



From Herat to Constantinople: The Books of Muřannifak Between Khorasan and the Ottoman Empire*

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Makale Türü / Article Type

Arařtırma Makalesi / Research Article

Geliř Tarihi / Date Received

10 Haziran / June 2026

Kabul Tarihi / Date Accepted

15 Ağustos / August 2026

ATIF © Liebreuz, Boris. “From Herat to Constantinople: The Books of Muřannifak between Khorasan and the Ottoman Empire”. *Yazmabilim* 2/1 (Eylül 2026): 1-34.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.29228/Yazmabilim.23>

* Research for this article was funded by the Federal Republic of Germany and the Free State of Saxony within the framework of the Academies’ Programme. I want to thank the two anonymous reviewers for their greatly valuable suggestions.

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The author declares no conflict of interest in relation to this article.

Abstract

Central Asian book cultures, like those in other regions, were part of larger networks of intellectual entanglements that led to the exchange and movement of books across regions. Thus, a history of Central Asian manuscripts needs to be written on a global scale. In the 15th century, one of the main routes of exchange was towards the fledgling Ottoman Empire in Anatolia and, eventually, Constantinople. This is the route taken by a productive writer, ‘Alī al-Biṣṭāmī, known as Muṣannifak, who made a splendid career among the Ottomans. This contribution will follow not only the man, but also his books, from Khorasan to Constantinople.

Keywords

Muṣannifak’s library, Khorasan, Sultan Mehmet II, Istanbul, Central Asian manuscripts, Ottoman libraries.

Herat’tan Konstantinopolis’e: Horasan ve Osmanlı Devleti Arasında Musannifek’in Kitapları

Öz

Diğer bölgelerdekiler gibi Orta Asya kitap kültürleri de kitapların bölgeler arasındaki değiş tokuşuna ve hareketine olanak tanıyan daha geniş entelektüel etkileşim ağlarının bir parçasıydı. Bu nedenle, Orta Asya yazmalarının tarihi küresel bir ölçekte yazılmalıdır. 15. yüzyılda ana mübadele rotalarından biri, Anadolu’da yeni gelişmekte olan Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’na ve nihayetinde Dersaadet’e (İstanbul) doğruydı. Bu rota, “Musannifek” olarak bilinen ve Osmanlı ilmiyesinde parlak bir kariyer yapan velud müellif Alī el-Biṣṭāmī’nin de takip ettiği rotadır. Bu çalışma sadece bu zatın değil, aynı zamanda onun Horasan’dan İstanbul’a uzanan kitaplarının da izini sürecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Musannifek’in Kütüphanesi, Horasan, Fatih Sultan Mehmet, İstanbul, Orta Asya Yazmaları, Osmanlı Kütüphaneleri.

من هرات إلى القسطنطينية: كتب مُصنَّفك بين خراسان والدولة العثمانية

الموجز

كانت ثقافات الكتب في آسيا الوسطى، شأنها في ذلك شأن نظرياتها في سائر الأصقاع، جزءاً من شبكاتٍ أرحب من التفاعلات الفكرية، أفضت إلى تبادل الكتب وانتقالها عبر الأقاليم. ومن ثمَّ فإن تاريخ مخطوطات آسيا الوسطى ينبغي أن يكتب على نطاق عالمي. وفي القرن التاسع الهجري / الخامس عشر الميلادي، كان أحد مسالك التبادل الرئيسة يتجه صوب الإمبراطورية العثمانية الناشئة في الأناضول وصولاً في نهاية المطاف إلى "دَرْسَعادُتْ" (إستانبول). وهذا هو المسلك ذاته الذي سلكها مؤلفٌ غزير التصنيف، علي البسطامي، المعروف بـ مُصنَّفكُ، الذي بنى لنفسه مسيرة باهرية بين ظهراني العثمانيين. ولن تقف هذه الدراسة عند اقتفاء أثر الرجل وحده، بل ستتعداه إلى تتبع مسار كتبه من خراسان إلى القسطنطينية.

الكلمات المفتاحية

كتب مصنّفك، خراسان، السلطان محمد الفاتح، القسطنطينية، مخطوطات آسيا الوسطى، المكتبات العثمانية

Introduction

Books are avid travelers. Their peregrinations may span continents and cross borders of states, languages, and cultures. And yet, quite obviously, they don't do this on their own. One core task for the historian of books and libraries is to follow the trails of volumes between owners, institutions, and cities, up to their modern homes, and so it is important to identify the agents and historical setting for this mobility. Still, libraries are often depicted as static entities and the aspect of mobility among different regional book cultures remains underexplored. Challenging this state and developing a framework of transhistorical and transregional analysis has to start on the most granular level, the individual book and its trajectory over time. A key source for this endeavor in the field of Islamic manuscript studies, and one that has been increasingly deployed for a wide range of historical inquiries in recent years, are the innumerable manuscript notes found on the books themselves, handwritten or impressed with seals and left by former owners, readers, endowers, and the like.¹

For those interested in the book cultures and intellectual lives of the Persianate East, the innate mobility of these objects compels us to look beyond the riches of modern collections in places like Herat, Samarqand or Tashkent. The historical reality of Central Asian book cultures naturally included books that came into the region as well as those that constantly left it. Likewise, the nascent book culture of the early Ottoman Empire cannot be thought of in isolation. On the contrary, it was in constant exchange with its immediate neighbors in Syria, Egypt, and Iran, not the least as an eager recipient of scholars, copyists, texts, and books. Bibliophile figures who connected those regions, who travelled back and forth between centers of learning and

¹ See my early overview of the field in Boris Liebreuz, *Die Rifā'iya aus Damaskus. Eine Privatbibliothek im osmanischen Syrien und ihr kulturelles Umfeld* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 4–33, as well as the edited volume Boris Liebreuz (ed.), *The History of Books and Collections through Manuscript Notes = Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 9, 2–3 (2018). Recent years have seen a number of contributions of widely varying quality. My own transcriptions of more than 90,000 such notes are currently accessible via <https://khizana.saw-leipzig.de/>, while the metadata (identification of people, places, or institutions) with which I have enriched these texts is available in an internal annotation tool within the framework of the *Bibliotheca Arabica* project at the Saxon Academy of Sciences and Humanities in Leipzig.

libraries, are ideal subjects to throw some light on such exchanges. This article offers a glimpse into the ways in which the perspective of one such figure can contribute to a fuller picture of Ottoman book culture's integration into transregional networks of manuscripts and their afterlives.

To do so, in this paper, I want to look closer at a man who grew up in Central Asia in the early ninth / fifteenth century, where he embarked on a promising career as a scholar and author. But, still at a relatively young age, he repeatedly travelled to and finally settled in Anatolia (Bilād al-Rūm). In the contested political sphere of the region, between the Karamanid principality and a resurging Ottoman Empire, he became a highly regarded and supremely influential figure as a professor, author, and Sufi master. At the end of his life, he even found himself close to the Ottoman sultan and his elite entourage. And so were his books, many of which were produced and procured in Central Asia only to end up eventually in the center of the Ottoman Empire, Constantinople.

I. Biographical Dimension

The background and prerequisite for the translocations we are tracing here was an unusually peripatetic life. The man behind these books was 'Alī b. Majd al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shāhrūdī al-Biṣṭāmī al-Ḥanafī. But to most who knew and still know him, he simply is Muṣannifak. This latter name is explained to be the Persian diminutive that translates to "little author." Yet, this was not meant in a belittling manner. The explanation put forth by his biographer Ṭāshköprü-zāde is that the nickname simply acknowledges how early in life 'Alī al-Biṣṭāmī had started out as an author.

There are two primary sources that inform us about this mobile life. First is the detailed account provided by the primary biographer of the early Ottoman polity, Aḥmad efendī Ṭāshköprü-zāde (d. 968 / 1560) in his major work *al-Shaqā'iq al-nu'māniya fī 'ulamā' al-dawla al-'uthmāniya* and based in part on autobiographical accounts of Muṣannifak himself.² Some doubt has been cast

² Ṭāshköprü-zāde Aḥmad Efendī, *Al-Shaqā'iq al-nu'māniya fī 'ulamā' al-dawla al-'uthmāniya / Eş-Şakā'iku'n-nu'māniyye fī ulemā'i'd-devleti'l-osmāniyye*, eds. Muhammet Hekimoğlu and Derya Örs (Istanbul, 2019), 274–81.

on this source's reliability in scholarship.³ Therefore, it is not surprising that specific parts of this account can be added to or even slightly challenged by the surviving books themselves, the works in which their author Muşannifak hints at or talks about his experiences, and the documentary notes he left in the manuscripts he owned. This latter material is so unusually dense that it has allowed Ümit Karaver to retell this biography in a rich and important investigation, which in turn has been a great resource for the present work.⁴

Muşannifak was born in 803 / 1400–1 in what his biographer only specifies as Khorasan (Khurāsān), the vast Central Asian region that encompasses parts of North-Eastern Iran, Turkmenistan, and Afghanistan. It is likely that this was either in Biṣṭām or Shāhrūd, neighboring cities to the South-East of the Caspian Sea, the nisba of both of which he constantly displays. Muşannifak himself usually mentions the two settlements in one breath, as Shāhrūd Biṣṭām. His family was well-respected in Biṣṭām with an illustrious scholarly pedigree. They prided themselves for their descent from a son of the famous philosopher and theologian Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606 / 1210), who had himself settled in Biṣṭām. The young 'Alī must have started out with one of the primary prerequisites for a successful career, a good name to himself.

Traveling long distances is a central aspect of Muşannifak's life, and it started early. He accompanied his brother to study in Timurid Herat already in 812 / 1409-10, when he was nine years old. And he would later return and live there starting in 839 / 1435-6, according to Ṭāshköprü-zāde. Indeed, it is from the period of this latter stay that we have Muşannifak's earliest recorded book purchases. But autograph copies of his works show him working in the city also in the 820s.

According to the published biography, 'Alī al-Biṣṭāmī then travelled to Konya in 848 / 1444 to begin a fabulous career within a city that had long been the center of Mongol and Seljuq Anatolia. His first steps did not lead him to

³ See the discussion of previous scholarship in Ali Anooshar, "Writing, Speech, and History for an Ottoman Biographer," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 69 (2010), 43–62, here 46–7.

⁴ Ümit Karaver, "XV. Yüzyıl Timurlu/Karamanlı/Osmanlı Ulemâsından Şeyh Alī El-Bestāmī Musannifek'e Dair Otobiyografik Kayıtlardan Hareketle Biyografik Bir İnceleme," *Ceride: Ben-Anlatıları Araştırmaları Dergisi* 2 (2024), 1–36. I owe knowledge of this article to Andrew Peacock.

the Ottoman sultanate but to the Karamanid Beylik, which vied for control over Konya with many rivals, chief among them the sultans of the house of Osman.⁵ The region at the time was, thus, not completely void of political and military tensions and it was likely not the promise of peace and security our man was searching for in Anatolia. Only after Muşannifak's death would the Ottoman expansion bring Konya securely into their realm. But while the city stayed with the Karamanids, Muşannifak himself chose to make the transition into the fledgling Ottoman scholarly system that was increasingly attractive for others from the Eastern Islamic lands, among them renowned scholars such as the astronomer 'Alī Qūshjī (d. 879/1474).⁶

Here, the manuscript record paints a much more complicated picture, one that is also highly relevant for Muşannifak's history of book acquisitions. Within the short time span of five years before the biography speaks of his definitive relocation to Konya, Muşannifak was active in no less than five cities between Afghanistan and Anatolia. This is according to colophons and ownership notes both of himself and in one case a person who bought a book from him. We find Muşannifak in Konya as early as Jumādā I 843 / November 1439, a full five years before Țāshköprü-zāde placed him there (MS Istanbul, Fatih 386). But he is back in Shāhrūd already in Dhū l-Ḥijja 844 / April 1441, prepares for another journey to Rūm the same year, where we find him even further West in the old Ottoman capital of Bursa in 845 / 1441-2, only to be back in Herat by Dhū l-Ḥijja 846 / April 1443. Surely, this was a man who

⁵ For the book culture of this beylik in earlier periods see exploratory analysis in Cailah Jackson, "Reframing the Qarāmānids: Exploring Cultural Life through the Arts of the Book," *Al-Masāq. Journal of the Medieval Mediterranean* 33 (2021), 257–81.

⁶ A prosopographical study of early Ottoman scholarly networks can be found in Abdurrahman Atçıl, *Scholars and Sultans in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); on the immigration of scholars from the Persianate East and Central Asia see 64–6, Muşannifak is mentioned briefly on 65. An independent study of scholarly mobility in the lands of Rūm by the same author in Abdurrahman Atçıl, "Mobility of Scholars and Formation of a Self-Sustaining Scholarly System in the Lands of Rūm during the Fifteenth Century," in A.C.S. Peacock and Sara Nur Yıldız (eds.), *Literature and Intellectual Life in Fourteenth- and Fifteenth-Century Anatolia* (Würzburg: Ergon and Beirut: Orient-Institut, 2016), 315–32. Another detailed prosopographical study, concentrated on the migration of Persian scholars like Muşannifak, is Giv Nassiri, *Turco-Persian Civilization and the Role of Scholars' Travel and Migration in Its Elaboration and Continuity*, PhD dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2002.

got his steps in! After another stop in Shāhrūd in Jumādā I 847 / October 1443, Muṣannifak is once again on his way to Rūm in 848 / 1444-5, just as Ṭāshköprü-zāde had declared. This we know because he bought a book in Erzincan “while heading for Anatolia” (dar waqt-e tawajjuh be-Rūm; MS Istanbul, Fatih 2753). After arriving in Konya, he must still have spent a long time in Larende (today’s Karaman) in 849 and 850, according to information he provides in his autograph colophons (MSS Dublin, CBL Ar 3196 II; Istanbul, Murad Molla 1608). This was the old capital of the Karamanid Beylik and maybe an opportunity to come closer to the rulers of his newly chosen home. The mind-boggling mobility of this itinerary may be a fascinating window into the realities of travel during this period. Was Muṣannifak a particularly resourceful traveler with unusual access to the means of transport? Or can we imagine such journeys to be available to anyone through the established caravan infrastructure between Anatolia and Central Asia?

No reasoning or motivation whatsoever is given for the decision to travel such a long distance into an unknown part of the world, neither by Muṣannifak himself nor his biographer. Was he invited? By a local ruler eager to tap into the reservoir of Khurāsān’s famed scholarly circles, so important for the history of the Ḥanafī rite that was espoused by the dynasties of Anatolia? Or did he himself seek the opportunity to parlay the credentials acquired in renowned centers of learning into scholarly capital in a more provincial setting, where it might have had even higher currency? Difficult political circumstances in the long struggles over the remnants of Timur’s vast empire have to be taken into consideration.⁷ And maybe it was yet another aspect of Muṣannifak’s identity that brought him to Konya, namely his role as a Sufi master. Konya, of course, was the place where Jalāl al-Dīn al-Rūmī (d. 672 / 1273), a fellow mystic from Khurāsān, had lived and was buried. It was where his disciples kept the spiritual and literary tradition of their master’s order, the Mevlevis, alive, not the least through the reproduction of his works.⁸ Part of

⁷ Political circumstances and court patronage are analyzed in the detailed prosopographical study of Persian scholarly migration by Nassiri, *Turco-Persian Civilization*, 369–64 as well as by Atçıl in his study of scholarly mobility into the lands of Rūm Atçıl, “Mobility of Scholars,” 321.

⁸ For books from this milieu see Cailah Jackson, *Mevlevi Manuscripts, 1268-c. 1400. A Study of the Sources* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2024).

Muşannifak's immense social success in a foreign land may thus be credited to the fact that he was himself a Sufi master, though the biography claims that he had his own order (*ṭarīqa*). Tāshköprü-zāde describes in some detail this aspect of his subject's persona, yet he does not go much into of the subtleties of his doctrine or order affiliation. Yet he does not forget to mention that Muşannifak, in his role as master, wore an ensemble that included a crown.⁹ The crown is also mentioned as an emblem placed on Muşannifak's grave when he was buried next to Eyüp Sultan, prominently displaying this aspect of his religious persona in his posthumous commemoration.¹⁰

From then on, we do not find Muşannifak outside of the lands of Rûm again as he embarked on a long and successful career of teaching in Konya. This career was ultimately cut short when he lost his hearing, scaled back his teaching, and declared not to write any more works due to his age (a decision he later retracted somewhat). During the time he had spent in Konya, the Ottoman Empire had experienced a massive realignment of its symbolic standing. After having suffocated what remained of the Byzantine realm for more than a century, the Ottoman sultans finally inherited the mantle of their empire with the conquest of Constantinople in 857 / 1453. This ascendance in their fortunes may be a reason that attracted Muşannifak, especially since he may have lost a main purpose of his life in Konya (namely teaching) along with his hearing. Whatever ultimately motivated him, Muşannifak made an overture towards the Ottoman sultan shortly after this event. In 860 / 1456, he left Konya and came to Edirne, where he authored a work in Turkish that he dedicated to Mehmed Fatih and which included an autobiographical account, analyzed by Karaver, in which he distanced himself from his former Karamanid masters.¹¹ According to the biography, Muşannifak moved to Constantinople after leaving Konya. Again, it is the books that inform us about the fact that Muşannifak, despite his age and impairments, was not glued to his new home.

⁹ Tāshköprü-zāde, *Al-Shaqā'iq al-nu'māniya*, 281. The "crown" should not be taken for the diadem of precious metals that the word implies today. The Sufi crown was a cap made of cloth.

¹⁰ Biographical portraits included in 'Abd Allāh al-Ayyūbī, *Risāla fī ḥaqq ḥaḍrat Abū Ayyūb Anṣārī*, Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Ktp, Hacı Cemal Öğüt OG0067, fol. 130r; also mentioned in Karaver, "XV. Yüzyıl," 29.

¹¹ Karaver, "XV. Yüzyıl," 22–3.

In reality, we find him frequently copying books, buying or endowing them while in Edirne, where the Ottoman court often spent long stretches of the year.¹²

We do not know much about how the man from Khurāsān got along with his Karamanid sovereigns, and Ṭāshköprü-zāde remains (probably deliberately) silent about the political affiliations of his subject in East or West prior to his allegiance to the Ottoman rulers, making him appear rather unmoored within worldly affairs. But Muşannifak instantly found avid supporters among his new Ottoman lords. The Grand Vizier Muştafā Pasha introduced him to sultan Mehmed Fatih, who in turn allocated for him a daily stipend of 80 dirhams. This was a very considerable offering for a retired man that shows the high standing this scholar had among the Ottoman elite. In 875 / 1470, Muşannifak died in Constantinople and was buried in the vicinity of Eyyüp.¹³

Even before his journey to the West, Muşannifak had emerged as a prolific author, especially of a host of commentaries on widely used works of law, philology, logic, or Sufism. Those were mostly written in Arabic, but there is also a strong subset of Persian works. He seems to have started authoring commentaries in Persian only once he had arrived in Anatolia according to the list provided in Ṭāshköprü-zāde.¹⁴ It is unclear in how far this reflects an evolution in Muşannifak's own thinking, but the early Ottoman literary scene was certainly very favourably inclined towards Persian.¹⁵

¹² On early Ottoman Edirne see Amy Singer, "Enter, Riding on an Elephant: How to Approach Early Ottoman Edirne," *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 3 (2016), 89–109.

¹³ For an analysis of Ṭāshköprü-zāde's ideological leanings, see Ali Anooshar, "Writing, Speech, and History for an Ottoman Biographer," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 69 (2010), 43–62.

¹⁴ Ṭāshköprü-zāde, *Al-Shaqā'iq al-nu'māniya*, 279.

¹⁵ See Murat Umut Inan, "Imperial Ambitions, Mystical Aspirations: Persian Learning in the Ottoman World", in *The Persianate World: The Frontiers of a Eurasian Lingua Franca*, ed. Nile Green (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019), 75–92; Murat Umut Inan, "Ottomans Reading Persian Classics: Readers and Reading in the Ottoman Empire, 1500–1700," in *The Edinburgh History of Reading: Early Readers*, ed. Mary Hammond (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), 160–81.

The tremendous success Muşannifak had in the Ottoman empire is visible both in his biography and the fate of his books, those authored as well as those owned by him. His works are widely distributed and he interacted with Grand Vizier and sultan during his lifetime. In the end, the sultan also appears to have been the one responsible for preserving the library as we know it pretty much intact.

II. The Fatih Connection

The central role of the Ottoman sultan Mehmed Fatih (r. 848/1444–850/1446 and 855/1451–886/1481) for the later career of Muşannifak is clearly apparent in ʿĀshkōprü-zāde’s biographical account. It is also patently obvious on the books of Muşannifak’s library. Not only are most of the volumes identified so far currently part of the Fatih collection in Istanbul’s Süleymaniye Library. Nearly all of those that are found outside of it still bear the same pointed oval seal with Mehmed’s ʿuğhrā, showing that they had once been part of the collection that was given to the great mosque which had been erected by Constantinople’s conqueror between 1463 and 1470.

The modern Fatih collection is the product of several stages of sultanic benevolence. At the heart of it are the books given in the fifteenth century by the eponymous sultan himself. They are recognizable today via the sultan’s seal and the registration marks of the librarian, Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Fanārī, possibly a professor at one of the madrasas attached to the mosque.¹⁶ Much

¹⁶ No less than three possible candidates for the identification of this librarian can be advanced, all of them named Muḥyī l-Dīn Muḥammad b. ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ‘Alī al-Fanārī. The first, who died in 954, has remarkable biographical parallels to Muşannifak, as his intellectual journey brought him in the opposite direction to Samarqand, whence he returned to become a professor first in Edirne and then at one of the eight madrasas around the Fatih mosque where Muşannifak’s books were endowed. When he lost his eyesight, he was retired by sultan Selim on a daily stipend of 80 dirhams, like Muşannifak had been before him. See Muḥammad Ḥafz al-Raḥmān al-Kumillāʾī, *Al-Budūr al-muḍīya fī tarājim al-ḥanaḫīya* (Cairo: Dār al-Şalāḥ, 1439/2018), 284. The other candidate of this name, who died 929, was awarded the posts of military judge (*qāḏī ‘askar*) of Rumelia and Anatolia, but had earlier been a professor at one of the eight madrasas as well; see ʿĀshkōprü-zāde, *Al-Shaqāʾiq al-nuʾmāniya*, 605–07. Then there is the third man of this name, with near exactly the same career, only that he died in 954; see ʿĀshkōprü-zāde, *Al-Shaqāʾiq al-nuʾmāniya*, 607–609. The similarities in those biographies make it not unlikely that we are dealing with some confusion on the side of the biographers.

of the modern collection, however, came together when the Fatih mosque was renovated and a new library building attached to it in the middle of the eighteenth century, to a large part by transferring books from the palace.¹⁷ Muşannifak's books, with no exception, are part of the original stock.

The library attached to the mosque did not exist in a vacuum. The area around it was clearly designed as an academic center for the new empire, with a group of elite madrasas erected around the central mosque. They were known collectively as the "eight madrasas" (*al-madāris al-thamān*).¹⁸ Teaching there was the pinnacle of the scholarly hierarchy as implemented under Mehmed Fatih and was often a step on the career path of the empire's highest-ranking judges as well. It was in many ways an ideal place for one's books to have a meaningful impact.

Of the identified volumes that Muşannifak owned or copied (that is, excluding the autographs of his works), only four do not bear the pointed oval seal with Mehmed Fatih's *tuğhrā*. One is the copy of al-Zamakhsharī's *al-Kashshāf* that Muşannifak bought in 843 / 1439-40 in Konya, early during his first stay in Anatolia (MS Istanbul, Fatih 386). The reason for this absence is also clear: The book did not stay with Muşannifak for long, since he sold it already in 845 / 1441-2 to one Ibrāhīm b. Hājji Bayram al-Şūfī (very likely a son of the famous Ottoman mystic who had died in 833 / 1430) in Bursa. This is interesting on several levels. For one, it is unclear why he would have parted with this work when a decade later he felt the need for having it at his disposal so much that he undertook to copy this very text himself in four massive volumes over the course of at least five years (MSS Istanbul, Fatih 352, 371, 379, 393). A possible answer can be sought in the fact that these were years of constant back and forth between Anatolia and Central Asia (see below) and

¹⁷ See Yoichi Takamatsu, "I. Mahmūd'un Kurduğu Üç Kütüphane: Ayasofya, Fatih, Galatasaray Kütüphaneleri," in *Osmanlı Kitap Koleksiyonları ve Koleksiyonlar: İtibar ve İhtiras*, ed. Tülay Artan and Hatice Aynur (Istanbul: Dergâh, 2022), 43–129; Yoichi Takamatsu, "Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi'nde Bulunan Bir Fatih Kütüphanesi Kataloğu (TİEM Yazma 2216)," *Zemin* 7 (2024), 156–177; Nimet İpek, *Crafting a Novel Imperial Image: Antiquarian Patronage of Manuscripts and Ayasofya Library (1740)*, PhD Dissertation, Sabancı University, Istanbul 2025, 35–42.

¹⁸ See Fahri Unan, "Sahn-ı semân," in *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 35 (Istanbul, 2008), 532–34.

the visit to Bursa, wedged between his earlier return to Shāhrūd in 844 and the immediate sojourn to Herat in 846, might have seen him liquidate some possessions rather than packing them up for the long trip. Then, of course, giving precious books like Muşannifak did here could have been meant to solidify connections with the Ottoman elite, which in turn could have been the main intention behind this journey to their capital. Surprisingly, however, the book still ended up in the Fatih library, even though, lacking the sultan's *tughrā*-seal, it was apparently not part of the original collection.

This frequent appearance of Fatih's seal also highlights the fact that at least most of the copies made by Muşannifak were, in principle, intended for his own library. While fair copies by many authors were clearly meant for widespread distribution, this was not the case for Muşannifak, as his copies basically remained together until they were incorporated into the sultan's library at the Fatih Mosque. And they did not come there haphazardly, but as part of what was considered Muşannifak's proper collection. It is clear from later notes that the books of Muşannifak were conceptualized as a distinct endowment (*waqf*) of their own, not simply part of the overall donation given by the sultan. Many volumes have small entries stating matter-of-factly "*waqf Muşannifak*" (e.g. MS Istanbul, Fatih 3941). Those are obviously not endowment notes of their own but have more of an explanatory character and similar notes can be seen employed by the Fatih Mosque's librarians for other sub-collections as well. This might have been deemed necessary especially on volumes that have no manuscript notes by Muşannifak himself, as in the case of MS Fatih 5004. The sultan's seal is also seen on most of those volumes that are now found outside of the Fatih collection. Even the only volume in this corpus that has left modern Turkey, MS Dublin, Chester Beatty Library Ar 3196 I + II, shows this sign of its previous history in the Fatih collection.

The question of whose initiative was behind the endowment is important, but also difficult to assess. Did the sultan consider it his prerogative to dispose of the estate of a man who might have died an heirless immigrant?¹⁹ Or was it Muşannifak himself who had designated his books to be made accessible

¹⁹ Muşannifak did have a family and records the birth of a son on one of his manuscripts, but the fate of this latter is unknown.

at his sovereign's marquee architectural achievement, a hub of scholarship overlooking his new capital? We do have the autograph endowment notes of Muṣannifak present on a few volumes. However, the details and stipulations found in those are fuzzy.



Figure 1: Autograph endowment note by Muṣannifak, dated 864 in Edirne;
MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 636, fol. 1r.

The lengthy text as found on MS Fatih 636 is most illustrative:

وقفت — هذا الكتاب على العلماء والفضلاء أين ما كانوا وحيث ما كانوا في
مشارك الأرض ومغاريها بشرط أن يستفيدوا منه ولا يطعموا فيه فيملكونه وبشرط
أن لا يرقى²⁰ ولا صندوق ولا زنيل ولا منديل ولا يباع ولا يشتري ولا يوهب
ولا ينصرف فيه تصرفا يخرج منه عن وقفيته فمن بدله بعد ما سمعه فإنما إثمه على
الذين يبدلونه وعليه لعنة الله والملائكة والناس أجمعين وفعلت ما فعلت ابتغاء
لوجهه الكريم وطلبا لرضوانه يوم لا ينفع مال ولا بنون إلا من أتى الله بقلب سليم
وأنا الفقير الواقف شيخ علي بن مجد الدين الشاه رودي ثم البسطامي مصنف هذا
الكتاب ومؤلفه رزقه الله سعادة الدارين وحقق آماله ومناه في المنزلين تحريرا في
سابع ذي الحجة حجة أربع وستين وثمانمائة بمقام ادرنة

²⁰ It is apparent that a verb is missing here. Of the four items into which the book should apparently not be put (presumably keep it from readers or for them to take it away?), I have transcribed the first as *bi-raqq* (in parchment). It would be more elegant to have two pairs of rhyming words: *būq* - *ṣandūq* and *zanbīl* - *mandīl*. However, *būq* could only mean a trumpet and would not make sense in this context.

“I endowed this book to the scholars and honorable men, wherever they may be in all parts of the world, under the stipulation that they don’t desire to own it. And with the stipulation that it [is not wrapped] in parchment, [is not put] in neither box nor basket nor [wrapped in] a towel, that it is not sold nor bought or gifted, and that nobody disposes of it in any way that would make it leave its endowment. “And whoever exchanges it after hearing of it, the sin will only be upon those who exchange it.” (Qur’ān 2:181) And on him (who exchanges it) is the curse of God and the angels and all the people. I did what I did hoping for His generosity and striving for His favour on the day when money or kin will be of no use, but only coming to God with a pure heart. I am the poor endower shaykh ‘Alī b. Majd al-Dīn al-Shāhrūdī then al-Biřāmī, the author of this book, may God provide for him the happiness of the two abodes and make his hopes come true in the two resting places. Written on 7 Dhū l-Hijja in the year 864 in Edirne.”

Here, we have an endowment made for the benefit of scholars who remain adamantly unlocalized (“wherever they may be”). The note itself is written in Edirne and dated in 864 / 1460, long before the Fatih Mosque was erected, but the place of the endowment is not specified. At this point, the volume had legally left al-Biřāmī’s library proper, but ended up in the Fatih collection with all the others, nonetheless. The same is true for other instances, like MSS Fatih 1091 and 2211, which were endowed much later, in 873 / 1468-9, but still do not name an institutional setting for the endowment, a responsible administrator, or even the city in which they were supposed to be available. Worded like this, the act of endowment does not overtly impede the mobility of the object. Most importantly, it did not change the fact that all of them apparently stayed together until they entered the Fatih collection in Constantinople.

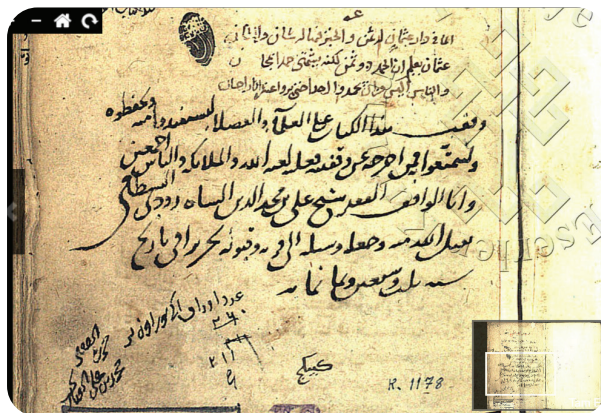


Figure 2: Autograph endowment note by Muşannıfak, dated 873; MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 1091, fol. 1r.

What is clear is that there must have existed some sort of early cataloguing with a written reference called *daftar*. This much has been clear from earlier research that has identified at least four catalogues, now mostly lost, and their revisions in the Fatih mosque and the four madrasa libraries associated with it. What is interesting about this cataloguing is the fact that it must have included information on the provenance of these collections' constituent parts, that is which volumes had come from Muşannıfak's library.²¹ In an evocative note on MS Fatih 5004, the writer declared this item to belong to the Muşannıfak endowment on the top of the page. In the margin, the same writer apparently wanted to dispel any doubts about this claim by referring to an old catalogue of the collection:

وقف مصنفك

مهري حك اولمشدر (...) دفتر قديمه مطابقدر (...)

Endowment of Muşannıfak.

The seal was erased. [signature] In accordance with an old *daftar*. [signature]

²¹ See İsmail E. Erünsal, *Ottoman Libraries. A Survey of the History, Development and Organization of Ottoman Foundation Libraries* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, The Department of Near Eastern Languages and Literatures, 2008), 139 (for the diligent recording of endowment notes in the catalogue of the Fatih collection in 1560), 144–5.

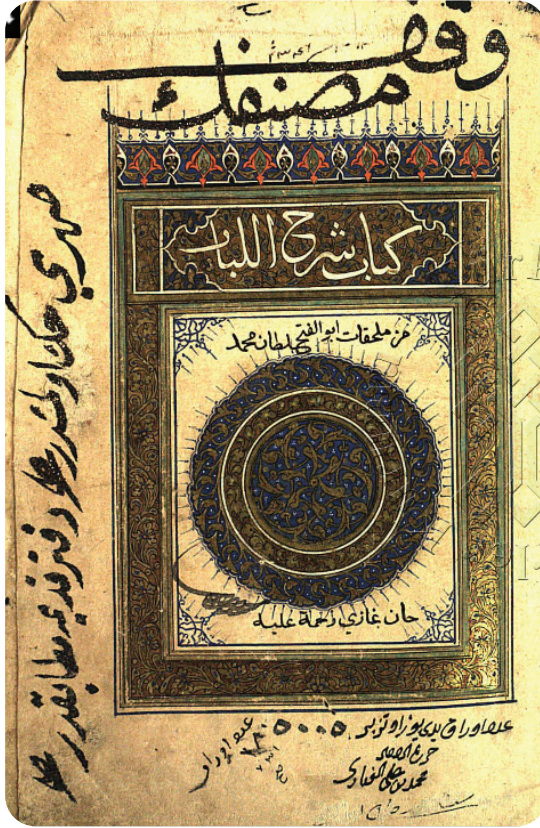


Figure 3: Allusion to an old catalogue in the Turkish endowment note made for MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 5004, fol. 1r.

A small note under the title on the previous example gave the initiative for the inclusion of this book to the sultan, stating that this was “from the additions of Abū l-Faṭḥ sulṭān Muḥammad Khān Ghāzī” (*min mulḥaqāt Abū [sic!] l-Faṭḥ sulṭān Muḥammad Khān Ghāzī*), which is repeated very boldly on the last page of the volume. But a large note on MS Fatih 1965 appears to state that the endowment was Muṣannifak’s: “Endowment of the deceased Muṣannifak in the Mosque of Abū l-Faṭḥ, the sultan Muḥammad Khān.” In both cases, however, the initiative is simply a grammatical one and does not allow us to draw any conclusions about how the endowment process had played out in reality.

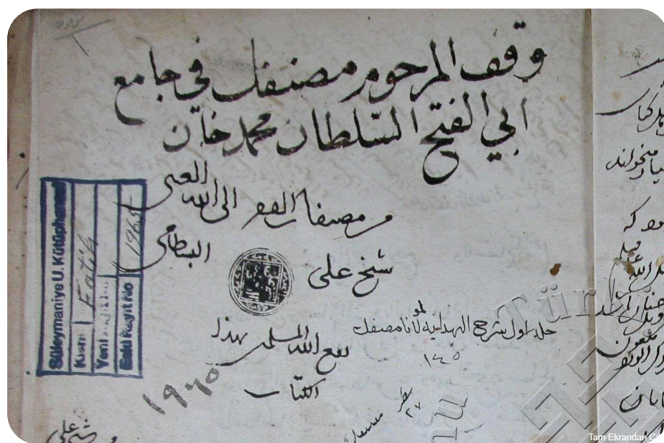


Figure 4: Endowment note naming Muşannifak as the active agent; MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 1965, fol. 1r.

Interestingly, the sultan's seal is absent from some of the books that are now found in the Fatih collection. As in the case of MS Istanbul, Fatih 2706, this absence does not mean that the books were not part of the early collection, since we can still find the registration note of the institution's librarian Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Fanārī as in the rest of the core library. The absence is an oversight that must be explained in some other, as yet elusive way.

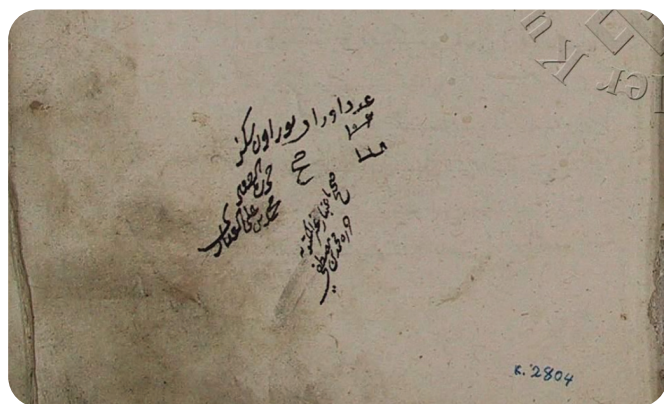


Figure 5: This volume did not receive impressions of sultan Mehmed II's seal, but bears the usual librarian's marks of his collection; MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 2706, fol. 1r.

III. The Seal: Central Asian Tradition or Anatolian Innovation?

One of the more unusual elements of Muşannifak's bibliophile identity is his seal. It is, in fact, what brought him to my attention in the first place. Sealing practices had been introduced sparingly in post-Mongol Iran, and the question of how they entered Ottoman book culture had been on my mind for a while. Here, now was a seal that was evidently older than the establishment of the Fatih collection and therefore from a time when seals were still a relatively young element of documentary practices in books.²² Indeed, his might have been the earliest non-sultanic seal firmly identified in Ottoman book culture.²³ Yet since it is not dated and we do not know for certain whether Muşannifak brought it from the East, many questions remain.

In the following discussion, I will present arguments that support an Eastern origin. For one, the seal is present with early ownership notes from Herat and Shāhrūd. MS Istanbul, Fatih 1439, dated in 840 / 1436-7 in Herat, is one such example. But seals could theoretically have been added at later dates to earlier handwritten notes, and there are examples for this to have been the case.

²² For the Ottoman tradition of seals, see Kut, Günay and Nimet Bayraktar, *Yazma eserlerde vakıf mühürleri* (Istanbul, 2021) and now the developing database, still largely replicating the former publication, <https://muhuryek.gov.tr>.

²³ This obviously depends on the dating of the seal. The earliest explicitly dated seal in Ottoman book culture, to my knowledge, was the endowment seal of Khalil b. Qāsim b. ḥājji Şafā, otherwise known as Tāshköprü-zāde (d. 879/1475), which bears the date 879. The seal can be found in the seal database of the Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu Başkanlığı: <https://muhuryek.gov.tr/muhur/yekmu0766>. This same database does register the small circular seal of one sayyid 'Alī as being dated in 754 (<https://muhuryek.gov.tr/muhur/yekmu0582>), but this is an obvious mistake as the seal's design is of a much later variety. The numbers, instead, have to be read 254, meaning 1254.

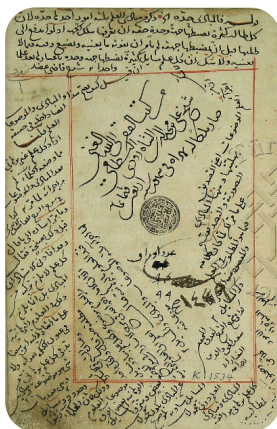


Figure 6: An early ownership note, dated 840 AH in Herat, with the seal; MS Istanbul, Fatih 1439, fol. 1r.



The placement in MS Istanbul, Fatih 1307, however, right in the center of an ownership note written in 844 / 1440 in Shāhrūd, suggests that the note would have been written around the seal. In this case, obviously, the seal was indeed used by Muṣannifak already at this early point.

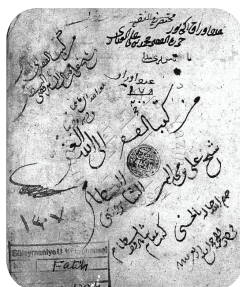


Figure 7: The writing of this ownership note, dated 844 AH in Shāhrūd, appears to go around a previously applied seal; MS Istanbul, Fatih 1307, fol. 1r.

The really unusual aspect of the seal still lies elsewhere and leads to the second argument for an Eastern origin. Whether it came with its owner from the East or was a product of early Ottoman seal-making, in either case Muşannifak's seal exhibits an unusual and probably even unique design.²⁴ Within its circular shape, it shows a square central field inscribed with the owner's name. The lines of the square, by touching the circumference at the corners, create four small outer fields, the upper one carrying the word *al-faqīr*. On all three remaining sides, the letters **بِهْ** **مِهْ** are repeated next to a heart-shaped knot that in later years became a common feature of Ottoman seal design, too. The letters appear to form the Persian adage said to have been inscribed on the seal of Sasanian king Khosrow I Anushirvan: **بِهْ** **مِهْ** **نِهْ** **مِهْ** (Be worthy of me, not I worthy of you).²⁵ Despite this historic allusion, there appears to be no template for this seal design variety.

The real inspiration behind this design appears to come from the related medium of coins. And again, the trail leads eastwards. Although the square-within-circle pattern originated with the Almohads and by the time of Muşannifak this was exhibited mainly on coins far to the West in the Maghreb and Andalusia, especially on the gold coins minted there in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, it had also been in use further East since the Ayyubids of the sixth / twelfth century.²⁶ But there are much more likely candidates closer to home for Muşannifak. By the early fifteenth century, this pattern had been

²⁴ A circular seal with a framed square central field is an absolute rarity among the thousands of seals I have seen and documented through my work with manuscript notes. Wherever such a general design is found, the central square is usually achieved by elongated letters from the four outside inscriptions surrounding it. This alternative is something seen also on Ottoman seals, such as the circular seal used by sultan Selim I and also after his death by the palace library. But for a genuine square within a circle, I can only think of the seal of the mystic Khālīd al-Naqshbandī (1190/1779–1242/1827) in early thirteenth / nineteenth century Damascus. A likely earlier example is found in MS Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Ar 3738, fol. 226r, yet while it appears to be very close to Muşannifak's seal in appearance, its text is scraped off and later overwritten, barring any interpretation of its context.

²⁵ Abū Ḥāmid Ġazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*, ed. Jalāl Humāī (Tehran, 1315-1317 hijrī shamsī), 72. This interpretation has been brought to my attention by an anonymous reviewer.

²⁶ Salvador Peña Martín, "Sacred Cubes Within Sacred Spheres. The Numismatic Symbolic System that Traveled to the East," in Mohamed Meouak and Cristina de la Puente (eds.), *Connected Stories. Contacts, Traditions and Transmissions in Premodern Mediterranean Islam* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2022), 159–92.

well established among the Timurid principalities of Central Asia. Timur himself had used the design for his silver dirhams, as in the reproduced pieces minted in 790 / 1388 in Şughd and 795 / 1393 in Samarqand, respectively. These would likely still have been in circulation during Muşannifak's lifetime. And Timur's successors have intermittently done the same throughout the following century. This is particularly true for his son Shāhrukh (r. 807/1409–850/1447) with several issues from Herat throughout the years when Muşannifak was studying and working there.²⁷



Figure 8: Silver dirham of Timur, Şughd, 790 AH, American Numismatic Society, Lot 1949.163.271.



Figure 9: Silver dirham of Timur, Samarqand, 795 AH, American Numismatic Society, 1955.34.25.

And while the coins regularly use dots as demarcations instead of or next to lines, Shāhrukh's pieces from Herat actually feature lines, and, in 807 AH, the same double line as Muşannifak's seal design. Here, too, do we regularly find certain letters that look like ornaments in the corner-spaces around the central square. On the coins, this is where the date and place of mint are often noted, but this is not the case in the Timurid issues, and we may see in those a possible inspiration for the Persian words that replaced them on the seal. The Karamanids, on the other hand, are not recorded to have used coin designs like these, and neither were the Ottomans.

²⁷ To show the chronological range of this coinage, we may cite here two pieces from The Khalili Collections, a silver tanka issued in 807 AH (Accession number AR5135; <https://www.khalilicollections.org/islamic-coins/4968-timurid-silver-tanka-harat-herat-%db%b8%db%b0%db%b7-807-ah/>) and a quarter tanka issued in 821 AH (Accession number AR5141; <https://www.khalilicollections.org/islamic-coins/4971-timurid-silver-quarter-tanka-or-miri-harat-herat-%db%b8%db%b2%db%b1-821-ah/>), both from Herat.

One element of the inscription's text, nevertheless, might appear to be suggestive for a later production: the use of the word *shaykh* for al-Biṣṭāmī. This might commonly evoke an allusion to age-related respect and thus make it unlikely that this was the seal of a young scholar in Khurāsān. But this is not always the case. I have, in fact, found clearly teenage *shaykhs* that suggest the term to be one of general veneration appropriate to the high social and scholarly status into which 'Alī al-Biṣṭāmī was born and which he cemented by becoming a recognized author very early.²⁸ In fact, we can show that 'Alī al-Biṣṭāmī was used to calling himself *shaykh* from a very young age. In his early autograph copies, he refers to himself in this manner, as he did in MS Fatih 3076, which he finished in 825, at the tender age of 22.

IV. Central Asian Origins

It remains to be shown now in which ways and to what extent this library can be considered a bridge between the worlds of books in Central Asia, the Karamanid realm in Anatolia, and ultimately the Ottoman Empire with its nascent center in Constantinople. Where did 'Alī al-Biṣṭāmī get his books from throughout his life?

The first thing that stands out in this undertaking is that so much of the library was of its owner's own making. It was already noted by his contemporaries, and duly recorded in Ṭāshköprü-zāde's biography, that Muṣannifak was an extremely fast writer who habitually copied a quire every day, be it of his own works or those of others.²⁹ As an author, Muṣannifak was a serial commentator first and foremost. A large part of the library as restored at this time consists in fact of these works in his autographs. Sometimes, the connection between the books he owned and those he authored can be shown since the former were likely the basis for his work on the latter. MSS Fatih 5004 and 5077 are prime examples for this process. These two volumes contain, respectively, al-Isfarā'nī's (d. 684 / 1285) original grammatical work *al-Lubāb fī l-naḥw* and Muṣannifak's autograph commentary on it. The autographs also show how

²⁸ For a shaykh of 11 years, see the *qirā'a*-note in MS Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Ar 3487, fol. 83v, recorded in 747 AH in Damascus, in which the listener Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-Karakī (736-759) is listed with this honorific.

²⁹ Ṭāshköprü-zāde, *Al-Shaqā'iq al-nu'māniya*, 281.

Muṣannifak carried them around with him, as he likely did with the rest of his library. MS Dublin, CBL Ar 3196 I + II, records emblematically the mobility of the whole process, beginning as it did in Biṣṭām in 834 / 1430 and ending in Lārand in Bilād al-Rūm in 850 / 1446.

His copying activity extended well beyond that. The corpus analyzed here includes 35 volumes that did not contain Muṣannifak's autograph works. Of those, Muṣannifak copied nine complete volumes or more than a quarter of the whole himself. With the exception of an early volume of al-Zamakhsharī's *Kashshāf*, which was done in 831 Ah in Herat and which did not make it into the Fatih library, all this copying activity happened between 852 / 1448 and 860 / 1456 in Konya and is therefore not immediately relevant for the present discussion of westward mobility.

One of the great methodological advantages of the Muṣannifak corpus is the unusual diligence with which its owner noted when and where he acquired or copied a book. In fact, only four of the volumes he owned do not contain either of this information.

As is to be expected, this review shows a significant Central Asian cluster in Muṣannifak's library. Apart from the autographs, on which he sometimes worked in those cities, three volumes were acquired in Herat and four in Shāhrūd. On the face of it, this Khorasanian and Central Asian provenance on seven volumes appears to be a low number. Yet it covers a full third of the owned volumes for which any provenance information is provided. Additionally, MS Istanbul, Şehid Ali Paşa 1420 could likely also come from Shāhrūd, as it was bought in 844 / 1440-1, the year in which we know Muṣannifak to have visited his erstwhile home and to have acquired two more volumes there. When a biography simply speaks of the relocation of a person like the protagonist of this study, this narrative minimalism challenges us to fill in the blanks. The scenario of a travelling person could entail a train of other people, like slaves, students, servants, or family. Depending on the traveler's status, it might be done with more than a pack animal full of clothes and household items. It might also contain merchandise to liquidate along the way. Additionally, and most importantly for our present discussion, the travels of a scholar were often travels with books, and lots of them.

One interesting aspect of Muşannifak's book-shopping operation with regard to its region-bridging function is seen on the content level. It is not surprising to see that the authors he bought and copied while in Herat and Shāhrūd were all Central Asian scholars. But the same is true for most of those he acquired when he came to Anatolia. The first book he bought in Konya, in 843, was the Koran commentary *al-Kashshāf* of al-Zamakhsharī. And when he made a stop in Erzincan in 848, he bought a work of his near contemporary, the mystic Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad khwāja Pārsa (d. 822 / 1420). Later, in Konya, the repertoire of his growing library was still dominated by scholars from Central Asia and the Persianate East, such as Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī, and Burhān al-Dīn al-Marghīnānī. This certainly reflects the great role these authors played in early Ottoman scholarship, a fact that enabled a man like Muşannifak, who was part of this tradition, to insert himself into this scholarly elite with such ease. But it also shows how little interest this visitor from the East appears to have harboured for the literary developments in contemporary Anatolia or the Arab world to the South of it.³⁰

It seems that wherever he stayed, 'Alī al-Biṣṭāmī did not only bring, but also bought books. Demonstrably, he did so in Konya in 843 (MS Fatih 386), during his first short sojourn to Anatolia. And he did it in the coming years when he twice returned home to Shāhrūd (MSS Fatih 1234, 1307, 2839, Murad Molla 577) and visited Herat (MS Fatih 2223). So, the question remains whether any books he bought in the Ottoman realm could have travelled with him in the opposite direction and stayed in Khorasan and Central Asia? Answering this question will have to rely on a systematic search in the collections of the region (most importantly in Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, and Iran, where Biṣṭām and Shāhrūd are situated today) and further on a global scale. Only then will we get the full picture of Muşannifak's library as the possibly fluctuating entity that such collections often were.

³⁰ See A.C.S. Peacock and Sara Nur Yıldız (eds.), *Islamic Literature and Intellectual Life in Fourteenth- and Fifteenth-Century Anatolia* (Würzburg: Ergon and Beirut: Orient-Institut, 2016).

Table of books owned and / or copied by Muşannifak:³¹

Volume	Title	Author	Seal of Mehmed Fatih	Role of Muşannifak	Date of Muşannifak's note	Place
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Hamidiye 168	الكشاف	الزمخشري	No	Copyist	831	ببلدة هراة
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 5360_2	الخلاصة في معرفة الحديث	حسين الطيبي	X	Owner	840	بمقام هراة
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 1439	مختصر منتهى السؤل و الأمل في علمي الأصول والجدل	ابن الحاجب	X	Owner	840	هراة
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 386	الكشاف عن حقائق غوامض التنزيل و عيون الأقاويل في وجوه التأويل	الزمخشري	No	Owner	843	بمقام قونية روم
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 1307	دفع الاعتراضات	عبد العزيز البخاري	X	Owner	844	بمقام شاهرود
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 1234	أصول البزدوي	فخر الاسلام البزدوي	X	Owner	844	بمقام شاهرود وقت الذهاب الى ممالك الروم
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Şehid Ali Paşa 1420	1 اصطلاحات الصوفية 2 منازل السائرين 3 در بيان لطائف سبع 4 الوصايا القدسية	1 2 خواجه عبد الله الهروي 3 زين الدين الخوافي 4 زين الدين الخوافي	X	Owner Partial copyist	844	
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 2223	وقاية الرواية في مسائل الهداية	برهان الشريعة	No	Owner	846	بمقام هراة
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 2839	مرصاد العباد من المبدأ الى المعاد	نجم الدين دايه	X	Owner	847	بمقام شاهرود بسطام

³¹ Besides my own data collection, I have used the comprehensive work of Karaver, "XV. Yüzyıl". However, some of the volumes listed there were not accessible to me and it is not always clear which of the volumes listed by the author under the general heading "primary sources" were actually owned by or copied by Muşannifak, or were otherwise connected to the arguments of the author. In addition to this list, I have identified an anonymous marginal note in Muşannifak's distinct hand in MS Istanbul, Ragıp Paşa Kütüphanesi, Ragıp Paşa 775 (paper pasted between folios 9 and 10), which means that he must have used this volume but does not show any signs of him having owned it.

Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Murad Molla 577	الجامع الصحيح	البخاري	X	Owner	847	بمقام شاهرود
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Şehid Ali Paşa 141	تفسير سورة الفاتحة	ملا فناري الرومي	No	Owner	847	
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 2753	فصل خطاب	خواجه بارسا	X	Owner	848	ببلده ارزنجان در وقت توجه بروم
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 2211	الوجيز	ابو حامد الغزالي	X	Owner Endower	849 873	بمقام قونية
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 2551	احياء علوم الدين	الغزالي	X	Copyist	852	بظاهر مقام قونية
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 2552	احياء علوم الدين	الغزالي	X	Copyist	853	بظاهر مقام قونية
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 2777	التعرف لمذهب التصوف	الكلاباذي	X	Copyist	853	بظاهر بلدة قونية
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 4589	دلائل الإعجاز	عبد القاهر الجزجاني	X	Owner	853	في مدينة قونية
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 3739	ديوان الحماسة	ابو تمام	X	Owner	854	بمقام قونية
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 4961	الوافية في شرح الكافية	ابن شرفشاه	X	Copyist	855	بمدينة قونية
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 351	الكشاف	الزمخشري	X	Copyist		بظاهر بلدة قونية
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 371	الكشاف	الزمخشري	X	Copyist	855	بظاهر بلدة قونية
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 2244	الهداية في شرح البداية	برهان الدين المرغيناني	X	Owner	856	بمقام قونية
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 1186	مصاييح السنة	البغوي	X	Owner	856	بمقام قونية
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 379	الكشاف	الزمخشري	X	Copyist	860	بظاهر بلدة قونية
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 393	الكشاف	الزمخشري	X	Copyist	860	بظاهر بلدة قونية
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 1092	الجامع الصحيح	البخاري	X	Owner Endower	871 873	بدار السلطنة ادرنة
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 404	تلخيص تبصرة المتذكر وتذكرة المتبصر	الكواشي	X	Owner	873	ببلدة ادرنة

Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 1091	الجامع الصحيح	البخاري	X	Endower	873	
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 4449	قصص الأنبياء	النيسابوري (Persian version)	X	Endower	873	
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 722	جامع الأصول من أحاديث الرسول	ابن الأثير	X	Owner	874	بدار السلطنة ادرنه
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 405	تلخيص تبصرة المتذكر وتذكرة المتبصر	الكواشي	X	Owner		
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 1328	كشف الأسرار في شرح أصول البزدوي	عبد العزيز البخاري	X	Owner		
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 2304	خلاصة الفتاوى	افتخار الدين طاهر البخاري	X	Owner		
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 3941	شرح الحماسة	المرزوقي	X	Only seal		[Eastern provenance]
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 5077	اللباب في النحو	الاسفراييني	X	Owner		

List of autograph copies of Muşannifak's works:³²

Volume	Title	Author	Seal of Mehmed Fatih	Role of Muşannifak (additional to author / copyist)	Date	Place
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Hekimoğlu Ali Paşa 51	تفسير الآيات الثلاثة من سورة البقرة	مصنفك	X			
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 635	تفسير مصنفك	مصنفك	X			
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 1965	شرح الهداية	مصنفك	X			
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 2706	شرح أوائل مشنوي	مصنفك	X			
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 5004	شرح اللباب	مصنفك	No			

³² As in the previous list, some of Muşannifak's works listed by Karaver, which may have been autograph, were not accessible to me. The author did not distinguish between copies of Muşannifak's works made by others and his proper autographs.

Istanbul, Atıf Efendi Kütüphanesi, Atıf Efendi 2479	الرشاد في شرح الإرشاد	مصنفك	X		823	هراة
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 5032	شرح المصباح	مصنفك	X		824	دار السلطنة هراة
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 3076	حاشية على شرح عقائد النسفي	مصنفك	X		825	
Konya, Konya Yusuf Ağa Kütüphanesi 5531	حاشية على المطول	مصنفك	X		830	دار السلطنة هراة
Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Ar 3196 I + II	شرح الوقاية	مصنفك	X		834 850	بسطام لارند
Bursa İnebey, Hüseyin Çelebi 136 / 3 + 4	1: كتاب المفاتيح في شرح المصباح 2: الخلاصة في معرفة الحديث 3: شرح القصيدة العينية 4: حقائق الإيمان لأهل اليقين والعرفان	1: حسين الزيداني 2: شرف الدين حسين الطيبي 3: مصنفك 4: مصنفك	No	1 + 2: Copyist	1: N.N. 2: N.N. 3: 837 4: 843	1: N.N. 2: N.N. 3: بالمدرسة الشريفة الخاقانية بمزار المبرك بسطام 4: بمقام طقاة روم
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 1876	شرح الوقاية	مصنفك	X		844	
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Nâfiz Paşa 604	شرح بعض أبيات مشوي	مصنفك	No		845	بمقام برسه روم ³³
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Murad Molla 1608	حاشية على المفتاح	مصنفك	No		Beginning: 849	Beginning: Larende
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 636	ملتنقى البحرين	مصنفك	X	Endower	864	بمقام أدرنة
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 2611	حل الرموز وكشف الكنوز	مصنفك	X		866	بدار السلطنة أدرنة
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Satın Alınan Yazma Eserler 1123	المحمدية في التفسير	مصنفك	X		866	دار السلطنة أدرنة
Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Fatih 4476	مختصر المنتظم وملتنقى الملنظم	مصنفك	X		870	بدار السلطنة المسماة ببلدة أدرنة

³³ This volume was also endowed in Brusa at an unspecified date by a mufti Aḥmad Pasha.

Conclusion

This article has used the biography of an important scholar of the 9th / 15th century and his career under several Central Asian and Anatolian dynasties of his day to illuminate the history of early Ottoman libraries with special attention to book mobility between Khorasan and Constantinople. Along the way, it has also analyzed an unusual seal as a then still new facet of book documentation and connected its rare design with Muşannifak's background in the Timurid monetary system of Khorasan. Since Muşannifak was far from being the only scholar who migrated along similar routes in those days, the present inquiry is no more than a snippet of larger translocation trends that await to be uncovered in order to place early Ottoman book culture within them. A central question for our understanding of the previous discussion is how representative the material is. This does not only extend to the question of how many scholars like 'Alī al-Bisṭāmī packed their bags and books to travel westwards, but also how much of this library we were in fact able to identify.

It was certainly possible for a wealthy scholar at the time, like Muşannifak obviously was, to bring together a library of more than a hundred and in exceptional cases even many hundreds of volumes.³⁴ Therefore, it seems unlikely that the numbers clustered in the Fatih collection are all there was or even very close to it. On the other hand, if his had been a sprawling and much more voluminous library that was not channeled exclusively into the endowment of Mehmed Fatih, then we would have to expect volumes of it to emerge in great numbers in those collections that most reflect the early Ottoman book market. After all, I have systematically collected manuscript notes in precisely those collections throughout Europe, North America and the territories of the former Ottoman Empire, among them many of Istanbul's great libraries.³⁵ And right now, the volumes found outside the Fatih library still overwhelmingly show that they had once been part of it through the appearance of the sultan's pointed oval seal. In other words, everything points

³⁴ For an overview of early Ottoman libraries, see Erünsal, *Ottoman Libraries*.

³⁵ I have catalogued the manuscript notes in more than 30,000 manuscripts globally. In Istanbul, I have complete data for the Feyzullah, Fazıl Ahmed Pasha, Hekimoğlu, and Ragıp Paşa libraries, in addition to having systematically scanned through several other large collections such as Ayasofya, Fatih, or Laleli.

to a scenario in which the library had originally entered the Fatih collection in what was close to its entirety. From this perspective, what we have discussed here should very much reflect the extent of this collection. At the moment, we cannot know for certain to what degree this sample is representative of the whole library, its origins and later distribution. In particular, the books that might possibly have stayed in Khorasan and other regions of Central Asia or even carried there from Anatolia by a man who always travelled with books, need to be identified if they exist. But, through the example of Muřannıfak, we can get an idea of the human agency which allowed books from Khorasan and Central Asia to turn up at the other end of the Islamicate world to blend into a new book culture.

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