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Keshif is a peer-reviewed electronic journal dedicated to collecting and editing small, fine texts and providing easy, free access to the material through a database with sound search functions.

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Preface

Dear readers, users, and friends of *Keshif*,
Sevgili Keshifçiler,

Keshif is entering its fourth year, and we are delighted to announce that, alongside the publication of *Keshif* 4/1 (Winter 2026), our database is now going live. We promised this in our first issue and—at long last—it's here. We're very pleased to present the first version of our database.

You can access it here: https://keshif-db.univie.ac.at/

This is an initial release, and it will surely have a few teething issues. If you have comments or suggestions for improvements, please don't hesitate to get in touch—ideally by email at aysu.akcan@univie.ac.at.

We thank our colleague Aysu Akcan for the dedication and enthusiasm she has brought to this project, and we look forward to your feedback!

Gisela Procházka-Eisl & Ercan Akyol

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Digital Edition and Database: Note on the *Keshif* Database

Aysu Akcan

This note outlines the editorial and encoding principles developed over the past year and used to produce the digital editions for the *Keshif* Database, which are based on micro editions published in *Keshif: E-Journal for Ottoman-Turkish Micro Editions*.The *Keshif* Database runs in a WordPress environment hosted by the University of Vienna and parses TEI P5–encoded XML files to generate predefined filters, allowing users to search and filter documents directly from the XML corpus.

The note is organized in three parts. The first part describes the <teiHeader>, which carries the bibliographic, institutional, and descriptive metadata for each file and generates the database's *Metadata* display. The second part describes the <body>, where the original text and its English translation are marked up with the entity and concept layers—persons, roles, dates, places, genre and format designations—that populate the remaining filters and make the corpus searchable. The third part, "A Note on the Note," addresses the status of the decisions recorded here and the wider set of questions they open for future work.

The <teiHeader>: Metadata

The <teiHeader> provides the basic metadata framework of each TEI XML file. It identifies the digital file, records its source, and defines the main descriptive categories used for database integration. Elements such as <fileDesc>, <encodingDesc> and <profileDesc> serve this function briefly by recording the digital title, editorial responsibility, and publication details of the file.

The main metadata work, however, is concentrated in the <sourceDesc> element located within <fileDesc>, particularly in the more specialized <msDesc> (manuscript description). In keeping with the TEI-Guidelines, this section records the manuscript or archival witness through elements such as <msIdentifier> and <msContents>. It provides the basis for metadata fields such as repository, identifiers, and source related

attribution. As the *Keshif* Database develops, this part of the header will be further regularized through a more systematic structure aligned with cataloguing practice.

A second key layer is <profileDesc>, particularly <langUsage> and <textClass>. Within <langUsage>, the languages represented in the file are declared explicitly, and the language of the original text is also tagged separately and displayed in the metadata. This is important because the corpus points not only to the Ottoman *elsine-i s̲elās̲e* framework, but also to a wider multilingual textual world that includes texts written entirely in Arabic or Persian, as well as materials in Chagatai, Hebrew, and other languages.

Within <textClass>, genre and format terms are distinguished from other descriptive keywords in order to support filtering in *Keshif*. This distinction will be examined in detail in the section below.

The <body>: Structure and Markup

Within the <body>, two elements are used. The first division, , contains the original text; the second, , contains the English translation. The *Persons, Roles, Dates, Places, Genre and Format*, and related filters in the database's left-hand menu are generated primarily from the content of .

The markup strategy prioritizes entity and concept layers that can be extracted consistently across heterogeneous materials. Persons are encoded with <persName>, offices and ranks with <roleName>, and honorifics, epithets, and other additional name components with <addName>. The distinction requires careful judgment. TEI defines <roleName> as a title or rank that exists, at least to some degree, independently of its bearer, while <addName> covers honorifics, epithets, aliases, and other descriptive elements within a personal name. The TEI-Guidelines also note that this boundary is not always clear and may require culture specific decisions. Terms such as *aġa, aʿyān, şeyḫ,* and *ʿālim* illustrate this difficulty. In Ottoman-Turkish, such elements may function either as <addName> or as <roleName>, depending on context, rather than denoting discrete offices in a fixed sense. In the *Keshif* Database, however,

they are encoded not only as <addName> but also, depending on context, as <roleName>. This does not resolve their broader semantic range but merely establishes a limited and consistent practice for the database. By contrast, terms such as *müderris, ḳāḍī, defterdār, kātib/kātip*, and *beg/beġ* are encoded as <roleName> when they clearly denote an office or rank identifiable beyond the individual bearer.

Dates are encoded only with <date>. Hijri dates are marked with @calendar="#hijri" and appear in the database with a green “h”, while Gregorian dates appear with a green “m”. Where only a Hijri date is preserved in the source, approximate Gregorian correspondences may be added later through @notBefore and @notAfter. These values indicate heuristic chronological placement, not exact conversion. This approach preserves the source form while improving searchability and comparison across the database.

The database heading *Places* serves as a deliberately broad category for geographic references. For this reason, <placeName> is used rather than TEI’s more specific place-name elements. This decision is both technical and methodological. In the TEI-Guidelines, <placeName> functions as the general element for a place name, whereas <settlement>, <region>, and <country> denote narrower categories. Because the corpus includes towns, cities, provinces, countries, and Ottoman territorial designations whose status does not always remain stable across texts, these finer distinctions are not imposed at the point of initial tagging. Instead, <placeName> is retained as a broad and consistent category, while @type is used to preserve historically specific designations such as *eyālet* or *ḳarye* where necessary. This does not reject finer differentiation in principle; rather, it defers it until a more robust typology can be developed within the database.

The *Genre and Format* filter, and the associated category in the database, draw on both the header metadata and the body text. The primary aim is to work from within each text rather than to impose a fixed external typology. Each Ottoman text carries its own structural and textual information, inseparable from its format. A *kitābe*, a *ġazel*, or a *mektūb* is not merely an instance of a genre. Each text actively produces its generic identity through formulaic openings, organizational conventions, and material layout.

In encoding these texts, it is therefore important not only to assign terminology from the outside but also to retain the terminological layers that the text itself produces in relation to its format.

This matters especially for early modern Ottoman texts, where genre boundaries are often fluid, where a single document may bear multiple overlapping textual identities, and where the vocabulary used to describe format is historically specific and analytically significant. Allowing each text to surface its own textual and structural format designations, rather than absorbing them into a predetermined classification, is an attempt to keep that historical specificity visible within the database.

To support this, body-level format information is encoded with the <term> element. Among its available attribute options, type="textGenre" is used exclusively. This is narrower than the full semantic range that @type could accommodate in principle, since the attribute may carry values such as type="register", type="topic", or type="domain", as well as project-specific categories. Retaining type="textGenre" nonetheless reflects both a conceptual and a practical consideration.

In the early modern Ottoman textual world, format and genre are often inseparable: arrangement, formulaic structure, and textual presentation frequently help constitute genre itself. For this reason, and to maintain a consistent degree of standardization across the corpus, body-level format designations are subsumed under the broader category of text genre. The aim is not to exhaust the classificatory potential of @type, but to use it selectively in support of a text-centered representation of early modern texts and their structural and textual properties.

Micro-editions frequently involve uncertain readings, variant spellings, and editorial normalization. TEI's editorial mechanisms are treated as core transcriptional infrastructure rather than optional annotation. Alternative editorial encodings are represented with <choice>, using <sic>/<corr> for apparent error and correction, and <orig>/<reg> for original and regularized forms. Where the text is only partly legible or cannot be transcribed with certainty, <unclear> is used; where no reading can be recovered, <gap> is used. Material supplied by the editor is marked with <supplied>, while additions, deletions, and substitutions in the source itself may be encoded with <add>,

<del>, and <subst> as needed. These practices preserve scholarly accountability while enabling stable indexing and cross-file comparison. As the project develops, additional encoding of this kind will be reflected in the database's left-hand menu.

A Note on the Note

Because the *Keshif* Database aims not to answer a single research question but to make micro-editions searchable and filterable according to a set of basic standards, it necessarily entails choices that are open to discussion. The fact that these micro-editions arrive in *Keshif* from highly varied sources and are then re-encoded for database use has raised numerous questions about preparing digital editions of Ottoman texts. Issues concerning encoding decisions, taxonomic choices, the limits of standardization, and the relationship between textual representation and scholarly accountability will be addressed in a more comprehensive study now in preparation, where matters left deliberately undiscussed in this note will be treated in fuller detail. The most important point to register here is that feedback from both article authors and users with expertise in Ottoman studies is essential to the development of this database. The *Keshif* Database is built in full awareness that its texts belong to a much larger textual field. The value of attending carefully to the formal properties of texts and—perhaps most importantly—of establishing shared tagging conventions and a common encoding language capable of representing those properties accurately is evident. It is a goal this project continues to pursue.

"We Look Forward to Welcoming You to the Iftar on Friday": An Ottoman-Era Invitation Letter

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Context[1]

The invitation letter for *iftar* presented below is found on folio 33b of the *mecmua* registered under number 135 in the Arslan Kaynardağ Collection of the Süleymaniye Library. The compilation encompasses poems, prose compositions, and glossarial entries written in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish, as well as various *fevāʾid* (short didactic notes) and exemplars of correspondence. The exact date of the mecmua remains unknown; however, the mention of the year 1248 (ca. 1833 CE) in one of the letter samples suggests that the volume was produced in the nineteenth century. This reference, nevertheless, does not allow for a precise determination of the date on which the invitation letter for iftar was written.

The manuscript does not specify when or by whom this invitation letter was written.[2] Although the absence of such contextual information limits the extent to which the text can shed light on its broader background, it nevertheless illuminates the role that written communication played in the routines of everyday life in Ottoman society. The letter further shows that Ramadan, beyond its religious significance, served as a catalyst for social interaction. This intensified social atmosphere during Ramadan also found reflection in Ottoman literature, most notably in the *Ramazaniyye* which contain themes related to the religious and social dimensions of Ramadan. In these poems, which grew increasingly popular from the eighteenth century onward, the cultural and folkloric aspects of the month were used alongside its religious features as literary material.[3]

The invitation letter is addressed to a certain Mehmed Efendi and asks him to visit the writer's home together with his son, Şakir Efendi. Nevertheless, the expression

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[1] I would like to sincerely thank Gisela Procházka-Eisl, Ercan Akyol, and Orhan Kılıçarslan for their kind support and helpful comments. I am also grateful to the anonymous reviewer for the constructive feedback.

[2] The *mecmua* contains six letters with similar handwriting; four are dated 1248 (ca. 1833 CE), and two are undated. This suggests that the invitation letter may have been written in the same year or in a closely related period. In addition, the name of Taşköprü (Kastamonu) appears in three of the letters. If the letters are assumed to have been written by the same person, they may be linked to someone living near Taşköprü around 1833.

[3] Mustafa İsmet Uzun, "Ramazâniyye," *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 34 (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 2007), 439.

"*Şākir Efendi oġlumuz ile maʿan*" (together with our son, Şakir Efendi) found in the text is open to more than one interpretation in its context. It is also possible that the author of the invitation letter sent his own son along with the intention of honoring or impressing the addressee. However, the use of the honorific "Efendi" with the personal name, together with the expression "*oġlumuz*" (our son), suggests that the phrase functions as a form of address intended to honor the addressee's son and to establish a sense of close and cordial relations. Indeed, in social usage, expressions such as "efendi oğlumuz" (our esteemed son) and "hanım kızımız" (our esteemed daughter) are employed as inclusive and relational forms of address that convey both respect and warmth in communication with the addressee and his family. For these reasons, the individual in question is interpreted as the son of the invited person. Nevertheless, the possibility that the phrase refers to the author's own son is retained as a cautious alternative.

Considering the possibility that other members of the family may have been alive at the time, it is noteworthy that the invitation did not encompass the household. Whether all family members usually joined such visits within the neighborhood or the city is a question that may be clarified through the examination of other iftar or dinner invitations that may surface in future studies.

In Ottoman studies, scholarly interest in the everyday lives of ordinary people has grown in recent years.[4] Eating and drinking practices, along with friendly social gatherings, constituted a significant component of daily life.[5] The delivery of the iftar invitation in written form, and its expression in an ornate style, suggest that both the sender and the recipient belonged to families with an established culture of literacy and adherence to social customs. The stylistic features of the invitation align closely with conventions commonly observed in Ottoman letter writing. Typically, Ottoman letters begin with honorific phrases and greetings adjusted to the recipient's social position and to the nature of the relationship between the parties. These are followed

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4 Ulrike Freitag and Nora Lafi, "Daily Life and Family in an Ottoman Urban Context: Historiographical Stakes and New Research Perspectives" *History of the Family*, 16 no: 2 (2011): 83.

5 Suraiya Faroqhi, *Osmanlı Kültürü ve Gündelik Yaşam* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 2005), 4.

by transitional expressions that lead into the statement of the letter's purpose, and the text concludes with an appropriate closing formula. [6]

Transcription

Daʿvet içün

Pesendīde aḫlāḳ ile meşhūr-ı āfāḳ olan maʿārif kānı ser-tācum ḳarındaş-ı eʿazz u ekremüm Meḥmed Beg efendüm sulṭānum ḥażretleri hemvāren vaḳt-i şerīfiñüz saʿīd ve ʿömr-i devletiñüz mezīd olub nice sāl emṣāl-i keṣīresiyle müşerref olmaları daʿvātıyla baʿde's-selām inhā-yı muḥibbāne-i vefādārīleridür ki inşāʾallāhu teʿālā cumʿa gicesi ḳadem rencīde ḳılub Şākir Efendi oġlumuz ile maʿan bizüm ḫāneye ifṭāra teşrīf buyurmalaruñuz içün maḫṣūṣ tezkere-i maḥabbet taḥrīrine yārī ḳılındı maʿlūm-ı mürüvvetleri [ola] bi-eyyi ḥālin teşrīfiñüze muntaẓırım ve ġāyet memnūn olurum sulṭānum

Translation

For the invitation

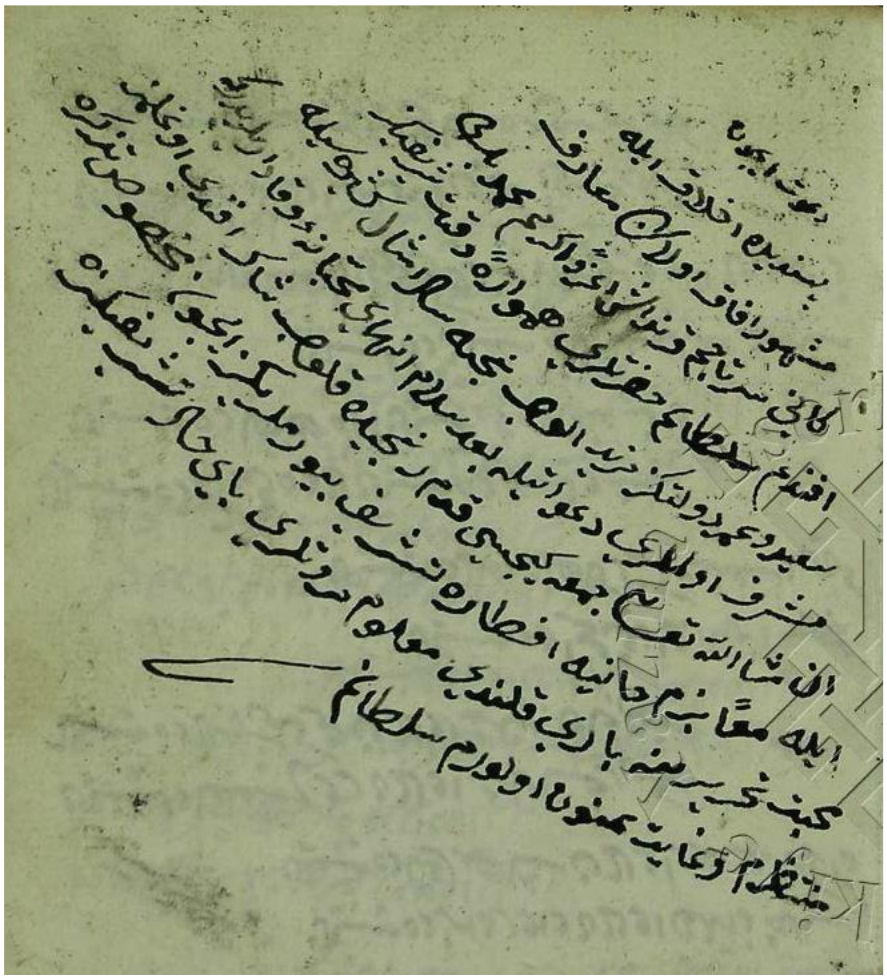
My exalted sire Mehmed Efendi—my esteemed and generous brother, the source of knowledge whom I hold in the highest regard [like a crown on my head], whose distinguished virtue and [far-reaching] renown extend beyond all horizons—may your precious hours always be blessed, and may your blissful life be augmented. After offering my salutations together with prayers that you may be honored with many more years adorned by many similar blessings, it is hereby submitted with the loyalty of friendship that this special letter of friendship has been written in the hope that, God willing, you would graciously deign to [molest your feet and] come to our home for the iftar on Friday night together with our son, Şakir Efendi. May your gracious

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6 İbrahim Çetin Derdiyok, "Osmanlı Devrinde Mektup Yazma Geleneği," in *Osmanlı*, ed. Güler Eren (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 1999), 735.

kindness know this. In any case, I am awaiting your gracious visit and would be most delighted, my sire.

Facsimile



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Curative Travel during the Great War: An Ottoman Woman's Notes from the Lahmann Sanatorium (1918)

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Context

The following excerpt is from the travel diary of Emine Hanım,[1] written between the years 1916 and 1919, hence, during the First World War. The diary is titled "Avrupa Seyahati Hatırası," ("European Travel Memoirs") and features various locations across Europe to which Emine Hanım traveled during these years due to her husband Miralay Celal Bey's diplomatic mission. The diary was undiscovered until I chanced upon it at the Bahtiyar Sahaf in Kadıköy, Istanbul, in the summer of 2022. I hope to make it available through publication in the coming years.

Emine Hanım's travel diary is written in a small notebook (11.0 x 13.5 cm) with a light brown cover and contains forty leaves (eighty pages). Some of the leaves have been torn out, and the last page bears scribblings made with a colored pencil, likely by a child. However, these affect only a few pages towards the end, and the rest of the diary has fortunately remained intact despite the century that has passed since its completion. The text is written in tiny, elaborate *rika* script and contains five carefully drawn maps depicting train and ship routes in Europe. Four of these maps show the wartime train routes that Emine Hanım and her family used, while one (from May 1919) depicts the return trip by ship from northern Germany to Istanbul. [2] The fact that some of these maps show very long-drawn-out routes testifies to the hardships of wartime travel, even for diplomatic personnel.

Although there is still research to be done on her family history, we learn from the diary that Emine Hanım's paternal grandfather was Süleyman Paşa who bought the Sabuncakis Kiosk in Büyükada before or around the year 1918, before its transfer to the public treasury in 1924. Her father was Mirliva Ali Rıza Paşa, who served as the commander of the Fifteenth Corps during the First World War.[3] She was married to

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1 What surname the author Emine Hanım acquired after the Surname Law in 1934, or whether she lived up to that date, requires further research.

2 Map 1 (p. 1): Istanbul – Bucharest, Map 2 (p. 13): Bucharest to Berlin (not through Austria-Hungary, but via Russia, Finland and the Baltic Sea), Map 3 (p. 30): Berlin - The Hague, Map 4 (p. 46): Istanbul – Berlin, Map 5 (p. 64): sea voyage from Hamburg to Istanbul, via the Nordic Sea, the Atlantic Ocean, and the Mediterranean.

3 Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi, Irade Dosya Usulü (İ..DUİT), 178/74 (27 ZA. 1339 [2 August 1921]).

Miralay Celal Bey, who appears to have graduated from the Military Academy (*Mekteb-i Harbiye*) in the year 1304/1886.[4] At the time when the diary was written, Celal Bey was appointed as military attaché, first to Bucharest[5] and then to The Hague in the Netherlands.[6] They traveled as a family, bringing along their little daughter Semiha and two maids named Nazlı and Çelebi.

The diary's content is varied and historically interesting, since one can find ample material on everyday life in wartime Europe: anecdotes involving Ottoman and foreign statesmen, lists of people joining lunch/dinner or afternoon tea gatherings, the daily life of a diplomat's family, price lists for food, and even conversion rates between different European currencies. Besides all this, the diary shows us the ways in which Emine Hanım saw and experienced the politically unstable climate of a world war along with the novelty of traveling to diverse European cities. In the course of these three years, Emine Hanım stayed in Bucharest, The Hague, Dresden, and Berlin for extended periods of time (including a one-year stay back home in Istanbul). During these stays, Emine Hanım and her family were often able to travel to other nearby cities to visit important cultural landmarks and, equally importantly, to visit other Ottoman and foreign diplomats and their families.

The excerpt that I would like to present here belongs to the Dresden episode of the diary's narrative, which stands out as a unique interlude. Unlike her time in other European cities; Emine Hanım's stay in Dresden was unrelated to Celal Bey's diplomatic duties. Rather, it was an instance of wartime curative travel.[7] According to the diary, Emine Hanım was diagnosed with a kind of nervous illness (*bir nevʿi sinir ḫāstalığı*) towards the end of her one-year stay in Istanbul (May 1917 – May 1918). Her entries in this one-year period are only sporadic, since she most probably intended to

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4 "304 senesi Mekteb-i Harbiye mezunlarının Dersaadet'te bulunanlarından müteşekkil grup", Salt Araştırma, https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/21682 Last accessed: 21 July 2025.

5 Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi, Hariciye Nezareti Sofya Sefareti (HR.SFR.04), 646/126 (26 January 1916), 652/89 (12 May 1916), 656/43 (27 August 1916).

6 Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi, Hariciye Nezareti İdare (HR.İD.), 75/34 (25 September 1917).

7 For more on this term, see Marion Stamatu, "Curative travel,"in K. Leven and N. Metzger (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Medicine in the Greco-Roman World Online*, eds. Karl-Heinz Leven and Nadine Metzger (Brill, 2024). doi: https://doi.org/10.1163/2950-466X_EMGO_SIM_023639

use the diary to note down travel occasions. However, she does inform us of some of the important events in her life that might have led to a nervous illness, such as the passing away of her mother in July 1917 and the passing away of her aunt in May 2018. She adds the fact that her children went away, which made her feel lonely and added to the condition (*ço-cuḳlarıñ gitmesi binā'en 'aleyh yalñız ḳalmaḳlıġım*).

Emine Hanım informs us that following this diagnosis, the family doctor Dr. Petraki prescribed her a "change of air," (*tebdīl-i hevā*) preferably somewhere away from her homeland.[8] Asking around about possible health resorts, Emine Hanım and Celal Bey were recommended the Lahmann Sanatorium at Weisser Hirsch, near Dresden.[9] Not so long afterwards, the family completed the necessary visa procedures and eventually traveled to Germany in September 1918. The sanatorium was located in a village named Weisser Hirsch, or "White Stag," as Emine Hanım nicely translates it in the diary. The patients had to follow a rigid daily schedule consisting of morning gymnastics in the open air, various baths (including mud baths), and a nutritive diet. I am including her descriptions of the sanatorium complex, as well as of the meal plans. At another point in the diary, Emine Hanım avows her distaste for German food, saying "the food here tastes lame, as in all of Germany." (*yemekleri tekmīl Almanya'da olduġı gibi yavan.*)

On the whole, Emine Hanım's heretofore undiscovered travel diary can be taken as a rare example of Ottoman women's travel writing. Another example of this kind, almost contemporary to Emine Hanım's but much better known in literature, is Zeynep Hanım's *A Turkish Woman's European Impressions* (1913) which she wrote in the form of letters to British journalist Grace Ellison.[10] The intended audience of Emine

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8 Doktor Petraki, at the time Director of Public Health at the Istanbul Municipality (*şehremāneti sıḥḥiye müdīri*). Recipient of an order of Osmaniye in 1920. Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi, İrade Dosya Usulü (I.DUIT), 63/51 (27 R. 1340 [28 December 1921]).

9 Lahmann-Sanatorium, established in 1888 by Dr. Heinrich Lahmann (1860-1905). The sanatorium expanded rapidly in the decades following its inception: by 1900, it was hosting 2000 patients, and by 1921, the number had risen to 5000. It hosted celebrities such as the poet Rainer Maria Rilke (1901) and novelist Franz Kafka (1903). See Friedhelm Kirchfeld and Wade Boyle, *Nature Doctors: pioneers of naturopathic medicine* (Portland, Oregon, 1994), 148.

10 Zeyneb Hanoum, *A Turkish Woman's European Impressions,* ed. Grace Ellison (Cambridge University Press, 2013).

Hanım's diary, on the other hand, was likely exclusively herself, and this brings a more personal and transparent tone to her writing. Through these examples of travel writing by women such as Emine Hanım and Zeynep Hanım, we get to hear late Ottoman women's voices not only with regard to their local environments, but also in their subjectivity as observers of "the other," i.e. foreign cultures and cities. The serendipitous discovery of Emine Hanım's *European Travel Memoirs* suggests that there might be other first-hand travel accounts by Ottoman women from this period that have yet to see the light of day.

Transcription

9 [*Eylül 1918*]

Esāsen İsṭanbuldan ḥareketimizde (*Dresden*)*de Vayserhirş sanatoryumunı tavṣiyye // itmişlerdi biz de oraya gitmege niyyet itmişdik. Ve Berlin'de oṭurduġımuz müddetce muḫābere iderek //* Prospektus*ını aldıḳ. Dresdene ḥareket itdik aḳşamleyin Vayserhirş //sanatoryumına vāṣıl olduḳ. Dresden* (*Elbe*) *nehri kenārındadır. Vayserhirş* (*Beyāż geyik*) *// köyi mürtefaʿ bir sırṭ üzerindedir. Elektriḳ tramvay ile şehre merbūṭdur. Tramvayla yarım // sāʿat sürer. Vayserhirş ḥaḳīḳaten cennet-āsā bir maḥaldir. Ormanları güzel // villāları cāmiʿdir. Bu sanatoryum bir merkez ḫāstaḫānesi ve sanatoryuma muḳteżā // tedāvīḫāneleri ve müteʿaddid villāları ḥāvīdir. Bize* Zu Linden *villasında bir //oṭa virmişlerdi. Villa iyi olmadıġı gibi soġuḳca olduġından şikāyetimüz üzerine // Dora villasına*[11] *naḳl eyledik. Tamāmıyla ārzū itdiġimüz gibi bir köşk.*

22 [*Eylül 1918*]

Vulf Hüġel (= Wolf Hügel = *Ḳurt Tepesi*) *sanatoryum civārında ormanlar // içinde ve ġāyet mürtefaʿ maḥalde bir ḳale. Neẓāret-i fevḳa'l-ʿādesi var. Dresden şehrinden* (*Elbe*) *nehri geçiyor // o vādī kāmilen görüliyor. Biraz eglendik ve ʿavdet itdik. // Pansiyonda ber vech-i ātī yimek viriliyordı. // Ṣabāḥleyin 7,5 da süd reçel tereyaġı etmek* (*bu ṣoñrakiler pek az miḳdārda*) *// 10da etmege sürülmüş yoġurtumsı bir şey, ve yemiş*

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[11] Villa Dora, built in 1899-1900, by Reichpietsch. Now located on Lahmannring 15, 01324 Dresden, Germany. See Elizabeth Boer, *Chronik des Kurorts Weisser Hirsch Dresden* (Dresden, 1932), 62f.

// 1de ögle yimegi bir çorba (*baʿżen et*) *sebze ṣalaṭa muḥaḳḳaḳ bir yemiş // 4te südli ḳahve etmek // 7de aḳṣam yimegi sebze patates yemiş // Bir ögle yimegi listesi*

lunch menu in German, cut and pasted on the page:

Kürbissuppe, Wiegebraten, Bohnen, Kartoffeln, Salat, Obst

Yevmiyye yimekler ve tedāvī (iḳāmet ḫāric) ādem başına 28 marḳ. // Köşkde büyük bir oṭa içün yevmiyye 8 marḳ viriyorduḳ. // Ḫiḍmetci oṭası içün yevmiyye 4 marḳ. // Semīḥa içün 2 marḳ fażla viriyorduḳ.

Translation

9 [September 1918]

We had heard good things about the Weißer Hirsch Sanatorium in Dresden, so we were already minded to go there when we left Istanbul. While in Berlin, we obtained [the sanatorium's] *Prospectus* through correspondence.

We then traveled to Dresden, and arrived at the sanatorium at Weißer Hirsch in the evening. Dresden is located along the River Elbe. The village named Weißer Hirsch (White Stag) is on a high mountain ridge, and it is connected to the city via electric trams. It takes half an hour by tram. Weißer Hirsch is truly a heavenly place, where one finds beautiful villas built in(side) a forest. The sanatorium complex includes a central hospital with auxiliary therapeutic units and numerous residential villas. We were given a room in the villa *Zu Linden*. It wasn't a good one though, and was too cold. Upon our complaint, we moved to villa Dora. This villa was exactly as we wanted.

22 [September 1918]

The Wolf Hügel [sic] = the Wolf's Hill,[12] is in the vicinity of the sanatorium, deep within the forest and [there is] a castle in a very elevated location. It possesses

[12] The hill is known as the Wolfshügel and the tower on the hill is called the Wolfshügelturm. For brief historical information on the tower, see "Wolfshügel im Albertpark – Geschichte und Erreichbarkeit," *Wolfshügelturm.de,* https://wolfshuegelturm.de/wolfshuegel.php. According to the website, the Wolfshügel Tower was built in 1911 as an observation tower designed by Hans Erlwein, and was erected on the Wolfshügel (Wolf's Hill) in Albertpark, Dresden. The website confirms Emine Hanım's remark on "extraordinary views," writing "[t]he tower offered an outstanding view of Dresden." (*Der Turm bot eine hervorragende Aussicht auf Dresden.)* The tower was blown up on May 8, 1945, and only the base remains today.

extraordinary views. The river Elbe flows through the city of Dresden; that valley is visible in its entirety. We enjoyed ourselves [there] for a while and returned.

The sanatorium provided the following meal plan:

At 7:30 in the morning: milk, jam, bread and butter (the latter two in little amounts)

At 10: a yoghurt-like spread on a slice of bread and fruit

At 1: lunch consisting of soup (and sometimes a meat dish), vegetables, salad, and always some fruit

At 4: coffee with milk, bread

At 7 in the evening: vegetables, potatoes, fruit

A lunch menu [lunch menu in German, cut and pasted on the page]

Pumpkin soup, Meatballs, Beans, Potatoes, Salad, Fruits

Daily meals and treatment (excluding accommodation) cost 28 marks per person. We were paying 8 marks per day for a large room in the villa. For the servant's room, the daily rate was 4 marks. We were paying 2 marks extra for Semiha.

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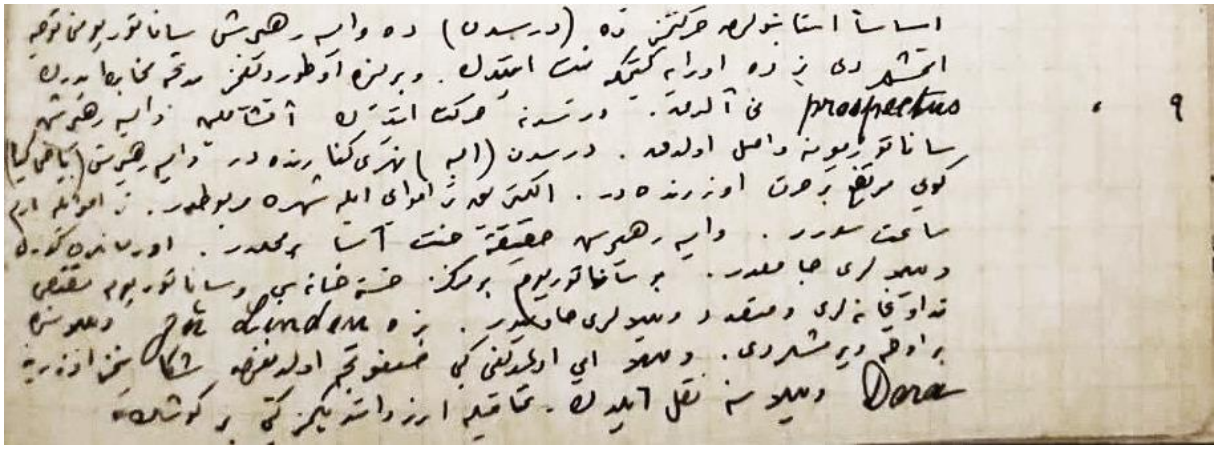
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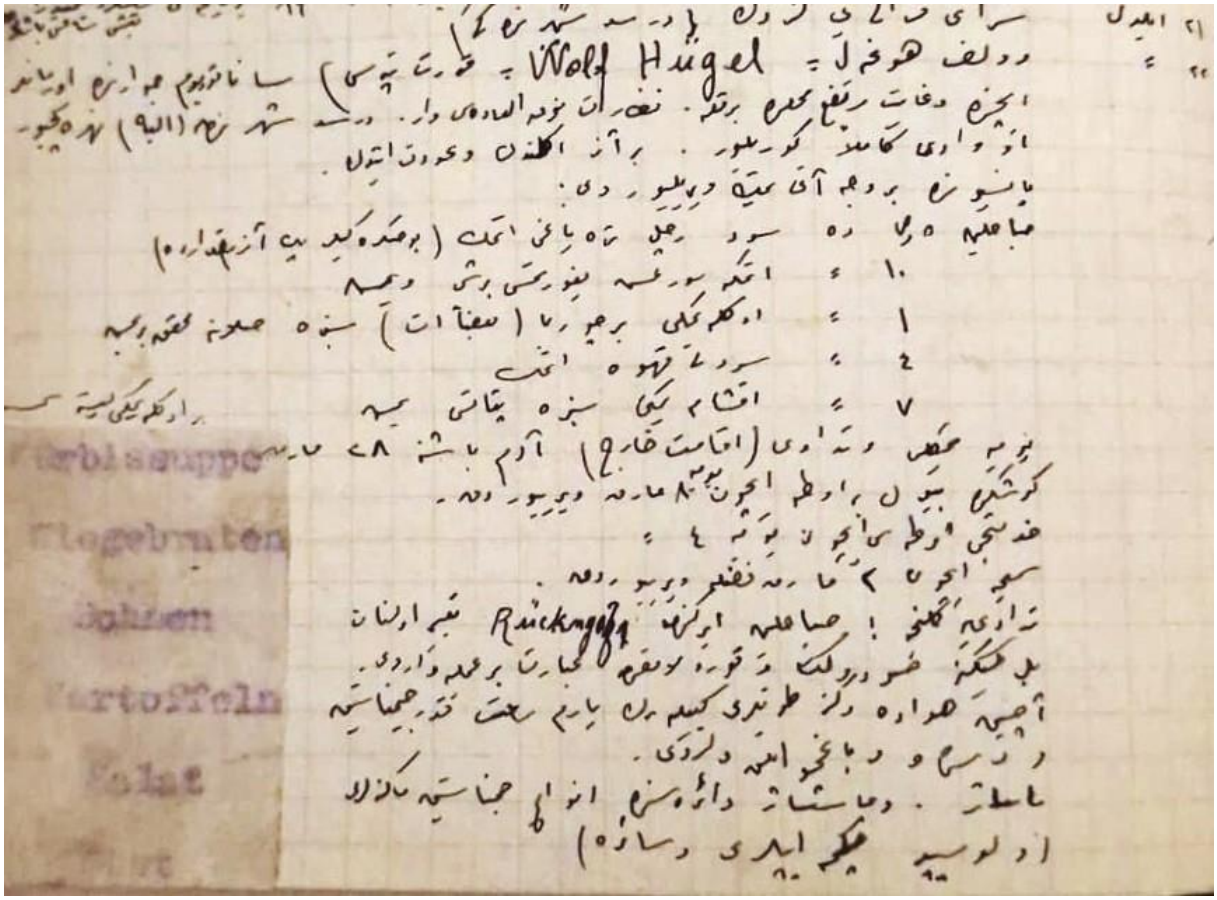
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Facsimile 1



Facsimile 2


Wolf Hügel
Rückgang
Verbl.suppe
Fliegebrnten
Bohnen
Kartoffeln
Polat

Who were the Yahūd Evlād-ı ʿArab in Late Ottoman Palestine?

Yuval Ben-Bassat & Johann Buessow

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Context

In June 1914, an unknown scribe compiling a military conscription register listed a group of male Jewish residents of Tiberias under the heading of *Yahūd evlād-ı ʿArab ṭaʾifesi*, literally "Jewish sons of the Arabs" or "Jewish children of the Arabs." The entry was validated with the signet stamp of Yaakov Neḥmad (Yaʿqūb Naḥmād), who identified himself as *muḫtār-i evvel*, the head of a local community bearing the same designation.[1] *Yahūd evlād-ı ʿArab* as an official community label is both unusual and ambiguous. In administrative Ottoman Turkish, *evlād* often denotes origin, affiliation, or descent rather than strict genealogy. In contrast, "Arab" can refer to Arab ethnicity, Arabic-speaking identity, or "native" as opposed to "foreign," depending on the context.

From roughly the 8th to the 12th centuries, a large proportion, if not most, of the world's Jews lived under Islamic rule in Arabic-speaking regions such as Iraq, the Levant, Egypt, North Africa, and al-Andalus, where major Jewish intellectual centers operated predominantly in Arabic. Before the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, up to 850,000 Jews lived in the Arab Middle East and North Africa. Due to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, *Arab Jew* has become a controversial term in international debates since the mid-20th century. A hyphenated form, *Arab-Jew*, entered public and scholarly discourse largely through interventions by intellectuals such as Albert Memmi and Ella Shohat,[2] who used the expression to articulate the hybrid identity of Jews from Arab-majority societies.

Salim Tamari and Menachem Klein discussed this concept in the context of late Ottoman Palestine and showed how certain Jewish communities were socially, linguistically, and culturally embedded within broader Arab environments. This local embeddedness was reflected in everyday language and often contrasted with Jews of other origins, particularly the growing numbers of religious or Zionist immigrants from Europe. They noted two Arabic terms used for this population in the decade before

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1 ISA, Nüfūs 362, pp. 21-30 (finalized on 16 Ḥazīrān 1330 [June 29, 1914]).

2 Albert Memmi, *Jews and Arabs* (Chicago: J. P. O'Hara, 1975); Ella Shohat, *On the Arab-Jews, Palestine and Other Displacements: Selected Writings* (London: Pluto Press, 2017).

WWI: *Yahūd awlād ʿArab* ("Jews of Arab descent") and *abnāʾ al-balad* ("local Jews").[3] Yaron Ayalon mentions a similar term, the Arabized Jews, *mustaʿribūn*, in the Ottoman Empire.[4] They often had strained relations with the Sephardic Jewish community in the Empire, which in Ottoman eyes represented the Jewish community and hence was an officially recognized *millet*. At times, in some cities across the Empire, they cooperated and Arab Jews tended to accept Sephardic dominancy. Most evidence in Ottoman census sources suggests that the government generally avoided such intricacies and instead relied on broad religious labels such as "Jewish," "Sephardic," or "Ashkenazi," in keeping with the logic of *millet*-centered administration and the broader pragmatic rationale of "Ottoman corporatism."[5] Nevertheless the appearance of *Yahūd evlād-ı ʿArab* in the Ottoman census of Tiberias indicates that more nuanced conceptualizations could surface in the interaction between Ottoman officials and local residents. It remains unclear whether the registration of Jewish groups was identical across population registers during the late Ottoman period in Palestine or varied from place to place. Was the label *evlād-ı ʿArab* an early Ottoman rendering of what was later known as "Arab Jews (Heb. *Yehūdīm ʿAravīm*)" or "Oriental Jews (*Yehūdīm Mizraḥīm*)" in Israeli society? While these and related questions still await fuller study, this short article offers an initial glimpse into these issues.

The Tiberias Conscription Register

There are hundreds of Ottoman population registers (*Nüfūs defterleri*) preserved in the Israel State Archives (ISA) in Jerusalem that are available for online research today.[6] These registers cover military conscription, *muḫtār* books, marriages, and foreigners,

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3 Salim Tamari, *Mountain against the Sea: Essays on Palestinian Society and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), p. 164; Menachem Klein, "Arab Jew in Palestine," *Israel Studies* 19/3 (2021), pp. 135, 142.

4 Yaron Ayalon, *Ottoman Jewry: Leadership, Charity, and Literacy* (Leiden: Brill, 2025).

5 Johann Buessow and Astrid Meier, "Ottoman Corporatism, Eighteenth to Twentieth Centuries: Beyond the State-Society Paradigm in Middle Eastern History," in Shirin Amir-Moazami et al (eds.), *Ways of Knowing Muslim Cultures and Societies* (Boston: Brill, 2019), pp. 81-110.

6 https://search.archives.gov.il/search/ob0717068a73b725; for more about the Nüfūs collection in Jerusalem, see Jonathan Pagis, *Ottoman Population Censuses in Palestine, 1875-1918* (Jerusalem: Israel State Archives, 1997) [in Hebrew].

but most are provisional registers (*müsvedde defterleri*) and basic books (*esās defterleri*) from the 1905 census, the last general Ottoman census in Palestine. Nüfūs 362 includes information about males of conscription age in the city of Tiberias and its district from 1914, an area in northern Palestine which at the time was part of the Province of Beirut. This book provides data about Muslims, three different Christian denominations, and Jews.

The Jews of Tiberias are listed under two headings: the *Yahūdī Şkenāzī ṭāʾifesi* ("Ashkenazi Jewish community") and the exceptionally rare category *Yahūd evlād-ı ʿArab ṭāʾifesi* ("Jewish community of Arab descent") that does not appear in other registers studied to date. By contrast, the Jewish population residing in the Jewish colonies in the subdistrict of Tiberias is simply labelled "Jewish (*Yahūd*)" with no further specification of origin. The designation *Yahūd evlād-ı ʿArab* may signal an intention to distinguish these Jews from the Ashkenazim of Tiberias and from the Jewish colonists in the region, who were thus implicitly classified as "non-Arab" Jews, regardless of their linguistic abilities or cultural identity.

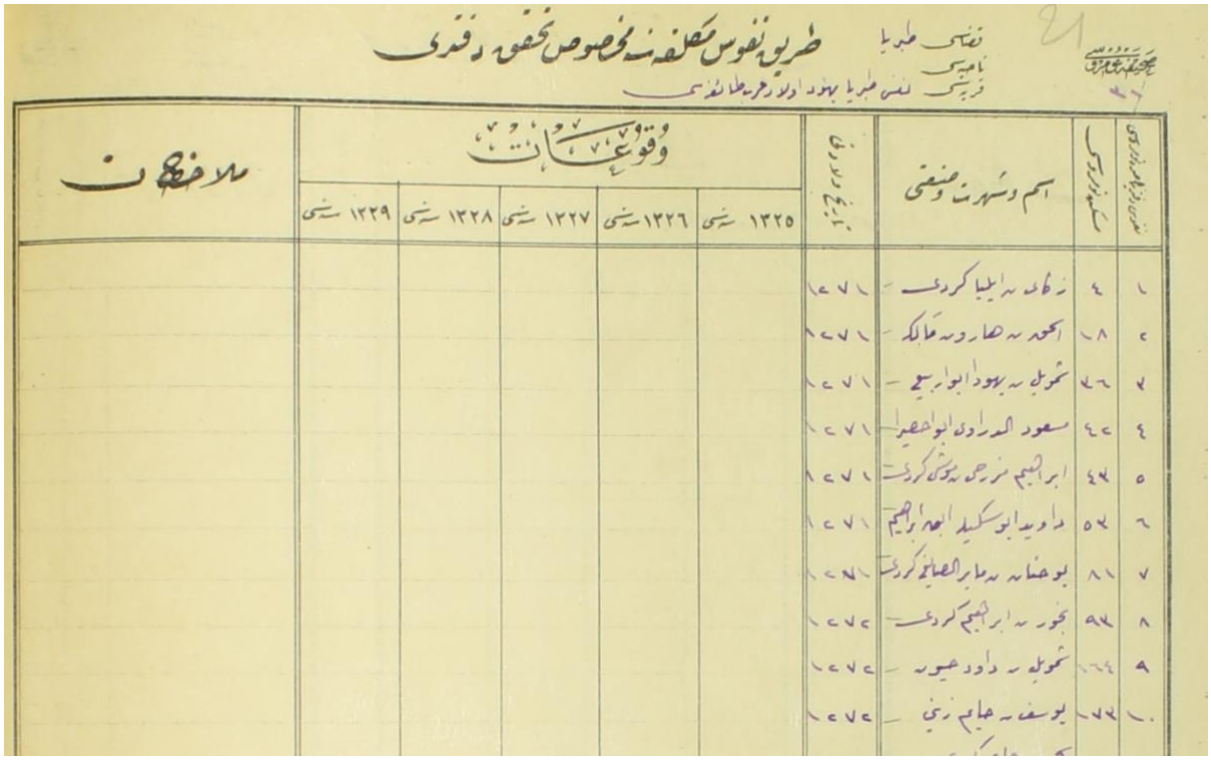
In total, 300 people are listed as *Yahūd evlād-ı ʿArab* in the city of Tiberias. Unlike in the Basic Books (*esās defterleri*) of the Ottoman census, birthplaces are not indicated, but the last names suggest that these individuals came from the Maghreb (Abū Ḥaṣīra [Abu-Hatsera], Abū l-Ṭubūl [Abutbul], Shiṭrīt, Dahān, Bīṭōn, and Biṭān) or from the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire (ʿAbādī, Mūṣlī/Mawṣilī, Ūrfalī, al-Najār, and Kurdī) (Figure 1). The unusual organization of the Tiberias census register raises broader questions about how the Ottoman authorities perceived Palestine's Jewish population (the Yishūv) at the time and how they defined subgroups within it, especially in the 1905 census, but also in other registers.

Transcription / Translation

This is the Translation of the first 10 names labelled *Yahūd Evlād-ı ʿArab* in *Nüfūs* 362 out of 300 names in total in this category (p. 28, the City of Tiberias).

Number	Number of Household members	Name	Year of Birth
1	4	Zakāʾi Ben Īlyā Kurdī	1271 [1855]
2	18	Isḥāḳ Ben Hārūn Mālka	1271
3	36	Ṣemūʾel b. Yehūdā Abū Rabīʿa	1271
4	42	Masʿūd al-Darāwī Abū Ḥaṣīrā	1271
5	43	Ibrāhīm Mizraḥī Ben Mūsa Kurdī	1271
6	53	Dāwūd Abū Skīla b. Ibrāhīm	1271
7	81	Yōḥanān Ben Māʾīr al-Ṣāliḥ Kurdī	1271
8	93	Beḫōr Ben Ibrāhīm Kurdī	1272 [1856]
9	164	Ṣemūʾel b. Dāwūd Ḥayūn	1272
10	173	Yūsuf b. Ḥayyīm Zīnī	1272

Facsimile



The Registration of Jews in the Late Ottoman Census

Of the hundreds of Ottoman registers preserved in the ISA, a few dozen deal fully or partly with Palestine's Jewish population. These include long-established centers such

as Jerusalem, Hebron, and Tiberias, three of the four cities considered holy by Jews in Palestine, as well as newer hubs like Haifa and Jaffa, cities with minimal Jewish presence such as Gaza, and the colonies founded after 1882. From the 15th century onward, the Ottoman Empire recognized only a single Jewish *millet*, headed by a Sephardic chief rabbi, as the official representative body for all Jews. In the 19th century, however, the Empire gradually acknowledged new *millet*s. Thus, the 1905 Ottoman census in Palestine, along with other late Ottoman registers, often subdivided Jews by geographic origin, language, and culture through labels such as Ashkenazim,[7] Yemenites,[8] Maghrebis,[9] Bukharis,[10] Georgians,[11] and Karaites (Figure 2).[12]

Despite their official status as a recognized *millet*, Sephardic Jews are often referred to as being "from the Jewish [*Mūsevī*, 'Mosaic'] community [*ṭāʾife*]"[13] rather than specifically designated as Sephardic Jews ("*Mūsevī Sefaradīm*").[14] In keeping with the corporatist logic of Ottoman administration, the authorities upheld the principle of a single Jewish *millet* (*millet-i Yahūd*) headed by a chief rabbi (*hahambaşı*). In practice, however, faced with the diverse communal and linguistic groups in Palestine, they appear to have granted some of these groups a limited, quasi-corporate status at the local level. It does not appear that there were official directives on ways to designate different groups, so that local clerks had a certain amount of latitude. For example, Nüfūs 39, a basic registration book dealing with the Jewish population of Jerusalem between 1915 and 1917 divides the Jewish population into numerous subgroups including Sephardim, Maghrebis, Georgians, and Bukharis. Other Jerusalem registers from that period are restricted to the Ashkenazi population.[15] In Nüfūs 64, for example, they are interchangeably called "Jewish ('Mosaic') [community], Ashkenazi

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7 *Ibid*.
8 ISA, Nüfūs 74, basic registration, Jews in the District of Jerusalem, 1905-1917.
9 ISA, Nüfūs 65/1, Maghrebi Jews in Jerusalem, *muḫtār* book.
10 ISA, Nüfūs 39, basic registration, Jews in the City of Jerusalem, 1915-1917.
11 *Ibid*.
12 ISA, Nüfūs 48, provisional book, Sephardim in Jerusalem, 1905-1911.
13 ISA, Nüfūs 74.
14 ISA, Nüfūs 39.
15 ISA, Nüfūs 58, provisional book, Ashkenazim in Jerusalem, 1905-1911.

[section] (*Mūsevī Ṣkenāz*)," or simply *Ṣkenāz*.[16] Nüfūs 362 discussed above divides Tiberias' Jewish population into Ashkenazi Jews and *Yahūd evlād-ı ʿArab*, even though the last names suggest that further subdivisions might have been applicable and that heterogenous groups were involved (for instance Maghrebis).

Even within the same register, some groups are referred to in different ways. The geographic and Ottoman administrative divisions in the region may have led to differences, when relevant teams of officials and scribes did not use the same definitions. For example, Nüfūs 48, a provisional book dealing with the Sephardic community in Jerusalem between 1905 and 1911 uses Sephardim (*Sefaradīm*), Jewish Sephardim (*Yahūd Sefaradīm*), Sephardim of the Mosaic faith (*Mūsevī Sefaradīm* / *Sefaradīm Mūsevī*), or simply Jews (*Yahūd*). Karaites (*Mūsevī Ḳarāʾīn*, *Ḳarāʾīn Mūsevī*) are also designated separately in this register. More than one official may have conducted the survey for this specific register. All relied heavily on the *muḫtār*s and other local informants, which would account for the different terms. Alternatively, the same official may have used alternative terms, suggesting that the terms themselves were open to interpretation, thus reflecting the fluidity and liminality in their everyday usage.

Many Jews in the colonies founded after 1882 retained their previous nationalities until WWI, when Entente nationals were expelled. Some gradually accepted Ottoman citizenship, while others who had migrated within the Empire or already lived in Ottoman Palestine were Ottoman subjects. In most registers, however, they are simply listed as *Yahūd* or *Mūsevī*.[17]

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[16] ISA, Nüfūs 64, basic register, Jewish community of Jerusalem, 1905-1917.

[17] Nüfūs 379, Foreign Book, the city of Haifa and its district, 1901-1917; Nüfūs 391, Basic Register, the district of Haifa,1911-1916.

Transcription/ Translation

Six Examples of Variations in *Nüfūs* Designations

	Document	***Nüfūs* Number**	**Page**	**City and Neighborhood**	**House Number**	**Name**	**Occupation**	**Father's Name**
1	Basic Register (*esās defterlerī*)	39	7	Ḳudüs [Jerusalem], Wād *maḥallesi* [neighborhood of al-Wad]	21	Maryam		ʿAṭiyya
2	Basic Register	39	9	Jerusalem, Wād *maḥallesi*	1	Māʾīr Menāshrūf	*ḫaḫām* (rabbi)	Mūsā
3	Basic Register	39	9	Jerusalem, Wād *maḥallesi*	3	Isḥāḳ al-Yafūlā		Dāwūd
4	Basic Register	39	79	Jerusalem, Yahūdīya *maḥallesi* [Yahūdīya neighborhood]	3	Rufāʾīl		Isḥāḳ Ṣāydōf
5	Basic Register	48	65	Jerusalem, Ḳarāʾīn [Karaite Neighborhood]	304/5	Yāfit al-Ḳarā	*ṣınāʿatı yoḳdur, Arabça söyler* (no occupation, speaks Arabic)	Mūsa Lēvī al-Ḳarā, *müteveffā* (died)
6	Basic Register	8	69	Jerusalem, Waqf	224/3	Isḥāḳ Lēvī	*ṣınāʿatı yoḳdur, Arabça söyler, İbranice oḳur yazar* (no occupation, speaks Arabic, reads and writes Hebrew)	Saʿīd Ḥasan Yamanī *müteveffā* (died)

Continued

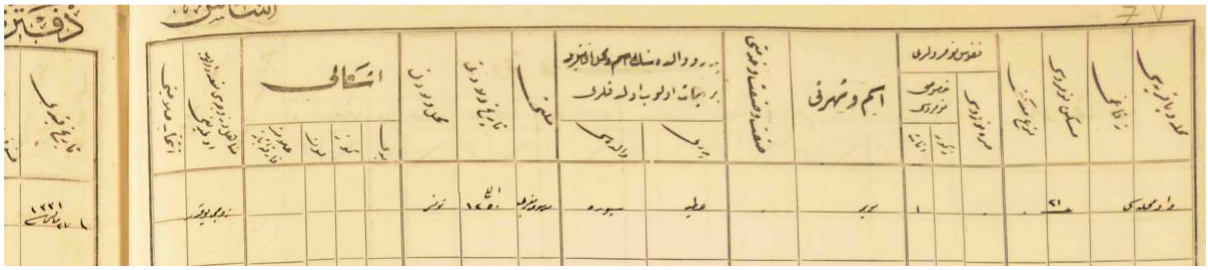
	Mother's Name	**Religion**	**Date of Birth**	**Place of Birth**	**Height**	**Eye Color**	**Skin Color**	**Prominent Marks**	**Married and whether to One Wife**
1	Sibōra	Mūsevī Maghribī	1250	Tūnus (Tunis)					*Zevcesi yoḳdur* (single)
2	Sāra	Mūsevī Sefaradīm	1259	Rūsya (Russia)	Tall (*uzun*)	Hazel (*ela*)	Darkish (*buġday*)	Healthy (*tām*)	*yoḳdur* (single)
3	Ḫana	Mūsevī Korjī (Gorji)	1258	Rūsya	Average (*orta*)	Hazel	Darkish	Healthy	zevces*i vardır* (married)
4	Līna	Mūsevī Buḫārālī	1280	Bukhārā	Average	Hazel	Darkish		Married
5	Hāna al-Ḳarā	Mūsevī Ḳarāʾīn	1264	Ḳırım (Crimea)	Average	Hazel	Darkish	Has an eye problem (*gözleri maʿlūldur*)	Married
6	Maryam *müteveffiyye* (died)		1281	Yemen	Average	Hazel	Dark (*esmer*)		Married

Continued

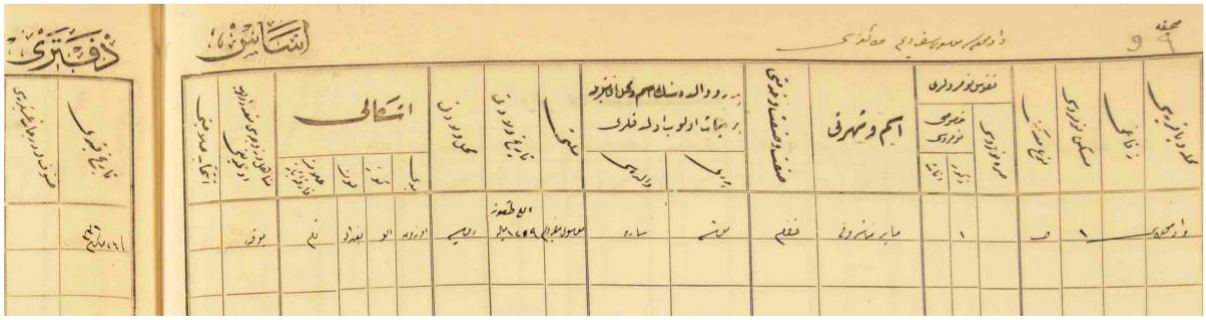
	Corrected Date of Registration
1	27 Mayıs 1331 [June 9, 1915]
2	26 Mayıs 1331 [June 8, 1915]
3	24 Mayıs 1331 [June 6, 1915]
4	24 Mayıs 1331 [June 6, 1915]
5	
6	

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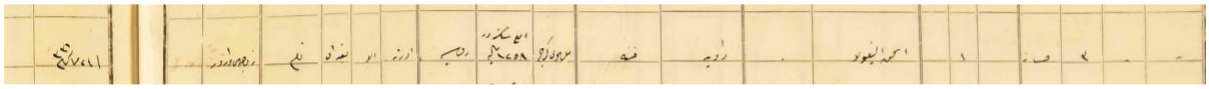
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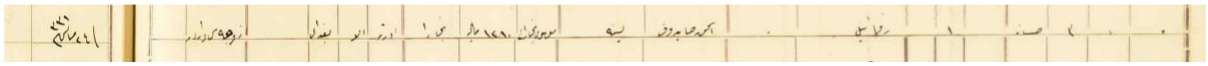
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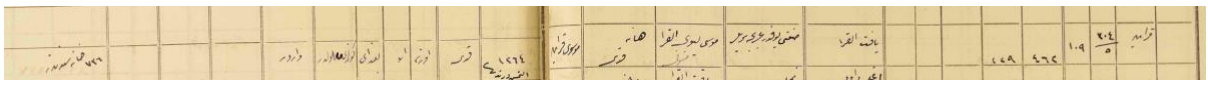
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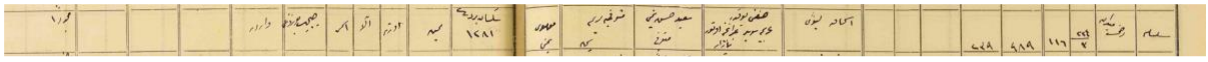
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6



Conclusion

Ottoman census records from Palestine reveal that the idea of an "Arab Jewish community" was acknowledged and recorded by Ottoman census officials. The designation *Yahūd evlād-ı ʿArab ṭāʾifesī* challenges the assumption that categories such as "Arab Jew" were purely retrospective constructs, by showing that local Jewish communities as well as Ottoman officials recognized communal distinctions. It stands out as an unusual assertion of a shared "Arab" identity among Maghrebi, Syrian, Iraqi, and Anatolian Jews. As the signet ring bearing the community's name indicates, "Jews of Arab descent" was not merely an ad hoc administrative label: Jewish leaders in Tiberias themselves endorsed it to signal common origins and, perhaps, belonging within the Arabic-speaking milieu, in which social belonging, linguistic identity, and imperial classification converged in unusual ways. It suggests that debates over Arab-Jewish identity have deeper historical roots than previously recognized. Complementary sources are needed to illuminate the dynamics behind this administrative act.

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A Hebrew Magic Formula in Arabic Script: At the Crossroads of Cultures and Languages in an Ottoman Turkish Manuscript

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Hebrew in Arabic script, Hebrew magic formula, reception of Jewish occultism by Muslim Ottomans, 18th century, *mecmua*

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Context[1]

This paper examines a Hebrew sentence rendered in Arabic script found in an Ottoman manuscript. It appears in *Mecmūʿatü'l-Fevāʾid*, a composite manuscript housed in the Archaeological Manuscripts Collection (no. 885) of the Istanbul Archaeological Museums Library. Consisting of 182 folios, the manuscript includes a rich assortment of texts in Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman Turkish.[2] The page on which this prayer is found embodies the manuscript's multilingual and multi-generic character, incorporating Turkish couplets in addition to hadiths and anecdotes in Arabic. Flanking the Hebrew sentence on the left is a Turkish couplet rendering Mīrwais Khān Hotak's laqab (honorific title)[3] in verse. Given that Mīrwais Khān's rule in Kandahar spanned from 1709 to 1715, the text likely postdates 1709.

A brief introductory note preceding the sentence identifies it as a prayer from the Torah. While it neither constitutes an actual prayer nor is attested in its complete form in the Tanakh, this sentence contains an excerpt from Exodus 3:14—*Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh*—commonly translated as "I Am That I Am," God's self-identification addressed to Moses at the burning bush. The additional elements in the sentence—*Adonai* (Lord) and *Melekh Malkhei HaMelakhim* (King of Kings of Kings)—are honorific titles used to invoke and describe God in Jewish liturgical tradition.

An examination of the phrase *Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh* outside the Torah reveals it to be a popular magic formula in the Jewish magical tradition. For instance, we encounter it in *Sefer Raziel HaMalakh* (i.e., the book of Angel Raziel), a compendium comprising

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[1] I would like to express my sincere thanks to Ronny Vollandt for helping me to decipher and translate the Hebrew sentence. I am also grateful to Yaron Ben-Naeh for drawing my attention to the fact that the Hebrew sentence could be a magic formula.

[2] While the first 39 folios consist of a variety of such short texts, from folio 39 onward, the manuscript contains Hasan Esîrî's historical and geographical work *Mi'yârü'd-Düvel ve Misbârü'l-Milel* completed in 1725. This section thus preserves a hitherto unknown copy of the work. Cf. Göker İnan, "Hasan Esîrî'nin Mi'yârü'd-Düvel ve Misbârü'l-Milel İsimli Tarih ve Coğrafya Eseri (İnceleme-Transkripsiyon)", PhD diss., Istanbul: Marmara University, 2017, 38–42.

[3] "Sikke-i Mīr Veys: Sikke-zed-i dirhem dāru'l-ḳarār-ı Ḳandehār / Şāh-ı ʿālem ḫān-ı ʿādil Mīr Veysī-i nām-dār." 7v. See also Orhan Yazıcı, *Timur Şah Dürrânî*, Malatya: Yılmaz Matbaacılık ve Yayıncılık, 2017, 22.

the teachings of knowledge and wisdom, as well as magical formulae revealed to Adam. The book delineates the actions to be taken and the words to be spoken for specific tasks. According to the book, one should recite *Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh* to render well water potable by heating it during the first season.[4]

Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh was also frequently inscribed in magical gems and amulets.[5] Gideon Bohak, in *Ancient Jewish Magic: A History*, presents an example of an amulet written designed to protect a pregnant woman and her unborn child. The most striking aspect of the amulet is that it contains the same expressions from the Hebrew sentence referred to in this paper:

> Holy, Holy, Holy … the God of the gods of spirits for all flesh, **the King of Kings of Kings** […] **Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh**, God, God, God […] the holy name of God which was revealed to Moses from within the (burning) bush, YHWH YHW, his name is blessed, **I-am-who-I-am**.[6]

Similarly, though it is plausible that the scribe wrote it for protective purposes, the source of this prayer formula is ambiguous. Typographical errors in the text suggest that he lacked formal knowledge of Hebrew and had copied it from a text or an amulet. Alternatively, he might have heard of it from a Jewish magician or healer[7] and transcribed it as accurately as he could. In any case, this example deserves attention as an illustration of the eclectic interests and diverse sources available to Ottoman literati.

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4 The relevant part is "Speak, Heh Yehieh Yedied Adokeh Yedied Yechotzoriya Iyayar Aberesekem Yeh Yeh Yeh Yeh Yeh **Ahieh Asher Ahieh** Zeqoqoveheyi Yehoveh [IHOH]." See *Sepher Rezial Hemelach: The Book of the Angel Rezial*, edited and translated by Steve Savedow, Boston: Weiser Books, 2000, 16-17.

5 Gideon Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic: A History*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008, 265. For the examples, see ibid., 162, 210, 232.

6 Ibid., 337-338.

7 Bohak observes that since the Middle Ages, Muslim and Jewish magicians have been influenced by each other's magical traditions, and highlights *Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh* as one of the formulae used by Muslim magicians ("Jewish Magic and Muslim Magic: Mutual Influences in the Middle Ages and Modern Era," in *Khamsa Khamsa Khamsa: The Evolution of a Motif in Contemporary Israeli Art*, ed. by Shirat-Miriam Shamir & Ido Noy, Jerusalem: L. A. Mayer Museum for Islamic Art, 2018, 177, 181).

Transcription

ʿAn duʿāʾ-i Tevrāt-ı Şerīf

Azonāʾī ṣumāġ māliḫ melḫiyy hemelūḥīm ṣehū ehiyyā eṣer ehiyyā Azonāʾī[8]

Corrected version according to Hebrew transliteration:

Shimkha Adonai Melekh Malkhei HaMelakhim shehu Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh Adonai.

Translation

A Prayer from the Noble Torah

Your name is Adonai, King of Kings of Kings; He who is *I Am That I Am*—Adonai!

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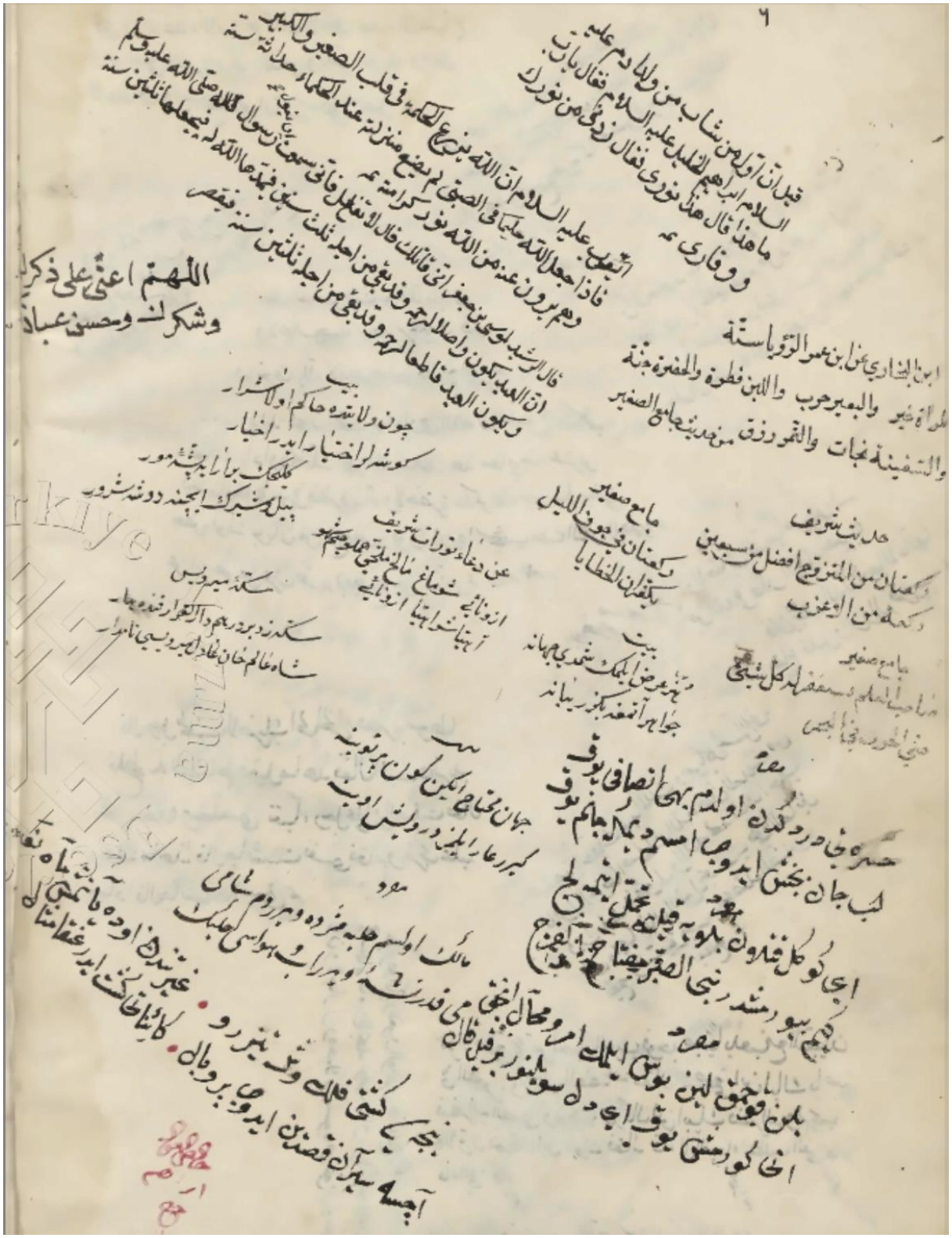
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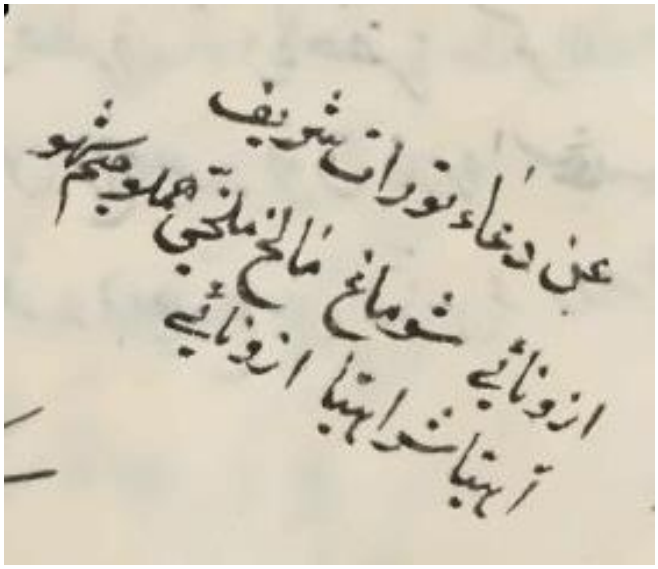
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8 This transcription follows standard conventions for rendering Ottoman Turkish into Latin script and reflects the probable pronunciation of the Hebrew sentence at the time of its composition.

Facsimile



Detail



Mustafa Efendi's Medical Recipes: Remedies for Sciatica and Constipation

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Context

The prescriptions whose full text and translation we present below are contained in manuscript Ms. Or. Oct. 2946 in the Turkish manuscripts section of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin. The manuscript consists of two principal sections, comprising the works titled *Żāhirü'l-ḳuḍāt* (5b–42a) and *Ḳānūn-nāme* (42a–62b).[1] In addition to these sections, the manuscript also contains various medicinal recipes and prayers.[2]

The texts in this manuscript were among the principal reference works used by various administrative officials serving within the Ottoman scholarly class in the early modern period. In this respect, it represents a type of reference source frequently encountered in manuscript form. Through such works, these officials were able to keep at hand earlier practices and regulations that could serve as precedents for their administrative decisions.[3] Indeed, as can be understood from the ownership record, the manuscript once belonged to an individual named Seyyid Muṣṭafā Efendi, who served as the mufti of Eski Cuma (in present-day northeastern Bulgaria).[4] No information concerning Muṣṭafā Efendi's identity has been found in the sources .

With regard to the date of compilation of the manuscript, it is possible—based on internal evidence—to suggest that it must have been written no earlier than the second half of the seventeenth century. Since the manuscript unfortunately contains no explicit dates such as those found in colophons, this assessment is derived from the dates of the fatwa samples included in the work. While the earliest of these dates back to the reign of Murad I (1362-1389 CE), the most recent is dated 1661.[5]

Of the four recipes translated here, three concern constipation and one addresses sciatica. Two of the constipation recipes are introduced with the term *līnet*, which

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1 *Żāhirü'l-ḳuḍāt* can be roughly translated as the book of judges and *Ḳānūn-nāme* means the code of laws.

2 For more details, see *Verzeichnis der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland IV*, 84-85 and 119.

3 Uriel Heyd, *Studies in Old Ottoman Criminal Law,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 189-190.

4 Ms. Ort. Oct. 2946, 1a.

5 Ms. Ort. Oct. 2946, 53a and 56b-57a.

refers to a gentle relaxation of the bowels; accordingly, the plants mentioned in these recipes are intended to achieve this mild laxative effect to treat the condition. The recipes also include brief instructions on how and when these mixtures should be taken. Some personal names appearing in the recipes may have been used to increase the credibility of the recipes. For example, the first recipe is attributed to *Ḫançerli nāʾib,* about whom no information could be found in the sources. His status as a deputy judge likely serves to establish him as a reliable source. The fourth recipe refers to Lokman the Sage,[6] highlighting legendary and ancient knowledge. Such references may have encouraged users to trust the effectiveness of the recipes.

Recipe 1, Transcription (64b)

yevmī bir iki ʿamel-i līnet içün saḥḳ ide ve dilerse maʿcūn idüb ekl ideler

60 dirhem sināmekī

10 dirhem çörek otı

20 dirhem zencebīl

10 dirhem rāvend

130 dirhem şeker

Ḫançerli nāʾib terkībidür

Recipe 1, Translation (64b)

For one or two laxative effects daily, one should pulverize it; if one wishes, one may make it into a paste and eat it.

60 *dirhem*[7] senna

10 *dirhem* black cumin

---

[6] Lokman the Sage is a legendary figure in Turkish folklore, widely regarded as a physician and a symbol of wisdom and healing, especially associated with knowledge of medicinal plants. See Mustafa İsmet Uzun, "Lokman," *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, accessed February 8, 2026, https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/lokman.

[7] The *dirhem*, which also saw regional variations and changes over time, was traditionally calculated as two-thirds of a *miṣḳāl,* corresponding to a weight of 3.086 grams. See Walter Hinz, "İslam'da Ölçü Sistemleri," trans. Acar Sevim, *Türklük Araştırmaları Dergisi,* no. 5 (1989): 6.

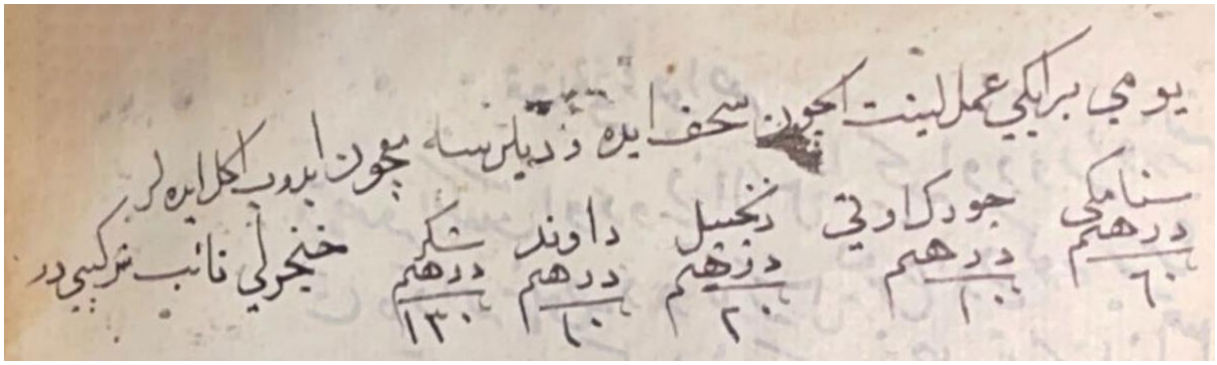
20 *dirhem* ginger

10 *dirhem* rhubarb

130 *dirhem* sugar

This is the mixture of *Ḫançerli nāʾib*.[8]

Facsimile 1



Recipe 2, Transcription (65a)

līnet içün ḥabb ide

10 ṣabır [dir]hem[9]

5 rāvend[-i] Hindī [dir]hem

5 ġārīḳūn[10]

5 ṣurencan

bir yere döküb ḥabb idüb istiʿmāl ide

Recipe 2, Translation (65a)

For laxative effects, one should make pills from it.

10 agave *[dir]hem*

---

8 A *nāʾib* is a deputy of a judge *(ḳāḍī)*.

9 The word *hem* (هم) may have been written as an abbreviated form of *dirhem* (درهم).

10 The word was mistakenly written as "ḳārīḳūn" in the text.

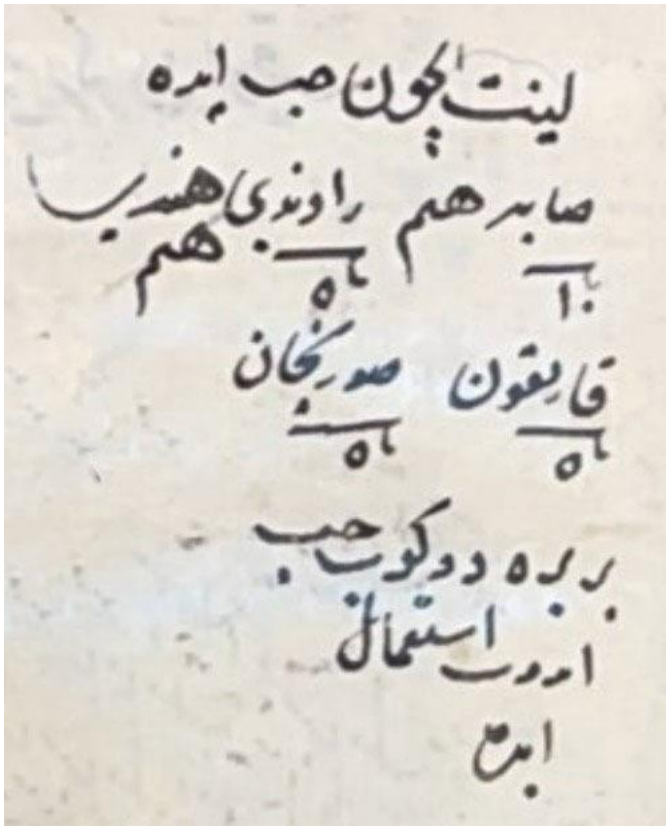
5 Indian rhubarb *[dir]hem*

5 agarics

5 meadow saffron

One should pour it out, form pills out of it and use it.

Facsimile 2



Recipe 3, Transcription (65a)

ḳabż içün olan ḥabb budur

1 dirhem saġferān[11]

1 dirhem mürr-i ṣāfī[12]

1 dirhem afyūn

1 dirhem günlük

1 dirhem eger

1 dirhem [?][13]

afyonı gül-āb[14] *ile ışladub yumurta ṣarusı ile eczāyı bir yire saḥḳ idüb noḫūd miḳdārı ṣabāḥ aḥṣām istiʿmāl ide ekşiden ve baldan ve südden perhīz ide*

Recipe 3, Translation (65a)

This is the pill used for constipation.

1 *dirhem* saffron

1 *dirhem* myrrh

1 *dirhem* opium

1 *dirhem* sweetgum

1 *dirhem* agrimony

1 *dirhem* [?]

One should wet the opium with rose water; pound the ingredients together with egg yolk on a surface and take a chickpea-sized amount morning and evening. One should abstain from sour (food/drink), honey, and milk.

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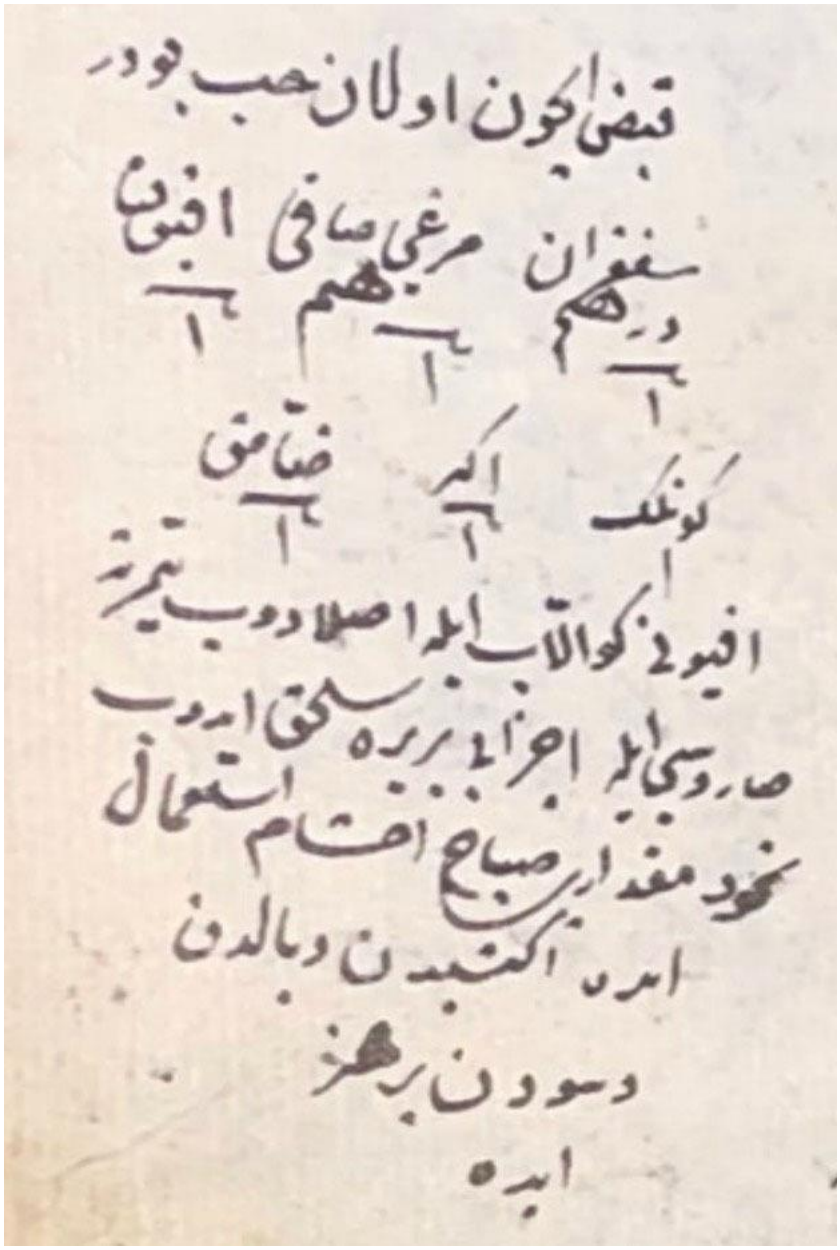
[11] It may have been written this way due to the z-s alternation in Turkish. In the following recipe, it is written with the letter "ذ".

[12] Org. "murġī-yi ṣāfī", which is obviously wrong.

[13] The word could not be found.

[14] Org. "گوالاب" could not be found in any dictionary. Given that the author makes numerous spelling mistakes, we propose reading it here as *gül-āb* ("rosewater").

Facsimile 3



Recipe 4, Transcription (65a)

maʿcūn-ı ʿırḳu'n-nesā içün olan Loḳmān hekīm rivāyet cemʿ-i emrāżlar[a][15] nāfiʿ olmaḳ üzre

5 dirhem cevz-i bevvā dirhem[16]

5 dirhem ḳaranfil

5 dirhem ḳāḳūle

5 dirhem dārçīn

5 dirhem saʿad

5 dirhem emlec

5 dirhem sünbül-i ṭayyib

1 dirhem zaʿferān[17]

1 dirhem afyon

misk-i berdenk

üç eczā miḳdārı ʿasel ile ḳıvām buldurub saḥḳ-ı eczā idüb parmaḳ duyar duymaz ḳarışdırub maʿcūn idesiz her tenāvül birer miṣḳāl ola

Recipe 4, Translation (65a)

This is a paste transmitted by Loḳman the Sage for sciatica and said to be beneficial for all diseases.

5 *dirhem* coconut

5 *dirhem* clove

5 *dirhem* cardamom

5 *dirhem* cinnamon

5 *dirhem* nut grass / cyperus rotundus

5 *dirhem* phyllanthus emblica / indian gooseberry

5 *dirhem* spikenard

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15 In the text, it is written as "emrāżları".

16 The word *dirhem* is written in addition to the abbreviation of *dirhem*.

17 In the text it is written with "ز".

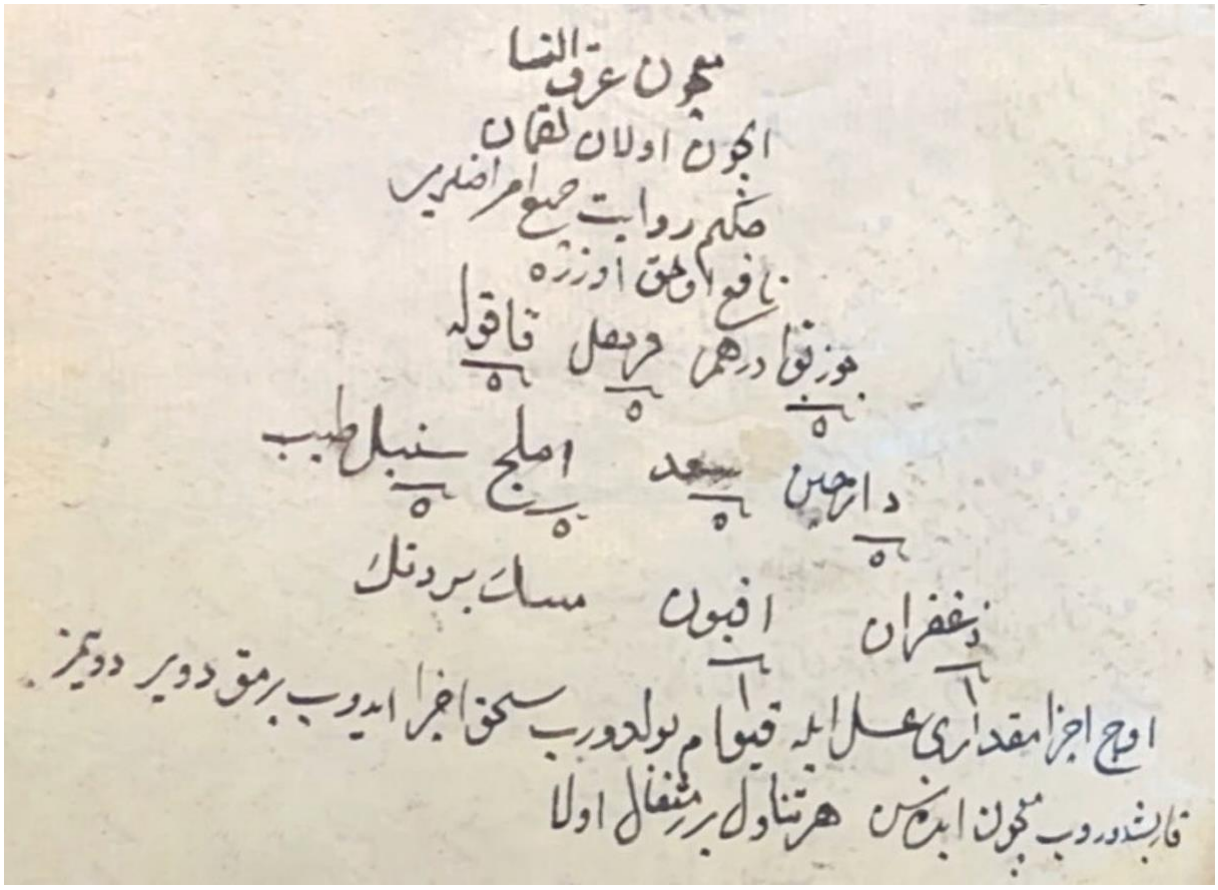
1 *dirhem* saffron

1 *dirhem* opium

desert musk

Bring it to consistency with three parts of honey; pound the ingredients; and as soon as the mixture reaches a proper consistency,[18] mix it and prepare a paste. Each dose should be one *miṣkāl.*[19]

Facsimile 4



[18] As no record of the phrase "barmak duyar duymaz" was found in the sources, its meaning has been interpreted according to the context of the passage.

[19] While its exact value frequently fluctuated across different periods and regions, the Ottoman *miṣkāl* was typically standardized at 4.81 grams, a figure derived from the Egyptian *miṣkāl*. See Walter Hinz, "İslam'da Ölçü Sistemleri," trans. Acar Sevim, *Türklük Araştırmaları Dergisi,* no. 5 (1989): 6.

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The Foundation-Inscription of the Qawālīsī Mosque

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Keywords:

Sharaf-nāma, Qawālīsī, Kurdish history, Ottoman Empire, Arabic, 15th century

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Context[1]

A fifteenth-century foundation-inscription was recently identified at the village of Irun, some 5 km northeast of Bidlīs in eastern Anatolia. In December 2022 Vural Genç and Mehmet Demirtaş made several visits to Irun, surveyed the remains of the Qawālīsī mosque, and took numerous photographs of every detail of the building.

The inscription of the mosque, located within the historical cemetery site registered by the Van Regional Council for the Protection of Cultural Heritage on 24 September 2008, was first published in 2006 by Kadir Pektaş.[2] In this study, while the architectural features of the building were emphasized and the inscription was transcribed, the reading contains several inaccuracies. Most importantly, Pektaş misread the name of the building's patron,[3] which led him to conclude that the individual could not be identified in historical sources.[4] Furthermore, his interpretation of the epithet "Aka/Ağa" only among the Turks of Iran is problematic, since the epithet was in fact employed widely across Turco-Mongol polities and even by the Kurdish emirates.[5] Building upon this, he incorrectly suggested that the mosque was constructed under the patronage of Turkmen dynasties, emphasizing the Qarakoyunlu and Aqqoyunlu presence in the region. Finally, he characterized the monument in broad art-historical terms, incorrectly asserting that "with its inscribed plaque providing information on its plan, date of construction, and patron, this mosque stands out as a monument of considerable importance in fifteenth-century Anatolian–Turkish art, distinguished by its figures that can be traced back to Central Asian traditions while also reflecting regional interactions".[6] The misreading of the most crucial part of the inscription, along with the resulting misinterpretations and

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1 We are grateful to Mehmet Demirtaş and Sacha Alsancakli for helping us to prepare this short note.

2 Kadir Pektaş, "Güroymak (Norşin) Yakınlarında Figürlü Bir Mescid", in: *Sanatta Anadolu Asya İlişkileri, Prof. Dr. Beyhan Karamağaralı'ya Armağan* (Ankara: Hacettepe Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2006), pp. 389-402.

3 "Süleyman Aka ibni Abd, Er-Rahman El-Kavvasi". See Pektaş, "Güroymak (Norşin) Yakınlarında Figürlü Bir Mescid", pp. 389-390.

4 See Pektaş, "Güroymak (Norşin) Yakınlarında Figürlü Bir Mescid", p. 390.

5 See Pektaş, "Güroymak (Norşin) Yakınlarında Figürlü Bir Mescid", p.390, n. 4.

6 See Pektaş, "Güroymak (Norşin) Yakınlarında Figürlü Bir Mescid", pp. 393-4.

erroneous conclusions, obscures the true identity of the building. It is therefore essential that this issue be corrected.

Irun (probably by metathesis > Yirun), now known as Gölbaşı, seems to have been paid no attention by the early geographers.[7] The sole mention of the village that we have been able to find is a contemporaneous one by *taḥrīr* makers who visited the place in 1539, that is, almost a century after the building of the mosque. It is particularly interesting to note that the *taḥrīr emīnī*[8] makes no mention of a Qawālīsī mosque at Irun or other villages in the Çukur area.[9] In a later Ottoman primary source, however, the author mentions the same mosque, at the same village, as Süleyman Ağa Kalesi.[10]

This inconsistency is not, strictly speaking, about the historical buildings of Bidlīs. Rather it is about the legal, moral, and political dialogue that the Bidlīs royal conflicts have provoked among tribal successors and political commentators. The Kurdish emir and historian Sharaf Khān Bidlīsī and his grandfather, Sharaf Khān I, might have objected to any mention related to the Qawālīsī family because of the negative role that ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Qawālīsī (*c*.1438-1505), a very powerful and influential *aǧa* of the Qawālīsī subdivision of the Ṛōzhikī tribe, and his relatives played against the Sharafkhānids of Bidlīs.[11]

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7 The name sometimes suffers from faulty identification. It should not be confused with Irun of Shīrwān. Compare Scheref, Prince de Bidlis, *Scheref-nameh ou Histoire des Kourdes*, Ed. V. Véliaminof-Zernof. St.-Pétersbourg: Commissionaires de l'Académie Impériale des Sciences, 1860-62, i, 232, 238; Evliya Çelebi, *Seyāḥatnāme*, vols. I-VI, Ed. A. Cevdet; vols. VII-VIII, Ed. K. Rif'at; vols. IX-X, Ed. Anonymous. Istanbul: Ikdam, 1896-1938, iv, 157, 204.

8 The *taḥrīr emīnī* can be identified as the surveyor responsible for recording all resources and productive activities in the survey registers (*taḥrīr* defters) with the aim of increasing the revenue of the imperial treasury.

9 For Irun as a village in the Çukur area, see Ahmet Yılmaz, "413 Numaralı Mufassal Tapu Tahrir Def-terine Göre Bitlis Sancağı (1555-1556)". Konya: T. C. Selçuk Üniversitesi, unpublished MA thesis, 2010), 41, 44, 47, 54.

10 See Eralp Yaşar Azap, *Bitlis Salnameleri: Devlet-Vilayet-Maarif*. Istanbul: BETAV Yayın No: 6, 2017, 95.

11 For Qawālīsī as both a Kurdish tribe of Bidlīs and a name given to a collection of (twelve) Kurdish tribes of the Ṛōzhikī confederation, and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Qawālīsī, especially the role he played in the rulership of Bidlīs, see Scheref, *Scheref-nameh ou Histoire des Kourdes*, i, 358, 361, 382, 400-403, 405.

Sharaf Khān adapts all Kurdish oral traditions to create a legitimate genealogy for his grandfather, Sharaf Khān I, and his patrons. In telling the history of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Qawālīsī as the political rival of his grandfather, Sharaf Khān takes a partial approach to making rival historical traditions relevant to Bidlīs emirate history. To him, the disintegration of the Bidlīs emirate after the death of a powerful emir followed the normal pattern for Kurdish independent powers based on a military tribal elite. This corporate claim to sovereignty created a free-for-all situation in which individual members of the princely Ṛōzhikī clan clamored to assert their claims to rule the steadily shrinking territory under Bidlīs' control.

ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Qawālīsī was one of the hereditary *aǧa*s in the Bidlīs emirate. The *Sharaf-nāma* has created a lasting picture of the life and career of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, with a corresponding lack of impartiality for the place he holds within Bidlīs history. The understanding of Sharaf Khān Bidlīsī does not match certain historical and ideological strategies evident in the *Sharaf-nāma* and in other historical sources. According to the following foundation-inscription, for example, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Qawālīsī had exercised a tight hold on the government of Bidlīs, and his lineal male descendants shared the right to claim political sovereignty over the dependencies of Bidlīs. In the sixteenth century, the long reigning Sharafkhānids saw in this situation of political decentralization an opportunity to remove the name and importance of Qawālīsī from *taḥrīr* registers as illegitimate dissident political *aǧa*s across the Bidlīs emirate.

The following foundation-inscription suggests that, even if Kurdish chronicles like that of *taḥrīr* registers have little to say about the Qawālīsīs (and this silence itself is worthy of note), they still give us valuable information on the Sharafkhānids' political and ideological programs.

The condition of the inscription is remarkably good, considering its exposed position, and it remains legible. The ostensible purpose of the inscription is to record the date of the end of building work at the mosque, that is 1466, and to show or imply Qawālīsī patronage. It was built to mark the foundation of the Mosque of Qawālīsī by order of Sulaymān Āqā, a son of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān. His name and title (*āqā*) are

displayed in the epigraph, as well as that of his father. Taken more literally, the inscription is an effectively worded and carefully laid out epigraphic tribute to the building and an expression of pride in the new foundation on the part of the *ağa* who founded it.

Text

[قد بنا] عمارة هذا المسجد المبارک سليمان آقا ابن عبد الرحمن القواليسى في تاريخ سنة سبعة و ستين و ثمان مائة

Transcription

[*qad banā*] *ʿamārat hadhā al-masjid al-mubārak Sulaymān Āqā ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥman al-Qawālīsī fī tārikhi sanata sabʿatin wa sittīn wa thamān miʾata.*

Translation

The building of this blessed mosque [was undertaken] by Sulaymān Āqā, son of ʿAbd al-Raḥman al-Qawālīsī, in the year 867.

Facsimile

Qawālīsī foundation-inscription. Photograph courtesy of V. Genç



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A Letter of Protection for Debrecen from Devlet Giray, Kalga Sultan (1690/91)

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Context

In the winter of 1690–1691, the market town of Debrecen[1] received a remarkable document. Devlet Giray, Kalga[2] Sultan of the Crimean Khanate, granted a letter of protection to the town's inhabitants. In it, he recognized the services that Debrecen had rendered to his "glorious and victorious army" and strictly forbade his troops from troubling its citizens in the future.[3] What makes this charter unique is that, among the 143 charters[4] issued by Ottoman authorities during this century and a half of domination over the city, it is the only one that came from the Tatars.

The protection letter issued by Devlet Giray can only be understood within the wider context of the Second Long Turkish War. In 1683, the Ottomans under grand vizier Kara Mustafa (1676–1683) made their final, ill-fated attempt to lay siege to Vienna. In the years that followed, the Habsburgs and their allies launched a vigorous counteroffensive which, by 1689, had forced the Turks back beyond northern Serbia and western Bulgaria, well to the south of the Kingdom of Hungary.[5] That same year, a new grand vizier — Köprülü Mustafa (1689–1691), a leader of formidable stature — rose to power. By October 1690 he had already regained the lost territories of Bulgaria and Serbia, culminating in the reconquest of Belgrade. Soon after, he dispatched a 10,000-strong corps under the command of the Kalga Sultan to relieve the besieged fortresses

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1 Today situated near Hungary's eastern border, the city found itself in a precarious position throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, caught in the buffer zone between the Habsburgs, the Ottoman Empire, and the Principality of Transylvania. Although formally under Transylvanian authority, in 1555 it voluntarily submitted to Ottoman suzerainty as well. Until its liberation at the close of the 17th century, it was classified as an imperial *ḫāṣṣ* estate, obliged to pay an annual tax to the Ottomans. In return, the town was supposed to be exempt from the burden of military billeting during wartime. In reality, however, this privilege was often disregarded, and the Tatars repeatedly used the city as winter quarters (Fekete 1926, 43–44).

2 Within the Crimean Khanate this was the second most important office after that of the khan himself. After his election, the khan usually appointed his eldest brother or nephew as kalga (co-ruler), commander of the right wing and, in the khan's absence, of the entire Tatar army. Sometimes, however, he bypassed the senior brother and gave the office to his own son (Ivanics 1994, 27).

3 Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Hajdú-Bihar Vármegyei Levéltára (MNL HBML). *Document no. XV–21–c–00078–1.* HU_MNL_HBML_XV_21_c_00078_1. Archival manuscript. Devlet Giray, Kalga Sultan – Letter of protection for Debrecen, 1690/91.

4 The collection is today held in the Hajdú-Bihar County Archives in Debrecen.

5 Pálffy, 2021. 219–221.

of Várad. Once these strongholds had been secured, the Tatars, under the Kalga Sultan's command, pushed their raids as far as Debrecen and Kálló[6].

Devlet Giray, who led the raid, served as Kalga Sultan from 1683 to 1699.[7] As vassals of the Ottoman Empire,[8] the khan and his kalga had, since the days of Süleyman the Magnificent, regularly joined the Ottomans in their campaigns in Hungary.[9] Because most of their warriors received neither regular pay (*ʿulūfe*) nor revenue lands (*zeʿāmet*), warfare for them was not only a military duty but also an economic enterprise. They made up for the lack of wages through plunder and the taking of captives. From time to time the Tatars protected the villages and towns of the Ottoman domains that paid tribute to the sultan,[10] but the lands of subjects who had broken faith with the sultan were open to their raids.[11]

When the allied armies first tried to recapture Várad, the citizens of Debrecen withheld the sultanic tax from the fortress garrison. Their act of defiance cost them dearly: the *beg* of Várad made no move to protect the town when Tatar troops arrived to relieve the fortress. The ordeal of Debrecen is described in the memoirs of János Pósalaki, a contemporary notary and senator of the town. He recounts how the Tatars seized the city's leaders and carried them off to Várad, where the Kalga himself threatened to destroy Debrecen if his demands were not met. The Tatar envoys pressed for a "gift" of 10,000 gold coins, while at the same time subjecting the townspeople to constant harassment, seizing food supplies and draft animals. To avoid utter devastation, Debrecen ultimately offered both gold and payments in kind, after

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6 Bánlaky, 1940. 393–406.

7 Ivanics, 1991. 210.

8 The Crimean Khanate was one of the most important vassal states of the Ottoman Empire. Although formally under the authority of the sultan, it enjoyed considerable autonomy: its ruler minted coins (*sikke*) in his own name, his name was included in the Friday prayer (*ḫuṭbe*), and he maintained diplomatic relations with foreign rulers (Królikowska 2013, 43–66).

9 Ivanics, 1994. 52–53.

10 In 1596, at the start of the Fifteen Years' War, Feth Giray, the Kalga, issued a Hungarian-language letter instructing the citizens of Debrecen to bring guards from Szolnok to protect the town from roving Tatars (HU_MNL_HBML_XV_21_c_0000113).

11 Ivanics, 1994. 190–192.

which the Kalga Sultan withdrew peacefully to the plains of Kálló,[12] from where he sent the letter in question.

Transcription

hüve el-muʿīn

Devlet sulṭān bin Selīm ḫān sözümüz

[1] *bāʿiṣ-i taḥrīr-i yarlıġ-i şerīf-i sulṭānī ve mūcib-i tasṭīr-i belīġ-i saʿādet-i teblīġ-i ḫāḳānī oldur ki işbu dārende-yi emr-i şerīf-i vācibü t-teşrīfüm oraş-ı*[13]

[2] *Döbreçin ehālīsi işbu biñ yüz iki tārīḫinde ordu-yı hümāyūn-i ẓafer-şiʿārımuza ʿalā ḳadri l-imkān ḫidmet idüb*

[3] *bundan aḳdem devletlü ve şecāʿatlu aġacalarımuzuñ* [!] *viregeldükleri emr-i şerīfleri üzre işbu emr-i şerīfümi virdüm ve buyurdum ki*

[4] *baʿde l-yevm ʿaskerimüzden kim kimesne taʿaddī vü rencīde eylemeyeler ve-l-ḥāṣıl efrāddan ferd-i aḥadıñ taʿaddīsine rızāʾ-yi şerīfüm yoḳdur*

[5] *şöyle bilüb emr-i şerīfüm ile ʿamel eyleyeler taḥrīren fī māh-i Rebīʿ ül-evvel*

Devlet Girāy sulṭān bin Selīm [*Girāy*] *ḫān bi-yurt-i ṣaḥrā-yi Ḳālō temme*

Translation

He is the Helper

Devlet Sulṭān son of Selīm ḫān, our word:

The reason for issuing this noble sultanic decree and for composing this exalted imperial notification is the following: the bearer of this noble decree, the inhabitants of the market town of Döbrecin, served our victorious imperial army to the best of their ability in the year 1102 [1690]. Based on the noble decrees formerly issued by our glorious and valorous ancestors, I too have issued this noble command and ordered that, from this day forward, none of the members of my army shall assault or harass anyone. In short, I do not grant my noble consent to any act of aggression against even

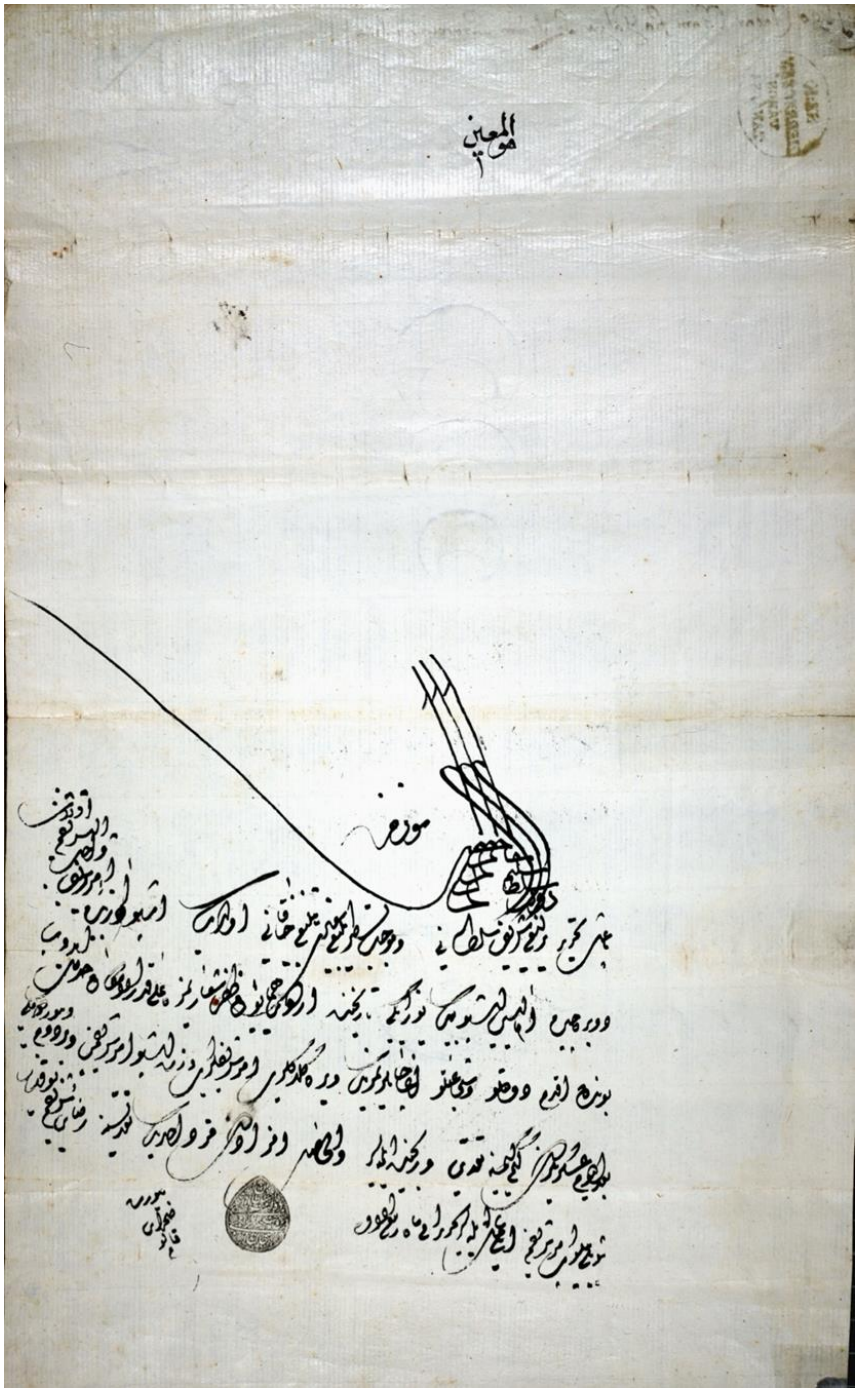
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[12] Balogh, 1987. 37–39.

[13] A word of Romanian origin, meaning “city”.

a single individual. Thus should they acknowledge and act according to my noble decree! Written in the month of Rebīʿ ül-evvel,
Sulṭān Devlet Girāy son of Selīm ẖān at the encampment on the plain of Ḳālō. End

Facsimile



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A Life Without You is Unbearable:
Ḥafṣa Sulṭān's Letter to Sultan Süleymān

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Context

The *Vālide Sulṭān*, the mother of the reigning Ottoman sultan, held the highest position attainable by a woman within the imperial hierarchy and played a central role in both the dynastic household and palace governance. As the sultan's mother, she stood at the apex of the female court, wielding considerable symbolic and administrative authority. From the late sixteenth century onward, the office—designated in contemporary sources as *vālide-i pādişāh* ("mother of the sultan"), *vālide-i saʿādet-penāh* ("mother of the refuge of felicity", an honorific for the sultan), and *mehd-i ʿulyā-yı salṭanat* ("the exalted cradle of the sultanate")—conferred upon its holder exceptional prestige and established her as the most esteemed and influential figure within the imperial *ḥarem*.[1] Court protocol strictly regulated all interaction with the *Vālide Sulṭān*; no individual was permitted to approach, speak to, or sit in her presence without her explicit consent, underscoring the ceremonial and political weight of her position.[2]

Among the women who shaped this powerful institution, Sultan Süleyman's (r. 1520–1566) mother, Ḥafṣa Sulṭān (d. 1534), stands out as one of its most notable figures. Ḥafṣa Sulṭān[3] entered the Ottoman dynasty as a concubine of Şehzade Selīm (later Sultan Selīm I, r. 1512–1520). Although the details of her early life remain obscure, she emerges in the historical record as one of the most influential women of the sixteenth-century Ottoman court. Archival documents refer to her as Ayşe Ḥafṣa bint ʿAbdülmuʿīn[4], yet no reliable information survives regarding her family background.[5] Ḥafṣa

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1 For further reading on the imperial harem in the Ottoman Empire, see: Leslie P. Peirce, *Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire*, New ed, Studies in Middle Eastern History (Oxford University Press, 1994).

2 Ali Akyıldız, "Vâlide Sultan," in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul, 2012), 42:494.

3 In accordance with Ottoman tradition, all slave girls were given new Muslim names upon entering the dynasty. Ḥafṣa was named after a prominent figure in early Islam— Ḥafṣa bint ʿOmar, a wife of the Prophet Muhammad and the daughter of one of his closest companions. See, Betül İpşirli Argıt, *Life after the Harem: Female Palace Slaves, Patronage and the Imperial Ottoman Court*, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2020), https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108770316.

4 For a biography of Hafsa Sultan see, Necdet Sakaoğlu, *Bu mülkün kadın sultanları: valide sultanlar, hatunlar, hasekiler, kadınefendiler, sultanefendiler*, Oğlak bilimsel kitaplar (Oğlak Yayıncılık ve Reklamcılık, 2008); Alan Fisher, "The Life and Family of Süleymân I," in *Süleymân the Second and His Time*, ed. Halil Inalcik and Cemal Kafadar (Gorgias Press, 2010),

Sultan was renowned not only for her beauty but also for her philanthropic patronage, having founded numerous charitable institutions.[6].

She gave birth to Süleymān (d. 1566) during Selīm's governorship of Trabzon, at which time she is believed to have been approximately fifteen years old.[7] The birth of a son marked a profound transformation in the life of a concubine, as exemplified by Ḥafṣa Sulṭān. Although she remained legally enslaved, becoming a mother transformed her institutional position. As the mother of a prince, she was given a larger household, increased financial resources, and clear hierarchical precedence over concubines who had not borne male heirs. Her primary role became caring for and raising the prince, and she probably stopped having sexual relations with Selim. Should the prince survive childhood and receive a provincial governorship, she would accompany him and assist in establishing his household. If he were to ascend the throne eventually, she would become the most senior female figure in the imperial court. However, such an outcome was not guaranteed, and the death of a prince could leave his mother politically marginalised and financially precarious.[8] With the authority conferred by her role as mother of the prince during Süleymān's early career as a provincial governor (*sancak-beyi*), she accompanied him to his postings, first to Caffa in 1509 and then to Manisa in 1513.[9] Upon Süleymān's accession to the throne in 1520[10], Ḥafṣa Sulṭān was brought to Istanbul, where she assumed the title of *Vālide Sulṭān*, thereby becoming the highest-ranking woman in the imperial hierarchy. She retained this

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https://doi.org/10.31826/9781463231774-002.

5 Ali Haydar Bayat, "Hafsa Sultan," in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul, 1997), 15:122.

6 Bayat, "Hafsa Sultan."

7 Kaya Şahin, *Peerless among Princes: The Life and Times of Sultan Süleymān* (Oxford University Press, 2023), 35, https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197531631.001.0001.

8 Şahin, *Peerless among Princes*, 35.

9 Feridun M. Emecen, *Kanuni Sultan Süleymān ve zamanı*, with Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu, Türk Tarih Kurumu yayınları 4/A-2.2.1 dizi, sayı: 52 (Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2024), Feridun M. Emecen, *Kanuni Sultan Süleymān ve zamanı*, with Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu, Türk Tarih Kurumu yayınları 4/A-2.2.1 dizi, sayı: 52 (Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2024), 21. [Why is this title repeated twice?]

10 For more on this period and Süleymān see, Halil İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age, 1300-1600*, trans. Norman Itzkowitz and Colin Imber (Phoenix, 2013).

preeminent position until her death in 1534 and was subsequently interred in the Sultan Selīm Mosque in Istanbul.[11]

The letter under study is undated, but its content suggests that it was likely sent from Manisa in around 1520. In the letter, Ḥafṣa Sulṭān instructs her son to call for her "*as soon as you ascend the throne*," indicating her awareness of the imminent transfer of authority. Historical records show that 117 individuals were moved from Manisa to Constantinople following Süleymān's accession. Some of these individuals arrived earlier, while others—including his mother Ḥafṣa Sulṭān, his unnamed sister, and his sons and concubines—reached the capital several weeks later.[12] Accordingly, this letter was almost certainly composed during the interval between Süleymān's receipt of the news of his father Selīm I's death and the subsequent relocation of all 117 members of his Manisa household to Constantinople, marking a critical transitional moment in the establishment of his court in the new capital. While the phrasing could also refer more generally to ceremonial returns to the capital following military campaigns, the content points to a pre-accession context. Furthermore, the letter was almost certainly composed by a court scribe possessing considerable linguistic and literary skill. The poetic metaphors convey Ḥafṣa Sulṭān's emotional vulnerability and underscore her dependence on the sultan's favor for personal solace. The careful selection of words, phrases, and prayers also provides chronological clues, indicating that the letter was written precisely at the moment when Süleymān was on the verge of ascending the throne.

In conclusion, the study of this letter is particularly significant. This letter goes beyond personal sentiment to reveal the political and social realities faced by a sultan's mother. It shows how Ḥafṣa Sulṭān's well-being, influence, and security were closely tied to her son's future position, making her appeal both an expression of maternal concern and a strategic assertion of her place within the imperial household. In this way, the letter provides a rare insight into the intersection of familial affection and

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[11] Bayat, "Hafsa Sultan," 123.
[12] Şahin, *Peerless among Princes*, 108.

political dependence in the Ottoman court. In this context, her personal anguish also signals the weight of these stakes, as she poignantly states, "*life without you is unbearable*[13] *for me*."

Transcription

Cenāb-ı salṭanat-meʾāb ḥażret-i begüm kāmbīn u kāmyāb

edāme'llāhu teʿālā salṭanatehū ve devletehū ʿaleynā ve ʿale kāffeti'l-enām ilā yevmi'l-ḥaşri ve'l-ḥisāb

Ġıbbe itḥāf-ı tuḥafi'l- edʿiyeti 'l-maḳrūneti bi-icābeti'l-Meliki'l-ʿalīm ve eşera ihdā'-ı'l şeniyyeti'l-memzūceti bi-enfāsi'n-nebiyyi'l-kerīm

maʿrūż-ı dāʿiye-i sāʿiye oldur ki şimdiki ḥālde eger luṭf olınub bu ḥarīḳe-i nār-ı firāḳ ve ġarīḳe-i baḥr-ı iştiyāḳ

ṭarafından istiʿlām buyurılursa sen ʿömrüm ḥāṣılı ve gözlerüm nūrı rāḥat-ı rūḥum ve sermāye-i fütūḥumdan

ayru olalı ʿömr-i ʿazīz-i bī-bedelden maḥẓūẓ ve behremend olmayub gülistān-ı saʿādet ve būstān-ı devletinden

ayru düşmüş bülbül-i nālān ve ʿandelīb-i hezār-destān gibi feryād-kunān āteş-i mücerred birle nār-ı hicrān

āfet-i cān vāḳiʿ olub, ʿıyşımız nīş ve işümüz teşvīş olmuşdur eyle olsa benüm āfitāb-ı devletüm

ve māhitāb-ı saʿādetüm mercūḥdur ki saʿādetlü başuñ içün bu ġurbet-zede'i bu firḳatdan ḫalāṣ idüb serīr-i salṭanata

devlet ü saʿādetle cülūs itdükde ḳadīmen [*ve*] *ʿācilen bu muḫliṣe'i rüʾyet-i cemāl-i dil-güşāñla müşerref ve muġtenim buyurasız*

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[13] The original letter uses the word *ḥarām*, which literally means "forbidden" or "prohibited" in Islamic and Ottoman Turkish contexts—something a Muslim must not do and will not do. In Ottoman usage, ḥarām can also refer more broadly to anything considered impermissible or off-limits. In this context, Ḥafṣa Sulṭān employs the term metaphorically to convey that life apart from her son is not only forbidden but impossible; she cannot, and will not, endure such separation. I have therefore translated it as "unbearable," as this rendering better captures the emotional intensity and sense of impossibility embedded in her plea, whereas "forbidden," though literal, does not fully convey the affective force of the original term.

ki ʿömr-i cihān bir dem sensüz ḥarāmdur şöyle mülāḥaẓa olına bāḳī ʿömr-i devlet der mesned-i saʿādet [ve] destgāh-ı devlet
müstedām ü müstaḥkem bād bi'n-nūn ve's-ṣād
Ve dāye ḫātūn selāmlar ve duʿālar idüb ḫāk-ı pāy-ı şerīfiñüze yüzin sürer

Translation

His Majesty, the refuge of sovereignty, my lord, the fortunate and successful
May God, Exalted, perpetuate his sultanate and his authority over us and over all mankind until the Day of Resurrection and Judgment
Following the presentation of the gifts of prayer, conjoined with acceptance by the All-Knowing Sovereign (i.e., God), and following the offering of exalted supplications imbued with the breaths of the Noble Prophet, the humble petition of this earnest supplicant is as follows:
If, by your gracious favor, should it please you to inquire into this conflagration of the fire of separation and this drowning in the sea of longing, since the day I was parted from you—who are the very fruit of my life, the light of my eyes, the solace of my soul, and the very foundation of my every success—I have found no joy, nor taken any share of delight from this precious and incomparable life.
I have become like a lamenting nightingale separated from the rose-garden of felicity and the orchard of fortune and prosperity and a nightingale of a thousand songs, crying out in anguish. With the sheer fire, the fire of separation has become a calamity to my soul and our joyful days have become poisoned, and our affairs have been cast into turmoil.
As this is so, the sunshine of my prosperity and the moonlight of my felicity would be greatly surpassed if, for the sake of your felicitous head, you would deliver this one, stricken by separation from you while you are far from home, from this affliction; and if, upon your return with fortune and prosperity to the seat of the throne, you would from the very outset and without delay graciously honor and favor this devoted and loyal one with the sight of your heart-delighting countenance. For life in this world,

even for a single moment, is of no value or benefit to me without you, like something forbidden.

Let it be understood thus.

May the course of your good fortune and rule endure, firm and secure upon the seat of felicity.

With *Nūn and Ṣād*[14]

Post-Script[15]

And your *dāye*[16] (wet-nurse/mother) sends her salutations and prayers, humbly laying her face at your noble feet.

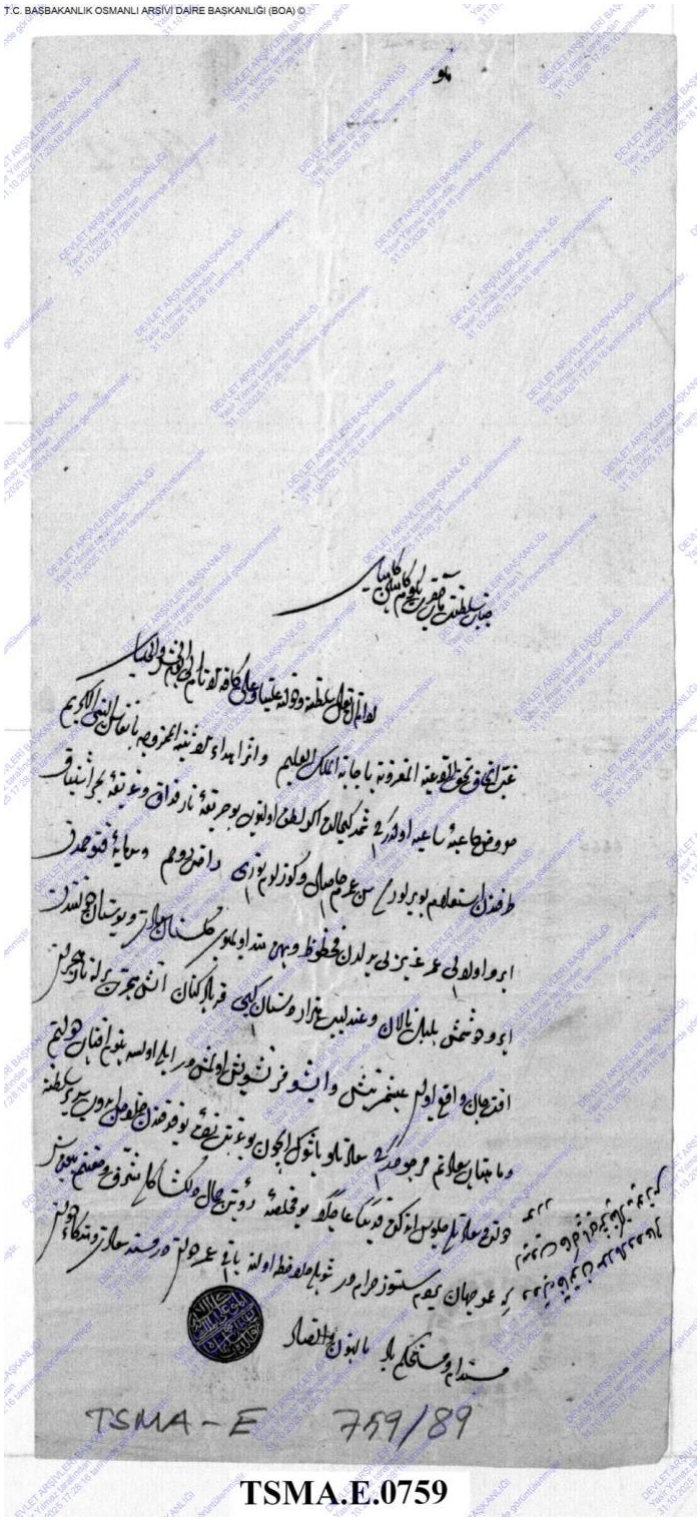
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[14] The letter closes with "*Bi'n-nūn ve's-ṣād*" (بِالنُّونِ وَالصَّادِ), Qur'anic disjoined letters (*ḥurūf al-muqaṭṭaʿāt*) that were commonly used in Ottoman epistolary practice as a pious formula invoking divine protection and blessing. Some Ottoman sources interpreted these letters as abbreviations for *nusret ve saʿādet* ("victory and felicity"), though this reading remains a traditional or symbolic explanation rather than a universally attested meaning.

[15] The post-script appears written in the same hand, placed along the right margin and oriented upside-down.

[16] Sultan Süleymān's *dāye* (wet nurse) was Surūrī Dāye Ḫātūn. This is known from the *Surūrī Dāye Ḫātūn Mosque*, built around 1530 in Yeşildirek (Eminönü, Istanbul), which she founded with the support of Sultan Süleymān and Hürrem Sultan. For further discussion of this, see, Oleksandra Şutko, *Hürrem Sultan*, 1st ed., trans. Hazal Yalın (Kitap Yayınevi, 2017).

Facsimile



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Countering 'Local Discord' with 'Imperial Servitude': Mehmed Zeki Pasha's Defense of Mihrali Bey

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Context

The two-folio ciphered telegram sent by Mehmed Zeki Pasha serves as an illustrative case study of the Hamidian era.[1] Written at a time when the order to serve in Yemen induced dread among the Anatolian populace, the document highlights the exceptional willingness of Mihrali Bey to mobilize for this perilous frontier. However, a closer reading exposes a layer beyond simple military logistics, the text functions as a sophisticated defense mechanism. Mehmed Zeki Pasha's utilization of this correspondence may be interpreted as an effort not only to shield his protégé from the structural tensions arising from tribal settlement, but also quite possibly, from the fierce bureaucratic factionalism in Istanbul, thereby demonstrating the rectitude of his stance and dismissing any potential accusations of administrative failure.

The discursive strategy employed by Mehmed Zeki Pasha reveals the depth of the bureaucratic rift within the Ottoman center. By labeling Mihrali Bey's local accusers as "ill-wishers of the state" (*bed-ẖᵛāhān-ı devlet*), the Marshal reframes local complaints as treachery against the regime. This rhetorical maneuver is also visible in his sharp juxtaposition of Mihrali Bey against the "gentlemen excellencies" (*efendiler ḥażarātı*)[2] and the "expelled" (*maṭrūd*) Fuad Pasha. The specific reference to Fuad Pasha, a former Marshal stripped of his rank and exiled to Damascus in 1902 for his opposition to the Palace circles,[3] may be considered to serve as a critical marker of political alignment. By dissociating Mihrali from the *efendiler* and the disgraced Fuad, Mehmed Zeki Pasha

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1 This telegram was sent by Mehmed Zeki Pasha, the marshal of the fourth army, to the mabeyn chief scribe on August 22, 1905. Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi (DABOA), Y.PRK.ASK., 232-23, 20 Jumada al-Akhirah 1323 [August 22, 1905].

2 The term *efendi*, as a form of address for the literate and educated class, gained widespread use following the Tanzimat Edict, becoming integrated with the civil bureaucracy through the designation *kalem efendileri* (gentlemen of the offices) as the bureaucracy became institutionalized (see Carter Vaughn Findley, *Ottoman Civil Officialdom: A Social History* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989], 26). Given this historical development, it can be argued that the expression *efendiler ḥażarātı* in the document targets civil bureaucrats who were opponents of the Palace or members of the Young Turk movement, and is employed with a pejorative connotation within the text.

3 Ahmet Yadi, "Müşir Deli Fuad Paşa'nın Petersburg Fevkalâde Elçiliği (1894)," *Karadeniz Araştırmaları* 21, no. 82 (2024): 474.

positions his protégé within the "loyalist" camp of the Palace.[4] Thus, the defense of a tribal chief in Sivas becomes a proxy war against the Marshal's own bureaucratic rivals in the capital.

Beyond the immediate bureaucratic maneuvering, the document allows for a dual-layered reading regarding the nature of "loyalty" in the Hamidian tribal zone. On the part of the tribal chief, Mihrali Bey's professed eagerness to sacrifice his life (*fedā-yı cism u cān*) for the Yemen campaign may be interpreted not merely as blind devotion, but potentially as a strategic exit. Facing mounting legal and social pressure in Sivas – where his settlement had likely disrupted local power balances – volunteering for a distant frontier offered a dignified way to distance himself from local vendettas while securing imperial favor. In this sense, his "enthusiasm" (*kemāl-i muṭāvaʿat u heves*) might be read as a calculated survival strategy. Simultaneously, regarding the Marshal, the staunch defense of the chieftain appears to be a strategic effort to reinforce his own position in the eyes of the Palace. By framing the local tension as a conflict between 'loyal servants' – represented by his protégé – and "treacherous rivals," the Marshal effectively dissociates himself from the discord. This suggests that his defense of Mihrali was likely a calculated maneuver to consolidate his own faction's standing against both provincial and central rivals, rather than a mere administrative duty.

To conclude, the 1905 cipher illustrates how Mehmed Zeki Pasha's patronage network likely functioned as a reciprocal shield against both central and local instabilities. The correspondence suggests that military mobilization possessed a distinct political utility, serving as a mechanism for the tribal chief to evade local risks while enabling the Marshal to consolidate his faction's standing. However, it is crucial to note that such projections remain interpretive. Rather than offering definitive conclusions, this document merely provides subtle clues conducive to speculation regarding the intersection of survival strategies and high-level patronage. Therefore, a complete

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4 For a detailed account of Mehmed Zeki Pasha's career, which illustrates his long tenure and close relationship with Sultan Abdülhamid II, and his subsequent inability to work in harmony with the Unionist (CUP) government following the 1913 coup, see Cengiz Çakaloğlu, "Müşîr Mehmed Zeki Paşa (1835-1929)" (PhD diss., Atatürk University, 1999), 30, 274.

interpretation necessitates the examination of additional documentation regarding both the period and the specific actors involved.

Transcription

[1r]

Hüve // Baş Kitābete // Dördüncü Ordu-yı Hümāyūnları Müşīriyetinden //

Şifre C fī 8 aġustos sene 321 Mihrʿalī beg ʿan-aṣıl Ḳarṣ dāḫilinde Ḳarapapaḳ ʿaşīretindendir // mesʾele-i zāʾilede Ḳarṣ ordusunda uġur-ı meyāmin-mevfūr ḥażret-i pādişāhide pek ziyāde // yararlıḳ göstermişdir baʿde'l-mesʾele ʿaşīretiyle berāber Sivasa hicret iderek Sivas // merkezine on beş sāʿat mesāfede Ḳānḳām[5] *nāḥiyesi dāḫilinde iskān olunmuşdur // teşkīlātdan berü kendüsi hīç bir ṭarafa gitmemiş ve alay başında mevcūd bulunmuşdur // teşkīlāt-ı müteyemminede bir alay teşkīl itdigi içün Sivas vilāyeti dāḫilinde raḳīb ve bed-ḫᵛāhları // çoġalub ʿaleyhinde şikāyetden ḫālī ḳalmadıḳlarından kendüsüne neṣāyiḥ-i lāzime icrāsıçün // bā-irāde-i seniye-yi mülūkāne iki defʿa muvaḳḳaten merkez ordū-yı hümāyūna celb olunmuşdur kendüsünüñ // efendiler ḥażarātına ve maṭrūd Fuʾāda bir güne münāsebeti ḳatʿiyyen olmamalıdır bu aḫbār // ṣırf ruḳabā ve ḫuṣamāsınıñ eṩer-i siʿāyet ve iftirāsı olmaḳ gerekdir çünki bu ḫaber u rivāyeti // īmā ve işrāb ider şimdiye ḳadar hīç bir ḥāl u ḥareketi aṣlā ḥüsn-i istiḫbār olunmamışdır // Yemene meʾmūriyyeti ḥaḳḳındaki irāde-i seniyye-i ḥażret-i pādişāhī kendüsine teblīġ olundıġı ānda // uġur-ı hümāyūn ḥażret-i ḫilāfet-penāhīde fedā-yı cism u cihāna*[6] *ḥāżır ve müşṭāḳ oldıġından baḥiṩle // ve bu ḥavālī ḫalḳınıñ Yemenden mütedehhiş olmasına raġmen kemāl-i muṭāvaʿat u hevesle bir ḳaç // gün ẓarfında mükemmel altı yüz silāḥ altına celb ve serīʿan ḥarekete bir şevḳ-i vicdānī // irāʾe eylemiş ve niẓāmiye ve redīf ḳıṭaʿātından daha sürʿat ve intiżāmla ṭoplanaraḳ // İskenderūna ḳadar gitdigi yollarda rıżā-yı hümāyūn-ı ḥażret-i żıll'u-llāhīye münāfī bir ḥareketde*

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[5] The place name here appears with the spelling *Ḳānḳām*. However, considering the context and particularly the '15-hour distance' indicated in the document, it is highly probable that the scribe erroneously recorded the name *Ḳānḳāl* (i.e., Kangal), a district of Sivas province in Türkiye, in this form.

[6] It is written as *cihān* in the document, but according to the context it should be *cān* (i.e., life).

[2r] *bulunmadıḳları güzer-gāhda bulunan meʾmūrīn-i mülkiyye ve ʿaskeriyyeden taḥkīk ḳılınmışdır bed-ḫ^{v}āhān-ı // devlet bu alaylar degil Yemen ḥattā bu ordu dāḫilinde bile ʿınde'l-īcāb ictimāʿa meyl // ü müsāraʿat göstermeyecekleri ümīd u iʿtiḳādında iken bu ümīd u iʿtiḳādıñ mertebe-i // buṭlānı bu kere de teẓāhür idince artıḳ ḳalblerinde açılan cerīḥa-yı teʾesṡürātıñ böyle bir // ṭaḳım isnādāt u müftereyātla kesb-i iltiyām itmesine çalışmaḳdadırlar meʾmūldür ki Yemeni // iṭāʿat ve ārzū ile alaylarından birini altı yüz mükemmel atlı ile silāḥ altına celb // ve Yemene göndermek üzre merkez ordu-yı hümāyūnlarına munṭaẓaman göndermiş olan Ḥaydarānlı // reʾisi Ḥüseyin pāşā ḥaḳḳında da gerek İngilizler ve Ermeniler ve gerek bunlara mütemāyil olub // fikr ü emelleriniñ tervīcine ḫādim olanlar bir ṭaḳım isnādāt-ı ġaraż-kārānede bulunurlar // el-ḥāṣıl ḳullarınıñ şimdiye ḳadar vukūʿbulan tecrübe ve taḥḳīḳāt-i kemterāneme göre böyle bir // ḳuvve-i cesīmeniñ ʿınde'l-īcāb vücūdundan devlet-i ʿaliyyece bir istifāde vuḳūʿuna meydān // virmemek zaʿm-ı fāsidiyle ümerā ve rüʾesāyı bir ṭaḳım müftereyāta hedef itmek ṡūretiyle // kendülerini naẓar-ı ʿālīde maḳhūr vesāʾika-yi yeʾs u nedāmetle ḫilāf-ı ṣadāḳat u ʿubūdiyet // aḥvāle mecbūr eylemek içün pek ziyāde çalışıldıġı añlaşılmaḳda ise de kāffe-i umūrda // oldıġı gibi ʿilm-i ʿālem-ārā-yi ḥaẓret-i ẓıll'u-llāh-ı aʿẓāmī bu bābdaki ḥaḳāyıḳı da tamāmiyle muḥīṭ // bulundıġına naẓaran īcābı herhālde vā-beste-yi reʾy-i fermān-ı işābet-beyān ḥażret-i velī-niʿmet-i bī-minnet // efendidir ol bābda // fī 20 cemāẕiye'l-āḫire sene 323 ve fī 9 aġustos sene 321 //*

Yāver-i ekrem-i ḥażret-i şehr-i yārī dördüncü ordu-yı hümāyūn müşīri Meḥmed Ẕekī

Translation

He [Allah]

To the Chief Scribe

Cipher from the Marshalship of the Fourth Imperial Army

R[eply] date 8 August year [1]321.[7] Mihrali Bey is originally from the Karapapak tribe from Kars. In the past issue,[8] in the Kars army, he showed very much utility in the

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7 This date corresponds to August 21, 1905, in the Gregorian calendar.

abundantly blessed path of His Excellency the Padishah. After the issue, migrating to Sivas together with his tribe, he was settled within the Kankam subdistrict, fifteen hours' distance from the Sivas center. Since the organization [formation of Hamidiye Regiments], he himself has not gone to any side, and he has been present at the head of the regiment. Because he formed a regiment in [this] auspicious organization, his rivals and ill-wishers within the Sivas province having multiplied and not having refrained from complaints against him; in order to execute the necessary counsels to him, he was summoned temporarily twice to the center of the imperial army by the imperial decree of the sovereign. His relations with the "Gentlemen Excellencies" and the expelled Fuad must absolutely not exist in any way. These reports must be purely the work of slander and calumny of his rivals and adversaries. Because this news and rumor implies and suggests [this situation]. Until now, no state or action of his has ever been well-reported [received via good intelligence]. The moment the Supreme Decree of His Excellency the Padishah regarding the Yemen assignment was notified to him, mentioning that he is ready and eager to sacrifice body and life in the auspicious path of His Excellency the Refuge of the Caliphate, and despite the people of this region being terrified of Yemen, with complete obedience and enthusiasm, within a few days, recruiting [summoning under arms] six hundred perfect [men] and showing a conscientious zeal for rapid movement, and gathering with greater speed and order than the regular [Nizamiye] and reserve [Redif] detachments, on the roads he traveled as far as Alexandretta [İskenderun], that they were not found in an action contrary to the consent of His Excellency the Shadow of God [the Padishah] has been verified by the civil and military officials located on the route. The State's ill-wishers, while in the hope and belief that these regiments would not show inclination and speed to gather when necessary, not [only] to Yemen, but even within this army; when the degree of invalidity of this hope and belief manifested itself this time as well, now [they] are

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[8] This "issue" likely refers to the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78, also known as the War of '93. Although Mihrali Bey is a figure whose biography is intertwined with legend and reality, it is considered that he rose to fame following his distinguished service during the War of '93. See Erkan Aslan, "Sözlü Gelenekte Folklorikleşen Anlatıların Gerçeklik Algısı: Mihrali Bey Örneği," *Selçuk Türkiyat* 65 (August 2025): 91-92.

striving for the wound of affliction opened in their hearts to acquire healing through such a set of imputations and slanders. It is hoped that recruiting under arms with six hundred perfect horsemen one of the regiments that [accepted] Yemen with obedience and desire and having sent [it] regularly to the Centers of the Imperial Army to be sent to Yemen, regarding the Haydaranlı chief Hüseyin Pasha as well; both the English and the Armenians, and those who have inclined towards them and serve the promotion of their ideas and ambitions, make a set of spiteful imputations.

In short, according to my humble experience and investigations thus far, it is evident that significant efforts are being made to target commanders and leaders with various slanders. These efforts stem from a malicious presumption aimed at preventing the Sublime State from benefiting from the abundance of such a massive force when necessary. By inducing despair and regret, [these detractors] seek to compel the leaders into conduct contrary to loyalty and servitude, thereby rendering them disgraced in the Supreme View. Although this is the case, as it is in all matters, considering that the world-adorning knowledge of His Excellency the Shadow of the Almighty God, has completely encompassed the truths in this regard as well, the requirement [of the matter] depends in any case on the opinion of the owner of the edict declaring correctness, the benefactor without obligation, His Excellency the Master. [I am ending the letter] upon this manner…

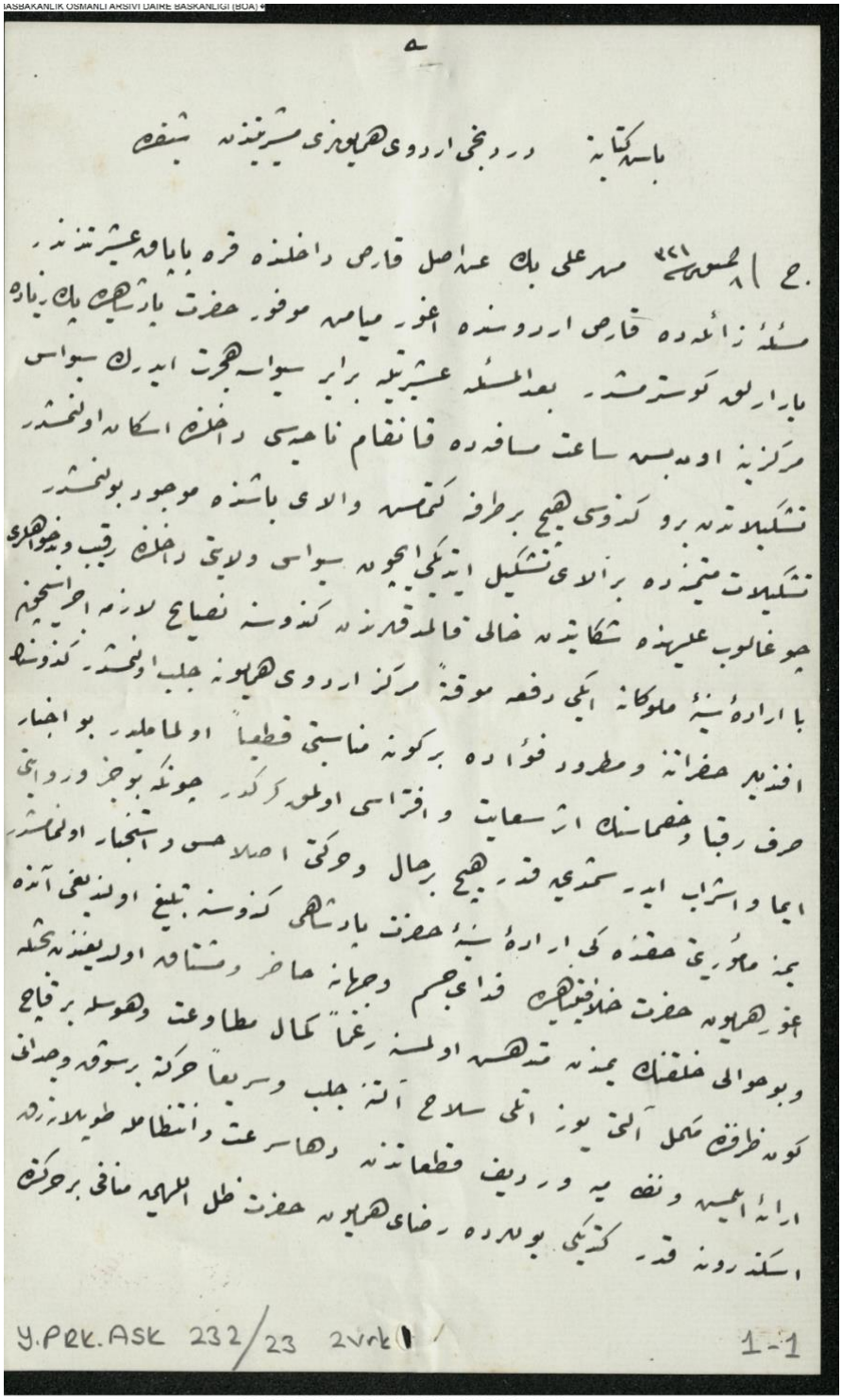
On 20 Jumada al-Akhirah, year [1]323 and on 9 August, year [1]321.[9]

His Imperial Majesty's Aide-de-Camp, Marshal of the Fourth Imperial Army, Mehmed Zeki

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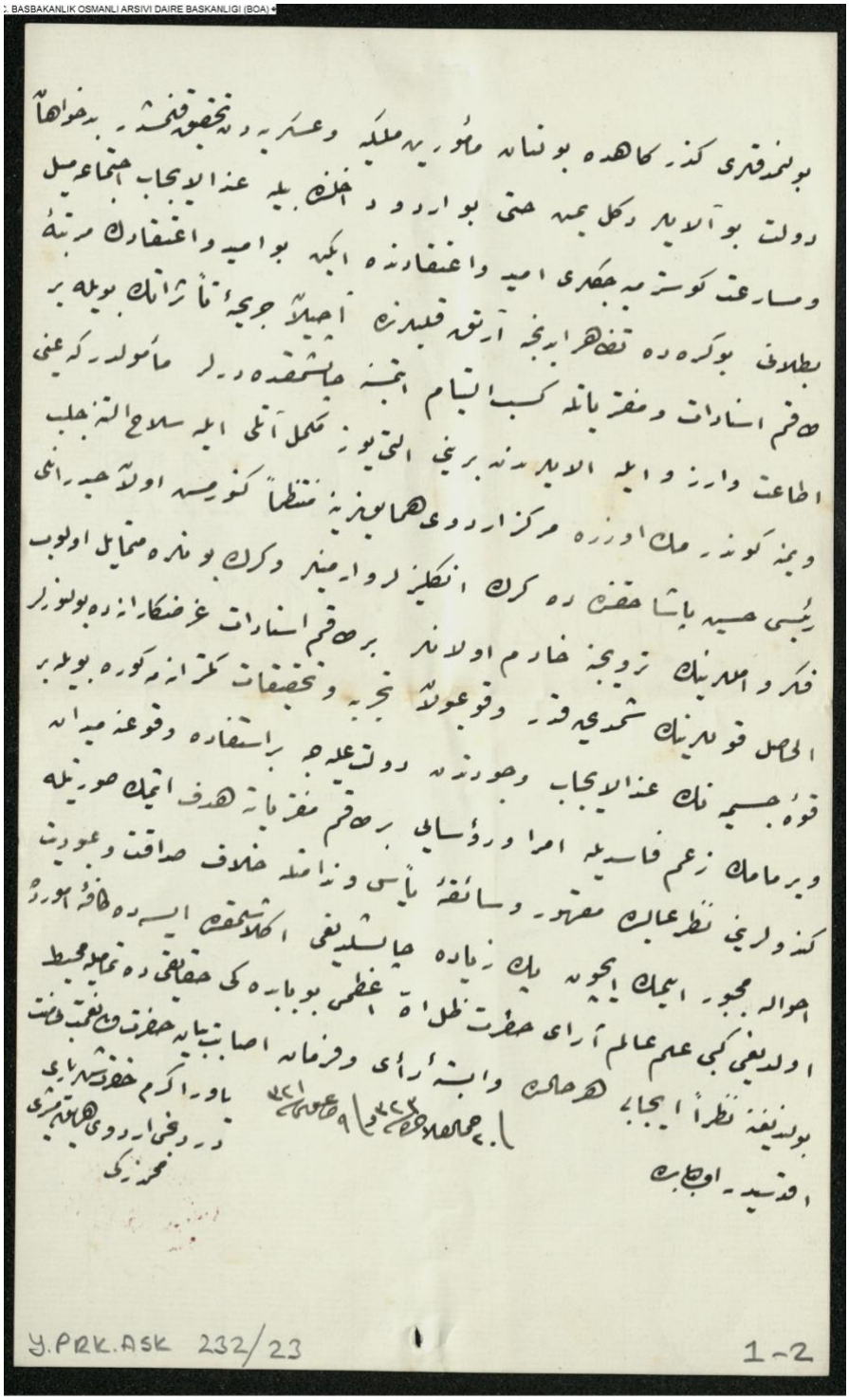
9 The first date mentioned in the line is written according to the Hijri calendar, and the second according to the Rumi calendar; both correspond to the same day: August 22, 1905.

Facsimile 1


BASBAKANLIK OSMANLI ARSIVI DAIRE BASKANLIGI (BOA)

Y.PRK.ASK.00232.00023.001

Facsimile 2



Y.PRK.ASK.00232.00023.001

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