Cevat Sucu

THE MARVELOUS SCIENCES IN *'ACEBÜ'L-'UCCĀB*: DISSEMINATING AND REFRAMING OF OCCULT KNOWLEDGE FOR THE OTTOMAN AUDIENCE IN THE EARLY FIFTEENTH CENTURY

MA Thesis in Comparative History, with a specialization
in Late Antique, Medieval, and Renaissance Studies.

Central European University

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June 2020

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by

Cevat Sucu

Turkey

Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,
Central European University, Budapest, in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Arts degree in Comparative History, with a specialization in Late Antique, Medieval, and Renaissance Studies.

Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU.

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Chair, Examination Committee

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Thesis Supervisor

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Examiner

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External Reader

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External Supervisor

I, the undersigned, **Cevat Sucu**, candidate for the MA degree in Comparative History, with a specialization in Late Antique, Medieval, and Renaissance Studies declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

Budapest, 03 June 2020

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Cevat Sucu

Abstract

This study discusses the work entitled *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb* (lit. *The Most Marvelous among Marvelous Things*) written in 1438 by Mahmud bin Kadı Manyas, also known as Manyasoğlu, contextualizing it in the lettrist trends of the Islamic world and Ottoman literary politics of the early fifteenth century. At this time, Ottoman intellectuals translated works from Arabic and Persian, commenting on, excerpting, and rearranging them to instruct Turkophone readers in various sciences and transmit the knowledge from the wider Islamic world. This period also coincided with the dissemination of lettrist practices, as well as proliferation of messianic ideas and movements with different political agendas. The courts, including Ottoman, sponsored occultist cosmopolitan intellectuals who viewed lettrism as a "queen science" of the impending messianic age. It is against this background that the thesis approaches Manyasoğlu's work that was compiled and presented to Ottoman sultan Murad II in 1438. The thesis argues that *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb* differs from contemporary lettrist and occultist works because it largely disregards millennialist, messianic, gnostic and Sufi perspectives, and focuses more on the experimental and replicable nature of the occult practices than a mystical chain of transmission. Moreover, it strives to activate occult properties for the practitioner's benefit rather than solve the theoretical problems of the cosmos. By juxtaposing it to the contemporary "cosmopolitan" occult works, the thesis argues that this lettrist text reflected Manyasoğlu's vernacular authorial strategies not only in terms of language but practice of the occult as well.

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To my mother, Nurhayat Sucu

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Introduction

Research Framework & Argument

'Acebü'l-'Uccāb (lit. *The Most Marvelous among Marvelous Things*) was written by Mahmud bin Kadı Manyas (hereafter Manyasoğlu), and presented to Ottoman ruler Murad II (r. 1421-44, 1446-51) in 1438. The main aim of this study is to discuss *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb* in the contexts of the lettrist trends of the Islamic world and Ottoman literary politics in the early fifteenth century. The science of letters or lettrism "posits the letters of the Arabic alphabet and the names of God found in the Quran as the constitutive elements of the cosmos, and when used in talismans and other practices, as the keys to the secrets of reshaping reality."[1] Lettrism found a place in the courts throughout the late medieval and early modern period, and the crisis of authority that emerged in the Islamic world in the aftermath of the Mongol destruction of the caliphate in Baghdad in 1258 was one of the reasons behind it. Muslim polities that came into existence in the wake of 1258 tried to overcome this crisis of authority by finding alternative discourses of legitimacy, most of which blended loyalty to the household of the Prophet (*ahl al-bayt*), especially his descendants through the line of 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib, with claims to *walāya* (sacral power) and help of the occult sciences. Lettrism was believed to be the science transmitted by 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib, the Twelve Imams from his lineage, and gnostics, and it was a way to decipher cycles of history. In addition to this, lettrism was considered a science that allowed the practitioner to manipulate natural phenomena for practical purposes.[2]

[1] Noah Gardiner, "Occult Sciences," in *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*, ed. Richard C. Martin (Macmillan Reference USA, 2016), 816.

[2] On lettrism, occult, and *walāya* and their role in the discourses of legitimacy in the late medieval and early modern Islamic world see Matthew Melvin-Koushki, "How to Rule the World: Occult-Scientific Manuals of the

In the "Islamic cosmopolis"[3] of the late medieval period, there were several occultist messianic and intellectual movements that were steeped in lettrism, such as the fifteenth-century *Ikhwān al-Ṣafā* (Brethren of Purity/Sincerity) and the *Ḥurūfiyya* movement that even infiltrated the Ottoman court. I consider *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb* as representative of another form of lettrism at the Ottoman court, and I pay special attention to its ties with other lettrist currents. I argue that *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb*'s approach to lettrism is distinctive due to two reasons. Firstly, unlike the representatives of the *Ḥurūfiyya* and fifteenth-century *Ikhwān al-Ṣafā*, Manyasoğlu penned his treatise in Turkish vernacular rather than Persian or Arabic. Secondly, *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb* did not have messianic, millennialist, gnostic, and "Alid" (referring to 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib) claims, whereas other contemporary examples of lettrist literature did.

Manyasoğlu gathered and recontextualized the occult information for his audience while retaining connections to the cosmopolitan Islamic intellectual tradition. His openness about his sources along with his willingness to give a theoretical background on occultism makes his work's relationship with Islamic texts and his links with lettrist ideas traceable. In the scope of this study, there is no direct comparison between *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb* and a particular lettrist text. Instead, I discuss *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb* in the context of broader occultist ideas and currents in the Islamic world.

Early Modern Persian Cosmopolis," *Journal of Persianate Studies*, no. 11 (2018): 140–54; Matthew Melvin-Koushki, "Early Modern Islamicate Empire: New Forms of Religiopolitical Legitimacy," in *The Wiley Blackwell History of Islam*, ed. Salvatore Armando (Wiley Blackwell, 2018), 353–75; Christopher Andrew Markiewicz, *The Crisis of Kingship in Late Medieval Islam: Persian Emigres and the Making of Ottoman Sovereignty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019); Hüseyin Yılmaz, *Caliphate Redefined: The Mystical Turn in Ottoman Political Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018).

[3] I use the concept of "Islamic cosmopolis" to refer to the language and mobility of scholars and manuscripts. In the Islamic world, during the fifteenth century many intellectuals were mobile and active in different courts and *madrasa*s. This was an important feature of the "international society" according to Marshall Hodgson. In addition, as Shahab Ahmed demonstrates, there was a shared textual culture in the Islamic world from Balkan-to-Bengal-Complex. In this "Islamic cosmopolis," Arabic and Persian remained as cosmopolitan languages, and intellectuals could exchange ideas and letters, establish informal networks and devote books to each other. They received their education in this cosmopolis, and they were able to become transregional intellectuals and subjects. See: Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam, Conscience and History in a World Civilization: The Expansion of Islam in the Middle Periods*, vol. 2 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1977), 444. Shahab Ahmed, *What Is Islam: The Importance of Being Islamic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 75.

In my analysis, I draw on İlker Evrim Binbaş's definition of the fifteenth-century intellectuals from the Timurid milieu and Islamic world as "cosmopolitan intellectuals."[4] These cosmopolitan intellectuals penned their works in the cosmopolitan languages (Arabic and Persian) of the Islamic world, and they had transregional informal networks, connections, and influence in terms of literary and scholarly trends as well as religiopolitical ideas. The cosmopolitan intellectuals formulated occultist-lettrist ideas and practices, and they disseminated these ideas in the service of imperial rivalry and millennial scenarios.[5] Their writing in Arabic and Persian made their writings inaccessible for most Ottoman Turkophones who by and large did not have reading skills in these languages. I suggest that Manyasoğlu had different authorial practices to convey occult and lettrist knowledge that targeted Turkophones. For this reason, I call him and other authors writing in Turkish having similar authorial practices "vernacular intellectuals."[6] Vernacular intellectuals gathered information from different sources in Arabic and Persian, and then translated, edited, and recontextualized it in vernacular Turkish according to their own ideals, the expectations of their patrons, and audience. In this respect, *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb* did not serve an imperial ideology but was rather a text written for daily and practical purposes.

Secondary literature has underlined the importance of Ibn 'Arabī's (d. 1240) thought for the occultist cosmopolitan intellectuals.[7] However, as I show, Manyasoğlu, preferred the corpus of Aḥmad al-Būnī (d. 1225), another famous Andalusian mystic who produced a considerable number of occultist texts. In order to trace the Būnīan corpus' popularity and its

[4] İlker Evrim Binbaş, *Intellectual Networks in Timurid Iran Sharaf Al-Din Ali Yazdi and the Islamicate Republic of Letters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 9. For the first appearance of the concept, see: Binbaş, 70.

[5] Melvin-Koushki, "How to Rule the World: Occult-Scientific Manuals of the Early Modern Persian Cosmopolis."

[6] I borrowed the concept of vernacular intellectuals from Sheldon Pollock, and adopted for my thesis' context. For the brief account of vernacular intellectuals in the Indian context, see Sheldon Pollock, "The Cosmopolitan Vernacular," *Journal of Asian Studies* 1, no. 57 (1998): 6–37.

[7] See: Cornell H. Fleischer, "Ancient Wisdom and New Sciences: Prophecies at the Ottoman Court in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries," in *Falnama: The Book of Omens*, ed. M. Farhad and Serpil Bağcı (Washington: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, 2009), 231–43.

place in the fifteenth-century Islamic world, I utilized the term "post-esotericist lettrism" coined by Noah Gardiner.[8] Gardiner suggests that after the fourteenth century al-Būnī's texts circulated more freely in the Islamic world, which was not the case before because eastern Islamic world was not familiar with the Andalusian Sufis' esoteric interpretation of the Quran and lettrist methods. Hence, these sciences were taught in the clandestine groups to avoid accusations of heresy in Cairo. Also, Gardiner suggests that the cosmopolitan intellectuals such as ʿAbd Al-Raḥman Bisṭāmī (d. 1454) promoted the sciences of letters to his patrons as "the queen-science of a new, messianic age"[9] and was instrumental in the dissemination of the Būnīan corpus.[10] As his predecessors, he synthesized the lettrist knowledge. Synthesis was also one of the characteristics of the occultist cosmopolitan intellectuals' authorial practices.[11]

In my discussion of lettrist practices, I also draw on Matthew Melvin-Koushki who has provided translations and editions of Ṣāʾin al-Dīn Turka Iṣfahānī's (d.1432) texts, along with the summaries from Safavid lettrist texts.[12] He has shown that Ibn Turka classified lettrism according to the approach to the science of letters. Ibn Turka terms the first group *ahl-i khavāṣṣ* (the masters of occult properties) because they dealt with practical lettrism, while he calls the second group *ahl-i ḥaqāyik* (the masters of realities) because they prioritized the theoretical framework of the science of letters to understand the cosmos and the sciences.[13] Based on this explanation, I believe it is possible to classify Manyasoğlu as

[8] Noah Gardiner, "Esotericism in a Manuscript Culture: Aḥmad al-Būnī and His Readers through the Mamlūk Period" (Ph.D. Thesis, Ann Harbor, University of Michigan, Near Eastern Studies, 2014), 321–40.
[9] Gardiner, 325.
[10] Jean-Charles Coulon and Noah Gardiner attained the same conclusion regarding the pedigrees' in *Shams al-Maʾārif* of al- Būnī. Jean-Charles Coulon, "Building Al-Būnī's Legend: The Figure of al-Būnī through ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Bisṭāmī's Shams al-Āfāq," *Journal of Sufi Studies*, no. 5 (2016): 1–26; Gardiner, "Esotericism in a Manuscript Culture: Aḥmad al-Būnī and His Readers through the Mamlūk Period," 321–40.
[11] Gardiner, "Esotericism in a Manuscript Culture: Aḥmad al-Būnī and His Readers through the Mamlūk Period," 328–29.
[12] Matthew Melvin-Koushki, "The Quest for a Universal Science: The Occult Philosophy of Ṣāʾin al-Dīn Turka Iṣfahānī (1369-1432) and Intellectual Millenarianism in Early Timurid Iran" (Ph.D. Thesis, Yale University, 2012).
[13] Melvin-Koushki, 463–89.

belonging to the category of *ahl-i khavāṣṣ*. Besides, I engaged with Melvin-Koushki's classification of lettrism as "intellectual," "Sufi," and "gnostic-messianic." I demonstrated the commonalities between "intellectual lettrism" and Manyasoğlu's approach, which takes experimentalism to the forefront while largely disregarding the chain of transmission, gnosticism, and Sufism.

Thus, in the first chapter, I examine Manyasoğlu's authorial practices together with those of early fifteenth-century vernacular intellectuals in the Ottoman domains. In the second chapter, I discuss the occultist cosmopolitan intellectuals and messianic movements, and their interactions with the fifteenth-century Ottoman court. In the third chapter, I examine *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb* as part of the fifteenth-century Islamic lettrist dynamics as well as Ottoman cultural environment supported by court patronage by paying special attention to the occult ideas and esoteric concepts.

The Structure and Content of *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb*

'Acebü'l-'Uccāb includes a wide range of topics, but centers upon three. The first chapter is on the science of *fiqh* (Islamic law), the second one is on the calculations and arithmetic, the third chapter is on the wondrous features of the sciences and occult properties of things, and the fourth and last chapter is on the occult properties of the Quran, prayers, sins, letters, and merits. In the introduction, Manyasoğlu summarizes the meaning of the terms *'ilm* and *ma'rifa* and discusses the differences between them. In the first chapter, he answers the uncommon and hypothetical religious questions. These questions are about prophecy, devils, jinns, affinities (kinship), inheritance, and the issue of affinity and inheritance. The second chapter has two sections: in the first one, the book instructs the reader in numbers and multiplications, while the second section focuses "on the features of the science of calculation," but here the author deals with the games like "where is the ring?"

"finding the number on his friend's mind," "how to know how many objects someone has," as well as the arithmetical problems like measuring a surface of a pool, and so on.

The longest chapter is the third one and it is divided into four sections. The first section is entitled "On the Secrets and Benefits of Things," where the author writes about "the features and benefits of the animals, plants, and mines." He arranged this section alphabetically to simplify the reader's work. The second section is about the secrets of marvelous things, and in this part of the work Manyasoğlu elucidates more than a hundred secrets regarding how to make a text readable (visible) or unreadable (invisible), how to produce ink for these purposes, how to break the talismans, create illusions, cause the birth of strange creatures, etc.

The third section is entitled "On the Various Things." This section has eight subsections, which are associated with (1) the calendar, (2) *ahjaz* (assigning numbers to each Arabic letter for letterist purposes), (3) foreseeing through lettrism whether a sick person will die or be cured, (4) prophesying whether a lost cattle will be found or not, (5) the calculations of *hesāb-ı kebīr*/*ṣagīr* and *abjad*/*jumel* (having the same purpose as *ahjaz* and mostly used in chronograms), (6) calculating the house (*burc*) of the moon and how many days there are in a month, (7) calculating which day is attached to which star, (8) predicting through lettrism whether your wish will be fulfilled by a particular person or not.

The fourth and the last subsection's title is "On the Secrets of the Quran, Prayers, Sins, Letters, and Graces." It has four subheadings, the first one of which is "On the Secrets of the Quran," where he explains the favors to be derived from one hundred and ten surahs. The second subheading's title is "On the Secrets of Prayers," where he discusses the blessings of thirty-four different prayers. The third one is titled "On the Secrets of the [Divine] Names," and under this title he discussed each of God's names and elaborated on their favors. The last subheading is "On the Secrets of Letters." Here Manyasoğlu classifies

letters into four groups and associates the Arabic letters with numbers, humors, stars, and seasons.

Manyasoğlu compiled his work by gathering different information from Islamic sources. Hence, when one checks his sources or reading recommendations, one realizes that he benefited from the works by scholars, litterateurs, and mystics who were very popular among the occultists, court circles, and intellectuals in a broader Islamic context. Some of the works that Manyasoğlu claimed to have used are: ʻAbd al-ʻAzīz al-Bukhārī's (d. 1330) *Kashf al- Pazdawī*, Galen's (d. 210) works, Aristotle's *Kitāb al-Hayvānī*, Avicenna's (d. 1037) *Kitāb al-Shifāʾ*, Samarqandī's (d. 983) exegesis, *Tuḥfa-i Nawādir*, whose author is not clear to me, al-Jawbarī's (d. thirteenth century) *al-Mukhtār fī kashf al-asrār wa-hatk al-astār*, Aḥmad al-Būnī's *Shams al-Maʾārif, ʻIlm al-Huda, Asrār al-Adwār,* and *Shakilāt*. Besides these books, he cites the twelfth-century Almerian jurist Shaykh Abu Abd al-Allah Andalusi, and refers to him as Shaykh Andulusi. His books are *al-Asmā al-Husnā* and *Kanz al-Maṭālib*. Manyasoğlu also refers to Hermetic texts.

In my thesis I focus in particular on the third chapter's last section, "On the Secrets of the Quran, Prayers, Sins, Letters, and Graces," since this is where Manyasoğlu's lettrist tendencies come to the fore most clearly. Yet, I refer to other sections when it is necessary to discuss certain points about the entire text's structure and Manyasoğlu's attitudes toward Sufism, gnosticism, and confessional ideas.

Literature Review

In Turkish historiography, the categories of occult and marvelous have been regarded as superstitious and perceived as unscientific. Because Agah Sırrı Levend's definition influenced many researchers, it would be appropriate to cite him here. Levend in his *Türk*

Edebiyatı Tarihi classifies the occult books under the title of "The Books Having the Characteristics of Encyclopedia." According to Levend, these sorts of books can be "prose or verse books, which define the real and superstitious sciences and branches, and explain scientific topics, features, and terms."[14] In my opinion, Levend's point of view profoundly influenced the perspective of the researchers working on *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb*.[15]

Although *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb* has been known since 1939,[16] scholars have not paid much attention to this work. Until 2017, there was a very limited number of studies that referred to it. Yet, in 2017 *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb* became the topic of one masters and one doctoral thesis, and was examined for its linguistic features.[17] The authors of the theses, Zeynep Buçukcu and Ebru S. Öztürk, both published articles on *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb*'s third chapter.[18] In addition to these works, Şermin Kalafat wrote an introductory article on the second chapter, namely the arithmetic section of *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb*.[19]

Ebru S. Öztürk and Zeynep Buçukcu argued that *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb*'s third chapter is about folk medicine, and they ignored the concept of the occult altogether. Öztürk considers the medicines discussed by Manyasoğlu as nostrums—i.e. ineffective medicines prepared by an unqualified person. For Öztürk, "these [treatments]… prove that the basis of Anatolian folklore is Shamanism."[20] Yet, Öztürk does not clarify why these cures were supposedly

[14] Agâh Sırrı Levend, *Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi*, vol. 1 (Ankara: TTK, 2000).
[15] For instance, Zeynep Buçukcu includes *'Acebu'l-'Uccâb* into the encyclopedic works by referring to fkala. See: Zeynep Buçukcu, "Manyaslı Mahmud ve Aceb'ül-Üccab'ının Halk Hekimliği Bölümü," *Akademik Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, no. 68 (2018): 468.
[16] A. Adnan Adıvar, *Osmanlı Türklerinde İlim*, (İstanbul: Remzi, 1982 [1939]), 29.
[17] Zeynep Buçukcu, "Mahmud Bin Kadı-i Manyas'ın A'cebü'l-'Üccâb Adlı Eserinin Transkripsiyon ve Dizini" (Unpublished MA Thesis, Hacettepe University, 2017); Ebru Öztürk Silahşor, "Mahmūd b. Kadî-i Manyâs, Acebü'l-'Uccāb, (İnceleme, Tenkitli Metin, Gramatikal Dizin)" (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Atatürk University, Turkish Language, 2017).
[18] Zeynep Buçukcu, "Manyaslı Mahmud ve Aceb'ül-Üccab'ının Halk Hekimliği Bölümü," *Akademik Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, no. 68 (2018): 467–531; Ebru Öztürk Silahşor, "15. Yüzyılda Yazılmış 'Aceb'ül-'Uccab Adlı Eserde Maden, Bitki ve Hayvanların Dinsel-Büyüsel ve Tıbbi İşlevleri," *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Türkoloji Dergisi* 22, no. 2 (2018): 109–64.
[19] Şermin Kalafat, "Anadolu (Osmanlı) Sahasında Yazılmış En Eski Tarihli Türkçe Matematik Risalesi: Mahmud Bin Kadı-i Manyas'on Aʿcebü'l-ʿÜccab'ı -Hesap Bölümü-," *Turkish Studies: International Periodical For the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic* 12, no. 30 (2017): 243–98.
[20] Öztürk Silahşor, "15. Yüzyılda Yazılmış 'Aceb'ül-'Uccab Adlı Eserde Maden, Bitki ve Hayvanların Dinsel-Büyüsel ve Tıbbi İşlevleri," 113.

derived from Shamanism, which contrasts with Manyasoğlu's constant references in his work to the well-known books of the Islamic world. Zeynep Buçukcu, on the other hand, makes a remark on his sources. According to her, even if Manyasoğlu "refers to well-known physicians such as Avicenna, Hermes, Ibn Baitar and Galen," these references "fall short of making it a medical text." Furthermore, she argues that "his [contradictory] statements corroborate this point," and that the absence of standard measurements "distances it from being scientific."[21]

Nonetheless, it is quite apparent that Manyasoğlu did not intend to write "a scientific" medical text. At the beginning of the third chapter, he notes that he will "explain the occult properties and secret features of animals, plants, and minerals." [22] Moreover, Buçukcu assumes that Hermes is "a well-known physician," while he was one of the most important occult figures in Islamic tradition who was equated to Prophet Idris. The writings of Avicenna and Galen have a significant place in the Islamic occult sciences as well. Above all, the book's very title gestures towards the occult. Yet, I do not mean that "folk", having an ambiguous meaning in the pre-modern context, did not read or use this book in the fifteenth century or later on, nor do I claim that the occult sciences are entirely irrelevant to the folklore. I avoid making distinctions between "popular" and "learned" culture, because, as Roger Chartier points out,

> Above all, the "popular" can indicate a kind of relation, a way of using cultural products or norms that are shared, more or less, by society at large, but understood, defined, and used in styles that vary. Such an argument evidently changes the work of the historian or sociologist because it requires identifying and distinguishing not cultural sets defined in themselves as popular, but rather the ways in which common cultural sets are appropriated differently.[23]

[21] Buçukcu, "Manyaslı Mahmud ve Aceb'ül-Üccab'ının Halk Hekimliği Bölümü," 477.
[22] Mahmud b. Kadı Manyas, "'Acebu'l-'Uccâb" (Manuscript, Princeton University, 38 1437), 26a-b, 1010, Princeton University Rare Collection; Mahmud b. Kadı Manyas, "Kitāb-ı 'Acebü'l-'Uccāb" (Paris, 1601), 31a-b, Département des manuscrits. Supplément turc 203, Bibliothèque nationale de France.
[23] Roger Chartier, "Forms and Meanings" (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 89.

I suggest that *'Acebü'l-Uccāb* was written for the Turkophones at the Ottoman courts who constituted a local social and learned elite and yet may have had a certain practical expectation or need from this text akin to what could be also found among the 'folk.' Furthermore, manuscripts were also mobile and might have been read or listened to in the rural areas. They could have been brought to other regions by officials who visited or were promoted to certain places.

In this study, the definition of the occult given by Noah Gardiner is explanatory in terms of *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb*. According to Gardiner, occultism entails "theories and practices of discerning and harnessing the hidden—i.e. 'occult'—properties of various phenomena (stars and planets, gems, herbs, magnets, the letters of the alphabet, etc.)."[24] This definition is notable for two reasons. Firstly, it recognizes occultism as a crossroads between natural phenomena and science. Secondly, this definition provides insight into why occultist texts have "encyclopedic features:" since occult texts focus on the secret properties of the objects, they need to define and describe the objects and illuminate their beneficial and harmful properties. These two reasons are highly applicable to *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb*.

Nevertheless, it must be noted that for a litterateur or scholar of the pre-modern era, the knowledge of *ʿajāʾib* was not considered a superstition; on the contrary, it was a category of epistemology concerned with the "order of knowledge," including the theory of humor qualities,[25] along with the Quranic exegesis, *maʿrifa* (gnosis) and cosmology. Having the knowledge of *khawāṣṣ* [occult properties], a Sufi, a litterateur, or a scholar could elucidate the phenomena of the sublunar world and explain "the supernatural" deeds and incidents. It

[24] Noah Daedalus Gardiner, "Stars and Saints: The Esotericist Astrology of the Sufi Occultist Aḥmad al-Būnī," 2017, 46.

[25] See the important comment of Gottfried Hagen: "Given the use of such obvious or secret correspondences between body, substances and environment, by modern scientific concepts certain aspects of Ottoman medical practice appear sound and others as pure magic. However, such an extraneous evaluation misses the crucial point that these correspondences all follow the same logic, and adherents regularly claim that experience has proven the validity of these practices." Here, Gottfried Hagen emphasizes the importance of experiment for the Ottoman learned men. Gottfried Hagen, "The Order of Knowledge, the Knowledge of Order: Intellectual Life," in *The Cambridge History of Turkey: The Ottoman Empire as a World Power, 1453-1603*, ed. Suraiya N. Faroqhi and Kate Fleet, vol. 2 (Cambridge University Press, 2013), 431–32.

might be useful here to cite Marinnos Sariyannis' evaluation; "indeed, in cultures where the rational science has not yet established its independence from theology and religion (…), the notion of 'nature' is practically very near to that of 'God'. God being omnipotent, no event or phenomenon can be impossible, no matter how extraordinary it may seem."[26] Thus, the Islamic occultism, blended with Greek philosophy and teachings from Persian, Indian, and other traditions, was a science that related to Islamic theology, cosmogony, and cosmology. Many litterateurs and scholars acknowledged it as legitimate and important science rather than perceiving it as "unreal" or "superstitious."

Primary Sources

There are fifteen copies of the full text of *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb* that have been traced so far.[27] In addition, three different anthologies have chapters from *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb*. The first one, "Risāle-i 'Ilm u Ma'rifet" (The Treatise on Knowledge and Gnosis) is in the Kastamonu Provincial Library,[28] the second one is in Oxford Bodleian Library, the third one is in the İstanbul Millet Library. The first one is a part of an anthology compiled in the seventeenth including works about faith and belief, and a commentary on the surah Fatiha written by the renown chief judge Ebu's-Su'ūd Efendi (d. 1574).[29] The Kastamonu copy involves the first chapter, a part of the second chapter, and a passage of the third chapter of *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb*. The Oxford Bodleian Library anthology includes the arithmetic chapter of *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb*.

[26] Marinos Sariyannis, "Aja'ib and Gharaib: Ottoman Collections of Mirilabia and Perceptions of the Supernatural," *Der İslam* 2, no. 92 (2015): 443.
[27] Zeynep Buçukcu and Ebru Silahşor Öztürk each detected ten copies. According to their findings there are fifteen copies of *'Acebu'l-'Uccâb* in the archives of Süleymaniye Library (four copies), Topkapı Palace (two copies), Istanbul University (two copies), Konya Provincial Public Library (one copy), Millet Library (one copy), Ankara National Library (one copy), Hungarian Academy of Sciences (one copy), Bosnia Gazi Husrev Library (one copy), Richelieu Sorbonne Library (one copy), Princeton University Library (one copy). See: Buçukcu, "Manyaslı Mahmud ve Aceb'ül-Üccab'ının Halk Hekimliği Bölümü," 470; Ebru Öztürk Silahşor, "15. Yüzyılda Yazılmış 'Aceb'ül-'Uccab Adlı Eserde Maden, Bitki ve Hayvanların Dinsel-Büyüsel ve Tıbbi İşlevleri," *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Türkoloji Dergisi* 22, no. 2 (2018): 111.
[28] Mahmud b. Kadı Manyas, Risale-i İlm ve Marifet, (Kastamonu İl Halk Kütüphanesi, 37 hk 1568/4)
[29] Mahmud b. Kadi Manyas, (Oxford Bodleian Library, MS Turk. e. 33/2). Turkish catalogs falsely claim that this text was written by Muwaqqit Mustafa b. Ali Rumi (d. 1571). see: http://yazmalar.gov.tr/eser/acebul-ucab/97600 However, Oxford catalog has the true entry.

The third anthology's name is *Mirāt-ı Kā'ināt* (The Mirror of the Universe), and it was compiled by the seventeenth century's well-known Sufi Hüsameddin Bursāvi (d. 1632) and presented to Osman II.[30]

In this study, I used three copies of *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb*. I primarily worked with the oldest copy, which is registered in Princeton University Rare Collection 1010, and available in open access.[31] Princeton copy's date is the same with the compilation date-1438, and its ownership record suggests that it belonged to the gatekeeper Maʿrifetli Mustafa Agha, but the record is not dated. Since the Princeton manuscript has few ambiguous or unintelligible tables and expressions, I also consulted the Sorbonne (BNF) manuscript, copied in 1601-2, which is also open to access.[32] Due to its different title, "The Treatise on the Knowledge and Gnosis," I read Kastamonu anthology as well, and from time to time I benefited from the copyist's explanations, not available in the Princeton copy.

I also benefited from Manyasoğlu's other works, *Lugat-ı Manyasoglı* [33] and *Gülistān*,[34] while discussing his authorial practices.

[30] Hüsameddin Bursavi, Mirat-ı Kainat, (Reşid Efendi -Millet Ktb.- no. 671), see: http://yazmalar.gov.tr/eser/mirat-ikainat/107014

[31] https://dpul.princeton.edu/catalog/bk128995t (last accessed on 27.05.2020) This is the copy on which Zeynep Buçukcu also worked. However, after I began to work with the manuscript, I read many crucial words and passages differently from her. Therefore, throughout the thesis, I refer to the manuscript itself rather than her transcription of it. Zeynep Buçukcu, "Mahmud Bin Kadı-i Manyas'ın A'cebü'l-'Üccâb Adlı Eserinin Transkripsiyon ve Dizini" (MA, Ankara, Hacettepe University, 2017).

[32] https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b525081997 (last accessed on 27.05.2020)

[33] Mahmud b. Kadı Manyas, "Lugat-ı Manyâsoglı" (İstanbul, 1598), Nazif Paşa 1486, Süleymaniye Yazma Eserler Kütüphanesi.

[34] Mahmud b. Kadı Manyas, *Gülistan Tercümesi (Giriş-İnceleme-Metin-Sözlük)*, ed. Mustafa Özkan (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu, 1993).

Chapter 1 - The Vernacular Authorship and Dissemination of Knowledge in the Early Fifteenth Century Ottoman World

In the early fifteenth century, Ottoman court-poets penned a multitude of works in multiple genres. Apart from poetry, they wrote compendia in Turkish to transmit the knowledge from the Islamic world in different sciences, and instruct their Turkophone readers who did not have sufficient reading skills in Arabic and Persian. Even in this early stage of the institutionalization of literary and scholarly foundations, these authors and poets cooperated with the court and the political elites, and disseminated the sciences of the Islamic world to the literate, mostly Turkophone bureaucrats and officials. In this chapter, I focus on the manuals and authorial practices of these so-called court-poets, whom I refer to as "vernacular intellectuals." I argue that through the patronage system and the communities of learned men they established "court-centered" literature, through which court educated literates according to its ideals. Even though Manyasoğlu is known as a scholar rather than a court-poet, his authorial practices and interests were very akin to those of vernacular intellectuals. He was interested in poetry, compiled a manual and a Persian guidebook, wrote the first Turkish translation of Sa'di Shirāzī's *Gülistān* in Anatolia, and engaged with the court. My aim in this chapter is to describe the dynamics of the early fifteenth-century Ottoman literary world and vernacular authorship, and situate Manyasoğlu's writing practices and motivations in this context.

The Vernacular and Court-Centered Book Culture

The emergence of Turkish language as a literary and scholarly medium goes back to the early fourteenth century, a period when Sufi literary works also appeared and were intensely read. Nevertheless, the emergence of literature in Turkish vernacular seems to have been a post-Mongol phenomenon. By 1277, Mongols took control over Anatolia, pushing many Turkmen tribes like Aydinids, Karasi, and Germiyanids to western Anatolia, along the borders with the Byzantine Empire. Turkomans fleeing to western Anatolia shifted the demographic structure of the region, and the number of Turkophones increased.[35] These developments were accompanied by the rise of Anatolian principalities as political powers. On the one hand, Sufi authors, such as Āşık Paşa and Gülşehri penned their works in Turkish for urban confraternity (*futuwwa*) circles and Mongol warriors. On the other, recently emerged Anatolian principalities commenced to sponsor vernacular literary, administrative, and religious texts.[36] The emergence of Turkish as a written literary and administrative device in the "Roman" (*Rum*)[37] lands was a new phenomenon. Even though Turkish dynasties ruled over the Persianate world before, Persian and Arabic, with their cosmopolitan prestige, remained dominant administrative, literary and scholarly languages.

In the fourteenth century, Anatolian principalities fostered the vernacularization of literary, religious, and administrative texts through the patronage system. There might have been multiple reasons behind the vernacularization. Moreover, as Sheldon Pollock suggests for Sanskrit cosmopolis,[38] this process unfolded in Anatolia simultaneously with other

[35] Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, "Social, Cultural and Intellectual Life, 1071–1453," in The Cambridge History of Turkey, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 360–65.
[36] A. C. S. Peacock, *Islam, Literature and Society in Mongol Anatolia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 164–67.
[37] For the concept of Rūm, see Salih Özbaran, *Bir Osmanlı Kimliği: 14.-17. Yüzyıllarda Rûm/Rûmi Aidiyet ve İmgeleri* (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2013); Cemal Kafadar, "Introduction: A Rome of One's Own: Reflections on Cultural Geography and Identity in the Lands of Rum," *Muqarnas* 24, no. History and Ideology: Architectural Heritage of the "Lands of Rum" (2007): 7–25.
[38] Sheldon Pollock, "The Cosmopolitan Vernacular," Journal of Asian Studies 1, no. 57 (1998): 6–37; Sheldon Pollock, The Language of the Gods in the World of Men: Sanskrit, Culture, and Power in Premodern India

regions, and the dynamics and reasons for this wait to be examined. These vernacular texts were significant for two major reasons. First, they transmitted the knowledge of the 'Islamic cosmopolis' for Turkophones, and second, they determined the technical terms of various sciences in Turkish language. I will return to this point below. Thus, with the efforts of the Anatolian principalities, by the early fifteenth century Turkish gradually became the prevalent language of the literary circles and administrative officials.

Under the influence of the nineteenth-century nationalist historiography, the preeminent agents of this process were regarded as unoriginal and imitative court poets.[39] The historiography had a penchant for rigidly separating their "literary works" such as lyric poetry (*ghazal*), *mathnawī*, and panegyric poetry (*qaṣīda*) from their texts on the wide variety of topics like exegesis, prose manuals, creedal books and so on. This perspective contributed to the image of court-poets as isolated from society and stuck in the court. Yet, the translation studies,[40] and the historians discussing the books and treatises *in toto* and/or in the certain context opened up new perspectives.

Two studies, examining court-poets and intellectuals, are remarkable since they investigated their works in relation to the historical context and audience. One of these

(Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006). According to Pollock, the vernacularization is not an accidental process, but rather supported by the court patronage, denoting the "choice" of political powers using vernacular language as a literary device against the cosmopolitan language. According to him, this process has three phases; literalization, literarization, and superimposition, when the vernacular becomes vernacular cosmopolitan. While Pollock's model is useful for the Ottoman context, it is also problematic because it overemphasizes the usage and status of vernacular languages against the cosmopolitan one. For instance, even though Ottoman Turkish language turned out to be a predominant literary language in the so-called "core-Ottoman domains," Arabic continued to be a medium of madrasa education and was accepted as a sacred language. Quran was in Arabic, and this fact gave it a higher status among the *elsine-i selase* (three languages: Arabic, Persian and Turkish). In addition, Pollock himself includes Europe/Latin cosmopolis into the same discussion. See also Sheldon Pollock, "India in the Vernacular Millenium: Literary Culture and Polity, 1000-1500," Daedalus 3, no. 127 (1998): 41–74.

[39] For the most influential literary and cultural studies see M. F. Köprülü, "Method in Turkish Literary History," trans. Gary Leiser 11, no. 1 (April 2008): 53–84; Elias John Wilkinson Gibb, *A History of Ottoman Poetry*, vol. I–VI (London: Luzac-, 1900); Abdülbâki Gölpınarlı, *Divan Edebiyatı Beyanındadır* (İstanbul: Marmara Kitabevi, 1945). For criticism of this approach see Walter G. Andrews, *Poetry's Voice Society's Song: Ottoman Lyric Poetry* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1985).

[40] For the examples see: Saliha Paker, "Turkish Tradition," in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (London: Routledge, 1998), 573–76; Cemal Demircioğlu, "From Discourse to Practice: Rethinking 'Translation' (Terceme) and Related Practices of Text Production in the Late Ottoman Literary Tradition" (İstanbul, Boğaziçi Üniversitesi, 2005).

studies is "The Origins of Classical Ottoman Literature, Persian Tradition, Court Entertainments, and Court Poets" written by Halil İnalcık.[41] Even though İnalcık focused on the affinities of these poets with the court through *adab* (etiquette) works, he also underlined their pedagogical significance in the establishment of Perso-Islamic culture in the Ottoman court. According to him, these *adab* works taught the social gatherings (*işret meclisleri*), where intellectual matters were discussed and poems were recited, and it was an important element of the court culture. İnalcık emphasized the transfer of Germiyan poets to the Ottoman court, and clarified the connections between the Anatolian principalities and Ottomans regarding acculturation of the Ottoman court. The second was written by Sara Nur Yıldız, in her article she investigated Aydinid court patronage through the *adab* books, and drew a more complete picture: the scholars and litterateurs did not only write books for the madrasas and court, but they also wrote for the commoners.[42]

As I stated above, before these developments, most of the prose texts written by these court-poets escaped the attention of the historians of literature, or rather, their other works were excluded from the record of their literary authorship. While these authors wrote poems, at the same time they composed, compiled, and translated texts concerning different sciences. In this way, they strove to standardize the terminology in vernacular Turkish, transmitted the knowledge to Turkish speakers, and instructed the audience in certain sciences such as prose writing, Persian and Arabic languages, literary arts, and so on. Since the works sponsored by Anatolian principalities and written by these authors reached the audience outside the court and madrasa circles, instead of calling them court-poets, I call them "vernacular intellectuals."

[41] Halil İnalcık, "The Origins of Classical Ottoman Literature, Persian Tradition, Court Entertainments, and Court Poets," trans. Michael D. Sheridan, *Journal of Turkish Literature*, no. 8 (2008): 5–76.
[42] Sara Nur Yıldız, "Aydınid Court Literature in the Formation of an Islamic Identity in Fourteenth-Century Western Anatolia," in *Islamic Literature and Intellectual Life in Fourteenth- and Fifteenth-Century Anatolia* (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag Würzburg in Komission, 2016), 197–242.

The notion of vernacular intellectuals derives from authorship practices. They compiled texts by drawing from the multitude of "canonical" Arabic and Persian sources, translated or paraphrased them in Turkish, and arranged them in an abridged version. Apart from the authors' ideals and preferences, in terms of the content and the language they also considered the factors of audience, demands of the patron, and religiopolitical structures. Likewise, they translated literary, religious, and scholarly works from Islamic cosmopolis. The choice of the text to be translated and the way of translation depended on the same criteria. These books could aim at entertaining the reader as well, but for this discussion I underline their intention to instruct the readers in sciences and serve as guidebooks and manuals. These guidebooks may include professional manuals, grammar books, dictionaries, rhetoric books, creeds, exegeses, encyclopedic works, or, as is the case with Manyasoğlu, an occult manual.

Referring to these figures as vernacular intellectuals does not mean that they were not courtiers or did not cooperate with the court; on the contrary, they had strong ties with the court. Among these vernacular intellectuals, Şeyhoğlu Mustafa (d. 1414) was a chancellor in the Germiyanid court, Ahmedī (1412-13) was a boon-companion of several rulers, Ahmed-i Dā'ī (after 1421) was a judge, but his works signify that he attended the social-gatherings of Ottoman rulers, and was a tutor of Murad II. For instance, Ahmed-i Dā'ī presented his *Çeng-nāme* to Süleyman Çelebi, the Ottoman prince who was defeated and killed during the Interregnum in 1411, by putting down a *qaṣīda* for his vizier Mehmed Pasha (unknown).[43] The vizier of Murad II, Umur Bey asked Ahmed-i Dā'ī to write several works. It seems there was a cooperation between the vernacular intellectuals and the court and political elites, so that both played an active role in the composition of books.

[43] Ahmed-i Dā'ī, *Çengname*, trans. Günay Kut (Cambridge: The Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations Harvard University, 1992), 317–22.

In this regard, some authors presented their work to the court to influence the court's perspective. In some instances, the author knew the tendencies in the Ottoman court and wrote his work according to these standards. There are also multiple indicators that the court requested and intervened in the translation work of the vernacular intellectuals. For example, litterateur Mercimek Ahmed (d. unknown) translated Persian *adab* book *Ḳābūṣnāme* in 1431-32, and the work was commissioned by Murad II. The sultan regarded previous translation with disfavor, and asked Ahmed to retranslate it.[44] In another instance, Muhammed bin Mahmud Şirvānī told that Murad II asked him to translate an abridged version of the *History of Ibn Kesir*.[45] There are other conversations between translators and patrons, who were political elites and sultans, like aforementioned Timurtaşoğlu Umur Bey who told Şirvānī that he had a book about precious stones in Arabic, and asked him to translate it into Turkish.[46] Şirvānī presented another book to Murad II, and expressed that he appreciated the favors of the Ottomans, especially Murad II and his father Mehmed. Thus, the Ottoman court took active role in terms of selecting the books and the ways of their translation. These books were not only for personal use of the patrons but rather the political elites and sultans tried to "make Islamic culture in its broadest sense accessible to a wider audience in Anatolia and the Balkans."[47] Tim Stanley made this comment on Umur Bey's library, which was in Bursa and Bergama, and was accessible to the local community. Hence, it is hard to discern how its audience could include all of Anatolia and Balkans. Nevertheless, Umur Bey's library indicates that the court endeavored to foster a literary culture, aiming to edify Turkophone readers. Through libraries, court must have transmitted its moral, administrative and

[44] Keykâvus, Kabusnâme, ed. Orhan Şaik Gökyay, trans. Mercimek Ahmed (İstanbul: Kabalcı Yayınevi, 2007), 42.
[45] The translator of *Ibn Kesir Tarihi* is controversial, but Şirvâni is different from the author of *Cevhernâme*, who possibly bore the same name. See: Necdet Okumuş, "Şirvânî, Muhammed b. Mahmūd," in *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınevi, 2010), 206–8.
[46] Demircioğlu, "From Discourse to Practice: Rethinking 'Translation' (Terceme) and Related Practices of Text Production in the Late Ottoman Literary Tradition," 123.
[47] Tim Stanley, "The Books of Umur Bey," *Muqarnas* 21 (2004): 325.

religiopolitical claims and values to the public. Umur Bey and his library nicely illustrate this point.

Umur Bey's family had close ties with the Ottoman rulers since Osman Bey (r. ca. 1299-1326). His father Kara Timurtaş Paşa (d. 1404) served as a governor of Rumelia (*beylerbeyi*) and vizier, and was active during the reigns of Orhan Gazi (r. 1323/4-62), Murad I (r. 1362-89) and Bayezid I (1389-1402). Three of his five sons, Umur, Oruç, and Ali Bey were assigned in 1421 to the vizierate when Murad II's brother Düzmece Mustafa (d. 1422) revolted against the new sultan.[48] In 1423, after triumphing over his brother, Murad II reduced the numbers of viziers. In the same year, Umur Bey was appointed as an envoy to the Germiyanids and may have stayed there until 1429, when the Germiyanid ruler Yakub II died. The family must have had close ties with the principality: Timurtaş Paşa resided there for some time when he was a *beylerbeyi*, and after Umur Bey left the post, his son Osman Çelebi was appointed to the Germiyan sanjak. Furthermore, Umur Bey endowed properties such as a mosque, madrasa, and bathhouse in the Germiyan region.[49]

Umur Bey is famous for his endowments for constructions such as madrasas, mosques, caravansaries and baths in western Anatolian cities of Bursa, Bergama, Afyon, as well as Edirne in Rumeli. Besides, he commissioned multiple books written by early fifteenth-century renowned intellectuals such as Ahmed-i Dā'ī (d. after 1421) and Mahmūd Şirvānī (d. after 1438). However, for the literary and cultural historians Umur Bey's most remarkable legacy are the libraries in Bursa and Bergama. According to the *waqf* (endowment) record arranged in 1440, the former one comprised forty-one volumes in Turkish, and was in the service of mosque community, whereas the latter one contained

[48] Adem Apak, "Osmanlı Devleti'nin Kuruluş Döneminde Bursalı Bir Vezir Ailesi: Kara Timurtaşoğulları," Marife, no. 1 (2002): 181–96.
[49] Stanley, "The Books of Umur Bey," 324.

three-hundred six volumes in Arabic, and was open to the instructors and students.[50] For the purpose of this research I focus on the books entitled "Kütüb-ü Türkiyye," endowed to the mosque.[51] In the endowment record, Umur Bey requested that the reader must not take the book outside the library, and if they want to take the books out, they must pawn something worthy, but they must not leave Bursa.

The list of books includes most of the works written by important vernacular intellectuals from Germiyanid and Ottoman courts such as Ahmedī, Şeyhoğlu Mustafa, Ahmed-i Dā'ī, and Musa İznikī. Umur Bey's residence and close ties with Germiyanids must have led to the inclusion of the works from both courts. The list includes a number of books by the protégés of Umur Bey, Ahmed-i Dā'ī and Musa İznikī, as well as other authors. Thus, it contained Musa İznikī's translation of Abū'l-Layth Samarqandī's exegesis, *Tadhkirat al-Awliya*, Ahmed-i Dā'ī's translation of *Tıbb-ı Nebevī* from al-Tifāshī's abridged version of al-Iṣfahānī's *Marzubannāme*, which was a book of Persian fables translated by Germiyanid chancellor and later Ottoman courtier Şeyhoğlu Mustafa, a Turkish translation of *Mirṣād al-'Ibād*, which is probably another work by Şeyhoğlu Mustafa entitled *Kenzü'l-Kübera*, and *Tābirnāme* translated by Ahmed-i Dā'ī and presented to Germiyanid ruler Yakub II. In addition, İsmail Erünsal counts among these books Ahmedī's *İskendernāme* (The Book of Alexander).[52] Therefore, I suggest that the court made effort to disseminate its values and edify the Turkophone readers. The writings of vernacular intellectuals seem to have presupposed that these books would be copied and passed from hand to hand in the cities.

[50] The rules of benefiting from the library varied over time, but it seems that in every phase it remained open to the community. For the information on Umur Bey's library see İsmail Erünsal, "Umur Bey Kütüphanesi," in TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi (İstanbul: TDV Yayınevi, 2012), 159; İsmail Erünsal, *Osmanlılarda Kütüphaneler ve Kütüphanecilik: Tarihî Gelişimi ve Organizasyonu* (İstanbul: Timaş, 2015), 90. For detailed discussion, see Stanley, "The Books of Umur Bey." For more information about the madrasa in Bergama and endowments in Bursa, see Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi, *Osmanlı Mi'mârîsinde Çelebi ve II. Sultan Murad Devri*, Vol. II (İstanbul: Baha Matbaası, 1972), 270, 337–46.
[51] Erünsal, "Umur Bey Kütüphanesi," 159.
[52] Erünsal, 159–60.

Even when the book was presented to the court, the authors addressed it to the wider audience.

Yet, the vernacular intellectuals did not only present books to the court. They probably cooperated with other learned men and perceived themselves as a community. In a certain sense, this would not be surprising, as Selim S. Kuru claims that from the fifteenth century onward "a high form of literature was consciously crafted by poets of Rum (…) to distinguish themselves from mystical and folk literature."[53] These poets "were the products of an intricate and heterogeneous education system, which prepared intellectually elevated state officers,"[54] and similar tendencies probably applied to prose and likely started in the earlier period. The so-called court-poets wrote books they expected to fit the interests of Turkophone officials, either of high or low-mid ranks.

In order to elaborate this point, I will discuss Ahmed-i Dā'ī's works, who as Günay Kut suggests, must have died after 1421.[55] Ahmed-i Dā'ī was one of the most prolific vernacular intellectuals of his time. He presented works to Ottoman prince Süleyman Çelebi, Germiyanid ruler Yakub II, Ottoman sultans Mehmed I and Murad II. In addition, Ahmed-i Dā'ī penned a Persian-Turkish lexicon *Ukūdü'l-Cevāhir*[56] for Murad II when the latter was a prince, so he may have been the tutor of the prince. He also translated a book of dream interpretation, a work of exegesis,[57] Tusi's book on calendar-making entitled *Si-Fasl*,[58] a creedal book, book on prophetic medicine, two small *masnawi*s of the prophecies

[53] Selim S. Kuru, "The Literature of Rum: The Making of a Literary Tradition (1450-1600)," in *The Cambridge History of Turkey: The Ottoman Empire as a World Power, 1453-1603*, ed. Suraiya N. Faroqhi and K. Fleet, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 549.
[54] Kuru, 549.
[55] Günay Kut, "Ahmed-i Dâî," in TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi (Ankara: TDV Yayınevi, 1989).
[56] Şükrü Özdemir, "Ahmed-i Dā'ī'nin Ukudü'l-Cevahir'i İnceleme-Tenkitli Metin-Sözlük" (Yayımlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Kütahya, Dumlupınar Üniversitesi, Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı, 2015).
[57] Orhan Pekçetin, "Ahmed-i Dâ'î'nin Vesîletü'l-Mülūk Li-Ehli's-Sülūk Adlı Eseri (1b-58b) (Metin-İnceleme-Sözlük)" (İstanbul, İstanbul Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı, 2010).
[58] Nasir el-Din el-Tusi, Muhtasar Fi' 'ilm El-Tencim ve-Ma'rifet El-Takvim : Risale-i Si Fasl, ed. T. N. Gencan and M. Dizer, trans. Ahmed-i Dâ'î (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Kandilli Rasathanesi, 1984).

(*Camasbnāme*),[59] a mirror-for-princes (*Vasiyet-i Nuşirevān*),[60] and a metrics manual.[61] He also compiled manifold treatises and books to teach Persian[62] and prose writing (*inşā*).[63] In addition, he has two *Divān*s in Persian and Turkish, in which there are multiple examples of his participation in social gatherings of Süleyman Çelebi, Mehmed I, and Murad II.[64] He also translated *Çeng-nāme mathnawi* depicting social gatherings and introducing musical concepts, from Sā'di Shirāzī.[65]

Three among his works were not sponsored and were written for the beginners in the sciences. These works suggest that vernacular intellectuals' works could reach the Turkophones in the cities through libraries, as in the example of Umur Bey's foundation, and instruct them in certain sciences. The first example of these works is *Teressül*, a guidebook on prose and letter-writing. In this book, Ahmed-i Dā'ī followed the tradition of Persian and Arabic manuals and designed his book by taking them as a model. Accordingly, he informs his readers that he benefited from Arabic and Persian books while compiling his work. He did not collect the letters; rather he wrote hypothetical letters to people from different social and bureaucratic ranks without naming them. The book includes ten "manners" (*adab*) with detailed descriptions of how to address the recipient according to his/her social status, the ways of folding the letter, using pen and ink, etc. Furthermore, he expressed the reason for composing his book by saying that "it might be beneficial for the beginners (*mübtedi*

[59] Kazım Köktekin, "Ahmed-i Dâ'î'nin Camasbnâme Tercümesi ve Dili," A. Ü. Türkiyat Araştırmaları Enstitüsü Dergisi, no. 13 (1999): 27–48.
[60] Emine Yeniterzi, "Ahmed-i Dâ'î'nin Vasiyyet-i Nūşirevân Adlı Mesnevisi," Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi, no. 19 (2006): 1–25.
[61] Ahmet Sevgi, "Ahmed-i Dâ'î'nin Bilinmeyen Bir Eseri: İlm-i Aruz," Selçuk Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi, no. 18 (2007): 1–11.
[62] Abdullah Çetin, "Ahmed-i Dā'ī'nin Farsça Öğretmek Amacıyla Yazdığı Bir Eser: Müfredat," Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi, n.d., 113–28.
[63] Halil İbrahim Haksever, "Ahmed-i Dâ'î'nin Teressül'ü," Turkish Studies 6, no. 1 (2011): 1265–73; İ. Çetin Derdiyok, "Eski Türk Edebiyatı'nda Mektup Yazma Kuralları Hakkında Bilgi Veren En Eski Eser Ahmed-i Dâ'î'nin Teressül'ü" 1, no. 6 (1994): 56–59.
[64] Ahmed-i Dâ'î, Ahmed-i Dâ'î Divanı (Metin-Gramer-Tıpkı Basım), ed. Mehmet Özmen, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Ankara: TDK, 2001).
[65] Ahmed-i Dā'ī, *Çengname*.

kişilere)."[66] He uses similar expression in his translation of Tūsī's *Sī-Fasl*: "for some beginners, (*mübtedi*) it is difficult to read this book; therefore, I translated it into Turkish." He says that he illustrated some astrological and astronomical parts of the work with the schemes to make them more understandable.[67] The last book is *Müfredat*, which is a Persian grammar book written for Turkophones. In this book Ahmed-i Dā'ī writes: "It is observed that in the cities of Rum, [in the writings of Turkophones] there are many defects in the principles of Persian words. (…) Distinguished brothers and friends of a community suggested to me that a brief lexicon must be written to teach those who cannot write correctly."[68] Dā'ī based his work on the "masters of rhetoric and eloquence" and used works of history (*ahbar*) and poetry collections (*divan*).

In these passages Ahmed-i Dā'ī does not address "the people" (*halk*), but specifies his audience. These are the literate beginners in Islamic sciences, who try to learn through manuals and guidebooks. As Sehi Bey witnessed, Ahmed-i Dā'ī's *Teressül* was used by the scribes at the beginning of the sixteenth century.[69] Ahmed-i Dā'ī' wrote his *Müfredāt* upon the request of distinguished members of a community. Thus, it would be reasonable to suggest that vernacular intellectuals cooperated with the political elites and court to cater to literate Turkophone officials and bureaucrats who did not have good Persian and Arabic skills. Moreover, they wrote manuals for the sultans and princes, but these manuscripts were probably copied and used by the wider literate and literary community.

Other vernacular intellectuals wrote similar guidebooks as well. However, one cannot see as much productivity and attention to the literates as in Ahmed-i Dā'ī's case. This might stem from the potential loss of manuscripts, which is common for the early fifteenth-century

[66] Haksever, "Ahmed-i Dâ'î'nin Teressül'ü," 1268.
[67] Nasir el-Din el-Tusi, Muhtasar Fi' 'ilm El-Tencim ve-Ma'rifet El-Takvim : Risale-i Si Fasl, 12.
[68] Çetin, "Ahmed-i Dā'ī'nin Farsça Öğretmek Amacıyla Yazdığı Bir Eser: Müfredat," 119. Also see: Murat Umut İnan, "Imperial Ambitions, Mystical Aspirations: Persian Learning in the Ottoman World," in The Persianate World: The Frontiers of a Eurasian Lingua Franca, ed. Nile Green (California: University of California Press, 2019), 81–82.
[69] Sehi Beg, *Heşt Bihişt*, ed. Haluk İpekten et al. (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2017), 73.

Ottoman world due to the lack of institutionalization. Ahmedī authored three language books (*Mirkātü'l-edeb,*[70] *Mīzānü'l-edeb* and *Miʿyārü'l-edeb*)[71] for Aydinid ruler İsa Bey's son Hamza to teach him Arabic. He did not write these treatises for Turkophones as they were in Persian. However, his *İskendernāme* provided litterateurs and literates with a wide range of knowledge on world history. Furthermore, it located Ottoman history within the world history, and served for ideological purposes.

In a similar vein, other authors tried to educate Turkophones in religious practices and knowledge. These authors presented their books to the court, with the hope of favor and prestige along with spreading their ideals. They were familiar with the court's interests and in some cases might have exploited them. For instance, both in Arabic and Turkish, the manuals on *fiqh* written for the court or in Murad II's reign follow only Hanafi school of law. The same tendency can be observed in the treatises as well. For instance, in *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb*'s first chapter, on the Islamic law, Manyasoğlu mostly compares the three *imam*s of Hanafi madhhab; Abu Hanifa, Abu Yusuf and Imam Muhammad. He sometimes involves other branches of Sunni Islam like Maliki and Shafii and compares them with the Hanafi madhhab. In this respect, according to Nihat Azamat's dissertation, in which the reader can find the outline and brief summary of the works from Murad II's reign,[72] there are eleven books on *fiqh* (Islamic law). One of the books on *fiqh*, Devletoğlu Yusuf's translation of *Wiqāya*, was written in Ottoman Turkish and dedicated to Sultan Murad II.

Recently Sara Nur Yıldız examined Devletoğlu Yusuf's work by considering its connections with the broader Islamicate world and the early fifteenth century Ottoman

[70] Nihad Çetin, "Ahmedî'nin 'Mirkatü'l-Edeb' i Hakkında," Journal of Turcology 14 (1965): 217–30; Ali Alparslan, "Ahmedi'nin Yeni Bulunan Bir Eseri 'Mirkat-ı Edeb,'" İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Dergisi 10 (1960): 35–40.
[71] Nihad Çetin, "Ahmedî'nin Bilinmeyen Birkaç Eseri," Tarih Dergisi 2, no. 3–4 (1952): 103–8.
[72] The dissertation was written in 1996, and much information in the text must be revised. For instance, the translation of Abū Layth's Samarqandī was not done by Ahmed-i Dâ'î, and it was probably a part Musa Iznikī's *Enfesü'l-Cevâhir*. In Azamat's text, they are regarded as different works written by Ahmed-i Dâ'î and Musa Iznikī. Nihat Azamat, "II. Murad Devri Kültür Hayatı" (Ph.D. Thesis, İstanbul, Marmara University, History Dept., 1996), 130–31.

context. Her analysis reveals that there are commonalities between literary and *fiqh* manuals. Yıldız paid special attention to the Turkophones and their learning of religion.[73] According to her, "[t]he use of the Turkish vernacular by the authors of these texts was motivated by the growing need among Turcophone Muslims for basic literacy in the Islamic textual tradition."[74] Yusuf, as his contemporary authors, vernacularized religious Arabic text as convenient to the needs of the Turkophones in the context of early fifteenth century.[75] Yıldız discerned that different audiences must have benefited from this Hanafi manual, such as Turkophone children studying in the *mekteb*, who did not have Arabic skills yet,[76] as well as Turkophone jurists, who could not easily access the libraries in the rural areas.[77] She also discusses the status and legitimacy of Turkish concerning the composition of Islamic sciences. Yıldız explains that Yusuf refers to Abu Hanifa's approval of Quranic translation into other languages, and the verbal instruction in the madrasa, which was in Turkish.[78] In addition, the excuses of the scholars for writing in Turkish remained as a *topos* since their primary motivation was "to serve the people (…) by providing them with access to knowledge that was otherwise inaccessible."[79]

The Vernacular Authorship and Manyasoğlu

Manyasoğlu's works must be considered in this framework. He wrote *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb* in 1438 and presented it to Sultan Murad II in the same year. There are no records regarding the author's birth and death dates. Manyasoğlu informs his readers in *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb* that he was born in Manyas, which is a town in Balıkesir area, in Marmara region. He

[73] Sara Nur Yıldız, "A Hanafi Law Manual in the Vernacular: Devletoğlu Yūsuf Balıkesrī's Turkish Verse Adaptation of the Hidāya-Wiqāya Textual Tradition for the Ottoman Sultan Murad II (824/1424)," Bulletin of SOAS 80, no. 2 (2017): 283–304.
[74] Yıldız, 284.
[75] Yıldız, 284.
[76] Yıldız, 291
[77] Yıldız, 300.
[78] Yıldız, 300–301.
[79] Yıldız, 298.

most probably received a *madrasa* education and wrote down *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb* in Skopje, where he was a teacher (*mudarris*). The biographical books agree that later on he became a *mudarris* in Edirne, where he also died.

Influential sixteenth-century scholar Taşköprizade and other biographical sources state that Manyasoğlu was learned in exegesis, hadith, *kalām*, *fiqh*, as well as the knowledge of *'ajāib al-gharāib* (*The Most Marvelous Wonders*). Taşköprizade claims that Manyasoğlu wrote a book entitled *Kitāb al-Acāib vel-garāib* and a *hashiye* (gloss) on Taftāzānī's (d. 1390) *Sharh al-'Aqā'id*.[80] There are three entries about Manyasoğlu in Katip Çelebi's (d. 1657) *Kashf az-Zunun*.[81] In the first entry, Katip Çelebi affirms that Manyasoğlu wrote a *hashiye* for Taftāzānī's commentary on *'Aqā'id an-Nasafī*.[82] In the second one, Katip Çelebi talks about *Kitābu'l-'Acāib ve'l-Garāib*, where he states that Manyasoğlu "transmitted the things that cannot be found in books."[83] In the third and last entry, he wrote about Manyasoğlu's translation of *Golistān* by Sa'di Shirāzī (d. 1291), which is regarded as a commentary (*sharh*).[84] Bursalı Mehmet Tahir mentions Manyasoğlu's *hashiye* on Taftāzānī, *Şerhü'l-Gülistān-i Sa'di*, and *el-Garāib ve'l-Acāib*. According to him, the subject matter of this research, *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb*, is a different work from *al-Garāib ve'l-'Acāib*.[85] The last record about Manyasoğlu is from an anthology of *nazīre* (parallel poem), titled *Mecmū'atü'n-Nezāir* compiled by 'Ömer bin Mezid in the fifteenth century. There are two poems with the

[80] Taşköprülüzâde Ahmed, Osmanlı Bilginleri: Eş-Şakâiku'n-Nu'mâniyye Fî Ulemâi'd-Devleti'l-Osmâniyye, trans. Muharrem Tan (İstanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 2007), 110. See also: Şakaik Tercümesi, p. 123..

[81] Katip Çelebi, Keşfü'z-Zünun, An Esami'l-Kütübi Ve'l-Fünun (Kitapların ve İlimlerin İsimlerinden Şüphelerin Giderilmesi), trans. Rüştü Balcı, vol. 5, Dizin (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2011), 1963, 1998.

[82] Katip Çelebi, Keşfü'z-Zünun, An Esami'l-Kütübi Ve'l-Fünun (Kitapların ve İlimlerin İsimlerinden Şüphelerin Giderilmesi), trans. Rüştü Balcı, vol. 3 (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2011), 915.

[83] Katip Çelebi, 3:1146.

[84] Katip Çelebi, 3:1198. The edition of the work is available, see: Mahmud b. Kadı-i Manyas, Gülistan Tercümesi (Giriş-İnceleme-Metin-Sözlük), ed. Mustafa Özkan (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu, 1993).

[85] Bursalı Mehmed Tahir, Osmanlı Müellifleri, vol. 2 (İstanbul: Matbaa-ı Amire, 1333 [1914]), 15. It seems that Mehmet Tahir saw the Suleymaniye Library's Hekimoğlu copy of *'Acebu'l-'Uccâb,* since he specifies that it is comprised of twelve articles.

title of *Nazīre-i Manyasoğlu*.[86] Even though Manyasoğlu wrote and translated poems, there is no entry for his name in the Ottoman poet biographies. Manyasoğlu must have also compiled a Persian-Ottoman Turkish dictionary, *Lugat-ı Manyāsoglı*[87] which has not been subject to study. The manuscript does not contain an introduction, the-reason-for-composing (*sebeb-i telīf*), and conclusion sections. Unfortunately, we cannot get any further information regarding Manyasoğlu's life and his motivations for penning this dictionary. As I discuss below, probably it was written for the sultan, prince, or court-centered audience of the fifteenth century.

Based on biographical sources, I assume that Manyasoğlu penned four books: *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb*, *Lugat-ı Manyāsoglı*, a gloss on Taftāzānī's commentary, and *Gülistān Tercemesi*. Nevertheless, Manyasoğlu's gloss on Taftāzānī did not reach the present day, and the sources do not mention *Lugat-ı Manyāsoglı*, the only copy of which is from 1595. I suppose for two reasons that the *Lugat-ı Manyāsoglı* was written by Manyasoğlu. First, most of the biographical dictionaries do not record all the books of the authors, so the limited insight provided by them does not indicate that the work was not written by Manyasoğlu. Second, to my knowledge, there is no other litterateur, poet or scholar who has "Manyasoğlu" as his penname, and the title of the guidebook clearly assigns the book to Manyasoğlu. Therefore, I suggest that we have three books written by Manyasoğlu: *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb*, *Gülistān Tercemesi*, and *Lugat-ı Manyāsoglı*. The first two works were presented to Murad

[86] Mahmud b. Kadı-i Manyas, Gülistan Tercümesi (Giriş-İnceleme-Metin-Sözlük), 6; Ömer bin Mezid Ömer bin Mezid, Mecmua'tün-Nezair, Metin-Dizin-Tıpkıbasım, ed. Mustafa Canpolat (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu, 1995), 52, 168.

[87] There are two different records in the catalogues. Süleymaniye Library gives the title as *Lugat-ı Farisi*, whereas "The Islamisation of Anatolia" project recorded it as *Lugat-i Manyâsoglı*. I used the latter title. although the dictionary was copied in 1004/1595-6, the first page has ownership records going back to 952/1545-6. At the same time, in 2b, where the book begins, the title is *Lugat-ı Manyâsoglı*. I assume that the title of *Lugat-ı Farisi* belongs to another work. For the record of "The Islamisation of Anatolia" project, see: https://arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/anatolia/data/documents/TK_Sul_Nafiz_1486;unnumbered_1?hlu=&hl=Edirne%7C(Turkey), retrieved in 17.05.2020. In addition, Yusuf Öz seems to be the first researcher who mentioned the work: Yusuf Öz, "Tarih Boyunca Farsça-Türkçe Sözlükler" (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Ankara, Ankara University, Persian Language and Literature Dept., 1996), 274–76. He recorded the dictionary as *Lugat-ı Minyâsoglı*. I thank Murat Umut İnan for bringing this dissertation to my attention.

II. Due to the lack of *sebeb-i telīf* section as well as introduction and conclusion of the work we cannot speculate whether Manyasoğlu dedicated the *Lugat-ı Manyāsoglı* to the Ottoman court or not.

Manyasoğlu as a scholar had similar authorial practices and choices with vernacular intellectuals and his scholarly predecessors like Şeyhoğlu Mustafa, Ahmedī, and Ahmed-i Dā'ī, who translated or compiled important *mathnawi*s of the Islamic world. There are two apparent patterns in their translations regarding the audience and status of Turkish. First, they complain that Turkish is not an ideal language to "rewrite" the classical Persian poetry. Second, they insist on writing in Turkish because people of the region, the Turkophones, could not speak Persian and Arabic. For instance, Manyasoğlu was the first one in Anatolia to translate *Gülistān* of Sa'di in Turkish. His translation process unveils that he had similar anxieties as his predecessors. Manyasoğlu attempted to translate *Gülistān* twice, and his first attempt was to compose an expanded translation in verse form. According to the *sebeb-i telif* section, distinguished fellows asked him to translate this eloquent book, since the "people of Rum" did not have Arabic and Persian skills.[88] Yet, Manyasoğlu's first attempt failed, and he completed the abridged version of it in prose. Manyasoğlu complained that Turkish was unpleasant (*bārid*) and inadequate language to translate *Gülistān* in verse in comparison to Persian, so he began to translate it in prose.[89] This was a common trope in the earlier books, such as Hoca Mes'ud's *Kenzü'l-Bedāyi* in the early fifteenth century. It lasted until the sixteenth century, when Ottoman poets and litterateurs began to claim superiority of literary Ottoman Turkish over Persian literature.[90] Manyasoğlu's audience and comments on vernacular Turkish are echoed in Ahmed-i Dā'ī's *Çengnāme* and in Şeyhoğlu Mustafa's *Kenzü'l-Kübera*. It is necessary to note here that these translations are not word-for-word

[88] Mahmud b. Kadı Manyas, *Gülistan Tercümesi (Giriş-İnceleme-Metin-Sözlük)*, 7–8.
[89] Mahmud b. Kadı Manyas, 10.
[90] Nuran Tezcan, "Sebeb-i Teliflere Göre Mesnevi Edebiyatının Tarihsel Dönüşümü," *Doğu Batı*, Osmanlılar Özel Sayısı II (2010): 49–74.

translations. The vernacular intellectuals emphasized that their translations are also "commentaries."[91]

Furthermore, Manyasoğlu's appointment to the madrasa in Edirne signifies that he attracted the attention of the court and/or political elites, who established endowments to construct and maintain madrasas. It is hard to discern whether Manyasoğlu may have instructed prince Mehmed II, as Ahmed-i Dā'ī tutored Murad II. It is also difficult to speculate whether he penned *Lugat-ı Manyāsoglı* for the court or not. It is possible that Manyasoğlu wrote his work to teach the Turkophone audience Persian. Yet, *Lugat-ı Manyāsoglı* suggests that Manyasoğlu shared similar characteristics with other vernacular intellectuals concerning the genres, audience and motivations. As I discuss in the third chapter, *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb* transmits the marvelous properties of the sciences, and Manyasoğlu's chapter on lettrism bears the characteristics of an early fifteenth century manual. He compiled information from different sources, recontextualized it, and dedicated it to Murad II in 1438. The audience of *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb* must have included social elites, especially those at the court, since some practices in the manual aim to help one to be recruited by the Sultan in a certain position, be protected from the rage of Sultan, and end the unjust policies of the Sultan.[92] Whether or not *Acebu'l-'Uccāb* was directly commissioned by the sultan or some other official, Manyasoğlu's text reveals that he followed the expectations as well as scholarly and literary choices of the Ottoman court.

[91] Ahmed-i Dâ'î, *Çengname*, 327; Şeyhoğlu Mustafa, *Kenzü'l-Küberâ ve Mehekkü'l-Ulemâ*, ed. Kemal Yavuz (İstanbul: Büyüyen Ay Yayınları, 2013). The poets do not see the translation as a passive practice of conveying "the meaning;" rather they consider it "renewing," "commenting" and "explaining." For the studies on the translations in the early fifteenth century Ottoman world, see Selim S. Kuru, "Destanı Mesnevide Anlatmak: Gülşehri, Aşık Paşa ve Mesud'un Eserleri Hakkında Gözlemler," in *Eski Türk Edebiyatı Çalışmaları VI: Hikâyenin Şiiri*, ed. Hatice Aynur et al. (İstanbul: Turkuaz, 2011), 207–8.

[92] Mahmud b. Kadı Manyas, "'Acebu'l-'Uccâb" (Manuscript, Princeton University, 38 1437), 65a, 1010, Princeton University Rare Collection.

Chapter 2 - Lettrism and Occult Sciences in the Early Fifteenth-Century Islamic World and the Ottoman Court: Cosmopolitan Intellectuals and *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb*

The fifteenth century was a time of synthesis of the occultist, lettrist ideas with the messianic and millennialist beliefs in the Islamic world. Those engaged in occultism were respected cosmopolitan scholars, litterateurs, and Sufis. They transformed, disseminated and popularized esoteric knowledge in different geographies of the "post-esoteric" Islamic world. Suggested by Noah Gardiner, the term "post-esotericist lettrism" refers to the period after the second half of the fourteenth century, when lettrist and occultist works circulated among the intellectuals, courtiers and were read in public rather than in clandestine reading groups in the Islamic world.[93] The occultists' understanding of the universe and the world around them had a long history, as is suggested by the fact that a prominent fifteenth-century group of occultists took their name after the tenth-century esoteric clandestine community, the *Ikhwān al-Safā'* (The Brethren of Purity). This chapter presents the occultist and lettrist intellectual milieu in the fifteenth-century Islamic world, as well as the dynamics of dissemination and popularization of lettrist and esoteric knowledge. It aims to shed light on the intellectual sphere in which Manyasoğlu penned his occult manual, *'Acebu'l-'Ucāb* (1438).

Even though Manyasoğlu wrote in vernacular Ottoman Turkish, he shared the sources with cosmopolitan intellectuals and was influenced by similar intellectual traditions and views. Furthermore, he found a place in the biographies of scholars side-by-side with cosmopolitan intellectuals. This chapter delves into the intellectual tradition and milieu in which Manyasoğlu lived and worked. This context is the basis of my argument that, along with cosmopolitan intellectuals, Manyasoğlu was an agent of the post-esoteric occultism who

[93] Gardiner, "Esotericism in a Manuscript Culture: Aḥmad al-Būnī and His Readers through the Mamlūk Period," 3–38.

also contributed to the dissemination of the lettrist corpus to the Ottoman court by compiling the *'Acebu'l-'Ucāb*.

Post-Esotericism and the Ottoman Court: The Cosmopolitan Synthesizers

The writings of the renowned intellectual Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1406) on the science of letters are widely quoted by scholars interested in Islamic lettrism and occultism. In a passage from *Muqaddimah* (*An Introduction to History*), Ibn Khaldun cites "Egyptian magician" Aḥmad al-Būnī,[94] and Ibn 'Arabī, known as the "Greatest Master" by many Sufis in the pre-modern and modern world.[95] Ibn Khaldun was critical of these two Sufis, who were popular in the Islamic world because of their occult teachings. Noah Gardiner suggests that Ibn Khaldun's account reveals the popularity of lettrist practices in his era,[96] and Aḥmad al-Būnī's and Ibn 'Arabī's works were the main sources of these practices.

Interestingly, besides hailing from Andalusia, the two Sufis' biographies have further characteristics in common. Aḥmad al-Būnī's reluctance to include autobiographical information in his own writings leaves us with many uncertainties about his life.[97] Recent literature surmises that he was born in Bunah/Annaba, Algeria, in the mid-twelfth century and died after 1225. He had been to Mecca and emigrated to Cairo. His emigration to Cairo might have been "a part of a wave of Western (i.e. North African and Andalusian) Sufis who

[94] Here I refer to the following work Jan Just Witkam, "Gazing at the Sun: Remarks on the Egyptian Magician al-Būnī and His Work," in *O Ye Gentlemen: Arabic Studies on Science and Literary Culture, In Honour of Remke Kruk*, ed. Arnoud Vrolijk and Jan Hogendijk (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 183–200.
[95] Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History - Abridged Edition*, ed. N. J. Dawood, trans. Franz Rosenthal, Abridged edition (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015).
[96] Gardiner, "Esotericism in a Manuscript Culture: Aḥmad al-Būnī and His Readers through the Mamlūk Period," 262.
[97] For Ahmad al-Būnī's life, see: Edgar Walter Francis, "Islamic Symbols And Sufi Rituals for Protection And Healing Religion And Magic in The Writings of Ahmad Ibn Ali Al-Būnī" (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Los Angeles, University of California, 2005), 98–103; Noah Gardiner, "Esotericism in a Manuscript Culture: Aḥmad al-Būnī and His Readers through the Mamlūk Period" (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Ann Harbor, University of Michigan, Near Eastern Studies, 2014), 71–74.

emigrated to Egypt and the Levant during the Ayyubid and early Mamluk periods."[98] Ibn ʿArabī was also among these emigrant Sufis.

Ibn ʿArabī's life is better known due to his autobiographical accounts. He was born in 1165 in Murcia, Andalusia and died in 1240 in Damascus. In 1195, he went to Tunis, and five years later he undertook pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina, where he met Majd al-Dīn ʾIsḥāq, a scholar from Malatya, a city in Anatolia. He travelled to Anatolia with him and resided there until he visited Syria and Egypt. Until he traveled to Baghdad and revisited Mecca and Medina in 1211-12, he wandered between different cities of Turkey, Syria and Egypt. During his visits, he established connections with Seljuk and Ayyubid courts. From 1223 to his death in 1240 he stayed in Damascus. His writings were systemized by his disciple and son-in-law Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī (d. 1274) who diffused Ibn ʿArabī's teachings throughout Anatolia. His title of the "Greatest Master" referred to his reputation among and centrality of his teachings for Sufis, and he is also remembered as a distinguished scholar in religious sciences.[99] Both Sufis were students of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Mahdawī (d. 1224), who was a disciple of preeminent African Sufis like Abū Madyan (d. 1198).[100]

Aḥmad al-Būnī, Ibn ʿArabī, and their teachings have a significant place in this chapter for a reason. As Gardiner convincingly suggests, cosmopolitan intellectuals, fifteenth-century *Ikhwān al-Safā'* in particular (as will be discussed below), synthesized the works of these two Sufi masters along with those of Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ḥarāllī (d. 1240), Abū al-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī (d. 1258), and the latter's follower Abū al-ʿAbbās al-Mursī (d. 1287).[101] These cosmopolitan intellectuals, who were active in the Ottoman, Mamluk and Timurid courts were among the agents of "post-esotericist lettrism."

[98]Gardiner, "Esotericism in a Manuscript Culture: Aḥmad al-Būnī and His Readers through the Mamlūk Period," 75.
[99] William C. Chittick, *Ibn 'Arabi: Heir to the Prophets* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005), 4–9.
[100] Noah Gardiner, ''Abd al-'Aziz al-Mahdawi', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. Kate Fleet et al. (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2016), 1.
[101] Gardiner, "Esotericism in a Manuscript Culture: Aḥmad al-Būnī and His Readers through the Mamlūk Period," 323.

The main sources of fifteenth-century Islamic occultists', Ibn 'Arabī and Aḥmad al-Būnī's teachings are major examples of "revelatory magic" or "esotericism."[102] "Revelatory esotericism" tendencies intermixed with Sufism existed before the thirteenth century as well. However, unlike most of the pre-thirteenth century occultist ideas dealing with "intellectual magic/esotericism," as tenth-century *Ikhwān al-Safā'*, post-thirteenth century occultists did not give priority to astral agency in manipulating the physical world. Instead, they highlighted the significance of receiving the divine knowledge. Astral agency and astrology did not entirely lose their importance, but they had a limited effect. In other words, even though celestial bodies were not entirely neglected, "the capacity of the operator to receive divine knowledge through contemplating and meditating on the letters" had more significance.[103] Therefore, in the post-thirteenth-century Islamic occultism, Sufi concepts such as *ma'rifa* (gnosis), *kashf* (unveiling) and *ilhām* (inspiration) were much more important than celestial bodies. In this respect, Ibn 'Arabī's teachings were particularly important, especially his reflections on the names of God or Divine Names, which he considered key for understanding the cosmos. He rejected the idea of attaining the "realities of the cosmos" via rational means, and exalted "revelation" to understand it.

The main source of revelation was the Quran. In it, God revealed His own names, and they are the keys to comprehend the true knowledge or "seeing the things as they are."[104] Human beings have the potential to unravel the cosmic realities, unlike other creatures,

[102] Liana Saif classifies "Intellectual" and "Revelatory Esotericism" in her article: Liana Saif, "Introduction: What Is Islamic Esotericism," *Correspondences* 7, no. 1, Special Issue: Islamic Esotericism (2019): 1–59. She uses similar principles to specifically classify magic in her another article see: Liana Saif, "From Ġāyat Al-Ḥakīm to Šams al-Maʿārif Wa-Laṭāʾif al-ʿawārif: Ways of Knowing and Paths of Power in Medieval Islam," ed. Matthew Melvin-Koushki and Noah Daedalus Gardiner, *Arabica* Arabica Supplement 1, no. Islamicate Occultism: New Perspectives (2017): 297–345.

[103] Saif, "From Ġāyat Al-Ḥakīm to Šams al-Maʿārif Wa-Laṭāʾif al-ʿawārif: Ways of Knowing and Paths of Power in Medieval Islam," 317.

[104] William C. Chittick, *Ibn Al-'Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination: The Sufi Path of Knowledge:* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 34.

including angels and *jinns*.[105] To do so, humans must know the esoteric interpretation of the Quran, depend on Sufi rituals like remembrance (*dhikr*), and figure out the relationships between cosmos and God—these relationships are the Divine Names.

Noah Gardiner's argument about post-esotericist lettrism is based on his examination of *Corpus Bunianum* or "Būnīan corpus," which suggests that Būnī's works were "the product of […] several generations of practicing magicians, who arranged al-Būnī's work and thought and brought it out, probably while mixing these with elements of their own works."[106] He demonstrates that until the early fourteenth century, the books of Aḥmad al-Būnī circulated in the clandestine reading communities. Yet, after the second half of the fourteenth century onward, these books circulated widely. For some time, the Būnīan reading communities were comprised of Sufi disciples of Andalusian origin. In one respect, the reason behind this was Western Muslim (in this context, Cairo) established religious and political officials' alienation from the Eastern (Andalusian) esoteric/*bāṭin* hermeneutics.[107] The secretiveness of members had three functions. Firstly, the community protected themselves from accusations of heresy by those uninitiated in the secrets of letters and names. Secondly, they tried to stand between the sacred knowledge and commoners, who were not able to understand their hermeneutics or would have used sacred knowledge for impure purposes. Thirdly, their secret hermeneutics and knowledge "must be guarded from *al-'āmmah* (the common people), for if disclosed they would lead to *fitnah* (social disunion) and the destruction of the community."[108] Gardiner employs the term "reading ethics" to account

[105] Gisela Webb, "Hierarchy, Angels, and the Human Condition in the Sufism of Ibn 'Arabi" 81, no. 3–4 (1991): 250.
[106] Witkam, "Gazing at the Sun: Remarks on the Egyptian Magician al-Būnī and His Work," 183.
[107] Gardiner, "Esotericism in a Manuscript Culture: Aḥmad al-Būnī and His Readers through the Mamlūk Period," 87–88.
[108] Gardiner, 101.

for the discretion of the members throughout the esoteric and germinal period in the Mamluk and Ayyubid realms.[109]

The post-esotericist world emerged in the second quarter of the fourteenth century. In this period, Būnī's teachings seem to have become more prominent, and even open to public. A courtly version was compiled of one of his books, *Shams al-Maʿārif*, which signifies that Eastern Sufi hermeneutics based on letters and Divine Names gained recognition among political elites and courts.[110] However, this work was embraced neither by the entire reading public nor religious officials, and often faced condemnation.[111] Nevertheless, I must reiterate Gardiner's argument that Ibn Khaldun's harsh criticism of Aḥmad al-Būnī and Ibn ʿArabī's lettrist ideas in his monumental book, *al-Muqaddimah*, shows the interests towards and popularity of the lettrist practices.[112] This interest was accompanied by "the golden age of encyclopedism" in Mamluk lands, especially in the fifteenth century. Occult sciences occupied a prominent place in the Mamluk encyclopedias. As has already been discussed by scholars such as Thomas Bauer,[113] Elias Muhanna,[114] and Maaike van Berkel,[115] Mamluk encyclopedism rose with the influence of newcomers to the Mamluk reading public. In other words, during the fifteenth century, many of the compilers and authors were amateurs, i.e. merchants and craftsmen, and lettrist passages circulated freely. Gardiner also suggests that the cosmopolitan intellectuals, who were "the members" of informal network of fifteenth-

[109] In the thirteenth century, Būnī and his successors made an effort to conceal the esoteric knowledge from commoners by utilizing *tabdid al-ʿilm* (literally, "dispersing the knowledge"). Their efforts of dispersing knowledge meant that some key points of Būnī's teachings were not entirely revealed in one book, but dispersed in several, with only the spiritual guide being familiar with their textual location. The spiritual guide exposed these locations only to his disciples, who were in "advance spiritual" state to learn it. When Būnī's works were not in circulation, it was difficult for someone outside the community to reach the necessary books. See Gardiner, 105–7.
[110] Gardiner, 267.
[111] Gardiner, 76.
[112] Noah Gardiner, "The Occultist Encyclopedism of ʿAbd Al-Rahman al-Bistami," *Mamluk Studies Review*, no. 20 (2017): 3–38.
[113] Thomas Bauer, "Anthologies, Arabic Literature (Post-Mongol Period)," in *EI*, ed. K. Fleet et al., 3, 2007.
[114] Ibrahim Elias Muhanna, "Encyclopaedism in the Mamluk Period: The Composition of Shihâb Al-Dîn Al-Nuwayrî's (d. 1333) *Nihâyat Al-Arab Fî Funūn Al-Adab*" (Cambridge, Harvard University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, 2012).
[115] M. van Berkel, "Opening up a World of Knowledge: Mamluk Encyclopaedias," in *Encyclopaedism from Antiquity to the Renaissance*, ed. Jason König and Greg Woolf (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

century *Ikhwān al-Safā'*, were the ones who synthesized and reformulated the lettrist corpus, which had circulated among the Ottoman, Mamluk and Timurid literary and scholarly circles. Both Gardiner and Jean-Charles Coulon also demonstrated that ʿAbd al-Raḥman al-Bisṭāmī's *Shams al-āfāq* was a source for later versions al-Būnī's *Shams al-maʿārif al-kubrā*.[116] Cosmopolitan intellectuals' synthesis includes most of the ancient lettrist and esoteric tradition along with Aḥmad al-Būnī and Ibn ʿArabī.

However, as noted above, cosmopolitan intellectuals were not static, regional subjects. On the contrary, they were mobile and connected to other cosmopolitan intellectuals from other empires and courts. Not surprisingly, the Ottoman court was a crossroad for both intellectual and vernacular intellectuals. Manyasoğlu seems to have gained access to the works of the Būnīan corpus either through interacting with these cosmopolitan intellectuals or by obtaining access to some occult and lettrist manuscripts that increasingly began to circulate in Anatolia. Subsequently, these two different sorts of occultist learned men, local and cosmopolitan, will be remembered as the learned men of occult sciences.

Manyasoğlu and the Cosmopolitan Intellectuals

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the resemblance between information in Taşköprizade and other biographical dictionaries about Manyasoğlu's life must be the result of the former's use of the latter as a source. However, Taşköprizade's inclusion of Manyasoğlu into his biographic work deserves closer attention. Taşköprizade's book contains the biographies of scholars arranged by the reign of Ottoman sultans. Manyasoğlu is listed among the scholars of Murad II's reign (r. 1421-44 and 1446-51) along with Şükrüllāh (d. 1464). Abd ar-Raḥmān al-Bisṭāmī (d. 1454), Shaykh Bedreddin (d. 1420) and Molla Fenarī (d. 1431) were listed as the scholars of Bayezid I's (r. 1389-1402) reign, for example.

[116] Coulon, "Building Al-Būnī's Legend: The Figure of al-Būnī through ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Bisṭāmī's Shams al-Āfāq," 14–15.

Taşköprizade clearly had great sympathy for these scholars. They were associated with the above-mentioned "informal network," fifteenth-century *Ikhwān al-Safā'*.[117] Taşköprizade was not convinced that Shaykh Bedreddin revolted against Mehmed I (r. 1413-1421) for the Ottoman throne, and his sympathy for the scholar is revealed in his remark that the latter was "unjustly" executed. For him, Shaykh Bedreddin was a victim of slander by conspiring adversaries.[118] In historiography, nevertheless, Bedreddin's revolt against Mehmed I is treated as a complex phenomenon reflecting religious, social and political dynamics of the early fifteenth century.[119] In addition, the entry of Taşköprizade on Bisṭāmī reveals that he had great respect for Bisṭāmī and had an interest in the lettrism.[120] Moreover, Bisṭāmī must have profoundly influenced Taşköprizade, since he cites Bisṭāmī's *Favāʾīh* in his work entitled *es-Seʿādetü'l-Fāhira fī Siyādeti'l-Āhira* without providing a reference. Besides, most of the names of hundred and fifty-nine sciences that Taşköprizade enumerates in his work are the same as Bisṭāmī's hundred and forty-five sciences.[121] Manyasoğlu's work may have intrigued Taşköprizade, since Manyasoğlu's compilation deals with the interesting, curious and marvelous features of sciences and occult practices, which fit Taşköprizade's interests. Therefore, it is justifiable to suggest that in the Ottoman literary and scholarly circles Manyasoğlu's work was considered a remarkable contribution rather than written only for a limited audience of courtiers and commoners.

[117] See more detailed discussion of the Ikhwan al-Safa below. İhsan Fazlıoğlu, "İlk Dönem Osmanlı İlim ve Kültür Hayatında İhvanü's-Safa ve Abdurrahman Bistami," *Divan*, 1996, 229–40; Binbaş, *Intellectual Networks in Timurid Iran Sharaf Al-Din Ali Yazdi and the Islamicate Republic of Letters*, 107.
[118] Taşköprülüzâde Ahmed, *Osmanlı Bilginleri: Eş-Şakâiku'n-Nu'mâniyye Fî Ulemâi'd-Devleti'l-Osmâniyye*, ed. Muharrem Tan (İstanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 2007), 65.
[119] For the historical review and this revolt's place in the historiography, see Dimitris J. Kastritsis, *The Sons of Bayezid: Empire Building and Representation in the Ottoman Civil War of 1402-13* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2007), 16–18, 163–65.
[120] Taşköprülüzâde Ahmed, *Osmanlı Bilginleri: Eş-Şakâiku'n-Nu'mâniyye Fî Ulemâi'd-Devleti'l-Osmâniyye*, 62.
[121] Faruk Akyıldız, "Erken Dönem Osmanlı Tarihi'nde İlim ve Tasnif Anlayışı: Abdurrahman Bistami'nin El-Fevâʾihü'l-Miskiyye Fî'l Fevâtihi'l Mekkiye Adlı Eseri ve Etkileri" (Unpublished MA Thesis, İstanbul, İstanbul 29 Mayıs University, 2019), 63–64.

Taşköprizade gave us an idea about the reception of lettrism and occult sciences as well as Manyasoğlu's work in sixteenth-century Ottoman scholarly circles. In the sixteenth century, millenarian and messianic ideas and expectations were prevalent in Islamic and European courts. This might have stimulated interest in these sciences and works written in the past. Yet, such a generic interpretation might marginalize the agency of fifteenth-century scholars who formulated a new lettrism and contributed to the dissemination and popularization of occultist interests in the courts. The cosmopolitan intellectuals of the fifteenth century, primarily ʿAbd Allāh al-Akhlāṭī (d. 799/1397), and his followers al-Bisṭāmī and Ṣāʾin al-Dīn ʿAlī b. Muḥammad Turka Iṣfahānī, strove to synthesize, disseminate and popularize lettrist practices based on the esoteric interpretations, for the courts.[122] While doing this, they also shaped political discourses in the early fifteenth-century world. Before delving into the concepts articulated in post-esotericist syntheses and their political uses, it is necessary to sketch the relationship between the lettrist intellectuals as well as their informal network with various courts.

Lettrist and Occultist Cosmopolitan Intellectuals in the Islamic World

In the fifteenth century, the courts warmly welcomed the occultist cosmopolitan elites and their esoteric practices. The reason behind this phenomenon was connected to the political conjuncture of the post-Mongol period, traditionally dated from the conquest of Baghdad by Mongols in 1258. The Mongol invasion led to a "crisis of kingship" because it ended the Caliphate, which was weakened from the tenth century onwards but retained its religiopolitical and symbolic significance in terms of legitimacy and unity of Islamic world.[123] The mighty Mongols' genealogical prestige lasted until the mid-fourteenth century,

[122] Gardiner, "Esotericism in a Manuscript Culture: Aḥmad al-Būnī and His Readers through the Mamlūk Period," 328–29.
[123] About the rise of millennialism in the post-Mongol world see: A. Azfar Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign: Sacred Kingship and Sainthood in Islam* (Columbia University Press, 2012), 37–68.

when the Ilkhanate collapsed.[124] Yet, from the tenth century on, the prestige of Shi'i and Sufi *walaya* (sacral power) was on the rise. Sacral power stood for the proximity to God and was attributed to the descendants of the first Shi'i *imam*, the fourth caliph and nephew of Prophet Muhammad, 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib. In other words, sacral power belonged to the *ahl-i bayt* (the household of the Prophet) as well as the *awliya* (saints), and sultans and Sufi sheiks all claimed to have this power since it provided divine legitimacy to rule. In the sixteenth century, dynasties endeavored to consolidate their claims to possessing sacral power and being "the chosen one" through "Sufism, occultism or Alidism, and often eclectic combinations of all three."[125] Nevertheless, fifteenth-century esoteric methods provided a blueprint for the sixteenth-century model of kingship. In the sixteenth century when *Shajara* (Genealogies) were written to reveal prognostications about the legitimate Ottoman rule, one of the three sources was *Miftah al-jafr al-kabir* of Bisṭāmī.[126] The use of his work in the *Shajara* indicates that cosmopolitan intellectual occultists such as Bisṭāmī participated "in the formulation of new forms of political discourse," and "in the second half of the fourteenth and first half of the fifteenth century, [their] intellectual networks emerged as powerful actors in the public sphere."[127] These elites had their own "informal intellectual network," and their name was *Ikhwān al-Safā' wa-khillān al-wafā'* (Brethren of Purity and Friends of Loyalty).

Fifteenth-century *Ikhwān al-Safā'* took their name after a tenth-century esoteric group *Ikhwān al-Safā'*. Tenth-century *Ikhwān al-Safā'* was an "esoteric" community that issued

[124] Markiewicz, *The Crisis of Kingship in Late Medieval Islam: Persian Emigres and the Making of Ottoman Sovereignty*, 6–7.
[125] Melvin-Koushki, "Early Modern Islamicate Empire: New Forms of Religiopolitical Legitimacy," 2.
[126] Ahmed Zildzic, "Friend and Foe: The Early Ottoman Reception of Ibn 'Arabi" (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Berkeley, CA, University of California, Near Eastern Studies, 2012), 83.
[127] Binbaş, *Intellectual Networks in Timurid Iran Sharaf Al-Din Ali Yazdi and the Islamicate Republic of Letters*, 21. There were interactions between cosmopolitan intellectuals and the vernacular literary circles. The author of *Dürr-i Meknun* (*The Hidden Pearls*, written in 1453) attributed to Yazıcıoğlu Ahmed Bīcan cites al-Bisṭāmī in the sixteenth chapter. Carlos Grenier discussed authorship of *Dürr-i Meknun* and text's relationship with textual genealogies. See Yazıcıoğlu Ahmed Bican, *Dürr-i Meknun - Tıpkıbasım: İnceleme, Çeviriyazı, Dizin*, ed. Ahmet Demirtaş (İstanbul: Akademik Yayınlar, 2009), 208–15, Carlos Grenier, "The Yazıcıoğlu Brothers and Textual Genealogies of Ottoman Islam," *Turcica* 49 (2018): 37–59, Carlos Grenier, "Reassessing the Authorship of the Dürr-i Meknun," *Archivum Ottomanicum* 35 (2018): 193–211.

fifty-one or two epistles on their philosophical and religious system. Contemporary scholars and sources do not agree about the authorship, date, religious and political affiliations of the community and their epistles. Scholars have offered two possible composition dates, with the mid-tenth century being more commonly accepted than the eleventh century.[128] Islamic tradition attributes the letters of *Ikhwān al-Safā'* to various people as single authors, including ʿAlī Ibn Abī Ṭālib; Al-Ghazālī (d. 1111), al-Ḥallāj (d. 922); al-Majrītī (d. 661); the sixth imam Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (c. 700-65); Jābir bin Hayyān (d. 815) renowned for the "Jabirian corpus;" *Ismaili* missionaries (*da'i*), and so on.[129] Scholars, however, tend to agree that the letters were written under the supervision of a single person but reflecting communal attitudes. Although it is not possible to ascertain the answer by using secondary sources written by near-contemporaries of the *Ikhwān al-Safā'*, several names crop up in the secondary sources, such as Abī Bakr al-Maqdisī, ʿAlī b. Hārūn al-Zanjānī, al-ʿAwfī. These individuals are unlikely to have been sole authors of the epistles, but their shared characteristics give us an idea about the *Ikhwān al-Safā'*s background. They were either religious scholars (*'ulama*) or civil servants from Basra, all "men of letters with a predilection for philosophy and science."[130]

Tenth-century *Ikhwān al-Safā'* were famous for their ambition of reconciling philosophy and the Islamic sciences. Approaches to the sciences, religion and cosmos by *Ikhwān al-Safā'* were inspired by Platonic and Pythagorean traditions through adopting the Neo-Platonic emanation theory, the division between unchanging supra-lunar and generated sub-lunar world, correspondences, Pythagorean numerology, humor theory, unicity of nature and so on. They reconciled these ancient traditions with Islamic sources and offered "eclectic

[128] Godefroid de Callatay, *Ikhwan Al-Safa': A Brotherhood of Idealists on the Fringe of Orthodox Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005), 3.
[129] Seyyed Hussain Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines: Conceptions of Nature and Methods Used for Its Study by the Ikhwan al-Safa', al--Biruni, and Ibn Sina* (London: Thames and Hudgson, 1978), 26; Ian Richard Netton, *Muslim Neoplatonists: An Introduction to the Thought of the Brethren of Purity (Ikhwan al-Safa')* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991), 3.
[130] de Callatay, *Ikhwan Al-Safa': A Brotherhood of Idealists on the Fringe of Orthodox Islam*, 7.

philosophy" that benefited from a wide array of texts including the canonized texts of other Abrahamic religions, Hermetic corpus, Sasanian books as well as Indian works.[131]

The literature explains "eclectic philosophy and synthesis" in relation to the historical actors' confessional background and agenda. For instance, Nasr puts forward that Shiites acknowledged occult sciences in earlier phases of their history. The legacy of ʿAlī Ibn Abī Ṭālib and Jaʾfar al-Ṣādiq had a crucial impact on the formation of this tradition. For example, the renowned alchemist Jābir bin Hayyān himself was a pupil of the sixth imam, Jaʿfar, and the eighth imam, Ridā, justified all sorts of intellectual sciences for Shiite theology. Their acceptance of "Hermeticism" led Shiites to be "the proponents of a synthetic physics, a 'periodic' conception of time as consisting of different cycles, or *adwar* and *akwar*, and the tradition of Hippocratic medicine tied to alchemy."[132] In addition, Shiites accepted Aristotle, the Peripatetic School, yet they rejected the purely rationalistic components, and combined their teachings with illuminist philosophy and gnostic elements.[133] Hence, when the political arena was favorable to Shiites in the tenth and eleventh centuries, these eclectic and synthetic philosophies blossomed.

The tenth-century *Ikhwān al-Safāʾ*s confessional orientation is controversial. Although experts claim they were connected to the Ismaili branch of Shiism, some oppose this by suggesting that the *Ikhwān al-Safā'* was not Ismaili but the other way round: later generations of the Ismailis embraced their philosophy.[134] Allegedly, one of their epistles was written by the hidden Imam. Although this text establishes that *Ikhwān al-Safā'* was Shiite, it also reveals that they condemned many established Shiite practices and ideas, such as cursing

[131] For the detailed information see: Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines: Conceptions of Nature and Methods Used for Its Study by the Ikhwan al-Safa', al--Biruni, and Ibn Sina*; de Callatay, *Ikhwan Al-Safa': A Brotherhood of Idealists on the Fringe of Orthodox Islam*.
[132] Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines: Conceptions of Nature and Methods Used for Its Study by the Ikhwan al-Safa', al--Biruni, and Ibn Sina*, 14–15.
[133] Nasr, 14–15.
[134] See the related discussion: Nasr, 26–30; Liana Saif, "Ikhwan Al-Safa's Religious Reform and Magic: Beyond the Ismaili Hypothesis," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 30, no. 1 (2018): 34–68.

of the first three caliphs and waiting for the Hidden Imam. The *Ikhwān al-Safā'* praised the third caliph 'Uthman and perceived him "as a model of piety and resignation." They also believed that "one reached [the *imam*s] by assimilating their virtues, and this in turn one achieved by study, above all by study of philosophy, not by crude emotionalism," nor waiting for their physical presence.[135] Lately, Liana Saif argued that the *Ikhwān al-Safā'* was influenced by Zaydism and Ibadism regarding the "legitimacy of Imam and the Caliph," and they named their position as "The Third Way;" in other words, they were not bound to any established religious tradition but had their own "unique" way.[136]

But who were the fifteenth-century *Ikhwān al-Safā'* then? They were comprised of distinguished cosmopolitan scholars in the Mamluk, Ottoman and Timurid courts. Scholars discovered the fifteenth-century *Ikhwān al-Safā'* through Bisṭāmī's reference to an informal network, whose name is *Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ wa-khillān al-wafāʾ* in *al-Durra al-Sāfiya fī al-adwiyya al-Shāfiya.*[137] Gardiner and Melvin-Koushki referred to them as *Neo-Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'*,[138] and İlker Evrim Binbaş devoted considerable attention to them in his *Intellectual Networks in Timurid Iran Sharaf Al-Din Ali Yazdi and the Islamicate Republic of Letters.*[139]

Several scholars are known to have taken part in this informal network. Members included scholars and litterateurs, and followers of the Mamluk courtier Shaykh Husayn Akhlātī (d. 1397); Mamluk and later Ottoman courtier al-Bisṭāmī; Ibn Turka (d. 1432) and Sharaf ad-Dīn Yazdī (d. 1454) from the Timurid Iran,[140] as well as several Ottoman scholars. These Ottoman scholars were Molla Fenarī (d. 1431), Qāżīzāda Rūmī (d. 1436), Sheikh

[135] de Callatay, *Ikhwan Al-Safa': A Brotherhood of Idealists on the Fringe of Orthodox Islam*, 100–101.
[136] Saif, "Ikhwan Al-Safa's Religious Reform and Magic: Beyond the Ismaili Hypothesis."
[137] Fazlıoğlu, "İlk Dönem Osmanlı İlim ve Kültür Hayatında İhvanü's-Safa ve Abdurrahman Bistami," 239.
[138] Gardiner, "Esotericism in a Manuscript Culture: Aḥmad al-Būnī and His Readers through the Mamlūk Period," 157.
[139] Binbaş, *Intellectual Networks in Timurid Iran Sharaf Al-Din Ali Yazdi and the Islamicate Republic of Letters*, 109–12.
[140] Melvin-Koushki, "The Quest for a Universal Science: The Occult Philosophy of Ṣāʾin al-Dīn Turka Iṣfahānī (1369-1432) and Intellectual Millenarianism in Early Timurid Iran," 16–18, 67.; Binbaş, *Intellectual Networks in Timurid Iran Sharaf Al-Din Ali Yazdi and the Islamicate Republic of Letters*.

Bedreddin (d. 1420) and Şükrüllāh (d. ca. 1464).[141] According to contemporary sources, these scholars had a tutor-pupil relationship, exchanged letters, requested and dedicated books to each other. For example, Bisṭāmī taught Shaykh Bedreddin from his own *es-Sayhā al-Bum* in 1414.[142] Cornell Fleischer notes that Bisṭāmī's *Miftāḥ al-jafr* circulated in the courtly circles,[143] which, as noted previously, was one of the sources of *Shajara* falsely attributed to Ibn 'Arabī. Bedreddin's grandson Hafiz Halil, who wrote a biography of Bedreddin, called his grandfather's colleagues *Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'*.[144] Şükrüllāh, who was active in Murad II's and Mehmed II's courts, informed his readers that he wrote *Jāmī al-Dāwat* at the request of the *Ikhwān al-Ṣafā',* while in his other work, *Manhac al-Rashād*, *Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'* was one of the dedicatories.[145] And lastly, Qāżīzāda Rūmī and Ibn Turka are also known to have exchanged letters.[146]

These cosmopolitan intellectuals traveled to different places across the Islamic world and received their education from diverse scholars. Some of them contacted each other before they met at the Ottoman court, and some might have studied under the supervision of the same tutor. They could read and write Arabic and Persian, and most of them were knowledgeable in Ottoman Turkish. Bisṭāmī's biography represents a good example of a cosmopolitan intellectual. He travelled to many cities in the Islamic world and was a courtier in Mamluk and Ottoman courts. He travelled in order to receive education in different disciplines. For example, he traveled to Damascus, then Cairo in order to deepen his knowledge in science, as Taşköprizade explains. In the end, thanks to his erudition in lettrism

[141] Binbaş, *Intellectual Networks in Timurid Iran Sharaf Al-Din Ali Yazdi and the Islamicate Republic of Letters*, 106–7; Melvin-Koushki, "The Quest for a Universal Science: The Occult Philosophy of Ṣāʾin al-Dīn Turka Iṣfahānī (1369-1432) and Intellectual Millenarianism in Early Timurid Iran," 50–51.
[142] Fazlıoğlu, "İlk Dönem Osmanlı İlim ve Kültür Hayatında İhvanü's-Safa ve Abdurrahman Bistami," 239.
[143] Fleischer, "Ancient Wisdom and New Sciences: Prophecies at the Ottoman Court in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries," 239.
[144] Binbaş, *Intellectual Networks in Timurid Iran Sharaf Al-Din Ali Yazdi and the Islamicate Republic of Letters*, 108.
[145] Binbaş, 107.
[146] Melvin-Koushki, "The Quest for a Universal Science: The Occult Philosophy of Ṣāʾin al-Dīn Turka Iṣfahānī (1369-1432) and Intellectual Millenarianism in Early Timurid Iran," 50–51.

and the names of God (*'ilm-i hurūf* and *Asmā al-Husnā*), he rose above the others. Taşköprizade adds that he saw Bisṭāmī's autograph copies of histories, written with the help of the science of lettrism and the names of God.[147] He depicts Bisṭāmī as a scholar of exegesis and Islamic law, a learned man knowledgeable in occultism and amulets, and as a connoisseur of history thanks to his knowledge of the comprehensive prognostication (*al-jifr* and *al-jāmi'*). However, unlike most of his predecessors in these disciplines, his *madhhab*s were Sunni and Hanafi, both of which were embraced by the Ottoman court.[148]

The literature on 'Abd al-Rahmān Bisṭāmī reveals that his works are connected to the expectations of the Mahdi and millenarianism. Fleischer stated that Bisṭāmī's occultism encompasses and reconciles "all ancient and hermetic traditions."[149] His lettrism aimed to attain "the knowledge of the divine and of the cosmos," which was reached by mystics—in effect, to have divine inspiration. His system acknowledges that the fourth caliph and the first imam 'Alī obtained the knowledge of the divine and the cosmos from previous prophets. This "prophetic wisdom," which contains knowledge of the future, was protected by supreme Gnostics, and eventually inherited by the sixth *imam* Ja'far al-Ṣādiq. He did not share it with commoners, but this wisdom was transmitted through comprehensive prognostication (*al-jifr wa al-jāmi'*. Ibn 'Arabī plays a critical role here, since he received this secret knowledge by "reunit[ing] mystical and philosophical wisdom."[150] Once one reaches knowledge of the divine and the cosmic order, he attains the knowledge of "the beginnings of history and its cycles of prophets" through lettrism.[151]

[147] Taşköprülüzâde Ahmed, *Osmanlı Bilginleri: Eş-Şakâiku'n-Nu'mâniyye Fî Ulemâi'd-Devleti'l-Osmâniyye*, 62; Fazlıoğlu, "İlk Dönem Osmanlı İlim ve Kültür Hayatında İhvanü's-Safa ve Abdurrahman Bistami," 229–32.
[148] Taşköprülüzâde Ahmed, *Osmanlı Bilginleri: Eş-Şakâiku'n-Nu'mâniyye Fî Ulemâi'd-Devleti'l-Osmâniyye*, 62.
[149] Fleischer, "Ancient Wisdom and New Sciences: Prophecies at the Ottoman Court in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries," 234.
[150] Fleischer, 234.
[151] Fleischer, 237.

Bisṭāmī's ideas shared many common points with the *Ikhwān al-Safā'* of the tenth century, beginning with ancient esoteric traditions, millenarianism, cyclical history, renewal of religion and others. However, Ibn 'Arabī's influence shaped fifteenth-century *Ikhwān al-Safā"*s mystic tendencies to a great extent, and these cosmopolitan intellectuals were a part of the Ibn 'Arabī school. The importance of Ibn 'Arabī in al-Bisṭāmī's thought is apparent. As Ahmed Zildzic underlines, Bisṭāmī "credited Ibn 'Arabī for his influence in *'ilm al-ḥurūf* [lettrism]." Moreover, "[t]hat influence is visible everywhere; the title of al-Bisṭāmī's most important work is *al-makkiyya*, which undoubtedly resembles, both in title and structure, Ibn 'Arabī's oeuvre *al-Futuhat al-makkiyya.*"[152]

This influence was not limited to al-Bisṭāmī. Another member of the informal network, the first chief-mufti of Ottomans, Molla Fanārī, is considered to have been the most significant actor—with Dawūd al-Qayṣarī—in the dissemination of Ibn 'Arabī school and thought in the Ottoman lands.[153] Molla Fenarī's commentary on Ibn 'Arabī's disciple, Ṣadr ad-Dīn Qūnawī's *Miftāh al-Ghayb*, was an important text in terms of understanding Ibn 'Arabī's thought. Thus, "for several generations the main instruction (*müderrislik*) duties at Manastır madrasa were performed by scholars who were not only favorable to Ibn 'Arabī, but also closely related to Fanārī."[154] During his residence in Bursa, al-Bisṭāmī taught sciences to Molla Fanārī.[155]

Another agent of fifteenth-century *Ikhwān al-Safā'* from the Timurid world, Ibn Turka, was related to the Ibn 'Arabī school. Even though Turka upheld different views such as that of lettrism's superiority over Sufism, one of his main sources was Ibn 'Arabī, and he maintained his connections with the proponents of Ibn 'Arabī. His argument supports the idea that the fifteenth-century *Ikhwān al-Safā'* perceived themselves as the "systematizer and

[152] Zildzic, "Friend and Foe: The Early Ottoman Reception of Ibn 'Arabi," 100.
[153] Zildzic, 60.
[154] Zildzic, 79.
[155] Zildzic, 100.

synthesizer of a broader and more ancient tradition."[156] Hence, these intellectual networks' intersection with the Ibn ʿArabī school does not mean that they were passive followers of Ibn ʿArabī's teachings; rather, these intellectuals reformulated occultism and lettrism and synthesized concepts created by their forerunners.[157] They were the actors of *post-esotericism*: "a lettrist actively synthesized from the teachings of al-Būnī, Ibn al-ʿArabī, and others and declared a revealed science of the invisible for a new, apocalyptic age."[158]

Ḥurūfiyya Movement in the Ottoman Court

Due to the resemblance of their method of lettrism and millennialist ideas, *Ḥurūfiyya* movement stands in a puzzling relationship to the fifteenth-century *Ikhwān al-Safā'* , which requires some clarification. First, the members of the fifteenth-century *Ikhwān al-Safā'* endeavored to split from the Ḥurūfiyya movement on account of doctrinal, confessional and millennialist differences. Second, and most importantly, the members of the fifteenth-century *Ikhwān al-Safā'* wanted to protect themselves from the consequences of the *Ḥurūfiyya* movements' political attempts, especially given that some members of the informal network, such as Ibn Turka, could not avoid interrogations and torture.

As for the problem of separation from the Ḥurūfiyya movement, it is notable that they used not same, but similar methods such as science of letters, and shared beliefs that were akin to other millennialist movements, like the importance of Adam as the first human, an

[156] See the remarkable interpretation of M. Melvin-Koushki on Ibn Turka's project and his textual relationship with Ibn ʿArabi: "On the other hand, Ṣāʾin al-Dīn parts ways from the 'mainstream' of the Ibn ʿArabī school in his lionization of the occult sciences, and lettrism in particular. Although earlier members of the school were no strangers to lettrist theory, Ṣāʾin al-Dīn openly promotes it in a way that is unprecedented in the tradition—and cites Ibn ʿArabī himself as one of his primary textual sources to this end. Even his commentary on the Fuṣūṣ is unique; unlike the host of other commentaries on this text, his is thickly veined with lettrist excursuses. A millenarian and universalist thinker, Ṣāʾin al-Dīn saw his own role as a systematizer and synthesizer of a broader and more ancient tradition." Melvin-Koushki, "The Quest for a Universal Science: The Occult Philosophy of Ṣāʾin al-Dīn Turka Iṣfahānī (1369-1432) and Intellectual Millenarianism in Early Timurid Iran," 390–91.

[157] Noah Gardiner suggests that al-Akhlātī might have been "the key actor" in terms of synthesizing the teachings of Ibn al-ʿArabī and al-Būnī. He also suggests that Bisṭāmī might have been one of his disciples along with Ibn Turka and Yazdī. Gardiner, "Esotericism in a Manuscript Culture: Aḥmad al-Būnī and His Readers through the Mamlūk Period," 328.

[158] Gardiner, 253.

esoteric reading of creation and the structure of cosmos, but their millennialist agenda and doctrine were quite distinct. The *Ḥurūfiyya* movement was founded by Fażlāllāh Astarābādī (d. 1394), an ascetic man who became famous for his dream interpretation.[159] In 1374, he saw a dream, and this dream "exalted Fażlāllāh to the level of prophets and beyond, and gave him a pivotal position in the structure of the cosmos,"[160] which was a clear heresy for the region's Sunni scholars. As a self-proclaimed Messiah, who possessed the secrets of cosmos and was the embodiment of divinity, he even dared to regard Persian as a new sacred language, similar to the Prophet Muhammad's bringing Arabic as the language of Revelation. He was executed by the Timurid prince Miranshah, and it remains unclear whether the execution was ordered by sovereign Timur (d. 1405) or it was Miranshah's own initiative in attempt to consolidate Timurid power in the region. Nevertheless, it is obvious that Fażlāllāh's mission was discovered by the political authorities. Considering Fażlāllāh's religiopolitical claims and doctrine, the Timurid authorities had no trouble obtaining a decree by the religious scholars of Samarqand and Gilan for his execution.[161]

After Fażlāllāh's death, his disciples were bewildered with the shock. His tomb became the new Kaaba and the center of the world for his followers. Yet, his followers' perception of his death differed concerning "the accession to paradise."[162] Shahzad Bashir states that, on one hand, some believed that "God had pledged exactly such a momentous revelation for the end times, and that the science of letters that could be learnt from

[159] Fażlāllāh Astarabadi's father was a judge in Astarabad, in modern day Iran, and he inherited his father's occupation, when his father passed away in his childhood. Their confessional background is not clear, they had commitment to Twelver-Shiism, but they might have had belief in Shafii branch of Sunni Islam. He had a genealogy going back to Prophet Muhammad. He denounced his post, and devoted himself to Sufism, and he wandered in different cities Khawarazm, Sabzavar and Tabriz. In these cities, he established connections with scholars and political elites, and made himself a name as an ascetic Sufi and excellent dream interpreter.
[160] Shahzad Bashir, *Fazlallah Astarabadi and The Hurufis* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005), 26.
[161] Bashir, 37–38. For the biography of Fazlallah Astarabadi also see: Fatih Usluer, *Hurufilik: İlk Elden Kaynaklarla Doğuşundan İtibaren* (İstanbul: Kabalcı Yayınevi, 2009), 29–56. Also see: Abdülbâki Gölpınarlı, *100 Soruda Türkiye'de Mezhepler ve Tarikatler* (İstanbul: Gerçek Yayınevi, 1969), 144–45.
[162] Bashir, *Fazlallah Astarabadi and The Hurufis*, 91–93.

Fażlāllāh's works fulfilled this promise."[163] On the other hand, others were expecting his second arrival in the world. The former faction stopped conducting necessary rituals, claiming that they were in the metaphorical heaven thanks to their knowledge of Fażlāllāh's teachings. The second group continued to carry out their rituals, and prepared themselves for the second arrival of their Messiah by retaining their missionary activities.[164]

Fażlāllāh had several important disciples who propagated their master's teachings by penning works and attending religious debates across the Persianate world in the first half of the fifteenth century. To mention a few, Sayyid Isḥāq engaged in missionary activities in Khorasan, 'Alī al-A'lā was active in Syria and Anatolia, and poet Nesīmī influenced most of the Persianate world until his execution by Mamluk authorities in 1404-5. 'Alī al-A'lā and Nesīmī were the most relevant figures for the Ottoman context—the former profoundly influenced the Bektashi order in Anatolia, and the latter transmitted the Ḥurūfi doctrine to the Anatolians through poems in Turkish and Persian.[165] It seems that these two missionaries strove to prepare grounds for the second coming of the Messiah.

The Ḥurūfiyya movement's activities were not only propagating the Ḥurūfi doctrines, but they also embarked on assassinations and revolts against the Timurids whom they despised due to Fażlāllāh's execution. In this way, they paved the way for the second coming of the Messiah, Fażlāllāh, planning to create catastrophe, punish the Timurid authority, and abolish the biggest obstruction before the coming of Messiah.[166] In 1427, a Ḥurūfi supporter, Aḥmad-i Lur, attempted the assassination of Timur's son, Sultan Shākhruh. The attempt failed, and Timurid authorities investigated the incident, which prompted a witch-hunt. During this persecution, many prominent intellectuals dealing with the science of letters,

[163] Bashir, 91.
[164] Bashir, 96.
[165] Bashir, 97–101.
[166] Bashir, 102.

lettrism, were interrogated and tortured, and during this time occult practices are likely to have become a dangerous occupation.[167]

One of these intellectuals was Ibn Turka. Ibn Turka was interrogated twice by the Timurids, and he penned two apologies to avoid accusations and to prove that he harboured no sympathy towards the *Ḥurūfiyya*. He even referred to the Ottomans who displayed the "open mindedness" to the science of letters and Sufism in the Islamic world.[168] Melvin-Koushki underlines that "[g]iven the irreparable damage the Ḥurūfis did to his career and his lettrist project, then, Ṣāʾin al-Dīn's feelings toward the group were understandably of bitter resentment and naked hostility."[169] Even though a few Ḥurūfi biographies assert that Turka and Yazdi asked Fażlāllāh to interpret dreams, they were probably trying to show his charisma and influence.[170]

Ibn Turka was not the only one among fifteenth-century *Ikhwān al-Safā'* who was anxious to distinguish himself from the *Ḥurūfiyya* movement. As Cornell Fleischer notes, Bisṭāmī was also hostile towards the *Ḥurūfiyya* movement. He "specifically denounces Fażlāllāh as an extremist, 'a friend of Satan' who perverted a true form of knowledge for his own worldly ends in the same way that ignorant and corrupt practitioners of Sufism are tempted to an antinomianism that is merely an excuse for moral license."[171] On the other hand, Fatih Usluer demonstrates that the *Ḥurūfiyya* movement, as most occult and lettrist movements, is typically considered "a humanist philosophy" because of their anthropocentric perspective. Yet, Usluer regards this perspective irrelevant, and focuses on their theological perspective. In this sense, *Ḥurūfiyya* were adamant against every human being who was not a

[167] Binbaş, *Intellectual Networks in Timurid Iran Sharaf Al-Din Ali Yazdi and the Islamicate Republic of Letters*, 17.
[168] Binbaş, 147–48.
[169] Melvin-Koushki, "The Quest for a Universal Science: The Occult Philosophy of Ṣāʾin al-Dīn Turka Iṣfahānī (1369-1432) and Intellectual Millenarianism in Early Timurid Iran," 239.
[170] Melvin-Koushki, "The Quest for a Universal Science: The Occult Philosophy of Ṣāʾin al-Dīn Turka Iṣfahānī (1369-1432) and Intellectual Millenarianism in Early Timurid Iran."
[171] Fleischer, "Ancient Wisdom and New Sciences: Prophecies at the Ottoman Court in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries," 235.

follower of Fażlāllāh, and according to them, it was legitimate and obligatory to slay those unbelievers.[172] After the death of Fażlāllāh, those who believed that learning Fażlāllāh's teaching "fulfilled the paradise promise" deduced that "they had the right to the lives and property of those outside the group."[173] Hence, while it is justifiable to consider Shaykh Bedreddin's revolt against Mehmed I in the context of the broader apocalyptic and millennialist trends in the Islamic world, he and his fellow *Ikhwān al-Safā'* had a very different understanding of millennialism and esotericism than the Ḥurūfis.

In this respect, the *Ḥurūfiyya* movement's missionaries not only intended to influence and convert Sufi, Bektashi orders and masses but they also worked their way into the Ottoman court. Abdulbaki Gölpınarlı infers from Mecdi Efendi's biographical dictionary that a Ḥurūfi missionary had influence over Mehmed II, which Fahreddīn Acemī (d. 1460) heard from Grandvizier Mahmud Pasha. Fahreddīn Acemī took action to execute the Hurufī by immolating him in the minaret of Edirne Mosque. Gölpınarlı adds that Hamidi touched upon this incident in a *qasida* (panegyric poetry) in his *Divan* (poem collection) dedicated to Mahmud Pasha.[174] Based on the same source, Fatih Usluer suggests that Fahreddīn Acemī examined Ḥurūfi beliefs and reached the conclusion that they believed in incarnation (*hulūl*), and issued an execution *fatwa* (edict) for them.[175] In another account of an event that took place in 1444, when Murad II renounced his throne for the benefit of Mehmed II, the *Ḥurūfiyya* rioted in Edirne, and the Ottomans suppressed them.[176] The reaction of Mehmed II to these incidents remains unknown. However, the sources suggest that the execution of the *Ḥurūfiyya* was the decision of political and religious elites. The *Ḥurūfiyya* movement could not integrate themselves into the Ottoman court as fifteenth-century *Ikhwān al-Safā'* did.

[172] Usluer, *Hurufilik: İlk Elden Kaynaklarla Doğuşundan İtibaren*, 263–64.
[173] Bashir, *Fazlallah Astarabadi and The Hurufis*, 94.
[174] Gölpınarlı, *100 Soruda Türkiye'de Mezhepler ve Tarikatler*, 157.
[175] Usluer, *Hurufilik: İlk Elden Kaynaklarla Doğuşundan İtibaren*, 25.
[176] Franz Babinger, *Fatih Sultan Mehmet ve Zamanı*, trans. Dost Körpe (İstanbul: Oğlak Yayınları, 2002), 49–50; Usluer, *Hurufilik: İlk Elden Kaynaklarla Doğuşundan İtibaren*, 25.

Nonetheless, their legacy carried on in the teachings and esoteric practices of the Bektashi order, who had a long-lasting and profound influence on Ottoman janissaries. These teachings were continued to be targeted by Sunni scholars as heresy in the following centuries.

Chapter 3 - Reframing the Occult Knowledge

The preeminent Andalusian Sufis, Aḥmad al-Būnī and Ibn ʿArabī, as well as their fifteenth-century synthesizers discussed in the previous chapter, gave a considerable place to the Divine Names and letters in their teachings. They interpreted the Quran in "an esoteric way" and taught in the clandestine reading groups, lest they be accused by "commoners" of being heretics. They had concerns about the occult sciences' being utilized in a non-Sufi or pernicious ways by these "commoners." Here, the term commoners should be understood as the ones not attaining the secrets of the Quran by reading it in an esoteric way.

In this chapter, I argue that *ʻAcebu'l-Uccāb* does not feature a meticulous Sufi understanding and gnostic framework that we find in the works of the cosmopolitan occultists discussed in the previous chapter. Manyasoğlu excludes Ibn ʿArabī from his lettrist theory, and mostly refers to Būnīan texts. The result, I argue, was a manual on the wondrous and marvelous features of the sciences produced for the courtly audience, in which he taught the lettrist knowledge for the practical ends. Rather than prioritizing the reception of the divine knowledge, he focuses on the practical thaumaturgy by employing Sufi concepts. In this sense, *ʻAcebü'l-ʻUccāb* may be considered a "vernacular" text not only in terms of the language in which it was written, but also, potentially, usage. Yet, as I suggest, *ʻAcebü'l-ʻUccāb* was not a *sui generis* attempt; rather, it fit in the genre of lettrist texts written by *ahl-i khavāṣṣ* for practical purposes rather than comprehension of theoretical problems concerning God and Cosmos. Furthermore, the fact that Manyasoğlu transmitted occult knowledge without any reference to the esoteric Sufi, Alid and millennialist ideas, while at the same time holding Sufi rituals acceptable to the ulema and religious purity in high regard, suggests that he was adapting the knowledge and usage of the occult to the particular religio-political

milieu of the court and, likely, his own sensibilities that championed Sunni and Hanafi madhhabs.

The Sciences of the Learned: The Occult Knowledge in *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb*

Unlike his cosmopolitan counterparts at the Ottoman court such as Abdurrahman al-Bistāmī or representatives of the messianic religious movements like the *Ḥurūfiyya*, who wrote in Arabic and Persian, Manyasoğlu did not compile and reframe Islamic occult knowledge in a millennialist or messianic perspective. Furthermore, as opposed to mystics and his sources, he did not fashion himself as a devoted Sufi. Instead, he explicated his motivation as following: "I explained several matters, I [compiled] a treatise, in which marvelous matters (*'acāib mesāil*) are collected. Those setting eyes on it might consider me among the learned ones (*'ulemā*) and mention me with blessings."[177] Having received *madrasa* education and having taught in the madrasas of Skopje and Edirne as well as writing a chapter on Islamic law in his occult manual, Manyasoğlu intended to fashion himself as a learned person (*'ulemā*) rather than a devoted Sufi or "a doctor of Islamic law" (*fākih*). I speculate that he introduced himself as an *'ālim* having knowledge in a wide range of topics because he aimed to reach the Turkophone audience outside the madrasa circles, including low-mid rank officials, social and political elites.

In *'Acebu'l-Uccāb*, Manyasoğlu seems to have had two divergent purposes: a) to astonish the reader with marvelous and wondrous aspects of the sciences, and b) instructing him in practical aspects of the sciences covered in the book. These two goals mostly worked together. Nevertheless, Manyasoğlu's tone alters when he begins to write on lettrist practices, where he emphasizes more practical benefits than astonishment. He discusses these practices in the third and fourth subsections of the third chapter, which is more than one-third of the

[177] Mahmud b. Kadı Manyas, "'Acebu'l-'Uccâb," 2a.

'Acebü'l-'Uccāb. Before describing lettrist practices and knowledge, in the end of the second section of this chapter, "On the Secret Issues," Manyasoğlu says: "Manyasoğlu is not afraid of imputation of the wretched folks, and troubles from the grandees, and he articulated so many secrets, marvels and occult things that those seeing and listening to it might be astonished."[178] He clearly separates the section of "On the Various Issues," wherein he wrote on the lettrist practices, from the previous section. In a similar vein, at the end of the book, he does not refer to the whole book, but rather to the section entitled "The Occult Properties of the Quran and Prayers and Names and Letters."[179] He addresses the readers with further reading suggestions on the Divine Names and Letters, but this time merely focusing on instruction: "Oh the wise man of the secrets (*'ārif-i esrār*), if you want to know and see more about the occult properties (*ḫavāṣṣ*) and secrets of these [Divine] Names and Letters, consult the books *Shams al-Ma'ārif* or *'Ilm al-Hudā* or *Esrār-ı Edvār* by Sheikh Aḥmad al-Būnī. It is not appropriate [possible] to elaborate more and disclose the secrets in this abridged [treatise] in Turkish."[180] In addition, despite the fact that there are instructions on manifold sciences like arithmetic, and magic instructions before the subtitle "On the Secret Issues," most of this information is written to astonish, and some of it did not have any practical value. Hence, I suggest that from "On the Secret Issues" and onward Manyasoğlu concentrated on instructing the reader in the practical uses of the science of letters. As such, I consider it an introductory treatise and practical manual on the occult sciences due to his willingness to give theoretical knowledge about lettrism.

[178] Here Manyâsoglı makes suggestions for further reading: "These I found in the books of Hermes, (…). Oh wise seeker of the secrets, if you want to know more secrets and marvels, consult the book of Imam Jawbarī's *Hatk al-astâr* or *The Great Hermes* among the books of Hermes." Mahmud b. Kadı Manyas, 57b–58a.
[179] Mahmud b. Kadı Manyas, 64a.
[180] Mahmud b. Kadı Manyas, 92b.

The Absence of Gnosticism

Manyasoğlu begins his book with an interesting discussion on the differences between *'ilm* (knowledge/science) and *ma'rifa* (gnosis).[181] In this passage, Manyasoğlu cites a verse from the Quran, and a hadith integrated in the theological and Sufi discussions. The Quranic verse reads: "I did not create jinn and humans except to worship me" (Quran 51:56) and the hadith reads: "I was a Hidden Treasure; I loved to be known/recognized. Hence, I created the world so that I would be known." The Quranic verse is interpreted in distinct ways by the Islamic scholars. In the *tafsīr* (exegesis) of Ibn 'Abbās, there are three different interpretations of it.[182] The first possible interpretation puts forward that humans must not disobey God even for a second. The second interpretation, attributed to the fourth caliph 'Alī ibn Abī Tālib, emphasizes God's command and His entrusting the creatures with legal responsibility. According to the third *tafsīr*, however, God "created the jinn and humankind only for them to declare [God's] divine Oneness [*tawhid*] and worship [Him]."[183] The hadith is cited by Sufis in alignment with Ibn 'Abbās' third interpretation to explain that humankind must recognize God and declare His Oneness [*tawhid*] to accomplish the divine responsibility of Men.

Manyasoğlu revealed the connection between the exegesis, hadith and gnosis. He began by clarifying the reason behind Ibn Abbas' third interpretation by explaining that "some" Quran commentators construed *ya'budun* (worship/serve) as *ya'rifun*

[181] This section must have drawn attention of the reading public in the following centuries. A seventeenth-century anthology (*majmu'a*) which includes chapters of *'Acebü'l-Uccāb*was entitled "The Treatise on Knowledge and Gnosis." This manuscript involves first two chapters of *'Acebu'l-'Uccâb*, and there are two formulas from the chapter 3. Mahmud b. Kadı-i Manyas, "Risale-i İlm ve Marifet" (Manuscript, Kastamonu İl Halk Kütüphanesi, 37 Hk 1568/4, 17th century).

[182] Ibn Abbas, *Tanwīr Al-Miqbās Min Tafsīr Ibn 'Abbās*, ed. Muḥammad al-Fīrūzabādī, trans. Mokrane Guezzou (Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, 2007), 616.

[183] Ibn Abbas, 616.

(know/recognize) which takes into account the awareness of God's Oneness.[184] According to Manyasoğlu, the construal of *ya'budun* as *ya'rifun* differentiates *'ilm* (knowledge) from *maʿrifa* (gnosis). He specifies the differences between knowledge and gnosis as follows:

> For instance, *'ilm* is utilized in *külliyat* (entirety), whereas *ma'rifa* is utilized in *cüziyat* (singularity). *'İlm* is utilized in compounds (*mürekkebat*), *ma'rifa* is utilized in simplicity (*besait*). Furthermore, *ma'rifa* is such a cognizance that an object is recollected after you forget it. '*İlm* is extensive, and they address Allah as *'ālim* (omniscient) not *'ārif* (gnostic). (…) Thus, He said *ehbabtu en-u'rafe* (I desired/loved to be known/recognized).[185]

After this explanation, Manyasoğlu declines to take a side in this discussion. He writes: "whether *'ilm* and *maʿrifa* are same or not, they are the most glorified graces."[186] Eventually *'ilm* and *maʿrifa* are comparable concepts, both having a meaning of "knowledge." According to some Sufi understandings, *'ilm*'s status is higher than that of *maʿrifa*, as unlike *maʿrifa*, *'ilm* is attributed to God.[187] However, "when discussing knowledge as a human attribute, many Sufis placed *ma'rifa* at a higher stage than *'ilm*," since *ma'rifa* denotes the knowledge directly coming from God through unveiling. Hence, the preeminent Sufis such as Ibn 'Arabī, who were the inspiration of cosmopolitan intellectuals, call the *'ārifūn* (gnostics) having *ma'rifa* as "the greatest friends of God."[188] Moreover, the replacement of "serve/worship" with "recognize" in the above-mentioned verse seems to have been of a pivotal significance for Sufis. In this respect, *ma'rifa* is comprehended as the potential of Men, as the world is created for Men, to find the Hidden Treasure. In other words, the requirement for serving God is to recognize/know Him.[189] As William C. Chittick explains through Ibn 'Arabī's teachings:

[184]Mahmud b. Kadı-i Manyas, "Aceb'ül-Üccab" (Manuscript, Princeton University Rare Collection, 1010, 38 1437), 1b–2a.
[185] Mahmud b. Kadı-i Manyas, 2a.
[186] Mahmud b. Kadı-i Manyas, 2a.
[187] William C. Chittick, "Ibn 'Arabī on the Benefit of Knowledge," in *The Essential Sophia : Love and Wisdom*, ed. Katherine O'Brien and Seyyid Hossein Nasr (World Wisdom, 2006), 126.
[188] William C. Chittick, *Ibn Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination: The Sufi Path of Knowledge* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1989), 148.
[189] Süleyman Uludağ, "Marifet," in *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: TDV Yayınevi, 2003), 55.

> Perfect Man realizes the knowledge of the Hidden Treasure, a knowledge that is God's goal in creating the universe. Only human beings can recognize God in the fullness of his divinity, because only they were created in the form of his all-comprehensiveness. The importance of this knowledge is already implicit in the Quranic statement, "I created jinn and mankind only to worship/serve Me" (Q. 51:56). As the Prophet's companion Ibn Abbas explained, "to worship/serve Me" (*ya'buduni*) means "to know Me" or "to recognize Me" (*ya'rifuni*). Once one recognizes one's own human status as a servant and creature of God, one can give servanthood its full due by following prophetic guidance.[190]

Manyasoğlu's reluctance to consider *ma'rifa* and *'ilm* as distinct human attributes splits him from the Sufi ideas that give priority to gnosis. He seems to be indifferent to gnostic teachings and does not give any account regarding the allegorical interpretation of the Quran that are related to cosmological accounts and the Creation. This is in contrast with his sources' and counterparts' comprehension of esoteric sciences that attributes importance to gnosis, *walāya* (sacral power), cosmology and cosmogony. Their primary interests include the understanding of the realities of cosmos, discovering the Hidden Treasure, and seeking for the universal sciences.[191]

For Manyasoğlu's counterparts and sources, the creation of cosmos and Adam are the basis of esoteric interpretation and theoretical background of occultism. The esoteric knowledge in Islam, as in the European Renaissance esotericism, acknowledges the human's potential to be a sanctified being thanks to his deific essence. In the hierarchy of the chain of being, humans are in the transitory position between the unchanging, sacred heavens (supralunar world) and the changing world of generation on earth. For a human being, it is possible to be heavenly, as was the case with the sanctified figures (e.g. saints), or remain an earthly being, such as animals, plants and mines.

[190] William C. Chittick, *Ibn 'Arabi: Heir to the Prophets* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005), 63–64.
[191] Melvin-Koushki, "The Quest for a Universal Science: The Occult Philosophy of Ṣāʾin al-Dīn Turka Iṣfahānī (1369-1432) and Intellectual Millenarianism in Early Timurid Iran," 9–10, 322–23.

In the Sufi understanding, as in the writings of Ibn ʿArabī, human beings were the only creatures having this potential; firstly, Adam was created by God in His own image,[192] from which humans take their deific essence, and God taught Adam the names, "[t]he goal of human life is then to actualize the knowledge taught to Adam."[193] Thus, in order to find the Hidden Treasure, one, as a human being, must "recollect" the knowledge and recognize the cosmos and God. Human beings can attain the Hidden Treasure and advanced spiritual state through certain practices. For example, according to Ibn ʿArabī, one might discover the Hidden Treasure by advanced spiritual state using Sufi practices and Divine Names, since Divine Names reflects the relationship between cosmos and God. However, applying Sufi practices such as fasting, solitude, remembrance, invocation and being in a pure and clean state do not indicate that one would certainly attain the advanced spiritual state. God is the one bequeathing the mystical visions, unveiling, and knowledge or *walāya* upon a human being.[194] Most of the lettrists of the Islamic world were influenced or were the proponents and advocates of these ideas.

Manyasoğlu's usage of the concepts related to Sufis appears in the earlier chapters as well. As I stated in the very beginning, in the third chapter Manyasoğlu aspires to astonish and amaze his readers along with pedagogical goals. The state of astonishment is closely related to the Sufi understanding and unveiling of God's wonders. The genre of "Wonders of Creation," which was first written in the thirteenth century, emphasizes the omnipotence of God. The most famous work in this genre is al-Qazwīnī's (d. 1283) *ʾAjāib al-Makhlūqāt*. As Syrinx von Hees observes, for Qazwīnī astonishment "is originally innate in the human being, but it is gradually lost due to different preoccupations," so he "hopes that the reading of his book will revive this feeling of astonishment and will stimulate the reader to

[192] For the contradicting views on this hadith, see: Şaban Çiftçi, ""Allah Âdem'i Kendi Sūretinde Yaratmıştır" Hadisinin Tahric ve Değerlendirmesi," *Pamukkale Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, no. 1 (2014): 1–20.
[193] Chittick, *Ibn 'Arabi: Heir to the Prophets*, 49.
[194] Chittick, 14–15.

contemplate the greatness of God's creation."[195] Fifteenth-century Ottoman translations of the "Wonders of Creation" also aimed for the reader or listener to "recognize and exalt God" without seeing the wonders. In line with this, this genre accepts the idea of the human's microcosmic status before God.[196]

In the Islamic context, the prophets were privileged by wonder-making or creating miracles, and the *awliya* (saints), Sufis and shaykhs were allowed to perform miracles through their communion with God. One of Manyasoğlu's sources, al-Jawbarī in *Hatk al-astār*, informs people about fake prophets, Sufis, shaykhs, and their tricks.

Manyasoğlu's transmission of al-Jawbarī's work entitled *Hatk al-astār* provides an interesting example of how he frames his material.[197] Al-Jawbarī presented his work to Artuqid ruler Mesūd (r. 1222-31).[198] It can be understood that this book was read in the sixteenth-century Ottoman lands since it was available in the library of Ottoman ruler Bayezid II.[199] Al-Jawbarī wrote his work against those who manipulated the occult properties of things to be recognized as a prophet, *wāli* (saint) or shaykh, despite the fact that they were not. Obviously, al-Jawbarī warns his readers to distinguish sanctified figures having *walaya* from the illusionists.

[195] Synrix von Hees, "Al-Qazwìnì's 'Ajà'ib al-Makhlùqàt: An Encyclopædia of Natural History?," in *Organizing Knowledge: Encyclopædic Activities in the Pre-Eighteenth Century Islamic World* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2006), 175–76.

[196] The near contemporary text of Manyasoğlu, the anonymous translation of Wonders of Creation written in the fifteenth century gave a considerable place to the separation between tricks through being knowledgeable about the occult properties of things and utilizing it as a trick, and real miracles. These texts justify the prophets' and *awliya*'s miracles bestowed by God, but they distinguish them from magic, which depended on the tricks rather than favors of God. As I discuss below, Manyasoğlu neglects the discussion of difference between magic and miracles Furthermore, he does not establish a link between astonishment and creation. Anonymous, *Tercüme-i Acaibü'l-Mahlukat ve Garaibü'l-Mevcudat*, ed. Bekir Sarıkaya (İstanbul: Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu Başkanlığı, 2019), 112.

[197] In the Princeton manuscript, it is written "imam Cevberi'nin *Hekt'ül-estar* adlı kitabın"(57b), Zeynep Buçukçu's reading is misleading. She misreads "Cevberi," and recorded it as "imam Ceriri," she left empty the book name.

[198] See Sadettin Ökten, "Cevberi," in TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi (İstanbul: TDV, 1993), 442–43.

[199] Noah Gardiner, "Books on Occult Sciences," in *Trasures of Knowledge: An Inventory of Ottoman Palace Library (1502/3-1503/4)*, ed. Gülru Necipoğlu, Cemal Kafadar, and Cornell H. Fleischer, vol. 1 (Leiden & Boston: BRILL, 2019), 746–47.

Al-Jawbarī explained in his book the tricks of fake prophets, saints and sheikhs who performed fake miracles and illusions. Manyasoğlu appears to have translated and used many passages from this book in the last section of his work's third chapter. Nevertheless, he recontextualized these passages, and utilized the information found in them only to amaze his readers.[200] For example, al-Jawbarī talks about a fake miracle of a fraudulent shaykh: when a fraudulent shaykh prays beneath the tree, the tree prostrates. Al-Jawbarī informs his readers that they should not believe in it , as when one gathers black cat's brain, a bone of a black snake and a human bone and burns them, such smoke is known to make cypress and tamarisk trees stoop.[201] Manyasoğlu does not mention the fake prophets, *wāli* or *shaykhs*, and does not warn his readers. Rather, he includes the examples from al-Jawbarī as curiosities recorded under the title of "On the Marvelous Secret:" "if you gather a black cat's brain and a black snake's bones and a human bone, if you burn them and let the smoke under the cypress or tamarisk, that tree stoops."[202] Thus, Manyasoğlu ignored the discussion regarding the differences between the miracles bestowed by God and magic, yes he was committed to astonishing his readers. Clearly, wondering at the creation did not merely belong to Sufis but made sense for the edification of the commoners as well.

Manyāoglı's negligence of the gnostic Sufi framework does not mean that he was an anti-Sufi. I suggest that his particular stance towards Sufism and exclusion of Ibn 'Arabī might be related to the fact that his compilation was written for practical purposes and for public. Otherwise, Manyâsoglı is very aware of the Sufi roots of the science of letters, and he kept Aḥmad al-Būnī and Abdallah al-Andalusi in high regard by addressing the latter as the "Sheikh of Andalusia"[203] and the former as the "Sheikh of the East."[204] As I discuss below,

[200] Mahmud b. Kadı-i Manyas, "'Acebü'l-'Uccâb," 58a.
[201] Abdurrahman el-Cevberi, *Şarlatanların Sırları: El-Muhtâr Fî Keşfi'l-Esrâr ve Hetki'l-Estâr*, trans. Hüseyin Kara (İstanbul: Ocak Yayıncılık, 2006), 34.
[202] Mahmud b. Kadı Manyas, "Kitāb-ı 'Acebü'l-'Uccāb" (Paris, February 1601), 50b, Département des manuscrits. Supplément turc 203, Bibliothèque nationale de France.
[203] Mahmud b. Kadı Manyas, "'Acebu'l-'Uccâb," 85b.

Manyasoğlu penned a book ignoring the wider theoretical questions about the cosmos and focusing on how to activate occult properties, which was an interest of the practitioners called *ahl-i khavāṣṣ*.[205] The second sort of practitioners were *ahl-i ḥaqāyik*,[206] and Ibn ʻArabī was one of the main sources for them. They were more concerned with the realities of the cosmos, God and science. In the late medieval and early modern era, the possessors of the occult properties mostly followed the Būnīan corpus and explicated the science of letters with experimental methods. I argue that Manyasoğlu penned his work in the way of *ahl-i khavāṣṣ*, yet he did not regard the Twelve Imams and supreme saints as the transmitters and guardians of the science of letters, as did most of the *ahl-i khavāṣṣ*. Rather, he refers to the less controversial prophetic and popular figures such as prophet Solomon.

In my opinion, this is also related to the fact that Manyasoğlu's text must have intended to downplay the Shiʻi (or at least Alid) connotations of the occult sciences. My comment does not mean that fifteenth-century Ottoman scholars and Sufis did not have a profound respect for ʻAlī ibn Abi Talib, the *imams*, and Gnostics. The Ottoman courtier Abd ar-Raḥmān al-Bisṭāmī was described as a Sunni and Hanafi in the Ottoman sources,[207] the court sponsored his works, and the courtly circles showed favor to him, despite his great affection and frequent references to ʻAlī and the Twelve İmams. Nevertheless, some scholars as Manyasoğlu might have followed another path in which ʻAlī did not have a privileged status in relation to particular sciences. The difference between the vernacular and cosmopolitan texts in this respect might be related to their audience as well. The cosmopolitan intellectuals addressed their claims to the Islamic cosmopolis and, as I discussed in the previous chapter, their writings resonated in the context of imperial rivalry, whereas most of the vernacular intellectuals did not have to focus on macro-politics.

[204] Mahmud b. Kadı Manyas, 73a.
[205] Melvin-Koushki, "The Quest for a Universal Science: The Occult Philosophy of Ṣāʾin al-Dīn Turka Iṣfahānī (1369-1432) and Intellectual Millenarianism in Early Timurid Iran," 479.
[206] Melvin-Koushki, 480.
[207] Fazlıoğlu, "İlk Dönem Osmanlı İlim ve Kültür Hayatında İhvanü's-Safa ve Abdurrahman Bistami," 230.

I suggest that Manyasoğlu was not necessarily opposing the Ibn ʻArabī school and Sufi ideas. It is true that his perspective on Sufism in *ʻAcebu'l-Uccāb* and his penning a gloss on Taftāzānī, a polemicist against Ibn ʻArabī school,[208] gives the impression that he might have had an anti-Sufi perspective. However, Manyasoğlu compiled his treatise from Sufi works, and he addresses Aḥmad al-Būnī and Sheikh Abu Abdallah al-Andulusi as sheikhs, which is obviously a sign of respect. This also denotes that Manyasoğlu was aware of the Sufi basis of the science of letters. Secondly, Manyasoğlu's writing a gloss on Taftāzānī does not necessarily mean that he was an anti-Ibn ʻArabī scholar. Taftāzānī was famous for his eloquence and clarity in his writings, and this was a significant scholarly skill, especially due to the influence of al-Jurjani. Taşköprizade conveys that the significant figures of Ibn ʻArabī school, such as Molla Fenarī, made their pupils copy Taftāzānī's works to develop their writing skills. Hence, Manyasoğlu might have penned a gloss on Taftāzānī to prove his scholarly merits. Thirdly, Manyasoğlu also translated *Gülistān* of Sadi Shirāzī from Persian into Ottoman Turkish in 1430. In his translation he included a couple of hadiths which were taken from Ibn ʻArabī. These hadiths were rejected by the Ibn ʻArabī polemicists such as Ibn Taymiyya. One of these hadiths was "God increase me in astonishment;"[209] in other words, Sufi astonishment was available in Manyasoğlu's other translation, which is disregarded in *ʻAcebü'l-ʻUccāb* .

Furthermore, apart from his chapter on Islamic law, which was Hanafi-oriented in alignment with Murad II's court, it is hard to deduce "a systematized religious idea" from

[208] For Taftāzānī's views on Ibn Arabi and Sufism see: Alexander D. Knysh, *Ibn 'Arabi in the Later Islamic Tradition: The Making of a Polemical Image in Medieval Islam* (State University of New York Press: Albany, 1999), 141–65. Alexander D. Knysh's following comment is remarkable: "al-Taftāzānī agreed with al-Ghazali and Asharis that 'in the way of the mystic there is perfection of belief and absolute knowledge. Al-Taftāzānī's sympathy for Sufism had its limits, however. (…) In other words, mystical experience, as seen by al-Taftāzānī, has no epistemological or argumentative value at all. On the contrary, accounts of mystical insights by individual mystics often contradict the truths obtained through rational thinking or empirical observation." See Knysh, 147.

[209] Mahmud b. Kadı Manyas, *Gülistan Tercümesi (Giriş-İnceleme-Metin-Sözlük)*, 128.

'Acebu'l-Uccāb.[210] For instance, there are also hints that, as Ibn 'Arabī and Aḥmad al-Būnī, Manyasoğlu was opposed to the proofs for the existence of God obtained through rational means. Ibn 'Arabī's and Aḥmad al-Būnī's Sufi point of view denies the possibility of reaching the divine through rational tools, and accepts gnosis, bestowed by God upon the individual, and human potential to acquire "revelatory knowledge," which refers to the knowledge bestowed by God. The correspondence between Fahraddin Rāzī and Ibn 'Arabī also reveals "the methodological" differences between these two different understandings. Fahreddin Rāzī utilized rational tools to reach the Divine while Ibn 'Arabī objected to this and laid emphasis on the revelatory knowledge. In a passage, Manyasoğlu also underlines that God's existence and Prophet Muhammad's prophecy do not need any proof. He cites Rāzī's story where the latter said he discovered one thousand proofs of God's Oneness, and a woman replied to him: "you had one thousand doubts of God's Oneness."[211] This passage does not necessarily indicate that Manyasoğlu affirms reaching the knowledge through unveiling, but at least it demonstrates that he did not necessarily choose the rationalist point of view.

The Book as a Sheikh

In the Islamic post-esotericist period, the science of letters appeared in many genres written for public, especially in the encyclopedias of the Mamluks. Aḥmad al-Būnī was also one of their primary sources. Some encyclopedists such as Ibn Manẓūr attempted to show their "membership in an alternative set of elites that is versed in deep knowledge of the

[210] As Nihat Azamat's dissertation indicates, most religious works were written to advocate or teach the Hanafi branch of Sunni Islam. Manyâsoglı in many instances compare the judgements of three great Hanafi figures: Abu Hanafi, Abu Yusuf and Abu Muhammad. In only two instances were Imam Maliki and Imam Shafi brought into the discussion.

[211] In the Princeton copy, the answer of the woman is not available, Manyâsoglı only writes: "The answer of the woman is well-known." Mahmud b. Kadı Manyas, "'Acebu'l-'Uccâb," 3a. The answer of the woman is given by the copyist of the seventeenth-century treatise in an anthology *Risâle-i 'İlm u Ma'rîfet*. See: Mahmud b. Kadı Manyas, "Risale-i İlm ve Marifet" (Manuscript, Kastamonu İl Halk Kütüphanesi, 37 Hk 1568/4, 17th century), 228b.

letters" because then it was a prestigious religious view, occupation and community.[212] Some others, such as al-Nuwayrī, "de-esotericise" the science of letters by only mentioning its practical aspects, without giving any reference to the Creation or rites of Būnīan teachings.[213] Manyasoğlu, nevertheless, constructed his text in a different way. He did not censure or omit any Sufi practices, cosmological concepts or figures. As already stated above, Manyasoğlu composed his book for the Turkophone readers, and unlike his main source, Aḥmad al-Būnī, he does not address the Sufi community or disciples, nor does he distinguish among his audience between spiritual elites and commoners.

Before post-esotericism, the masters of lettrism, Aḥmad al-Būnī and his disciples, strove to protect their sacred science and hermeneutics from commoners to avoid accusations of heresy and guard the science of letters from the commoners' misuse to avoid disunion in the Islamic community.[214] In this regard, even though Manyasoğlu did not write for a Sufi community or for spiritual enlightenment, his recommendations to his readers at the end of the book suggest that his perspective was not disconnected from Sufi practices and requirements of religious purity. Like Sufis, he perceived the science of letters as compatible with piety and religious purity, and he never refers to "illicit magic," in which the practitioner asks assistance from demons. Manyasoğlu states that the practitioner must be religiously and spiritually pure in order to activate the occult properties of letters, Divine Names, prayers and surahs.[215] After disclosing the secrets to the public, he warns his readers not to utilize them for impure and abusive purposes. He says: "you shall not [use] them [Divine Names and letters] in mischievous affairs, and [use them] when you really need. Do not make them impure by applying them to sordid affairs."[216]

[212] Gardiner, "Esotericism in a Manuscript Culture: Aḥmad al-Būnī and His Readers through the Mamlūk Period," 281.
[213] Gardiner, 286–87.
[214] Gardiner, 101.
[215] Mahmud b. Kadı Manyas, "'Acebu'l-'Uccâb," 92b.
[216] Mahmud b. Kadı Manyas, 92b–93a.

Manyasoğlu must have assumed that there was no need for a Sufi community or a sheikh, and that his guidebook would be enough to practice lettrism. He claims that no one should see the practitioner while he is practicing lettrism.[217] This recommendation is given by the other occultists as well for the untrained or uninitiated practitioners since they might spiritually endanger themselves or others.[218] I assume that this is a phenomenon of post-esotericism, as in those texts of the Mamluk era that disseminated the practice of lettrism to the commoners in the Ottoman lands, lettrism was perceived as a licit science, which can be practiced by the individuals on their own. Does the concept of *ʻārif-i esrār* refer to his readers or listeners, who read it on their own or in a group? I suppose this is also a possible answer because Manyasoğlu seems not to have perceived lettrism as a solely Sufi prerogative. As I discuss below, his approach was similar to the texts classified as "intellectual lettrism" by Matthew Melvin-Koushki.[219]

Manyasoğlu's references to Sufism are explicit when he speaks about the rituals that activate the occult properties of the Divine Names. This section also reveals that he gathers the information from Sufi sources. As I stated, in the main sources of the fifteenth-century cosmopolitan intellectuals, as well as in the teachings of Ibn ʻArabī, the Divine Names reflect the relationships between God and Cosmos, and through them one can attain the truths of Cosmos. Similar to Ibn ʻArabī, Būnī's teachings maintain that "the Divine Names describe the Creator as well as His influence (…) in the created Cosmos."[220] Manyasoğlu conveys the knowledge to his readers on how the Divine Names impact the physical world, and his explanation complies with "revelatory" Islamic occult knowledge. Manyasoğlu writes:

[217] Mahmud b. Kadı-i Manyas, 93a-93b
[218] John D. Martin III, *Theurgy in the Medieval Islamic World: Conceptions of Cosmology in al-Buni's Doctrine of the Divine Names* (Cairo: The American University of Cairo, 2011), 17.
[219] Melvin-Koushki, "The Quest for a Universal Science: The Occult Philosophy of Ṣāʾin al-Dīn Turka Iṣfahānī (1369-1432) and Intellectual Millenarianism in Early Timurid Iran," 205.
[220] Martin III, *Theurgy in the Medieval Islamic World: Conceptions of Cosmology in al-Buni's Doctrine of the Divine Names*, 70.

> A special way and an easy path are bestowed upon (*nasib*) these diverse names, (…) they are the favors of God. Every name has a specific method and unique properties. Each person having connection with a certain name, can bring forth and ordain their intentions by charging themselves with the name. Some say that a soul or an angel (*firişte*), as they are called in the terminology of Islam, is assigned to every name and letter.[221] That person having connection with the spirituality (*ruhāniyet*) of that angel and engaging with that name, is helped by particular angel to accomplish his/her any goals. Due to this reason, they say God's every name is the Greatest, but every person's spirituality pertains to His one name. S/he can bring forth whatever they aim, that name is the Greatest name in relation to that person.[222]

In this passage, his explanation shows that the Divine Names are more concerned with the theurgy that deals with theurgic rites and angelic magic, summoning angels to activate the occult properties in order to manipulate the natural world. To get the help of these angels, one must conduct Sufi rituals and practices, "a discipline to subdue the individual (base) soul—the *nafs*—became a method of subduing spirits outside the individual, that is to say, the *ruhaniyyat*."[223] In that regard, the operator needs to capture the spirits/angels through the Divine Names and Sufi practices for his own goals, and for these purposes one does not need a sheikh or any other person to open up the secrets for the reader.

Yet, the reader still needs to engage in Sufi rites. For instance, Manyasoğlu begins to introduce the Divine Names with the name of Allah, as it is the Divine Name in which "all other Divine Names" are gathered. He conveys that when one persists in remembrance (*zikr*) of the name of Allah in solitude (*ḫalwet*) and seclusion (*i'tikāf*), the *'alem-i taṣarruf* (the world of spiritual power)[224] will be divinely facilitated to him/her.[225] In other words, if one maintains the remembrance in solitude or seclusion, he will be knowledgeable about how to engage with the Divine Names. Yet, apart from this expression, there is no reference to these

[221] Here, Manyâsoglı obviously considers "the angel" of Platonic idea equivalent with the Islamic angels.
[222] Mahmud b. Kadı Manyas, "'Acebu'l-'Uccâb," 80a.
[223] Edgar Walter Francis, "Islamic Symbols and Sufi Rituals for Protection and Healing: Religion and Magic in The Writings of Ahmad Ibn Ali Al-Buni" (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Los Angeles, University of California, 2005), 121.
[224] In the Princeton copy (80b) the word is given as "تصريف," whereas in the Sorbonne copy (80b) it is "تصرف." In the given context, the phrase in the Sorbonne copy, *alam-ı tasarruf* fits to concept.
[225] Mahmud b. Kadı Manyas, "'Acebu'l-'Uccâb," 80b.

Sufi practices. Hence, it is difficult to figure out whether one must or must not practice these three rituals for these names to be bestowed upon them. Manyasoğlu constantly states that one engages with (*mülāzim*) these names and that only few Divine Names require further rituals. For instance, charging with the names of al-Halim, ar-Rauf and al-Mannan hinders the enmity against the subject, and sultan will not entirely aim his rage at the practitioner. Yet, if the practitioner fasts for three days, and recites it until (s)he is overwhelmed, the fire will not burn him/her.[226]

Still, the groups of Divine Names are divided according to the classification of some "gnostics." Manyasoğlu gives ten parties, which are (I) invocators and worshippers, (II) the Sufis, pursuing the secrets of God's oneness, (III) the possessors of seclusion (*aṣḥāb-ı mürāḳabe*), (IV) the ones having strong fear of God, (V) the possessors of lifting of the veil (*mukaşefe*), (VI) the masters of solitude (*erbāb-ı ḥalvet*), (VII) not specified[227], (VIII) the men of sword (*aṣḥāb-ı kahra ve istiḷā*), (IX) the stations of Divine Names (*esma-yı maḳāmāt*), (X) all humans.[228] Seven out of these ten parties are strongly associated with the Sufi context. The readers must have known the Sufi connotations of these groups, but Manyasoğlu does not emphasize the necessity to be in the Sufi ranks. What *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb* offers is to instruct the reader in Sufi theurgy. I need to reiterate that good deeds, spiritual purity, and piety are the most important requirements, so the individual could accomplish Sufi rites and magic without any "institutional" Sufi ties, such as lodge, master-disciple relationship and so on. While there is no reference to how one can attain religious purity, he presumably means by practicing obligatory worship. After having these qualities, one must practice given rites to activate the occult properties.

[226] Mahmud b. Kadı Manyas, 84a.
[227] Manyâsoglı does not specify the seventh group, but the functions of the names focus on livelihood and Sufi context.
[228] Mahmud b. Kadı Manyas, "'Acebu'l-'Uccâb," 81b–85b.

According to Manyasoğlu's methodology, Sufi practices of remembrance and seclusion are essential for the lettrist magic, but not the Gnosticism and established Sufi institutions. He treats occult sciences as if they are natural sciences, which is possible to practice as long as the practitioner is pious. Therefore, in Manyasoğlu's work there is no evidence of elitism, unlike in the work of most cosmopolitan occultists, for whom being 'Alī's descendant was a significant element in acquiring *walaya*, and with it a special insight into the occult sciences.

A Vernacular Lettrist Text for Practical Benefits: The Court and Beyond

Manyasoğlu had deep belief in letters' effect on the sublunar world, and was teaching his readers how to manipulate natural world by activating letter's occult properties. It seems that there were similar tendencies in the Islamic cosmopolitan. Ibn Turka, in his treatise "On the letters"[229] divides lettrist practitioners into two groups. According to him, the second group is *ahl-i ḥaqāyik* (the possessors of realities) who seek the meanings of letters together with "the universal sciences they contain, and understand all types of knowledge and modes of knowing, whether with respect to the divine presences or the realms of contingency."[230] The first group is *ahl-i khavāṣṣ* (the possessors of occult properties), and these practitioners are "the best-known," and the more frequent ones. They practice lettrism by considering every letter's "description and its associated conditions activate its particular quality either with respect to the levels of the physical world or to spiritual interactions at various levels."[231] According to Ibn Turka, Aḥmad al-Būnī, who wrote multiple works with this

[229] The Persian text is available: Melvin-Koushki, "The Quest for a Universal Science: The Occult Philosophy of Ṣāʾin al-Dīn Turka Iṣfahānī (1369-1432) and Intellectual Millenarianism in Early Timurid Iran," 463–75. For its translation into English: Melvin-Koushki, 476–89.
[230] Melvin-Koushki, "The Quest for a Universal Science: The Occult Philosophy of Ṣāʾin al-Dīn Turka Iṣfahānī (1369-1432) and Intellectual Millenarianism in Early Timurid Iran," 480.
[231] Melvin-Koushki, 479.

approach, is the most remarkable interpreter of *ahl-i khavāṣṣ*.[232] Given that Manyasoğlu builds closely on al-Būnī and instructs the readers in the ways of activating the occult properties, he can also be counted as *ahl-i khavāṣṣ*.

Hence, I suggest that Manyasoğlu's authorship and approach to lettrism are similar to *ahl-i khavāṣṣ* who deal with activating the occult properties of letters. The sixteenth-century Safavid lettrist 'Alī Ṣāfī, gives a more detailed account of lettrism when classifying the science of letters. He penned a lettrist treatise entitled *Tuḥfa-yi Khānī* or *Kashf al-Asrār* in 1522, and it was written for practical reasons, from the genre written by *ahl-i khavāṣṣ* in Ibn Turka's terminology. As Ibn Turka, 'Alī Ṣāfī also utilizes similar classification between practical and theoretical lettrism: *ahl-i haqīqat* and *ahl-i khāṣṣiyyat*. He describes the later as follows:

> The *ahl-i khāṣṣiyyat* are far more numerous and well-known than the first group, and are concerned with the active properties of the forms of the letters, whether spoken or written. They hold that when a person utters or writes at a set time certain letters or a certain word or Quranic verse or sura[h] a set number of times, and then contemplates it, or buries it, or erases it, or leaves it in a particular place, a specific benefit will accrue to him in that regard, whether physical or spiritual in nature. Most people use the science of letters in this fashion, i.e., to attract a benefit or defend against harm. [233]

As 'Alī Ṣāfī description suggests, Manyasoğlu wrote a text that had similar purposes as the texts written by *ahl-i khavāṣṣ*.

In Manyasoğlu's work, the practitioner was instructed to make amulets and talismans featuring Quranic verses, letters and Divine Names. The effects of lettrism were seen as relevant to all social strata of the Ottoman world. For instance, peasants, low-mid rank bureaucrats, courtiers, sultan, and his household could all suffer certain medical, financial and other problems. Yet, some other anxieties are distinguished from these "general anxieties" and signify the higher status of the audience. For example, Manyasoğlu informs his readers about the occult properties of one-hundred-ten surahs. More than eighty percent of them are

[232] Melvin-Koushki, 479–80.
[233] See Melvin-Koushki, 275.

relevant to the public. For instance, when Manyasoğlu elaborates on the *al-Waqiah* surah, he gives two distinct rituals for two benefits. He writes that one must recite *al-Waqiah* before the sunrise and in the evening. The benefit of this rite would be avoiding poverty and paying the debts. The second rite is recitation before the sick person, and its benefit is the sick person's ease of pain during his/her death (*sekerat-ı mevt*). In the case of the former one, he writes "me, poor and humble Manyasoğlu, tested these many times."[234] Manyasoğlu's statement indicates that an Ottoman scholar had such interests in the fifteenth century. Besides, there are occult effects directed towards voyage or traveling, avoiding bandits, being able to shoot arrows, being protected from weapons, the return of soldier or husband, having son or children, protection from devils and jinns, health problems of children or new-born baby, easing the torments of the grave, various wishes' becoming true, freedom from enslavement, finding out the cheats and tricks of the sly enemy, winning over the enemy, etc.

Some other surahs targeted social elites' life, and they are mostly related to slaves and concubines, employment through central government, interaction with the Sultan and warfare and martial arts. For example, writing and carrying the surah of *Al-Anfal* was supposed to help one avoid the rage of the sultan; moreover, it was supposed to make the sultan accept one's requests.[235] If the surah of *al-Ala* were to be recited before visiting the sultan, he was supposed to affirm the practitioner's requests.[236] The surah of Joseph, moreover, supposedly helped one be recruited into the sultan's service and feel free from the fear of the sultan. To accomplish the first benefit, one must declare his intentions, and write the surah and keep it at home for three days. After three days, one must take it outside to a clean place. For the second benefit, one only need recite it thirteen times.[237] Through *Ar-Rad* surah, the practitioner can even cause the death of a cruel sultan by writing the surah on paper and

[234] Mahmud b. Kadı Manyas, "'Acebu'l-'Uccâb," 67b–68a.
[235] Mahmud b. Kadı Manyas, 64b.
[236] Mahmud b. Kadı Manyas, 69b.
[237] Mahmud b. Kadı Manyas, 65a.

burying it in front of the door of the sultan.[238] Similar assessments are valid for the surah of *An-Nur*.[239] Another example also signifies very courtly context of the text: if someone writes the surah of *Amma* before he visits the sultan, even if the sultan is in rage, he will not say anything to the practitioner or vent his anger on him.[240] Other benefits cater to slave owners. For example, if one writes *adh-Dhariyat* surah for a lost man or a slave and hangs it in the home of the slave towards the sunrise, the slave will be back soon.[241] Writing and hanging the *Adh-Dhzuba* surah has a similar function of bringing back a runaway child or slave.[242]

'Acebü'l-'Uccāb reflects other problems and anxieties of the practitioners. The functions of some surahs are concerned with someone's authority, reputation and place in the society. For example, writing *al-Fatir* on the white silk, putting it into glass with a narrow tube, and keeping it at home makes the practitioner respectable and admired in the eyes of people.[243] Writing *Yasin* surah on the buckskin and binding it to the arm has the same effect.[244] The second sort of effect can be explained through *Muhammad* surah. Writing the surah on the silk, and washing it with Zamzam water, and drinking it leads people to obey the practitioner.[245]

There are also passages written for warfare, which at first glance might be considered for the general audience. However, there are practices requiring education and professionalism, like archery. The surah of Israel particularly deals with the archery. It must be written and bound to the arm to hit the mark.[246] There are other surahs such as *Al-Feel*, which should be recited against the enemy soldiers to make them leave the battlefield.[247] The practitioner must use specific materials to activate the occult properties. In some rituals, the

[238] Mahmud b. Kadı Manyas, 65a.
[239] Mahmud b. Kadı-i Manyas, 65b-66a.
[240] Mahmud b. Kadı Manyas, 69a.
[241] Mahmud b. Kadı Manyas, 67b.
[242] Mahmud b. Kadı Manyas, 70a.
[243] Mahmud b. Kadı Manyas, 66b.
[244] Mahmud b. Kadı Manyas, 66b.
[245] Mahmud b. Kadı Manyas, 67a.
[246] Mahmud b. Kadı Manyas, 65b.
[247] Mahmud b. Kadı Manyas, 70b.

practitioner must write the surah with musk, saffron or rose water, on the specific object such as buckskin, glass, (copper or iron) bowl, silk, cloth, velvet, and paper. Several rituals include melting the surah in the rainwater or clean water, and drinking it, while some require writing and carrying the surah or hanging it. Sometimes the practitioner must engrave the letters on the object (e.g. golden plaque), and burry it.

The letters provide similar sorts of benefits for the practitioner. Their medical benefits are curing aches, protection from diseases caused by cold and humidity or malaria, pyrexia. There are also benefits related to giving birth. Some benefits are related to the Sufi and esoteric notions. For instance, if one fasts for forty days, and writes *mim* forty times on the antelope skin, and carries it with him/her, the secrets of heavens and earth will be revealed to her/him. Rites attached to letters *d* and *ṭ* give way to seeing Prophet in the dream. The effects of *ṣ* protects the practitioner from suffering when one fasts. Similar to surahs, several letters' effects are concerned with the practitioner's authority, reputation, and affection from other people together with one's status before the men of religion and power. Several letters are associated with virtues regarding the good deeds and intelligence along with material benefits in trade and harvest.

The invocations follow the similar pattern, but their effects are mostly concerned with healing and protection from diseases. Only few prayers imply higher social status of the beneficiary. Prayers' other benefits might be summarized as follows: ending melancholia, pregnancy, bringing back the slave or husband, protection from *jinns*, protection of the herd from wolves, shooting the arrow well, finding suitors and so on.

In terms of Divine Names, these effects are mostly associated with the spirituality and Sufi notions in comparison to letters, invocations and surahs. For example, *al-muhyi* strengthens one's soul, body and intelligence. Yet, some names have different effects according to status of the person. For instance, *al-mālik*, and *al-Kudus* make the beneficiary

respectful, but if the practitioner is a Sultan, he will not lose lands, while a Sufi will obtains the benefit concerning the Sufi path. All the rites regarding the Divine Names entail constant invocation (*mülāzemet*); only a few Divine Names require further rituals such as fasting. Divine Names function to protect the practitioner from poverty and the rage of the sultan.

To sum up, lettrist practices were supposed to resolve various daily problems that arose in the lives of Ottoman subjects, including court elites. Practitioners were instructed to make amulets to protect themselves or cure the diseases. Furthermore, some Quranic verses were supposed to provide success in the martial and military arena. The courtly context shines through unmistakably through the questions on the interaction with the sultan and expectations of employment. Although Sufi knowledge and context inform the text, there is no systematic approach that is discernable. Manyasoğlu's vernacular text does not address the questions about prophetic cycles, the messianic or any other macro-political issues. On the one hand, this aspect of *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb* reflects the vernacular usage of lettrism. On the other, however, similar pratical usage of lettrism was popular elsewhere in the Islamic world in the fifteenth century.

The Occult Theory in *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb* and Occultism in the Islamic World

According to Manyasoğlu, the occult properties of letters, surahs, invocations, and Divine Names are similar to the occult features of materials. He discusses surahs through a hypothetical question of why it is not enough to carry the Quran, where all surahs and verses are available, to activate these occult properties.[248] He responds to his own question by establishing analogy between medieval medicine and the Quran's secret effects. According to Manyasoğlu, if the physicians want to efface the black bile from the body, they use *euphrasia officinalis* or prepare compound medication with it by mixing it with another herb, the nature

[248] Mahmud b. Kadı Manyas, 71b.

of which is compatible. If the physicians mix herbs randomly, they would not be able to dispel the black bile. Likewise, as in the case of herbs, every word and letter in the surahs has a specific benefit and one must apply the true formula, which is given by Manyasoğlu. He ends the passage by writing: "listen to rest of my words [on this topic], [in the section on] the occult properties of invocations and letters."[249]

Regarding the letters, Manyasoğlu did not suggest a theory very distinctive from his formulation on the surahs. He classifies seven letters according to their characteristics. These characteristics are divided into four categories: four elements, humors, letters' hot or cold qualities, and the seasons. The four qualities are *ḥār-ı yābis*, *ḥār-ı raṭb*, *bārid-i raṭb* and *bārid-i yābis*, which remind me of hot (*ḥārrah*), moist (*raṭbah*), arid (*yābisah*), and cold (*bāridah*) in the Būnīan terminology. [250] In terms of healing, lettrists utilize humoral/elemental paradigm with other features of letters. According to *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb*, each group of seven letters have similar characteristics. For instance, the letters ذ ا ه ط م ف ش correspond to the element of fire and are hot letters. Their season is the summer and the humor is the black bile. Another group corresponding to hot letters involves the letters ت ض ب و ى ن ص; whose element is air, while their humor is blood, and their season is spring. The third group is comprised of ج ز ك س ق ث ظ letters. This group's correspondences are winter, cold, phlegm, and water. The last group includes د ح ل ع ر خ غ letters and corresponds to fall, cold, yellow bile and earth.[251]

In the later passages Manyasoğlu teaches how to utilize letters by using their humors, qualities, and other properties. He again raises a hypothetical question, asked by a random person. The question claims that letters cannot have qualities as the qualities are (*keyfiyyet*) subjected to bodily temperament (*mizāc*). Manyasoğlu replies by establishing analogy with

[249] Mahmud b. Kadı Manyas, 71b.
[250] Gardiner, "Esotericism in a Manuscript Culture: Aḥmad al-Būnī and His Readers through the Mamlūk Period," 212.
[251] Mahmud b. Kadı-i Manyas, 86b

the stars. He takes the similarities between the stars and letters beyond the analogy, considering them to have same methodological dynamics:

> They say these letters are hot and cold, according to their effects on the nature. In fact, some of the stars are hot, while some others are cold, and they also called some constellations of the zodiac and some mansions of the moon either hot or cold. For example, they *observed* that when the Sun moves to Aries, the universe's temperament is hot and cold (…). Thus, they called Aries *ḥār-ı raṭb*. In a similar vein, they *observed* that some letters dispel the heat, and they called them cold; some letters effaced the cold, and they called them hot. (italics are mine)

Manyasoğlu's references are not the cosmologic elements or the archetypal figures of the esoteric sciences transmitting the secrets, such as 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib, imams and supreme gnostics. The letters gain objective and replicable features, and he asserts their objective features are detected through observation and experiment by the masters of this art. In the subsequent chapters, he gives more detailed information how to practice this art. He does it through classification of the letters and apprises his readers about their functions and how to employ them.[252] For instance, the letters ا د ذ ر ز و لا are effective for enmity, but one must utilize *har-ı rabt* letters for grief. Hot and arid letters are impactful for memorizing the sciences (*hıfz-ı ulum*). For the constancy of the affairs, cold and arid letters must be employed, whereas in order to attain one's goals quickly, one must employ *bārid-i raṭb* letters.[253] Nevertheless, Manyasoğlu gives other examples for treatments in order to clarify how to use the qualities of letters. He writes that in order to cure the intoxication of the scorpion, the operator must utilize hot and moist letters, since the poison of scorpion is *bārid-i yābis*.[254] Hence, in Manyasoğlu's framework, the operator must know the qualities of the letters and employ them according to the qualities of the things of the sublunar world. In this

[252] In order to introduce different practices, he adverts different views about the practice of science of letters. For instance, to explain which letter determines the qualities of letters, he presents a couple of methods. The first approach accepts the superior letters' qualities for the word, whereas the other perspective acknowledges the qualities of the first letter.
[253] Mahmud b. Kadı Manyas, "'Acebu'l-'Uccâb," 87b.
[254] Mahmud b. Kadı Manyas, 88a.

way, he brings the theoretical background to bear on the practical ends. While doing this, Manyasoğlu disregards the spiritual principles.

Moreover, Manyasoğlu explains how "they"—probably the masters of lettrism—proved the natures of the stars: "for example, malaria [depends on] the phlegm, they wrote the letter, which they call hot and dry, and censed it, hereupon, [due to this reason] they proved the natures of the letters."[255] Matthew Melvin-Koushki has argued that this penchant for experimentalism was typical of the "late medieval and early modern lettrist[s]," who "assert the wholly objective, replicable nature of this science."[256] He argued that because Ibn Turka considered the science of letters as "as a queen science" of millennialism, he naturalized the occult sciences, and transformed it into a science "encompassing both occult and non-occult sciences." [257] Therefore, he and those similar to him relied on the experimentalism rather than chain of transmission. In my opinion, this is not entirely valid for Manyasoğlu: while he also treats the science of letters as a natural science, he is more concerned with convincing his readers in the validity of this science itself.

I would suggest that Manyasoğlu tried to persuade his audience by including the science of letters into "the order of knowledge" that I cited in the introduction. This notion refers to different paradigms in the medieval science, such as humors and four qualities, which were used not only to explain the functioning of the nature and body, but also of the body political. Gottfried Hagen has suggested that early modern Ottomans believed in the correspondences between 'body, substances, and environment,' and that especially medical practitioners insistently claimed that "the experience has proven the validity of these practices."[258] Interestingly, the above-mentioned 'Alī Ṣāfī also emphasized less the chain of authority than the experimentation in the occult sciences, and Melvin-Koushki has suggested

[255] Mahmud b. Kadı Manyas, 87a.
[256] Melvin-Koushki, "The Quest for a Universal Science: The Occult Philosophy of Ṣāʾin al-Dīn Turka Iṣfahānī (1369-1432) and Intellectual Millenarianism in Early Timurid Iran," 443.
[257] Melvin-Koushki, 443.
[258] Hagen, "The Order of Knowledge, the Knowledge of Order: Intellectual Life," 432.

that the experimentalism in the practice of lettrism became "fully mainstream by the early 10th/16th century."[259] However, it seems that already in the early fifteenth century, at the time of Ibn Turka's contemporary Manyasoğlu, who was under the influence of Aḥmad al-Būnī, experimental methods of lettrism existed in the vernacular literary circles of the Ottomans.

Nonetheless, even if ʻAlī Sāfi and some other Timurid works examined by Matthew Melvin-Koushki gave priority to the experimentalism, they are not identical in authorial intention or key principles with *ʻAcebü'l-ʻUccāb*. Melvin-Koushki reports that ʻAlī Sāfi as a Safavid author did not entirely neglect the Shiʻite transmitters of the science of letters, and he certainly focused on ʻAlī Ibn Abī Ṭālib as well as eleven imams with a special emphasis on the sixth imam Jaʻfar al-Ṣādiq.[260] In *ʻAcebü'l-ʻUccāb*, there is no mention of ʻAlī Ibn Abī Ṭālib and imams along with the cosmology having Shiite roots.

Similar references to the Shiʻite roots were available in the works of cosmopolitan intellectuals. As stated in the previous chapter, the cosmopolitan intellectuals such as ʿAbd Al-Raḥman Bisṭāmī, who presented books to the Ottoman court, considered himself a Hanafi. Cosmopolitan intellectuals' writings emphasized the millennial age, and these writings had a role in imperial politics. Matthew Melvin-Koushki considers the occult manuals written in the Persian cosmopolis in this framework. He suggests that the rise of occult manuals in the post-Mongol era ensured confessional ambiguity so that Sunni manuals became popular among the Shiʻites and *vice-versa*, while the intellectual basis of these compositions was connected to "imperial rivalry."[261] In *ʻAcebü'l-ʻUccāb* this is not a case as Manyasoğlu shows neither Alid loyalty nor does he make any reference to imams. Furthermore, Manyasoğlu did not pen his text in order to engage in a discussion about imperial rivalry.

[259] Melvin-Koushki, "The Quest for a Universal Science: The Occult Philosophy of Ṣāʾin al-Dīn Turka Iṣfahānī (1369-1432) and Intellectual Millenarianism in Early Timurid Iran," 443.
[260] Melvin-Koushki, 274.
[261] Melvin-Koushki, "How to Rule the World: Occult-Scientific Manuals of the Early Modern Persian Cosmopolis," 145.

I assume due to this reason, in the chapter on lettrism, he only refers to prophetic figures. His references were Prophet Solomon and his vizier Aṣif bin Berkhiyyā along with hadiths. Manyasoğlu refers to the story of Solomon and Belkis, and to the *an-Naml* surah, in which Prophet Solomon invited the pagan Sheba people to the true religion. He mentions the story twice, first in the section on the invocations, and for the second time in the passage on the Divine Names. In both sections Manyasoğlu writes that the Divine Names "The Ever Living," "The Self Subsisting Sustainer of All," "The Lord of Majesty and Generosity" were the Greatest Names connected to Aṣif bin Berkhiyyā, the vizier of Solomon.[262] He brought the "castle" of Belkis by these three Names.

Why did Manyasoğlu disregard Alid references and only refer to the Prophetic figures and hadiths? Why did he only refer to the Quran, hadith and popular story of Solomon, which was possibly well-known and acceptable to his audience? I suggest that one must seek the answer to this question in the micro-dynamics of the Ottoman milieu. As his chapter on *fiqh* indicates, Manyasoğlu was a Sunni and Hanafi scholar. He was not an anti-Sufi, and paid considerable attention to Sufi knowledge and practices. However, he seems to have deliberately denied the gnostic ideas, and tried to protect his stance as a "sober" Ottoman scholar. Therefore, he kept acceptable Sufi rites and religious purity in high regard but disregarded the significant aspect of Sufi esotericism like spiritual advancement and elitism. In this way, he transformed the lettrism into the public and Sunni science. It is possible that the reason behind *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb*'s "sharia-minded" Sunni orientation was its intended courtly audience. Unfortunately, we do not know much about the confessional orientation of early-fifteenth century courtiers, patrons, and officials. A comprehensive study on the early-fifteenth century literary and intellectual protégés of the court might help us to answer this question.

[262] Mahmud b. Kadı Manyas, "'Acebu'l-'Uccâb," 72b–73a.

In sum, I believe that Manyasoğlu's authorial practice was experimental and hybrid, gathering information from multitude of esoteric sources. He excluded much of the information found in his sources while he included things that fit his context and his own ideals, as well as his patron's and audience's needs and expectations. Due to this "experimental nature" of the text, it is hard to discern "a systematical exegesis" in it. However, it represents an interesting early Ottoman vernacular contribution to post-esotericist lettrism.

Conclusion

The few existing studies on *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb* have approached it from a linguistic perspective. In this study, I focused on *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb*'s third chapter's fourth section entitled "On the Secrets of the Quran, Prayers, Sins, Letters, and Graces," and sought to contextualize its approach to the occult in the early fifteenth-century Islamic intellectual, occult, and lettrist trends. In terms of these contexts, I argued that Manyasoğlu was a vernacular intellectual, and I showed how *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb* compares to other occultist-lettrist works circulating in the Islamic world at the time as well as to other vernacular works produced in Ottoman and other Anatolian polities in the first half of the fifteenth century.

Firstly, I suggest that the court, which included not only the sultan and his household but also political elites, did not sponsor texts only for themselves, but also for the low-mid rank officials and literate Turkophones in general. Their works must have been disseminated through libraries, constructed by the endowments of central government and political elites. In addition, I asserted that most of the court-poets of the early fifteenth century such as Ahmed-i Dā'ī, Ahmedī and Manyasoğlu were vernacular intellectuals. Their authorial practices were based on gathering information from manifold sources in Persian and Arabic, and composing works in line with the authors' ideals, patrons' and audience's expectations and needs. In this way, they transmitted the knowledge of different sciences in order to instruct Turkophones in theoretical and practical aspects of language, letter writing, rhetoric, etiquette, as well as occult, in form of guidebooks, compendia and manuals. In a similar vein, they translated and interpreted canonical literary texts from Islamic cosmopolitan culture. With these authorial practices, they contributed to the standardization of terminology in

Turkish. The court-centered patronage and authorial practice of vernacular intellectuals were not the invention of the Ottomans but a phenomenon of the post-Mongol Islamic world and a legacy of Anatolian principalities.

Secondly, I approach the lettrist interests in the Ottoman court through the term of "post-esotericist lettrism" coined by Noah Gardiner. In this study, this term bears significance for several reasons. Firstly, it explains the mobility and reception of Manyasoğlu's primary sources, which are mostly from the Būnīan corpus. Manyasoğlu must have reached the manuscripts of this corpus thanks to the developments taking place in the fourteenth century, when al-Būnī's works obtained a legitimate status and were disseminated across the Islamic world by cosmopolitan intellectuals, such as the "members" of the informal intellectual network of fifteenth-century *Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'*. The cosmopolitan intellectuals whose work sheds light on Manyasoğlu's outlook were Mamluk and Ottoman courtier Abd ar-Raḥmān al-Bistāmi, the occultists from Timurid milieu such as Ibn Turka, and influential Ottoman scholars from Ibn 'Arabī school such as Molla Fenarī, Sheikh Bedreddin, Qāżīzāda Rūmī, and Ṣükrüllāh. In addition, the recent findings reveal that these cosmopolitan intellectuals such as

al- Bisṭāmī edited wrote and formulated lettrist books and subscribed to al-Būnī's corpus. Even though most of these cosmopolitan intellectuals were Sunni, their works and approach to the occult sciences are recognized as confessionally ambiguous, millennialist, and displaying Alid-loyalty. As I argued, Manyasoğlu took a different approach.

Thirdly, I demonstrated that it is hard to locate *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb* in the current discussions on esotericism in the secondary literature. It differed from the esoteric texts in various aspects. Manyasoğlu did not prioritize gnosticism, he did not focus on the Sufi sheikh-disciple relationship, and disregarded the science of letters' transmitters, i.e. the fourth caliph 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib, Ja'far al-Ṣādiq and other ten *imam*s along with supreme gnostics.

Furthermore, Manyasoğlu referred only to Prophet Muhammad, Solomon, and his vizier Asaf bin Barhiya. Thus, there is no indication of confessional ambiguity. Manyasoğlu never mentioned illicit magic, and recommended only religious purity and good deeds, which were based obligatory worship of Islam. However, Manyasoğlu acknowledged thaumaturgical rites along with Sufi practices. Also, he kept his Sufi sources in high regard by underlining their Sufi roots. The lettrists of the late medieval and early modern period emphasized experimental verification of lettrist practices instead of the chain of transmission, which is visible in *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb* as well. Hence, I argue that Manyasoğlu's authorship was an experimental humanistic attempt to reconcile different branches of lettrism, which was another aspect of the "post-esotericist lettrist" period. In a similar vein, Manyasoğlu differed from his cosmopolitan counterparts since he did not deal with macro-politics, prophetic cycles, theoretical questions and legitimacy of the courts. Instead his text was closer to the lettrist works written by *ahl-i khavāṣṣ* (the masters of occult properties). These practitioners instructed their readers in the practical benefits and daily usage of lettrism, and their works were not necessarily related to larger political and theoretical concerns, as *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb* signifies.

In my thesis, I mainly elucidated two significant points about vernacular authorship and book culture along with the lettrist trends. However, there are many points that need to be elaborated. First, there is no comprehensive study on the scholars' and Sufis' attitudes toward 'Alī and the Twelve *imam*s, which precludes further discussion about the exclusion of these figures in *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb*. I believe that this is an important part of the future research agenda. Secondly, apart from few studies, vernacular manuals of the fifteenth century have been subjected to the linguistic rather than contextual and historical analysis. Because of this, it is not easy to evaluate *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb* in dialogue with other perspectives on the vernacular books of the fifteenth century. Thirdly, the comparison of *'Acebü'l-'Uccāb* with

other occult manuals in Turkish, both contemporary and later, can provide more extensive results. As Jan Schmidt demonstrates through examples from the Dutch public collections, there are many practical occult manuscripts in Turkish in the archives,[263] such as the *Davetnāme* written by Firdevsi-i Rūmī.[264]

[263] Jan Schmidt, "The Occult Sciences and Their İmportance in Ottoman Culture; Evidence from Turkish Manuscripts in Dutch Public Collections," *The Journal of Ottoman Studies*, no. 23 (2003): 219–54.
[264] Firdevsi-i Rumi, *Firdevsi-i Rumi and His Da'vetname: Interpretation, Transcription, Index, Facsimile and Microfiche*, ed. Fatma Büyükkarcı, Turkish Sources XXVI (The Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations Harvard University, 1995).

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