NETWORKS OF THE HOLY:

Religion and Magic in eighteenth-century Ottoman Province of Damascus

by

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My lovely Teo has a special place in my heart. She changed my life.

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Abstract

This dissertation studies beliefs of the common people, the elites, and the religious authorities in eighteenth-century Ottoman Syria. It traces the popular belief in *baraka,* often interpreted by the ulamaic circles as Allah's grace. Through the analysis of *baraka* as a historical, social, and anthropological fact of the Syrian eighteenth century, this dissertation looks deeply into the thaumaturgical beliefs and practices of both common people and the religious elites in the region.

The beliefs in *baraka,* which interconnected people and places, allow for the reconstruction of the Syrian eighteenth-century networks of the holy. This vast system of networks included those individuals whose *baraka* was popularly believed in. Muslim saints, both dead and alive, attracted cults of believers throughout the Middle East and North Africa (and beyond) over the course of time. The networks of Muslim shrines committed to saints and the prophets, as well as of enchanted natural phenomena such as caves, trees, or rocks, formed an integral part of these networks of the holy, that represented a fundamental element for early modern Ottoman Sunnism. This dissertation offers discussions about these networks' important nodes, highlighting their relationship in the popular imaginary to interpret with more clarity the history of religion in eighteenth-century Ottoman Province of Damascus.

On the case of eighteenth-century Ottoman Syria, this dissertation furthermore aims to present arguments for defining a Muslim priestly sodality, identified through a considerable overlap between the Sufi and ulamaic functions within the Province (and beyond) represented by religious authorities who often received official state appointments. This dissertation hopes to demonstrate that Sufism and its thaumaturgical beliefs and practices were therefore integral to eighteenth-century Ottoman Sunnism, and that most prominent Sufi masters and their disciples formed a part of the institutionalized priestly sodality networks that were present in the region.

The Ottoman priestly sodalities over time made doctrinal and social distinctions between their own thaumaturgical beliefs and practices, and those commonly interpreted as magic. Although conceptually and anthropologically congruent, thaumaturgy and magic retained their distinctive character during the eighteenth century, allowing for a contribution to the contemporary socio-anthropological discussions about the relationships between religion and magic in history, which represent another of this dissertation's main points.

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Note on Transliteration

Throughout this dissertation, the ALA-LC transliteration system is used for the Arabic language. Well-known toponims, as well as otherwise commonly known terms are presented in their English language forms. For the less-known toponims and phenomena, transliterations are frequently given in parentheses.

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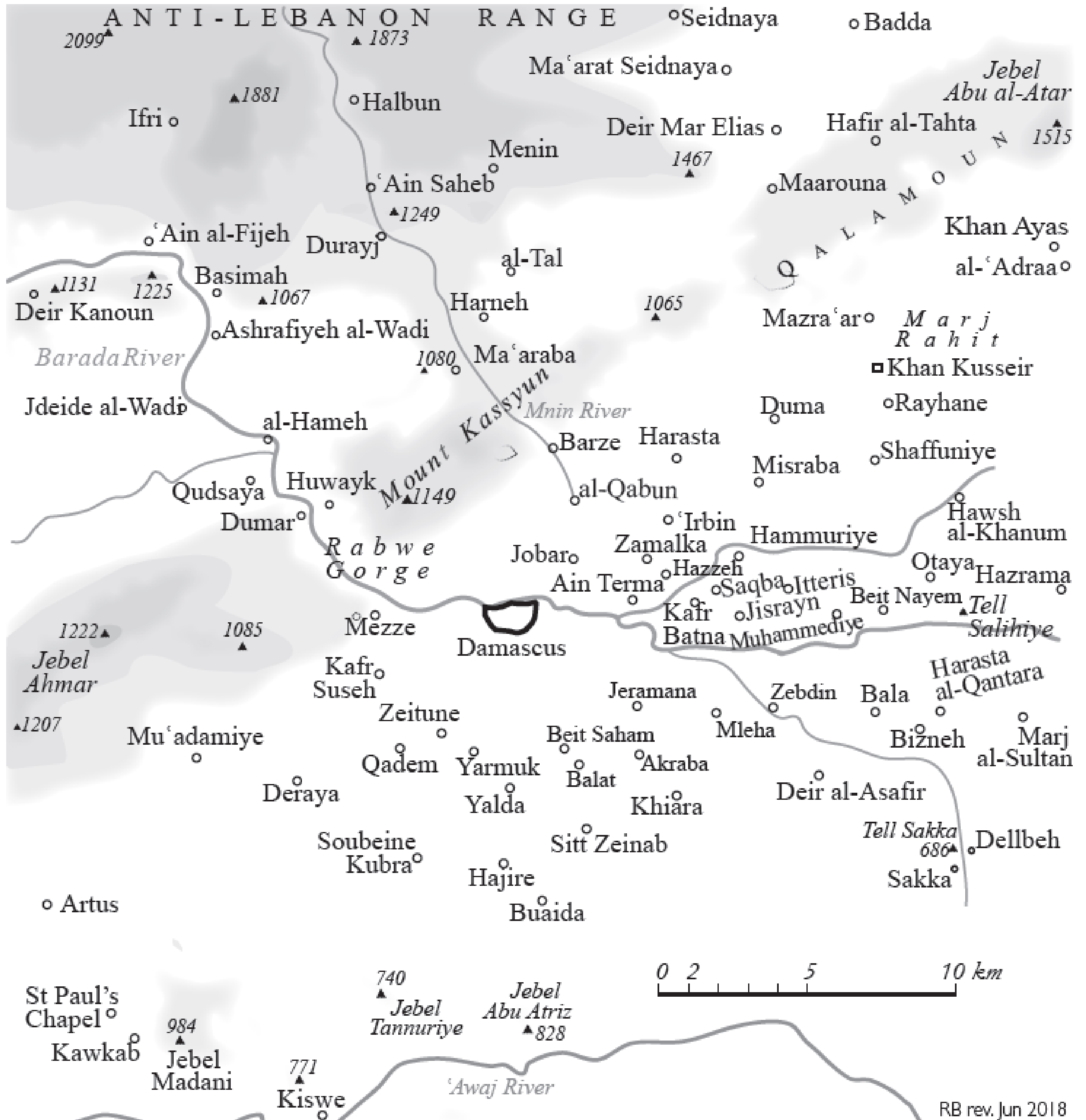
Urban Growth of Damascus over the Centuries



Map 1. The Ghouta and the wider surroundings of medieval Damascus. Source: Ross Burns, Damascus: A History (London&New York: Routledge, 2007), 355.

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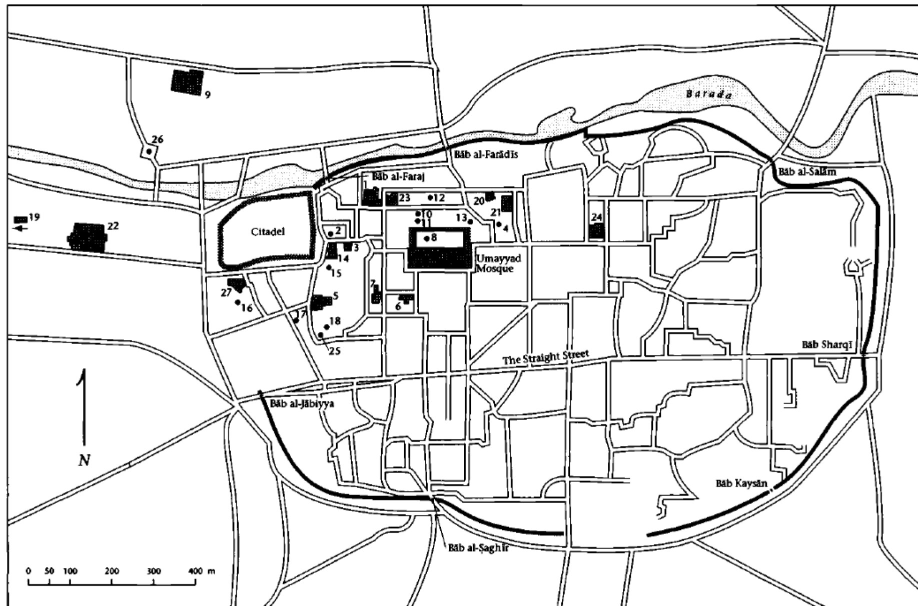

Legend
1 al-ʿĀdiliyya al-Kubrā
2 al-Nūriyya / al-ʿImādiyya
3 Dār al-Ḥadīth al-Nūriyya
4 al-Duwlāʿiyya
5 Nūr al-Dīn's Hospital
6 al-Amīniyya
7 al-Mujāhidiyya
8 al-Ghazāliyya
9 al-Shāmiyya al-Barrāniyya
10 al-ʿAzīziyya
11 Tomb of Saladin
12 al-Taqawiyya
13 al-Rawāḥiyya
14 al-Ashrafiyya
15 al-Qaymāziyya
16 al-Adhrāʾwiyya
17 al-Ṣārimiyya
18 al-Shāmiyya al-Juwāniyya
19 al-ʿIzziyya al-Barrāniyya
20 al-Nāṣiriyya al-Barrāniyya
21 al-Bādharāʾiyya
22 Mosque and Tomb of Tankiz
23 al-Ẓāhiriyya al-Barrāniyya
24 al-Qaymāriyya
25 Tomb of Umm Ṣāliḥ
26 Horse Market
27 Dār al-Suʿāda (palace)

Map 2. The districts within the Damascene walls in the thirteenth century. Source: *Michael Chamberlain, Knowledge and Social Practice in medieval Damascus, 1190-1350 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), xv.*

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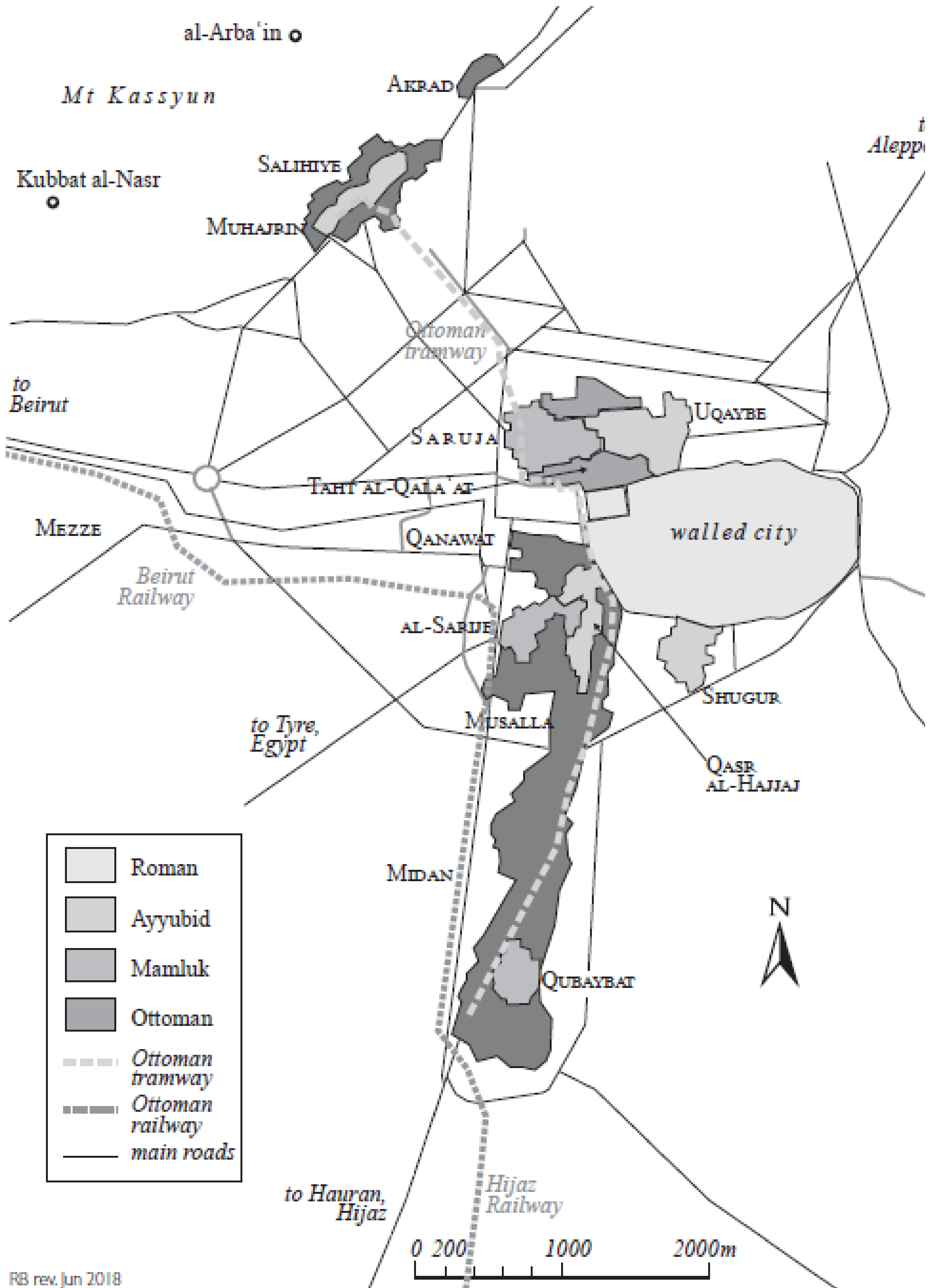

Map 3. The historical growth of Damascus through centuries. Source: Burns, *Damascus,* 344.

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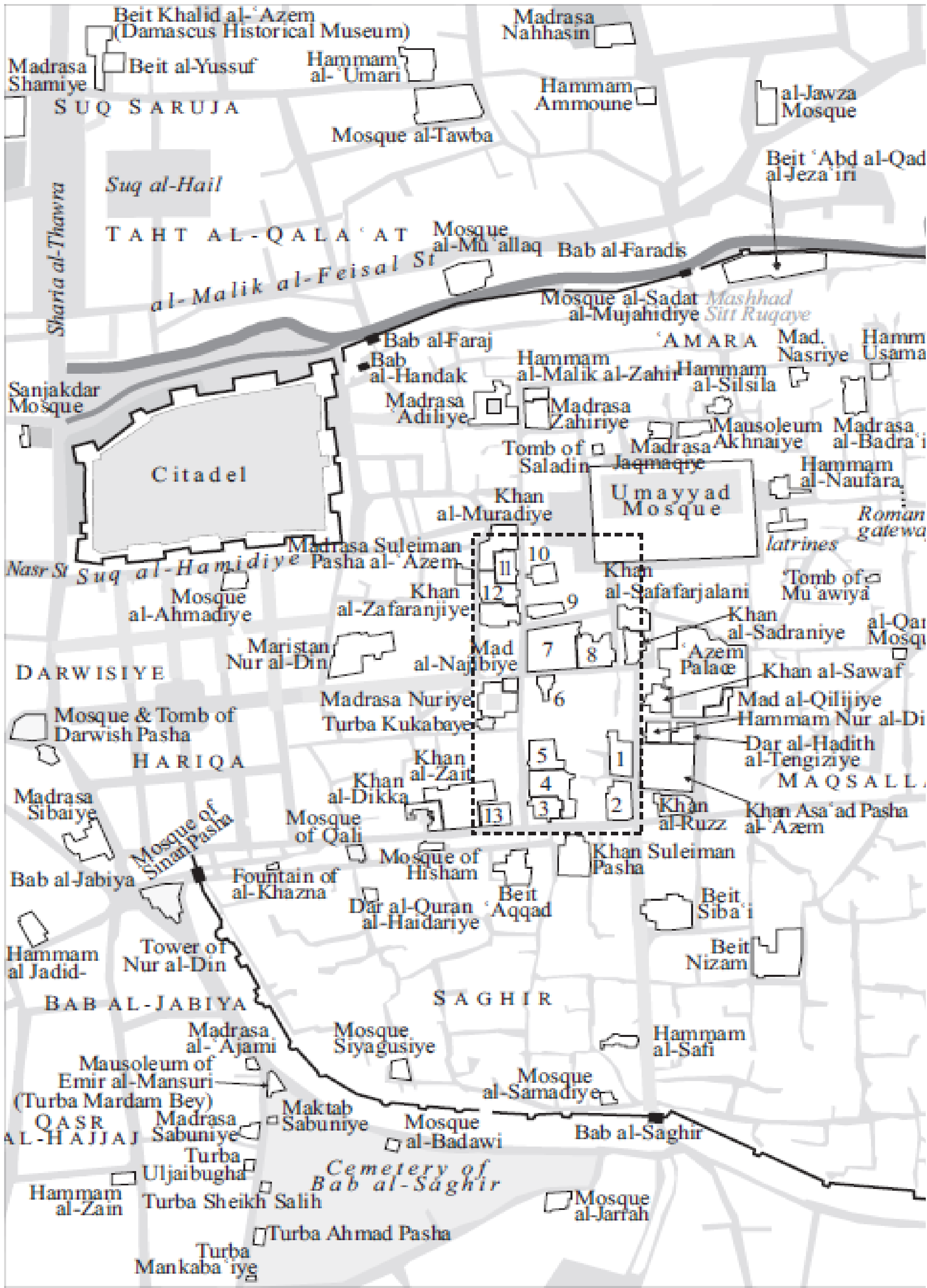

KEY: 1 Khan al-Amud; 2 Khan al-Fuqani; 3 Hammam al-Hayyatin; 4 Khan al-Juhiye; 5 Madrasa Asʿad Pasha al-ʿAzem; 6 Madrasa ʿAbdullah al-ʿAzem;

Map 4a. Western side of Inner Damascus. Source: Burns, *Damascus,* 346.

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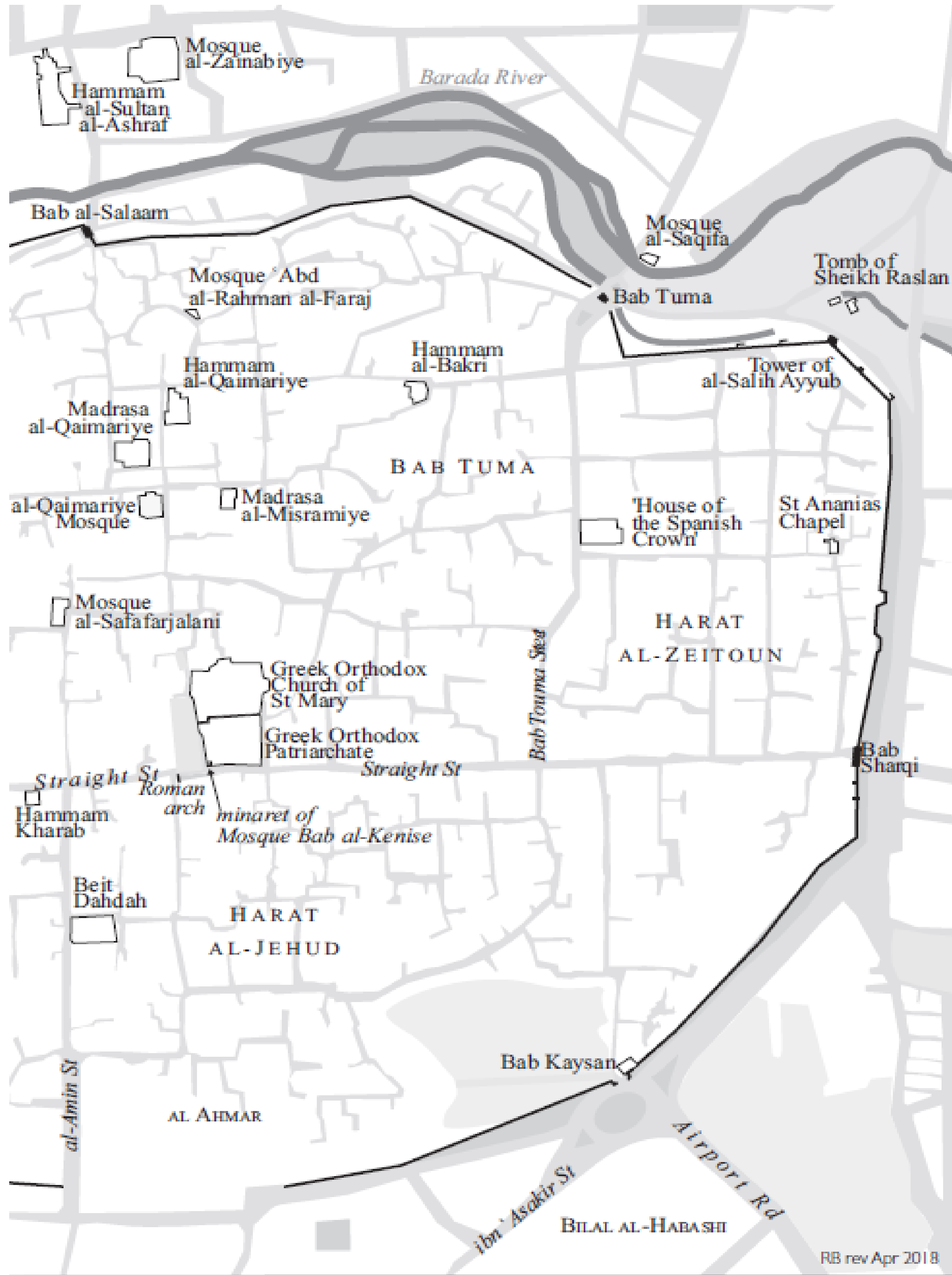

7 KHAN AL-HARIR; 8 KHAN AL-TUTUN; 9 HAMMAM AL-QISHANI; 10 KHAN AL-HARAMIN; 11 KH AL-SH. QATANA; 12 KHAN AL-JUMRUK; 13 KHAN JAQMAQ

Map 4b. Eastern side of Inner Damascus. Source: Burns, *Damascus,* 347.

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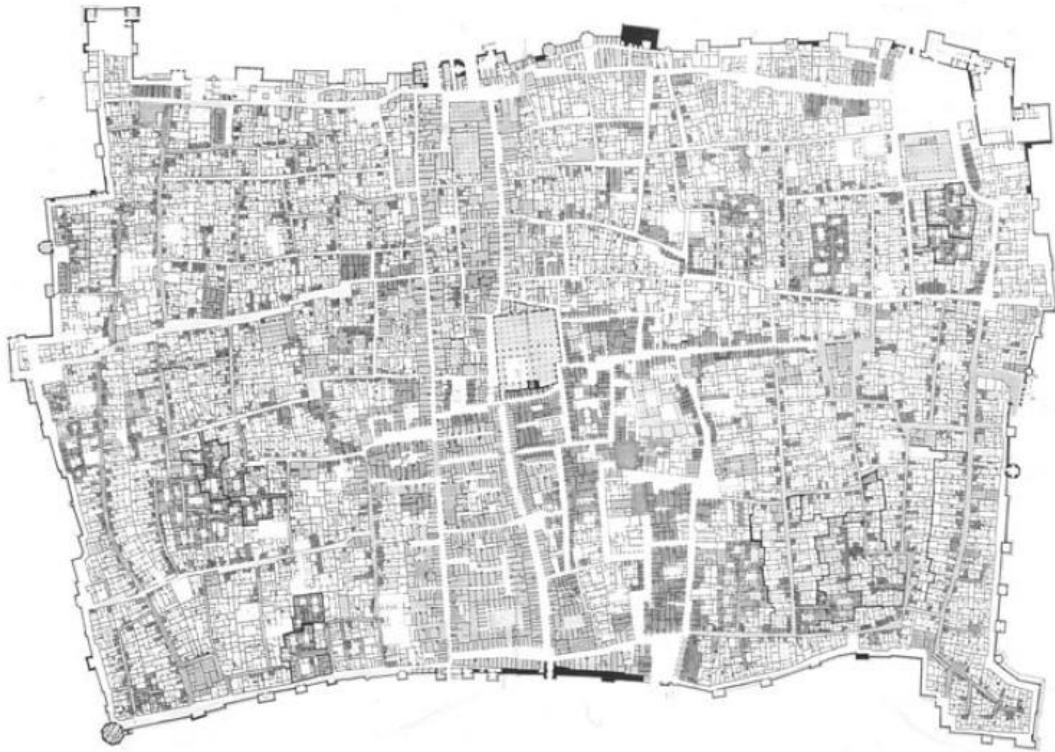

Map 5. The French cadastral map of Inner Damascus in 1932. Source: Salma K. Jayyusi, ed., *The City in the Islamic World: Volume 1* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2008), 1197.

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Preface

This dissertation hopes to contribute to the historical knowledge about the relations between religion, thaumaturgy[1] and magic in eighteenth-century Ottoman Syria. The social and religious history of this region in the eighteenth century is not well-served by existing research. The arguments presented in the following chapters are therefore at times exploratory, where the present state of scholarship does not allow for a synoptic nor a synthetic study.

The relations between religion, thaumaturgy and magic which represent this dissertation's subject of research were present elsewhere in the Ottoman, as well as many other premodern Muslim and Christian states. Research into thaumaturgy as an integral element of these states' official religious practice contributes to the broader field of comparative religions. Furthermore, the aims of this dissertation are to historically and sociologically define a Muslim priestly sodality, comprised of state-authorized religious professionals and reflected in the overlap between the Sufi and ulamaic circles, officialy appointed to positions of authority over religious matters. These religious professionals represented the foundation of the network of the holy, which was the

[1] Gr. *θαῦμα* - "miracle;" *ἔργον* – "work;" with *θαυματουργία* in Ancient Greek literally indicating the working of miracles or wonders.

network of *baraka*, believed to grace certain individuals among the Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ*, the living and the deceased saints among them, and the Muslim prophets.

The old belief that the Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* could utilize preternatural grace, often defined by the ulamaic circles as Allah's *baraka,* to perform wonders was present in eighteenth-century Syria. This dissertation further uses the term thaumaturgy to refer to the Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* wonder-working practices. One of the main arguments in the following text is that thaumaturgy represented an important element integral to premodern Sunnism, as was the case with other scriptural religions as well. It shall be shown that Sufism, which is until today often described as distinct and separate from official Islam, contained Muslim thaumaturgy. Sufism was therefore inseparable from mainstream Islam of the Ottoman Empire. The analysis of the attitudes of Muslim religious professionals' towards thaumaturgy, which were similar to that of Christian priesthoods in Europe, illuminates relevant historical disputes that in part influenced the developments in Christianity and Islam over the passage of time. During the early modern period, disputes arose around the concepts of religion and magic, or with religious rigorists casting doubt on the thaumaturgical powers of Muslim saints.

The region for this research, eighteenth-century Syria, refers to the Ottoman Province of Damascus and the Bilād al-Shām. Since the sixteenth century, the Province of Damascus was comprised of ten *ṣanjaqs*: Jerusalem, Gaza, Ṣafad, Nāblus, ʿAjlūn, Lajjūn, Tadmur (Palmyra), Sidon and Beirut, and Karak and Shawbak.[2] The city of Damascus represented an important center for religious learning and an important node of communication for Muslim theologians and the Sufis of the Ottoman Empire. It was relatively well-connected with Istanbul, while its Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ*

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[2] Abdul-Karim Rafeq, *The Province of Damascus, 1723-1783* (Beirut: Khayats, 1966), 1.

sodalities held strong ties with the Ottoman administration.[3] There existed a high level of mobility for the Syrian scholars and Sufis – educated Muslims frequently traveled within Syria, and to other regions as well, which led to the development of broad networks of knowledge transmission and exchange. In turn, this allowed for the preservation of the source material which is invaluable for this dissertation.

The following chapters hope to make contributions to the studies of premodern religions in the wider Eurasian region (and in some cases elsewhere). Comparisons between different religious traditions shall be made when possible, demonstrating that the study of Islam and Sufism has comparative possibilities with the studies of European premodern Christianity. Furthermore, this dissertation aims at broadening the space for the analysis of the complex history of relationships between religion and magic. Topics discussed in this dissertation contain potential to bring scholarship closer to clarifying these two anthropological concepts, more accurately positioning their relationship in various historical contexts.

Chapter 1 will introduce scholarly approaches to Islam and Sufism and indicate how they influenced the scholarship on early modern Ottoman Syria. The purpose of this chapter is to further clarify this dissertation's approach to the studied topics, setting the language and terminology to be used in the rest of the text. In addition to scholarly literature, chapter 1 provides the overview of some primary sources which made this research possible.

Chapter 2 explores analytical tools for the further study of eighteenth-century Syrian Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* thaumaturgy. This chapter's main purpose is to analyze literature on religion and magic, written both in the recent past and by the Muslim scholars of the eighteenth century. Parallels

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[3] David Dean Commins, *Islamic Reform: Politics and Social Change in Late Ottoman Syria* (New York&Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 64, and Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), 54, 62.

between religion and magic in belief and practice shall be demonstrated, after which the chapter shall analyze the processes through which the religious authorities of eighteenth-century Shām created and maintained social boundaries between themselves as exclusive institutional dispensers of divine grace[4] and the rest of the population. The concept of thaumaturgy shall be appropriately placed between the concepts of magic and religion. Through the discussions provided by this chapter, a high comparative potential between the economic, religious and socio-political functions of the Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* and priestly sodalities in Europe shall be illuminated.

It shall furthermore be argued that during the premodern period, as well as in eighteenth-century Province of Damacsus, the people believed in the continuity between the material and immaterial, seen and unseen worlds. These beliefs were integral to the premodern understanding of nature, and were presupposed in the development of certain thaumaturgical practices of apotropaic and prophylactic variety. Discussing the beliefs in the *jinn,* common in eighteenth-century Syria, along with beliefs in some other creatures (such as the ghouls), chapter 3 demonstrates the widespread assumption that a continuity existed between the visible and the invisible. Such assumptions were common among the people of eighteenth-century Shām. Sufi manuals as well as works of jurisprudence written in the eighteenth century treat the *jinn* as a very serious matter.

Chapter 4 studies the Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* sodalities and their networks in eighteenth-century Syria. Similar dynamics within these networks in the many regions of the Ottoman Empire will be illustrated and exemplified. Religious professionals of the eighteenth-century city of Damascus needed to train as Sufis and study *ʿilm,* while those who acquired prominence among their peers

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[4] This phrase was first coined by Keith Thomas to refer to the function of the early modern English Catholic Church. See Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Penguin, 1991), 31. It is very relevant for the function of the ulamaic sodalities in the early modern Ottoman Empire, and shall be used throughout the following chapters.

and the rest of the people often enjoyed popular beliefs in their thaumaturgical powers as well. Their social mobility grew, as well as their opportunities for acquiring lucrative state appointments and properties. The eighteenth-century city of Damascus represents this dissertation's case study that will indicate the tight networks of Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* sodalities, comprised of prominent families, the acquaintance with whom was highly relevant for an individual's career as a mystic and scholar. Throughout this dissertation, and especially in chapter 4, accent shall be placed on the significance of *baraka* as a social marker which further distinguished the officially appointed Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* from the rest of the people.

Not all individuals believed to have been endowed with *baraka* represented members of the Damascene Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* sodalities. Other, more informal groups which were believed to receive divine grace shall be discussed, such as the holy fools (*majādhīb*) for instance. The purpose of chapter 4 is to discuss the significance of the Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* for Ottoman state religion of the eighteenth century on the one hand, while, on the other, the chapter traces the development of beliefs through which a Muslim would become a saint among the people. The saints represented nexuses through which the Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* were interconnected with the rest of the Syrian eighteenth-century network of the holy.

After the death of a Muslim saint, the people of eighteenth-century Syria would traditionally take care to build a shrine to either commemorate or entomb such a sacred individual. It was believed that the saints continued to transmit *baraka* after death, and that their grace could pervade their surroundings, as well as natural objects in the vicinity of their tombs. Chapter 5 discusses the significance of holy tombs and other sacred objects for early modern Ottoman Sunnism. Widespread *ziyāra* customs represent one of the main subjects of this chapter as well. The analysis of these customs and the economy that was generated around them indicate the

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significance of the Muslim cults of saints for imperial self-representation, socio-political strategies, and the economy of the region.

Chapter 6 takes up the Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* thaumaturgical practice. The procedure of the Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* thaumaturgical rituals seems to have for the most part remained unchanged over a long number of centuries, and at times until the present day. Reading the instruction manuals copied and distributed in Ottoman Empire during the eighteenth century, the chapter shall discuss elements of these rituals uncovering their long tradition and a significant and broad comparative potential with the procedure of thaumaturgical rituals in other regions. Rituals at Muslim shrines, public religious ceremonies, talismanics and divination represent some of the main themes of this chapter, along with other elements of the ritual, such as time, and space. In addition, chapter 6 provides a reading of the extant sources to discuss instances of antinomian magical practices and the ways in which they have been approached by the Ottoman authorities. Comparisons shall be made between magical and thaumaturgical rituals. It shall be shown that their efficacy was widely believed in and that this belief inspired many jurists as well as mystics to compose a large number of texts, ranging from instructions to legal opinions on some of these practices.

It will be shown that Sufism in eighteenth-century Syria, as well as elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire, represented a constituent element of Ottoman premodern Sunnism. As Sufism contained Muslim thaumaturgy, it appears that Muslim wonder-working – technically, anthropologically and conceptually similar to magic – represented an integral part of Ottoman premodern religion. Sporadic marginalization of thaumaturgical practices became more prominent only after the emergence of Muslim reformist thought during the nineteenth and the twentieth century.

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1. Introduction: The Network of Grace in eighteenth-century Bilād al-Shām

In the previous century, significant research has been done on Sufism,[1] a tradition of mystical beliefs and practices in Islam. Some scholarship holds that these mystical beliefs and practices gained prominence from the twelfth century onwards.[2] The historical significance of Sufism for the Mamluk and Ottoman states has been well-documented.[3] The term "Sufism" for a long time

[1] The term usually corresponds to the Arabic word *taṣawwuf* which has commonly been taken to mean "adorning oneself in wool," thus becoming a Sufi, due to the supposed habit of the Sufis to wear wool instead of more luxurious clothing. This gesture is tied to the world-renouncing thesis – see, for instance Carl W. Ernst, *Sufism: An Introduction to the Mystical Tradition of Islam* (London: Shambhala, 2011), 1-17. Other theories tie the term to the Greek *sophos, "*wisdom." Both theories seem purely conjectural. See Mark J. Sedgwick, *Western Sufism: From the Abbasids to the New Age* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 84.

[2] John Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 1-30, 83, 229. Jonathan P. Berkey, *The Formation of Islam: Religion and Society in the Near East, 600-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 231. Liana Saif places the gradual institutionalization of Sufism in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, observing the gradual split between metaphysical theory and thaumaturgical healing between the eleventh and the fourteenth centuries. See Liana Saif, "Between Medicine and Magic: Spiritual Aetiology and Therapeutics in Medieval Islam," in *Demons and Illness from Antiquity to the Early Modern Period,* ed. Siam Bhayro (Leiden&Boston: Brill, 2017), 335-337. Also see Liana Saif, *The Arabic Influences on Early Modern Occult Philosophy* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 1-8.

[3] For instance, see Nathan Hofer, *The Popularisation of Sufism in Ayyubid and Mamluk Egypt, 1173-1325* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 1-32 and Daphna Ephrat, "Sufism and Sanctity: The Genesis of the *Wali Allah* in Mamluk Jerusalem and Hebron," and Boaz Shoshan, "Popular Sufi Sermons in late Mamluk Egypt," in *Mamluks and Ottomans: Studies in Honour of Michael Winter,* ed. David J. Wasserstein and Ami Ayalon (London&New York: Routledge, 2006), 4-18, 106-113 (respectively). For the Ottoman context, illustrative is Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 52, 140-142, as well as Markus Dressler, "Inventing Orthodoxy: Competing Claims for Authority and Legitimacy in the Ottoman-Safavid

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surfaced whenever scholars researched Muslim mysticism. This was especially the case with the analyses of the influence of mystical beliefs and practices on the political establishments dominant in the Middle East and North Africa (as well as further to the east) prior to the Muslim reforms of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[4]

The main aim of this dissertation is the investigation of thaumaturgical beliefs and practices in early modern Syria, and of the body of professionals who were responsible for this religious and cultural corpus. This task requires an overview of existing secondary literature on religion in early modern Ottoman Syria. Suggestions shall then be made to align the historical narrative of eighteenth-century Ottoman Syria with the newer literature on religion in the Ottoman Empire. Some readers may find this problematic, due to insufficient empirical material and sholarly analyses of eighteenth-century Syria. However, due to the highly centralized nautre of the early modern Sufi *ṭuruq* and the *ʿulamāʾ* institutions in the Ottoman Empire, it is possible to make parallels which align the history of eighteenth-century Syria with the flows and developments in Ottoman history. Such analyses would further avoid the problems caused by studying this region

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Conflict," in *Legitimizing the Order: The Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power,* ed. Hakan T. Karateke and Maurus Reinkowski, (Boston: Brill, 2005), 151-173. Further see John J. Curry, *The Transformation of the Mystical Thought in the Ottoman Empire: The Rise of the Halveti Order 1350-1650* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 1-15, Mustapha Sheikh, *Ottoman Puritanism and its Discontents: Aḥmad al-Rūmī al-Āqḥisārī and the Qāḍīzādelis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 1-41, Michael Winter, *Society&Religion in Early Ottoman Egypt: Studies in the Writings of ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʿrānī* (New Brunswick&London, 2009), 11-30, or Riza Yıldırım, "The Rise of the 'Religion and State' Order: Re-confessionalization of State and Society in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire," and John J. Curry, "Some Reflections on the Fluidity of Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy in an Ottoman Sunni Context," in *Ottoman Sunnism: New Perspectives,* ed. Vefa Erginbas (Edinbrough: Edinbrough University Press, 2019), 12-46, 193-210, Examples are numerous. This dissertation deals with the Ottoman period and shall supply references throughout the text. Unfortunately, the final state of composing this manuscript concurred with the covid-19 pandemic. Many channels for obtaining literature became unavailable to researches. Some highly desirable works are missing from this dissertation's bibliography, such as the works of Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, highly relevant for the topic.

[4] For other geographical contexts, see for instance Azfar Moin, "The *ʿUlama'* as Ritual Specialists: Cosmic Knowledge and Political Rituals," in *The Wiley Blackwell History of Islam,* ed. Armando Salvatore (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2018), 377-392. Further see Azfar Moin, "The Crown of Dreams: Sufis and Princes in Sixteenth-Century Iran," in *The Millennial Sovereign: Sacred Kingship and Sainthood in Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 56-93. Moin deals with this topic in the whole book.

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with intent to write the history the Arabs exclusively, and not a history of an Ottoman Empire's highly significant province.[5]

The modern period witnessed a rise in pejorative portrayals of Sufism. In the modern Arab thought and among the reformist *'ulamā',* Sufism represented a collection of eroticism, superstitions and speculative abstractions. It was depicted as advertised by unkempt dervishes otherwise engaged in orgiastic dances under charlatan elders. The caricatures of Sufi *shaykh*s were frequently published in magazines and literature,[6] and it seems they filtered into the early scholarly thought as well. For instance, Fazlur Rahman, a Pakistani Muslim reformist, wrote that Sufism was propagated by parasitic charlatans who pursued spiritual jugglery instead of self-discipline and genuine spiritual enlightenment.[7] Later during his career, Rahman moderated his approach to Sufism. He acknowledged it as an intellectual tradition adding, however, that it probably developed as a response of creative minds to the barrenness of "official Islam." He did not believe that Sufism corresponded to the Islam of the Prophet Muḥammad and his early followers,[8] implying a distinctive character to Sufi mysticism instead. Such views were largely maintained by the classical scholarship on Sufism. Their influence seems to remain strong in contemporary scholarship about eighteenth-century Syria, even though a significant body of secondary literature emerged to argue against the classical attitudes and depict a more reasonable narrative about Sufism in the Ottoman period.[9]

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[5] This problem was discussed in Karl Barbir, "Introduction," in *Ottoman Rule in Damascus, 1708-1758* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 3-10.
[6] Trimingham, *Sufi Orders,* 249-251.
[7] Fazlur Rahman, *Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 153. Also see Sir Hamilton Alexander Rosskeen Gibb and Harold Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West: A Study of the Impact of Western Civilization on Moslem Culture in the Near East,* 2 volumes (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), or H A R Gibb, *Mohammedanism: An Historical Survey* (London&New York: Oxford University Press, 1949), 86-99.
[8] Fazlur Rahman, *Islam & Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* (Chicago&London: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), 27-28.
[9] See sections 1.1. and 1.2.

The most recent scholarly works sometimes still restate definitions of Sufism as distinct and separate from official Islam, regardless of historical contexts.[10] Scholarship at times describes Sufism as heterodox against the orthodox binary of mainstream Islam, or "low" in the traditional high-low dichotomy.[11] Classifications of Sufism according to these binaries partially caused the lack of accurate positioning of Muslim mysticism in religious studies today, further generating issues with the scholarly research of Syrian early modern religion. This dissertation suggests a somewhat different approach. In the following text, eighteenth-century Sufism in Ottoman Syria is approached as a constituent element of premodern Islam which contained many mechanical and devotional aspects of premodern Ottoman Sunnism. It was widely believed that the Sufis were the recipients of *baraka* that allowed them to perform *karāmāt* – to display preternatural feats or acquire otherwise inaccessible knowledge. Due to widespread beliefs in wonders (*karāmāt;* sg. *karāma*) and miracles (*muʿjizāt;* sg. *muʿjiza*), and the significance of divine grace (*baraka*) for premodern Muslims, Sufism had an important role in matters ranging from quotidian affairs to various Muslim states' policies. Sufi traditions in premodern Islam cultivated and maintained widespread trust in sodalities of religious professionals who were believed to perform wonders through divine grace. Analyses of Muslim beliefs and practices tied to wonder-working may allow for identifying overlapping influences within the premodern sodalities of Muslim religious professionals that further illuminate the historical role of Sufism for the Muslims.

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[10] This important point shall further be discussed in section 1.1. For examples, see Alexander D. Knysh, *Sufism: A New History of Islamic Mysticism* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2017), 173-178. Knysh restates a much older trend of separating Sufism from mainstream Islam. This trend may be found in some conservative scholarship on Sufism. For a critique of such theories, see Markus Dressler, Ron Geaves, and Gritt Klinkhammer, "Introduction," in *Sufis in Western Society: Global Networking and Locality,* ed. Markus Dressler, Ron Geaves and Gritt Klinkhammer (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), 1-12, or Ridgeon, *Companion,* 278. For the conservative view, see for instance, Linda Sijbrand, "Orientalism and Sufism: An Overview," in *Orientalism Revisited: Art, Land and Voyage,* ed. Ian Richard Netton (London&New York: 2013), 99-105, or Ignác Goldziher, "Koranauslesung der islamischen Mystik," in *Die Richtungen der Islamischen Koranauslesung* (Leiden: Brill, 1920), 180-262.

[11] See section 1.1.

The body of premodern Muslim religious professionals contained significant overlaps between the Sufis and the *ʿulamāʾ*. The Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* and the Muslim saints since the medieval and until the modern period assumed the role of what may sociologically be interpreted as a Muslim priestly sodality,[12] even though the Christian priestly function did not have its theological equivalent in Islam. Analyzing the case of eighteenth-century Ottoman Province of Damascus, the following chapters will show that the premodern Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* sodalities were sociologically, institutionally, and to an extent ideologically comparable to the priestly sodalities in Orthodox and Catholic early modern Europe. Their historical function as institutional dispensers of divine grace, as well as their historical relation to the common people and the state allows for such comparisons.[13] The significance of the Sufis for the history of premodern Islam and their functional overlap with various ulamaic groups over the centuries further emphasize that Sufism for the most part stood inseparable from mainstream religion of the early modern period. Such was the case in eighteenth-century Ottoman Syria as well.

1.1. Sufism in Scholarship, Sufism in Islam: Scholarly Approaches to Religion of eighteenth-century Province of Damascus

This section shall describe the most common approaches used to study the history of Syrian religion. It shall be shown that influences of classical scholarship, already moderated or discarded in numerous subsequent scholarly works, still linger in the studies of Ottoman Syria. Scholarship occasionally interprets Sufism through dichotomies which may not be helpful for explaining its history. Their simplicity fails to explain the complex dynamics of the early modern Syrian religious

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[12] See, for instance, Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, In *Economy and Society 1* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993), 28-31, 115-137, and Pierre Bourdieu, "Genesis and Structure of the Religious Field." *Comparative Social Research*, Volume 13 (1991): 9-14.
[13] See section 1.2, 1.3, chapters 2 and 4.

beliefs and practices. The most frequently encountered dichotomies in scholarly literature on Sufism and Islam are those of the orthodox-heterodox and the high-low. They are often entangled and together create problems with attempts to design a definition of Sufism which is precise enough, yet sufficiently broad to account for the full extent of the available factual material. Furthermore, scholarship until the present day often portrays Sufism as a body of beliefs and practices which is separate from (although often described as parallel to) Islam. Academical depictions of Sufism often distinguish it from other Muslim "trends."[14] For instance, Alexander Knysh describes Sufism as distinct enough from "non-Sufi versions of Islam and other Islamic movements." Knysh explains that the embeddedness of Sufism in Islam paralleled by its distinction from other Muslim mainstreams may serve as an analytical tool for historians today,[15] yet fails to clarify what types of research may be conducted, or what results may be obtained from using such notions. Depictions of Sufism as distinct from Islam influenced the writing of the history of early modern Ottoman Syria as well, which is the primary purpose of the present argument.

Ahmet Karamustafa notes that problems in the early scholarly understanding of Islam and its Sufism emerged from the traditional reliance on the high-low dichotomy.[16] The "high" and "low" binaries to this day maintain a considerable presence in academic literature dealing with this, as well as many other topics. In the framework of the high-low binary, Sufism is supposed to represent the "low" – piety of the masses, a form of popular religion,[17] or religion of antinomian

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[14] Correlatively, claims that Islam represents a monolithic historical entity are also quite common. See Julian Baldick, *Mystical Islam: An Introduction to Sufism* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), 1. For arguments against such attitudes, consult Aziz al-Azmeh, *The Times of History: Universal Topics in Islamic Historiography* (Budapest&New York: Central European University Press, 2007), 39-42.
[15] Knysh, *Sufism,* 174, 225.
[16] Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends: Dervish Groups in the Islamic Later Middle Period 1200-1550* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1994), 5-7.
[17] Lloyd Ridgeon, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Sufism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 29.

groups,[18] against Islam of the elites, based on a puritanical reading of the Scripture. This dichotomy possibly acquired a greater currency in the studies of Islam with Ernst Gellner's research about sainthood in Morocco. The binaries of "popular" and "elite" are clearly visible in his "pendulum swing" theory of Islam.[19] Due to the long usage of the adjective "popular" with reference to cultures explained as inferior to their "high" and "elite" counterparts on the binary scale,[20] writing about Sufism as "popular religion" might strike the reader almost as a pejorative.

Attempts to go beyond this binary are evident in some recent scholarship produced about early modern Ottoman Syria. Efforts of such scholarship to redeem the "popular" customs of the Ottoman Bilād al-Shām[21] resonate with broader historiographical attempts to locate the "little people" in history and improve historical knowledge about their particular temporal and spatial contexts.[22] These efforts in some cases led to the other extreme which depicted early modern Syrian religion almost entirely as a product of the common people's beliefs and practices. In 2014, James Grehan's study of Sufism and popular religion in early modern Ottoman Syria concludes

[18] Karamustafa, *Friends,* 12-25.
[19] Ernst Gellner, "A Pendulum Swing Theory of Islam," in *Sociology of Religion: Selected Readings,* ed. Roland Robertson and Michael Zwettler (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1969), 127–141.
[20] Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1978), xi, 65-76, 91-115, 244-286. The theoretical model based on the "high"-"low" dichotomy was later applied to many different periods where certain scholars attempted to develop it further. For instance, see Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (London: Verso, 1992), xi-2, 120-167, and Theodor W. Adorno, *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture,* ed. J. M. Bernstein (London: Routledge, 1991), 53-84. Finally, Herbert J. Gans, *Popular Culture & High Culture: An Analysis and Evaluation of Taste* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 5-12, 27-76. The dichotomy pervades religious studies frequently. As an instance relevant to this dissertation, see the debate about religious and magical practice in Weber, *Sociology,* 11, 80-94.
[21] See James Grehan, *Everyday Life & Consumer Culture in 18th-Century Damascus* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007), 3-20, or Dana Sajdi, *The Barber of Damascus: Nouveau Literacy in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Levant* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), 114-137. For much of Sajdi's methodological inspiration see Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller,* trans. John and Anne C. Tedeschi (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), xiii-xxvi.
[22] For a discussion about methods of conducting such research, see Sigurður Gylfi Magnússon and István M. Szijártó, *What is Microhistory? Theory and Practice* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 1-12, 62-78, 119-133, or Francesca Trivellato, "Is there a Future for Italian Microhistory in the Age of Global History?" *California Italian Studies* 2 (2011): http://escholarship.org/uc/item/0z94n9hq (Last accessed: April 15th 2021), just to start with this complicated question.

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that Muslim eighteenth-century religious beliefs and practices represented a "triumph of religion from below."[23]

This dissertation, however, approaches Islam of eighteenth-century Ottoman Syria, along with its Sufism, as a product of the relationship between local Ottoman religious professionals and the rest of the Syrian common people. As the following chapters will show, eighteenth-century Syrian Islam was influenced by the combination of the latitudinarianism of official religious authorities and religious and magical beliefs held across the social scale. Caution seems therefore necessary. Eighteenth-century Syrian religion shall be discussed not as a product of high and elite cultures, nor as that of "the masses" exclusively. The cultivation and maintenance of a vast body of religious beliefs and practices represents a process of elaborate exchange between groups of professionals, erudites, jurists, as well as the common people, under the careful surveillance of the state authorities.[24] This dissertation does not study a religion of the masses, nor does it aim to employ the high-low binary. It examines Sufism in Islam predominantly referring to those practices which appealed to all social strata in eighteenth-century Ottoman Syria[25] and thus represented cultural property available to all its inhabitants. If the word "popular" emerges in the following text, it should not be understood as a term referring to the previously outlined binary. Instead, the adjective is used to refer to those cultural items described by Shirley Fedorak as the sum of "performance, expression and symbolism that both influences and reflects human culture"[26]

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[23] James Grehan, *Twilight of the Saints: Everyday Religion in Ottoman Syria and Palestine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 112-115. See also chapter 5.

[24] Michel de Certeau provides a relevant theoretical approach to studying developing cultures and traditions. See Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), xi-xxiv, xv-xvi.

[25] The methodological approaches of Clark and Clanton are highly illustrative. See Terry Ray Clark and Dan W. Clanton, Jr., ed., *Understanding Religion and Popular Culture: Theories, Themes, Products and Practices* (London: Routledge, 2012), 1-12. This is comparable to Gábor Klaniczay, *The Uses of Supernatural Power: The Transformation of Popular Religion in Medieval and Early-Modern Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 2-5.

[26] Shirley A. Fedorak, *Pop Culture: The Culture of Everyday Life* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press Incorporated, 2009), 1-13.

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– the collective representations[27] of the Syrian eighteenth-century Ottoman subjects. The *popularity* of Sufism is evident. Sufism for a long number of centuries represented a corpus of widespread beliefs and practices that attracted the participation of all Muslims, regardless of their rank or status. Such was the case in eighteenth-century Bilād al-Shām as well.[28]

Another well-established dichotomy in the study of Islam (and other scriptural religions) divides its beliefs and practices to those that are orthodox, and their opposites – the heterodox or heretical. This dichotomy is most often entangled with that of the high-low. The explanation behind the usage of these binaries reflects the old presumptions that the orthodoxies of Muslim establishments continuously represented a set of doctrinal, jurisprudential and sociopolitical norms based upon the early sources of Islam – the Qur'ān, the *Ḥadīth* and the *Sunna*, which were nomocentric yet not mystical.[29] Attempts have been made to break through this dichotomy, yet some of them bring more confusion than clarifications. For instance, Julian Baldick dispatched the orthodox-heterodox binaries asserting that they inherently corresponded only to the Christian setting. In *Mystical Islam,* Baldick insisted that heterodoxies could not exist in Islam because orthodoxy was never present. He underlined that Islam represents a scriptural religion without an official priesthood, concluding that no authoritative body existed to establish any orthodoxy, therefore eliminating the possibilities of any deviances.[30] The issue of the presence or the lack of an official priesthood in Islam represents one of the main themes of this dissertation.[31]

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[27] Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Karen E. Fields (New York: Free Press, 1995), 5-12.
[28] Eminegül Karababa and Güliz Ger, "Early Modern Ottoman Coffeehouse Culture and the Formation of the Consumer Subject*," Journal of Consumer Research* 37 (2010): 17, doi: 10.1086/656422, or Rachida Chih and Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen, "Le soufisme ottoman vu d'Égypte (xvie-xviiie siècle)," in *Le soufisme à l'époque ottomane, XVIe-XVIIIe siècle,* ed. Rachida Chih, Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen, Denis Grill, and Richard McGregor (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 2010), 1-56. See also Grehan, *Everyday Life*, 21-55.
[29] See Gibb and Bowen, *Islamic Society*, 70-85.
[30] Baldick, *Mystical Islam,* 7.
[31] See sections 2.1. and 2.3. Further see chapter 4.

Other suggestions have been offered to neutralize the orthodox-heterodox binaries in the previous decade. In 2013, Bruce Masters emphasized the necessity to look beyond this dichotomy. Masters, however, employed the same terminology in his work without attempts to nuance his methodological vocabulary, or indicate how these terms may be redefined.[32] In 2014, James Grehan offered an approach that partially relied on the theories of Ernest Gellner. Gellner through his own research concluded that Sufism represented a phenomenon which tended to emerge and grow stronger wherever and whenever the state authority weakened, especially on the margins of state systems.[33] James Grehan described the historical popularity of Sufism as the gradual filtering of "agrarian religion" into the cities of early modern Ottoman Shām. He explained such developments through the dependence of early modern Muslim urban centers on their countryside, and the dominance of an agrarian culture in both urban and rural hubs. Grehan concluded that "agrarian religion" of the Ottoman realm represented eighteenth-century Syrian religious mainstream, composed of popular beliefs and Sufi teachings which overwhelmed the ulamaic minority over the passage of time.[34] This definition relies on the orthodox-heterodox and high-low dichotomies equally and seems not to acknowledge the full complexity of Syrian eighteenth-century religion. Furthermore, Gellner's and Grehan's theories imply that Sufism represented a distinct and separate body of practices and beliefs in relation to Islam. This presumption is frequent in scholarship today.

The scholarly interpretation of Sufism as a separate entity from Islam represents in equal measure the consequence of reliance by scholars on the previously outlined dichotomies, and the

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[32] Bruce Masters, *The Arabs of the Ottoman Empire, 1516-1918: A Social and Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 30-31, 125. Similar can be perceived in Saif, "Medicine and Magic," 335-337, which is a text published in 2017.
[33] Ernest Gellner, *Muslim Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 114-130.
[34] Grehan, *Twilight,* 6-19, 112-115.

lack of consensus about the historical origins of Sufi beliefs and practices. Nile Green indicates that the researchers of Sufism faced considerable difficulties in attempts to analyze the origins of Muslim mysticism due to the scarcity of early Muslim sources.[35] The resulting debates at times questioned the relation of Sufism to Islam, and it seems as if such discussions are more focused on pronouncing upon the orthodoxy of Sufism than studying its history. Julian Baldick, for instance, criticizes Louis Massignon's theories of an autochthonous historical development of Sufism. Baldick further rejects the possibility that Sufism arose from the Muslim Scripture. In his views, Sufism developed under the influence of Greek Christian asceticism.[36] Baldick seems not to acknowledge that historical developments most often emerge from the circumstances present in a particular time and space, and not from books. Written texts, however, may be later used to lend credibility to a certain emergence, as the case may have been with Sufism during the early medieval period.[37]

Alexander Knysh defends Massignon's attitudes and emphasizes the potential of the Qur'ān, the Sunna, and the *Ḥadīth* to inspire the development of Sufi beliefs and practices. In addition, Knysh acknowledges the relevance of Christian and Jewish traditions, which through social interaction and entanglement contributed to the development of Muslim beliefs.[38] Knysh further criticizes scholarly reluctance to compare Islam and its Sufism with religious trends present in Europe and other regions. As the reason for this reluctance, he points out the scholarly tendency

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[35] Nile Green, *Sufism: A Global History* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 16-19.
[36] Baldick, *Mystical Islam,* 9, 32-33. For the criticized text see Louis Massignon, *Essay on the Origins of the Technical Language of Islamic Mysticism: Translated from the French with an Introduction by Benjamin Clark* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), 49-67, 73-76, 94-106. Other religious confessions, however, did have influence on the development of Islam. See Aziz al-Azmeh, *The Emergence of Islam in Late Antiquity: Allāh and his People* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 11-40, 449-487.
[37] For instance, see Abu 'l-Qasim al-Qushayri, *Al-Qushayri's Epistle on Sufism: Al-Risala al-Qushayriyya fi 'Ilm al-Tasawwuf,* trans. Alexander Knysh (Reading: Garnet Publishing, 2007), xxi-xxvii, Ian Richard Netton, *Islam, Christianity and the Mystic Journey: A Comparative Exploration* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 102-110, or Martin Nguyen, *Sufi Master and Qur'an Scholar: Abū'l-Qāsim al-Qushayrī and the Laṭā'if al-Ishārāt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 23-87, 205-236.
[38] Knysh, *Sufism,* 15-18.

of preserving an authentic “Islamness” of Sufism. Knysh, however, proceeds to define Sufism as “Islam in the miniature, with the major features of Sufism present in Islam and vice versa.”[39] Alexander Knysh explains the coinage “Islam in the miniature” stating that Sufism contained identical elements to Islam and stood as a unique and fully formed option among other “Muslim identities.”[40] He considers it justified to study Sufism as a distinct “stream” of Islam.[41] Such opinions seem to restate older conservative scholarship.[42] It is more accurate to state that Sufism contained identical elements to Islam since it for a long time (and before the modern period) represented a constituent element of Islam. Distinctions between Islam and Sufism do not seem plausible prior to the advent of the modern religious reforms.

Instead of employing dichotomies of orthodox and heterodox, or high and low, which may lead to distinctions between mainstream Islam and Sufism, this dissertation will demonstrate that Sufism was inseparable from eighteenth-century Syrian Sunnism. Its roots were deep within premodern Ottoman religious traditions. It was only during the modern period that Muslim reformist thought attempted to push Sufism to the margins as a heterodox body of superstitions. Modern reformers achieved varying degrees of success in various regions and times. Before them, Sufism represented an important component of practiced Islam which had a considerable influence on the social, economic and political fields within the early modern Ottoman Empire. It was already indicated that scholarship produced ample evidence of this influence.

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[39] Ibid., 14, 23.
[40] Ibid., 174.
[41] Ibid., 7, 173-178.
[42] See Dressler, Geaves, and Klinkhammer, “Introduction,” 1-12, Ridgeon, *Companion,* 278, Sijbrand, “Sufism,” 99-105, and Goldziher, “Mystik,” 180-262.

1.2. Religion of an Imperial Province: Eighteenth-century Syrian Sufism, its Primary Sources, and Contemporary Scholarship

The focus of this dissertation is on the overlap between the teachings and function of various ulamaic and Sufi groups in eighteenth-century Syria. This overlap was not confined to one century, nor to one given province. However, authors such as Hüseyin Yılmaz with his theory of an Ottoman mystical turn, highlight an unprecedented level of entanglement between Sufi and ulamaic circles during the Ottoman period. Due to heavy reliance on the Sufi orders, they became invaluable for the Empire's spread.[43] Many studies were published on the history of Sufism in the Ottoman Empire, predominantly focused on Istanbul, Anatolia, and the Empire's Balkan province. The following discussion aims to suggest a way of filling the gap in the history of eighteenth-century Syria through the framework of existing secondary literature.

The popularity of Sufism in the Ottoman period had much earlier roots. Throughout the early medieval period, Sufis in the Middle East strove to bring their teachings in line with the mainstream Sunni doctrine.[44] Mysticism played a significant role both for ulamaic sodalities in state administration[45] and individual scholars. Sufi initiates with ulamaic careers in mind were required to learn about the ulamaic sholarly methods, techniques and disciplines along with the requirements of their respective orders.[46] The prominent Sufi *shaykh*s from the eleventh century onwards seemed to move seamlessly between *madrasa*s and *ṭuruq,* demonstrating shared practice, language and symbols.[47] Through the dissemination of texts, as well as oral transmission,[48] Sufism

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[43] Hüseyin Yılmaz, *Caliphate Redefined: The Mystical Turn in Ottoman Political Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 5-18.
[44] Karamustafa, *Friends,* 87.
[45] Ibid., 5-11.
[46] Ernst, *Sufism,* 1-17.
[47] Ohlander, *Sufism,* 307-310.
[48] Ibid., 311.

gradually became more aligned to the ulamaic teachings.[49] In a similar fashion, since the Abbassid and until the modern period, the *ʿulamāʾ* establishment served mystagogic, initiatory[50] and thaumaturgical functions,[51] in addition to their other responsibilities.

With ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Qushayrī (986/987-1072/1073), Sufism seems to have reached the form in which it was able to resist charges of heterodoxy.[52] Ayfer Karakaya-Stump, Johnatan Berkey, and many other scholars see the jurist *cum* mystic, Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī (1058-1111) as a pivotal figure for the development of Sufism.[53] Al-Ghazālī's work embodied the growing acceptance of Sufism by the ulamaic circles, and contributed to the gradual harmonizing of institutional Sufi training and *madrasa* education.[54] Green sees the utilization of the *madrasa* system by the Sufis as an important step further towards the "hard institutionalization" of Sufi orders.[55] This process resulted in the emerging institution of the Sufi *ṭarīqa* over the following centuries.

Since the eleventh century, the gradual alignment of Sufi doctrines to official versions of orthodoxy occurred in parallel with the development of institutional Sufism – a transition from the individual master-disciple relationship model to the Sufi *ṭuruq* (sg. *ṭarīqa*; [Sufi] "path") with large followings.[56] Very early on, there existed a tendency of grouping Sufi adherents into clearly

[49] Green, *Sufism,* 42.
[50] Weber, *Sociology*, 54-61.
[51] Al-Azmeh, *Times,* 223. Compare with Thomas, *Decline,* 227-229.
[52] See al-Qushayri, *Epistle*, xxi-xxvii, Netton, *Mystic Journey* 102-110, and Nguyen, *Sufi Master*, 23-87, 205-236.
[53] Ayfer Karakaya-Stump, *The Kizilbash/Alevis in Ottoman Anatolia: Sufism, Politics and Community* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), 50-51, Berkey, *Formation*, 231, or Eric Geoffroy, *Introduction to Sufism: The Inner Path of Islam*, trans. Roger Gaetani (Bloomington: World Wisdom, 2010), 78-86.
[54] Babak Rahimi and Armando Salvatore, "The Crystallization and Expansiveness of Sufi Networks within the Urban-Rural-Nomadic Nexus of the Islamic Ecumene," in *The Wiley Blackwell History of Islam,* ed. Armando Salvatore, Roberto Tottoli, and Babak Rahimi (Oxford: John Wiley & Sons Ltd., 2018), 257-264. Further see, for instance, Zeynep Yürekli, *Architecture and Hagiography in the Ottoman Empire: The Politics of Bektashi Shrines in the Classical Age* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2012), 1-4.
[55] Ibid., 55-60.
[56] Green, *Sufism,* 55-60, Derin Terzioğlu, "Sufis in the Age of State-Building and Confessionalization," in *The Ottoman World,* ed. Christine Woodhead (London&New York: Routledge, 2012), 86.

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defined communities with distinct boundaries and internal rules.[57] Erik Ohlander traces the processes through which Sufi education became increasingly tied to a particular place between roughly the eleventh and the thirteenth century. Such places, the Sufi lodges, became the localities in which the core *madrasa* education was replicated by the disciples under a *shaykh'*s supervision.[58]

It is possible to trace the development of the lodge since its early emergence. Dina Le Gall distinguishes the three stages of the Sufi lodge development as the *ribāṭ,* the *khanqa,* and the *zāwiyā.* The early *ribāṭ*'s function was to host Sufis, as well as the poor of both genders. The *khanqa* in general represented a royal or a princely foundation that hosted numerous Sufis, who were however not attached to a particular master or a Sufi path. The third stage, the *zāwiyā,* was reserved specifically for a certain order's master and his disciples.[59] Ohlander adds the forth stage, the *ṭā'ifa*, which developed during the Ottoman fifteenth century as an instutitonalized network of lodges belonging to the same order, and under the supervision of a supreme master (*shaykh al-ṭarīqa*).[60] Le Gall, however accurately observes that the interchangeable usage of these terms in the Ottoman sources might indicate that the contemporaries did not have as much use from these classifications as scholarship does today.[61]

The processes of institutionalizing place and method of teaching ran in parallel with aligning Sufi doctrines to Sunnism over the centuries, allowing for a wider dissemination of texts as highly important media for the spread of Sufi ideas. During the Mamluk and Ottoman centuries, the names of scholars such as al-Suhrawardī and al-Gīlānī[62] became eponyms to indicate a

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[57] Ohlander, *Sufism,* 27-34.
[58] Ibid., 53.
[59] Dina le Gall, *A Culture of Sufism: Naqshbandis in the Ottoman World, 1450-1700* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005)*, 45.*
[60] Ohlander, *Sufism,* 1-4.
[61] Le Gall, *Sufism,* 45.
[62] A Pole of his Time – see section 2.3.

particular set of doctrines, practices and methods tied to increasingly differentiating Sufi orders (*ṭuruq*). Their adherents commenced with codifying the collective past into concrete, self-regulating methods of organization and practice which was highly convenient for further reproduction.[63]

Adherents to a given order were expected to function as brotherhoods based upon the medieval *futuwwā* principle.[64] Confraternal expressions aimed to describe a community of equals in faith.[65] They are comparable to the concepts of brotherhoods in Christ which featured in European sources during the premodern times.[66] However, clear ranks between the orders' disciples seem to have begun formulating as early as the eleventh century, with initiates at the bottom and the masters of orders at the top.[67] A transition was identifiable, meanwhile, from individual masters as the focus of all learning to the institution of the *ṭarīqa* with specific teachings, practice and a set of doctrines.[68]

[63] Ohlander, *Sufism,* 187-190.

[64] Ibid., 25-26, 285-288. Also see Yavuz, "Sufi Order," 98, Rıza Yıldırım, "Inventing a Sufi Tradition: The Use of the Futuwwa Ritual Gathering as a Model for the Qizilbash Djem," in *Sufism and Society: Arrangements of the Mystical in the Muslim World, 1200-1800,* ed. John Curry, Erik Ohlander (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), 164-182, Terzioğlu, "Sufis," 90-93, Green, *Sufism,* 52, 85-86.

[65] The brotherhood notions had a practical application during turbulent periods in the history of the Middle East. They pervaded, for instance, the discourse of lodges which helped amalgamate Muslim societies during power vacuums in the medieval and early modern periods. This was, for instance, the case with Saljuq Anatolia. See Rachel Goshgarian, "Opening and Closing: Coexistence and Competition in Associations based on Futuwwa in Late Medieval Anatolian Cities," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 40 (2013): 36-52. For instance, see Gervase Rosser, "Trust," in *The Art of Solidarity in the Middle Ages: Guilds in England, 1250-1550* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 149-186.

[66] See for instance David Carpenter, "The Piety of Henry III," in *Henry III: 1207-1258,* volume 1 (London: Yale University Press, 2020), 273-348, Maurizio Viroli, *As if God Existed: Religion and Liberty in the History of Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 89-103, Kat Hill, "Brothers and Sisters," in *Baptism, Brotherhood ad Belief in Reformation Germany: Anabaptism and Lutheranism 1525-1585* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 167-198, Colin Kidd, "Race and Religious Orthodoxy in the Early Modern Era," in *The Forging of Races: Race and Scripture in the Protestant Atlantic World, 1600-2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 54-78, and L. Fatum, "Brotherhood in Christ: A Gender Hermeneutical Reading of 1 Thessalonians," in *Constructing Early Christian Families: Family as a Social Reality and Metaphor,* ed. H. Moxnes (London: Routledge, 1997), 183-200.

[67] It seems that al-Gīlānī contributed to the formulation of the orders' hierarchy. See Ohlander, *Sufism,* 27-34, or Yıldırım, "Sufi Tradition," 164-182. Finally, see chapter 4 and specifically, section 4.3.

[68] Ohlander, *Sufism,* 187-190.

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The legitimacy and authenticity of a given order was symbolized by that order's *silsila,* which at the same time legitimized the authority of every individual *shaykh* of that order.[69] *Silsila* represented a genealogical chain of knowledge and *baraka*-transmission and succession that ranged from the still living Sufis all the way to a Sufi order's eponymous founder, and at times further until the Prophet, often through ʿAlī Ibn Abī Ṭālib.[70] S*ilsila*s were fundamental for internal organization of various Sufi paths, as they represented core principals around which *ṭuruq* were organized.[71] Rooted into the *silsila* principle, the *ṭuruq* became efficient mechanisms of saint-making through the initiation of individuals,[72] functioning at the same time as *baraka*-conducting chains[73] and *isnad*s leading to important historical Muslims to ensure an order's integrity. The orders' masters were to be obeyed without question,[74] and they commanded authority as the successors of a long line of Sufi *shaykh*s instead of functioning as individual teachers to isolated groups.[75] The growingly bureaucratized *ṭuruq* gradually became institutionalized channels for the dissemination of Sufism as the secret legacy of the Prophet.[76]

Throughout the medieval and early modern centuries, a significant degree of overlap persisted between various Sufi and ulamaic groups. The majority of the most prominent Muslim authors were representative of this convergence. Illustrative is the case of Ibn Khaldūn (1332-

[69] See Trimingham, *Sufi Orders,* 94-105, 261-263, 269-271. Further see Le Gall, *Sufism,* 166-167, Thierry Zarcone, "Bridging the Gap between pre-Soviet and post-Soviet Sufism in Ferghana Valley (Uzbekistan): the Naqshbandi order between Tradition and Innovation," in *Popular Movement,* ed. Kisaichi, 43-47, Shahzad Bashir, *Sufi Bodies: Religion and Society in Medieval Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 78-80, and Mohammed Yamin, *Impact of Islam on Orissan Culture* (New Delhi: Readworthy Publications, 2009), 96-97.
[70] The Naqshbandīyya was an exception, maintaining a Bakrī *silsila.* Le Gall, *Sufism,* 127.
[71] Le Gall, *Sufism,* 14-16.
[72] Green, *Sufism,* 93.
[73] See chapter 2 for *baraka.*
[74] Ohladner, *Sufism,* 27-34, Derin Terzioğlu, "Man in the Image of God in the Image of the Times: Sufi Self-Narratives and the Diary of Niyāzī-i Mıṣrī (1618-94)," *Studia Islamica,* No. 94 (2002): 144, and Curry, *he Transformation,* 8.
[75] Some orders, such as the Naqshbandīyya, however, still seemed to prefer smaller, intimate meetings for the dissemination of their teachings, despite conforming to the institutional framework. See Le Gall, *Sufism,* 46-47, or Green, *Sufism,* 131-135.
[76] Ibid., 7-8.

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1406), a conservative adherent to Ash'arite theology. Ibn Khaldūn held one of his mentors, Abū Mahdī ʿĪsā Ibn al-Zayyāt – an Andalusian gnostic, "great among the saints"[77]- in high esteem. Ibn Khaldūn served as the rector of the Baybarsīyya Sufi lodge in Egypt,[78] and wrote a tractate on Sufism which was very influential during the premodern times, while for today's historians it represents a valuable resource.[79]

Roughly during the Ottoman fourteenth and the fifteenth century, emerging Sufi orders grew in popularity among the Ottoman subjects.[80] While the Ottoman administration strove to consolidate its authority over official imperial religion and deal with its rivals – such as the emerging Safavid dynasty – many orders that aligned with Sunnism became much closer to the state top. Such was the case most prominently with the Sufi Khalwatīyya and Naqshbandīyya orders.[81] At the same time, efforts have been made to align potentially problematic doctrines to the legislative norms of the Ottoman government. Illustrative examples are provided by the scholarly studies focused on the Bektashi order's history.[82]

The works of Ibn ʿArabī (d.1240) were invaluable for the history of Ottoman Empire's official religion. Ibn ʿArabī, dubbed "the Grand Master (*al-shaykh al-akbar*)" by the Sufis of the following generations,[83] received his spiritual and philosophical training from a Muḥammad Ibn

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[77] Abū Zayd Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima* [Prolegomenon], ed. Jumaʿa Shaykha (Tunis: Dār al-Qalam, 1984), 593.
[78] Knysh, *Sufism,* 179.
[79] See Yumna Ozer, trans., *Ibn Khaldūn on Sufism: Remedy for the Questioner in Search of Answers (Shifā' al-Sā'il li-Tadhīb al-Masā'il)* (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 2017), i-xii, and Robert Irwin, *Ibn Khaldun: An Intellectual Biography* (Princeton&Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2018), 108-117.
[80] Terzioğlu, "Sunnitization," 307.
[81] Terzioğlu, "Sufis," 90-93.
[82] See Surayia N. Faroqhi, "Conflict, Accommodation and Long-term Survival: The Bektashi Order and the Ottoman State" in *Bektachiyya, Études sur l'ordre mystique des Bektachis et les groupes relevant de Hadji Bektash*, ed. Alexandre Popovic and Gilles Veinstein (Istanbul: The Isis Publications, 1995), 171-184, or Yürekli, *Architecture,* 79-134. Although it is possible to presume the relationship between the Damascene janissary corps and the Bektashi order, such relations should not be taken for granted. See Cemal Kafadar, "Janissaries and Other Riffraff of Ottoman Istanbul: Rebels without a Cause?" *International Journal of Turkish Studies* Vol. 13, Nos. 1&2 (2007): 113-116. Further studies of the janissaries in Ottoman Syria are a necessity to collect hard evidence for such claims.
[83] See Claude Addas and Peter Kingsley, *Quest for the Red Sulphur: The Life of Ibn ʿArabī* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1993).

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Qāsim al-Tamīmī (d. 1207/8), who was a prominent *Ḥadīth* scholar and a biographer. Ibn ʿArabī adhered to the Ẓāhirī school of jurisprudence.[84] Early Ottoman scholars demonstrated mixed reactions to the works of Ibn ʿArabī,[85] yet the Grand Master was later considered the patron saint of the Ottoman dynasty.[86] He was buried in Damascus, and Selim I (1470-1520) endowed a large shrine complex around his tomb.[87] The commissioning of Ibn ʿArabī's shrine represented one of many pivotal events in the framework of the Ottoman policy of institutionalizing the Sufi *ṭuruq* under the control of the ruling class.[88]

This institutionalization process had roots in the medieval period. The governments of medieval Muslim states had significant impact on the development of Sufi orders. Erik Ohlander criticizes the apparent reluctance of contemporary scholarship to acknowledge the ruling class's systematical patronage of popular Sufi scholars and the *ṭuruq* from the medieval period onwards.[89] During the Abbasid reign, many prominent Sufis were appointed to high-ranking positions of significant social and political influence,[90] such was the case with Abū Ḥafs al-Suhrawardī (1145-1234) under al-Nāṣir (r.1158-1225).[91] The ulamaic sodalities had continuously assisted the Abbasid state in locating ways to justify the dynasty's right to caliphate.[92] The Abbasid caliph was

[84] See John Renard, ed., *Tales of God's Friends: Islamic Hagiography in Translation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 1-12, 30-47.
[85] See, for instance, Le Gall, *Sufism,* 124-126, and Cankat Kaplan, "An Anti-Ibn ʿArabī (d.1240) Polemicist in the Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Istanbul: Ibrahīm Al-Ḥalabī (d.1549) and his Interlocutors," unpublished MA thesis (Budapest: Central European University, 2019), 10-23.
[86] See Yılmaz, *Caliphate,* 211-214, Rafeq, "Relations," 81, and Sirriyeh, *Visionary,* 126.
[87] Le Gall, *Sufism,* 124. Further see chapter 5.
[88] See below.
[89] Erik S. Ohlander, *Sufism in an Age of Transition: ʿUmar al-Suhrawardī and the Rise of the Islamic Mystical Brotherhoods* (Leiden&Boston: Brill, 2008), 6.
[90] Ibid., 19.
[91] Maha El-Kaisy Friemuth, "al-Suhrawardi, Abu Hafs," in *Encyclopedia of Islamic Civilisation and Religion,* ed. Ian Richard Netton (London&New York: Routledge, 2008), 619, or Qamar-ul Huda, "The Life of Shaikh 'Abū Ḥafs 'Umar al-Suhrawardī," in *Striving for Divine Union: Spiritual exercises for Suhrawardī sūfīs* (London&New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005), 13-40.
[92] Ohlander, *Sufism,* 250-251.

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claimed to be graced by god and appointed to ensure the natural cycle of divine order.[93] In turn, the caliph provided legitimacy to the ulamaic sodalities and made partnerships with them through granting tenures and official appointments. In addition, many Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* received lucrative landed properties and other privileges which allowed for a significant degree of economic power.[94]

In the aftermath of the Mongol conquests, Anatolian and Syrian Sufi orders assisted the amalgamation of various communities during the power vaccum.[95] The Mongols themselves soon started to rely on the *ṭuruq* for a number of purposes ranging from education to proselytization.[96] Researchers noticed a comparable state of affairs during the Ayyubid (1171-1260)[97] and the Saljuq (1077-1308)[98] reign.

During the early modern period, Sufi *ṭuruq* assisted in justifying the mystical legacy of the Ottoman caliphate. While these mystical orders were conforming to the imperial expectations of the social and religious norms, they were becoming increasingly popular among the Ottoman elites. The state enforced Friday prayers and commissioned the erection of numerous *madrasa*s, mosques and *masjid*s, allowing the Sufis to compete with the *ʿulamāʾ* for appointments.[99] By the

[93] This is comparable to sacred kingship in European history. See for instance Joseph Canning, *A History of Medieval Political Thought: 300-1450* (London&New York: Routledge, 2005), 16-43, 47-58. Further see Thomas, *Decline*, 227-229. For the role of the bishops for the development of medieval European political thought, again highly comparable to the role of the *ʿulamāʾ* for the caliphate-related developments, see for instance Michael Edward Moore, *A Sacred Kingdom: Bishops and the Rise of Frankish Kingship, 300-850* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2011), 1-20.

[94] Yılmaz, *Caliphate,* 14, Green, *Sufism,* 7, 96, 131-135, and al-Azmeh, *Kingship*, 157-159.

[95] Terzioğlu, "Sufis," 89, Green, *Sufism,* 131, Knysh, *Sufism,* 179.

[96] Judith Pfeiffer, "Confessional Ambiguity vs. Confessional Polarization: Politics and the Negotiation of Religious Boundaries in the Ilkhanate," in *Politics, Patronage and the Transmission of Knowledge in 13th-15th Century Tabriz,* ed. Judith Pfeiffer (Leiden&Boston: Brill, 2014), 135-136, Karakaya-Stump, *Kizilbash,* 89-90, Green, *Sufism,* 94, and Yürekli, *Architecture, 14-16*. Further see Derin Terzioğlu, "How to Conceptualize Ottoman Sunnitization: A Historiographical Discussion," *Turcica,* Vol. 44 (2012-2013): 306-307.

[97] Ethel Sara Wolper, "The Patron and the Sufi: Mediating Religious Authority through Dervish Lodges," in *Cities and Saints: Sufism and the Transformation of Urban Space in Medieval Anatolia* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 24-41.

[98] H. Crane, "Notes on the Saldjūq Architectural Patronage in the Thirteenth Century Anatolia," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* Vol. 36, No. 1 (1993): 1-57.

[99] Derin Terzioğlu, "Sunna-minded Sufi Preachers in Service of the Ottoman State: The *naṣiḥatname* of Hasan addressed to Murad IV," *Archivum Ottomanicum* 27 (2010): 244-246, 250-251.

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sixteenth century, Sufis could hold important government posts, such as tenures at courts. Adherents of various mystical orders were taking a growingly significant role in many political and jurisprudential matters. Michael Winter demonstrates the involvement of Sufis in state affairs with the case of a sixteenth-century Sufi, ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʿrānī (1493-1565). In Winter's work it is apparent that personal relationships between Sufi masters and office holders increased the Sufi masters' potential to influence state appointments.[100]

Ottoman sources from the late fifteenth century onwards show an unprecedented degree of *ṭuruq* organization as institutional networks across the Empire and under control of state administration. The centralization of Sufi lodges' network reflects the Ottoman rulers' effort to organize the Empire's religion (and its orthodoxy) and structure the orders of religious professionals to conform with state policies and respond to pressures from both within and outside its borders.[101] Investigations into Ottoman imperial patronage reveal a process of legitimization in which the state administration continuously distinguished orthodox and illicit practices.[102] This process extended over both the Sufi and the ulamaic sodalities in the early modern period.

The participation of the *ʿulamāʾ* in politics, society and economy of various Muslim state polities during the premodern centuries is well documented.[103] During the Ottoman era, the

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[100] Winter, *Society&Religion,* 31-96.

[101] See Betul Yavuz, "The Making of the Sufi Order between Heresy and Legitimacy: Bayrami-Malāmis in the Ottoman Empire," unpublished PhD diss. (Houston: Rice University, 2013), 134-159, Green, *Sufism,* 132-136, Ohlander, *Sufism,* 187-190, Yürekli, *Architecture,* 1-4, 17-19, 33-34, 138-139, Terzioğlu, "Sunnitization," 307, 320, Terzioğlu, "Sufis," 90-93, Le Gall, *Sufism,* 45-47.

[102] Yürekli, *Architecture,* 17-19. The Abbassids at times made similar efforts. See Ohlander, *Sufism,* 35-42.

[103] Karamustafa, *Friends,* 36-37, Knysh, *Sufism,* 179, Al-Azmeh, *Kingship,* 182, Al-Azmeh, *Times,* 159-179, 185-266, Yılmaz, *Caliphate,* 24-33, Rafeq, "Relations," 88, Enrico Boccaccini, "A Ruler's Curriculum: Transcultural Comparisons of *Mirrors for Princes,*" in *Knowledge and Education in Classical Islam: Religious Learning between Continuity and Change,* ed. Sebastian Günther (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 684-712. The relationships between Sufi- *ʿulamāʾ* sodalities with the state in their administrative capacities is comparable to the relationships between European *ecclesia* and various medieval and early modern courts. See, for instance, See, for instance, Walter Ullmann, "The Secular Prince and Papal Law,", and "Limitations of Theocratic Kingship," in *Principles of Government and Politics in the Middle Ages* (London: Taylor&Francis e-Library, 2010), 27-49, 88-95, respectively. Also see Walter Ullmann, "Lecture V-I: The King's Stunted Sovereignty," in *The Carolingian Rennaissance and the Idea of Kingship: The Birbeck Lectures 1968-9* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 83-92.

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increased bureaucratization of the state affected an unparalleled degree of centralization of institutions such as the Ottoman ulamaic networks and their official functions.[104] The institutionalization of the *madrasa* system, started by the Saljuqs,[105] reached its peak during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. By the 1500s, most *madrasa* teachers and judges had pensions, were divided into ranks and had grades under state auspices. Most scholars' names figured on state-pay ledgers.[106] The highest ranks of the *ʿulamāʾ* were responsible to the two chief judges. They were in turn under the supervision of the *shaykh al-islām* in office, who operated under the rule of the sultan.[107] Over time, the ulamaic networks became highly exclusive and privileged social groups.[108]

The Ottoman state administration persisted in its efforts to centralize doctrinal and ritual conformity to social and political trends of the period[109] – the appointment of Sufi *shaykh*s, preachers and teachers largely came under control of Istanbul.[110] The masters of those orders that were most correspondent to the Ottoman political designs acquired immense renown,[111] which attracted numerous scholars. The Sufi-*ʿālim* overlap became a common occurence,[112] and has recently been documented by Rachida Chih and David Dean Commins in their works on Egypt and Syria in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[113] It remained evident at least until the

[104] Madeline Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety:The Ottoman Ulema in the Postclassical Age (1600-1800)* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1988), 1-32.
[105] Terzioğlu, "Sunnitization," 306, Green, *Sufism,* 52,
[106] Zilfi, *Politics,* 192-193.
[107] Madeline C. Zilfi, "The Ottoman *ulema,*" in *The Cambridge History of Turkey: Volume 3, The Later Ottoman Empire 1603-1839,* ed. Suraiya N. Faroqhi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 209, 210-214, and *Politics,* 24.
[108] Baki Tezcan, "The Ottoman "Mevali" as 'Lords of the Law'," *Journal of Islamic Studies,* Vol. 20, No. 3 (September 2009): 383-384.
[109] Karakaya-Stump, *Kizilbash,* 259-267.
[110] Derin Terzioğlu, "Patronage," 149-150, 164-165, Green, *Sufism,* 131-135.
[111] Le Gall, *Sufism,* 65-66.
[112] Green, *Sufism,* 154-157.
[113] Rachida Chih, *Sufism in Ottoman Egypt: Circulation, Renewal and Authority in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century* (London&New York: Routledge, 2019), 7-11. Further see Denise Aigle, "Essai sur les autorités religieuses dans l'islam médiéval oriental," in *Les Autorités Religieuses entre Charismes et Hiérarchie: Approches Comparatives*,

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nineteenth century when, for instance, the Cairene al-Azhar's faculty included nine Khalwatīyya Sufis (and some members of al-Azhar's faculty still declare themselves the members of this order today).[114]

Hagiographies of saintly Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* were highligting the entanglement between *ʿilm* and *taṣawwuf*,[115] over time becoming the evidence of the increasing politicization of the *ṭuruq.*[116] Communal Sufi affiliations represented a key mechanism in the transition of Sufism from a secluded collection of spiritual teachings to an institution of widespread social and political presence in the Ottoman Empire.[117] The Sufis came to represent an obvious corporate identity with specific gathering centers, garments, "vows of allegiance and an arcane idiolect."[118] Derin Terzioğlu finds that Sufism that was taught represented an "increasingly institutionalized, confessionalized and domesticated" doctrine.[119]

Officially appointed Sufi-scholars enjoyed *askeri* status, superior to the ordinary tax-paying subjects, and were immune to execution and confiscation.[120] The ulamaic circles accumulated finances along with landed properties through the *waqf* institutions[121] that secured the social and material status of families over the ensuing centuries.[122] Careerism intensified among the appointed scholars, with an increase in documented attempts to manipulate occupational benefits for the prosperity of the appointees' families.[123] Madeline Zilfi sees the

ed. Denise Aigle (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2011), 17-40, as well as Commins, *Islamic Reform,* 7-20. For the early modern Ottoman period, see Le Gall, *Sufism*, 55-58, and Zilfi, *Politics*, 170-171.
[114] Chih, *Sufism,* 33-36.
[115] Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen, "The Small World of Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī (1761-1825), an Egyptian Khalwatī Shaykh," in *The Piety of Learning: Islamic Studies in Honor of Stefan Reichmuth,* ed. Michael Kemper and Ralf Elger (Leiden&Boston: Brill, 2017), 105-144.
[116] Yürekli, *Architecture*, 1-4.
[117] Karakaya-Stump, *Kizilbash,* 62-63.
[118] Green, *Sufism,* 50-54.
[119] Terzioğlu, "Sunnitization," 320.
[120] Zilfi, "*Ulema*," 209, and Zilfi, *Piety,* 70-71.
[121] See section 5.5.
[122] Tezcan, "Mevali," 396.
[123] Zilfi, "*Ulema,*" 209, 210-214.

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eighteenth century as a period of true arrogance and power of the *ʿulamāʾ*,[124] caused in part by the diminishing of the Kadızadeli movement.[125] Throughout the 1700s, the *ʿulamāʾ* and the palace formed the same ruling enterprise.[126]

In eighteenth-century Ottoman Bilād al-Shām, the Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* overlap was not demonstrated by the champions of an "agrarian religion," but by officially appointed representatives of a highly centralized network of religious authorities. Of high importance were individuals such as Muḥammad Amīn Ibn ʿAbidīn (1784-1836), ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nabulsī (1641-1731), or Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī (d.1749). Ibn ʿAbidīn was a Damascene jurist and a Naqshbandīyya and Khalwatīyya Sufi order member. He was a descendant of a long line of Muslim scholars. In Damascus, he held the state-appointed position of a Fatwa Secretary (*amīn al-fatwā*).[127] In his capacity as a jurist in charge of writing legal opinions, Ibn ʿĀbidīn wrote around fifty works that even today influence Hanafite jurists.[128] ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nabulsī was also a descendant of a long line of Muslim scholars and wealthy Damascene urban patricians. In addition, he was the highest-ranking Sufi *shaykh* and saint of his time. He belonged to the Qādirīyya and Naqshbandīyya orders and worked as a *mufti,* taught in many *madrasas* and delivered sermons in mosques around the Province of Damascus.[129] He trained many students among whom was Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī, one of

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[124] Zilfi, *Politics,* 38-40.
[125] See section 2.5.
[126] Zilfi, "*Ulema,"* 224. Further see Abdul-Karim Rafeq, "Relations Between the Syrian "Ulamā" and the Ottoman State in the Eighteenth Century," *Oriente Moderno* 79/1 (1999): 105-134.
[127] For the title, see Jakob Skovgaard-Petersen, "A Typology of State Muftis," in *Islamic Law and the Challenges of Modernity,* ed. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Barbara Freyer Stowasser (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2004), 81-89.
[128] Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *Ashraf ʿAli Thanawi: Islam in Modern South Asia* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2008), 70-75.
[129] Elizabeth Sirriyeh, *Sufi Visionary of Ottoman Damascus: ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, 1641-1731* (London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005), 1-17, as well as Astrid Meier, "Words in Action: ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī as a Jurist," in *Early Modern Trends in Islamic Theology: ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī and his Network of Scholarship (Studies and Texts),* ed. Lejla Demiri and Samuela Pagani (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019), 107-136. Further see Barbara Rosenow von Schlegell, "Sufism in the Ottoman Arab World: Shaykh ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulūsī (d. 1143/1731)," unpublished PhD diss., University of California, 1997, 16-22.

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the most influential *shaykh*s of the Khalwatīyya order.[130] Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī produced a great number of works, describing his pilgrimages and leaving tractates on techniques of prayer and worship. He was a skilled networker who left considerable influence on many Sufi- *ʿulamāʾ* as well as other Ottoman notables.[131] The written works composed by these three scholars represent highly relevant source material for this dissertation. They are also examples of powerful individuals with authority and social status defined through the engagement with the ulamaic and Sufi institutions.

Most such individuals who would later gain reputation as prominent Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* commenced with their education at home with their families. They would later join one, or several of the available Sufi orders. A large number of the Sufis would in addition seek supervisors among the *ʿulamāʾ* and receive education which would qualify them as jurists, theologians, or teachers. The Ottoman administration would frequently appoint the members of the Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* groups at important jurisprudential and other administrative positions.[132] However, even those of humble origins were able to accumulate social capital through acquaintances with the members of these networks, as well as the beliefs in their *baraka*.[133]

Prominent *shaykh*s would often superintend lucrative property endowments, obtain important appointments from the state,[134] and further network with other groups of Ottoman imperial elites. Gatherings in Sufi lodges, for instance, as well as private assemblies, (*majlis,* pl. *majālis*) allowed disciples and masters to mingle among influential merchants, artisans, and

[130] Ralf Elger, *Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī: zur Selbstdarstellung eines syrischen Gelehrten, Sufis und Dichters des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Schenefeld: EB-Verlag, 2004), 52-103, or Zachary Valentine Wright, *Realizing Islam: The Tijaniyya in North Africa and the Eighteenth-Century Muslim World* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2020), 34-36.

[131] Muḥammad Khalīl al-Murādī, *Silk al-Durar fī Aʿyan al-Qarn al-Thānī ʿAshar* [A String of Pearls among the Notables of the Eighteenth Century], ed. Akram Ḥassan al-ʿUlabī. Four volumes (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 2002), 4:220-228.

[132] To receive lucrative positions in eighteenth-century Damascus, the Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* seemed to rely on the patronage of established and prominent members of the local priestly sodalities. This shall be shown on concrete examples in chapter 4.

[133] See chapter 4.

[134] Chih, *Sufism,* 33-35, as well as al-Azmeh, *Times,* 220-221. Further see chapter 5.

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notables.[135] For instance, personal networks of the Khalwatīyya *shaykh* Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī, a student of al-Nābulsī, allowed him to become the grey eminence behind the Khalwatīyya intitiation campaign in Cairo. Al-Bakrī's efforts led to a significant rise in the Khalwatīyya disciples' numbers. Many of them obtained important positions from the state. Nine of the Khalwatīyya members obtained tenures in the Cairene al-Azhar, with al-Bakrī's student Muḥammad Ibn Sālim al-Ḥifnī (d.1767), a Pole of his time,[136] becoming its rector.[137] The Khalwatīyya's popularity growth was interpreted in scholarship as this order's revival.[138]

In the eighteenth-century, the Ottoman *'ulamā'* preserved traditional methods to control their knowledge transmission while preserving the exclusive character of their networks. The circulation of knowledge was regulated through the system of granting *ijāza*s. Religious scholars granted their students with several types of such documents to attest to the completion of various training stages. *'Ilm* was taught in *madrasa*s or mosques. The students could hope to obtain an *ijāza* which would allow them to further transmit or discuss a particular text. Furthermore, certain *ijāza*s recognized a student's aptitude to discuss a particular subject, or confirmed the successful completion of training in a particular discipline. Finally, a *shaykh* could grant *ijāza*s of a general character, which would allow the students to teach all works that their master taught as well. All such documents represented institutional elements of one's education.[139] For the Muslim scholars, these certificates were invaluable while they looked for opportunities to teach law, or issue legal

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[135] Chih, *Sufism,* 19, 25-26.
[136] See the next section.
[137] Ibid., 2-3, 29, 44.
[138] Ibid., Khaled el-Rouayheb, "The Khalwatī Order in Syria," in *Intellectual History,* 261-270, and Frederick de Jong, "Mustafa Kamal al-Din al-Bakri (1688-1749): Revival and Reform of the Khalwatiyya Tradition?" in *Eighteenth-Century Renewal and Reform in Islam*, ed. N. Levtzion and J. Voll, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1987), 117-132.
[139] See Vajda, G., Goldziher, I. and Bonebakker, S.A., "Id̲j̲āza", in *Encyclopaedia of Islam II*, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs (Brill Online, 2012). http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_3485 (Last accessed: April 15th 2021). Also see Al-Azmeh, *Arabic Thought*, 226-227, 231-233.

opinions. With appropriate certification, the students would be able to pursue appointments in the legal, or the educational *madrasa* system. Later on, some would advance to the position of judges or *mudarrisūn.*[140]

Sufi knowledge transmission also ended with the granting of *ijāza*s. These documents certified that the disciples trained in a particular discipline, allowed them to further transmit particular texts, or to teach and initiate new disciples.[141] Sufi *ijāza*s legitimization depended on an order's *silsila,* a chain of transmission which led to the early centuries of Islam and justified the authority of the graduate and his master through the authority of the institution. Upon initiation, the disciples would tie a knot that symbolized the relationship of authority with their masters.[142] New initiates would receive a cloak and a cap as symbols of their office.[143] This act was comparable to initiation and graduation ceremonies in other scriptural religions.[144]

Rituals and ceremonies conducted by the Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* networks during the eighteenth century further demonstrate the entanglement of Sufi doctrines with Ottoman state institutions. For instance, in the eighteenth century (and throughout the early modern period), newly appointed governors to the Ottoman Province of Damascus would enter the capital and attend the prayer at the Umayyad Mosque. Afterwards, they would head to the shrine of Ibn ʿArabī, the patron saint of

[140] See Guy Burak, *Islamic Law,* 27-28, or Michael Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in medieval Damascus, 1190-1350* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 87-90. Further see Anver M. Emon, "Shari'a and the Modern State," in *Islamic Law and International Human Rights Law: Searching for Common Ground?* ed. Anver M. Emon, Mark S. Ellis, and Benjamin Glahn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 76-80.
[141] Canaan, *Saints,* 313, Khaled el-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History in the Seventeenth Century: Scholarly Currents in the Ottoman Empire and the Maghreb* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 98, 125-128, and Rachida Chih, "Discussing the Sufism of the Early Modern Period: A New Historiographical Outlook on the *Tariqa Muhammadiyya,*" in *Sufism East and West: Mystical Islam and Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Modern World,* ed. Jamal Malik and Saeed Zarrabi-Zadeh (Leiden&Boston: Brill, 2019), 114-116.
[142] John Renard, "Initiation," in *Historical Dictionary of Sufism* (Lanham: Rowman&Littlefield, 2016), 153.
[143] Lane, *Egyptians,* 1:317, Chih, *Sufism,* 32.
[144] See Paul B. Fenton, "Abraham Maimonides (1187-1237): Founding of a Mystical Dinasty," in *Jewish Mystical Leaders and Leadership in the 13th Century,* ed. Moshe Idel and Mortimer Ostow (Lanham&New York: Rowman&Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 2005), 143.

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the Ottoman dynasty,[145] to collect *baraka*.[146] Furthermore, natural disasters such as earthquakes or locust infestations usually involved public religious rituals which were ordered by the government authorities and conducted by the most prominent Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ shaykh*s.[147]

Prior to the modern period, the function of Sufi-ulamaic networks was twofold. They served as institutional dispensers of justice, as well as institutional dispensers of divine grace. As intercessors between the people and Allah, the *ʿulamāʾ* of eighteenth-century Damascus served as leaders of prayers (*imām*s), held sermons as *khāṭib*s, or preached as *wuʿāẓ* and performed other devotional functions. Prayers for the dead, for instance, known as the *tahlīla* rite, were often conducted upon the request of mourners in eighteenth-century Syria.[148] As it shall be shown in detail, the eighteenth-century Syrian Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* performed daily thaumaturgical interventions such as curing injuries and sicknesses, or banishing daemons through exorcisms.[149] They assisted the people in *baraka*-harvesting and it was believed that they repelled the devils. It was also believed that their *baraka* prevented misfortunes or natural disasters.[150] These beliefs are comparable to the widespread beliefs in the thaumaturgical power of the Catholic priesthoods in early modern Europe.[151]

Research into thaumaturgical beliefs and practices in eighteenth-century Syria, and the significance of *baraka* represents a key element to defining the Ottoman early modern groups of

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[145] Yılmaz, *Caliphate,* 211-214, Rafeq, "Relations," 81, and Sirriyeh, *Visionary,* 126.
[146] Heghnar Zeitlian Watenpaugh, *The Image of an Ottoman City: Imperial Architecture and Urban Experience in Aleppo in the 16th and 17th Centuries* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2004), 38-39 and Çığdem Kafescıoğlu, "In the Image of Rūm: Ottoman Architectural Patronage in Sixteenth-Century Aleppo and Damascus," *Muqarnas* 16 (1999): 74.
[147] See chapter 6.
[148] See Muḥammad Saʿīd al-Qāsimī, Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī, and Khalīl al-ʿAẓm, *Qāmūs al-Sināʿāt al-Shāmiyya* [The Dictionary of Occupations in Damascus], ed. Ẓāfir al-Qāsimī (Damascus: Dār Ṭlās, 1988), 222-223. Henceforth: *QS.* For funeral rites further see Russell, *Aleppo,* 308-309.
[149] See chapters 3 and 6.
[150] For instance, al-Murādī, *Silk,* 1:129-130.
[151] All these matters bear a high comparative potential with the Catholic tradition in western Europe. See Thomas, *Decline,* 28-29.

religious authorities. This element was comprised of the practices and beliefs[152] which represented the mechanical[153] aspect of pre-modern scriptural religions[154] and which were, as Keith Thomas observes in his lengthy study of early modern England, impossible to separate from devotional religion prior to the Reformation (in Catholicism,[155] for instance, as well as in other forms of Christianity[156]), and the modern reforms in Islam.[157] Anthropologically and technically comparable to various magical practices,[158] yet through a long line of theologians defined as the power to cause wonders through divine will, the mechanical aspect of Islam – its thaumaturgy – was as important as its devotional counterpart, and the two were inseparable in the domain of religious belief and practice. It was widely believed that Allah's grace, *baraka,* represented the energy behind thaumaturgical acts. The beliefs in *baraka* tied the Sufi and ulamaic confraternities into an institutionalized body of divine grace dispensers.[159] In light of this premodern overlap, it is possible to discuss the distinction between Sufism and official Islam only after the advent of Muslim reformism.

[152] Randall Styers, *Making Magic: Religion, Magic and Science in the Modern World* (Oxford&New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 219-226, Collins, David J, ed, *The Cambridge History of Magic and Witchcraft in the West: From Antiquity to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 521-575, Edward Bever, *Realities of Witchcraft and Popular Magic in Early Modern Europe: Culture, Cognition and Everyday Life* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), 419-424 and Jason A. Josephson-Storm, *The Myth of Disenchantment: Magic, Modernity and the Birth of the Human Sciences* (Chicago&London: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 41-178.
[153] The mechanical aspect of a religion is defined by the belief in a causal relationship between ritual performance and immediate results. See Thomas, *Decline,* 57. Further see Bernard Muscio, "The Mechanical Explanation of Religion," *The Monist* Vol. 28, No. 1 (January, 1918): 123-135.
[154] Thomas, *Decline,* 46-57.
[155] Ibid.
[156] See, for instance, Michael Macdonald, "Religion, Social Change, and Psychological Healing in England, 1600-1800," *The Church and Healing* 19 (1982): 101-125, or C. Peter Williams, "Healing and Evangelism: The Place of Medicine in Later Victorian Protestant Missionary Thinking," *Ibid:* 271-285.
[157] Ernst, *Sufism,* 8-18, and al-Azmeh, *Times,* 47-66. Further see Aziz al-Azmeh, "The Discourse of Cultural Authenticity: Islamist Revivalism and Enlightenment Universalism," in *Islams and Modernities* (London&New York: Verso, 1993). 39-59, and Albert Hourani, "Sufism and Modern Islam: Rashid Rida," in *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East* (Berkeley&Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1981), 90-102.
[158] For instance, Saif, "Medicine and Magic," 336.
[159] For the eighteenth-century Damascene context, see ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī, *al-Ḥadīqa al-Nadīyya: Sharḥ al-Ṭarīqa al-Muḥammadīyya* [The Dewy Garden: Explanations of the Muhammadan Way], two volumes (Miṣr: n.p. 1860), 198-200.

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1.3. A Network of Wonders: The Place for Sufism in eighteenth-century Shām

This dissertation approaches Sufism as a body of mystical beliefs and practices which contained the mechanical aspects[160] of Islam, and which was to a large extent comprised of Muslim thaumaturgical traditions. It emphasizes the inseparability of Sufism from premodern Islam, where it contained a body of fully Muslim thaumaturgical beliefs and practices that inspired the cultivation and ensured maintenance of the Muslim network of the holy. The network of the holy further represented the foundation of the Ottoman early modern state religion.

The Ottoman network of the holy is approached as the network of religious professionals defined by the Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* whose authority in religious matters was certified by the Ottoman administration. The beliefs in their *baraka* were endorsed by the state as well, for instance through granting important appointments to the alleged wonder-workers, or through public demonstrations of belief in ulamaic grace.[161] The network of the holy further comprised of the social networks of the Sufi *ṭuruq* and of living Muslim saints. This network in eighteenth-century Syria contained a system for the conveyance of Allah's grace, most often in the form of pedigrees of individuals through the pedigrees of Sufi paths.[162] The eighteenth-century Shāmī network of the holy was laden with *baraka* and was believed to have only partially been immanentist – observable in the material world.[163] According to common belief, the network of Allah's *baraka* was comprised from preternatural, or transcendental[164] entities as well, such as the deceased saints, as well as the

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[160] Ibid. Comparable to Thomas, *Decline,* 46-48, 643.
[161] See chapter 4, or Chih, *Sufism,* 32-36, 118, for some concrete examples of such demonstrations during the eighteenth century in Syria and Egypt.
[162] See section 2.3.
[163] Alan Strathern, *Unearthly Powers: Religious and Political Change in World History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 47-81, 131-141.
[164] Ibid., 27-47, 117-131.

prophets and other mystical beings, such as al-Khiḍr,[165] for instance. Al-Khiḍr was frequently referred to as a saint in eighteenth-century Shām. He was widely venerated and had many shrines in his honor.[166] Such entities were believed to coexist with the living human beings, albeit unseen, and to participate in daily affairs, especially when invoked to do so through ritualistic action. *Baraka* further "leaked" into various natural objects, such as trees, rocks or caves, connecting them into a particularly "Muslim folk geology."[167] This dissertation maintains that such objects were elements of the Ottoman network of *baraka.* Together with shrines, they formed a religious landscape that served as a focus and catalyst for the communal sense of confessional identity.[168] Allah's grace was believed to have had many practical uses for the Ottoman subjects as it supposedly brought various benefits to the believers.

Studies into the Ottoman network of the holy contain potential to indicate an intricate religious dynamic that in significant ways impacted religious, social, political and economic life of the Ottoman Empire. With the network of the holy, the Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* through their thaumaturgical and devotional, as well as socio-political and economic engagement, cultivated and maintained the corpus of early modern Muslim beliefs and practices among the Ottoman subjects. They kept their authority over religious maters by continually claiming association with the divine through Allah's grace.

The overlap between the Sufi and the *ʿālim* throughout the premodern periods represents a crucial factor for understanding premodern Islam and its Sufism better. The following analysis suggests that the combination of Sufi training and official state-appointments of an *ʿālim* during the

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[165] This mysterious creature guided Moses in Qur'ān, 18:65-82. Al-Khiḍr was in eighteenth-century Province of Damascus frequently referred to as a saint. He was widely venerated and had many shrines in his honor.
[166] See chapters 3, and 5.
[167] Grehan, *Twilight*, 132.
[168] Alexandra Walsham, *The Reformation of the Landscape: Religion, Identity, and Memory in Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 567.

Ottoman period represents the key to locating and defining functions of what might be sociologically (but not theologically, or liturgically) identified as a Muslim priesthood,[169] without intentions to create blind and robust comparisons with Christian priestly establishments.[170] With the term "priesthood," this dissertation refers to the highly exclusive, establishmentarian group of religious professionals who over time kept particular vocabulary, particular behavior, as well as special garments as symbols of their office – Alexander Russell, for instance, noticed that established Sufi *shaykh*s in eighteenth-century Aleppo wore ulamaic robes in public.[171] The members of this network were united by a common educational itinerary, a strong sense of corporate identity, prerogatives and privileges, and a monopoly over devotional and educational functions. In addition, the *ʿulamāʾ* traditionally kept an idea that they were the successors of prophets after the demise of the caliphate.[172]

The Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* were further in practice defined and self-defined through their de facto role as intercessors – between Allah and the people, as well as between political authorities and their subjects – even though Islam had no clear theological equivalent of this function.[173] The Muslim Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* sodality institutionally dispensed grace and brought other transcendental goods to the people,[174] in addition to its work on legislation, education, and social control.

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[169] See Weber, *Sociology,* 28-31, 115-120, and Bourdieu, "Genesis," 10. Also see section 2.3.

[170] The Muslim Scripture is often disparaging about the priests in other religions. See 5:82, 9:31, 9:34, 12:106, 42:21, 49:16, and numerous other instances. The eighteenth-century barber-chronicler from Damascus, Ibn Budayr, tended to refer to the Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* as "noble ones" (*afāḍil*). See Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad Ibn Budayr, "Ḥawādith Dimashq al-Shām Yawmīyya min Sanat 1154 ilā Sanat 1176"[The Daily Events of Damascus from the Year 1741 to 1763], MS Chester Beatty Library Ar 3551/2, Dublin, 31B. Pagination is unclear, so I suggested my own. The cover page is labeled as 1. Henceforth: "HDY."

[171] Alexander Russell, *The Natural History of Aleppo: A Description of the City and the Principal Natural Productions in its Neighbourhood, together with an Account of the Climate, Inhabitants, and Diseases, Particularly of the Plague,* ed. Patrick Russell (London: G.G. and J. Robinson: 1794), 208.

[172] Al-Azmeh, "Caravan," 326-400, *Times,* 223, and *Kingship*, 102-104. Further see Zilfi, "Ulama," 209.

[173] Intercession (Ar. *shafāʿa*) was confined to the Prophet, but was also attributed to the saints and the righteous. See chapter 5.

[174] Compare with Thomas, *Decline,* 31-32, 87-88.

Eighteenth-century Syrian members of the priestly sodality – the prominent Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* with official appointments – may be recognized from social categories made by the Damascene erudites. For instance, Muḥammad Khalīl al-Murādī (1759-1791), who was a *mufti,* a historian, a Naqshbandīyya adherent[175] and the syndic of the descendants of the Prophet (*naqīb al-ashrāf*) in Damascus, left a biographical dictionary of the capital province's notables of the eighteenth century. Throughout his text, the Damascenes are classified as the commoners (*al-ʿāmma*), the scholars (*al-ʿulamāʾ*) and the righteous (*al-ṣāliḥūn*).[176] Ibn ʿĀbidīn's writings reflect an identical social division.[177] The *ʿulamāʾ* in eighteenth-century sources from Bilād al-Shām seems to represent an overarching category which referred to legal authorities, thaumaturgical professionals, and ranking Sufis (such as al-Nābulsī, for instance). The term therefore indicates popular expectations of the overlap between the Sufis and the Muslim scholars in eighteenth-century Bilād al-Shām. Such beliefs are further evident from the interaction of the Damascenes with foreign priests. James Grehan notices the Damascenes' belief that European Christian clerics possessed thaumaturgical powers of their own.[178]

Eighteenth-century Syrian sources were not exceptional in terms of making such categorizations. For instance, Rachida Chih notices social divisions in eighteenth-century Egypt, which indicate the same Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* overlap, and which had a much longer history.[179] In

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[175] Rafeq, "Ulamā'," 81, Albert Hourani, *The History of the Arab Peoples* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), 255, Steve Tamari, "Biography, Autobiography, and Identity in Early Modern Damascus," in *Auto/Biography and the Construction of Identity and Community in the Middle East*, ed. Mary Ann Fay (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 42-43, Itzchak Weismann, *The Naqshbandiyya: Orthodoxy and Activism in a Worldwide Sufi Tradition* (London&New York: Routledge, 2007), 75-76, or John O. Voll, "Sufi Brotherhoods: Trans-cultural/Trans-state Networks in the Muslim World," in *Interactions: Transregional Perspectives on World History,* ed. Jerry H. Bentley, Renate Bridenthal, and A. Yang (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), 38-39.
[176] As an instance, see al-Murādī, *Silk*, 4:305. Beside this illustration, this division is present throughout the entire work. See the following section for a discussion about the righteous.
[177] Muḥammad Amīn Ibn ʿUmar Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil Muḥammad Ibn ʿĀbidīn* [The Collection of Treatises by Muḥammad Ibn-ʿĀbidīn], four volumes (Istanbul: Dar-i Saʿādat, 1907), *MR*, 2:5-47.
[178] Grehan, *Twilight,* 151.
[179] Chih, *Sufism,* 111.

contemporary scholarship, the term *ʿulamā'* often tends to imply scholars and jurists, yet not thaumaturges. Historians rarely noticed that the scientific approach to premodern ulamaic role through such limitations distracts from understanding these groups' priestly function in various types of historical Muslim states.[180]

The general point being made in this work is that eighteenth-century Syrian thaumaturgical practices were technically, anthropologically and conceptually homologous to magical practices and beliefs present in the region and further afield. Comparisons may be drawn to show that such was the state of affairs across the Ottoman realm. The Sufi-*ʿulamā'* sodalities over time developed socio-political distinctions that on the one hand created a boundary between themselves as the institutional *baraka*-dispensing body and the rest of the people. On the other, the exclusive claim of the Sufi-*ʿulamā'* to divine grace was made stronger through such boundaries, as the common people were forbidden to study and practice the same rituals without official guidance. The relationship between magic (*siḥr*) and wonder (*karāma*) in premodern Islam seems comparable to relationships between thaumaturgy and magic in other religious traditions. Studies in comparative religion, however, expose a gap pertinent to analyses of this binary relationship.

The anthropological, technical, and conceptual similarity between certain religious rituals and magic prompted Eugene Subbotsky to conclude that religion contained sanctioned magic.[181] Subbotsky's definition indicates the previously mentioned gap. Discussions of thaumaturgy, a body of beliefs and practices pertinent to theurgical wonder-working that was contained by premodern religions, rarely feature in scholarly debates. The consequences of this absence appear in scholarship on Sufism as well. Muslim mysticism was at times compared to Arab magic

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[180] Al-Azmeh, *Times,* 222.
[181] Eugene Subbotsky, *Magic and the Mind: Mechanisms, Functions, and Development of Magical Thinking and Behavior*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 12-14.

(*siḥr*),[182] and it is possible to identify the influence of broader scholarly works on religion and magic on the scholarship about Sufism as well. The evolutionary theories of religion which see magic as a primitive form of religious behavior,[183] influenced later authors to locate magic at the margins of religions.[184] As it was discussed above, certain authors very recently displayed tendencies to position Sufism at the margins of Islam where it supposedly grew in power with the weakening of state authorities. These views are reflected by Grehan's *Twilight of the Saints.*[185] Emile Durkheim explained religion as an already advanced system of sub-cults and practices which represents a higher stage of the evolution of faith. Durkheim held that magic remains outside the boundaries of religion.[186] Similar attitudes may be observed in Yılmaz's narrative which outlines the development of Sufism on the borderlands of powerful Muslim empires.[187] For Marcel Mauss and certain classical scholars on these subjects, such as James Frazer and Bronislaw Malinowski, magic was a little religion, one concerned with immediate goals[188] and ultimately representative of a primitive form of a higher, religious understanding of abstract supernatural entities.[189] Alexander Knysh in 2017 defined Sufism as "Islam in the miniature," reflecting similar attitudes.[190]

To avoid such problems and investigate deeper into the dynamics between premodern religions and magical traditions, it seems necessary to include thaumaturgy as the third category

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[182] The comparative potential between various thaumaturgical and magical traditions was noticed in other confessions as well. For instance, see Thomas, *Decline,* 318.
[183] Possibly best expressed by Sir James Frazer. See Sir J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion* (London: Macmillan Press, 1983), 63-79.
[184] See Jacob Neusner, "Introduction," and Hans H. Penner, "Rationality, Ritual, and Science," in *Religion, Science, and Magic: In Concert and in Conflict,* ed. Jacob Neusner, Ernest S. Frerichs, and Paul Virgil McCracken Flesher (New York&Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 3-10, 11-26.
[185] Grehan, *Twilight,* 14-19. Also see Gellner, *Muslim Society,* and 114-130.
[186] Durkheim, *Elementary Forms*, 39-43.
[187] Yılmaz, *Caliphate,* 22, 97.
[188] See Frazer, *Golden Bough,* 70-79, and Bronislaw Malinovski, "Sir James George Frazer,“ in *A Scientific Theory of Culture and Other Essays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), 177-222.
[189] Marcel Mauss, *A General Theory of Magic,* trans. Robert Brain (London: Routledge, 1972), 22-26, 112-120.
[190] Knysh, *Sufism,* 7, 173-178. Also see chapter 1.

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that stood between the binaries of religion and magic. Thaumaturgy partially intersected with magical beliefs and practices, yet represented a constituent element of premodern religions. In Islam, it was represented mainly by Sufism. Eugene Subotsky's statement that religion contained sanctioned magic[191] needs to be revised by stating that premodern religion contained sanctioned theurgical/magical beliefs and practices that represented a given religion's thaumaturgical tradition. Although thaumaturgical and magical beliefs and practices were technically, conceptually, and anthropologically homologuos, there existed an array of socio-political and theological distinctions between the two, developed by religious authorities in office. Through such distinctions, the sodality of religious professionals pertinent to a given religion established their role as dispensers of divine grace, outlawing other practitioners as illicit wizards and magicians. Such was the case with eighteenth-century Syrian Sufism which was distinguished from magic through the engagement of Muslim priestly sodalities.[192] The advent of Muslim reformism brought the Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* thaumaturgical practices into question. During the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries many such practices became classified as superstitions. Comparisons are therefore possible between such changes in Ottoman Syria and similar historical processes that occurred, for instance, in Europe with the advent of Protestantism.

In attempts to highlight the historical significance of Sufism, scholarship at times approaches it from the perspective of intellectual history, as a predominantly intellectual trend. This is the case with studying thaumaturgical and mystical trends globally.[193] Researches into Sufism as an intellectual tradition over time produced many scholarly works that help understand

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[191] Subbotsky, *Magic*, 12-14.
[192] Chapter 2 analyzes how boundaries were created between ulamaic sodalities, alleged sorcerers and the rest of the common people.
[193] See Bernd-Christian Otto and Michael Stausberg, ed. *Defining Magic: A Reader* (Sheffield and Bristol: Equinox Publishing, 2013), 1-15.

facts about the life and work of prominent Sufis. These works however do not sufficiently demonstrate the full significance of Sufism for political, social and economic settings of premodern Muslim states and their religion.[194] This dissertation will demonstrate such entanglements through the study of eighteenth-century practiced religion in Ottoman Syria. It approaches the overlaps between the Sufis and the ulamaic networks, and studies beliefs and practices that formed around them. The thaumaturgical role of the Sufi-*ʿulamā'* represented a crucial historical fact that demonstrates entanglements between Ottoman mystical beliefs and practices on the one hand, and socio-politics, economy, and everyday life on the other. These entanglements are further comparable to the histories of other scriptural religions.

1.4. What Remains: Eighteenth-Century Syrian Sources relevant to the Dissertation

The empirical base for the research into Syrian eighteenth-century history is built through reading daily chronicles which were written in the region during the 1700s. This dissertation uses a number of them to track important events and mine for data about the Sufi-*ʿulamā'* sodalities, as well as about other individuals. This dissertation makes use of the chronicles written by prominent scholars, such as Muḥammad Ibn ʿĪsā Ibn Kannān (d.1740). Ibn Kannān wrote about Damascus (*Yawmiyāt;* "Daily Events") and its ulamaic networks with ample details which help uncover the dynamics between religious professionals in this eighteenth-century provincial capital. In addition, the events within the Province of Damascus of the eighteenth century were documented by a number of autodidactic chroniclers. These authors represented the research subject of many

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[194] These are many such works. This dissertation relies on many such works. Some of them are, for instance, Sirriyeh, *Visionary,* 1-17, Knysh, *Ibn ʿArabi*, 17-24, or Jonathan Katz, *Dreams, Sufism and Sainthood: The Visionary Career of Muhammad al-Zawawi* (Leiden, New York and Koeln: Brill, 1996), 1-35.

today's historians.[195] The chronicle of Damascus written by the famous Damascene barber, Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad Ibn Budayr, contains the most material which is relevant for the research into Damascene religious customs. Laden with narratives about people's beliefs, local saints and holy madmen, the chronicle illustrates well the everyday religious customs and practices of eighteenth-century Damascenes. In addition, Ibn Budayr paid heed to omens and practiced many important customs himself, such as the pilgrimage to saints buried around the provincial capital. In addition to Ibn Budayr's chronicle, this thesis relies on a daily chronicle written by the court clerk from Homs, Muḥammad al-Makkī. Information about popular religion is scarcer in this text, which is best used for topographical references. The chronicle of Mikhā'īl Burayk, who was a senior cleric of the Christian Orthodox establishment in Damascus, offers data about religious beliefs and customs of both Christian and Muslim Damascene inhabitants, allowing for comparisons between these two confessions in eighteenth-century Syria.

In addition to the chronicles of daily events, of high relevance to this dissertation is the biographical dictionary of Muḥammad Khalīl al-Murādī (1759-1791). Al-Murādī compiled the biographies of important scholars, notables and politicians of the Bilād al-Shām in the eighteenth century. This dissertation uses his biographical dictionary in parallel with the reading of daily events chronicles to gather important information about the individuals from the Province of Damascus. Furthermore, this dictionary helps map out the Damascene networks of the holy and trace their dynamics. Al-Murādī was careful to record the lives of those individuals whose *baraka* was believed in. Some of these individuals were not counted among the elites of Damascus, which reveals the significance of *baraka* in eighteenth-century Syrian society as a trait which would make

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[195] Bruce Masters, "The View from the Province: Syrian Chronicles of the Eighteenth Century," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* Vol. 114 No. 3 (July-September, 1994): 353-362, and Dana Sajdi, "Peripheral Visions: The World and Worldviews of Commoner Chroniclers in the 18th Century Ottoman Levant," (PhD Diss., Columbia University, 2002), 56-151.

the ulamaic circles enlist one of the common people in their tally of important Damascenes. Al-Murādī's work is useful for the analysis of *baraka* as a social marker. Additionally, the Dictionary of Crafts (*Qāmūs al-Sināʿāt*) authored by Muḥammad Saʿīd al-Qāsimī represents a helpful document for further mapping of the daily lives of various Sufis and scholars within the Ottoman priestly sodality. Al-Qāsimī authored his dictionary somewhat later, with intent to use it as a record of vanishing institutions.

During the eighteenth century, scholarly works of many Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* seem to have been influenced by religious rigorists of the period. The persistence of rigorism on the margins of Ottoman societies on the one hand influenced certain historical events during the eighteenth century. On the other, religious rigorism induced the production of apologetic works by the ulamaic sodalities in power. Two distinct streams of religious rigorism influenced matters of religion (as well as, to an extent, social life) in eighteenth-century Province of Damascus alongside Sunni mainstream. One of these streams represented the trace and remaining presence of the seventeenth-century Kadızadeli movement. The other emerged in the Arabian Peninsula during the eighteenth century with the Wahhābī movement. While the latter was an object of derision that remained distant from the Syrian urban hubs, the Kadızadelis were much better networked. Their presence caused several impacts on religious and social matters in Istanbul, as well as in Syria and Egypt.[196] The Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* in Damascus appear to have formulated their response to these movements in works of apologetic theology where they discussed Sufism, the cult of saints in Islam, and many religious and thaumaturgical practices. Comparing these volumes with the range of religious practices that were documented by eighteenth-century chroniclers and Sufi masters yields important information about the boundaries of licit magical practice, as well as the extant

[196] Further see section 2.5

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beliefs in miracles, wonders, and Allah's grace. Furthermore, these works make possible to identify responses to the doctrinal attacks launched by the eighteenth-century Muslim rigorists. The legal and religious authorities of Damascus on the one hand took pains to write about various elements of the Ottoman network of the holy in detail, while on the other, they enumerated what they considered blasphemous and antinomian types of religious behavior, proclaiming certain groups of people heretics.

Invaluable is the collection of treatises (*Majmūʿat Rasā'il*) written by Muḥammad Ibn ʿĀbidīn (1784-1836). Ibn ʿĀbidīn took time to describe in detail the Ottoman network of the holy and gave reasons for the necessity to respect Muslim saints. He made distinctions between Muslim thaumaturgical practices and magic, which was for him daemonic, or blasphemous. He further denounced those who doubted the Muslim saints (such as the representatives of rigorist streams in the region) as heretics and ignoramuses. It is possible to identify the traces of apologetic writing about the Sufis and the Muslim saints in Ibn ʿĀbidīn's *opus magnum, Answer to the Baffled* (*Radd al-Muḥtār*) as well. This work contains Ibn ʿĀbidīn's legal opinions on prayer, pilgrimage, charity, fasting, marriage and divorce, property and inheritance laws, customary law, and so on. Ibn ʿĀbidīn's opinions are still consulted by the Hanafite Sunni scholars. In addition to such legal matters, *Radd* contains descriptions of the proper ways of praying, as well as of ritualistic sacrifice. They will be discussed in chapters 5 and 6 of this dissertation.

ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī left apologetical works himself. His treatise of deceased saints, *Revealing Light* (*Kashf al-Nūr,* 1694), explains the logic and necessity of the belief in saints. It further desctibes practices at saintly shrines. *The Lordly Revelation* (*al-Fatḥ al-Rabbānī*) analyzes themes such as sinning, repentance, blasphemy, and other matters of faith. As a contemporary of the Kadızadeli Movement, al-Nābulsī wrote a document entitled *Explanations of the*

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Muḥammadan Way (*Sharḥ al-Ṭarīqa al-Muḥammadīyya*) to address detractors and justify Sufi beliefs and practices. With the purpose of understanding the rigorist attitudes which inspired al-Nābulsī's, Ibn ʿĀbidīn's, and many other authors' apologetics, this dissertation contains discussions of the work of Mariʿī al-Karmī (d.1623/1624). Al-Karmī was selected due to his exceptional erudition and wide renown. He was a Hanbalite judge from Cairo and a prominent representative of Muslim rigorist thought. An adherent to Ibn Taymīyyan hostile opinions about the Muslim cult of saints, al-Karmī wrote the *Healing of Breasts* (*Shifā' al-Ṣudūr*) in which he openly and aggressively attacks the veneration of saints in Islam and the customs of *ziyāra.* This dissertation further makes use of the texts of Birgivī Mehmed, the ideological inspiration behind the Kadızadeli Movement, as well as Ibn Taymīyya, the medieval scholar of wide renown who caused much controversy with his skepticism towards Muslim saintly cults.

Comparisons of eighteenth-century apologetic theological works with documents about religion produced during earlier centuries allow for approaching Shāmī religious practice from a *longue durée* perspective. Through such approaches it may become evident that the form of premodern Sunnism which was prevalent in eighteenth-century Syria belongs to a long tradition of Muslim religious beliefs and practices. Of significant help for diachronic comparisons are the famous *Prolegomenon* of the historian Ibn Khaldūn or al-Baqillānī's work on magic and religion. In addition to such documents, for the further reading into the relationship between the visible and invisible worlds in the premodern Muslim imaginary, this dissertation uses the classical works of authors such as al-Damīrī (1344-1405), al-Qazwīnī (1203-1283), or Ibn al-Jawzīyya (1292-1350). These authors wrote about the *jinn* as creatures which cohabited the world with the rest of the human beings. Their texts contain suggestions of proper apotropaic rites to be performed in case one encounters such creatures, or other dangerous phenomena, and demonstrate a long religious

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tradition which lasted among the Muslims until the modern period (and in some cases until the present).

For the study of thaumaturgical practices, this dissertation relies on Sufi manuals which were produced or copied during the eighteenth century. Highly relevant is the text written in 1795 by Muḥammad al-Kīlānī about the initiation, training, and granting *ijāza*s to the Qādirīyya Sufi disciples. It is entitled *al-Durra al-Bahīyya* (The Gorgeous Pearl). Muḥamad al-Kīlānī also copied a treatise written by a Shafi'ite scholar, Muḥammad Ibn Aḥmad al-Shawbarī (1569-1659). This treatise, entitled *al-Ajwibah 'an al-As'ilah* (Answers to the Questions), discusses Muslim saints and their wonders. It instructs the readers into the supposed power of the names of the widely venerated saints, prophets, and angels and their proper usage in the Sufi *dhikr* for the purpose of collecting divine grace.

In addition, this study uses a number of composite Sufi manuals written by groups of anonymous authors and copied during the eighteenth century. These compilations require careful reading as they lack any comprehensive topical arrangement, which is perhaps the consequence of more authors adding parts of the text over the passage of time. These manuscripts often contain texts written in Arabic, or Ottoman Turkish, which indicates that they were widely circulated over the passage of time. The first of them, *Compendium of All Arts* (*Majmūʿ min kul Fann*), is a book about various rituals. Most of its content is committed to instructing the readers into prayers and supplications which were believed to attain immediate results, such as curing sickness or making more money. It demonstrates the reliance of certain Muslim thaumaturgical practices on the position of celestial bodies, the four elements of the world, as well as the days of the week. It further describes the production of some talismans and seals. The *Compendium* also offers the description of the twelve *jinnic* clans and some possible ways to contend with them. *Verses of*

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Exorcism (*Ayāt al-Raqīyya*) is a manual of apotropaic rites and prayers which is focused on crafting various objects of power, such as talismans or amulets. *Letters in Sand* (*Risāla fī al-Ramal*) is a lengthy tome about the mysterious power of Arabic letters and their use in talismanics. It further offers informative material about astrology and the influence of celestial bodies on the efficacy of thaumaturgical performance. These manuscripts are held in the National Library of Berlin, which otherwise contains an impressive collection of similar volumes from different centuries and countries.

The widespread respect for the Muslim saints induced the development of particular religious customs connected with pilgrimage (*ziyāra*) to saintly shrines. Particular prayers and other religious actions were believed more powerful if performed in the vicinity of saintly tombs. In the process of gathering information about these practices, as well as for mapping out the locations of Damascene saintly tombs, this dissertation relies on eighteenth-century Sufi travelogues, as well as travel guides for the pilgrims. Among his many written works, ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī left three important travelogues. These works describe the locations of the Muslim shrines and their interiors. At the same time, it is possible to gather information about the ritual procedure conducted within the shrines from this material. *Riḥlat Bilād al-Shām wa Miṣr wa Lubnān* (Travels in Syria, Egypt, and Lebanon) traces al-Nābulsī's travels through Syria, Egypt and Lebanon in 1690.[197] *Al-Riḥla al-Ṭarābulusīyya* is concerned with the saint's trip to Tripoli in 1700. *Riḥlatān ilā Lubnān* from 1689 describes two of al-Nābulsī's early travels to Lebanon. One of the more famous students of this saint, Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī (d.1749) left a document entitled *al-Riḥla al-Qudsīyya* (Jerusalem Journey; dated to 1710) that describes al-Bakrī's pilgrimages in Palestine. In addition, Ibn Kannān left a *Brief Sumary of the History of al-Ṣāliḥīyya* (*Talkhīṣ Tārīkh*

[197] James Grehan mapped out this trip in his *Twilight,* 22. Also see Map 10. in Appendix B.

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al-Ṣāliḥīya, 1727).[198] The Damascene al-Ṣāliḥīyya district contained much religious importance due to the high number of its Sufi lodges, frequently built in the vicinity of important saintly tombs. A high number of saintly graves was located there as well.[199] Finally, Ibn Kannān offers details about the locations of some other Damascene saintly tombs and sacred places, such as the caves on Mount Qasiyoun. In addition to Ibn Kannān's work on al-Ṣāliḥīyya, the traveling guide to Damascus authored by Aḥmad al-Manīnī (d.1758) is used for the eighteenth-century Damascene context.

To improve empirical knowledge about the Damascene shrines, this dissertation uses other works that indicated hallowed sites and important saitns. The authors of these works belonged to different premodern centuries. Of use are works by Ibn ʿAbd al-Razzāq (1664-1725), Maḥmūd al-ʿAdawī (d.1622), and Imād al-Dīn al-Ḥanafī (d.1494). Comparison between these texts demonstrates the continuous beliefs in Damascene saints over the passage of centuries.

Travel accounts and ethnographical works produced by external observers are helpful for the research of Syrian premodern Islam. Foreigners to the Middle East often wrote down a number of details tied to various Muslim religious rituals which are otherwise absent from Arabic sources. They were not penned down by the Arab authors presumably because they were widespread enough to be taken for matters of course. Henry Maundrell (1665-1701) was an Oxford academic who later joined the clergy of the Church of England. In 1697 he went to pilgrimage to Jerusalem through Syria with fourteen other individuals. He kept a detailed journal which will be used in this dissertation, since it contains descriptions of Muslim shrines, as well as of the popular religious

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[198] This is the abbreviated and updated edition of Ibn Ṭūlūn's work on al-Ṣāliḥīyya. There exists an edited version of the text which can be found under the reference: Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn ʿAlī Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Qalā'id al-Jawharīyyah fī Tārīkh al-Ṣāliḥīyya* [The Precious Pendants in the History of al-Ṣāliḥīyya] (Damascus: s.n., 1980-1981).

[199] Al-Ṣāliḥīyya is a district of Damascus which contained a lot of religious significance for the city, with its numerous shrines and Sufi lodges. See chapter 5, as well as Map 7 in Appendix B. Further see Toru Miura, "The Ṣāliḥīyya Quarter in the Suburbs of Damascus: Its Formation, Structure, and Transformation in the Ayyūbid and Mamlūk Periods," *Bulletin d'études orientales* 47 (1995): 129-181.

behavior in Syria and Palestine. Maundrell did not live to see his journal published. Alexander Russell (1715-1768) was a Scottish physician and historian of nature who wrote about the customs of the Arabs of Aleppo, where he was a resident between 1740 and 1754. His account gives information about the religious customs of the eighteenth-century Aleppines. Constantin François de Chassebœuf, Count de Volney (1757-1820) was a French philosopher and an orientalist who traveled through Syria and Egypt between 1783 and 1785. His *Travels* contain his impressions of the Sufis, their practices and their influence on economy. John Lewis Burckhardt (Johann Ludwig Burckhardt; 1784-1817) was a Swiss traveler who assumed the name Shaykh Ibrāhīm Ibn ʿAbd Allah. He left an ethnographic work which in detail describes the customs of the Arabs and pays much note to religious beliefs and practice. This work is entitled *Travels in Syria,* while his *Notes on the Bedouins and Wahabys* describe the problems Syrian and Egyptian people faced during the Bedouin raids at the end of the early modern period.

Ethnographies written during the later centuries indicate that religious practice among the peoples of the Middle East did not witness much change with the passage of time. This is visible from the work of Louis du Couret (1812-1867) who wrote about his travels through Egypt. Employed under Muḥammad ʿAlī, du Couret converted to Islam and performed the *Ḥajj*, leaving much evidence about the Muslim practices of worship and the Sufi lodges in the Middle East. Edward William Lane (1801-1876) was an orientalist scholar and a lexicographer. In the nineteenth century, Lane arrived to Egypt, lived there between 1825 and 1828 (and returned for additional research in 1833), and published his *Manners and Customs* which contains significant detail about religious customs in the Middle East and further indicates a continuity of Muslim religious traditions over the passage of time and across space.

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The beginning of the twentieth century brought along a number of anthropological and ethnographical works which in detail analyzed Muslim religious practices in Syria and Palestine. Among such ethnographies, this dissertation mainly uses the work of Samuel Ives Curtiss (1844-1904), *Primitive Semitic Religion To-day*. Even more important and illuminating is the ethnography of a Palestinian physician and anthropologist, Taufik Canaan (1882-1964), whose *Mohammedan Saints* is fully committed to discussing matters tied to the cult of saints in modern Palestine. The combined reading of these texts is sufficiently illuminating with regards to the relationship between religion, thaumaturgy and magic in eighteenth-century Ottoman Province of Damascus.

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2. Miracles of God and Saintly Wonders: Magic and Religion in the Syrian Eighteenth Century

This chapter will discuss the relationship between religion and magic on the case of eighteenth-century Islam in Ottoman Syria. The following sections hope to suggest a more accurate definition of Muslim thaumaturgy between the historically and anthropologically opposed binaries of religion and magic. Sufism was associated with beliefs and practices pertinent to Muslim thaumaturgy in Syria during the eighteenth century. Such was the case in earlier times as well. The following discussion therefore aims to provide a more nuanced approach through which Sufism may be studied as a constituent element of premodern Islam, representative of Muslim thaumaturgy.

It was previously emphasized that thaumaturgical beliefs and practices represented an important component of premodern religions. Thaumaturgical and magical beliefs and practices universally bore significant comparative potential in terms of their ritual performance. The nexus between them was reflected in practices and beliefs which involved invocations of and supplications to the divine, as well as other celestial beings such as angels, for instance. These practices were sometimes dubbed theurgy, which as a term and a concept had a long history in the

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Eurasian region.[1] It seems that throughout the premodern times, while magic was understood as a generic phenomenon, thaumaturgy represented a specific form of practice defined by sodalities of religious professionals in office. In eighteenth-century Syria, these sodalities were represented by the Sufi-*'ulamā'* with official appointments. Their networks are one of the main research subjects of this dissertation.

This chapter is primarily committed to discussing the relationship between eighteenth-century Syrian wonder-working and magic. It was previously stated that premodern Shāmī Islam contained its thaumaturgical component, mainly represented by Sufism and made exclusive by the network of Syrian ulamaic sodalities. The following analysis traces the ways through which the state-appointed ulamaic sodalities in eighteenth-century Ottoman Syria maintained the boundaries between their office and the rest of the common people, fashioning themselves as institutional dispensers of divine grace. Thaumaturgical beliefs and practices appear to have played a significant role in creating and maintaining such boundaries, both during the eighteenth century and in previous times. It was widely believed that the individuals who attained popularity through

[1] See Thomas, *Decline,* 256. For Islam, see Toufic Fahd, "Siḥr," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam IX*, ed.C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs, and G. Lecomte (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 567-571, Toufic Fahd, "Magic in Islam," in *Encyclopedia of Religion,* vol. 9, ed. Mircea Eliade (New York: Macmillan, 1987), 104-109, A. Chris Eccel, *Egypt, Islam, and Social Change: Al-Azhar in Conflict and Accommodation* (Berlin: K. Schwarz, 1984), 526-528, or Osman Bakar, *Classification of Knowledge in Islam: A Study in Islamic Philosophies of Science* (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 2000), 221, 253-254. For the history of theurgy in a wider Eurasian context, see Georg Luck, "Theurgy and Forms of Worship in Neoplatonism," in *Religion, Science, and Magic,* ed. Neusner, et. al., 185-228, F.E. Peters, *Allah's Commonwealth: A History of Islam in the Near East, 600-1100 A.D.* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973), 265-305, Peter Moore, "Mysticism (Further Considerations)," in *Encyclopedia of Religion, Second Edition,* ed. Lindsay Jones, Mircea Eliade, and Charles J. Adams (Detroit: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 6355-6359, Ilinca Tanaseanu-Döbler, "Introduction: The Problem of Theurgy," in *Theurgy in Late Antiquity: The Invention of a Ritual Tradition* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck&Ruprecht, 2013), 9-20, Crystal Addey, "Divination and Theurgy in Iamblichus' *De Mysteriis,*" in *Divination and Theurgy in Neoplatonism: Oracles of the Gods* (London&New York: Routledge, 2014), 239-282, April D. DeConick, "Introduction," and Gregory Shaw, "Theurgy and the Platonists' Luminous Body," in *Practicing Gnosis: Ritual Magic, Theurgy and Liturgy in Nag Hammadi, Manichaean and Other Ancient Literature. Essays in Honor of Birger A. Pearson,* ed. April D. DeConick, Gregory Shaw, and John D. Turner (Leiden&Boston: Brill, 2013), 1-6, 537-558, Wiebke-Marie Stock, "Theurgy and Aesthetics in Dionysios the Areopagite," in *Aesthetics and Theurgy in Byzantium,* ed. Sergei Mariev and Wiebke-Marie Stock (Berlin&Boston: De Gruyter, 2013), 13-30, and Radcliffe G. Edmonds III, "Drawing Down the Moon: Defining Magic in the Ancient Greco-Roman World," in *Drawing Down the Moon: Magic in the Ancient Greco-Roman World* (Princeton&Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2019), 1-42.

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their virtue, piety and righteousness were capable of performing wonders through Allah's grace. Most often, these individuals would claim membership among the Sufi-*'ulamā'* in office while the rest of the common people were forbidden from performing thaumaturgical rituals. Such individuals helped maintain the exclusiveness of their office through their own teachings and written works, allowing for the continuity of Muslim religious and thaumaturgical traditions from the early middle ages and until the Muslim reforms of the modern period.

The beliefs in the thaumaturgical powers of eighteenth-century Sufi-*'ulamā'* in office to a significant extent stand comparable to similar beliefs present in other regions and in other times. It is therefore hoped that the following analysis shall highlight the importance of filling the previously indicated scholarly gap in comparative religions[2] through the historical, anthropological and sociological studies of thaumaturgy and its relationship with magic. In the case of Ottoman Syria, which is the main subject of this research, it shall be shown that according to the eighteenth-century theologians, the principal difference between thaumaturgy and magic was the belief that Allah's grace – *baraka* – made thaumaturgy possible, while magic was most often described as daemonic. Such was the case with divine grace in Christian traditions as well.[3] It was widely believed that Allah's grace (*baraka*) was the cause and energy behind Muslim thaumaturgy. As such, it represented an important resource as well as a social marker for the members of eighteenth-century Syrian priestly sodality. The following sections will further discuss *baraka,* both as a social marker and a socio-anthropological tool through which analyses of early modern Ottoman societies may be conducted.

This chapter will discuss Muslim priestly sodalities on the case of eighteenth-century Province of Damascus, indicating that their members may be identified through a combination of

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[2] See sections 1.2. and 1.3.
[3] For instance, see Thomas, *Decline,* 55-57, 265, 564

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three crucial elements. Members of this sodality's network in eighteenth-century Syria were defined through Sufi training, education in *ʿilm,* and various state-appointments that brought them to official positions as religious authorities in the early modern Province of Damascus. This eighteenth-century Ottoman priestly sodality further represented an element within the eighteenth-century Ottoman network of the holy which comprised of the Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ,* the still-living Muslim saints, the deceased *awliyāʾ* and the prophets.[4] This network in addition included a number of sacred places ranging from shrines to objects such as rocks, caves, bodies of water, or trees.[5]

Some Muslim theologians through centuries displayed skepticism towards certain elements of the Muslim network of the holy. Scholars who expressed doubt about Muslim saints lived in the eighteenth century as well. This chapter will offer a brief account of this skepticism, shedding light on the debates it caused, such as they remain in apologetic writing of the eighteenth-century Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* authorities in office.

2.1. "What I do is Miracle, but what you do is Magic:"[6] Thaumaturgy and Magic in eighteenth-century Damascus

"Magic [is] the art of producing effects in the absence of causes."[7] Éliphas Lévi (1810-1875), a self-proclaimed ceremonial magician who left a strong influence on the theosophical movements that arose in response to the Enlightenment in France,[8] suggested a description of his trade with this brief statement. Recent scholarly studies define magic more accurately as a set of pragmatic

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[4] After initial discussions in the following sections, chapter 4 shall offer a further and more detailed analysis of the Damascene eighteenth-century network of the holy.
[5] The geology of the network of the holy shall be further discussed in chapter 5.
[6] Neusner, "Introduction," 4-5.
[7] Eliphas Lévi, (Alphonse Louis Constant), *The History of Magic*, trans. Arthur Edward Waite (Maine: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1999), 29.
[8] Cristopher McIntosh, *Eliphas Lévi and the French Occult Revival* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2011), 73-156.

acts achieving results through unseen means.[9] In this dissertation, magic is approached as a body of beliefs and practices aimed to compel, bargain with, or appease various unseen forces capable of defying natural causalities. Magicians believed themselves capable to manipulate magical energies which would directly, or indirectly through talismans or images, for instance, influence people, animate nature, or predict certain events. In addition, certain types of augury and divination, such as geomancy, technically and conceptually overlapped both with various kinds of magical and thaumaturgical practices.

During the eighteenth century, beliefs in magic (*siḥr*) were widespread in the Ottoman Empire and the Damascene Muslim scholars amply wrote about them. Muḥammad Ibn ʿĀbidīn treated *siḥr* as a broad and open-ended category pertinent to various kinds of illicit beliefs and practices. In this category, Ibn ʿĀbidīn and al-Nābulsī included daemonology, in the sense of bargaining with the *jinn*[10] or compelling them to do one's bidding. Ibn ʿĀbidīn further seemed cautious towards astrology,[11] and geomancy, but both scholars referred to any practice aimed at preternaturally causing harm as magical.[12] The famous medieval author Ibn Khaldūn nuanced the *siḥr* category with more detail, differentiating magic from talismanics, various types of divination, illusionism, and prestidigitation.[13]

[9] Robert H. Winthrop, *Dictionary of Concepts in Cultural Anthropology* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), 167.
[10] See chapter 3 for more details.
[11] Throughout Eurasian history many practices, both magical and thaumaturgical, depended on astrology and astronomy. See Aziz al-Azmeh, *Arabic Thought and Islamic Societies* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 72-75. However, astrology was frowned upon as well. Religious authorities claimed that through astrology an individual attempted to acquire knowledge available only to God. Such attitudes were ubiquitous. Compare, for instance, Thomas, *Decline,* 425-426, 432, 755-756 and Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima,* 398-413, 601-605, 625-630, 677-682. Also see Saif, "Medicine and Magic," 315-319. Further Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR*, 2:28, 41-45, Henceforth: *MR,* and al-Nābulsī, *Ḥadīqa*, 2:389-393.
[12] For the differences between wonders and magic, see Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:15-18, 28-31, 42-45. Further al-Nābulsī, *Ḥadīqa,* 1:202, 232.
[13] Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima*, 141-165, 623-624, 630. For a systematic theological discussion about wonderworking and magic, see Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī, *al-Bayān ʿan al-Farq bayn al-Muʿjizāt wa al-Karāmāt wa al-Ḥiyal wa al-Kahāna wa al-Siḥr wa al-Nārinjāt* [Clarification of the Difference between Miracles and Wonders and Illusions and Wizardry and Magic and Prestidigitation], ed. Richard J. McCarthy (Cairo: al-Maktaba al-Sharqīyya, 1958). Also see

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Thaumaturgical practices and beliefs were throughout history technically, conceptually and anthropologically comparable to magic.[14] In the Catholic case, which is in many ways comparable to that of Islam, some scholars noticed that the difference between the concepts of prayer and a spell became elaborated only with the advent of Protestantism.[15] Thaumaturgy, like magic, aimed to compel, bargain with, or appease various unseen forces in order to achieve results that defied natural causalities. The forces which both thaumaturges and magicians supposedly interacted with were believed occult. These forces were entities like gods, angels, daemons, spirits, and so on. It seems possible to define such forces as praeter- or supernatural. Max Weber, however, noted that only a modern spectator would understand them as such.[16] It may be possible to presume that pre-modern peoples for the greater part accepted the idea that these forces dwelled unseen among them. In the popular imaginary, they were fully natural, although they inhabited a part of the world which was invisible. During the premodern centuries, there existed a continuity between the visible and the invisible which further influenced the perception of nature present among the premodern peoples.[17]

During the premodern centuries, Sunni theologians established categorical distinctions between magic and thaumaturgy based on the type of energy which was believed to cause their efficacy. In eighteenth-century Damascus, Ibn ʿĀbidīn insisted that the preternatural phenomena

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Edward William Lane, *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians: Written in Egypt During the Years 1833, -34, and -35,* two volumes (London: Charles Knight&Co., 1836), 1:341-342.

[14] A number of comparisons may illustrate this both in Christianity and Islam. For instance, compare Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima*, 132-139-143, 146-157, 398-403, 572-574, 584-597, with Thomas, *Decline,* 27-48, 60-70, 152-153, 215-229, 318, 327-330. Also see chapter 6.

[15] Thomas, *Decline,* 69, and further Bremmer, "Birth," 1-12, and Mateo Benussi, "Magic," 2019: 1-16, in *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Anthropology*, eds. F. Stein, S. Lazar, M. Candea, H. Diemberger, J. Robbins, A. Sanchez & R. Stasch (open access resource: http://doi.org/10.29164/19magic Last accessed: April 15th 2021). Also see Mark A. Waddell, *Magic, Science, and Religion in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 198-202.

[16] Weber, *Sociology*, 1-4.

[17] Chapter 3 will discuss this matter in more details on the case of the *jinn* and beliefs in daemons among the Muslims, especially in eighteenth-century Ottoman Syria.

(*khawāriq*) were real and divided to magic, wonder- and miracle-working. He considered magic an evil inspiration from the devil (*shayṭānīyya*). He wrote that *siḥr* corrupted the world and human character. Ibn ʿĀbidīn furthermore rendered any preternatural phenomenon caused by an evil individual – a sinner, or an unbeliever – clearly magical.[18] ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī wrote that magicians were blasphemers and infidels who often cooperated with the devils (*shayāṭīn*).[19] However, these scholars suggested that any mystical effect caused by the pious and the righteous may have been understood as a wonder (*karāma*).[20] It was widely believed that Sufis were the recipients of Allah's grace (*baraka*) which protected them from sinful behavior. Sufis earned *baraka* through their devoutness and piety, expressed through the Arabic term *ṣalāḥ* that most often represented the primary condition for beliefs in one's grace.[21] In this dissertation, the relation between *ṣalāḥ* and *baraka* is continually emphasized. Through the analysis of the beliefs in this relation, it is possible to identify ways through which the Sufi-*ʿulamā'* sodalities and the common people of eighteenth-century Shām identified their wonder-workers and saints. Because of their *baraka,* the Sufis and the *awliyā'* supposedly caused wonders (*karamāt*), while the prophets caused miracles (*muʿjizāt*).[22] These beliefs remained fairly unchanged since the medieval period.[23]

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[18] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR*, 2: 5-7, 15-18, 25-32, 36-37, 42-45.

[19] ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī, *al-Fatḥ al-Rabānī wa al-Fayḍ al-Raḥmānī* [The Lordly Revelation And the Flow of Mercy], ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Qādir ʿAṭā (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1980), 136-137, and al-Nābulsī, *Ḥadīqa*, 1:232, 2:390-391.

[20] See Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:14-18, 25-28, 36-37, 41-46. For comparative purposes, see Denise Aigle, "Charismes et rôle social des saints dans l'hagiographie médiévale persane," *Bulletin d'études orientales* 47 (1995): 15-36.

[21] Al-Nābulsī, *Ḥadīqa,* 1:199-200, and Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:36.

[22] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:5-18. These beliefs persisted until the present times. See Yūsuf Ibn Ismāʿīl al-Nabhānī, *Jāmiʿa Karamāt al-Awliyā'* [Collection of Saintly Wonders], ed. ʿAbd al-Wārith Muḥammad ʿAlī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 2009), 1:13-21. Henceforth: *JK.* Further see Taufik Canaan, *Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries in Palestine* (London: Luzac & Co., 1927), 255. Compare with Eliza Marian Butler, *The Myth of the Magus* (London&New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 1-12. Alexander Knysh interprets *karāma* as "charisma" of a Sufi master, while *baraka* for him represents a *shaykh*'s "blessing." See Knysh, *Sufism,* 178.

[23] Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima,* 134-157, 601-605, 623-631, 631-641, 653-671, 689.

Making distinctions between wonder-working and magic based on the type of energy that supposedly caused them[24] seems to be ubiquitous across different religious systems. Influential scholars such as Max Weber drew a line between religion and magic according to the moral dispositions of the invoked entities.[25] The emergent good-evil dichotomy, evident in the eighteenth century from Ibn ʿĀbidīn's treatises, and in medieval Islam from Ibn Khaldūn's *Prolegomenon,*[26] may be found in many scholarly works in comparative religion. Some prominent sociologists and anthropologists describe magic as antinomian and daemonic, or committed to worshipping ancient and illicit deities. It is frequent to encounter the descriptions of magic as a mockery of proper religious practice.[27] Emile Durkheim's research uncovers that the people of many regions sanctioned magic that was believed to bring benefits. In contrast, magical practices tied to curses or causing harm to people and the environment was usually condemned as witchcraft.[28] It appears that the good-evil dichotomy between religion and magic stood in direct relation with the dichotomy of licit-illicit,[29] which directly led to debates about orthodoxies and heterodoxies.

Throughout the history of premodern religions, religious authorities in office defined a given orthodox religious practice. Keith Thomas traces the strategies through which the late medieval English Catholic Church used the belief in wonders as a means of obtaining monopoly

[24] For eighteenth-century Syria, see Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:25-29, 36, and al-Nābulsī, *Ḥadīqa,* 1:202, 232, 2:389-393. This is a long tradition, as seen from Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima,* 141-143, 625-630. In Egypt, such divisions persisted well after the eighteenth century. See Lane, *Egyptians*, 1:341-342.
[25] See Weber, *Sociology,* 28.
[26] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:18, 2:27-32. Ibn Khaldūn explains that the difference between saintly grace and magic is that the former is a sign of goodness and thus cannot corrupt or be corrupted, unlike magical practice. See Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima,* 139-142.
[27] Mauss, *Magic,* 14-23.
[28] Durkheim, *Elementary Forms,* 199. Examples are many. For instance, Bronislaw Malinowski, *Magic, Science and Religion, and other Essays* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1948), 67, or Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss, *Sacrifice: Its Nature and Function,* trans. W.D. Halls (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 61-76. Among some fresher works, striking is Michael D. Bailey, *Magic and Superstition in Europe: A Concise History from Antiquity to the Present* (Lanham and New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 2007), 134-140.
[29] Frank Klaasen, *The Transformations of Magic: Illicit Learned Magic in the Later Middle Ages and Rennaisance* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013), 8-12.

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over religious orthodoxy.[30] The Church condemned any divergence from the proceedings of an officially prescribed ritual as sorcery or devil-worship. Similarly, any usage of the Church's symbols outside of the given norm was outlawed along with the participation in any rituals that the religious authorities did not establish themselves.[31] Reading Muslim theologians' treatises reveals comparative strategies of monopolizing orthodoxies. In eighteenth-century Syria, ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī implied that the untrained would not be able to recognize the difference between wonder-working and magic. Ibn ʿĀbidīn believed that the lack of proper behavior and sufficient training led to *siḥr.*[32] Sufi master Muḥammad al-Kīlānī insisted on the necessity of an established Sufi *shaykh*'s guidance for those who embarked on his Sufi path – the Qādirīyya.[33] Common people were advised to adhere to the normative prescriptions given by the religious authorities in office while performing common religious rites.[34] Divergencies, or intentional practice of mystical arts by the commoners was a sign of infidelity (*kufr*) for the eighteenth-century Damascene *ʿulamāʾ*.[35]

Ibn ʿĀbidīn and al-Nābulsī followed a much older Muslim theological tradition. In his *Prolegomenon,* Ibn Khaldūn established the same boundaries between magicians and Sufis. However, he added an illuminating statement. Similar to Ibn ʿĀbidīn's suggestions that the mystical effects caused by the righteous needed to be regarded as wonders,[36] Ibn Khaldūn indicated that a Muslim saint or a Sufi may accidentally perform magic (*siḥr*), or that some of their activities such

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[30] Thomas, *Decline,* 28-53, 327-330.
[31] Ibid., 55-57.
[32] Al-Nābulsī, *Ḥadīqa,* 2:389-393. Also see Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2: 15-18, 25-26, and 32-47. This dichotomy is ubiquitous in scriptural religions prior to the modern period. Neusner, et. al., *Religion,* 4-5. Further see chapter 6.
[33] Muḥammad Ibn Ṣāliḥ al-Kīlānī, "Al-Durra al-Bahīyya fī Ṣūrat al-Ijāza al-Qādirīyya," [The Gorgeous Pearl in the License of the Qādirīyya], MS Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Sprenger 819, Berlin, 10B. The text is an autograph from 1795. Henceforth: "DB."
[34] Al-Nābulsī, *Ḥadīqa,* 1:232, 389, 2:429.
[35] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:27-31.
[36] Ibid., 2:14-18, 25-28, 36-37, 41-46.

as talismanics may overlap with this category. He considered this permissible, due to the saintly and Sufi *baraka*, as well as their devotion expressed through *dhikr,* which protected them from all harm and proved them sinless.[37] *Baraka* seems to have served as a vessel through which Muslim premodern authors distinguished between orthodox and heterodox beliefs and practices over the passage of time.

It therefore appears that both with medieval and early modern Catholic and Muslim theological sodalities, the boundaries between religion and magic mostly helped maintain the boundaries between an exclusive group of religious professionals and the rest of the common people.[38] Any similarities between institutionally sanctioned rituals and those of free-lance magicians were immediately discarded, as the former were believed to represent a cause of divine grace, while the latter were described as diabolical. The comparison of historical developments in Christianity and Islam therefore reveals that distinctions between religion and magic continually represented issues of control, while religious authorities strove to preserve their place as official divine grace dispensers.[39] Furthermore, historians have noticed that various groups of religious professionals during disputes often exchanged accusations of sorcery, illusionism or fraud. This is in the eighteenth century Syria evident from Ibn ʿĀbidīn's writing.[40] The cynical formulation, "What I do is miracle, but what you do is magic,"[41] gains significance for the analysis of the histories of Eurasian religions, espousing a particular strategy of exclusion aimed to preserve the

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[37] Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima,* 151-152, 584-597, 623-631, 631-641, 653-671. Compare with al-Nābulsī, *Ḥadīqa,* 2:389, and Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:5-18, 30-47.
[38] Klaasen, *Transformations,* 10-12.
[39] Thomas, *Decline,* 303, and compare Ibid., 52-53, 298-300, with Ibn Khaldun, *al-Muqaddima,* 1:139-165, 623-641.
[40] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:4-14, 18-25, 32-47. The judge defends thaumaturgical beliefs from skeptics by exchanging accusations of heresy with them. For comparative perspectives, see Bailey, *Magic and Superstition,* 111-119, 171-178, Neusner et. al., *Religion*, 142-187, and Klaasen, *Transformations,* 10-12.
[41] Neusner, et al., *Religion*, 4-5.

institutional character of a sodality of professionals with the claim over religious orthodoxy through the belief in divine grace.

Thaumaturgical beliefs and practices were in eighteenth-century Syria sanctioned by the official religious authorities. As such, they were considered orthodox. Similarly, Sufism, which was during the early modern period a primary vehicle for Muslim thaumaturgy, cannot be taken for as an odd, heterodox body of beliefs and practices during the premodern centuries, as some recent scholarship still suggests.[42] The scholarly view of Sufism as a heterodox body of mystical traditions in premodern Islam seems to mainly owe to the general tendency to overlook the history of thaumaturgy in scholarship today.

The absence of thaumaturgy from scholarly debates may occasionally lead to confusion between the anthropological categories of religion and magic. Some scholarship suggests that distinctions between these concepts appeared only with the advent of the European Enlightenment.[43] It is, however, evident that these distinctions emerged much earlier. The omission of thaumaturgy from scholarly analyses might on the one hand represent the consequence of the historical fact that thaumaturgy and magic were congruent from an anthropological point of view.[44] On the other, the conflation of the categories of thaumaturgy and magic may be owed to the Protestant influence in Europe, as well as the engagement of Muslim modern reformists in the Middle East and North Africa. Through the influences of such groups, thaumaturgy came under

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[42] See sections 1.2. and 1.3.

[43] Styers, *Making Magic*, 4-9, 219-226, Collins, *History of Magic*, 521-575, Josephson-Storm, *Disenchantment*, 41-178.

[44] Bremmer, "Birth," 1-12, and Benussi, "Magic," 1-16. For comparisons between Islam and Christianity, one could compare Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima*, 132-143, 146-157, 398-403, 572-574, 584-597, and Thomas, *Decline,* 27-48, 60-70, 152-153, 215-229, 318, 327-330.

accusations that it represented magic itself, despite the historical fact that these categories were distinguished through the doctrine of religious institutions.[45]

European Protestant movements attacked the beliefs in the divine grace attributed to the established priesthoods, as well as in the cults of saints which were spread across Europe.[46] For instance, in Western Europe, Protestants were widely denying the thaumaturgical capabilities that the Catholic Church possessed according to common beliefs. Various degrees of Protestant movements' success induced changes in the theological opinions about the origin and purpose of thaumaturgical beliefs and rituals.[47] Miracles and wonders caused by divine will through the agency of the Catholic priests, as well as any alleged priestly power that granted immediate relief to the people,[48] slowly took shape as superstitions. Thaumaturgy was in the Protestant discourse reduced to lowly magical practice inspired by devils and labeled evil, illicit, and heterodox.[49]

Similarly, the belief in Muslim saintly cults and Sufi wonders in Islam was attacked by the Muslim reformist thought during the modern period, bringing about comparable historical developments. The collapse of the thaumaturgy-magic distinction[50] may partially account for the cause of the unease with which scholarly studies of Islam today position the categories of religion and magic, as well as Islam and Sufism.[51] The appropriate positioning of these concepts seems

[45] See Bailey, *Magic and Superstition*, 111-119. For an interesting discussion, see Neusner et. al., *Religion*, 142-187. Fort he eighteenth-century Damascene context, see Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:4-14, 18-25, 42-47.

[46] Thomas, *Decline,* 69, 318, Bremmer, "Birth," 1-6, 9-12, and Benussi, "Magic," 1-16, Winthrop, *Dictionary*, 167-170, and Saif, *Influences*, 1-8. The trend can at times be observed during the contemporary period as well.

[47] Thomas, *Decline,* 55-57.

[48] Ibid., 69. Also see Douglas Burton-Christie, "Early Monasticism," and Edward Howells, "Early Modern Reformations," in *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Mysticism,* ed. Amy Hollywood and Patricia Z. Beckman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 37-58, and 114-136, respectively. Further see Stephen Sharot, "Protestants, Catholics, and the Reform of Popular Religion," in *A Comparative Sociology of World Religions: Virtuosos, Priests, and Popular Religion* (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 211-241.

[49] The case of early modern England represented the main focus of Keith Thomas, whose work is very illustrative of such changes. See Thomas, *Decline*, 58-60. Also see Robert Bartlett, *Why can the Dead do Such Great Things? Saints and Worshippers from the Martyrs to the Reformation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 85-92.

[50] Ibid., 69, 318.

[51] One can, for example, encounter coinages such as "Sufi-mage" and others. See Matthew Melvin-Koushki, "Magic in Islam between Religion and Science," *Magic, Ritual and Witchcraft*, Volume 14, Number 2 (2019): 267-268.

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somewhat elusive, perhaps due to the influences of modern scholarly writing about thaumaturgy globally,[52] as well as the efforts of the Muslim reformists to remove Sufism from mainstream religion.[53] Through a number of anachronisms, Sufism is often described by contemporary scholars as illicit and heterodox.[54] All the while, Sufism continues to pervade and exert a considerable influence on many socio-anthropological and socio-political fields studied by the scholarship committed to Islam.[55]

The aim of this dissertation is therefore to suggest an approach to Sufism in premodern Islam as a body of mystical beliefs and practices which were representative of Muslim thaumaturgy and fully orthodox. This body of mystical beliefs and practices contained many elements which were homologous to *siḥr*, yet were socio-politically distinguished through the writings of the official Ottoman priestly sodalities. These sodalities used the beliefs in divine grace – Allah's *baraka* – to justify the efficacy of thaumaturgy and further establish themselves as an institution of religious authorities. This dissertation will further analyze the role of these religious authorities, as official dispensers of *baraka*, for maintaining trends of religious belief and practice during the premodern periods, and in eighteenth-century Ottoman Syria. *Baraka* as a thaumaturgical resource was of high significance for the social dynamics of early modern Ottoman Shām, where it represented both a social marker and the energy behind thaumaturgical efficacy.

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[52] Thomas, *Decline,* 69, 318. Also see, for instance, Bremmer, "Birth," 1-6, 9-12, and Benussi, "Magic," 1-16. Also see Winthrop, *Dictionary*, 167-170, and Liana Saif, "Introduction," in *The Arabic Influences on Early Modern Occult Philosophy,* ed. Liana Saif (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 1-8.
[53] Al-Azmeh, *Times,* 47-66, al-Azmeh, "Revivalism," 39-59, and Hourani, "Sufism," 90-102.
[54] For instance, Karamustafa, *Friends,* 10-13.
[55] See sections 1.1. and 1.2.

2.2. Holy Energy: The Significance of the Belief in Allah's *Baraka*

Magical and thaumaturgical traditions were engaged in processes of continuous definition and re-definition along with the phenomena that were believed to be their cause. These energies, which in Bourdiesque terms represented magical or thaumaturgical capital,[56] served as a fuel that imbued and empowered objects, places, or people. According to globally widespread beliefs, they made magical and thaumaturgical actions and effects possible.

Depending on the region, these energies would be documented under names such as *manna*,[57] *purba*, *orenda,*[58] and so on. In the Muslim case, it is possible to identify thaumaturgical energy as grace, *baraka.* Muslim beliefs in *baraka* were comparable to the pre-modern Christian beliefs in divine grace.[59] According to Christian and Muslim beliefs, this mystical grace made prophetic miracles, as well saintly and priestly wonders possible.[60] Those who demonstrated extreme piety, devoutness and virtue in life were occasionally believed to represent recipients of grace who were furthermore capable of harvesting this thaumaturgical capital from certain sacred places, such as saintly shrines. Afterwards, these special individuals would be capable of dispensing divine grace to the rest of the people.[61]

The religious, socio-political, socio-anthropological and economic significance of *baraka* as a primary historical fact qualify it as a valid analytical tool for the study of eighteenth-century Syrian religion. This dissertation shall trace narratives about *baraka* produced in eighteenth-century Syria to map out the Shāmī religious topography, as well as the networks of religious

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[56] Bourdieu, "Genesis," 2-5, 31-38.
[57] Durkheim, *Elementary Forms*, 61-62.
[58] For instance, Claude Levi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology* (London: Penguin Books, 1993), 188-190.
[59] Thomas, *Decline,* 31-32, 87-88. Further see Klaniczay, *Supernatural Power,* 8-9.
[60] Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima,* 151-152, 584-597, and Thomas, *Decline,* 31-32, 87-88.
[61] Compare Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima,* 151-152, 584-597, with Thomas, *Decline,* 31-32, 87-88.

professionals who oversaw the dispensing of this thaumaturgical resource to the rest of the Ottoman subjects.

During the premodern periods, the majority of the *ʿulamāʾ* in office wrote that the ultimate source of *baraka* was divine will. It seems reasonable to presume, however, that the Sufi-scholars of note in eighteenth-century Damascus felt moved to offer such explanations in their apologetic texts, written in response to the rigorists' doubt in Muslim saints. Beliefs that all *baraka* came from Allah therefore may seem a second-order dogmatic and casuistic explanation. As a primary anthropological fact, *baraka* may have sometimes been seen as the energy of a hallowed individual or an object. Eighteenth century sources at times seem to support this view. For instance, the Damascene barber Ibn Budayr writes only of the saints' *baraka* during his pilgrimages around the provincial capital.[62] Similarly, biographies authored by al-Murādī often indicate the *baraka* of individuals, adding no mention of the deity.[63] In the twentieth century, Samuel Curtiss and Lewis Paton offer empirical evidence that the people preferred to pray near saintly shrines so as to make their prayers to God more efficacious.[64] However, Paton was in Syria told that the common people "[fear] God, yet [they] fear the *walī* also because he is near."[65]

Generally, according to the apologetics of the ulamaic authors, it was believed that *baraka* through divine providence passed down through prophets of whom many were believed in by the Christians as well (such as Abraham, or Moses).[66] Below were the deceased, and then the still-

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[62] Ibn Budayr, "HDY", 69A-69B.
[63] For instance, al-Murādī, *Silk*, 2:60-63, or 3:95-96. Other ʿulamāʾ of note at times seemed to omit the divine from their descriptions of saintly *baraka.* See, for instance, Muṣṭafā ibn Kamāl al-Dīn al-Bakrī al-Ṣiddīqī, "al-Khamra al-Ḥisiyya fī al-Riḥla al-Qudsīyya," [The Sensual Wine on the Journey to Jerusalem], MS Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Ms. or. quart. 460, Berlin, copied in 1785, 28B. Henceforth: "KhH."
[64] For instance, Lewis Bayles Paton, "Survivals of Primitive Religion in Modern Palestine," *The Annual of the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem* Vol. 1 (1919-1920): 63, or Samuel Ives Curtiss, *Primitive Semitic Religion To-day: A Record of Researches, Discoveries and Studies in Syria, Palestine and the Sinaitic Peninsula* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revel Company, 1902), 75, 92.
[65] Paton, "Survivals," 63. Compare with Thomas, *Decline,* 29.
[66] For the full list of most important prophets, consult Brannon M. Wheeler, ed., "Introduction," in *Prophets in the Quran: An Introduction to the Quran and Muslim Exegesis* (London&New York: Continuum, 2002), 1-15.

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living Muslim saints, as well as numerous Sufi masters. The *shaykh*s were believed capable of developing various thaumaturgical skills and knowledge, as well as to cause wonders through divine grace.[67]

In premodern popular belief, *baraka* had near-physical properties. Muslims believed that grace could "leak" between individuals through touch. In the popular imaginary, *baraka* gathered around entombed saints, or within their memorials. It further formed residues in places where powerful thaumaturgical acts allegedly happened. From there, it leaked into other people and objects.[68] Furthermore, some Muslim thaumaturges were believed capable of fueling small objects with a certain portion of their *baraka.* They would thus create talismans aimed at a range of purposes – from prophylactic to daemonological (aimed at controlling or banishing malevolent preternatural entities).[69] The early modern Ottoman subjects had a gesture called *tabarruk* ("solicitation of blessing"). One would hold their hands out, palms facing upwards. They would motion as if they gathered water to symbolize the collection of God's power. Hands would then pass over the body from the head downwards to symbolize "bathing" in the energy of God. This gesture is standard among Muslims everywhere and is functionally comparable to the Christian sign of the cross.[70] In eighteenth-century Syria, it was customary to perform the *tabarruk* upon seeing a saint or passing by a saintly shrine.[71]

According to popular beliefs in eighteenth-century Syria (and in premodern Islam broadly), the function of *baraka* was to protect against devils, destructive spells, curses, and other harmful

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[67] See section 2.4., chapters 4, 5 and 6.
[68] Chapter 5 gives particular details about this leaking.
[69] Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima,* 623-625. Christian priests produced their own talismans as well, Thomas, *Decline,* 58-60. Also see chapter 6.
[70] The Orthodox Christian populations today at various regions (such as in the central Balkans for instance) during religious services motion as if they are collecting smoke from the priests' censers before producing the gesture, symbolizing thus the collection of the priest's blessings.
[71] See al-Murādī, *Silk,* 1:228-234, and Canaan, *Saints,* 91-92.

phenomena such as diseases or natural catastrophes. Furthermore, Muslims believed that *baraka* caused prayers to come true and enhanced the power of some types of magical spells. Sufis believed that particular chapters from the Qur'ān, such as *al-Fātiḥa,* were able to activate *baraka* which would then be used to realize a thaumaturgical purpose, as this dissertation shall show.[72]

Baraka furthermore possessed a high degree of socio-anthropological significance for historical studies of premodern Islam. As it shall be continuously shown, in the popular beliefs *baraka* was attracted by and accrued from the personal traits of virtue and devoutness (Ar. *ṣalāḥ*).[73] It shall be shown that theological treatises, biographical dictionaries, as well as the daily chronicles written in eighteenth-century Syria frequently emphasized the *baraka* of those individuals who attracted popularity through their exemplary lifestyles. Allah's grace therefore represented a primary historical and social fact which may be used for a detailed analysis into the socio-anthropological dynamics of premodern Muslim societies. Such is the case with eighteenth-century Syria as well, where the belief that Allah's energies acted as a shield against the perils of the unseen world and its malevolent forces such as the daemons[74] additionally strengthened the Sufi-*ʿulamā'* sodalities' institutionalized function as dispensers of divine grace.[75]

Baraka influenced the people's views of early modern urban topography. Ottoman subjects strove to be buried as close as possible to graves of famous saints, or other places famous for religiously significant events. Shrines would be frequently built to mark such locations. These could be humble edifices, or more elaborate complexes. In Damascus, the shrines of Ibn ʿArabī and al-Nābulsī represented elaborate architectural clusters.[76] Many saintly shrines over time

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[72] Detailed examples shall be given throughout this dissertation, predominantly in chapters 3, 5, and 6.
[73] al-Nābulsī, *Ḥadīqa,* 1:199-200.
[74] Daemons represent the main subject of chapter 3.
[75] Highly comparable to medieval Christian Catholicism. See Thomas, *Decline,* 31-32, 87-88.
[76] See Figures 5 and 6 in Appendix A and chapter 5.

became large economic centers accompanied by various establishments aimed at accommodating pilgrims and performing charity.[77] Pilgrimage complexes grew in numbers and influenced mobility patterns, causing the production of pilgrimage traveling guides as well.[78] *Baraka*-harvesting pilgrimages were so common and frequent that James Grehan finds the source material an inspiration to write about the Muslim *ziyāra* customs as an obsession of some Sufi masters.[79]

It was believed that Allah's grace was earned by merit,[80] most often after long years of studying under established Sufi *shaykh*s. Those who acquired reputation for their *baraka* commanded significant respect among their peers, as well as other members of society. Many people who were believed recipients of Allah's grace pursued official appointments at important and lucrative positions within Ottoman administration. Their powers of office commanded significant socio-political influence in different parts of the Ottoman Empire. Their *baraka* further served as a powerful means of social mobility that occasionally facilitated an individual's advance from humble origins towards the highest echelons of the Ottoman imperial administration.[81]

2.3. Network of the Holy: The Network of Wonder-workers in Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Syria

The Sufi-*ʿulamā'* networks claimed monopoly over Allah's grace. *Baraka* was for them both the cause of their wonders and a discursive tool through which they would establish their authority over religious orthodoxy. Their professional credentials were further legitimized through the

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[77] Chapter 5 analyzes Muslim shrines.
[78] Chih, *Sufism,* 24-25 and Sirriyeh, *Visionary,* 108-111.
[79] Grehan, *Twilight,* 101. Damascus had a very large number of sacred places. See chapter 5 and Appendix B. The Muslim cult of saints is comparable to such cults among the Christians. See Bartlett, *The Dead,* 13-19.
[80] Knysh appropriately notes the hereditary system of charismatic transmission adopted by the Shi'ites. See Knysh, *Sufism,* 42.
[81] Chapter 4 discusses such matters in detail.

widespread belief in individuals, places and objects interconnected by divine grace into a network of the holy that was fundamental for premodern Ottoman Sunnism. This was a very broad network, comprised of both vertical and horizontal connections, which was crucial for early modern belief in Ottoman Syria. It may be mapped out by tracing the beliefs in *baraka* which was merited by exemplary individuals in the Ottoman society. In the eighteenth century, the Syrian network of the holy was comprised of prominent Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ,* deceased Sufi masters, Muslim saints (*awliyāʾ*), and the prophets (*anbiyāʾ*).

ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī divided the ranks of the Ottoman network of the holy between the *ṣāliḥūn,* the *ʿulamāʾ* and the *awliyāʾ* (Muslim saints).[82] The foundation of the network of the holy were the Damascene *ṣāliḥūn* who enjoyed popular belief that they were invested with divine grace. It was believed that these individuals, with origins across the social scale, merited their *baraka* through their virtuous ways of living, and that they could therefore cause wonders.[83] The *ṣāliḥūn* overlapped with the groups of Sufi masters and disciples. The *ṣāliḥūn* who attracted most respect usually belonged to various eighteenth-century Sufi orders during their lives. The eighteenth-century Syrian network of the holy contained considerable overlaps with the network of religious authorities represented by the officially appointed Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ*.[84] However, certain members of this category were believed to be the recipients of *baraka* even if they did not follow the teachings of a specific Sufi order, although such were rare. This dissertation will continually demonstrate that popular imaginary brought *baraka* in relation to the traits of *ṣalāḥ* (devoutness, virtue and piety).[85]

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[82] Al-Nābulsī, *Ḥadīqa,* 1:183. Al-Nābulsī uses the term of the *ʿulamāʾ* to refer to the overlapping groups of the Sufis and the Muslim scholars, like al-Murādī.
[83] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:15-16, 32-37, 40-46, and Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima,* 139-141 628-630. Chapter 4 offers a discussion of the Damascene *ṣāliḥūn,* showing that they rarely acquired far-reaching influence, unlike the trained Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* who enjoyed patronage of the influential Damascenes.
[84] See sections 4.3., 4.5., and 4.6.
[85] See the following section, as well as chapters 4 and 5.

Above the ranks of the Shāmī *ṣāliḥūn* were the saints (sg. *walī,* pl. *awliyā'*).[86] Scholarship at times describes the *awliyā'* as "friends of god" (sg. *walī allah*),[87] indicating a certain closeness to the divine.[88] Their higher authority was emphasized by the prominent eighteenth-century Sufi-*ʿulamā'*. The *awliyā'* rank was to its largest extent comprised from Sufi *shaykh*s. In addition, this rank partially consisted from other *ṣāliḥūn* who were believed to have merited divine grace. The most prominent saints were, however, almost always influential members of the Sufi-*ʿulamā'* sodalities.[89] Out of each saintly generation, an individual of unprecedented achievements would become known as the *quṭb zamānihi* ("the Pole of his time"). It was believed that the Poles (*aqṭāb*) maintained worldly order, prevented sin and ensured that the people were protected from evil. In practical terms, the Poles of their time among the Sufis enjoyed unparalleled popularity and influence, both among their peers and notables of economic and political influence.[90] Rachida Chih identifies four of the most prominent Poles who lived between the eleventh and the thirteenth centuries. In early modern Egypt, these individuals were widely respected. They were ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Gīlāni[91] (1078-1166), Aḥmad al-Rifaʿī (1118–1181), Aḥmad al-Badawī (1200-1276), and Ibrahīm al-Dasūqī (1255-1296).[92] These four Sufi masters were celebrated as the founders of some

[86] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:15-16.
[87] See Chih, *Sufism,* 111, and John Renard, *Friends of God: Islamic Images of Piety, Commitment, and Servanthood* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 1-20. Chapter 4 offers a detailed discussion of sainthood among the Muslims.
[88] Green, *Sufism,* 7.
[89] See chapter 4.
[90] Kunitzsch, P. and Jong, F. de, "al-Ḳuṭb", in Bearman, et. al., *Encyclopaedia of Islam II*. http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0550 (Last Accessed: April 15th 2021). Further see Chih, *Sufism,* 1, Yılmaz *Caliphate,* 204-205, and al-Azmeh, *Muslim Kingship,* 183-185. Further see Michael Winter, *Egyptian Society under Ottoman Rule, 1517-1798* (London&New York: Routledge, 1992), 136, and Hiroyuki Mashita, ed., *Theology, Ethics and Metaphysics: Royal Asiatic Society Classics of Islam: Book 4* (London&New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003), 14. The belief in the Poles of the world resembles some trends in Judeism. Fenton, "Abraham Maimonides," 143. Further, see Lane, *Egyptians*, 1:293.
[91] This scholar was of Persian and the Arabic sources therefore often spell his name as Kīlānī, Ghīlānī or Jīlānī, due to phonetic incompatibilities. In Syria, the form Kaylānī is frequently encountered.
[92] Chih, *Sufism,* 11. Lane, *Egyptians*, 1:293-294.

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of the larger Sufi orders – the Qādirīyya, Rifāʿīyya, Aḥmadīyya and the Burhānīyya[93] – that existed deep into the nineteenth century (and are still encountered in some regions). Taufik Canaan identifies the same four individuals as highly respected Poles in Syria,[94] in addition to other Syrian *aqṭāb* such as Arslān (Ruslān) al-Dimashqī (d.1160/64), "The Protector of Damascus,"[95] or ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī. The Cordoban scholar and saint, Ibn ʿArabī, remained remembered as the patron saint of the Ottoman dynasty[96] and was venerated throughout the imperial domain. In the eighteenth century, Syrian priestly sodalities considered al-Nābulsī the Pole of his time, while al-Ḥifnī enjoyed this honor in Egypt.[97] Numerous individuals from each generation of prominent Muslim *ṣāliḥūn* continuously expanded the saintly rank within the network of the holy. By the eighteenth century, Ottoman Syria as well as other imperial regions had an exquisite number of nodes in their networks of the holy[98] integrated within a pyramid through which divine grace was believed to descend upon humanity.

Above the deceased saints and the Poles, and under God as the source of all that existed, stood the rank of the prophets (*anbiyāʾ*; sg. *nabī*). The difference between the prophets and the saints was reflected in the beliefs that the former were tasked with spreading divine revelation, which was further indicated by their more potent abilities. Claims to prophethood and revelation were often used by Muslim theologians to differentiate between saintly *karāma* and prophetic *muʿjiza*.[99] Furthermore, it was forbidden for a saint to claim prophetic powers. Ibn ʿĀbidīn claimed

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[93] In premodern centuries, the latter order also bore the name Burhāmīyya, as for instance in Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:25.
[94] Canaan, *Saints,* 273-4.
[95] See Eric Geoffroy, "Arslān al-Dimashqī, Shaykh," *Encyclopaedia of Islam III,* ed. Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, and Everett Rowson (Brill Online, 2014). http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_23403 (Last accessed: April 15th 2021).
[96] Yılmaz, *Caliphate,* 211-214, Rafeq, "Relations," 81, and Sirriyeh, *Visionary,* 126.
[97] Chih, *Sufism,* 1, Winter, *Egyptian Society*, 136.
[98] For the Damascene case, see Appendix B.
[99] See Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR*, 2:5-18, 32-37. Further see al-Nabhānī, *JK,* 1:9-14, 19-21.

that such a saint would otherwise antagonize Allah.[100] Muḥammad was considered the first among the prophets as the perfect man (*al-insān al-kāmil*). He represented a source of knowledge, and the most significant node of the network of the holy for the continuous vertical distribution of grace.[101] Khalwatīyya masters claimed that their order was built on prophetic heritage.[102] Among other prophets of Islam, many featured in the Old and New Testament traditions as well, such as Abraham or Moses.[103] The belief in the same prophets across religious confessions inspired some scholars to underline the wide syncretic tendencies that Sufism contained during the previous centuries.[104]

ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī believed that after death the saints and prophets still received Allah's grace until the end of days.[105] He described their *baraka* (*dalīl*) as the proof of their virtue.[106] Due to the belief that saints continued to receive Allah's *baraka* after death, it was expected that they could also cause wonders post-mortem. Throughout the premodern centuries, Muslims therefore turned the graves of their saints into shrines[107] which became pilgrimage

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[100] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR*, 2:15.
[101] Al-Nābulsī, *Fatḥ,* 177. Muḥammad Amīn Ibn ʿUmar Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *Radd al-Muhtār ʿala al-Durr al-Mukhtār* [The Answer to the Baffled over The Exquisite Pearl], fourteen volumes, ed. Muḥammad Bakr Ismāʿīl (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmīyya, 2003), 2:242-243. Further see al-Nabhānī, *JK,* 1:9-14. Also see Chih, *Sufism,* 113.
[102] Curry, *Transformation*, 23-25.
[103] Wheeler,"Introduction," 1-15.
[104] For instance, Grehan, *Twilight,* 183.
[105] Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī, "Kashf al-Nūr ʿan Aṣḥābi al-Qubūr [Revealing Light in what pertains to the Dead in Graves]," in "Wasāʾil al-Taḥqīq wa Rasāʾil al-Tawfīq. Taḥqīq al-Maqṣūd min Maʿná "Yā man Huwa Maʿbūd fī ṣūrat Kull Maʿbūd [Means of Investigation and Letters of Conciliation. Clarification of the Meaning of "O you who is Worshipped" in cases of Worship]," MS Princeton University Library, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Manuscript Collection, Islamic Manuscripts, New Series no. 1113 Princeton, 162A-174A. This is a copy of the autograph produced in 1748/1749 by an *al-Ḥājj* ʿUmar Ibn ʿAbd Allāh. I am grateful to Dr Astrid Meier for pointing me towards this collection. Further see (al-Sayyid Shaykh al-ʿUlamāʾ) Muḥammad Ibn Aḥmad al-Shāfiʿī al-Shawbarī,"al-Ajwibah ʿan al-Asʾilah fī Karāmāt al-Awliyāʾ" [Answers to the Questions about the Saintly Wonders], MS Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Sprenger 819, Berlin, 45A-45B. The author lived between 1569-1695. I am reading a copy made by Muḥammad Ibn Ṣāliḥ al-Kīlānī made in 1796. Henceforth: "AA."
[106] Al-Nābulsī, "Kashf," 168B.
[107] Chapter 5 analyzes the structure of these sacred places. See Appendix A for illustrations of their interior and exterior.

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(*ziyāra*; pl. *ziyārāt*) destinations.[108] In the eighteenth-century, it was customary to pray and perform various religious rituals in the vicinity of these shrines,[109] in hopes that the saintly *baraka* would empower a spell or strengthen a prayer's efficacy. Furthermore, it was hoped that the unseen saintly presence within the shrines would intercede[110] before Allah and assist the people.

Ottoman imperial urban planning throughout the early modern period at times used the saintly shrines for a number of socio-political and economic purposes. Sufi lodges, usually centered around at least one sacred grave, were accompanied by a complex of buildings focused on charity and proselytization. Such complexes frequently represented focal points around which new neighborhoods would be developed in conquered cities.[111] In Damascus, the Ibn ʿArabī complex[112] represented a very important Ottoman endowment. Sultan Selim I (1470-1520) endowed both the Ibn ʿArabī complex and expanded the al-Sulaymānīyya Sufi lodge in Damascus. Heghnar Watenpaugh argues that it is quite likely that Selim I's commissions were ordered in the hopes of shifting the religious center of the city from the Umayyad Mosque and attributing more significance to his own dynasty.[113] The socio-political use of hallowed graves was not an original

[108] The city of Damascus had several important graveyards which contained many shrines. For their locations, see Map 9 in Appendix B. For the list of most frequently visited Muslim graves in Damascus, see Appendix B. The table there represents a list of graves, arranged by cemeteries, that figured in most available travel guides for pilgrims, produced during the early modern period.
[109] See chapter 6.
[110] The Arabic term for intercession is *shafāʿa*. See chapters 5 and 6, and al-Nābulsī, *Ḥadīqa,* 1:183.
[111] See, for instance, Grigor Boykov, "Reshaping Urban Space in the Ottoman Balkans: A Study on the Architectural Development of Edirne, Plovdiv and Skopje (14th-15th centuries)," in *Centers and Peripheries in Ottoman Architecture: Rediscovering a Balkan Heritage*., ed. Maximilian Hartmuth (Sarajevo: Cultural Heritage Without Borders, 2011), 33-34, Giulia Annalinda Neglia, "Some Historiographical Notes on the Islamic City with Particular Reference to the Visual Representation of the Built City," in *The City in the Islamic World: Volume 1*, ed. Salma K. Jayyusi (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2008): 3-4, Howard Crane, "The Ottoman Sultan's Mosques: Icons of Imperial Legitimacy," in *The Ottoman City and Its Parts: Urban Structure and Social Order,* ed. Irene A. Bierman, Rifa'at A. Abou-El-Haj, Donald Preziosi (New York: Aristide D. Caratzas, 1991), 173-194, Ethel Sara Wolper, "The Politics of Patronage: Political Change and the Construction of Dervish Lodges in Sivas," *Muqarnas* 12 (1995): 39-47, or Aigle, "Charismes," 15-36. Also see chapter 5.
[112] See Appendix A, Figure 6.
[113] Watenpaugh, *Ottoman City,* 38-39, or Kafescıoğlu, "Aleppo and Damascus," 70-96.

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Ottoman development. Muslim states that existed for a number of centuries prior to the emergence of the Ottoman Empire often used such graves for economic and self-representative purposes.[114]

The subjects of the Ottoman Empire, as was the tradition in other Muslim empires, organized ceremonies to honor their prominent saints and prophets such were, for instance, the *mawlid* ("birthday") celebrations[115] which were major attractions for travelers, as well as locals.[116] Major fairs and markets would be organized on such occasions. Similar ceremonies most often took place at saintly shrines that, in addition to marking saintly graves, may have been commissioned at places where a legendary event from Muslim religious history was believed to have happened. A complex economy generated around Muslim sacred sites, further indicating the economic correlates of premodern beliefs in *baraka* for the historical studies of the Middle East.[117]

In addition to the large number of hallowed shrines' complexes, certain events would at times inspire beliefs that *baraka* resided in natural objects such as trees, caves, rocks, or water sources.[118] This dissertation approaches the network of eighteenth-century Syrian sacred places – its "folk geology,"[119] comprised of sacred shrines, trees, caves, rocks and water sources – as an element in the Ottoman network of the holy.

[114] Wolper, "Patron,", 24-41, Pfeiffer, "Confessional Ambiguity," 135-136, or Heath W. Lowry, "The 'Soup Muslims' of the Ottoman Balkans: Was there a 'Western' & 'Eastern' Ottoman Empire?," *The Journal of Ottoman Studies* 36 (2010): 98-102,

[115] For proceedings of such ceremonies, see for instance ʿAlā al-Dīn Ibn Musharraf al-Māridīnī, "Mawlid al-Nabī" [The Birthday of the Prophet], MS Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Wetzstein II 1711, p. 1, Berlin, 1A-5B. The text is a copy from 1726. Further see Kamāl Jamīl al-ʿAsalī, *Mawsim al-Nabī Mūsā fī Filisṭīn: Tārīkh al-Mawsim wa al-Maqām* [The Festival of the Prophet Moses in Palestine: The History of the Customs and the Shrine] (Amman: Maṭbaʿat al-Jāmiʿa al-Urdunīyya, 1990), 101-150. Many allegedly powerful saints were honored by *mawlid* ceremonies. See Lane, *Egyptians,* 1:307.

[116] For instance, Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī was inconvenienced by the dense crowds gathered for the Prophet Moses's Festival. See al-Bakrī, "KhH," 11A.

[117] Chapters 5 and 6 discuss economic impact of sacred places and the Sufi intercession.

[118] Details shall be discussed in chapter 5.

[119] A very apt term coined by James Grehan, in *Twilight*, 132.

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The ever-growing network of the holy was in the eighteenth century comprised of entire *silsila*s[120] of deceased saints and the Poles among them. For the Ottoman priestly sodality, this network represented both the source of divine grace, and the source of legitimacy in front of the rest of the people. Among its other purposes, the didactic potential of this network emerges as well. *Baraka* was correlated to *ṣalāḥ,* and the priestly sodality of the Ottoman Empire, through beliefs in the network of the holy, fashioned itself as a network of role models in the Ottoman societies. In certain regions, beliefs in the network of the holy remain until today, while at many other places Muslim reforms succeeded at casting doubt in Muslim saints and their networks. This process was, however, slow and gradual. The Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* in office during the eighteenth century left a significant number of written works in response to disputes that occasionally arose around matters of Ottoman belief. They further illuminate the history of the Ottoman network of the holy.

2.4. Purity of Faith: Religious Rigorism of the Eighteenth Century

It may be stated that the model of the Ottoman networks of the holy, as well as the Muslim priestly sodalities represented by the Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* with state appointments remained largely uncontested until the early nineteenth century. Doctrinal disagreements, however, existed since at least the medieval period. Some prominent theologians tended to occasionally express doubts in the established cults of saints. At times they would doubt the thaumaturgical powers of the Sufis as well. They, however, remained a minority until the modern period.

Scholarship traditionally suggested that the Hanbalite school of jurisprudence (sg. *madhhab*, pl. *madhāhib*) was historically representative of a degree of animosity towards Sufism.

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[120] See chapter 4.

This may be the consequence of the Hanbalite school's literalist approach to the Scripture.[121] However, the eleventh-century founder of the Qādirīyya himself belonged to the Hanbalite *madhhab.* As one of the widely venerated Poles of his time, ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Gīlānī (1078-1166) had a shrine built in his honor in Baghdad. This shrine was destroyed during the reign of Shah Ismāʿīl I (1501-1524) but the Lawgiver rebuilt it later.[122] A *madrasa* was named after al-Gīlānī. Along with the shrine, this *madrasa* represents a pilgrimage destination until the present day.[123]

In eighteenth-century Damascus, the Hanbalite school of jurisprudence enjoyed considerable presence. Abū al-Mawāhib Ibn ʿAbd al-Bāqī al-Ḥanbalī (d.1714) was a prominent author, scholar and a Sufi. He was a critically acclaimed meteoromancer. The people believed he was a saint and turned his grave into a pilgrimage destination.[124] Furthermore, historians documented that the eponymous founder of the Hanbalite *madhhab,* Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal (780-855), himself performed rituals of baraka-*harvesting* and wondrous healing. For thaumaturgical healing, he used hair of the Prophet or his spittle. His grave had a pleasant fragrance and the people believed that he was a saint.[125] The case of Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal illustrates the long-lasting overlap between an ʿ*ālim* and a Sufi. Disagreements that emerged over the passage of time between various *madhāhib* with regards to certain Sufi practices and the cult of saints did not neutralize this overlap during the premodern periods.

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[121] George Makdisi, "Ahmad ibn Hanbal and the Qur'an," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 6 (2004): 22-34. Also, for instance, Racha El Omari, "*Kitāb al-Ḥayda:* The Historical Significance of an Apocryphal Text," in *Islamic Philosophy, Science, Culture, and Religion: Studies in Honor of Dimitri Gutas,* ed. Felicitas Opwis and David Reisman (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 419-421, Ingrid Mattson, *The Story of the Qur'an: Its History and Place in Muslim Life* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), 143-144,

[122] J. M. Rogers, *Sinan: Makers of Islamic Civilization* (London: I.B. Tauris and Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, 2006), 12.

[123] Daphna Ephrat, *A Learned Period of Transition: The Sunni ʿUlamāʾ of Eleventh-Century Baghdad* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2000), 27.

[124] See chapter 6 for more details. Further see Appendix B.

[125] Al-Azmeh, *Muslim Kingship,* 157. Also see Aziz al-Azmeh, *Secularism in the Arab World: Contexts, Ideas and Consequences* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), 44-45. For beliefs in the power of spittle, also see section 3.4.

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Over time, however, certain Hanbalite scholars developed a more rigorist[126] attitude to the Muslim cults of saints. Teachings of the eponymous founder of the Hanbalite *madhab* were often quoted as inspiration behind later rigorist thought. Some rigorist scholars were important figures for the historical developments in Syria over the passage of time. For instance, Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal left significant influence on the written works of the famous Hanbalite scholar and a Qādirīyya Sufi, Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad Ibn Taymīyya (1263-1328).[127] Ibn Taymīyya was a contemporary to the Mongol campaigns in the Middle East, and in time became known for his own achievements in combat.[128] While he was still a child, the advance of the Mongols pushed him towards Damascus. Early in his youth he was committed to education, and afterwards caused some controversies with his written works and provocative behavior in front of the jurisprudential authorities in office.[129] His disagreement with Ibn ʿArabī's teachings caused controversies in medieval Damascus. When Ibn ʿArabī proclaimed himself the "Seal of the Saints," Ibn Taymīyya interpreted this gesture as a challenge to Muḥammad's prophethood.[130] Ibn Taymīyya considered that *al-khalaf* generations brought many innovations (*bidʿa*) in Islam and that *ahl al-salaf* possessed more credibility with regards to the matters of proper belief.[131] He was in favor of many devotional Sufi practices, yet

[126] Fundamentalism is a frequent element in all scriptural religions. See, for instance, Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: an Introduction* (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2017), 43-46, E. Clinton Gardner, *Justice&Christian Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 54-62, Margo Todd, *Christian Humanism and the Puritan Social Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 1-21, or Milan Zafirovski, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Authoritarianism: Puritanism, Democracy, and Society* (New York: Springer, 2007), 1-2, 35-54, 80-122.
[127] George Makdisi, "Ibn Taymiyya: A Sufi of the Qadiriya Order," *American Journal of Arabic Studies* 1 (1973): 118-129. Also see Knysh, *Sufism,* 44, and Stephen Schwartz, *The Other Islam: Sufism and the Global Road to Harmony* (New York&London: Doubleday, 2008), 127. Ibn Taymīyya's work influenced many Ottoman theologians. See Derin Terzioğlu, "Ibn Taymiyya: *al-Siyāsa al-Sharʿiyya,* and the Early Modern Ottomans," in *Sunni Islam,* ed. Krstić and Terzioğlu, 101-154.
[128] H. Laoust, "Ibn Taymiyya," in Bearman, et. al., *Encyclopaedia of Islam II.* http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_3388 (Last accessed: April 15th 2021).
[129] Abdul Hakim I. al-Matroudi, *The Ḥanbalī School of Law and Ibn Taymiyyah: Conflict or Conciliation* (London & New York: 2006), 18, and Laoust, "Ibn Taymiyya."
[130] Chih, *Sufism,* 137. Also see Yahya Michot, "From al-Ma'amūn to Ibn Sabʿīn via Avicenna: Ibn Taymīya's Historiography of Falsafa," in *Philosophy,* ed. Opwis and Reisman, 453-475.
[131] Al-Matroudi, *Ḥanbalī School,* 18-20.

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he expressed doubt about *ziyāra,* reasoning that the practice derived from the hopes of acolytes to get closer to god, which was impermissible.[132] Because of his attitudes, he was expelled from Damascus and prosecuted in Cairo, facing incarceration several times before attracting sympathizers in Alexandria.[133] This Sufi-*ʿālim*'s shrine in Damascus was a very important pilgrimage site. The eighteenth-century pilgrims' guides still listed this site among the most prominent ones.[134]

Doctrinal disagreements persisted during the early modern period, and until today.[135] Ibn Taymīyya's opinions influenced some Ottoman Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ*. This is evident on the case of an Anatolian preacher, Taqī al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn ʿAlī (d.1573), later to be remembered as Birgivī Mehmed Effendī. Biographies of Birgivī Mehmed highlight his achievements either as a Sufi or an *ʿālim*. He belonged to the Hanafite *madhhab*[136] and combined various approaches in his doctrinal writings. His most popular written work was entitled *The Muḥammadan Path.*[137] Birgivī Mehmed never showed aspirations to network with the more influential imperial elites and mostly kept to the countryside,[138] claiming an urge to defend the people from things forbidden by God.[139] He echoed Ibn Taymīyya's scorn for certain Sufi practices, especially connected to *ziyāra.* He cautioned the Muslims to renounce beliefs in the Ottoman network of the holy and its intercession

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[132] See Sayf al-Dīn al-Kātib, ed., *Al-Kitāb al-Ziyāra min Ajwibat Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymīyya Raḥmahu Allah 661-* 728 [The Book of Pilgrimage [based] on the Response of Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymīyya, may God have mercy upon him 1263-1328] (Beirut: Dār Maktabat al-Ḥayyā li-l-Ṭibāʿa wa al-Nashr, n.d.), 18-26, 27-75, and Knysh, *Ibn ʿArabī,* 87-88.

[133] Ibid., and Al-Matroudi, *Ḥanbalī School,* 18-20.

[134] See Appendix B and Grehan, *Twilight,* 102.

[135] For the Ottoman context, see Terzioğlu, "Preachers," 277. For a broader picture, Richard A. Nielsen, *Deadly Clerics: Blocked Ambition and the Paths to Jihad* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 1-24.

[136] Yılmaz, *Caliphate,* 86-89.

[137] See for instance, Imam Birgivi (a 16th Century Islamic Mystic), *The Path of Muhammad (Al-Tariqah al-Muhammadiyyah): A Book on Islamic Morals and Ethics & Last Will and Testament (Vasiyyetname),* interp. Shaykh Tosun Bayrak al-Jerrahi al-Halveti (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2005). This text was copied fervently during the early modern centuries. See for instance Yılmaz, *Caliphate,* 86-89, and Chih, *Sufism,* 78, 135.

[138] Yılmaz sees this as an expression of piety. See Yılmaz, *Caliphate,* 86-89.

[139] Marc David Baer, *Honored by the Glory of Islam: Conversion and Conquest in Ottoman Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 65.

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between the people and Allah. He underlined that only the Prophet fulfilled this role.[140] It is important here to note that Birgivī did not fully agree with Ibn Taymīyya's writing. Many differences existed between their works, yet one notable point of agreement was reflected in their rigorist attitudes towards saint veneration and shrine pilgrimages.[141] For a long time, Birgivī's work impressed other scholars and was widely circulated within the Ottoman Empire. His ideas influenced many scholars, including the eighteenth-century al-Nābulsī who wrote a commentary upon it.[142] Among more precarious notions of Birgivī's text is the obligation of each believer to take responsibility over distinguishing between right and wrong, making efforts actively to fight for what is just.[143]

Scholarship indicates that Birgivī Mehmed's teachings represented one of Kadızade Mehmed Effendī's (d.1635) most important influences. Kadızade Mehmed enjoyed wide popularity in the seventeenth-century Ottoman Empire. In Istanbul, he started a rigorist movement under the patronage of the state. Kadızade Mehmed was a Khalwatī *ʿālim* whose personal charisma and capable networking brought him to the court circles in Istanbul. He preached a version of Sunnism that expressed doubts in the mystical capacities of the established Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* networks. His views were more in favor of a puritanical reading of the scriptural sources. His followers, the *Kadızadeliler,* received Sultan Murad IV's (r.1623-1640) support[144] and Kadızade Mehmed acquired lucrative appointments in the Mosques of Selim, Bayazid, Süleyman I and finally

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[140] Birgivi, *The Path,* xiii-xv. Also see Muḥammad ʿAlī al-Birkiwī (al-Birkilī), *al-Ṭarīqa al-Muḥammadīyya wa al-Sīra al-Aḥmadīyya* [The Muḥammadan Path and the Life of the Prophet], ed. Muḥammad Nāẓim al-Nadawī (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2011), 33-62, 77-106, 160-161, 171-177.
[141] el-Rouayheb, *Intellectual History*, 15-18.
[142] See Philipp Bruckmayr, "The Particular Will (*al-irādat al-juzʾiyya*): Excavations Regarding a Latecomer in *Kalām* Terminology on Human Agency and its Position in Naqshbandi Discourse," *European Journal of Turkish Studies,* 13 (2011): 1-24. Available online at http://journals.openedition.org/ejts/4601
[143] These ideas also resonate with the opinions of Ibn Taymīyya. Yılmaz, *Caliphate,* 86-89.
[144] The Kadızadeli movement was receiving continuous state support until Mehmed IV (r.1648-1687). Grehan, *Twilight,* 102, Chih, *Sufism,* 135.

Ayasofya.[145] As with strategic extension or retraction of support to various schools of jurisprudence, the Ottoman court appointed Kadızade Mehmed on various important administrative positions. At the same time, the Ottomans kept ties to various Sufi branches, most predominantly the Khalwatīyya.[146] *Kadızadeliler* established ties with the Sufi Naqshbandīyya order, possibly due to the somewhat more rationalistic Naqshbandī attitude to doctrine and ritualized practice,[147] and amassed a large following, inspiring bouts of popular vigilantism. Many social practices deemed "innovations" (*bidʿa*) were condemned, such as Sufi dances, music, or pilgrimages to saints' tombs. The belief in *baraka* was placed under attacks as well, followed by public defamations of certain Muslim saints and mystical figures, such as Ibn ʿArabī or the legendary al-Khiḍr. There exists evidence that during the seventeenth century, Sufis often played a more significant role than other *ʿulamā'* for the development of state orthodoxy – the Khalwatīyya order in particular. Green considers this a Sufi monopoly over state appointments.[148] This might have further provoked the Kadızadeli wrath.[149] Kadızadelis were hostile to smoking, drinking coffee and alcohol. In Istanbul, as well as in some other provinces, such as Syria and Egypt, there developed an attitude in favor of strict control over female behavior.[150]

In a short period, many Sufis were defamed or executed, and some Sufi lodges permanently shut down, predominantly in Istanbul, Anatolia, and the Balkan provinces. Distinction between Ottoman Muslims and the *dhimmī*s were heavily emphasized, with the movement proposing tighter

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[145] Marc David Baer, *Honored by the Glory of Islam: Conversion and Conquest in Ottoman Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 65, and Zilfi, *Politics,* 132.
[146] Yılmaz, *Caliphate,* 48-51, and Terzioğlu, "Preachers," 257. Also see Grehan, *Twilight,* 102, Chih, *Sufism,* 135, and Baer, *Glory*, 68-70.
[147] Le Gall, *Sufism,* 152-156.
[148] Green, *Sufism,* 159-160.
[149] Terzioğlu, "Sunnitization," 319, or Le Gall, *Sufism,* 135-136.
[150] Sheikh, *Puritanism*, 2, and Douglas A. Howard, *A History of the Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 168-172. See also Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies,* third edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 370. It is a universal trend for religious rigorists to attempt establishing particular moral codes. See Thomas, *Decline,* 121. Further see Le Gall, *Sufism,* 150-151, or Curry, *Transformation,* 78-80.

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restrictions for the latter. The Jewish rebellion of Sabbatai Sevi[151] coincided with the Kadızadeli uprising, leading to harsh repercussions against the Jewish imperial subjects, including forced conversions and murder.[152] Street fights occurred in Istanbul, some churches and synagogues were vandalized,[153] and records remain of the first case of public stoning in centuries. In 1680, a boot maker from Istanbul accused his wife of interconfessional adultery. She was stoned to death under the gaze of the sultan despite the circumstantial character of the evidence.[154] The Kadızadeli movement spread through the Empire, and its influence was felt in Syria more visibly than in Egypt, due to its closer contacts with Istanbul.[155] Reading the Damascene Pole al-Nābulsī's writings, some scholars describe his authorship as a life-long mission of defending Sufism from Kadızadeli attacks.[156]

Rigorist Taymīyyan ideas were spread among some Syrian *ʿulamāʾ*. Originally from Tulkarm in Palestine (hence the name al-Karmī), Zayn al-Dīn Marʿī Ibn Yūsuf the Hanbalite (d.1623/1624) pursued education in Jerusalem before attending al-Azhar in Cairo. A period of study under many jurists from Syria, Palestine and Egypt, Mecca and Medina, allowed al-Karmī to acquire a tenure in the Cairene Sultan Hassan Mosque. He left many written works and received much praise due to his eloquence and an enviable scholarly reputation. The historian al-Muḥibbī

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[151] See Gershom Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi: The Mystical Messiah (1626-1676)* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1973).
[152] Alison Conway, and David Alvarez, eds., *Imagining Religious Toleration: A Literary History of an Idea, 1600-1830* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019), 162-163.
[153] Le Gall, *Sufism*, 150-153, also Baer, *Glory,* 71-75.
[154] Fariba Zarinebaf, *Crime & Punishment in Istanbul 1700-1800* (Berkeley&Los Angeles&London: University of California Press, 2010), 106.
[155] Chih, *Sufism,* 139.
[156] See Dina Le Gall, "Kadizadelis, Nakşbendis, and Intra-Sufi Diatribe in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul," *The Turkish Studies Association Journal* Vol. 28 No. 1/2 (2004): 19-20, and Michael Winter, "Egyptian and Syrian Sufis Viewing Ottoman Turkish Sufism: Similarities, Differences, and Interactions," in *The Ottoman Empire and its Heritage: Politics, Society and Economy,* ed. Suraiya Faroqhi, Halil İnalcık and Boğaç Ergene (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 93-112. Further see von Schlegell, "Sufism," 78-82.

(1542-1608) expressed admiration for al-Karmī in his biographical dictionary.[157] Al-Karmī's *Healing of Breasts* is committed to cults of saints and the *ziyāra*. Al-Karmī warns that the pilgrimages to saintly tombs represented blasphemy. In the *Healing of Breasts,* al-Karmī uses very strong language, condemning the veneration of Sufi thaumaturges and dismissing sainthood as superstition. Al-Karmī claims that those who believed in the *awliyā'* and participated in the *ziyāra* customs read the Scripture wrongly, or completely failed to read it. Because of their ignorance, al-Karmī continues, those who venerated Muslim saints defected from Islam (*khārij(ūn) al-islām*). Those who argued in favor of beliefs in the Ottoman network of the holy for al-Karmī represented ignoramuses (*jāhilūn*).[158] Established scholars, such as al-Nābulsī, in detail argued against such matters in their written works.

Al-Karmī considered that there was no difference between the saints and the rest of the people and expressed astonishment with the Ottoman subjects' custom to bring votive offerings and perform religious rituals at saintly tombs and sacred caves. He saw no reason for saintly tombs to be decorated with silken, gold-embroidered coverlets,[159] and severely admonished the habits of the pilgrims to sit on graves, lean on, touch, or kiss them.[160] ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī believed that the *awliyā'* were those whom God has graced, concluding that they deserved all honors. He considered the grave coverlets adequate markers for the graves of hallowed Muslims. Eighteenth-

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[157] See Muḥammad Amīn Ibn Faḍl Allah Ibn Muḥib al-Dīn Ibn Muḥammad al-Muḥibbī, *Khulāṣat al-Athār fī Aʿyān al-Qarn al-Ḥādī ʿAshar* [Summary of the Influential among the Notables of the Seventeenth Century], (n.p.: al-Maṭbaʿa al-Wahība, 1873), 358-361. Also see Farid al-Salim, "Landed Property and Elite Conflicts in Ottoman Tulkarm," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 47 (2011): 75. See also Sebastian Gunther, Todd Lawson and Christian Mauder, eds., *Roads to Paradise: Eschatology and Concepts of the Hereafter in Islam* (Leiden&Boston: Brill, 2017), 931-933, Michael Winter, "ʿUlama' between the State and the Society in Pre-modern Sunni Islam," in *Guardians of Faith in Modern Times: ʿUlama' in the Middle East*, ed. Meir Hatina (Leiden&Boston: Brill, 2009), 40. Finally, see Marʿī ibn Yūsuf al-Karmī al-Ḥanbalī, *Shifā' al-Ṣudūr fī Ziyārat al-Mashāhid wa al-Qubūr* [The Healing of Breast with what Concerns the Visitation of Shrines and Graves], ed. Asʿad Muḥammad al-Ṭayyib (Mecca: Maktabat Narrār Muṣṭafā al-Bāz, 1998), 7-10. Henceforth: *ShS.*
[158] Al-Karmī, *ShS,* 25-155.
[159] See Appendix A, Figure 3.
[160] Al-Karmī, *ShS,* 25, 37-45.

century *ʿulamāʾ* believed that the wonders of the *awliyāʾ* represented a proof of their purity and virtue, and found necessary for the people to venerate both the living and deceased Muslim saints.[161] Failure to do so indicated an infidel (*kāfir*),[162] who succumbed to ignorance (*jahl*).[163]

Like Ibn Taymīyya, al-Karmī was against the custom of building shrines around saintly graves. He was opposed to what he considered the worship of such sites as "talismans upon the earth."[164] ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī was not exceptional, however, when he endowed his own shrine complex in the Damascene al-Ṣāliḥīyya.[165] Al-Karmī was in Egypt surrounded by a sea of holy shrines. In addition to the widely venerated *aqtāb* Aḥmad al-Badawī and Ibrāhīm al-Dasūqī, whose *mawlids* were holidays of much importance in Egypt,[166] the number of sacred places in the province resembled that of pre-modern Syria.[167]

Al-Karmī was opposed to the customs of *ziyāra* due to his belief that the pilgrims were praying to saints directly.[168] He condemned the *mawlid* celebrations, as well as any other ceremonies organized in the vicinity of sacred tombs. He considered praying or sacrificing at the tombs impermissible, insisting that all such practices represented idolatry (*shirk*) and devilry (*shayṭānīyya*) as they were aimed to worship the *awliyāʾ* and not God. Al-Karmī believed that no good would come out of such customs, which he considered innovations (*bidʿa*).[169] ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī wrote that the pilgrims prayed in the vicinity of the holy graves due to their *baraka*. He believed that divine grace brought benefits to the faithful and their prayers. He apologetically

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[161] Al-Nābulsī, "Kashf," 162A-163B, 165-174A. Further see al-Nabhānī, 1:13-14.
[162] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:15-26, 46-47.
[163] Al-Nābulsī, "Kashf," 167A-173B.
[164] Al-Karmī, *ShS,* 51. The Hanbalite judge uses the term *masājid* to refer to the shrines. This was an older tradition. See al-Kātib, *Ziyāra*, 70-75.
[165] Al-Murādī, *Silk,* 3:44. Further see Appendix B, Map 7.
[166] See Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen, *The Mulid of al-Sayyid al-Badawi of Tanta,* trans. Colin Clement (Cairo&New York: The American University of Cairo Press, 2019), 83-108.
[167] Chih, *Sufism,* 1-21.
[197] Al-Karmī, *ShS,* 15-25, 75, 101-115, but throughout the entire text.
[169] Ibid., 25-27, 52, 55-57, 58-60, 72, 75.

cautions that the intent of *ziyāra* was primarily to glorify Allah. If the veneration of hallowed tombs and building shrines over them with all rituals that accompanied *ziyāra* were innovations, mused al-Nābulsī, they were good innovations (*bidʿa ḥasana*), justified by the *baraka* of the entombed and the necessity to honor their *ṣalāḥ*.[170] Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī developed many techniques for praying, supplicating God and defending from evil, emphasizing the benefits of praying within shrines. He defended these techniques from skepticism, pointing out that they are fully in accordance with the *sharīʿa*.[171]

Scholarship suggests that rigorist attitudes towards the premodern saintly cults may have been the reason that accomplished Sufi-*ʿulamā*ʾ felt moved to write amply in defense of their craft.[172] They condemned skepticism and reaffirmed the significance of the Ottoman network of the holy for the divine and worldly order. In addition to ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī, who identified ignorance (*jahl*) as the driving force behind the doubt in Muslim saints, deceased or still living,[173] a generation later, the Damascene judge Ibn ʿĀbidīn wrote about similar matters in what seems to be a response to the Wahhābī doctrine. He warned that doubt in Sufi wonders, believed to represent the consequences of divine grace, contradicted divine will. He called those who disbelieved saintly wonders and prophetic miracles innovators and infidels.[174] The Damascene *naqīb al-ashrāf,* Muḥammad al-Murādī, agreed with such attitudes and took care to record wonders of the *shaykh*s in his biographical work.[175]

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[170] Al-Nābulsī, "Kashf," 168B, and throughout this text.
[171] Muṣṭafā Ibn Kamāl al-Dīn Ibn ʿAlī al-Bakrī al-Ṣiddīqī, "al-Manhal al-ʿAdhb al-Sāʾigh li-Warrādihi fī Dhikr Ṣalwāt al-Ṭarīq wa Awrādihi" [Sweet Spring of Delights in what concerns the Prayers and Litanies of the (Sufi) Path], MS Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Hs. or. 14153, Berlin, 1A-9B. The manuscript is an autograph. Henceforth: "MA."
[172] Winter,"ʿUlamāʾ," 40, and Abdul-Karim Rafeq, "ʾAbd al-Ghani al-Nabulsi: Religious Tolerance and ʾArabnessʾ in Ottoman Damascus," in *Transformed Landscapes: Essays on Palestine and the Middle East in Honor of Walid Khalidi*, ed. Camille Mansour and Leila Fawaz (Cairo&New York: The American University of Cairo Press, 2009), 1-5.
[173] Al-Nābulsī, "Kashf," 167A-172A, al-Nābulsī, *Ḥadīqa,* 1:199-200.
[174] Ibn ʿAbidīn, *MR,* 2:5-15.
[175] For instance, al-Murādī, *Silk,* 1:229, 1:284, 2:76, 3:205, 3:69, 3:103, or 3:175.

Subsequent generations of the Damascene *'ulamā'* wrote similar apologetics due to their own historical context. For instance, the prominent Shafi'ite judge Yūsuf al-Nabhānī (1849-1932) wrote from a setting tinged by increasingly frequent theological disputes between established scholar-thaumaturges and the rising groups of modern reformers. In Damascus, Yūsuf al-Nabhānī was one of the most representative members of the conservative *'ulamā'* who faced criticism from the reformist groups, represented by the attitudes of Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī. Al-Qāsimī was in turn influenced by Muḥammad 'Abduh of Egypt.[176] Al-Nabhānī insisted on showing respect to deceased and living saints.[177]

After the failure of the Vienna campaign, the Grand Vizier Köprülü Mehmed Pasha (d.1661) received the orders to suppress the Kadızadeli movement. Köprülü Mehmed was infamous for his ruthlessness in quelling several rebellions and securing military triumphs for the Ottomans.[178] His interventions pushed the *Kadızadeliler* to the margins, away from political influence. Rigorist attitudes of the Kadızadelis, at times referred to as "Islamic puritanism,"[179] remained present long after Köprülü Mehmed's interventions.[180] It was perhaps the persistence of such rigorist thoughts in Egypt that made the Palestinian saint Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī start a revivalist Khalwatīyya campaign.[181] It is, however, important to emphasize that throughout the most of the early modern period, the overlap between the Sufi-*'ulamā'* remained uncontested, regardless of the extant streams of rigorist thought. The first attempt to outlaw the entire body of Sufi mystical

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[176] Commins, *Islamic Reform,* 45-46, 116-118.
[177] Al-Nabhāni, *JK,* 1:24-40. Skepticism represented a universal phenomenon to many different religions. See J. L. Schellenberg, "On Religious Skepticism," in *Prolegomena to a Philosophy of Religion* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 2005), 95-105.
[178] Baer, *Glory,* 75-77.
[179] Brian S. Turner and Kamaludeen Mohamed Nasir, eds., *The Sociology of Islam: Collected Essays of Brian S. Turner* (London&New York: Routledge, 2013), 34.
[180] An interesting eighteenth-century chronicle from Sarajevo casts light on street violence provoked by the Kadızadelis around the Balkans. See Mula Mustafa Ševki Bašeskija, *Ljetopis* [Daily Events] *1746-1804,* ed.&trans. Mehmed Mujezinović (Sarajevo: Sarajevo Publishing, 1997).
[181] Chih, *Sufism*, 32-36, 118.

beliefs and practices occurred during the eighteenth century with the rise of the Wahhābī movement in the emerging First Emirate of Dirʿīyah.

Muḥammad Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb (1703-1792) was born in a family of Hanbalite scholars coming from the Najdi village of 'Uyayna. Allegedly, he became a *ḥāfiẓ* when he was ten years old and received a number of *ijāza*s in Mecca and Medina. He soon became a *mudarris* in Medina's mosques, where he could get acquainted with the rigorists' written works. For instance, al-Karmī's texts were read within the ulamaic circles in the Muslim holy cities during the early modern period, and they retained prominence until the present.[182] ʿAbd Allah Ibn Ibrāhīm Ibn Sayf and Muḥammad Ḥayyāt al-Sindī, both members of the Sufi Naqshbandīyya order, took Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb as a student. Ibn Taymīyya's religious attitudes influenced these two scholars, of whom the latter became one of the key individuals for the spread of Muslim rigorist thought through the Indian territories.[183]

Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb's doctrine accused the veneration of saints as idolatry (*shirk*). He urged the Muslims to adhere to the Prophet's *Sunna* and abstain from any excess. In his views, any religious practice which was not explicit in the Scripture represented heresy.[184] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb introduced an innovative thought through his denial of the Sufis' role as sanctioned interpreters of Islam.[185] Because of this idea, he was expelled from Basra and never managed to settle down in Damascus. 'Uyayna banished him as well.[186] In Dirʿīyah, which was under the

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[182] Al-Karmī, *ShS,* 6. Also see Alekseĭ Mikhaĭlovich Vasil′ev, *The History of Saudi Arabia* (London: Saqi Books, 1998), 189.

[183] Sayed Khatab, *Understanding Islamic Fundamentalism: The Theological and Ideological Basis of Al-Qa'ida's Political Tactics* (Cairo&New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2011), 63, Sherifa Zuhur, *Saudi Arabia* (Santa Barbara: Clio, 2011), 39.

[184] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb was eager to identify heretics. See Chih, *Sufism,* 137. Further see Samira Haj, "The Islamic Reform Tradition," in *Reconfiguring Islamic Tradition: Reform, Rationality, and Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 1-30, and David Commins, *The Wahhabi Mission and Saudi Arabia* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 1-40. For more about the movement as it was seen in Egypt during the nineteenth century, see Lane, *Egyptians*, 1:128.

[185] Ibid., 138.

[186] Haj, "Reform," 17.

control of the Suʿūd Clan of the Annazah Tribe, a partnership was formed between Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb and Muḥammad Ibn Suʿūd (1710-1765) during 1744. Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb was charged with matters of religion in the newly emerging Emirate of Dirʿīyah.[187] His religious views were organized into a text named *The Book of Divine Unity* (*al-kitāb al-tawḥīd*). The followers of his teachings labelled themselves "*al-muwaḥḥidūn.*"[188]

Within the First Emirate of Dirʿīyah, the Wahhābīs commenced with the purges of the previously established ulamaic circles. Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb ordered the destruction of the shrine to Zayd Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb in 'Uyayna, along with some other Muslim graves. Trees around these sites were also cut down.[189] Another alleged adulteress was stoned to death. Scholars weave a narrative that describes Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb's reluctance to pass the sentence to stoning.[190] Popular vigilantism increased under the influence of Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb's rigorism. Vandalization of Muslim shrines[191] and Bedouin raids caused much concern in some Syrian regions along the pilgrimage routes.[192] The Muwaḥḥidūn ultimately became intolerable for the Ottoman administration. In 1803, the Emirate's forces took Mecca and Medina, putting forward a challenge

[187] Ibid., 17-18, John Obert Voll, *Islam: Continuity and Change in the Modern World* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1982), 53-54. Crucial was Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb's insistence on obedience to the prince. See Ayman S. al-Yassini, "Saudi Arabia: The Kingdom of Islam," in *Religions and Societies: Asia and the Middle East,* ed. Carlo Caldarola (Berlin: Mouton Publishers, 1982), 69-72, and Israr Hasan, *The Conflict Within Islam: Expressing Religion Through Politics* (Bloomington: iUniverse Inc., 2011), 10-15.
[188] Zuhur, *Saudi Arabia,* 39, Commins, *Mission,* 26-30, Haj, "Reform," 17-18, and Voll, *Islam,* 53-54.
[189] Afshin Shahi, *The Politics of Truth Management in Saudi Arabia* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 47.
[190] Perhaps in a form of *immitatio Muḥammadi.* See Leila Ahmed, *Quiet Revolution: The Veil's Resurgence from the Middle East to America* (New Haven&London: Yale University Press, 2011), 95, or Jon Amarjani, *Modern Islamist Movements: History, Religion, and Politics* (Oxford: Wiley, 2012), 125-126.
[191] The vandalization of the shrine in Karbala possibly earned Ibn Saʿūd's son, Abd al-ʿAzīz, death at the hands of a vengeful assassin in 1803. See Shahi, *Truth,* 49, and Zuhur, *Saudi Arabia,* 41.
[192] That the Ottoman subjects were highly concerned with such raids was visible from the eighteenth-century Shāmī source material. See for instance, al-Bakrī, "KhH," 19B-20A, 21B. Further see Canaan, *Saints*, 2-3, 36, 93-95, and John Lewis Burckhardt, *Notes on the Bedouins and Wahabys: Collected During his Travel in the East* (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1831), 168-176. Further see Karl K. Barbir, *Ottoman Rule in Damascus, 1708-1758* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 97-107, Mohannad al-Mubaidin, "Aspects of the Economic History of Damascus During the First Half of the Eighteenth Century," trans. W. Matt Malcycky, in *Syria and Bilad al-Sham under Ottoman Rule,* ed. Peter Sluglett and Stefan Weber (Leiden&Boston: Brill, 2010), 137-154, Shahi, *Truth,* 49, Zuhur, *Saudi Arabia,* 41.

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to the Ottoman claim of the caliphate.[193] Pilgrims were banned from performing the *Ḥajj* unless they would accept to conduct their prayers under the supervision of Dirʿīyah's own *ʿulamā'*.[194] Muḥammad ʿAlī (1769-1848) of Egypt was ordered to deal with the Wahhābīs with extreme prejudice. By 1818, the Saʿūdī state was forced to retreat into Najd, and Ibn Suʿūd was taken to Istanbul where he was executed.[195]

A contemporary of the Wahhābī movement, the Damascene judge Muḥammad Ibn ʿĀbidīn made remarks that the rigorist views of the Wahhābīs represented an atrocity committed by deniers of faith (*munkir*). To believe only in what can be seen or heard was ridiculous for the Damascene judge who continuously emphasized the reality of the preternatural.[196] Ibn ʿĀbidīn praised the *ṣalāḥ* of Allah's saints.[197] In response to extant theological disputes, Ibn ʿĀbidīn left a treatise on matters concerning religion. He described in detail the ranks within the Ottoman network of the holy, praising the Sufis and the saints among them, while ferociously condemning skeptics. He further took efforts to outline the differences between saintly powers and the magic of infidels.[198] Like al-Nābulsī of the previous generation of scholars, Ibn ʿĀbidīn encouraged prayers in the vicinity of saintly shrines.[199] Later during the twentieth century, some Sufi-*ʿulamā'* like al-Nabhānī amply wrote about the the wonders of saints, building on the opinions of scholars like Ibn ʿĀbidīn and al-Nābulsī.[200]

According to the remaining sources, in eighteenth-century Damascus Sufism seemed fundamental for Ottoman Sunnism. The Sufi- *ʿulamā'* had an influence on socio-politics, economy,

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[193] Commins, *Islamic Reform*, 108.
[194] Ibid., *Islamic Reform*, 22.
[195] Ibid.
[196] Ibn ʿAbidīn, *MR*, 2:5-26. Al-Nābulsī without reservation dismisses such people as absolute ignoramuses (sg. jāhil), Al-Nābulsī, "Kashf," 167A-168B.
[197] Ibn ʿAbidīn, *Radd,* 2:114-116, 242-243, and *MR,* 2:14-18, 36, 42-47.
[198] Ibn ʿAbidīn, *MR*, 2-61.
[199] Ibn ʿAbidīn, *Radd*, 2:114-116.
[200] Al-Nabhānī, *JK*, 19-21, 24-40.

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and faith within a world that was perceived as only partially seen. In its unseen part dwelled the deceased Muslim saints, who were the intercessors between the people and God. Furthermore, the Ottoman network of the holy did not represent a subject of theologians' theories only. A vast body of thaumaturgical practice existed and continuously developed in eighteenth-century Ottoman Syria. For instance, the invisible part of the world was in the popular imaginary filled with various dangerous creatures. Muslim theologians and jurists took time to write about such beings. Contending with them was believed easier with the help of the divine grace recipients who, in their role as a priestly sodality, often assisted the people with banishing unseen evil. Cooperation with these invisible entities was strictly admonished, but the possibility of making such pacts was never denied, further illuminating the traditions of popular belief within eighteenth-century Province of Damascus.

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3. Haunting the Shadows: Contending with the *Jinn* between the Visible and the Invisible Worlds

The Arabs believed in invisible entities that cohabited nature with the human beings, calling these creatures the *jinn* (or *jān;* both are plural forms of m. sg. *jinni,* f. sg. *jinnīya*). These daemons were without any specific corporeal form and were therefore most often unseen. The *jinn* featured in the poetry of the pre-Islamic period. After the emergence of Islam they appeared in the Qur'ān and in many other written works. They remain in popular belief until the present.

Describing them as capricious beings with a penchant for mischief, classical texts told of troubles this unseen force caused to human beings. It was believed that the *jinn* used their powers to swoon, mislead and enrapture travelers, at times causing dire consequences.[1] Their bewitching call (*hātaf*)[2] was heard in the desert for centuries. Some scholarship etymologically relates the term

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[1] Abdulla L. Tayib, "Pre-Islamic Poetry," and M. J. Kister, "The Sīrah Literature," in *Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period,* ed. A.F.L. Beeston, T.M. Johnstone, R.B. Serjeant and G.R. Smith, (Cambridge: New York, 1983), 41-48, 358, Harry Munt, Touraj Daryaee, Omar Edaibat, Robert Hoyland and Isabel Toral Niehoff, "Arabic and Persian Sources for Pre-Islamic Arabia," in *Arabs and Empires before Islam,* ed. Greg Fisher (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 414, and al-Azmeh, *Emergence,* 207-212.

[2] Amira al-Zein, *Islam, Arabs, and the Intelligent World of the Jinn* (Syracuse NY: Syracuse University Press, 2009), 74.

jinn to Aramaic words used for gods who turned malevolent and fell to the status of demons.[3] Similar relations may be drawn in other historical contexts as well, such as among the Greeks during the pre-Christian era.[4] Some Ottoman Arab authors from much later centuries employed similar comparisons. For instance, in the *Healing of Breasts,* the Hanbalite rigorist al-Karmī compares the pre-Islamic deities, such as al-ʿUzza and al-Lat, with the *jinn.*[5]

This chapter analyzes Syrian eighteenth-century source material about the *jinn.* Legal texts authored by some renowned Syrian *ʿulamāʾ* such as Muḥammad Ibn ʿĀbidīn or ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī show that the unseen *jinn* during the eighteenth century represented a serious matter to contend with. Further reading into Sufi grimoires distributed across the Ottoman domain during the early modern period shows that the thaumaturgical professionals of the Empire had a number of ways to deal with this daemonic species. The presence of the Sufis as overseers of ritual proceedings aimed at contending with the *jinn* was preferred by the people. The Sufis were believed capable of empowering the efficacy of rituals due to their *baraka.* Purging malignant energies represented another aspect through which the Ottoman priestly sodality developed the specialized character of their profession.[6] In widespread beliefs, the *jinn* represented preternatural

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[3] Irving M. Zeitlin, *The Historical Muhammad* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007), 54, and Simon O'Meara, "From Space to Place: The Quranic Infernalization of the Jinn," in *Locating Hell in Islamic Traditions*, ed. Christian Lange (Leiden&Boston: Brill, 2015), 60. Further see Aziz al-Azmeh, "Paleo-Muslim Angels and Other Preternatural Beings," in *The Intermediate Worlds of Angels: Islamic Representations of Celestial Beings in Transcultural Contexts,* ed. Sara Kuehn, Stefan Leder and Hans-Peter Pökel (Beirut: Ergon Verlag in Komission, 2019), 144.

[4] For instance, the terms *theoi* and *daemones* were used before Christianity to indicate similar dynamics, and the latter became indicative of malevolent creatures only with the emergence of Christian tradition. See Francis Macdonald Cornford, *From Religion to Philosophy: A Study in the Origins of Western Speculation* (London: E. Arnold, 1912), 96, Ken Frieden, *Genius and Monologue* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 35-40, Harold Bloom, *Figures of Capable Imagination* (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), 80, or R. M. Van Den Berg, *Proclus' Hymns: Essays, Translations, Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 178. Further see al-Azmeh, *Emergence,* 294. Simon O'Meara sees the *jinn* legends as an autochtonous development among the Arabs. See O'Meara, "Jinn," 59.

[5] Al-Karmī, *ShS,* 58-60. This was a tendency from the medieval period as well. See al-Azmeh, *Emergence,* 294.

[6] Comparable to the Christian traditions, and the role of Christian wonderworkers in battles against demons. For instance, Thomas, *Decline,* 34-35, 56-57, 573.

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creatures that were succeptible to the grace of the Ottoman network of the holy, defining an aspect of its role in premodern Sunni beliefs.

The common people developed modes of interacting with these creatures as well. Such interaction was usually performed through a series of protective rites, rituals aimed at warding off the *jinn* or else coercing them into particular actions. Analyses of such methods help understand how eighteenth-century Ottoman subjects of Bilād al-Shām understood the world around them, and how they used their thaumaturgical resources to contend with its dangerous elements. Furthermore, it shall be shown that most practices tied to defense against unseen evils had their roots in ulamaic writing, illuminating a religious culture spread across the social scale. The history of the customs related to interacting with the *jinn* demonstrate the continuity between the visible and invisible worlds[7] in the beliefs of eighteenth-century Syrian subjects.

Numerous popular tales about the *jinn* possess a didactic element as well. Daemonic assaults against humans often bore relation to improper behavior. Relation between daemonic attacks and undesired behavior persisted both in the beliefs of the commoners and the Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* in office over the course of centuries. Previously, it was indicated that the Muslims often connected *ṣalāḥ* with *baraka*. It was believed that the *ṣāliḥūn* were protected from the malevolent entities due to their grace. On the other hand, tales about the *jinn* during the eighteenth century (and in other periods) often featured individuals who failed to perform an action prescribed by religious authorities or to abstain from undesirable practices. Jinnic attacks were often interpreted as the absence of *ṣalāḥ.* The didactic function of the tales about daemons in priestly texts or popular

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[7] Al-Azmeh, "Angels," 144-148.

narratives does not represent a uniquely Arab nor Muslim development. It is evident in other scriptural religions,[8] as well as in many other traditions.[9]

Ibn ʿĀbidīn wrote about the *jinn* in substantial detail, describing the character and nature of this unseen species. He used the beliefs in the *jinn* to deliver a series of warnings to his readers. As in his writings about the Muslim saints, Ibn ʿĀbidīn insisted on the necessity to recognize the reality of jinnic existence, condemning those who believed only in what they were able to see.[10] In addition to describing proceedings of rituals aimed at interacting with the *jinn,* Sufi manuals that circulated the Ottoman realm during the eighteenth century contain data on this unseen force in terms of its preferred habitats and common behavioral patterns. The beliefs in the *jinn* contain substantive comparative potential with beliefs in daemons pertinent to other scriptural religions, and the study of such beliefs may yield significant contributions to the broader field of comparative religion.

3.1. Nature of the Beast: What Were the *Jinn* and Where They Dwelled in the Syrian Eighteenth Century

A fully coherent classification of the *jinn* as a species of invisible beings did not exist during the premodern centuries.[11] In the eighteenth century, Ibn ʿĀbidīn the jurist appeared to use the terms

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[8] For instance, Thomas, *Decline,* 702, Linda C. Olson, *Visions in the Other World (Heaven, Hell, Purgatory) in Medieval French Saints' Lives and Other Didactic Literature,* vol.2 (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1996), 347-348, 440, Joyce Ruth Manheimer Galpern, *The Shape of Hell in Anglo-Saxon England* (Berkeley: University of California, 1977), 31-50, or Mary R. Rambaran-Olm, *'John the Baptist's Prayer' or 'The Descent into Hell' from the Exeter Book Text, Translation and Critical Study* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2014), 103-142. Also see Takami Matsuda, *Death and Purgatory in Middle English Didactic Poetry* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1997), 109-112.
[9] Among many examples, see Meghan Henning, "Learning from the Dead: Hades as an Expression of *Paidea* in Greek and Latin Literature," and "Conclusion: The Landscape of Hell and the Cultivation of Early Christianity," in *Educating Early Christians through the Rhetoric of Hell* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 43-82, 224-232, Christopher Leydon, "Judas, his Sister, and the Miraculous Cock in the Midle Irish Poem *Crist ro crochadh*," *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium,* vol. 28 (2008), 152-168.
[10] Ibn ʿAbidīn, *MR*, 2:26.
[11] Al-Azmeh, *Emergence,* 294.

jinn or *jān* to refer to various creatures believed to elude natural sight. He identified the malevolent among them as *shayāṭīn* ("devils;" sg. *shayṭān*).[12] The especially powerful malignant *jinn* have at times been called *ʿifrīt* as well.[13] The Qur'ān adopted the *jinn* from older beliefs,[14] among many other elements pertinent to pre-Islamic Arab and other scriptural traditions. The *jinn* of the Muslim scripture could not deny divine will, as supremacy of Allah was uncontested. Some members of this unseen species became Muslims themselves.[15]

Scholarship sometimes tends to compare the *jinn* with Allah's angels (*malak*; pl. *malā'ika*). Such tendencies also existed during the medieval period.[16] Scholars indicate similarities between the powers attributed to *malā'ika* and the *jinn,* such as the power of flight or transmogrification.[17] Aziz al-Azmeh notes that these similarities are reflected in historical inconsistencies concerning nomenclature and classification of Muslim unseen forces.[18] These inconsistences are present in other scriptural religions as well.[19]

Amira al-Zein and Robert Lebling see similarities between the *jinn* and the angels in terms of their imagined anatomy.[20] Some distinctions are evident, however. In the eighteenth century, Ibn ʿĀbidīn distinguished the *jinn* from the angels by their imagined outward appearance, as well as their role in the world. Both the angels and the *jinn* were of course creations of God.[21] Ibn ʿĀbidīn believed that the angels were created from light in aesthetically appealing forms, while the *jinn*

[12] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:16-23. Also see Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima,* 142-143, and Abū ʿUthmān ʿAmr Ibn Baḥr al-Jāhiẓ, *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* [The Book of Animals] ed. ʿAbd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1967), 6:190-193. This is not his unique tendency, however. See Robert Lebling, *Legends of the Fire Spirits: Jinn and Genies from Arabia to Zanzibar* (London&New York: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 7-8.
[13] Ibid. this is a widely known term due to the acclaim of *Arabian Nights.* See Lebling, *Jinn*, 7-8.
[14] Al-Zein, *Jinn,* 8-12, and O'Meara, "Jinn," 65-68.
[15] Beeston, et al., *Literature,* 212.
[16] Al-Azmeh, *Emergence,* 294-295.
[17] Al-Zein, *Jinn,* 34-46, Lebling, *Jinn,* 1-6, al-Azmeh, *Emergence,* 294.
[18] Ibid. Further see al-Azmeh, "Angels," 148-150. Also see Al-Jāhiẓ, *Ḥayawān,* 6:220-223.
[19] Stephen Burge, *Angels in Islam: Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī*'s *al-Ḥabā'ik fī akhbār al-malā'ik* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), 1-28.
[20] Al-Zein, *Jinn,* 34-46, Lebling, *Jinn,* 1-6.
[21] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR*, 2:14.

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had grotesque bodies made of air. The *shayāṭīn* were made of fire. Ibn ʿĀbidīn's writings reflect a tradition of belief that lasted throughout centuries. Similar depictions of the *jinn* may be found in medieval Arab scholarship.[22] The angels were obedient to their creator who used them as emissaries. They spent the rest of their time observing worldly affairs during flight. Al-Zein reads source material to add that each angel frequently had a single function as the purpose of its existence, such as carrying the divine message, or bringing punishment to evil-doers.[23] The *jinn* retained their freedom of will,[24] allowing Ibn ʿĀbidīn, like many other Muslim scholars, to classify some of them as devils due to their malevolence.[25]

Ibn ʿĀbidīn and ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī believed that the *jinn* were created earlier than human beings. These creatures were believed to approach humanity with alternating curiosity and hatred.[26] Ibn ʿĀbidīn further warns that it was at times easy to provoke them to anger. They would then become mischievous and cause trouble to humans.[27] Although unseen, the *jinn* were believed to cohabit the human world and equally take part in it.[28] Due to such beliefs, Muslim zoological dictionaries often included the *jinn* among the rest of the worldly fauna. Robert Lebling indicates a zoological dictionary from the fourteenth century and illuminates the belief in the *jinn* as it was

[22] Ibid., 2:16-18. This corresponds to the findings in relevant scholarship, which adds that it was believed that the humans were created from clay. See Lebling, *Jinn,* 1-6, and O'Meara, "Jinn," 58. For the history of such beliefs see Kamāl al-Dīn al-Damīrī and Zakarīyā Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Maḥmūd al-Kammūnī al-Qazwīnī, *Ḥayāt al-Ḥayawān al-Kubrā wa bi-Hāmishih Kitāb ʿAjāʾib al-Makhlūqāt wa al-Ḥayawānāt wa Gharāʾib al-Mawjūdāt* [The Major Book of the Life of Animals and The Book of Marvels of Creatures and Animals and Strange Things Existing], Two Volumes in One (Cairo: al-Matbaʿa al-ʿĀmira al-Sharqīyya, 1888), 1:178-185. Henceforth: *KAM.* For the grotesque depictions of the *jinn,* see Lane, *Egyptians,* 1:283-284. Medieval authors gave similar depictions. For instance, see the illustration in Zakarīyā Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Maḥmūd al-Kammūnī al-Qazwīnī, "Kitāb-i ʿAjāʾib al-Makhlūqāt wa Gharāʾib al-Mawjūdāt" [The Book of Marvels of Creatures and Strange Things Existing], MS The National Library of Medicine, 9409277, Bethesda, 262A. Samples are available online at: https://www.nlm.nih.gov/hmd/arabic/natural_hist3.html (Last accessed: April 15th 2021).

[23] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR*, 2:16-18, Al-Zein, *Jinn,* 32-52, and al-Azmeh, "Angels," 148-150.

[24] See Canaan, *Saints,* 171, 281.

[25] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:16-22. Such distinctions also represented a much longer trend, not exclusive to Islam. See al-Damīrī and al-Qazwīnī, *KAM,* 187-196. Further see Thomas, *Decline,* 560-570 for a comparative perspective.

[26] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:16-18. See also al-Nābulsī, *Fatḥ*, 177-179. Further see Michael W. Dols, Majnūn: *The Madman in Medieval Islamic Society,* ed. Diana E. Immisch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 215.

[27] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:16-22.

[28] Al-Azmeh, *Emergence,* 206-208.

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present among the Muslims in the twentieth century as well. To illustrate, Lebling reads the work of Muhammad Asad, a Pakistani diplomat, on the *jinn*.[29] However, even before the fourteenth century, zoological lexicons written by Muslim scholars contained the descriptions of the *jinn* as common elements in earthly fauna. Such was the case since the earliest centuries of Islam.[30] These written works indicate the belief in the continuity between the seen and the unseen. Ibn ʿĀbidīn believed that the accidental sighting of an angel, a prophet, the *jinn* or a jinnic battle in the sky,[31] represented a wonder due to the beliefs that all such entities were at most times invisible to human beings.[32] Eighteenth-century *ʿulamāʾ* believed that Muslim saints were aware of such entities' presence due to their grace.[33]

Ibn ʿĀbidīn believed that the *jinn* were capable of inhabiting the element of air, or fire in the case of the malevolent *shayāṭīn*.[34] Taufik Canaan observed similar beliefs among the common people of early twentieth-century Palestine.[35] More broadly and like the humans, the *jinn* were believed to have lived in their own communities, also divided into clans.[36] It was believed that jinnic clans inhabited natural objects such as trees, rocks, or caves. They would often be fond of settling in human-built structures as well – in particular the water cisterns and bathhouses,[37] as well as some domestic locations, such as the hearth, or the threshold.[38] Some *jinn* were believed

[29] Lebling, *Jinn,* 4-5, 256-258.
[30] Roger Allen, *An Introduction to Arabic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 61, 118-120, 141-142, 218-220. Further see al-Azmeh, *Emergence,* 207.
[31] James Grehan reads al-Nābulsī's record of one battle between the *jinn* at Grehan, *Twilight,* 143. It is fairly known that the medieval scholar Ibn Faḍlān mistook the Aurora Borealis for another instance of such a battle. See Aḥmad Ibn Faḍlān, *Riḥlat Ibn Faḍlān Ilā Bilād al-Turuk wa al-Rūs wa al-Ṣaqāliba 921* [Travels of Ibn Fadlan in the Lands of the Turks, the Rus, and the Slavs during 921], ed. Shākir Luʿaybī (Abu Dhabi: Dār al-Suwaydī li-l-Nashr wa al-Tawzīʿ, 2003), 82-83.
[32] See Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR*, 2:22-23.
[33] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR*, 2:18, and al-Kīlānī, "DB," 10A. Further see Lane, *Egyptians,* 1:300.
[34] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:16-22.
[35] See Canaan, *Saints,* 86-88. Connecting fire with daemonic forces is an old theme in numerous religious traditions.
[36] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR*, 2:20-23, Al-Zein, *Jinn,* 15, al-Azmeh, *Emergence,* 209.
[37] Lane, *Egyptians,* 2:37.
[38] Lebling, *Jinn,* 65-71.

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to ride animals, such as wolves or ostriches.[39] Others possessed the power of flight as well as of crossing between the visible and invisible worlds.[40]

Grimoires circulated during the eighteenth century describe twelve clans of the *jinn.* The *Compendium of All Arts*,[41] is a Sufi manual containing detail about the *jinn* as well as instructions to properly pray and inscribe talismans.[42] According to this text, jinnic clans corresponded to the signs of the zodiac.[43] The manual explains that humans were more prone to assaults of the clan belonging to their birth sign. This relation between the humans and the *jinn* according to zodiac signs is reflected in certain scholarly theories according to which every human being was believed to be accompanied by their *doppelgänger*.[44] The relevant Arabic term is *qarīn*,[45] which inspired scholarly investigations into guardian angels along with the mischievous *jinn* that were believed to shadow human beings.[46] The *Compendium* seems to be a training manual aimed to instruct the readers into the procedure of various thaumaturgical rites and rituals. Its text contains instructions to dispel the influences of the evil forces. It might be presumed that its circulation was restricted

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[39] Al-Zein, *Jinn,* 92-95. Also see William Smith, *Religion of the Semites: The Fundamental Institutions* (London&New York, 2002), 90-139. Further, Dols, *Majnūn,* 215.
[40] Al-Azmeh, *Emergence,* 209, and al-Zein, *Jinn,* 39.
[41] "Majmūʿ min kul Fann yabḥath annahu Jawāhir al-Kilām min Shiʿr wa Mathal wa Fawā'id min kul Fāḍil wa Ākhar al-Kitāb Asmā' wa Adʿiyāt min kul Shay" [Compendium of All Arts, the Jewels of Speech and of Poetry, Sayings and Proverbs and All that is Useful, with the Last Part of the Book containing Seals and Invocations for Everything], MS Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Glaser 100, Berlin. This is a composite text with multiple unidentified authors. I am reading a copy from 1785, comprised of texts in Arabic and Ottoman Turkish languages, which indicates wide circulation. Henceforth: "MMKF."
[42] See chapter 6.
[43] Daemonology and astrology were often entangled in beliefs and practice. See, for instance, Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima,* 402-410, or Saif, "Medicine and Magic," 313-315. This is not unique to Muslim tradition, as can be seen from Thomas, *Decline,* 425-426, 755-756, Tim Hegedus, "Astrology as the Work of Demons," in *Early Christianity and Ancient Astrology* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), 125-138, Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum, "Porphyry of Tyre on the *Daimon,* Birth and the Stars," in *Neoplatonic Demons and Angels,* ed. Luc Brisson, Seamus O'Neill and Andrei Timotin (Leiden&Boston: Brill, 2018), 102-139, Dorian Gieseler Greenbaum, *The Daimon in Hellenistic Astrology: Origins and Influence* (Boston: Brill, 2016), 1-11, or Theodore Otto Wedel, *Astrology in the Middle Ages* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2005), 60-75. The correspondence between jinnic clans and the zodiac is present in beliefs today as well, and can be noticed on many popular internet forums.
[44] Al-Azmeh, *Emergence,* 206.
[45] It is possible to identify this term in Qur'ān 4:38, 37:51, 43:36, and 50:23.
[46] Lana Nasser, "The Jinn: Companion in the Realm of Dreams and Imagination," in *Dreaming in Christianity and Islam: Culture, Conflict, and Creativity,* ed. Kelly Bulkeley, Kate Adams and Patricia M. Davis (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2009), 144-155.

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to confined circles of religious professionals,[47] which then indicates the importance of the protective functions of the Sufi- *ʿulamāʾ* for the Muslim societies of the premodern times.

The copy of the *Compendium* from the eighteenth century seems to distinguish the jinnic clans mostly by their zodiac. Their preferred domains and the particular problems they most often caused to humans were very similar. For instance, the Gemini Clan (*qabīlat al-jawzāʾ*), also known as Children of the Desert (*banū hawjal*[48]), resided in mountainous terrains, reefs, or the clouds, and was mostly responsible for body aches and arthritic problems. Members of this clan were believed occasionally to ride lions.[49] The Cancer Clan (*qabīlat al-saraṭān*), also known as Children of the Tempest (*banū zawbaʿa*) inhabited the cliffs and mountain ridges. The Cancer Clan caused malignant growths on the body, as well as aches and pains in the vital organs and the back. The Virgo Clan (*qabīlat al-sunbula*[50]) – the Children of the Birds (*banū al-ṭayyār*) – inhabited threshholds, as well as some trees. The Birds were believed to cause various ophthalmological problems, malignant growths, as well as epileptic fits.[51]

According to beliefs, the *jinn* possessed the power of transmogrification. They passed through the visible world in the form of various animals such as cats, dogs, goats,[52] and most often

[47] See chapter 4.
[48] *Hevcel* in Ottoman Turkish bears a variety of meanings out of which some indicate a vast desert without landmarks, a foolish man, or a female camel driven mad. Al-Zein also finds that the term corresponds with the name of a *jinnī* who compels poets into producing works without much quality, see *Jinn,* 126, 181.
[49] "MMKF," 106A.
[50] While in Arabic the Virgo sign most often corresponds to the word *ʿadhrāʾ* (lit. "virgin"), *al-sunbula* corresponds to the Spica star in the Virgo constellation where it represents the brightest celestial body and has sometimes been used to symbolize this zodiac sign. See Rudolf Kippenhahn, *100 Billion Suns: The Birth, Life, and Death of the Stars,* trans. Jean Steinberg (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983),12-14. The star historically had symbolical importance for various neo-Platonists as well as other thaumaturges. See, for instance, Bernadette Brady, *Brady's Book of Fixed Stars* (Boston: Weiser Books, 1998), 270-275. For the Muslim context, see, for instance, al-Damīrī and al-Qazwīnī, *KAM,* 145, 190, or Abū Ḥanīfah Aḥmad Ibn Dāwūd Dīnawarī, *Kitāb al-Nabāt* [Book of Plants], ed. Muhammad Hamidullah (Karatashi: Bayt al-Ḥikma, 1993), 87. Further see James Rosser, "The Zodiacal Constellations," in *The Stars and Constellations: How and When to Find and Tell Them,* ed. W.H. Rosser (London: Charles Wilson, 1879), 18.
[51] "MMKF,"107A-107B. Further see Canaan, *Saints,* 37.
[52] Canaan, *Saints,* 244, Al-Zein, *Jinn,* 92, Lebling, *Jinn,* 3.

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serpents.[53] Ibn ʿĀbidīn further related the *jinn* to scorpions, vermin, and serpents.[54] Various religious traditions through history used serpents as symbols[55] of both good and evil.[56] In twentieth-century Palestine, Taufik Canaan observes a linguistic distinction in the usage of the terms *ʿarbīd, thuʾbān,* and *ḥayya* in relation to the *jinn.* All indicating serpents, the former two words would be used for venomous varieties and bore relation to the *shayāṭīn,* while the latter word, the root of which is related to "life" as well, seemed related to benign *jinn.*[57] The eighteenth-century Syrian sources reflect similar distinctions between the terms *thuʿubān* and *ḥayya*.[58] Ibn ʿĀbidīn's language seems to indicate that the reptiles' color belongs among the elements of distinction. He considered more likely for the malignant *jinn* to transmogrify into darker-colored serpents. Benign daemons were believed to turn into white or bright-colored snakes. Slaying a white snake (*al-ḥayya al-bayḍāʾ*) was ill-advised, due to the imagined possibility that a benevolent *jinnī* – perhaps even a Muslim – inhabited the creature (although Ibn ʿĀbidīn's language seems to betray disdain for all serpents equally).[59] Consequences were dire for those who would strike a white serpent.[60] Lashing back in anger, the *jinn* were believed able to cause severe injuries or paralysis.[61] On the other hand, sighting a *thuʾbān* was a bad omen to Ibn ʿĀbidīn, who advises approaching such a beast with utmost caution, lest its wrath be provoked. Ibn ʿĀbidīn further relates that immoral people may have attracted snakes to signal their fall from grace.[62]

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[53] Lane, *Egyptians,* 1:289, 299-300. Also see Al-Azmeh, *Emergence,* 208, and al-Zein, *Jinn,* 21.
[54] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR*, 2:21.
[55] See, for instance, Roswell Park, *The Evil Eye, Thanatology, and Other Essays* (Boston: The Gorham Press, 1912), 49-69.
[56] James H. Charlesworth, *The Good and Evil Serpent: How a Universal Symbol Became Christianized* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 1-57, 188-268, Susan Skinner, *Symbols of the Soul: Sacred Beasts* (Winchester&Washington: Circle Books, 2012), 2-5, and al-Azmeh, *Emergence,* 208.
[57] Canaan, *Saints,* 243.
[58] See, for instance, Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR*, 2:23, or Ibn Budayr, "HDY," 28B.
[59] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR*, 2:19-22.
[60] Al-Jāhiẓ, *Ḥayawān,* 6:47.
[61] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR*, 2:19-22.
[62] Such legends survived into the late early modern period. See for instance Ibn Budayr, "HDY," 28B, and section 3.2.

Dietary habits of the *jinn* were subject to some debate. From classical times and throughout the eighteenth century, Muslim scholars were arguing if this species was able to eat and drink like humans. According to Ibn ʿĀbidīn, many scholars argued against such possibilities, while others were in favor of such opinions.[63] Ulamaic debates also emerged around the capability of the *jinn* to copulate. In Ottoman Syria, this was a popular belief that persisted until the modern period.[64] Legends of romantic affairs between the humans and the *jinn* were not rare before and after the emergence of Islam.[65] Ibn ʿĀbidīn took time to discuss the possibilities of marrying such creatures. He wrote that eighteenth-century Damascene Hanafites and Shafi'ites debated this issue. The *ʿulamā'* brought into question the capability of the *jinn* to consummate marriage.[66] In the Egyptian town of Dasūq,[67] early nineteenth-century rumors spread of a *shaykh* who was married to a *jinnīyya.* This marriage gave him the privilege, according to the popular belief, of making many wishes come true. Lane compared this man to a hero from the *Arabian Nights* who found a magic lamp.[68] Pragmatically and rationally, Ibn ʿĀbidīn cut the discussion about marrying the *jinn* short, concluding that such an act represented absolute empty-headedness.[69]

In addition to the incorporeal *jinn,* Arab legends tell of a corporeal variety of daemon – the ghoul (*ghūl*), which today enjoys much global popularity in social media and entertainment material. As with the *jinn,* there seems to exist a lack of proper classification of this species. Conflicted accounts define the ghoul as an exclusively feminine enchantress, or a masculine

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[63] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR*, 2:21-23. See al-Jāhiẓ, *Ḥayawān*, 6:210-211.

[64] Mrs. Hans H. Spoer (A. Goodrich-Freer), "The Powers of Evil in Jerusalem," *Folklore* Vol. 18 No. 1 (March 1907): 55, and Curtiss, *Primitive,* 115-120. Curtiss brings up an example of a man from Nebk (*al-Nabk*) who was rumored to be daemonic offspring, yet such stories may represent a turn of phrase prompted by various contexts. Reports of marriages and conceptions caused by the *jinn* are occasionally encountered on Arabic news portals even today.

[65] Al-Jāhiẓ, *Ḥayawān,* 6:161-164, 196-199, al-Zein, *Jinn,* 103-120, al-Azmeh, *Emergence,* 207.

[66] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR*, 2:18.

[67] Shafi'ite *madhhab* was predominant in Egypt. Chih, *Sufism,* 11.

[68] Lane, *Egyptians,* 1:344.

[69] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR*, 2:18.

member of the *jinn* who posed as an attractive female. Alternatively, the ghoul is described as an infernal being.[70] Various etymological and morphological accounts of the word *ghūl* exist,[71] yet its origins remain obscure. Most accounts describe this monster as a grotesque anthropomorphic beast with a disfigured face and body. Usually it would have donkey hooves instead of feet.[72] According to common beliefs, it would change into a more appealing form, such as that of an attractive woman (the hooves would remain). It would then use its enchanting voice to swoon the unaware into perdition.[73] Ahmed al-Rawi analyzes debates among the early Muslims about the introduction of this creature into Islam. Muslim scholars later wrote discussions about marrying such monsters, like the *jinn.*[74] Myths about ghouls persisted throughout the centuries.[75] John Burckhardt records the beliefs of the Bedouins along the southern reaches of Ottoman Syrian territories. They narrated that invisible female daemons carried off travelers who would tarry behind caravans. Such a creature would be dubbed *Umm Maghaylān*, which may be a dialectal inflection of the morphological root of the word *ghūl*.[76] The belief in the ghoul persists in Syria as well as elsewhere until the present day.

[70] Ahmed K. al-Rawi, "The Arabic Ghoul and its Western Transformation," *Folklore* Vol. 120, No. 3 (December 2009): 292, Canaan, *Saints,* 244.
[71] From *istaghāl* – "to kill,"(*ightiyāl* further means "assassination") to the Mesopotamian monster Gallu. See al-Rawi, "Ghoul," 292-294 and Ahmed al-Rawi, "The Mythical Ghoul in Arabic Culture," *Cultural Analysis* 8 (2009): 45.
[72] Al-Jāhiẓ, *Ḥayawān,* 6:214-215.
[73] Al-Rawi, "Ghoul," 294-297, al-Azmeh, *Emergence,* 207. Further see al-Jāhiẓ, *Ḥayawān,* 6:233-235. Myths such as these are reminiscent of the legends of sirens, as for instance in Lillian Eileen Doherty, *Siren Songs: Gender, Audiences and Narrators in the Odyssey* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 138-139, or David S. Ferris, *Silent Urns: Romanticism, Hellenism, Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), xi-xiv. Creatures such as these also existed in the mythologies of many other cultures. For instance, Geoffrey Keating, *The History of Ireland: From the Earliest Period to the English Invasion,* trans. John O'Mahony (New York: Jame B. Kirker, 1866), 171-172.
[74] Canaan, *Saints,* 244, Al-Rawi, "The Mythical Ghoul,"46-48, and "Ghoul," 294-298.
[75] For the eighteenth century, see for instance Muḥammad al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥusayn al-Ṣaydāwī al-Najjār, *Al-Kashf wa al-Bayān ʿan Awṣāf Khiṣṣāl Shirār Ahl al-Zamān* [Uncovering and Shedding Light on the Characteristics of Evil among the Present Day's People] ed. Muhannad Mubayyiḍīn (Beirut: al-Markaz al-ʿArabī li-l-Abḥāth wa Dirāsat al-Siyāsāt, 2019), 170-176.
[76] John Lewis Burckhardt, *Travels in Syria and the Holy Land* (London: John Murray, 1822), 451-452.

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Noticeable are Burckhardt's implications that *Umm Maghaylān* preyed upon kidnapped humans.[77] In today's western popular culture, the ghoul is known as a nocturnal monster, an undead and a necrophagist.[78] Legends of the ghouls breaking into cemeteries to devour the entombed do not seem of Arabic origin. Al-Rawi attributes the introduction of necrophagia to the myth about the ghoul to Antoine Galland (1646-1715) and his translation of the *Arabian Nights* that was published between 1704 and 1717. Al-Rawi argues that Galland might have attempted to add more spectacle to the description of this creature.[79] Comparable legends, however, exist elsewhere in the Arabic-speaking regions. Such is the case, for instance, with beliefs about the hyena. This animal is a scavenger that feeds on carrion, has a very particular cry, and releases a recognizable odor from its anal glands. These traits, along with its apparent androgyny (in the case of the spotted hyena), may have through history inspired beliefs into its magical properties across Africa, and then West and South Asia. Arabic legends narrate that hyenas acquired mysterious powers during nighttime. They then struck at unwary humans, entranced them with a human-like voice, or sprayed them with their scent. If the victim sensed the hyena's odor, they would be compelled to obey the beast's commands.[80]

Myths about the hyena also imply that the beast would at times turn into a human being during the day and lead a double life.[81] Beliefs in transmogrifying creatures are ubiquitous. Some scholars, however, presume that tales of shape-shifting hyenas may bear origins in sub-Saharan Africa, where at many places there existed cults committed to a variety of mythical transmogrifying beasts. The beliefs in the mystical powers of the hyena were spread between

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[77] Burckhardt, *Travels,* 452.
[78] Similar in Lane, *Egyptians,* 1:290.
[79] Al-Rawi, "Ghoul," 299.
[80] Dan Boneh, "Mystical Powers of Hyenas: Interpreting a Bedouin Belief," *Folklore* Vol. 98, No. 1 (1987): 58-62.
[81] Boneh, "Hyenas," 58.

central Africa and the Indian provinces.[82] The mythical hyenas and ghouls remain in a wide variety of today's popular content, from music to video games. In addition, narratives about these creatures are used to frighten and warn, for instance, ill-behaving children, or those who do not sleep at home during nighttime.[83]

In the eighteenth century, however, it appears that the ghouls, shapeshifting beasts, and the the *jinn* were taken as a natural element of the world. Texts composed by the *ʿulamāʾ* and popular beliefs about different types of the *jinn* and their occasional violent interaction with the human beings were associated with a number of warnings related to proper behavior and everyday practice which would help avoid assaults from the unseen. Failure to observe such advice would at times be costly, according to such beliefs.

3.2. Wrath of the Beast: Jinnic Assaults and their Causes

It is evident from the source material that *jinn*-related myths often served as a literary device in connection with individuals of bad reputation.[84] This was especially the case if they were wealthier people of some public renown.[85] Rumors about daemonic influence often complemented tales of unpopular individuals. At the same time, such rumors usually involved disreputable behavior and

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[82] Jürgen W. Frembgen, "The Magicality of the Hyena: Beliefs and Practices in West and South Asia," *Asian Folklore Studies,* Vol. 57, No. 2 (1998): 338. It is interesting that the hyena is considered a Muslim among the people of the Côte d'Ivoire, see 333.
[83] Al-Rawi, "The Mythical Ghoul," 58.
[84] Such was the case in Christian myths as well. See Anna Kuznetsova, "'A Wall of Bronze' or Demons versus Saints: Whose Victory?" in *Demons, Spirits, Witches II: Christian Demonology and Popular Mythology,* ed. Gábor Klaniczay and Éva Pócs (Budapest&New York: Central European University Press, 2006), 45-46.
[85] One can notice that in Western Europe, many of the disputes between various ecclesiastical groups sooner or later brought up tropes connected to demonology and infernalism for the sake of labeling opponents. See for instance Collins, *The Cambridge History,* 1-16, 393-428. Similar was the case in Ottoman Syria. Compare with Al-Karmī, *ShS,* 1-160, and Ibn ʿAbidīn, *MR,* 2:1-15, who reflect a centuries-old trend between the official *ʿulamāʾ* to exchange accusations of infidelity and blasphemy.

the disrespect of the tenets of faith.[86] The barber Ibn Budayr provides an illustration. In 1746, he recorded the death of a Damascene agha, Musṭafā Ibn al-Qabbānī, whom the people remembered as a hoarder of essential goods during financial crises. Ibn Budayr related that the agha succumbed to illness. A funeral procession took Ibn al-Qabbānī to the designated burial site where a grave had been prepared. A large serpent (*thuʿbān ʿaẓīm*) was spotted within, so the people quickly covered the grave and proceeded to dig another one. Mysterious serpents were dug up several more times before the people managed to bury the *agha*. Ibn Budayr concluded the report remarking that the serpents were drawn by the agha's vileness.[87] Similar to the jurist Ibn ʿĀbidīn,[88] the barber implied that odious characters would attract the serpents post-mortem.

Decency and proper behavior were crucial to avoid daemonic attacks. For instance, illustrating the acts committed by the Syrian Christian clergy, the Orthodox priest Mikhā'īl Burayk weaves his criticism in a peculiar causal chain. A conflict broke out between Catholic and Orthodox groups in Damascus in 1745.[89] Burayk narrates that this event was immediately followed by the birth of a cyclops goat in the town of Maaloula. As previously indicated, goats were believed to frequently represent jinnic manifestations.[90] The goat died after two days, and an outbreak of

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[86] On the list of transgressions, wine-drinking was fairly common, while other kinds of deviances may have been added. See Ibn Budayr, "HDY," 32A-32B, and Al-Murādī, *Silk,* 3:291-300. For a wider early modern Ottoman context, see Başak Tuğ, *Politics and Honor in Ottoman Anatolia: Sexual Violence and Socio-Legal Surveillance in the Eighteenth Century* (Leiden&Boston: Brill, 2017), 86-126, 140-154, and Tolga U. Esmer, "Notes on a Scandal: Transregional Networks of Violence, Gossip, and Imperial Sovereignty in the Late Eighteenth Century Ottoman Empire," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* Vol. 58 No. 1 (January 2016): 99-128.
[87] Ibn Budayr, "HDY," 28B.
[88] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR*, 2:19-23.
[89] One of many – the Christian sects of Shām have an interesting history during the eighteenth century. Mikhā'il Burayk al-Dimashqī, *Tārīkh al-Shām* [The History of Damascus] *1720-1782,* ed. Qusṭanṭīn al-Bāshā al-Mukhalliṣī (Harissa: Matbaʿat al-Qadīs Būlūs, 1930), 11-12. Henceforth: *TS.* Further see Anthony O'Mahony, "Between Rome and Antioch: The Syrian Catholic Church in the Modern Middle East," in *Eastern Christianity in the Modern Middle East,* ed. Anthony O'Mahony and Emma Loosley (New York: Routledge, 2010), 120-137, Alexander Treiger, "The Arabic Tradition," in *The Orthodox Christian World,* ed. Augustine Casiday (London&New York: Routledge, 2012), 89-104, and Hourani, *Arabic Thought,* 39-41.
[90] Al-Zein, *Jinn,* 92, Lebling, *Jinn,* 3, Canaan, *Saints,* 244.

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cholera followed.[91] It seems that Burayk victimizes the Orthodox Christian community of Damascus, at the same time creating a narrative about the evil deeds of the Catholic clergymen pervaded with allusions to daemonic influence.[92] In the frequently encountered versions of tales about the daemons, jinnic attacks would follow improper behavior.

At other times, even simple forgetfulness was believed to allow a *shayṭān* to lash out. Opportunities to suffer jinnic assault were many since the *jinn* were rumored to inhabit the world in incredible numbers. According to legends told in Palestine, ten thousand *jinn* existed on each man's left side and a thousand on his right. People were warned not to refer to each other by their real names, should they happen to be outdoors during nighttime.[93] Over the centuries, the Arabs believed that names had power. Knowing the names of entities and phenomena made control over them possible.[94] Similar to the names of deities and angels that were believed to be efficacious in banishing malignant energies,[95] myths narrated that a *jinnī* would be able to control a human being should it acquire their name. As an important thaumaturgical element, names were used in talisman production, both by the humans and allegedly the *jinn.*[96] If one would by mistake reveal their own name during the night, legends told that they might hear it called out in the darkness, often in

[91] Burayk, *TS,* 13-14.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Spoer "Powers," 71.
[94] See Ibn Khaldūn, *Al-Muqaddima,* 161, 658, very comparable to Catholic beliefs, as presented in Thomas, *Decline,* 211. Some practical illustrations are given in Ikbal Ali Shah, *Black and White Magic: Its Theory and Practice* (London: Octagon Press, 1975), 43-44. For historical comparisons, see Paul Allan Mirecki and Marvin W. Meyer, eds., *Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World* (Leiden&Boston: Brill, 2002), 68-116, Claire Fanger, *Invoking Angels: Theurgic Ideas and Practices, Thirteenth to Sixteenth Centuries* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012), 60, 169, 192, or Robert J. Wilkinson, *Tetragrammaton: Western Christians and the Hebrew Name of God: From the Beginnings to the Seventeenth Century* (Leiden&Boston: Brill, 2015), 1, 111, 160, 186, 460.
[95] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:19-23. Sufis believed that the "greatest name" of God (*al-ism al-aʿẓam*) had most power for their rituals, including those that supposedly dispatched daemons. See chapters 4 and 6.
[96] Ibid., 2:18, 29-33, al-Murādī, *Silk*, 1:59, and Stephan H. Stephan, "Lunacy in Palestine Folklore," *The Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society* Vol. 5, (1925): 5-8. Further see Hassan Abu Hanieh, *Sufism and Sufi Orders: God's Spiritual Paths, Adaptation and Renewal in the Context of Modernization,* (Amman: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2011), 153-157. Talismanics represent an important element in Ottoman thaumaturgical practice. In more detail, chapter 6 is committed to treating such practices.

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compelling tones, (*hātaf* or *ʿazīf*),[97] and without a visible source.[98] In addition, failure to perform proper protective action against daemonic influence was believed to bring risks of jinnic attacks. Protections usually involved the name of God expressed through a variety of deflective formulae.[99]

Trespassing into the territory of the *jinn* was advised against, in case proper protection measures were not observed. It was previously indicated that trees represented one of the favorite habitats for this unseen force. In Ottoman Syria, carob trees were rumored to be particularly favored haunts. Furthermore, processing carob wood was very likely to lead to an injury.[100] This belief persisted until fairly recently. In twentieth-century Palestine, people had the proverb that "sleep under the carob is not praiseworthy" (*al-nawm taḥt al-kharrūb ghayr mamḍūḥ*). It was furthermore considered dangerous to tie animals to this tree or leave possessions under it.[101] The carob was not the only tree favored by the *jinn.* The *Compendium* warns that the Libra Clan attacked woodcutters who chopped or damaged haunted trees. This clan was believed to cause numerous abdominal and back pains, ophtalmological complications and tumors.[102] Proper protection was needed, which is illustrated by a story recorded in Canaan's ethnography. A villager from Artas (*Arṭās*) in the Bethlehem Governorate claimed that he forgot to recite appropriate protection formulae. He lay with his wife under a tree which turned out to be a jinnic haunt. The woman later suffered epileptic fits. A Sufi master was summoned to assist her. He identified the assailant as the "Flying Bird."[103] This coinage may hint at the Virgo Clan described in the eighteenth-century copy of the *Compendium,*[104] demonstrating a continuity of such beliefs.

[97] Al-Zein, *Jinn,*74, al-Azmeh, *Emergence,* 208.
[98] Spoer "Powers," 71.
[99] There existed several such formulae, accompanied by certain chapters from the Scripture. They shall be listed in section 3.4.
[100] Curtiss, *Primitive Religion,* 64-65, Spoer, "Powers," 64.
[101] Canaan, *Saints,* 37.
[102] "MMKF," 108A.
[103] Canaan, *Saints,* 37.
[104] "MMKF," 107A-108B.

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Water sources such as cisterns and bathhouses were in the popular belief perhaps even more favored by the *jinn* than trees. In many cultures, water represented an important object of all kinds of beliefs, due to universal presumptions that it may serve as a powerful conduit of energies, as well as possess various enchantments.[105] Mrs. Spoer was told that a lady from Jerusalem once left her child with the superintendent of a public bathhouse. She heard the cry of her baby and rushed out to find it. She slipped and suffered severe cramps which later could not be treated. The Sufi master who was summoned to examine the mother stated that he could not help. He explained that the lady had forgotten to announce proper protective words before entering the water. This caused her to hear the cry of a *jinnī*'s baby while her child was peacefully sleeping in superintendent's care.[106] Spilling water without protective words was believed to provoke the *jinn* as well. Urination in the open was considered risky.[107]

According to widespread beliefs, the threshold of a home was usually inhabited by at least one, if not many *jinn*. Legends warned the people not to trip or step directly onto this jinnic haunt.[108] It was unwise to beat children upon the threshold. If they would accidentally be struck over this household item, apologetic formulae were to be spoken out as swiftly as possible to protect the child from convulsions, or physical defects later in life.[109]

In addition to forgetfulness or accidental lapses, some legends tell of people who blatantly ignored warnings about the *jinn* and suffered dire consequences. For instance, the Aries Clan

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[105] For antiquity, see Aleksandra Szalc, "In Search of Water of Life: The Alexander Romance and Indian Mythology," in *The Alexander Romance in Persia and the East,* ed. Richard Stoneman, Kyle Erickson and Ian Richard Netton (Groningen: Barkhuis Publishing, 2012), 327-338. For its influence on later traditions, Valerie Flint, Richard Gordon, Georg Luck and Daniel Ogden, eds., *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Ancient Greece and Rome* (London: The Athlone Press, 1999), 23. For North Africa, as well as universally in the Arabic-speaking world, Edward Westermarck, *Ritual and Belief in Morocco, Volume* I (London: Macmillan&Co., 1926), 290-325.
[106] Spoer, "Powers," 62.
[107] Stephan, "Lunacy," 5-6, Al-Azmeh, *Emergence,* 209.
[108] People in the Balkans at many places keep this belief still.
[109] Stephan, "Lunacy," 5-6, Al-Azmeh, *Emergence,* 209, Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:20. The threshold has a long history of significance for magical acts. See Sir Frazer, *Golden Bough,* 720-725, and H. Clay Trumbull, *The Threshold Covenant or the Beginning of Religious Rites* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1896), 3-24, 45-56, 74-98.

struck those who cut injinnated trees or urinated on ashes (it was believed that some of the Aries *jinn* inhabited ashes).[110] Similar stories continuously surfaced throughout Ottoman domains. Canaan records some from the Great War. Around the al-Qaṭṭāra cave[111] grew an injinnated grove. An Ottoman squadron was in the vicinity, preparing for a skirmish with the British military unit. A soldier was sent to the grove to bring back some wood, yet as he started to work a *jinnī* appeared to warn that the trees were not to be touched. Relating this to his commander, he was ordered back to his labor with a scoff. The obedient soldier fell to his death the same moment he struck the first branch, and the *jinn* residing in the grove joined the British forces to trounce the Ottoman unit.[112] The village of Bayt Nuba (*Bayt Nūbā*), approximately half-way between Ramla and Jerusalem, was in 1917 preparing for a British attack. The Englishmen were unaware of an enchanted tree that grew in the vicinity. A mysterious apparition, dubbed by the locals "our Laurel Lady" (*Sittnā al-Ghāra*)[113] was allegedly seen levitating above this tree during the attack. She wore green robes and a white shawl, and she wielded a sword. It was claimed that this creature stopped several waves of the British assault before the campaign failed.[114]

Transgressions against the jinnic habitats brought retribution that ranged from joint aches to military defeats. Narratives about the *jinn* among the Syrian people reveal that the beliefs in daemons were used as agents of social control and the preservation of social norms. According to beliefs, however, certain individuals would at times suffer jinnic assaults without any apparent reason.[115] Some of them would remain unaware that prevention or treatment were necessary until

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[110] "MMKF," 105A-106B.
[111] This cave lies near the Palestinian village Yānūn in the Nablus Governorate.
[112] Canaan, *Saints,* 254.
[113] This is Canaan's translation, although the word today also indicates a military raid.
[114] Ibid., 71. Canaan interprets the Laurel Lady as a saint, probably due to the color of her robes.
[115] Many cultures listed a number of comparable reasons for daemonic attacks. See Sari Katajala-Peltomaa, *Demonic Possession and Lived Religion in Later Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 28-45.

it was too late. Along with those believed to have somehow wronged the unseen creatures, they at times suffered severe consequences due to their encounters with the *jinn.*

3.3. Possessed: Madness and Daemons in Ottoman Syria

The mentally ill were traditionally regarded as victims of daemonic possession.[116] The word in Arabic for a madman is *majnūn* and refers to injinnation. There was a considerable lack of proper treatment for the "injinnated" even deep into the twentieth century. Many lunatics instead underwent attempts to expel the *jinn* out of their bodies.[117]

The Ottoman network of the holy played a significant role in combating the *jinn.* Places which were believed to have been laden with *baraka* often sheltered individuals believed to have suffered daemonic ire. Sufi lodges or Christian monasteries served the purposes of mental asylums, which did not exist everywhere until the twentieth century. The insane were accommodated in small cells where most inmates bore heavy restrains and lived in harsh conditions with poor hygiene. Should all such buildings be absent, a dark room or a dry cistern would have been refurbished to accommodate the patients. There existed a belief that poor living conditions would

[116] See Sameera Ahmed and Mona M. Amer, eds., *Counseling Muslims: Handbook of Mental Health Issues and Interventions* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 19-21, al-Zein, *Jinn,* 70-88, Lebling, *Jinn,* 72-76, 81-82, al-Azmeh, *Emergence,* 208-210. Understanding mental illness as a consequence of daemonic assaults was a widespread historical phenomenon. See for instance, Katajala-Peltomaa, *Demonic Possession*, 1-27, Stephen A. Diamond, "Madness, Mental Disorders, and the Daimonic: The Central Role of Anger and Rage in Psychopathology," in *Anger, Madness, and the Daimonic: The Psychological Genesis of Violence, Evil, and Creativity* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1996), 137-180, Yoram Bilu, "The Taming of the Deviants and Beyond: An Analysis of the *Dybbuk* Possession and Exorcism in Judaism," and Zvi Mark, "Dybbuk and Devekut in the Shivhe ha-Besht: Toward a Phenomenology of Madness in Early Hasidism," in *Spirit Possession in Judaism: Cases and Contexts From the Middle Ages to the Present,* ed. Matt Goldish (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003), 41-72, 257-305, Leigh Ann Craig, "The Spirit of Madness: Uncertainty, Diagnosis, and the Restoration of Sanity in the Miracles of Henry VI," *Journal of Medieval Religious Cultures* Vol. 39, No. 1 (2013): 60-93, or Anthony Ossa-Richardson, "Possession or Insanity? Two Views from the Victorian Lunatic Asylum," *Journal of the History of Ideas* Vol. 74, No. 4 (2013): 553-575.

[117] Dols, *Majnūn,* 211-261, Ahmed and Amer, *Mental Health,* 19-21, al-Zein, *Jinn,* 70-88, Lebling, *Jinn,* 72-76, 81-82, al-Azmeh, *Emergence,* 208-210.

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be unappealing for the invasive *jinn* who would then leave the bodies of their victims.[118] During the course of the treatment, other rigorous measures were often applied, supposedly to repel the intruding *jinn.* Forced starvation was common, as it was presumed that the *jinn* preferred more corpulent people and left the emaciated alone.[119] Diets of the insane consisted mostly of unleavened bread. Such measures would then be combined with talismans, or water in which pages of the scripture had been submerged.[120]

In addition to talismanics, patients were occasionally offered more pragmatic therapeutic methods. They would at times be fumigated, while cauterization was common, mostly at the back of the neck or the top of the head.[121] Inmates were regularly beaten. Corporal punishment of the mentally ill represented a widespread technique to induce fear and respect towards the therapist. There are indications that such beatings originated in the Roman period.[122] They were universally used in the Eurasian region during the eighteenth century.[123] Their seeming goal in Syria and Palestine was to cause sufficient muscle and tissue strain and physically drive the *jinn* out.[124] A particular implement was sometimes used for the beatings. Due to a Palestinian belief that the *jinn* would not inhabit the pomegranate tree, switches were often made from its branches and used to beat the insane.[125]

Kept in solitude, under poor conditions, the patients had to entrust the rest of their treatment to divine grace. Prayers were conducted for the recovery of the insane. Over time, inmates would

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[118] Stephan, "Lunacy," 7-8.
[119] Canaan, *Saints,* 123-125.
[120] Grehan, *Twilight,* 149. More details about thaumaturgical protection in the next section. Also see Dols, *Majnūn,* 223-243. Asylums of such harsh conditions do not seem ubiquitous. Larger urban centers often took better care of their patients. See Dols, *Majnūn,* 112-135.
[121] Stephan, "Lunacy," 8.
[122] Mary de Young, *Encyclopedia of Asylum Therapeutics, 1750-1950s* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2015), 309-310.
[123] John Conolly, *The Construction and Government of Lunatic Asylums and Hospitals for the Insane* (London: John Churchill, 1847), 46, 65.
[124] Canaan, *Saints,* 123-125. In the present-day Balkans, parents sometimes shout at their children that they shall drive the devil out of them while they are preparing to beat them. Adults may be threatened the same way, albeit rarely.
[125] Stephan, "Lunacy," 8.

perhaps quiet down and succumb to lethargy. They would then be proclaimed cured and their chains would be removed.[126] Transcedental elements of the Ottoman network of the holy were often believed to participate in the treatment of *majānīn*.[127] People in the Middle East believed that a particular creature from the Qur'ān was efficient in helping the mad. This was al-Khiḍr, the spiritual teacher and temporary guide to Moses in the Scripture.[128] At times dubbed *walī,* this green-clad figure of a long, white beard armed with a spear was most often compared to St. George.[129] When the people required thaumaturgical healing, they would often invoke both St. George and al-Khiḍr.[130]

The Palestinian town of al-Khader (*al-Khaḍir*) in the Bethlehem Governorate had an asylum for the mentally ill. This institution stood on the grounds of the monastery of St. George. It is believed that St. George was imprisoned and thrown in chains there.[131] Adjacent to the asylum stood a St. George's church. The clerics used a chain to connect the church to the asylum inmates' fetters. It was hoped that the chain would conduct the saint's healing energy into the mad. At times, legends would arise that the saint would signal the recovery of an inmate. Their fetters would open on their own.[132] Canaan narrates of a Bedouin who was brought to al-Khader complex the early twentieth century. During the night of his incarceration, he was spotted as he snuck along the rooftop of the asylum. He was brought down and questioned to describe a green-clad figure who undid his fetters. The Bedouin used the chain attached to the church building to escape through a

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[126] Canaan, *Saints,* 123-125.
[127] Strathern, *Powers*, 27-47, 117-131
[128] Found in Qur'ān, 18:65-82.
[129] For instance, Curtis, *Primitive Religion,* 83-84, and Spoer, "Powers," 62. Also see ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī, *al-Ḥaqīqa al-Majāz fī Riḥlat Bilād al-Shām wa Miṣr wa Lubnān [The Metaphor of Truth on the Road through Syria, Egypt and Lebanon],* ed. Riyād ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd Murād (Damascus: Dār al-Muʿarafa, 1989), 472. Further see Burckhardt, *Travels,* 39, 98, or Trimingham, *Sufi Orders,* 63. Burckhardt calls this figure a prophet.
[130] Al-Murādī, *Silk*, 1:127, also Curtiss, *Primitive Religion,* 213-214.
[131] Richard Pococke, *A Description of the East and Some Other Countries,* two volumes (London: W. Bowyer, 1745), 2:44, Philip G. Baldensperger, "The Immovable East,“ *Palestine Exploration Fund* (1906): 196.
[132] Canaan, *Saints,* 123-124, Stephan, "Lunacy," 5-8.

window. His tale apparently remained unquestioned. He was proclaimed cured and allowed to go, promising a yearly tribute to St. George.[133]

In the town of Qatana (*Qaṭana*), which is today a Syrian city in the Rif Dimashq Governorate, a saint was entombed under the local mosque. The Christians of the area, according to Burckhardt, referred to that tomb as the "Patriarch of Damascus." The people of Qatana narrated that this priest turned hermit and impressed the Muslims by having sheep prostrate themselves with him during prayers. His offspring were well-respected in Qatana. A hole was dug to adjoin the grave of the "Patriarch" so that the mad would be thrown inside. People would then slide a stone on top of it to prevent escape. After some days, the patients would be released with claims that their sanity had been restored.[134]

Many were left without such luck, however. Their condition usually required the assistance of religious professionals who comprised the Ottoman network of the holy. Thaumaturges would be summoned to perform rituals in hopes of inducing recovery, repel evil forces and restore the minds of the patients. Common people of Ottoman Syria had various ways to deal with unseen threats. However, without thaumaturgical assistance, the efficacy of their methods may have been brought to question. Sufis of the Province of Damascus, on the other hand, had many techniques to combat the daemons with divine grace. The *baraka* of the Sufis was believed to instantly dispatch the *jinn.*[135]

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[133] Canaan, *Saints,* 123.
[134] Burckhardt, *Travels,* 48.
[135] Spoer, "The Powers," 58. Compare with Kuznetsova, "Wall," 45-46.

3.4. "Vade Retro Satana:"[136] Repelling the *Jinn*

Above all other *jinn* repellents stood the name of God. Ibn ʿĀbidīn advises reiterations of the *basmala,*[137] as well as of the litany called *taʿawwudh.*[138] The *taʿawwudh* is often recited in the Muslim everyday and goes, "I seek protection in Allah from the accursed [stoned] devil" (*aʿūdhu bi-l-lah min al-shayṭān al-rajīm*). In addition, there existed an old belief in the power of the Qur'ānic chapters *al-Falaq* and *al-Nās*,[139] jointly known as *al-muʿawwidhatān* (Verses of Refuge), against the *jinn*. These two scriptural chapters, in combination with *al-Fātiḥa*, had a number of applications ranging from thaumaturgical healing to dispatching daemons and warding off sorcery.[140] Failure to pronounce the *taʿawwudh* while, for instance, going into water was believed to provoke the invisible creatures residing in the vicinity. It was customary to recite the *taʿawwudh* if one happened to be in the vicinity of other supposed jinnic haunts, such as wells or trees. In the popular belief, failure to do so brought dire consequences. This is reflected in the previously given stories about the Palestinian lady who was allegedly duped by a *jinni* baby's cry in the bathhouse, or the woman who suffered epileptic fits after laying with her husband under a tree without reciting protective formulae.[141] For the circumstances of the couple from the latter story, the Sufi manual,

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[136] C.S. Greaves, "Inscription on the Font at Chelmorton," *Journal of the Derbyshire Archaeological and Natural History Society* (1879): 6.
[137] It was traditionally believed that the *basmala* had strong protective capacities. For the eighteenth century, see "MMKF," 60A-61B.
[138] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR*, 2:22-23. Further see Lane, *Egyptians,* 1:286.
[139] Qur'ān 113 and 114. See Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR*, 2:22-23, 32.
[140] For the seventeenth/eighteenth century Ottoman context, see Ismāʿīl Ḥaqqī al-Brūsawī (İsmail Hakkı Bursevī), *Rūḥ al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qurʾān* [The Book of Statements on the Interpretation of the Qur'ān], (Cairo: Bulāq, 1839/1840), 1404-1410. The belief in the power of these chapters has a long history, as it was documented by medieval authors. See Jalāl al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ibn Abī Bakr Ibn Muḥammad al-Suyūṭī, *Kitāb al-Itqān fī ʿUlūm al-Qur'ān* [The Book of Mastery in Qur'ānic sciences], 2 volumes (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-Mūsawīya, 1870), 1:17, 99-100, or Muḥammad Ibn Abī Bakr Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīya, *Tafsīr Suwar al-Kāfirūn wa al-Muʿawwidhatayn* [The Interpretation of Sūrahs Infidels and Refuge], ed. Muḥammad Ḥāmid al-Faqqī (Cairo: Maktabat al-Sunna al-Muḥammadīyya, 1949), 15-18, 23-34, 100-111. Also Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR*, 2:22-23, and Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima,* 629.
[141] Spoer, "Powers," 62, Canaan, *Saints,* 37. Further see section 3.2.

Verses of Exorcism, advises the invocation which goes "… in the name of God, oh, God, protect us from the devil and protect what You bestow upon us."[142]

Several other Qur'ānic chapters were considered efficacious in combating daemons. The Throne Verse (*Ayāt al-Kursī*) and the Qur'ānic chapter *Yā Sīn*[143] had particular efficacy against the *shayāṭin* and the ghouls in popular belief. It was sometimes necessary to repeat the reading of these chapters over several days to resolve a given instance of haunting or possession.[144] For the majority of such protective rites, equivalents existed in other scriptural religions.[145] Accidental transgressions, or trespasses into injinnated territory, required an immediate demonstration of humility and contrition. In addition, the *dhikr* was highly preferred, as was the case with stepping on a threshold as well.[146]

Entering a space rumored to be haunted, one would recite a request for permission in addition to the protective formulae. The word *dastūr*[147] would usually be used for permission, which is of Persian origin. Intruders into jinnic haunts would demonstrate humility and plead to enter, invoking God. Similar *dastūr* formulae were used to warn females in a household or another locality to evacuate.[148] Only passing by supposed injinnated grounds required but a short *basmala,*

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[142] This is an old invocation from the *Ḥadīth.* It was advised to be spoken out before sexual intercourse. "ʿIddat Nuṣūṣ Ayāt al-Raqīyya" [Some Texts on the Verses of Exorcism], MS Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Hs. Or. 14283, Berlin, 11A. The text does not have an autograph and has been copied in the eighteenth century, in high Arabic standard, however it contains additional texts in Ottoman Turkish, which indicates wide circulation. The text spreads over the range of one single binding, however, the handwritings within the collection are many, indicating that this copy changed at least five hands that added bits and pieces of written material to it. Pagination did not exist, so I assume the page with the *basmala* is 1A. I am reading a copy made during the eighteenth century (the archive catalogue does not specify the exact date). Henceforth: "INAR."

[143] Qur'ān 2:255 and 36:1-83 respectively.

[144] Al-Rawi, "The Mythical Ghoul," 47-48. Repetitions represented a common element in thaumaturgical practice, both among the Arabs and elsewhere. See chapter 6 for details. Compare with Thomas, *Decline,* 211.

[145] For instance, Thomas, *Decline,* 573.

[146] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR*, 2:20-22, Trimingham, *Sufi Orders,* 194, Stephan, "Lunacy," 5-6, Al-Azmeh, *Emergence,* 209.

[147] Same word was used when asking saintly permission to enter a shrine. See chapter 5.

[148] Canaan, *Saints,* 86. These formulae apparently had a long history and later filtered into a number of daily settings around the Middle East, to end as an element of Arabic colloquial. They are customarily used when entering one's home. See Mansour Shaki, "Dastūr," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica* VII/1, 111-112; available online at: http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/dastur (Last accessed: April 15th 2021).

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sometimes along with the *shahāda* or *al-Fātiḥa.*[149] Protective words were often said over loved ones (the common formula was *ḥaṣṣantak bi-l-lah;* "may you be protected by God").[150] Protection was necessary for one's belongings as well. Such items were believed to make the *jinn* curious. Syria and Palestine reflected this tradition throughout the modern period as well. *Taʿawwudh* would be pronounced over clothing chests, for instance. It was believed that the personal possessions might otherwise be soiled.[151]

Protective items were in frequent use. The belief in the evil eye, for instance, prompted the production of such items. It was believed that the jinnic clans would be able to cast the evil eye upon those who were born under the corresponding zodiac sign.[152] It was furthermore commonly believed that the evil eye curse might be cast by humans as well. *Malocchio*[153] (Ar. *al-iṣāba bi-l-ʿayn*) would often be caused by envy. Ibn Khaldūn believed that the evil eye could occur accidentally. Expression of admiration for other people's belongings or their loved ones needed to be followed by the recitation of protective formulae and divine invocations. The evil eye curse would then be prevented. The absence of protective rites was believed to cause the corruption of the admired object.[154]

In addition to protective words, there existed an evil eye talisman fashioned after the image of an eye itself.[155] Other protective charms sported an open hand, which was among the Muslims

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[149] Grehan, *Twilight,* 109.
[150] Spoer, "Powers," 61, Grehan, *Twilight,* 150.
[151] Curtiss, *Primitive Religion,* 110.
[152] "MMKF," 105A-106B.
[153] The evil eye curse is ubiquitous in various cultural traditions. See Alan Dundes, ed., *The Evil Eye: A Casebook* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992). Each chapter of this volume concerns a different region. For ideas about historical origins, see John H. Elliott, *Beware the Evil Eye: The Evil Eye in the Bible and the Ancient World. Volume 1: Introduction, Mesopotamia, and Egypt* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2015), 1-76.
[154] Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima,* 630. Further see al-Nābulsī, *Ḥadīqa*, 2:202.
[155] This trinket is often given as a gift and all travelers to the Arabic- or Turkish-speaking regions may hope to be covered in them by the end of their visit. The aim of the object is to ward off the evil eye. See Ahmed and Amer, *Mental Health*, 19-22, 343. In the beginning of the twenty-first century, I have heard the Turks along the Anatolian coastline referring to this trinket as the "Eye of Muḥammad."

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known as *khamsa* ("the five" [fingers]), or the Hand of Fāṭima (605/615-632; the daughter of Muḥammad).[156] The hand symbol has a long history that predates the emergence of Islam and Christianity.[157] Both the Five and the eye talisman were distributed as pendants or marbles.[158] They were often painted on the walls of shops and households. In addition, some would paint the word "Allah," or the *taʿawwudh* upon their facades.[159] People would collect deflection amulets from other sources as well. The body parts of the hyena had protective powers in popular belief. The hyena's skin and bits of its flesh were believed to possess special properties useful for healing as well as protection. They were carried on one's person, or eaten.[160] In Cairo, Lane noted that the people sometimes wore the dried fingers taken from the deceased Jews and Christians as pendants to protect from ague.[161]

In addition to pomegranate branches,[162] the *jinn* were believed vulnerable to iron. Water would be fetched only in iron pales. It was advised to those who fetched water to repeat the *dhikr* without pause.[163] It was in addition possible to engage some jinnic creatures physically. In some legends, the ghouls as corporeal creatures could be slain. The first swing of the sword against a ghoul needed to be fatal. Wounding the creature made it virtually indestructible. No further strikes

[156] Fāṭima had a shrine in Damascus, which was comprised of a large mausoleum that contained several venerated graves. See Appendix B.
[157] Fāṭima was in some legends compared to the Virgin in terms of purity and devoutness. However, the symbol of the hand was connected to many other deities, such as Ishtar, or Aphrodite. See Annemarie Schimmel, *Deciphering the Signs of God: A Phenomenological Approach to Islam* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1994), 30, 37, 92, Sheila S. Blair, "Discerning the Hand-of-Fatima: An Iconological Investigation of the Role of Gender in Religious Art," in *Beyond the Exotic: Women's Histories in Islamic Societies,* ed. Amira el-Azhary Sonbol (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2005), 356-358, or "Hamsa," in *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Symbols,* ed. Ellen Frankel and Betsy Platkin Teusch (Lanham: Rowman&Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1992), 70.
[158] Both symbols have a long history in the entire Eurasian region and wider. See Park, *Thanatology,* 9-31.
[159] Lane, *Egyptians,* 1:321-322, 327-328.
[160] See Aref Abu-Rabia, *Indigenous Medicine among the Bedouin in the Middle East* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2015), 132. The body parts of the hyena were attributed special powers wherever this animal was considered magical. See Frembgen, "Hyena," 339-340.
[161] Lane, *Egyptians,* 1:333-334.
[162] Stephan, "Lunacy," 8.
[163] Spoer, "Powers," 56.

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would be enough to slay it.[164] The pre-Islamic vagabond poet Thābit Ibn Jābir was reported to have been victorious in a duel against a ghoul. His nickname, Ta'abbaṭa Sharrān ("the carrier of two evils") possibly stems from this encounter.[165]

Despite all attempts to keep them at bay, however, the *jinn* were sometimes believed to cause great harm to certain individuals, such as madness or fits. According to some legends, the *jinn* were capable of flinging heavy objects inside one's household, or in the streets. A bewitched person, by the *jinn,* or a magician, was at times believed to cause objects to fly around them – presumably animated by the *jinn.* Ibn ʿĀbidīn formulated some legal opinions about land ownership on the basis of this belief, demonstrating how seriously such matters were treated.[166] In addition to protective formulae, in such cases it was necessary to exorcise the *jinn* out of a particular individual or a place.

The assistance of religious professionals comprising the Ottoman network of the holy was necessary to expel the *jinn* out of a locality or a human being. It seems that the Syrian regions attributed particular efficacy to exorcisms performed by the Qādirīyya Sufis.[167] They were not the exclusive practitioners of this ritual, however. Other orders dealt with similar matters. For instance, the Rifāʿīyya order specialized in expelling serpents from various localities. The Rifāʿīyya sub-branch, the Sāʿdīyya, dealt with serpents and scorpions as well. The members of both these orders had expertise in poisons.[168] Some members of the Sāʿdīyya staged public performances during

[164] Al-Rawi, "Ghoul," 296-297, al-Jāhiẓ, *Ḥayawān,* 2:233-235.
[165] Ibid. Also al-Azmeh, *Emergence,* 209, Roger Allen, *The Arabic Literary Heritage*: The Development of its Genres and Criticism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 109, and Also see Ta'abbaṭa Sharrān, *Dīwān Ta'abbaṭa Sharrān wa Akhbāruh* [Poetry and Writing of Ta'abbaṭa Sharrān], ed. ʿAlī Dhū al-Fiqār Shakīr (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb ar-Islāmī, 1984), 165, 223-224.
[166] Lane, *Egyptians,* 1:286. See Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *Radd,* 9:111.
[167] Al-Murādī, *Silk*, 1:59, Stephan, "Lunacy" 5-8. Further see Hassan Abu Hanieh, *Sufism and Sufi Orders: God's Spiritual Paths, Adaptation and Renewal in the Context of Modernization* (Amman: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2011), 153-157.
[168] See Itztchak Weismann, "Sufi Brotherhoods in Syria and Israel: A Contemporary Overview," *History of Religions* 43 (2004): 306. See also Aḥmad al-Ḥallāq al-Budayrī, *Hawādith Dimashq al-Yawmīyya* [The Daily Events of

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which they bit into live venomous reptiles and arachnids.[169] Snakes, scorpions, as well as lions (ridden by the Gemini Clan in the popular imagination[170]) represented symbols used for magical practices or talismanics.[171]

Available sources are not explicit about the exact methods for performing exorcisms.[172] They, however, seem to have been conducted fairly frequently, as the eighteenth-century *ʿulamāʾ* indicates.[173] The exact procedure of the ritual needs reconstruction through comparative source analysis. Most often, a religious professional would conduct the proceedings, which involved preparatory acts such as fasting and ablution. It was customary to fast for three days and three nights before venturing upon most thaumaturgical acts.[174] Similarly, ritualistic ablution represented a common preparation method for such endeavors.[175]

Failure to observe the standards of ritualistic purity was considered dangerous.[176] The legends of the *kabsa* ("raid") reflect this belief. *Kabsa* befell those who lived in a state of impurity. It also emanated from corpses and could be contracted. According to common beliefs, a corpse would at times attract malignant forces that would first inhabit it and then attempt to strike at anyone who drew near. Legends of the *kabsa,* however, did not stop the people of Cairo from collecting water from the trough at Maghāsil al-Sulṭān. This structure was located on the south

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Damascus] 1154-1175/1741-1762, in the redaction of Muḥammad Saʿīd al-Qāsimī, edited Aḥmad ʿIzzat ʿAbd al-Karīm (Damascus: Dār Saʿad al-Dīn, 1997), 91, n.1. Henceforth: *HDY.* Also see Lane, *Egyptians,* 2:93-94.
[169] Ibid., 2:179-180.
[170] "MMKF," 107A.
[171] Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima,* 626. Further see chapter 6.
[172] Such was the case in earlier times as well. See al-Azmeh, *Emergence,* 206.
[173] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:20-23, 34-35, al-Nābulsī, *Ḥadīqa*, 2:390-393.
[174] For instance, "MMKF," 31A-32A. Fasting for three days before thaumaturgical performances represented a common preparatory measure for most rituals in the Eurasian region. See chapter 6.
[175] Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī, *Nihāyat al-Murād fī Sharḥ Hadiyyat Ibn al- ʿImad* [Ultimate Wish in the Interpretation of Ibn al-ʿImad's Gift], ed. ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Ḥalabī (Limassol: Al-Jaffan&Al-Jabi, 1994), 68-70. Also see Ibn ʿAbidīn, *Radd,* 2:464-465. Ablutions were universally advised before starting any Muslim religious ritual. See chapter 6.
[176] Al-Nābulsī, *Nihāya*, 68-70, Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:21, Ibn ʿAbidīn, *Radd,* 2:464-465.

side of the Citadel of Cairo. Its water was used to wash the corpses of executed prisoners. It was rumored that this water induced pregnancy.[177]

Kabsa was believed to plague the sick as well. The *jinn* that presumably caused the illness were believed capable of moving between several ailing individuals, worsening their conditions, which was the reason to keep patients away from each other.[178] Rumors of the *kabsa* made its victims unsafe to approach prior to performing ritualistic ablutions.[179] Furthermore, blood in common beliefs transferred *kabsa* among individuals. Food that contained fresh blood was considered dangerous.[180] Menstruating women[181] were advised not to interact with those who were pregnant, or about to breastfeed. They would need to observe proper cleansing rites beforehand. Impure menstrual blood would otherwise prevent lactation or cause miscarriages, according to common beliefs. When a birth occurred in a household during a funeral wake, it would be considered most unfortunate.[182]

Ibn ʿĀbidīn reads into the *Ḥadīth* implying that exorcisms had a long tradition among the Muslims.[183] The exorcist would fast for three days and nights, perform his ablutions and then approach the injinnated person. He would mutter protective formulae[184] over them. In addition, it was customary to massage the patient. Starting the massage from upper body parts, the exorcist would attempt to squeeze the *jinnī* out of the victim through their toes.[185] *Shaykh*s would often use

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[177] Lane, *Egyptians,* 1:334-335.
[178] This was, and still is, a fairly frequent epidemiological procedure. Further see Thomas, *Decline,* 3-25.
[179] Canaan, *Saints,* 170-173.
[180] Kamran Asdar Ali, *Planning the Family in Egypt: New Bodies, New Selves* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 186.
[181] Menstruation represented a taboo in various cultures and was often attributed magical properties. See Susan Greenwood, *The Anthropology of Magic* (Oxford&New York: Berg, 2009), 48-49.
[182] Ibid., 92-93.
[183] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR*, 2:18-23, 30-33.
[184] See the beginning of this section.
[185] Canaan, *Saints,* 123-125.

their spittle for massages as a supposed conduit of grace.[186] Healing and cursing by saliva is a universal phenomenon in religions. Prophets of scriptural religions healed with their spittle. Most notable of them were Jesus and Muḥammad.[187] Thaumaturgical manuals further advise boiling the "flower of Maryam"[188] in water. The resulting *maryamīyye* would be used in massages or as a curative potion.[189] Other such elixirs would occasionally be prepared. For instance, Qur'ānic verses would be written on the inside of a bowl and then boiled until the ink dissolved. Alternatively, pages of the scripture would be boiled instead. The water would then be drunk or massaged into the patient.[190] When the ritual proceedings were over, some people witnessed smoke exiting the body of the injinnated individual as a sign of the ritual's success and the *jinnī*'s departure.[191]

The Orthodox Christians of the Ottoman Bilād al-Shām conducted their own exorcisms as well. In 1749 a Damascene woman lapsed into fits, making people believe she was injinnated. She was fettered and locked within the Damascene Church of St. Nicholas (*Mār Niqūla,* or *Mār N'ūla* colloquially). Mikhā'il Burayk the priest ordered the clergy of the church to pray for the woman and oversaw the ritual. The priests repeated their prayers over her for several days while she

[186] This was an old tradition. Al-Azmeh, *Secularism,* 45. For the Syrian context, see Canaan, *Saints*, 124-125. Spittle could also be used to manipulate the jinn into a talisman or induce a curse. See Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima,* 625-626. Further see chapter 6 for details.
[187] Sir Frazer, *Golden Bough,* 17, 312-313, Frederick J. Gaiser, *Healing in the Bible: Theological Insight for Christian Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 152, and John M. Hull, *Hellenistic Magic and the Synoptic Tradition* (Naperville: A.R. Allenson, 1974), 76-78.
[188] "MMKF", 105A-110B. This plant belongs to the *Anastatica* genus and has actual curative and toxicological benefits. See Siti Rosmani Md Zin, Normadiah M. Kassim, Mohammed A. Alshawsh, Noor Eliza Hashim, and Zahurin Mohamed. "Biological Activities of Anastatica Hierochuntica L.: A Systematic Review." *Biomedicine & Pharmacotherapy 91* (July 2017): 611–620.
[189] "MMKF", 105A-110B.
[190] Lane, *Egyptians,* 328. Most often, these would be the Healing Verses (Qur'ān, 9:14, 16:69, 10:57, 26:80, 17:82, and 41:44). See chapter 6.
[191] Canaan, *Saints,* 124.

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screamed profanities at them.[192] Her condition slowly improved. It appeared finally that the *shayṭān* entirely left her. Her husband died meanwhile, so she remarried and bore children.[193]

Burayk the priest suspected that a sorcerer – *rajul sāḥir* (lit. "magic-making man") – "wrote some words on a piece of paper"[194] and compelled the *jinni* to possess the woman. According to very old beliefs, it was possible for magicians who knew the names of their targets to summon a *jinnī,* inscribe their wishes for the target and seal it with their spittle, crafting a *jinn*-manipulating talisman.[195] This belief persisted until the modern period. In the early twentieth century, Stephan recorded a story about a sorcerer from Nablus. The magician conjured the *jinn* with the help of a talisman and sent them to a married woman who hated him. She immediately went to Jerusalem to ask for a divorce. Ultimately, she married the daemonologist who happened to reside in Jerusalem at the time of her trip.[196] Talismans drove the *jinn* away as well. They were used during exorcisms to expel the *jinn* from a given place or an individual.[197]

Methods for driving the *jinn* away from humanity were abundant. However, at certain times they were deemed either insufficient, or there was no skilled religious professional to conduct them. In such cases, people of early modern Syria resorted to the old practice of bargaining with the unseen. Such bargains were usually struck through ritualistic butchering.

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[192] This is a common story, still present in popular culture today.
[193] Ibid.
[194] Burayk is not specific. Ibid. However, he hints at the long-standing beliefs that it was possible to manipulate the *jinn* through talismanics.
[195] Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima,* 625-626. For the early modern context, see Ibn ʿĀbidīn, MR, 2:18, 29-33. Talismanics shall be discussed in chapter 6.
[196] Stephan, "Lunacy," 6.
[197] Canaan, *Saints,* 123-125, Grehan, *Twilight,* 150-155.

3.5. Tribute to Belial: Sacrifice as *Jinn*-repellent

Sacrifice is a ubiquitous religious phenomenon.[198] In Ottoman Syria, the custom persisted until the modern times while its roots were ancient.[199] In eighteenth-century Bilād al-Shām people sacrificed for a variety of reasons including protection from evil and exorcism. Sacrificial animals were butchered aplenty at Muslim shrines as well, as offerings to deceased saints. Since the chapter 6 below discusses various Muslim thaumaturgical practices in detail, sacrificial ritual proceedings shall be discussed there. This section represents an overview of those reasons for offering sacrifice that were related to contending with the *jinn* or otherwise protecting oneself from evil. Muslim thaumaturges often oversaw sacrificial rituals. Ibn ʿĀbidīn considered it his responsibility to devote two chapters to sacrifice in his *opus magnum, Answer to the Baffled.* These volumes, entitled *The Book of Slaughtering* and *The Book of Sacrifice,*[200] entered the corpus of Hanafite traditions consulted to this day.

In Syria and Palestine, as well as in other Ottoman regions, it was customary to offer sacrifice to the *jinn* to avert possible misfortunes that these mischievous beings otherwise caused. As previously indicated, for instance, the threshold stone represented one of the favorite jinnic

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[198] Hubert and Mauss, *Sacrifice,* 1-18, Guy G. Stroumsa, "Transformations of Ritual," in *The End of Sacrifice: Religious Transformations in Late Antiquity,* trans. Susan Emanuel (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 56-83, Ivan Strenski, "Public Discourse and the Theory of Sacrifice," and "Imagining Sacrifice," in *Theology and the First Theory of Sacrifice* (Leiden&Boston: Brill, 2003), 1-31, 192-228, Royden Keith Yerkes, *Sacrifice in Greek and Roman Religions and Early Judaism* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2010), 20-50, or Albert I. Baumgarten, "Part One: Sacrifice from a Comparative Perspective," in *Sacrifice in Religious Experience* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 3-150.
[199] Al-Zein, *Jinn,* 54-57, al-Azmeh, *Emergence,* 206.
[200] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *Radd*, 9:423-505. Further see al-Nābulsī, "Kashf,"170A-174A.

habitats.[201] In popular belief, some magicians could curse a person and cause the *jinn* to haunt them or invade their household.[202] Sufi instruction manuals circulated during the eighteenth century offered curses for the threshold as well.[203]

Should a family move into a new home, they would customarily recite the *taʿawwudh* and other protective wards. The new owners would occasionally uproot the threshold stone and place a new one before moving in. This was customary in case the previous owner died, or if there were rumors about the misfortune of the previous residents.[204] In addition, the new owners of the household would sacrifice upon the new threshold. They would hope that the sacrifice would make the *jinn* leave.[205] Roosters were often used as offerings to ensure the peace of the residents. The people would draw the animal's blood upon the threshold stone.[206] Red henna at times served as a substitute for blood.[207] Even in modern Palestine, many houses bore a bloody mark in the shape of the Hand of Fāṭima as proof that the sacrifice was offered.[208]

The premodern Syrian people often sacrificed in the name of travelers and pilgrims venturing upon their journey. Sacrifice was performed over the threshold. If they were returning, blood would be drawn over the threshold once more.[209] Sacrifice was common during the preparations and performing of weddings as well. Prior to the wedding, caution would be taken against impure actions and words. The bridegroom would not pass over water for some days before

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[201] The threshold has a long history of significance for magical acts. See Sir Frazer, *Golden Bough,* 43, 720-725, Curtiss, *Primitive Religion,* 177, and Trumbull, *Covenant*, 3-24, 45-56, 74-98.
[202] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *Radd*, 9:111.
[203] See chapter 6.
[204] Canaan, *Saints,* 187, Curtiss, *Primitive Religion,* 184.
[205] Ibid., 233.
[206] Spoer, "Powers," 58.
[207] Grehan, *Twilight,* 175-176. See also W. H. D. Rouse, "Notes from Syria," *Folklore* Vol. 6, No. 2 (June, 1895): 173.
[208] Park, *Thanatology,* 9-31, Schimmel, *Signs of God*, 30, 37, 92, Blair, "Hand-of-Fatima," 356-358.
[209] Curtiss, *Primitive,* 177-178.

his marriage.[210] On the wedding day, a sacrifice would at times be offered to distract the *jinn.* After the proceedings would be done, another animal would be slaughtered, so that sacrificial blood gets into contract with the bride and groom.[211] Prior to entering her new home, the bride would at times break a pomegranate fruit[212] and spill its seeds over the threshold. Finally, a sheep or a goat would be sacrificed at a place overlooking the nuptial chamber. The blood would be drawn upon the bride.[213]

People sacrificed on behalf of infants on the brink of death believed to have suffered possession. Blood would be spilt on their bodies directly. Caution was taken that the sacrificial animal was unharmed prior to the slaughter. It was suspected that the infant would otherwise sympathetically suffer injuries.[214] Canaan recorded a custom of treating older children with epileptic seizures by selecting a smaller animal, such as a pigeon, and inserting it head first into the rectum of the *majnūn* so that it suffocates. It was hoped that the *jinnī* would be duped into believing that it took the soul of the child, which would make it leave.[215] After the exorcism ritual was over, if it was deemed successful, the people would offer another sacrifice as an apologetic act towards the expelled *jinn,* in hopes to quell their wrath. Further sacrifice might have been offered in praise of divine assistance with the procedure.[216]

The people offered sacrifice during exorcisms as well. It was important for the injinnated to establish proximity to the sacrificial victim. Most often, the patients would lay their hand on the

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[210] Mrs. H. Hamish Spoer, “Notes on the Marriage Customs of the Bedu and Fellahin,” *Folklore,* Vol. 21, No. 3 (Sep., 1910): 281-293.
[211] Mrs. Spoer, “Notes,” 281-293.
[212] It was previously mentioned that according to popular belief, the *jinn* were vulnerable to pomegranate. See Stephan, “Lunacy,” 8.
[213] Mrs. Spoer, “Notes,” 293.
[214] Curtiss, *Primitive Religion,* 177-178.
[215] Canaan, *Saints,* 170. In the Balkan territories, and even towards the end of the twentieth century, the youth would in slang use the coinage “releasing the pigeon” to refer to flatulence.
[216] Al-Azmeh, *Emergence,* 206.

animal during the ritual preparation and performance.[217] It was equally important for the injinnated to come into contact with sacrificial blood.[218] The significance of blood reflects a universal belief that it, like spittle, carried the creature's essence.[219] In other cases when an animal was slain for healing purposes, the ailing body part would be anointed with the blood of the slain beast.[220]

Sacrifice was offered for the deceased as well. The purpose was twofold. Firstly, the ritual was supposed to protect the deceased on their journey to the afterlife, often as a generalized apotropaic act with no specific recipient. Secondly, since the meat of the sacrifice was later distributed in an act of charity (*ṣadāqa*),[221] the people hoped that the sacrifice would help redeem the soul of the deceased.[222] It was important for the sacrificial blood to touch the corpse. If the funeral proceedings required the corpse to be mounted on a camel and transported to the grave, the people would draw blood over the mount before placing the deceased.[223] Syrian Christians also offered sacrifice for similar causes. Especially during the time of St. George's feast, clerics were called upon to bless the sacrificial animals. The meat was also distributed as charity, so the poor enjoyed a feast during these times of the year.[224] Sacrifices for the dead were not a unique Syrian custom and are still present in many regions.[225]

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[217] Curtiss, *Primitive Religion,* 148-149.
[218] Ibid., 200-201.
[219] Sir Frazer, *Golden Bough,* 237.
[220] Curtiss, Primitive, 213, and Paton, "Survivals," 56-64.
[221] Ibn Abidīn, *Radd*, 9:463-475, Lane, *Egyptians,* 2:259, 268, Curtiss, *Primitive Religion*, 177-178, 223-225. Also see chapter 6.
[222] Canaan, *Saints,* 170.
[223] Ibid.
[224] Curtiss, *Primitive Religion*, 207.
[225] See Alberdina Houtman, Marcel Poorthuis, Joshua Schwartz and Joseph Aaron Turner, eds., *The Actuality of Sacrifice: Past and Present* (Boston: Brill, 2015). In the central Balkans, for instance, upon one's death an animal would be immediately butchered to prevent the deceased to "drag someone with them." The nearest relatives of the deceased would then at times visit the house which most recently lost a member, in beliefs that their loved ones would proceed to the afterlife together.

As with most religious practices, the presence of professional thaumaturges was preferred during sacrificial slaughter.[226] They would instruct the people into the proper ways of offering sacrifice and oversee ritual proceedings. As dispensers of divine grace, members of the Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* sodality of the Ottoman Empire also specialized in dealing with daemonic creatures. Through such dealings, another important aspect of their role as ministers to the people becomes evident. This role in turn indicates that beliefs in the unseen historically seemed widely spread among the Ottoman subjects who expected Allah's *baraka,* dispensed by the ulamaic priestly sodality, to protect them from jinnic perils. The role of the Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* sodality as defenders from malignant forces highlights in more detail the particularities of the Ottoman religious field, and the function of professional thaumaturges within it.[227] The path to thaumaturgical mastery was long and arduous, yet brought many rewards. Some individuals would sometimes advance to the saintly ranks in the Ottoman network of the holy, becoming one of the fundaments for premodern Ottoman religion.

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[226] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *Radd,* 9:463.
[227] Levi-Strauss, *Anthropology,* 28, and Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, ed. Randal Johnson (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), 29-111, 161-175.

4. Path to Holiness: Networks of the Holy in eighteenth-century Syria

Allah stood at the top of the vertical chain of *baraka*-distribution – the Ottoman network of the holy. First under God were the prophets (*anbiyā'*; sg. *nabī*), of whom Muḥammad was the most perfect and accomplished.[1] Many ranks of the previously deceased Muslim saints (*awliyā'*; sg. *walī*) queued under the prophets. The most respected *awliyā'* were the Poles of their time (*aqṭāb*; sg. *quṭb*).[2] Their existence was believed to ensure the natural order of things. Presence of the *aqṭāb* drove away corruption and chaos, as well as natural calamities.[3] Names of the Poles figured in innumerable invocations ranging from the Sufi orders' *dhikr* to brief conjuration spells.[4] The belief in the Poles of their time and their powers remains widespread in some regions to this day. Families of prominent *aqṭāb* yielded innumerable Sufis in the following generations. Direct descendants of

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[1] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *Radd,* 2:242-243, Al-Nābulsī, *Fatḥ,* 177. Further see al-Nabhānī, *JK,* 1:9-14. Also see Chih, *Sufism,* 113.
[2] Patrick J. Ryan, "The Mystical Theology of Tijāni Sufism and its Social Significance in West Africa," *Journal of Religion in Africa,* Vol. 30, Fasc. 2 (May 2009): 209. For the Poles, see section 2.4.
[3] See Chih, *Sufism,* 1, Winter, *Egyptian Society*, 136, Yılmaz, *Caliphate,* 204-205, and al-Azmeh, *Muslim Kingship,* 183-185. Further see section 2.4.
[4] For instance, Canaan, *Saints,* 260, and Smith, *Rābiʿa,* 31-38.

such individuals enjoyed high esteem. Under the rank of the deceased saints were the still-living ones, who enjoyed high popularity among the Ottoman imperial subjects.

Certain members of Sufi orders enjoyed the beliefs in their *baraka* as well. The term "Sufi" is very general and applicable to all members of Sufi lodges. Eighteenth-century Damascene Sufi *shaykh*s used to refer to their networks as confraternities with much accent placed on solidarity and collegiality. The construction *al-sāda al-ṣūfiyya* ("Sufi masters" or "notables") is frequently encountered in eighteenth-century Arabic source material as a means of Sufi authors to refer to their peers.[5] In addition, terms expressing brotherhood (*ikhwān*) or camaraderie (*aṣḥāb*) often emerged.[6] Rachida Chih rightly observes, however, that scholarly references to Sufi "brotherhoods" do not accurately describe the dynamics of Sufi lodges. Sufi masters established and maintained rigorous hierarchy and expected absolute obedience.[7] There existed clear ranks within the orders, ranging from the *shaykh al-ṭarīqa* (the head of an order)[8] to the new initiates (sg. *murīd*; pl. *muradā'*) who still needed to complete their training. Similarly, the eighteenth-century Syrian network of the holy represented a chain of strict hierarchies which ranged between the still-living wonder-workers and the prophets of God. Beliefs in the *baraka* of Sufis developed gradually along with their accomplishments in learning and other achievements appreciated by the networks of their peers.

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[5] For instance, al-Bakrī, "KhH,", 17A-17B. Also see Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *Radd,* 9:505.

[6] As an example, al-Bakrī, "KhH," 10AB, 25B, ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī, *Riḥlatān ilā Lubnān* [Two Journeys to Lebanon], ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid and Stefan Wild (Beirut: Franz Steiner, 1979), 116-120, and Al-Nābulsī, *Ḥaqīqa,* 38, 162.

[7] Chih, *Sufism,* 11. Similar is observed for the medieval Sufis by Geoffroy, *Sufism*, 195-196. This is comparable to the obedience to bishops in European brotherhoods in Christ as well. See, for instance, Will Adam, "Natural Law in the Anglican Tradition," in *Christianity and Natural Law: An Introduction,* ed. Norman Doe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 58-76.

[8] The office of the order's head combined a variety of social and religious functions. See A.A. Batran, "The Kunta, Sidi al-Mukhtar al-Kunti, and the Office of Shaykh al-Tariq al-Qadiriyya," in *Studies in West African Islamic History, Volume 1: The Cultivators of Islam,* ed. John Ralph Willis (London&New York: Routledge, 1979), 113-146. Further see Chih, *Sufism,* 66-69.

This chapter investigates how the Ottoman subjects of eighteenth-century Syria attributed *baraka* to individuals among them. It traces the process through which an individual would inspire beliefs in their grace. The following sections examine the several possible paths to inspire rumors of *baraka* that were available for the eighteenth-century Ottoman Syrian subjects. Furthermore, this chapter highlights factors that were crucial for establishing the functions of an eighteenth-century Damascene priestly sodality, illuminating its internal relationships to indicate the dynamics of its networks. The chapter further examines relations between the Ottoman priestly sodality and its networks of the holy, analyzing possible ways through which an individual would amount to sainthood in eighteenth-century Province of Damascus.

Aside from some very rare cases, sainthood, like the beliefs in a Sufi's *baraka,* followed years of study, training and commitment, usually under Sufi masters as well as the established religious scholars in *madrasa*s. In addition, sainthood often was the product of skillful networking among the established religious professionals, as well as the common people. With some notable exceptions that shall be discussed in the following sections, sainthood represented the consequence of popular consensus and peer recognition. Saintly prominence, however, varied in scale. Many individuals who were locally famous for their *baraka* never received universal acceptance as the most prominent of Sufi *shaykh*s, or the *awliyā'* within the Ottoman network of the holy. Beliefs in their power had a confined local character.

Instead, then, of a universal Ottoman network of the holy, the dynamics tied to sainthood indicate that there existed a multitude of interconnected and overlapped networks which varied depending on location and historical period. Certain members of these networks were venerated only locally, while others became prominent in many regions of the Ottoman Empire. In addition, eighteenth-century Syrian sources indicate the existence of a tight urban Sufi-*ʿulamā'* network (and

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it is legitimate to presume that comparable settings existed in the previous centuries) whose validation was crucial for the emergence of new saints. At the same time, this network of well-established Sufi-*ʿulamā* yielded most of the prominent Damascene *awliyā'*. Common people would at times achieve sainthood, yet this did not represent the norm.

The eighteenth-century Syrian network of the holy expanded continually. As the number of Sufi lodges grew, the ranks of Muslim saints thrived as well.[9] Throughout this expansion, the priestly sodality of Ottoman Shām preserved its monopoly over divine grace and social control through a number of exclusionist strategies. The Sufi-*ʿulamā'* invested efforts to restrict their knowledge transmission to certified channels, maintaining a specialized niche for their occupation. In the course of such developments, the networks of the *ʿulamā'* and Ottoman mystics provided legitimacy to each other, while the widespread beliefs in *baraka* granted them high popularity among the imperial subjects.

In popular belief, *baraka* was tied to traits of virtue and devoutness, corresponding to the Arabic term *ṣalāḥ*. Individuals who acquired reputation for their role model behavior often inspired the people to group them under the broad category of the *ṣāliḥūn.*[10] Through further training and study, certain *ṣāliḥūn* achieved popularity as members of exclusive groups within the Ottoman Sufi-*ʿulamā'* network. However, sainthood represented an open-ended social category[11] for the Ottoman subjects. Certain individuals among the *ṣāliḥūn* were able to inspire beliefs in their own *baraka*, sometimes without any official Sufi training or *madrasa* education.[12] This socio-anthropological fact suggests that *baraka* was a social marker that had much importance in

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[9] The expansion of the network of the holy was noted in other periods by scholars of the Ottoman Empire. See for instance Yılmaz, *Caliphate Redefined,* 122.
[10] See section 2.3.
[11] Grehan, *Twilight,* 66.
[12] See, for instance, al-Nabhānī, *JK,* 1:67-71.

Ottoman societies, along with other parameters such as erudition, or social and material status. Due to the entanglement of *baraka* with *ṣalāḥ* in popular beliefs, traits of piety and devoutness would sometimes bring individuals to social positions of considerable popularity. During the eighteenth century, some of them would be honored by ulamaic biographies that memorialized them as prominent individuals within the Province of Damascus, along with the widely respected Sufi-*ʿulamā* and other notables. These individuals would, however, very rarely become prominent Ottoman saints.

Among the *ṣāliḥūn* were the theoleptics (*majādhīb*; sg. *majdhūb*[13]) as well. The Arabic expression *majdhūb* was and still is colloquially used to refer to idiots. However, it also marked individuals who were mentally disturbed, yet believed to have been inspired by divine or saintly intervention. Juxtaposing these blessed madmen to the injinnated (*majānīn*) further reveals the social significance of *baraka* in popular belief. Victims of supposed jinnic assaults suffered madness due to overlooking or blatantly disregarding certain social norms. On the other hand, popular belief classified the *majādhīb* among the other *ṣāliḥūn*. Their devoutness and piety earned them *baraka.* It was believed that their contact with divine power deprived them of their senses.[14] Some *majādhīb* were remembered as saints.

It is evident from the sources that *ṣalāḥ* represented a crucial condition for the emergence of beliefs in an individual's *baraka*. It seems worthwhile to begin the discussion about the network of *baraka* in Ottoman Damascus with a brief analysis of the *ṣāliḥūn*. Such analyses help better understand the beliefs in *baraka* within the context of eighteenth-century Bilād al-Shām.

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[13] See section 4.2.
[14] Further see, for instance, Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima,* 149-151, 153-154.

4.1. God’s Grace is Upon Them: The *Ṣāliḥūn* and Popular Belief

During the eighteenth century (and in the previous periods as well), narratives of the virtuous and devout as blessed by Allah’s *baraka* were widespread among the common people, as well as the ulamaic circles of Ottoman Syria. However, in many cases, *baraka* would be mentioned simply as a literary device to refer to an exemplary individual. It was common to describe such people as blessed with God’s grace. Although such descriptions did not imply that their subjects where wonder-workers, they could have been misleading. For instance, James Grehan reads of a Damascene Abū al-Surūr (“father of happiness;” d.1748), who often brought laugher to people. Grehan takes note of remarks about this Abū al-Surūr’s feature to conclude that he was a saint.[15] Such brief biographical descriptions, however, represented a standard narrative style that was widely used in the region. They did not always indicate sainthood, yet their usage illustrates well the popular tendency to connect *baraka* with exemplary behavior.

Some narratives employed the concept of sainthood in a more elaborate and direct manner. In 1749, the Damascene Orthodox cleric Mikhā’īl Burayk recorded the death of one of his colleagues. Burayk did not reveal the identity of the deceased priest, even though his funeral brought surprises to the assembled people. The funeral procession reached the burial site under the St. Nicholas Church to discover a strange light from the sky illuminating the grave. Aromatic fragrances pervaded the air that carried gentle whispers. When Burayk heard about these phenomena, he investigated into the matter himself. Mikhā’īl Burayk the priest discovered that the deceased had a particularly vicious and malignant wife. Despite her unruly behavior, her late husband persisted in patience (*ṣabr*)[16] and kindness. Burayk, a true misogynist throughout his

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[15] Grehan, *Twilight,* 72. The author reads Ibn Budayr the barber’s account of Abū al-Surūr from the published version of the source, al-Budayrī, *HDY,* 167.
[16] Patience was very important for the Sufis and the common people in eighteenth-century Damascus. See below.

chronicle, concluded that the phenomena at the funeral indicated grace of the deceased earned through his unyielding temper and the quality of his character. In Burayk's *History of Shām,* the entire account is introduced as a lesson for all those "who allow [themselves] to end up with horrible and evil women."[17]

Unlike such narratives where the concept of *baraka* was used as a literary device only, eighteenth-century source material indicates the popular belief in wondrous powers of some *ṣāliḥūn.* For instance, Abū Yazīd (d.1759) from Aleppo lived in such poverty that he could not replace his shirt for twelve years. He worked as the children's caretaker in the Aleppine al-Mushāriqa neighborhood mosque. His decency, honor, and virtue were so famous that "whoever saw him got to love him" (*man rā'h aḥabbah*). The people mentioned his name in constant praise. The caretaker's biographer Muḥmmad al-Murādī relates the tale of a certain Muḥammad (the surname remains unknown) who lived in the workshop of a Muḥammad al-Bunī. This Muḥammad met Abū Yazīd when the caretaker was already blind, as sight left him some time before death. He approached to kiss Abū Yazīd's hand after seeing that some people had this habit, which is indicative of the popular admiration the caretaker enjoyed. When Muḥammad did so, Abū Yazīd spoke up, guessing Muḥammad's name and address. Al-Murādī considers this event one of the blind caretaker's wonders.[18]

ʿAbd al-Muʿṭī (d.1760) was another *ṣāliḥ* of note in Aleppo. He suffered from polydactyly on both of his hands and feet and underwent numerous surgical procedures in attempts to improve his condition. Nothing seemed to help. However, ʿAbd al-Muʿṭī worked as a calligrapher until his death. His persistence earned much respect from the biographer al-Murādī, who offers an emotional narration of the soft rain on the day of ʿAbd al-Muʿṭī's funeral. The biographer

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[17] Burayk, *TS,* 27-28.
[18] Al-Murādī, *Silk,* 1:86.

considered it a suitable final honor for such an individual.[19] These two accounts indicate that traits such as endurance and patience (*ṣabr*) during hardships tended to inspire as much admiration as *ṣalāḥ* did among the Ottoman *ʿulamāʾ*. Burayk's account of the deceased priest demonstrates appreciation of the same qualities. As it shall be shown in this chapter, Sufi disciples were required to demonstrate endurance and patience as well, in addition to their *ṣalāḥ*. Without such traits, their training might have not been considered complete.[20] The difference between the generality of the *ṣāliḥūn* category and the Sufis among them requires an emphasis, however. The former were praised as righteous and sometimes attributed with minor wondrous powers. The latter could more often hope to enter the widely respected circles of eighteenth-century Syrian wonder-workers.

The common people seemed to praise the same qualities as the *ʿulamāʾ*, which is evident from the extant sources, such as Ibn Budayr's diary of Damascus. Ibn Budayr the barber illustrates this through the obituary of his own master barber. According to Ibn Budayr, the master barber Ibn Ḥashīsh (d.1742)[21] was an extremely pious man who demonstrated patience and endurance along with many other qualities. He praises his master, for Ibn Ḥashīsh was generous enough to groom the students and the poor for free. He was an experienced traveler and an excellent craftsman. In addition to coiffing, Ibn Ḥashīsh performed some other services.[22] Ibn Budayr does not elaborate, yet the profession of the barber in many premodern Eurasian regions involved some medical and surgical procedures. Among them were teeth extraction, bloodletting, cupping and circumcision.[23] It is possible that the profession of the barber bore a more mysterious air for the

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[19] Ibid., 3:153. Both these Aleppines, along with many other similar individuals, were honored by tombs near saintly graves. See chapter 5.
[20] For instance, see al-Kīlānī, "DB," 13B.
[21] Grehan, *Twilight,* 79.
[22] Ibn Budayr, "HDY," 6A-6B.
[23] For the Syrian region, see al-Qāsimī, *QS*, 103-104. For the wider European context, see Park, *Thanatology,* 296-313.

rest of the people.[24] The barber-author adds that his master was skilled in healing some afflictions of the body and some ophthalmological problems. Ibn Budayr interprets this as the master's *baraka* and takes much pride in the transfer of grace facilitated by his relationship with Ibn Ḥashīsh.[25]

Ibn Budayr's narratives clearly indicate the appreciation of the same character traits among both the common people and the ulamaic circles. Writing both about himself and other individuals, Ibn Budayr often seemed in effort to copy the vocabulary used by the Qādirīyya – the Sufi order of his choice.[26] Due to his exceptional network of scholars and Sufis, the barber adopted the vocabulary and writing style that imitated these prominent figures.[27] Ibn Budayr further boasted about the collection of ulamaic works that he acquired for his reading, as well as to educate his sons, indicating the popular appreciation of ulamaic education.[28] His vocabulary corresponds to that which Muḥammad al-Kīlānī used while writing his 1795 training manual for the Qādirīyya, the barber's own order.[29] The barber clearly adopted the language particular to some of the more prominent Sufi-ʿulamāʾ to stage himself according to the established norms of a Sufi's image.

Honor received high esteem among all Damascenes. The priest Burayk, for instance, narrates of a Damascene Christian who in 1773 got drunk and converted to Islam through the recitation of the *shahāda.* He renounced conversion immediately the following day. He was taken to court, where he provoked the authorities with his claims to Christian faith sufficiently to be

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[24] Certain professions were universally often mystified. In the European context, for instance, interesting is St. Dunstan's hagiography. St. Dunstan was a blacksmith and performed many wonders which were further mystified by the craftsmen in the same profession. See, for instance, Julia de Wolf Gibbs Addison, *Arts and Crafts in the Middle Ages: A Description of Mediaeval Workmanship in Several of the Departments of Applied Art, Together with some Account of Special Artisans in the Early Renaissance* (Boston: L.C. Page, 1921), 109-119, or Parish, *Miracles,* 110-117.
[25] Ibn Budayr, "HDY," 6A-6B.
[26] Compare ibid. with al-Kīlānī, "DB," 1A-15B.
[27] See Sajdi, *The Barber,* 38-76, and Nikola Pantić, "Faith of the Common Man: A Damascene Barber and Popular Religion, 1741-1763," unpublished MA thesis (Budapest: Central European University, 2014), 34-58.
[28] Sajdi, *The Barber,* 68, 72-74.
[29] Ibn Budayr, "HDY," 6A-6B, Al-Kīlānī, "DB," 13B

condemned to beheading. Burayk seems to be in praise of this man's persistence.[30] Similar tales were widespread in the Ottoman Empire during the early modern period and at times featured Christian priests carefully instructing the imprisoned into a behavior which would secure the death penalty. The executed would later be proclaimed martyrs and memorialized in writing. Composing such "neomartyrologies" represents a matter which was in the Ottoman Balkan context thoroughly analyzed by Tijana Krstić.[31]

Accounts such as these reflect that the common people and the ulamaic circles appreciated the same character traits of the *ṣāliḥūn*. Awareness of what constitutes an individual's *ṣalāḥ* was widespread among the Ottoman subjects of eighteenth-century Syria. Even without Sufi training or *madrasa* education, therefore, some Syrian *ṣāliḥūn* still managed to attract a lot of respect. Stories about them had a didactic aspect, as they profiled exemplary Ottoman subjects. Eighteenth-century *ʿulamāʾ* memorialized some *ṣāliḥūn* among the much wealthier and more accomplished contemporaries. *Baraka* would often appear in these narratives along with *ṣalāḥ*, indicating that the personal qualities of virtue, righteousness and devoutness, patience and persistence, represented primary conditions for the development of beliefs in an individual's blessings with Allah's grace. Such was the case even with those among the Ottoman subjects who unfortunately lost their senses. Provided that they were classified as the *ṣāliḥūn,* instead of beliefs in daemonic attacks, they would acquire reputation for divine blessings.

4.2. The Blessed Fools: Theolepsis among the *Ṣāliḥūn* of eighteenth-century Shām

During the eighteenth century, Ottoman subjects in Bilād al-Shām believed that Allah, his saints and prophets would at times reach out towards the minds of the people and cause various states of

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[30] Burayk, *TS,* 100.
[31] Tijana Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam: Narratives of Religious Change and Communal Politics in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2011), 121-142.

distraction. Divine and saintly powers were believed strenuous enough to sometimes exert a “pull” (*jadhba*; in this context, “theolepsis” represents an adequate translation as well) of one’s consciousness out of the physical body.[32] It was believed that the individuals who had experienced theolepsis remained aware of both the seen and unseen worlds. Their senses were therefore confused. They would display bouts of strange behavior, speak in tongues, or exhibit unusual and bizarre gestures.[33] They were known as the *majādhīb* (sg. *majdhūb*; “the pulled one,” or “theoleptic,“ but “idiot“ in colloquial Arabic).[34] The belief in holy fools was old and widespread across various cultural traditions.[35] In Syria, it survived until the modern period. Taufik Canaan narrates of early twentieth century madmen who were obsessively repeating the same action, or the same couple of words that they spoke at the time of the “pull.”[36] While passing through Ein ‘Arik (*ʿAyn ʿArīk*) in the Ramallah Governorate, for instance, Canaan noticed a theoleptic who was often loud in public. This holy fool walked only backwards. He forecasted rain by bellowing. The people of Ein ‘Arik waited for him to start anxiously running to and fro, as he sometimes did. His frenzy was a sign that the gendarmerie was arriving with the tax-gatherers. People collected strands of his hair to fumigate the ill.[37]

Contrary to the injinnated,[38] the *majādhīb* were subjects of divine attraction and narratives about them often featured *baraka.* The belief in Allah’s grace prompted great respect for the

[32] Mark J. Sedgwick, *Sufism: The Essentials* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2000), 30-31, or Scott Kugle, *Sufis and Saints’ Bodies: Mysticism, Corporeality and Sacred Power in Islam* (Chapel Hill: University of Carolina Press, 2007), 100-109.
[33] Canaan, *Saints,* 310-312.
[34] Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima,* 153-154.
[35] Dols, *Majnūn,* 366-410. The author pays attention to holy madmen in other scriptural trends as well. Also see Albrecht Berger and Sergey Ivanov, eds., *Holy Fools and Divine Madmen: Sacred Insanity through Ages and Cultures* (Neuried: Ars Una, 2018). Each chapter treats a different religious system, to comprise a global overview of holy madness.
[36] Canaan, *Saints*, 311.
[37] Ibid., 134-135. Hair, like spittle, was believed to carry the essence of an individual and was, in the case of holy men, attributed with talismanic properties. See chapter 6.
[38] Ibn Khaldūn compares the injinnated with animals, stating that they had no reason, see *al-Muqaddima,* 149-150, 153.

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Muslim theoleptics. It was bad to cause them harm.[39] Due to the belief that their theolepsis was related to divine grace, some thaumaturgical powers were often ascribed to them. In certain cases, although rare, *majādhīb* were capable of acquiring wide respect and improving their social status due to the beliefs in their *baraka.* Tales of holy madmen further indicate the significance of *baraka* for the social dynamics in eighteenth-century Syria.

Theoleptics represented a frequent leitmotif during the early modern period. In the eighteenth century, they would feature in a large number of accounts, at least in a passing mention. The previous section took note of an Aleppine Muḥammad who made acquaintance with Abū Yazīd the blind caretaker. Muḥammad was attending the funeral of a theoleptic ("... *dhahabt fī janāzat aḥad al-majādhīb…*") when the caretaker guessed his name and address. His story indicates that a larger group of people went to pay respects to the deceased holy madman.[40]

Ibrāhīm al-Kaykī (d.1748) was a famous theoleptic from the Damascene al-Qubaybāt district. Ibn Budayr addresses him as a *shaykh* and a *walī.* The barber praises the *ṣalāḥ* of the theoleptic, whose *baraka* convinced the locals not to mind his shouting in public. In addition to his bellowing, al-Kaykī would often sway to and fro, loudly clapping his hands. According to Ibn Budayr, one day al-Kaykī passed by a milk vendor in the district and became visibly agitated. Loud shouting attracted a crowd of people who presumed that the theoleptic was thirsty. They gave him a milk jug to calm him down. The *majdhūb*'s howling did not stop so the people offered him other milk jugs that he refused as well. Eventually, al-Kaykī accepted one particular jug that he turned upside down. As its contents spilled on the ground, a large serpent (*thuʿbān*) was revealed to the gathered crowd. The theoleptic quieted down and walked away.[41] The appearance of serpents

[39] Sedgwick, *Sufism,* 30-31.
[40] Al-Murādī, *Silk,* 1:86.
[41] Ibn Budayr, "HDY," 49B.

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alluded to the *jinn* in many tales, and it seems that uncovering snakes in vendors' jugs represented a story of wider popularity. In Cairo, theoleptics, as well as Sufis, uncovered snakes in such containers many times, and in one instance, both a dead dog and a dead serpent were found.[42] It was believed that the *majādhīb* could sense these dangers because of their *baraka.* Similarly, it was purported that nothing may be hidden from the gaze of fully trained Sufis.[43]

Despite the belief that they were graced by God, most *majādhīb* did not have a reputation as saints or thaumaturges of great power. Many theoleptics enjoyed popularity in their neighbourhoods only, which is evident from the stories given above. Their renown bore a local character and rarely merited recognition from the influential members of the *ʿulamāʾ*. Exceptions, however, existed. The biography of Aḥmad Ibn Sarrāj of Damascus (d.1726) seems illustrative. Ibn Sarrāj lived near Bāb Tūmā. He was remembered as a very eccentric individual, but also as an accomplished clairvoyant.[44] In addition to al-Murādī's own entry, other prominent *ʿulamāʾ* expressed their admiration for this theoleptic. Among them were Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī of the Khalwatīyya,[45] and Muḥammad Ibn ʿĪsā Ibn Kannān (d.1740),[46] a very prominent Sufi-*ʿālim*[47] and a chronicler of Damascus. Both addressed Ibn Sarrāj as a Damascene saint.[48]

The biography of ʿUthmān Ibn ʿAbd Allāh (d.1782) demonstrates that the belief in *baraka* gracing an individual at times may have been more relevant than many other social denominators. Exceptional individuals whose *baraka* was believed in were usually skillful networkers as well,

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[42] Dogs also symbolized transmogrified *jinn.* See Lane, *Egyptians,* 299-300.
[43] Al-Kīlānī, "DB," 10B-11A, and Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:18, 22-25. Further see Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima,* 139, or Lane, *Egyptians,* 1: 298-300.
[44] Al-Murādī, *Silk,* 1:125-129. The biographer does not offer further detail.
[45] Ibid., 1:125-126.
[46] Muḥammad Ibn ʿĪsā Ibn Kannān, *Yawmiyāt al-Shāmīyya min 1111h ḥattā 1153h* [*Daily Events of Shām 1699-1740*], ed. Akram Ḥasan al-ʿUlabī (Damascus: Dār al-Ṭibāʿ, 1994), 375-376.
[47] Ibn Kannān studied both *ʿilm* and *taṣawwuf.* See Muḥammad Ibn ʿĪsā Ibn Kannān, "al-Murūj al-Sundusīyya fī Talkhīṣ Tārīkh al-Ṣāliḥīya," [The Vast Gardens of the Brief Summary of the History of al-Ṣāliḥīyya], MS Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Wetzstein II 1117, p. 1 Berlin, 7B. This is an autograph from 1727. Henceforth: "MS."
[48] Al-Murādī, *Silk,* 1:125-129, Ibn Kannān, *Yawmiyāt*, 375-376.

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which illuminates a very important dynamic behind the beliefs in Allah's grace and their formation. ʿUthmān Ibn ʿAbd Allah, remembered as ʿUthmān al-Majdhūb, was a slave of the chief military judge (Tr. *kazasker;* Ar. *qāḍī al- ʿasākir*) in Istanbul. He had some reputation as his chief physician (*ra'īs al-aṭibbā'*). In addition, ʿUthmān al-Majdhūb studied the Qur'ān and Qur'ānic sciences (*ʿulūm*). He also trained to become a calligrapher. One day, Ibn ʿAbd Allah became divinely attracted (*ḥaṣala lahu jadhb^{un} ilahī*). Ever since, he was prone to prodigious trances (*aḥwāl khawāriq*). It was believed that he performed many wonders. In the end, ʿUthmān al-Majdhūb was widely recognized as a saint, both among the common people and the select few individuals (*al-ʿām wa al-khāṣ*[49]). Sultan Abdülhamid I (r. 1774-1789) acknowledged the sanctity of this former slave. The biographer al-Murādī is proud of his personal acquaintance with this theoleptic, whom he met during one of his visits to the imperial capital. He personally witnessed the clear wonders of Ibn ʿAbd Allah (*shāhadtu minhu karamāt ẓāhira*).[50]

ʿUthmān the Theoleptic worked as a calligrapher, which may suggest further explanations for his exceptional biography. During the eighteenth century, it appears that the Sufi Jalwatīyya[51] order enjoyed much popularity among the calligraphers of Istanbul.[52] It is possible that Ibn ʿAbd Allah had contacts among this order,[53] although al-Murādī the biographer does not indicate that

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[49] See Chih, *Sufism,* 111.
[50] Al-Murādī, *Silk,* 3:170-171.
[51] This order is a sub-branch of the Khalwatīyya order that appeared in the middle of the seventeenth century. See ʿAbd al-Bāqī Miftāḥ, *Aḍwā' ʿalā al-Ṭarīqa al-Raḥmānīyya al-Khalwatīyya* [Casting Light on the Merciful Ways of the Khalwatīyya] (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmīyya, 1971), 20-21, (Shaykh al-ʿUlamā') Ismāʿīl Ḥaqqī Ibn Muṣṭafā (al-Islāmbūlī al-Ḥanafī al-Khalwatī al-Burmawī, d.1724), *Tamām al-Fayḍ fī Bāb al-Rijāl: Rijāl wa al-Mashāyikh al-Ṭarīqa al-Khalwatīyya* [The Overwhelming of the Gate of Men: The Men and the Masters of the Khalwatīyya Path], ed. Aḥmad Farīd al-Mazīrī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmīyya, 1971), 29, 32, 113, and Maḥmūd Efendī al-Uskudārī (Üsküdari) (d.1628), with the commentary (*sharḥ*) by ʿAbd al-Ghanī Ibn Ismāʿīl al-Nābulsī, *Sharḥ al-Tajalliyāt al-Ilahīyya wa al-Kashfāt al-Rabānīyya* [The Explanation of Divine Manifestations and the Lordly Revelations], ed. ʿĀṣim Ibrāhīm al-Kayyālī al-Ḥusaynī al-Shādhilī al-Darqāwī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmīyya, 2013), 101-102. Shaykh Ismāʿīl Ḥaqqī was a prominent eighteenth-century member of the Jalwatīyya order whose grave was a *ziyāra* destination. This dissertation cites two of his works.
[52] Ḥaqqī, *Tamām al-Fayḍ,* 174.
[53] There are indications that one's choice of Sufi orders corresponded to certain occupations. See the following section.

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the theoleptic had any official affiliations to a Sufi lodge. Such contacts may have brought necessary leverage to the theoleptic saint from Istanbul, further improving his social status.

It is possible to presume that many individuals clearly understood the benefits brought by rumors of holy madness. Throughout centuries, theoleptics were often exempt from certain legal proceedings. Like children and the insane, *fiqh* considered them legally unaccountable for their words and actions.[54] The source material sometimes hints that certain individuals attempted to modify their behavior and social representation techniques to suggest theoleptic fits, which would attract rumors of divine *baraka* as well. Eccentricity would at times even help the image of a thaumaturgical expert or an otherwise prominent member of society. Perhaps therefore Mrs. Spoer finds that "the majority" of holy men in Palestine pretended to be mad, or displayed eccentricity in their clothing, hygiene and behavior during the modern period.[55] During the eighteenth century, such instances also occurred, and the authorities seemed aware of these self-representative strategies. For instance, James Grehan reads an account about a theoleptic from Tiberias who walked around the city completely naked. This provoked the local strongman-governor Ẓāhir al-ʿUmar (1689-1775). The notable took no action prior to consulting his jurists as well as the local *muftī*. The *ʿulamāʾ* debated appropriate ways to determine the authenticity of insanity. They suggested that the truly mad would not know the day of the week. However, the theoleptic answered correctly so he was first beaten and then ordered to remain clothed while in public areas.[56] This test, however crude, reveals that matters pertinent to theolepsis required a considerable amount of caution and a certain level of professionalism on the part of official jurists.

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[54] See Dols, *Majnūn,* 425-474. Further see Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima,* 153.
[55] Spoer, "Powers," 57.
[56] Grehan, *Twilight,* 75.

Popular Sufis tended to exhibit eccentric behavior, often in connection with prolonged self-isolation (*ʿuzla*; or *khalwa*, which might have given the Khalwatīyya their name). It was common for the Khalwatīs to spend forty days in isolation each year. They would normally reside in small cells.[57] Many Sufi masters spent a time of their lives as hermits, possibly to imitate Muḥammad's own reported isolation period.[58] During his own voluntary withdrawal from social life, which lasted for seven years, ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī gradually neglected his physical appearance. His hygiene worsened, as well as his manners. He was seen in public disheveled, with hair and nails grown far too long. After these seven years, he returned to public life and repaired such matters.[59]

The *baraka* of theoleptics would sometimes impress the highest ranks of the Ottoman court. Due to the beliefs in their *baraka,* the holy madmen enjoyed wide popularity as well as an esteemed social status. The *majādhīb* therefore represent an illustrative case which shows the importance of divine grace as a social asset. In most cases, however, it was the *baraka* of the established Sufi circles that helped one progress towards the ranks of the highly influential imperial spiritual elites. It was not easy to acquire such renown. Years of study and training were necessary to finally reach mastery of a Sufi path and perhaps achieve recognition as a worker of wonders among the Ottoman subjects.

4.3. Exploring the Sea of Knowledge: Sufi Initiates on the Path to Sainthood

Early modern Shām had several dozens of organized Sufi paths available for the people. Among the largest orders, both in Shāmī and Egyptian territories, were the Qādirīyya, Naqshbandīyya,

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[57] Lane, *Egyptians,* 1:314-315. The practice was not confined only to the Khalwatīs, and has a long tradition. For instance, Daniella Talmon-Heller, *Islamic Piety in Medieval Syria: Mosques, Cemeteries and Sermons under the Zangids and Ayyūbids (1146-1260)* (Leiden&Boston: Brill, 2007), 78-85.
[58] For instance, al-Nabhānī, *JK,* 2:442. Also see Chih, *Sufism,* 29, and 54 for two Egyptian Khalwatīs who spent seven years in isolation. One migrated to Aleppo.
[59] Sirriyeh, *Visionary,* 49-52.

Khalwatīyya, Rifāʿīyya and the Shādhilīyya.[60] The Aḥmadīyya, Burhānīyya, Yashrūṭīyya and ʿAfīfīyya maintained presence in the region as well. Each of these orders had many subchapters that were widespread in North Africa and the Middle East. New subchapters continued to surface in the following centuries as well.[61] A subchapter of the Rifāʿīyya order with a particularly large following in Syria was the Saʿdīyya, also called Jabāwīyya. This order became very prominent under the leadership of Muṣṭafā Sāʿd al-Dīn al-Jabāwī.[62] All these orders and their subchapters enjoyed extreme popularity. Many Ottoman subjects flocked to Sufi lodges scattered throughout the imperial domain. Despite the exhausting years of training, the people eagerly pursued spiritual teaching and guidance. Scholars suggest that but a minority of the early modern Ottoman subjects did not claim membership in at least one Sufi order. The majority visited the lodges to attend preaching and occasionally participate in common rituals.[63]

The majority of the Damascene *ʿulamāʾ* claimed memberships in Sufi orders as well. As a saint, *quṭb*, and a *muftī,* ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī was exemplary of this overlap. The Hanafite judge Ibn ʿĀbidīn belonged to the Khalwatīyya and the Naqshbandīyya,[64] similar to the rest of his family during the century after his death.[65] Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī claimed membership in the Khalwatīyya, Naqshbandīyya and the Qādirīyya.[66] During the modern period, similar overlaps were evident in greater Syrian territories. The famous Beiruti jurist Yūsuf al-Nabhānī (1849-1932) was, for instance, an *ʿālim* of Palestinian origin. He spent years working in Damascus. Al-Nabhānī

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[60] See Richard J.A. McGregor, *Sanctity and Mysticism in Medieval Egypt: The Wafāʾ Sufi Order and the Legacy of Ibn ʿArabī* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), 24-48.
[61] See the tally in Trimingham, *Sufi Orders,* 264-271. Some of the large orders at times amounted to several dozens of subchapters. Also see Lane, *Egyptians,* 1:310-312, 316, and Sirriyeh, *Visionary,* 112-115.
[62] Grehan, *Everyday Life*, 15, Rafeq, “Relations,” 81, and John P. Brown, *The Darvishes: Or Oriental Spiritualism* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 89. Brown’s volume was first published in 1868.
[63] Karababa and Ger, “Coffeehouse Culture,” 17, Grehan, *Everyday Life*, 21-55.
[64] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:45-46.
[65] See Muharrem Kılıç, “Ibn ʿAbidin, Ahmad b. ʿAbdulghani (1238-1307/1823-89),” in *The Biographical Encyclopedia of Islamic Philosophy,* ed. Oliver Leaman (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 158-159.
[66] Al-Murādī, *Silk*, 4:220-228.

studied at the Cairene al-Azhar and later joined the Qādirīyya, Idrīsīyya, Naqshbandīyya, Shādhilīyya, Rifāʿīyya and the Khalwatīyya orders.[67] He maintained parallel affiliations and became one of the more influential Sufis of his time. He collected stories of wonders attributed to prominent Muslim saints. Yūsuf al-Nabhānī spent his last days in Beirut.[68]

It is evident that membership in multiple Sufi orders was possible during the early modern period, as well as in other epochs. James Grehan reads a sixteenth-century account of a Shaykh Muḥammad al-Iskāf (d.1524). This Sufi master was a member of the Aḥmadīyya, who later joined the Qādirīyya order as well. An angry mob, comprised of Aḥmadī followers, formed up in front of his residence. However, the crowd dispersed peacefully after witnessing flags of both orders above al-Iskāf's house – red for the Aḥmadīyya and green for the Qādirīyya.[69] Multiple memberships in Sufi orders rarely raised any concerns.[70] The commoners were instead encouraged to join at least one of the many available Sufi lodges. Master Ḥasan Abū Ḥalāwā al-Ghazzī, who initiated the judge al-Nabhānī, underlined that the *shaykh*s' supervision after initiation improved one's life, occupational and social standards, and brought fortune to the disciples.[71] Popular beliefs in the eighteenth-century seemed to reflect al-Ghazzī's words. Dina Le Gall suggests that people sought to join several Sufi orders at once believing that they shall collect more *baraka* this way.[72] However, membership in a particular Sufi order at times reflected other parameters pertinent to an individual's social position and life choices.

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[67] This may have been a response to the Hamidian campaign of popularizing Sufi paths, especially of the Rifāʿīyya. See Masters, *Arabs,* 208-211, or Butrus Abu-Manneh, "Sultan Abdulhamid II and Shaikh Abulhuda Al-Sayyadi," *Middle Eastern Studies* Vol. 15 No. 2 (1979): 131-153.
[68] See Commins, *Islamic Reform,* 50, 116-118, and Amal Ghazal, "Sufism, *Ijtihād* and Modernity: Yūsuf al-Nabhānī in the Age of ʿAbd al-Ḥamid II," *Archivum Ottomanicum* No. 19 (2001): 242.
[69] James Grehan, "The Legend of the Samarmar: Parades and Communal Identity in Syrian Towns c. 1500-1800," Past & Present 204 (2009): 96.
[70] Grehan, "Samarmar," 96.
[71] Ghazal, "Sufism," 242.
[72] Le Gall, *Sufism,* 167.

Several factors influenced one's choice of a Sufi order, such as family ties, occupation, and personal networks. Descendants of a bloodline often started their studies in youth, and under supervision of their fathers. The initiation into the family's Sufi order would often follow. More prominent families were particularly representative of such trends, as was the case with the al-Nābulsīs or al-Gīlānīs who were prominent among the Qādirīyya during the eighteenth century. Muḥammad Murād (d.1720) – the biographer al-Murādī's grandfather and the ancestor of the Al-Murādī bloodline – brought the Naqshbandīyya teachings from Samarkand. He initiated some prominent family elders in Damascus in addition to his own descendants.[73] The biographer al-Murādī later advised some Damascene writers and poets who followed the same *ṭarīqa*.[74] It seems that throughout the eighteenth century, joining the Naqshbandīyya[75] represented a trend among the rich and prominent of Damascus. Such was the case with ʻAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī,[76] or Aḥmad al-Manīnī (d.1758),[77] Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī,[78] and many others. The *naqīb al-ashrāf* of Damascus, Muḥammad al-Murādī, also followed the Naqshbandī path.[79] Family ties acquired later in life also represented a relevant factor. For instance, the famous Ottoman eighteenth-century poet of Syrian origin who wrote in Istanbul, Aḥmad Ibn Ramaḍān (d.1738), most likely opted for the Jalwatīyya due to his marriage. His brother-in-law was a *shaykh* of this order in an Istanbul-based lodge close to the Sultan Selim Khān Mosque.[80]

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[73] Rafeq, "Relations," 81, Voll, "Brotherhoods," 38-39, and Weismann, *Naqshbandiyya*, 75-76.
[74] Voll, "Brotherhoods," 38-39.
[75] Le Gall, *Sufism,* 1-34, 87-106.
[76] Sirriyeh, *Visionary*, 1-17, Meier, "Jurist," 107-136.
[77] Al-Murādī, 1:153-166, and Voll, "Brotherhoods," 38.
[78] Al-Murādī, *Silk*, 4:220-228.
[79] Hourani, *Arab Peoples*, 255, Tamari, "Biography," 42-43, Weismann, *Naqshbandiyya*, 75-76, or Voll, "Brotherhoods," 38-39.
[80] Al-Murādī, *Silk*, 1:125.

Ibn Ramaḍān became a calligrapher.[81] It was previously indicated that this occupation often seemed connected to the Jalwatīyya.[82] During the early modern period, correlations between particular professions and Sufi paths were noticeable.[83] It is evident that partial social and geographical convergences existed between the Sufi orders and trade guilds (*aṣnāf*).[84] This was the case throughout the Middle East.[85] Similarities are detectable from comparisons between the internal hierarchies of trade guilds and Sufi orders. It seems that both types of organizations most often had a leading *shaykh* (*shaykh al-mashāyikh* or *shaykh al-ṭarīqa*). Under this *shaykh* was the chief attendant (*naqīb al-nuqabā'*) who served as the *shayhkh's* viceroy. Each particular lodge had its own *shaykh,* and each *shaykh* had an assistant (*khalīfa*). Under them were the rest of the members.[86] However, extant source material does not allow for a detailed description of Arab trade guilds, nor for detailed comparisons between guilds and Sufi orders. More research is necessary to locate relevant primary source material and build an empirical basis for such comparisons. The nexus between these organizations is, however, readable from other evidence. For instance, members of the Sufi orders often demonstrated tools of their trade during public parades.[87] It seems that most Qādirīyya Sufis in early modern Egypt worked as fishermen.[88] The Rifāʿīs and the Sāʿadīs

[81] Ibid.
[82] Ḥaqqī, *Tamām al-Fayḍ,* 174.
[83] See Trimingham, *Sufi Orders,* 233. This is comparable to Christian Europe. See, for instance, Thomas, *Decline,* 30.
[84] Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Art and Spirituality* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1987), 70, 162-163, or Khachik Gevorgyan, "Futuwwa Varieties and the Futuwwat-nāma Literature: An Attempt to Classify Futuwwa and Persian Futwwat-nāmas," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies,* 40:1 (2013): 3. Also see Titus Burckhardt, *Art of Islam: Language and Meaning* (Bloomington: World Wisdom Inc., 2000), 220-225. This convergence is sometimes comparable to the historical nexus between the guilds in Europe and various Christian esoteric paths. For instance, see Gervase Rosser, *The Art of Solidarity in the Middle Ages: Guilds in England, 1250-1550* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 37-118.
[85] See, for instance, André Raymond, *Artisans et commerçants au Caire au XVIIIe siècle*, 2 vols. (Damas: Institut français de Damas, 1973), 2:417-445, 503-585, or Gabriel Baer, *Egyptian Guilds in Modern Times* (Jerusalem: Israel Oriental Society, 1964), 1-7.
[86] This hierarchy was systematically analyzed in Iliyās ʿAbduh Qudsī, *Nubdha Tārīkhīyya fī al-Ḥiraf al-Dimashqīyya* [A Brief History of the Damascene Crafts] (London: Hindawi C.I.C., 2019), 11-22. Compare with Chih, *Sufism,* 35-37, 66-69. Further see Batran, "al-Kunti," 113-146. Also see Ohlander, *Sufism,* 27-34, and Yıldırım, "Sufi Tradition," 164-182.
[87] Lane, *Egyptians,* 1:311.
[88] See Trimingham, *Sufi Orders,* 233, and Lane, *Egyptians,* 1:311.

maintained reputation as skilled "toxicologists."[89] The habit of the Aḥmadīyya to train donkeys[90] may have alluded to this order's specialization for agrarian work or transport. Later during the modern period, this trend seemed to slightly change. Modern Sufi order chapters comprised of members stemming from a much wider variety of professional backgrounds.[91]

Personal networks played a significant role in opting for a Sufi order. The case of the eighteenth-century Damascene barber-chronicler is telling. Ibn Budayr and his master Ibn Ḥashīsh had good reputation among some of the more prominent Damascene Sufis. Ibn Ḥashīsh groomed ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī, which certainly brought him great honor. In addition, among his customers were Murād Effendī, the Naqshbandī master and the elder of the al-Murādī family, as well as Muḥammad al-ʿAjlūnī (d.1735).[92] Ibn Budayr boasts about his rich network, as well as the *baraka* he obtained both from his master and through serving his own clients. Among them, highly distinguished were the chronicler-wonderworker Muḥammad Ibn Jumʿa al-Maqqār (who was the barber's neighbor),[93] a Shaykh Muḥammad al-Jabrī,[94] and the Khalwatīyya *shaykh*, Yūsuf al-Ṭabbākh (d.1746). Al-Ṭabbākh, who studied under the chronicler Muḥammad Ibn Kannān,[95] was remembered as a saint, both by the people around Ibn Budayr and the biographer al-Murādī. In the streets, people would often rush to kiss his hands, touch him to induce *baraka*-transfer, or perform

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[89] Ibid., Weismann, "Sufi Brotherhoods," 306, or al-Budayrī, *HDY*, 91.
[90] Lane, *Egyptians,* 1:312.
[91] For instance, see Masatoshi Kisaichi, "The Burhāmi Order and Islamic Resurgence in Modern Egypt," in *Popular Movement and Democratization in the Islamic World*, ed. Masatoshi Kisaichi (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), 57-77.
[92] Ibn Budayr, "HDY," 6A-6B, and al-Murādī, *Silk,* 4:48-49. The al-ʿAjlūnī family seemed to have been highly placed and esteemed. See section 4.5.
[93] See Muḥammad Ibn Jumʿa al-Maqqār, *Wulāt Dimashq fī ʿAhd al- ʿUthmānī* [The Governors of Damascus in the Ottoman Era], ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid (Damascus: n.p. 1949), 8-10, and Ibn Budayr, "HDY," 20A. This Sufi master is a somewhat peculiar case as despite al-Munajjid's efforts and Ibn Budayr's praises it seems impossible to uncover accurate data about his life or the date of his death.
[94] Ibn Budayr, "HDY," 56B.
[95] Ibn Kannān was a Khalwatī adherent with initiatory powers. See Le Gall, *Sufism,* 169, and Atallah S. Copty, "The Naqshbandiyya and Its Offshoot, the Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya in the Ḥaramayn in the 11th/17th Century," *Die Welt des Islams,* New Series, Vol. 43, Issue 3 (2003): 329.

the *tabarruk.*[96] The majority of the barber's clientele belonged to the Qādirīyya – such as al-Nābulsī and al-Maqqār.[97] This fact most likely led to the barber's own initiation among the Qādirīs under Shaykh Aḥmad al-Sābiq (d.1748), who was a Damascene poet and author.[98]

Sufi order membership represented a defining parameter for Syrian biographers, as was the case in other regions of the Empire. Biographic data of an individual included their Sufi order, *madhhab,*[99] as well as the place of origin whenever such data was available. Whenever possible, biographers would also include the name of the *shaykh* who performed the initiation. The majority of *shaykhs* memorized full chains of mastery succession (*silsila*s). This character of ulamaic biographical writing stemmed from an old tradition,[100] which emphasized the importance of the bond with the Sufi master above all other social contacts of the initiates for the rest of their lives.

Jurists and Sufis insisted that all Sufi initiates in the Ottoman Empire needed to be supervised by a previously established master.[101] Since the medieval period, scholars warned about the dangers of pretence to hidden knowledge for those without due supervision.[102] In his work from 1795, Muḥammad Ibn Ṣāliḥ al-Kīlānī, a descendent of the Qādirīyya twelfth-century founder, quoted the very old saying that the one without guidance has the devil as master (*man lam yakun lah al-shaykh fa-l-shayṭān shaykhuh*).[103] Al-Kīlānī wrote a manual to instruct the Qādirīyya into properly training their disciples. The manual continually emphasizes the significance of the master as the only one who was able to guide the disciples properly.[104] According to al-Kīlānī, relationship

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[96] Ibid, 27B, and al-Murādī, *Silk,* 4:283-285. For the *tabarruk,* see section 2.2.
[97] Al-Maqqār claimed membership in the Shādhilīyya as well. al-Maqqār, *Wulāt*, 8.
[98] Ibn Budayr, "HDY," 15B, al-Murādī, *Silk,* 1:207-209.
[99] One usually chose to adhere the rulings of a certain *madhhab.* The *ʿulamā',* as well as ordinary people, often shifted *madhhab* adherence. See Rafeq, "Relations," 70. Further see, for instance, Leslie Pierce, *Morality Tales: Law and Gender in the Ottoman Court of Aintab* (University of California Press: Berkeley, 2003), 86-128.
[100] This tradition remained during the modern period. See for instance, Canaan, *Saints,* 313.
[101] Al-Nābulsī, *Ḥadīqa*, 2:389-393, Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:25-26. Further see Ohladner, *Sufism,* 27-34, Terzioğlu, "Image of God," 144, and Curry, *Transformation,* 8.
[102] Knysh, *Sufism,* 200-201, 208.
[103] Al-Kīlānī, "DB," 10B. Such was the case throughout the centuries, Saif, *Arabic Influences,* 88.
[104] Al-Kīlānī, "DB," 2A-2B, 10B-11A.

with the master was the most valuable social tie a trainee had to maintain. Other social relationships may have represented obstacles for the initiates.[105] The emphasis on the role of the master for the initiates had a long history.[106]

During their training, the initiates approached their masters with elaborated gestures of respect and reverence. Proper ablution rites were observed before appearing in the *shaykh*'s presence. Initiates would speak and act only with the master's permission. They were charged with speaking only the truth. They were not to shield their thoughts and leave matters unsaid. Throughout their training, they were under scrutiny by the *shaykh*s, who often recorded and interpreted the trainees' dreams as well. The disciples were obliged to refrain from any deeds or words which would suggest pretence to the *shaykh*'s rank.[107]

Initiation into an order was performed upon explicit request of the future disciple. The ritual often symbolically established the bond between the master and apprentice. In the eighteenth century, the Khalwatīs followed the initiation model transmitted by Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī. The master sat down facing the *qibla* and placed the hopeful so their knees would touch. They recited *al-Fātiḥa* (both at the beginning and at the end of the ritual). The master would hold the hopeful's (*murīd*; also "novice," "aspirant")[108] right hand and accept vows of obedience. The new initiate renounced the devil and asked forgiveness three times in a row. He sought to be accepted into the order. Finally, the *shaykh* revealed the first of the seven secrets – the seven names of god that the

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[105] Ibid. Despite the authors strong emphasis, it was extremely rare that the Sufis would completely withdraw from social relations. Similar was the case with celibacy, which was rarely evident, and more frequent during the earlier centuries of Islam. See Valerie J. Hoffman-Ladd, "Mysticism and Sexuality in Sufi Thought and Life," *Mystics Quarterly,* Vol. 18, No. 3 (September 1992): 82-93, Arin Shawkat Salamah-Qudsi, "Celibacy, Marriage and Familial Commitments among Early Sufis," in *Sufism and Early Islamic Piety: Personal and Communal Dynamics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 25-52, or Peter Clarke and Peter Beyer, eds., *The World's Religions: Continuities and Transformations* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 691-692.
[106] Knysh, *Sufism,* 204, Geoffroy, *Sufism,* 142-151.
[107] Chih, *Sufism*, 64-65.
[108] Ibid., 62, Geoffroy, *Sufism,* 3, Al-Kīlānī, "DB," 10B.

disciple would continually seek through the course of his training. The master finally commenced with the *dhikr* and the initiate recited after him.[109] Emotions provoked by the ritual were sometimes so powerful that initiates wrote about the *baraka* of their master that purged all worldly desires while the *dhikr* melted flesh and bone.[110] At the end of the ritual, the initiate was given the cloak (*khirqa*) and cap of office to symbolize admission to the Sufi lodge of his choice.[111]

After initiation, disciples would commence their studying period. Muḥammad al-Kīlānī expected that before their training truly began, the acolytes would already be familiar with some books on *tawḥīd, ʿulūm* and *uṣūl* in general. Al-Kīlānī compares the Sufi training with sailing an open sea. The knowledge of the disciple in the fields of Qur'ānic sciences and the sources of Islam represented vital parts of the ship's frame. Standing on the decks of their vessels, the disciples were to familiarize themselves with divine revelations, transmitted from the angels to the Prophet. Muḥammad al-Kīlānī is certain that the acolytes would gradually come to the realization that their ships, built from their previous learning, were but drops (*qaṭra*) in the "sea of knowledge" (*baḥr al- ʿilm*). They would then need a *shaykh*, who would ensure that disciples steered along the proper course (*al-maslak*), exploring the sea of knowledge and reaching unknown destinations.[112]

Most of the initiates' training seems to have been focused on developing morality and discipline which would satisfy the masters' requirements. For the purpose of completing their training, the initiates would often be required to follow strict diet, particular ways of dress and behavior. They were required to show respect to other members of their orders and consider them equals. The initiates needed to learn proper *adab* when dealing with their *shaykh,* other trainees, and the rest of the people. They were to cast down their ego (*nafs*) and nurture traits of patience

[109] Chih, *Sufism,* 61-63. Also see al-Kīlānī, "DB," 22A-23B.
[110] Chih, *Sufism,* 61-63.
[111] Al-Kīlānī, "DB," 11B-12A, Lane, *Egyptians,* 1:317, Chih, *Sufism,* 32.
[112] Al-Kīlānī, "DB," 1A-2B.

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(*ṣabr*), forebearance (*ḥilm*), sincerity (*ikhlās*), generosity (*ikrām*), asceticism (*zuhd*), humility (*tawādu'*), modesty (*hayā'*), mercy (*raḥma*), proper etiquette (*adab*), devoutness (*ṣalāḥ*) and patience (*ṣabr*). [113] The disciples needed to demonstrate love and compassion for the world (*ḥubb al-dunyā*) as well. They were required to attain mastery over their expression and language, as well as to be steadfast in all circumstances.[114] These traits were not obligatory just to the Qādirīyya. Most Sufi orders expected adherents to demonstrate them.[115] Deviations from the proper course corrupted al-Kīlānī's allegorical ship, along with envy, pride, and other emotions which brought negative connotations.[116]

Usually, the *shaykh* of a lodge (*zāwiyā*) would take permanent residence within the lodge's grounds along with his helpers. Other disciples were divided into ranks and may have expected promotions during their studies. The lowest ranks, for instance, took care of the hygiene and orderliness of the lodge residents' footwear. They would then progress to the rank of cupbearers and so on, while the highest rank among the disciples was the office of *naqīb al-nuqabā'* – the chief attendant.[117] The disciples were obliged to demonstrate solidarity and collegiality (*ṣuḥba*)[118] with the rest of the lodge's members. In return, the *shaykh*s were expected to remain kind and

[113] Ibid., 13B. Further see Chih, *Sufism,* 55-60, Knysh, *Sufism,* 137-145, Green, *Sufism,* 9-10, Geoffroy, *Sufism,* 142-151. Also see Ohlander, *Sufism,* 28, 148-149.
[114] Al-Kīlānī, "DB," 2A-3A, 13B.
[115] See for instance, Knysh, *Sufism,* 138-145, Chih, *Sufism,* 52-69, or Green, *Sufism,* 9-10. It is interesting to once more notice that Ibn Budayr the barber echoes a good part of this terminology in his obituary of Ibn Ḥashīsh. Ibn Budayr, "HDY," 6A-6B.
[116] Al-Kīlānī, "DB," 2B.
[117] Chih, *Sufism,* 66-69. This hierarchy is, as was indicated previously, comparable to the hierarchy within Middle Eastern trade guilds. See Iliyās ʿAbuh Qudsī, *al-Ḥiraf*, 11-22.
[118] Another point comparable to certain customs in Europe. See Rosser, *Solidarity,* 89-118, 149-187. The Lutherans had similar ideas. Juxtapose, for instance, Martin Luther, *Family Devotions for Every Day in the Church Year,* ed. Georg Link, trans. Joel Baseley (Dearborn: Mark V Publications, 2010), 229-230, against Emil Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of the Church, Faith, and the Consummation: Dogmatics Vol. III,* trans. David Cairns and T.H.L. Parker (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1960), 22-25, 82-86, 184.

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understanding towards the lodges' adherents. They were supposed to take care of the well-being of their disciples throughout the training and afterwards.[119]

Among the most important quotidian rites of the Sufis was the *dhikr*. Literally indicating remembrance, the *dhikr allah* ("remembrance of God") was central for the ritualistic Sufi performance and was conducted both publicly and within the privacy of the lodges.[120] Al-Kīlānī compares the *dhikr* with the significance of drinking water for passengers on his allegorical ship.[121] Among the responsibilities of a lodge's *shaykh* was to instruct the disciples into proper ways of conducting the *dhikr* (*talqīn al-dhikr*).[122] The ritual was somewhat longer than a common prayer, and involved the invocation of the names of God and the recitation from the Scripture. Invocation of the given order's *silsila* was common during the *dhikr*, the text of which would often be arranged to music played by the acolytes. Listening to music (*samāʿ*) was an important Sufi practice as it was believed that it could help in achieving states of trance.[123] Participants would at times use the prayer beads (*masbaḥa*)[124] to measure the length of the prayers and the number of their repetitions. It was common to read *al-Fātiḥa* at the beginning and end of each ceremony. Common people would often visit Sufi lodges to attend the *dhikr*. It was mandatory to perform ablutions prior to attending a the ritual.[125]

For the Sufi initiates, the *dhikr* over centuries had a special purpose. It was believed that the *dhikr* protected the Sufis from the forces of evil, helped them access the unseen world and facilitated theolepsis. It further made crucial difference between wonder-working and magic, since

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[119] Chih, *Sufism,* 65, Knysh, *Sufism,* 160.
[120] Trimingham, *Sufi Orders,* 265.
[121] Al-Kīlānī, "DB,“ 2B.
[122] Muḥammad al-Kīlānī gives the Qādirī technique at "DB," 22B-23A.
[123] See next section.
[124] Shauna Huffaker, "Prayer Beads,“ in *Encyclopedia of Islam,* ed. Juan Eduardo Campo and J. Gordon Melton (New York: Fast on File, 2009), 558-559. Praying beads and rosaries are a common requisite across cultures.
[125] Russell, *Aleppo,* 209-210, Lane, *Egyptians,* 1:313-314, 2:94, 169-175, Canaan, *Saints,* 313-321. Further see Knysh, *Sufism,* 178, 237, Chih, *Sufism,* 69-70. Also see Geoffroy, *Sufism,* 162-170, and Trimingham, *Sufi Orders,* 192-196.

it protected the Sufis from the influences of the *shayāṭīn.*[126] During the course of their training, Sufi masters would gradually reveal the names of God to the disciples. It was widely believed that divine names contained their own power and that through learning them and practicing *dhikr* with them one could unlock hidden mysteries of the world and obtain esoteric knowledge. The ultimate goal of the most advanced among the Sufis was to acquire knowledge of the Greatest Name of Allah (*ism Allah al-aʿẓam*) and through it unlock the hidden secrets of the world.[127] The belief that divine names were able to induce powerful thaumaturgy is evident across scriptural religions.[128]

Publicly, adherents to the Sufi lodges were engaged in various kinds of charity work, individually and in groups. Charity represented a centuries-long tradition of many lodges, which significantly raised the popularity of Sufi orders, especially in the territories most recently conquered by the Muslim state in power. Charitable work singnificantly improved the popularity of Sufis within newly conquered Ottoman domains that were predominantly inhabited by the Christians.[129] In addition, many Sufi orders organized public religious rituals. These rituals were aimed at a wide variety of goals. Some were performed in times of political, social, or natural crises, to solicit divine assistance for the people. During the eighteenth century in Damascus, when a catastrophic series of earthquakes caused massive damage to the city's infrastructure, the Sufis hosted a range of ceremonies in attemtps to drive away the danger.[130] Other ceremonies would be regularly conducted in front of audiences to demonstrate the effects of *baraka* on the *shaykh*s and

[126] Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima,* 151, 572-573, 658-660.
[127] Trimingham, *Sufi Orders,* 158, 216. For the scriptural context, see the discussions of one more prominent commentators on Ibn ʿArabī, ʿAbd al-Bāqī Miftāḥ, *Kitāb al-Ism al-Aʿẓam* [The Book of the Greatest Name] (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmīyya, 2012), 9-17. Names of angels and other celestial beings were of much importance in premodern Europe's religions as well. See Thomas, *Decline,* 211.
[128] Wilkinson, *Tetragrammaton,* 195, 278.
[129] For instance, Riza Yıldırım, "Dervishes, Waqfs, and Conquest: Notes on Early Ottoman Expansion in Thrace," in *Held in Trust: Waqf in the Islamic World. Edited by Pascale Ghazaleh* (Cairo&New York: The American University in Cairo Press), 2011, 23-40, or Lowry, "Soup Muslims," 97-133. This practice is older than the Ottoman Empire and involved both Sufi lodges and important mosques. See Talmon-Heller, *Piety*, 55-57.
[130] For instance, see Ibn Budayr, "HDY," 92B. Chapter 6 will give detail about such ceremonies.

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their disciples. For instance, the Aḥmadīyya Sufis made donkeys perform tricks for the audience, appearing as animal charmers.[131] Masochistic displays were frequent throughout the centuries.[132] Rifāʿīyya disciples skewered themselves in front of onlookers, broke rocks against their chests and swallowed swords.[133] The Sāʿdīyya, who were experts on venom, bit into live snakes and scorpions.[134] Their founder, Sāʿad al-Dīn al-Jabāwī,[135] was rumored to have invented the *dawsa* ritual.[136] During the proceedings, a number of disciples would lie abreast on the ground. The *shaykh* would mount a horse and make it step over the lying acolytes. They would then stand up to demonstrate that divine grace protected them from harm. This ritual was common during the celebration of the Prophet's *mawlid.*[137] Foreigners to the Middle East often expressed astonishment by these performances.[138] Such public displays were intended to demonstrate to the audience the powers which the Sufis acquired due to their *baraka.* Through such acts the popularity of the Sufi orders steadily grew through the centuries.

Following strict rules during years of training, the disciples hoped that eventually they would receive the master's *ijāza*s. Sufi *ijāza*s allowed the disciples to teach or distribute a particular text, while newly promoted masters received documents permitting them to start their own lodges and initiate their own disciples.[139] These documents usually came wrapped into tubular

[131] Lane, *Egyptians,* 312.
[132] Weismann, "Sufi Brotherhoods," 306, Karamustafa, *Friends*, 12-32.
[133] Lane, *Egyptians,* 1:310.
[134] Ibid., 2:179-181.
[135] This *shaykh* was a brigand who was later named Abū al-Futūḥ, „"The Father of Victories." See Rafeq, "Relations," 80.
[136] Ibid., 81.
[137] Ibn Budayr, "HDY," 37B, Lane, *Egyptians,* 2:177-179, and F. de Jong, *Ṭuruq and Ṭuruq-Linked Institutions in Nineteenth Century Egypt: A Historical Study in Organizational Dimensions of Islamic Mysticsim* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 63.
[138] M. C-F. Volney, *Travels through Syria and Egypt in the years 1783, 1784, and 1785. Containing: The Present Natural and Political State of those Countries, Their Productions, Arts, Manufactures and Commerce; with Observations on the Manners, Customs and Government of the Turks and Arabs, Translated from the French,* two volumes, (London: G.G.J. and J. Robinson, 1788), 2:388-401. See also Canaan, *Saints,* 261.
[139] Chih, *Sufism,* 32.

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cases. Sufis proudly hung them on their belts and apparel.[140] In addition to the disciple's name, the *ijaza* contained the name of the master. The master recognized in writing the completion of the disciple's training, allowing them to freely act under the rules of the lodge. He further guaranteed that he imparted "all secrets" to the disciple.[141] After the master, the full *silsila* of the order would follow. The Qādirīs kept a *silsila* which, after ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī and Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī, listed many saints this order venerated. Among them was a medieval judge and saint Abū Saʿid Mubārak (1013-1119) from Baghdad, as well as al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (642-728). Alexander Knysh identifies the latter as one of the first authors of "Sufi-like" texts.[142] The Qādirī *silsila* eventually ended with the Fourth Righteous Caliph.[143]

Sufi mastery was rewarding in many ways, as the newly-emergent *shaykh*s commanded vast respect among their peers and the common people. With respect and wide popularity came a number of privileges which the Sufi masters enjoyed as, allegedly, the recipients of God's *baraka* among the rest of the people.

4.4. The Popular Image: Sufi *Shaykhs* in eighteenth-century Damascus

In the Shāmī eighteenth-century everyday most of the Syrian people venerated the Sufi masters among them. This was often expressed through traditional gestures such as kissing the *shaykh*'s hands or performing the *tabarruk* in their vicinity.[144] Sufi *shaykh*s commanded sufficient social influence to often popularize certain social practices or defend them from criticism. For instance, current scholarship still demonstrates a tendency to write of some social habits, such as smoking,

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[140] Canaan, *Saints,* 313. See the photograph in Knysh, *Sufism,* 188.
[141] Canaan, *Saints,* 313.
[142] Knysh, *Sufism,* 71. Also see Massignon, *Essay,* 119-137.
[143] Al-Kīlānī, "DB," 12A, and Canaan, *Saints,* 313-321.
[144] Al-Murādī, *Silk,* 4:283-285, or 1:228-234.

drinking alcohol, or playing music, as taboos during the eighteenth century.[145] It is perhaps more accurate to state that such practices represented taboos only for select groups of religious rigorists. In the early modern Ottoman Empire, such was the case with the Kadızadelis, or the Wahhābīs.[146] Rigorist groups, however, remained a minority throughout the Ottoman period, althought the Kadızadelis managed to secure support from the Ottoman government during a brief period.[147] Extant primary source material that gives detail of the eighteenth-century Damascene social practices seems to support this statement. For instance, Ibn Budayr the barber writes about the Damascene common people of the eighteenth century who often enjoyed musical performances, most frequently in the many Damascene coffee houses.[148]

The reaction of the established ulamaic sodality to the rigorists' criticism is, however, clearly visible. ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī left an entire work committed to the benefits of playing and listening to musical instruments.[149] For the Sufis, the practices of listening both to music and poetry represented a habit of great importance, as it was believed that *samāʿ* helped in achieving mystical trances.[150]

Many Sufis were known by their communities to favor tobacco, coffee, and sometimes alcohol. They claimed that such substances facilitated reaching ecstatic states (*aḥwāl*) during rituals.[151] Muḥammad al-Jabrī (d.1749) from Damascus drank wine in public. Ibn Budayr, who

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[145] See Grehan, *Everyday Life,* 124-155. Also Karababa and Ger, "Coffeehouse," 2-4, 7. Also see Ralph S. Hattox, *Coffee and Coffeehouses: The Origins of a Social Beverage in the Medieval Near East* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1985), and James Grehan, "Smoking and 'Early Modern' Sociability: The Great Tobacco Debate in the Ottoman Middle East (Seventeenth to Eighteenth Centuries)," *The American Historical Review* 111, no. 5 (December, 2006): 1352-1377.
[146] Sheikh, *Ottoman Puritanism,* 2, Howard, *Ottoman Empire*, 168-172, or Lapidus, *Islamic Societies*, 370.
[147] See chapter 2.
[148] Ibn Budayr, "HDY," 14B, 38A. About alcohol, see Al-Qāsimī, *QS*, 127. Further see Sajdi, *The Barber*, 174, Grehan, *Everyday Life,* 142-146, and Rafeq, *The Province*, 321-322.
[149] See ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī, *Iḍāḥ al-Dalālāt fī Samāʿa al-Ālāt* [Clarifying the Proof in Listening to Instruments], ed. Aḥmad Murātib Ḥammūsh (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1981), 16-21. For a broader historical context, see Trimingham, *Sufi Orders,* 265.
[150] Geoffroy, *Sufism,* 89, 170-174, Chih, *Sufism,* 72, 135.
[151] Grehan, *Everyday Life*, 134, Green, *Sufism,* 80.

boasts about his personal acquaintance with al-Jabrī, narrates that this mystic was capable of frequent switches between trance-like and common behavior, while he was often inebriated. His habits did not seem to bother others, while Ibn Budayr even uses the coinage "Drinker of the Wine of the Greatest King"[152] to address the *shaykh.* The correlation of Sufi trances to drunkenness represented a much older trend, probably best represented by the poems of ʿUmar Ibn al-Farīḍ (1181-1234).[153] This Sufi author, also known for his poetry about love and sex in Sufi metaphorical modes, was buried in Egypt. His *mawlid*s were opportunities for people to harvest *baraka* from his grave, as it was believed that he was a saint.[154]

Established *shaykh*s could enjoy great respect among the people who often admired their eccentricity. Ottoman society had important expectations from the master thaumaturges as well. As it was previously shown, people at times required a Sufi master to perform exorcisms, heal other afflictions and injuries, or to through prayer and thaumaturgical rituals assist the Ottoman subjects in obtaining good fortune and blessings. Their thaumaturgical powers were believed to stem from divine will, distinguishing Allah's chosen ones among the people.[155] Ibn ʿĀbidīn writes that the *shaykh*s needed to earn their power through righteousness (*ṣalāḥ*) of mind and appearance. They were required to demonstrate proper behavior (*adab*) in all matters. They were not to perform any illicit acts (*harām*).[156] ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī muses that the *shaykh*s were protected from transgressions due to their *baraka.*[157] This opinion had a long history,[158] indicating that *baraka* represented a highly significant social marker.

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[152] Ibn Budayr, "HDY," 56A.
[153] See Emil Homerin, *Passion Before Me, My Fate Behind: Ibn al-Farīḍ and the Poetry of Recollection* (New York: University of New York Press, 2011), 143-176.
[154] Homerin, *Passion,* 1, and Winter, *Egyptian Society,* 175.
[155] Canaan, *Saints,* 255. Also Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:25, and Al-Nābulsī, "Kashf," 162A-168B.
[156] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:14-30.
[157] Al-Nābulsī, "Kashf," 161A-174A, and Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:42-47.
[158] Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima,* 132-138, 151-152.

Furthermore, Sufi *shaykh*s represented role models for the people[159] and were therefore required to continually act as paragons of virtue. *Ṣalāḥ* again comes to the fore as a set of personal traits that were highly relevant for inspiring beliefs in one's *baraka*. At times it appears that the early modern biographers praised *ṣalāḥ* above all other qualities, even with more prominent Sufis. Illustrative is the biography of Aḥmad Ibn Khalīl al-Maʿrūf (d.1707). Ibn Khalīl al-Maʿrūf was later remembered as Aḥmad Yek Dast,[160] due to a handicap. One-Armed Aḥmad was a Hanafite scholar of the Naqshbandīyya order. He was acquainted with al-Murādī's grandfather, Muḥammad Murād, and spent some time working in Mecca. His extent of success in scholarship is unclear, as the biographer al-Murādī focuses almost the entire biography on praising Ibn Khalīl al-Maʿarūf's *ṣalāḥ*. Immediately after, the biographer adds that One-Armed Aḥmad performed wonders (no details are given).[161] The Syrian Orthodox establishment demonstrated similar appraisal of an individual's virtue, devoutness and righteousness. For instance, the Damascene Patriarch Sylvester (Silbastrūs; d.1722) was widely praised for his kindness, generosity and decency. He succumbed to a fatal illness. After his funeral, rumors spread of strange occurrences in his tomb's vicinity. Burayk the priest went to investigate. Descending into the mausoleum to open the gate, he discovered a pleasant fragrance that pervaded the air. He was certain that the old patriarch became a saint.[162]

The requirements from the *shaykh*s seemed stern. However, according to beliefs they were well-compensated through divine grace. Muḥammad al-Kīlānī wrote that the *shaykh*s were masters of the knowledge of kings and religion of prophets. Nothing would remain unseen to their gaze.[163]

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[159] Grehan, *Twilight,* 65, Chih, *Sufism,* 72-73.
[160] *Yek dast* means "one arm" in Persian.
[161] This saint studied with the same master who trained the biographer's grandfather. Al-Murādī, *Silk,* 1:124-125.
[162] Burayk, *TS,* 79-80.
[163] Ibid., 10B-11A. Also see Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:18.

During their years of studying as apprentices, most *shaykh*s would be trained into a particular *habitus*. Centuries of their social, cultural and theological engagement cultivated a body of practices that remained stable for at least seven centuries and perhaps even longer.[164] In addition, Sufi masters made efforts to restrict the circulation of their knowledge outside of the lodges, at the same time strengthening the exclusive character of their networks.[165] Long before the eighteenth century, rumors circulated that the Sufi esoteric knowledge was detrimental to the minds of the uninitiated. Ibn ʿArabī was known to claim that a master's supervision would prevent an individual from "harmful doctrines" and preserve their sanity.[166] Al-Nābulsī and Ibn ʿĀbidīn endorsed the occultation of esoteric knowledge[167] from the public. The *ʿulamāʾ* of eighteenth-century Damascus implied that it was impossible to differentiate between miracle and magic without proper education. Dabbling in magical and thaumaturgical practice was innovation (*bidʿa*) and heresy (*kufr*).[168] Knowledge transmission control was facilitated through the granting of *ijāza*s.[169] Over time, Sufi-ulamaic groups grew into interregional sodalities that through mechanisms of exclusion kept their professional niche and maintained their tight network.[170] Through knowledge circulation control, the Sufi sodalities carved a distinguished specialization for themselves within the Ottoman socio-political milieu. Beliefs in their *baraka* and respect for their education further strengthened this position.

Orthodox Christian priesthood in eighteenth-century Shām demonstrated similar exclusivist trends which were in line with a long tradition pertinent both to Catholicism and

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[164] Knysh, *Sufism,* 156.
[165] *ʿIlm* education was similarly confined to the privacy of the teachers and students. See al-Azmeh, *Arabic Thought,* 237.
[166] See Knysh, *Sufism,* 200-201, 208.
[167] See al-Azmeh, *Arabic Thought,* 237.
[168] Al-Nābulsī, *Ḥadīqa*, 2:389-393, Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:25-26, 40-47. Also see Grehan, *Twilight,* 55-56.
[169] See chapter 2 and the previous section.
[170] See Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason,* Volume 1 (London and New York: Verso, 2004), 345-504.

Orthodoxy.[171] It is only with the advent of Protestantism that free reading of the Scripture became a point of debate among theologians.[172] Burayk the priest offers an illustration of this exclusionist tradition. In 1749, a young man attempted to read the Gospel. As soon as the book was in his hands, his brain froze. He was paralyzed, so his father carried him home. A long time passed before he regained control of his senses.[173]

James Grehan concludes that the exquisite erudition of the Sufis prompted the common people to attribute miraculous powers to them. He further elaborates that since most other imperial subjects were illiterate they may have believed that learning and literature production were magical.[174] This statement does not seem entirely accurate, as scholarship shows that various social groups among the Ottoman subjects underwent diverse training due to their occupational requirements. The level of literacy varied among such groups and cannot be reduced to a certain social class.[175] However, due to exclusivism and mysteries attributed to thaumaturgical knowledge, the Sufi sodalities represented the only institutionalized networks of professionals who enjoyed beliefs that their writing may produce wondrous results, such as with talismans they inscribed, for instance.

Beliefs in the miraculous powers of Sufi *shaykh*s led to the beliefs in Muslim saints. The self-reproductiveness of the Ottoman network of the holy allowed for the emergence of innumerable individuals who would inspire beliefs in their sainthood. Acknowledging a saint,

[171] Adrian Hastings, *Modern Catholicism: Vatican II and After* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 391, and Charles Eliott, *Delineation of Roman Catholicism drawn from the Authentic and Acknowledged Standards of the Church of Rome* (New York: George Lane, 1841), 75.
[172] For instance Isaak A. Dorner, *History of Protestant Theology Volume I* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2004), 290, and Thomas Hartwell Horne, "Popery the Enemy and Falsifier of Scripture,“ in *The Protestant Quarterly Review Volume III,* ed. Joseph F. Berg (Philadelphia: William S. Young, 1846), 100. Similar tendencies were noticeable in Islam with Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb's rising renown. See, for instance, Natana J. Delong-Bas, *Wahhabi Islam: From Revival and Reform to Global Jihad* (Oxford&New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 282.
[173] Burayk, *TS,* 26.
[174] Grehan, *Twilight,* 56, 64.
[175] Nelly Hanna, "Literacy and the 'great divide' in the Islamic World, 1300-1800," *Journal of Global History* 2 (2007): 175-194.

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however, varied with different Ottoman social milieus. Many would not enter the biographical dictionaries as prominent elites among the imperial subjects. Those who did usually demonstrated advanced networking skills beforehand and most often socialized with influential notables of the region. Studying under the prominent *ʿulamāʾ* and pursuing official appointments further impacted one's prominence. These factors – popular beliefs in thaumaturgical mastery, ulamaic erudition, official appointments within the imperial administration, as well as the prominence of one's personal or family network – help identify the early modern socio-anthropological model of the Ottoman Sunni priesthood. This priestly body appeared to possess the ultimate say on who would have been popularized as a widely recognized node within the Ottoman networks of the holy.

4.5. The Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ*: Religious Professionals and Peer Recognition in eighteenth-century Shām

It seems that the members of the eighteenth-century Shāmī priestly sodality who later acquired wider renown usually studied under and socialized with a tight network of well-established individuals at least at one point during their lives. Of particular importance for the city of Damascus were the families of al-Nābulsī, al-Mālikī, al-ʿAjlūnī and al-Manīnī. ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī held unparalleled status as the Pole of his time among the saints of Damascus. He was also wealthy and owned much land in the region. His ancestors had produced numerous influential *ʿulamāʾ* during the Mamluk period as well.[176] ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī held tenures in al-Sālimīyya[177] and the Umayyad Mosque. Muḥammad al-Mālikī (d.1706) also taught in the

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[176] See Sami G. Massoud, *The Chronicles and Annalistic Sources of the Early Mamluk Circassian Period* (Leiden&Boston: Brill, 2007), 415.
[177] See Abd al-Qadir al-Rihawi and Émilie E. Ouéchek, "Les Deux "Takiyya" de Damas: La "Takiyya" et la "Madrasa" Sulaymāniyya du Marg et la "Takiyya" as-Salimīmiyya de Ṣāliḥīyya," *Bulletin d'études orientales* 28 (1975): 217-225.

Umayyad Mosque.[178] Muḥammad al-ʿAjlūnī (d.1748) excelled as a teacher both in *fiqh* and *taṣawwuf.*[179] Aḥmad al-Manīnī (d.1758) was a very prominent scholar and author who was initiated into the Naqshbandīyya by the biographer al-Murādī's grandfather Muḥammad (while al-Nābulsī also belonged to this order). In addition, he claimed membership in the Khalwatīyya and the Qādirīyya.[180] His affiliation with the Qādirīs seems to have represented a product of his acquaintance with the al-Gīlānīs, descendants of this order's founder. The al-Gīlānīs were among the eminent Damascene families as well. In addition, al-Manīnī studied under al-Nābulsī and a member of the al-ʿAjlūnī family, some members of which were trained by Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī.[181]

These influential scholar-thaumaturges of eighteenth-century Damascus kept exclusive authority over matters of *ʿilm* and religion. The network of these religious elites was in its entirety comprised of individuals who were both eminent Sufis and respected Muslim scholars. Most of them held lucrative tenures in the Province of Damascus, therefore combining the factors through which a Damascene priestly sodality may be identified. Their positive assessment was crucial for younger religious professionals who strove to join religious authorities of the eighteenth-century province. Highly needed recognition usually came in the form of *ijāza*s that represented both the cause and the consequence of social mobility.[182] Pursuing *ijāza*s granted by the members of this exclusive group might have at times represented a deciding factor in a scholar-thaumaturge's career.

Networking seems to have been of equal importance in other imperial domains as well. Ḥusayn Ibn Ramaḍān (d.1744), who was of Rūmī origins and was therefore remembered as al-

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[178] Al-Murādī, *Silk,* 4:128-129.
[179] Ibn Budayr, "HDY," 6A-6B, al-Murādī, *Silk,* 2:122.
[180] Ibid., 1:153-166, and Voll, "Brotherhoods," 38.
[181] Al-Murādī, *Silk,* 1:154-155, 4:220-228.
[182] Ibid., 3, 33-35, and al-Azmeh, *Times,* 220-221.

Jabalī ("the highlander") traveled to Istanbul to seek his fortune. He started living in the Galata district to gradually progress toward the imperial capital's center. He was a rope-maker. He learned to read and write on his own and then started training as a calligrapher. Making acquaintance with an ʿAlī Ibn al-Anbārī, who was a prominent thaumaturge, he accepted the *shaykh*'s supervision[183] and married his daughter. After these events, Ibn Ramaḍān gradually became a popular *shaykh* and a teacher in Istanbul. He progressed to the tenure in the imperial harem, where he educated the *ghilmān.* He further acquired a teaching position in the Atik Valide Mosque. Ibn Ramaḍān was remembered as a paragon of erudition among his peers.[184] Biographies of the prominent imperial Sufi-*ʿulamā'* reflect that both Sufi and ulamaic training served as a means of promoting even the humblest of individuals among the holy men of the Ottoman Empire.

Due to the importance of the *ijāza* for peer recognition as well as obtaining tenures, many scholars strove to accumulate as many of these documents as possible. This was an old tradition[185] and the case of eighteenth-century Syria was not exceptional. ʿAbd Allah Ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Suwaydī (d.1761), of the Shafi'ite *madhhab* from Baghdad, lost his father when he was six years old. He was taken as a student by his maternal uncle, a *shaykh* named Aḥmad Suwayd. Suwayd introduced Ibn al-Ḥusayn to Sufism, as well as *fiqh* and Qur'ānic science, eventually issuing first *ijāza*s for his nephew. Al-Suwaydī set forth in pursuit of masters around Baghdad, Basra, Mosul, and eventually Aleppo and Damascus. He spent much of his life learning under more than a dozen of masters. Among them were both ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī and his student, Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī. Rising to prominence as a Sufi-*ʿālim*, al-Suwaydī was offered numerous appointments that included lecturing tenures in several *madrasa*s and in the Baghdad-based shrine of the Qādirīyya

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[183] The biographer is not specific but it is highly possible that al-Anbārī, as a calligrapher, belonged to the Jalwatīyya.
[184] Al-Murādī, *Silk*, 2:59-60.
[185] Trimingham, *Sufi Orders,* 227.

founder, ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Gīlānī. His travels brought him in continuous contact with the al-ʿAjlūnīs and al-Manīnīs, arranging for him a lucrative lecturing position in Mecca. He was renowned for honesty, quick wits and challenging rhetorical skills.[186]

Even individuals of wide renown at times underwent Sufi training for the sake of expanding their networks. Being a supposed descendant of ʿUmar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (r.634-644), ʿUthmān Ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (d.1779) was considered a figure of enviable social prestige. He attended some obligatory studies appropriate to his social status, becoming a *ḥāfiẓ* and leaving behind some *tafsīr* works. Only much later in life, he joined the Qādirīyya. According to al-Murādī's rounding up, the number of Ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's masters amounted to a total of fifty. Ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān was in the habit of going into forty days of seclusion every year, during which he would fast like the "people of the [Sufi] path" (*ahl al-ṭarīqa*).[187]

Most eighteenth-century Damascene scholars seemed well aware of the benefits of successfuly combining scholarly erudition and Sufi training. Some of these individuals opted to join a Sufi order only later during their lives, presumably to expand their network of personal connections and attain more professional opportunities. Combining memberships in particular Sufi orders with *madrasa* training could have at times represented a strategic choice. For instance, ʿAbd al-Kāfī Ibn Ḥusayn (d.1772) from Aleppo started the study of the Scripture while he was still very young. He became a *ḥāfiẓ* under Aḥmad al-Dimiyāṭī. He further pursued education in *fiqh* and *ʿilm* under four more masters. Only when he was much older, he requested initiation from a Qādirī *Shaykh* Ṣāliḥ al-Mawāhibī. Some time passed, and Ibn Ḥusayn became well-versed in both *ʿilm* and *taṣawwuf*. He traveled to Egypt and performed *Ḥajj* on his way back, as was often the custom. Upon his return, he finally secured *ijāza*s from ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī and Muḥammad al-

[186] He was also remembered as a poet. See Al-Murādī, *Silk*, 3:95-96.
[187] Ibid., 3:167-168.

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ʿAjlūnī. He went back to Aleppo, where he became a Shafi'ite *imām* and spent the rest of his life continuously praised by his peers.[188]

An illustrative example of a scholar-thaumaturge who efficiently balanced out his professional pedigree was Ḥusayn Ibn Ṭuʿma (d.1761). He was known as al-Baytimānī as he stemmed from the village of Bayt Tima in today's Gaza Subdistrict. Like many other scholars, he started his education under his father. Engaging both *fiqh* and *taṣawwuf,* he proceeded to join the Qādirīyya under one of the al-Gīlānīs. He joined the Rifāʿīyya as well. Accumulating renown as an achiever, al-Baytimānī moved to Damascus to take up a tenure in al-ʿAddās Mosque that was in al-Qanawāt district. A passionate student, al-Baytimānī pursued various masters during more than fifteen years. Among his teachers was ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī. Al-Murādī insists that the Pole of his time transferred a portion of his *baraka* into al-Baytimānī before he died. Al-Baytimānī acquired many appointments. He lectured on topics in *fiqh* in the mosques of the provincial capital, continuing his studies of *tafsīr* and *Ḥadīth* in parallel. He became the *imām* for *dhikr* ceremonies and administered Sufi training in the shrine of Muḥammad al-Ḥimyarī.[189] He was a prolific author as well. His poems were highly praised during the eighteenth century,[190] while some of his works in prose were preserved until the present times and published as edited texts.[191]

The appointments kept by the ulamaic groups in the Ottoman Empire could be very lucrative. Securing an admirable living standard may have inspired some scholar-thaumaturges to learning and acquiring authority as religious professionals. Many Sufi-*ʿulamā'* were able to earn

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[188] Ibid., 3:90-91.

[189] The biographer is not specific about the location of this shrine, and the available pilgrimage guides do not list it among the frequently visited destinations.

[190] Al-Murādī, *Silk,* 2:60-63.

[191] See, for instance, Hussein Ibn Ṭuʿuma al-Baytimānī, *Kashf 'Astār al-Tawḥīd li-l-Murīd 'An Wajh Jalālāt al-Qurān al-Majīd* [Unveiling the Curtains of Monotheism for the Disciple Faced with the Glory of the Qur'ān], ed. Dr. ʿĀṣim Ibrāhīm al-Kiyyālī (Beirut: Kitāb Nāshirūn, 2019).

well just by leading regular *dhikr* rituals.[192] In addition, they received considerable donations from the worshippers. They would often be remunerated or offered gifts in exchange for lending thaumaturgical assistance. Exorcisms came at a price, as well as talismans or spells.[193] Dispensing grace to the people earned a decent living.[194] Most Sufi initiates also had other occupations, as agriculturalists, merchants, or artisans.[195] After completing studies in *madrasa*s, the Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* were in addition able to turn enviable profit through their official appointments. The value of official tenures is sometimes evident from the sources. For instance, Aḥmad Ibn Shams al-Dīn (d.1759) was a highly prominent teacher and wonderworker. Like his predecessors, he was known as Ibn Siwār. Aḥmad Ibn Siwār held a tenure as a preacher in Qubbat al-Bāʿūnīyya, a shrine that lay at the eastern part of the Umayyad Mosque's nave. He was a relative of a saint, Shaykh Muṣṭafā. Muṣṭafā died and left his offspring locked in dispute against Ibn Siwār over the saint's tenures. After some competition, Muṣṭafā's heirs agreed to alternate between the Umayyad Mosque and the al-Buzūrī Mosque that was part of ʿĀtika Bint Yazīd's shrine, agreeing to share both appointments.[196] Members of the eighteenth-century Damascene priestly sodality generally preferred to keep tenures within their families, ensuring the prosperity of their descendants. Most often, the scholar-thaumaturges also supervised lucrative property endowments. These endowments usually included the grave of a saintly ancestor.[197]

In addition to the opportunities to gain wide renown due to their education as well as to compete for lucrative appointments, members of the eighteenth-century Syrian priestly sodality could hope to inspire rumors of their sainthood. They would then enter the higher ranks of the

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[192] Lane, *Egyptians,* 1:315.
[193] Stephan, "Lunacy," 7, Grehan, *Twilight,* 150-151, 152-153, 180, Canaan, *Saints,* 134.
[194] L. du Couret, *Life in the Desert; or Recollections of Travel in Asia and Africa, Translated from the French* (New York: Mason Brothers, 1860), 419-421.
[195] Lane, *Egyptians,* 1:315.
[196] Al-Murādī, *Silk*, 1:129-130.
[197] See section 5.5.

eighteenth-century Syrian network of the holy, joining other *ṣāliḥūn* who were widely respected and remembered because of their *baraka* and their wonders.

4.6. Those Who Ascended: Saints among the eighteenth-century Damascenes

Immediate examples of the widely respected Damascene Sufi-ʿulamāʾ who acquired saintly status were individuals like ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī, Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī, or Abū al-Mawāhib Ibn ʿAbd al-Bāqī al-Ḥanbalī.[198] They however joined the ranks of the *awliyāʾ* in the Ottoman networks of the holy along with other select members of the *ṣāliḥūn,* and the *majādhīb* among them. Sainthood represented an open social category.[199] *Awliyāʾ* grew in numbers with each generation, and while some of them managed to accumulate enough renown to be venerated both by the common people and the Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ*across the Ottoman Empire, many retained a local character and a limited geographical reach.

Saintly status represented the combination of popular belief and peer recognition. Many saints amounted only to inspiring beliefs within their communities, either regional or occupational, as was the case with some Christian saints as well.[200] Stories about simple conjurors who were respected in their circles for their *ṣalāḥ* were numerous. This meant that certain *ṣāliḥūn* ascended to saintly status regardless of erudition or training necessary for a member of the Ottoman priestly sodality. Illustrative is the example of the previously mentioned children's caretaker from Aleppo, Abū Yazīd. He was poor, he did not possess any lucrative tenures in Aleppo, nor was there any

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[198] For Ibn ʿAbd al-Bāqī al-Ḥanbalī, see sections 2.5. and 6.6.
[199] Grehan, *Twilight,* 66.
[200] For instance, Ibid., 105. Compare with Thomas, *Decline,* 30.

rumor about his erudition or influence. The people of al-Mushāriqa District, however, used to collect bits and pieces of his personal belongings as amulets.[201]

Certain *majādhīb* were remembered as saints, but their sainthood also varied in geographical extent. Despite the alleged extraordinary perception of Ibrāhīm al-Kaykī from the Damascene al-Qubaybāt district,[202] the *majdhūb* does not seem to have gained prominence outside of his neighborhood. The case was different with the charismatic Aḥmad Ibn Sarrāj the theoleptic. Two very influential Ottoman Sufi- *ʿulamāʾ* wrote about this *majdhūb* as a saint, which granted Ibn Sarrāj a much wider renown.[203] As with the prominent priestly sodality members, in eighteenth-century Shām personal networks played a crucial role along with *ṣalāḥ*. Such was the case in other regions of the Ottoman Empire. Al-Murādī testifies that Sultan Abdülhamid I personally acknowledged the sainthood of ʿUthmān the Theoleptic.[204] This implies that the recognition of the established Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* and other authorities in office represented a crucial factor for establishing the reach of an individual's popularity as a *walī.*

Among the Sufi acolytes and masters, some would at times, due to popular recognition and the influence of their networks, inspire rumors of sainthood regardless of the extent of their ulamaic training. Shaykh Yūnus (d.1747) was a man of humble origins whose place of birth was Mosul. Yūnus got acquainted with the members of the Rifāʿīyya network in Basra. They initiated him into this Sufi order. Yūnus al-Rifāʿī stayed in continuous contact with the members of his order. He demonstrated excellence as a disciple and soon inspired beliefs in his own *baraka.* Rumors of his sainthood eventually spread. Yūnus of Mosul's wonders impressed both the common people (*wa al-nās tashahhada bi-wilāyatihi wa taḥaddatha bi-karāmātihi*) as well as the *shaykh*s of his order.

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[201] Al-Murādī, *Silk,* 1:86.
[202] Ibn Budayr, "HDY," 49B.
[203] Al-Murādī, *Silk,* 1:125-129.
[204] Ibid., 3:170-171.

He became one of the most influential Rifāʿīs in Mosul. Later in life, he trained many disciples, while his offspring continued to attract popular praise.[205]

Similarly, Aḥmad Ibn Murād (d.1744) from Nahleh (Naḥla in Lebanon; therefore - al-Naḥlāwī) joined the Aḥmadīyya in Damascus. He quickly rose to prominence and was honored by al-Murādī with an unusually long biography that does not give much detail about the *shaykh*'s erudition. Aḥmad al-Naḥlāwī managed to gain extreme popularity among many of the prominent Damascene *ʿulamāʾ*. Al-Murādī narrates of the praises al-Naḥlāwī received from the Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* of Shām, proclaiming him the "Benediction of Damascus" (*barakat al-shām*). Similar were the praises directed to this saint by the famous Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī.[206] This widely respected *walī* was a teacher in the many *madrasa*s of the provincial capital whenever one of his theoleptic trances did not distract him. The commoners sought him out and performed *tabarruk* in his vicinity.[207] His wonders continuously impressed both the ulamaic circles and the rest of the Ottoman subjects.[208]

Descendants of prominent saints often had their sainthood acknowledged as well.[209] Such was the case with a prominent Damascene thaumaturge, Isḥāq al-Kaylānī (d.1771). In addition to being a *sayyid,* he was the descendant of the Qādirīyya order's founder. In addition, Isḥāq al-Kaylānī's erudition and *ṣalāḥ* were widely appreciated. He inscribed talismans and cast spells upon requests. The biographer al-Murādī procured such items from him. During the skirmishes in the Province of Damascus between strongmen-governors Abū al-Dhahab (1735-1775) and Ẓāhir al-

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205 Ibid., 4:306.
206 Al-Bakrī expressed high esteem for this saint at, "KhH," 4A.
207 Ibid., 1:228-234.
208 See below.
209 See Grehan, *Twilight,* 71-75, Canaan, *Saints,* 134, 302, 309. As a means of an example, see "Muḥammad al-Khalīlī," in al-Murādī, *Silk,* 4:112-115.

ʿUmar (1689-1775),[210] Isḥāq al-Kaylānī died in combat (*māta shahīd*[an]) yet remained remembered as a wonder-worker respected by the most prominent Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ*.[211]

These examples show that ulamaic training did not always attract beliefs in the thaumaturgical powers of an individual. These issues were analytically distinct but often corresponded in eighteenth-century Syria. Even though the scholar-thaumaturges of the Empire enjoyed the monopoly over the functions of a priestly network, the prominent *awliyāʾ* could emerge from many other social strata and attract praise from the common people and the Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* as well. On the other hand, many prominent scholars would not enjoy saintly status. For instance, the passionate learner al-Baytimānī, who was described as a virtuous and devout man in possession of many skills and talents, despite his efforts does not seem to have inspired beliefs in his sainthood.[212] Widely known and highly venerated saints of the Ottoman Empire required validation from the more prominent Sufi- *ʿulamāʾ*.

Common people believed that the *awliyāʾ* could acquire many praeternatural powers, such as extraordinary strength or endurance. Canaan heard about a Shaykh Ṭāhā ʿAbd al-Qādir from Nablus who was, according to local stories, able to lift one or even two stone pillars with one hand.[213] Eighteenth-century ulamaic circles endorsed these beliefs. Ibn ʿĀbidīn wrote that some saints were believed to be able to fly, walk on water,[214] speak with the dead or raise them back to

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[210] See P. M. Holt, "Egypt, the Funj and Darfur," *The Cambridge History of Africa Volume 4: From c.1600 to c.1790,* ed. Richard Gray, J.D. Fage and Roland Oliver (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 36-37, Bruce Masters, "Egypt," in *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire,* ed. Gábor Ágoston and Bruce Alan Masters (New York: Facts on File, 2009), 205, and Daniel Crecelius, "The Mamluk beylicate of Egypt in the last decates before its destruction by Muḥammad ʿAlī Pasha in 1811," in *The Mamluks in Egyptian Politics and Society,* ed. Thomas Philipp and Ulrich Haarmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 126-127.

[211] Al-Murādī, *Silk,* 1:251.

[212] Ibid., 2:60-63.

[213] Canaan found the most stories about *shaykh*s with inhuman physical attributes in Nablus and its environment. Canaan, *Saints*. 256.

[214] Imād al-Dīn al-Ḥanafī, "Kitāb fī Faḍāʾil al-Shām" [The Book of Virtues of Shām], MS Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Wetzstein II 1111, Berlin, 87A-87B. I am reading a copy produced in 1591. The Ahlwardt Catalogue of the National Library in Berlin, under entry number 6081, contains detail about the author, which needed to be reconstructed from several works. The manuscript lacks its final portion. Henceforth: "KFS." Further see Al-Nābulsī, *Fatḥ,* 271-272.

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life. Animal charming was common among the *shaykh*s. [215] Al-Murādī left a tale about Aḥmad al-Naḥlāwī turning a stone into gold.[216] The Burhānīs charmed donkeys, while the Rifāʿīyya and the Sāʿdīyya followers trained to deal with venomous critters.[217] Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī writes about one Shihāb al-Dīn who lived near Jerusalem during the middle ages. This wonder-worker was rumored to have participated in Saladin's battles for Jerusalem riding a bull. Al-Bakrī relates a legend that Shihāb al-Dīn's bull would march on its own into the city carrying a list of groceries that the saint required. The animal would find the required shop and wait to be loaded with goods. It would bring them back to the *walī.* This bull-charmer's village and his gravesite were known as Abū Thawr ("The Bull-father;" or the one with the bull), which is today a Jerusalem district. Abū Thawr's grave was a *ziyāra* destination, and his offspring lived in the same-named village when al-Bakrī visited it in 1710.[218]

Despite a minority who continued to doubt the thaumaturgical powers of the *awliyā'* throughout the Ottoman period, sainthood as a concept was rarely open to official questioning. Credentials of individual saints were sometimes put to the test, however.[219] In some cases, such examination would save one from official punishments. James Grehan reads of an ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Qawī (d.1866) who did not rise before the Damascene governor. He was ordered to drink an entire fountain of water to prove his power. Allegedly, he managed, after establishing sufficient flow through fierce urination while drinking. The governor repented, and al-Qawī was free.[220] During his travels in the late seventeenth and the early eighteenth century, ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī encountered many saints of local renown of whom he never heard before. At times he

[215] Ibn ʿAbidīn, *MR,* 2:14-15, al-Nābulsī, *Ḥadīqa,* 1:199-200. Further see al-Nabhānī, *JK*, 1:41-51, and chapter 6.
[216] Al-Murādī, *Silk,* 1:233.
[217] Lane, *Egyptians,* 1:312, Weismann, "Sufi Brotherhoods," 306, or al-Budayrī, *HDY*, 91.
[218] Al-Bakrī, "KhH," 19A-19B. Further see Canaan, *Saints,* 286. This may have been the site of an older Christian convent of St. Luke. See Ibid., 287.
[219] Grehan, *Twilight,* 82.
[220] Ibid., 76.

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would ask such individuals to perform the unusual deeds which popularized them in their communities. In Gaza, a local wonder-worker swallowed an entire apple in front of the *quṭb*'s eyes.[221] Stories about such tests of thaumaturgical capacity existed in the modern period as well. In the early twentieth century, Canaan heard about a Master Jābir from Palestine who welcomed some guests unaware that they were also saints, sent by God to test his thaumaturgical prowess. He offered them food and they responded that they could not enjoy the meal without lemons. Jābir raised his hand and invoked "Shaykh Badawī" – the founder of the Aḥmadīyya[222] – to conjure a lemon from thin air. He was then congratulated.[223]

The most powerful saints were the Poles (*aqṭāb*) who were widely venerated, sometimes trans-regionally, and sometimes across the Ottoman Empire. Individuals such as ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Gīlānī, Ibn ʿArabī, or Ruslān al-Dimashqī all represented very prominent Sufis and well-established *ʿulamāʾ*. During their lives, their actions attracted respect of both the common people and the high-ranking elites. They were remembered for centuries as the most important nodes in the Muslim network of the holy. Being a *quṭb* among the saints was useful for socio-political engagement as well. Al-Nābulsī enjoyed unprecedented authority during his own lifetime. Al-Ḥifnī's gradual ascension to this rank, through the pen of his students, certainly gave additional leverage to the Khalwatīyya initiation campaign in Egypt. Rachida Chih indicates that he may have supervised the composition of his own biography.[224]

Recognition of the Poles came gradually, most often through the writings of their peers. In addition to a formidable socio-political influence such individuals possessed, they were also

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[221] Ibid., 67-68.
[222] See Mayeur-Jaouen, *al-Sayyid al-Badawi,* 61-82.
[223] Canaan, *Saints,* 260. Saintly powers, and especially those of newly emerged holy men, often required verification in various confessions. For instance, see Nancy Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca&London: Cornell University Press, 2003), 14-15, 277, 289.
[224] Chih, *Sufism,* 1, 112-126, and Winter, *Egyptian Society,* 136.

believed to have the greatest thaumaturgical power among the Muslim saints. It was previously indicated that the existence of the Poles was believed crucial for maintaining worldly order.[225] In addition, they were capable of extraordinary feats far beyond the presumed skills of other saints. James Grehan reads of ʿAbd al-Fattaḥ al-Zuʿubī (d.1809), who told to his student that a Pole of his time would be able to move Mount Lebanon with a simple command. Mild tremors were felt in that moment, so the *shaykh* barked at the mountain to hold still, as it was not spoken to.[226]

Legends of *aqtāb* power were retold over centuries and often featured in the works of the prominent *ʿulamāʾ*. The "Protector of Damascus," Ruslān al-Dimashqī (d.1160/64)[227] according to tales once lounged in a Damascene garden surrounded by a large group of his peers. He picked a handful of branches. Discarding one, he announced spring to the surprise of the onlookers who felt a sudden rise in temperature. The *quṭb* threw another flower away to announce summer. Canopies around the audience turned richer in color, albeit to just rot and deform as Ruslān called autumn, discarding another flower. Finally, the *quṭb* conjured winter, while cold wind engulfed the audience. Ruslān al-Dimashqī then started compelling the birds in the garden to sing by pointing his fingers at them and invoking Allah. This legend seems to have persisted through centuries.[228]

No matter the power of the *awliyāʾ* during their lives, nor the extent of their wonders, it was widely believed that their power would immensely grow upon their death.[229] Edifices were erected in the vicinity of saintly graves specifically to facilitate the process of *baraka*-harvesting from these locations. The people went to popular and still-living saints to perform the *tabarruk* in

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[225] Lane, *Egyptians*, 1:293, Chih, *Sufism,* 1, Winter, *Egyptian Society*, 136, Mashita, *Theology,* 14.
[226] Grehan, *Twilight,* 65-66.
[227] Geoffroy, "Arslān al-Dimashqī, Shaykh," http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/arslan-al-dimashqi-shaykh-COM_23403 (Last accessed: April 15th 2021).
[228] Al-Ḥanafī, "KFS," 87A-87B.
[229] Canaan, *Saints,* 309-313.

their vicinity or collect pieces of their hair and personal possessions to benefit from the divine grace of such individuals. Similarly, the people in Ottoman Syria frequently visited prominent saintly graves. The still-living thaumaturges would in addition use these sites to augment the effects of their prayers and other thaumaturgical rituals.

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5. Beyond Death: Saintly Shrines and their *Baraka*

Muslims, similar to adherents to many other religious confessions, believed that the dead lingered in their graves, unseen until the end of days. The access of the deceased to heavenly rewards was secured by their devoutness.[1] Muslim jurists wrote that graves were new residences for the deceased Muslims. Ibn ʿĀbidīn compares graves to the households of the Muslims above ground. The latter were sites where the people would spend their "small deaths" in cycles of nocturnal slumber.[2] Their graves would then host them until the Day of Resurrection (*yawm al-qiyāma*). It was believed that the dead were aware of those who would stand in the vicinity of their graves. The deceased were believed capable of interacting with the grave visitors and participating in activities that occurred around their tombs.[3]

ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī wrote that Allah did not differentiate between the living and the dead. A deceased *walī* retained sainthood after death, which meant that the people believed in the unbroken effluence of *baraka* from the deceased *awliyāʼ*.[4] The eighteenth-century *quṭb* al-Nābulsī

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[1] Jane Idleman Smith and Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, *The Islamic Understanding of Death and Resurrection* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 31-99. For the eighteenth century, see Al-Nābulsī, *Fatḥ,* 271-272.
[2] Ibn ʿAbidīn, *Radd,* 9:505.
[3] Al-Karmī, *ShS*, 27-28. Similar beliefs still prevail in many cultures.
[4] Al-Nābulsī, "Kashf," 162A-174A. Further see al-Shawbarī, "AA," 45A-46B.

believed that the saints, as well as the virtuous, would retain the same traits of humility, virtue, and righteousness after they passed away.[5] God therefore continued to reward such individuals with thaumaturgical power.[6]

The belief in the *baraka* of deceased saints influenced the development of a grave visiting tradition among the Muslims.[7] Pilgrims went to sites where divine grace was expected to be found. Over the centuries, pilgrimages (*ziyāra*; pl. *ziyārāt*; lit. "visit") to saintly shrines developed into a widespread custom both among the common people and the Muslim elites. Grave visits and tomb cults represent a very old and ubiquitous phenomenon which was an important element in religions worldwide.[8]

The deceased Muslim saints were venerated by the people because of their *baraka.*[9] In general it was hoped that the deceased saints would assist people with quotidian affairs or intercede on their behalf in front of God. Saintly intercession (*shafāʿa*) in front of Allah was an important element in Muslim premodern beliefs and a strong motivation for endeavoring upon *ziyārāt.*[10] To

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[5] Al-Nābulsī, *Fatḥ,* 271-272.
[6] Al-Nābulsī, "Kashf," 162A-174A.
[7] Beliefs in the mystical powers of ancestors and other deceased are widespread around the globe. See Harvey Whitehouse, "Religious Enthusiasm and Its Limits," in *Modes of Religiosity: A Cognitive Theory of Religious Transmission* (Lanham&New York: Altamira Press, 2004), 119-138. For a historical perspective, see Jenipher Larson, *Understanding Greek Religion* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 265-283, or Carla Maria Antonaccio, *An Archeology of Ancestors: Tomb Cult and Hero Cult in Early Greece* (Lanham: Rowman&Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1995), 1-72.
[8] Ample material was published to offer potential for comparisons between Islam and other scriptural traditions. See Brian B. Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficient Dead: Ancestor Cult and Necromancy in Ancient Israelite Religion and Tradition* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 14-27, Christopher Tilley, *An Ethnography of the Neolithic: Early Prehistoric Societies in Southern Scandinavia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 317-335, Claire Trenery, "Demons, Saints, and the Mad in Twelfth-Century Miracles of Thomas Becket," in *Demons and Illness,* ed. Siam Bhayro, 339-358, Alison Chapman, "The Patrons of Heaven and Earth," in *Patrons and Patron Saints in Early Modern English Literature* (New York&London: Routledge, 2013), 1-20, Judy Ann Ford, *English Readers of Catholic Saints: The Printing History of William Caxton's Golden Legend* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020), 86, Thomas, *Decline,* 28, 78, Parish, *Miracles,* 119-143, Suzanne Glover Lindsey, *Funerary Arts and Tomb Cult – Living with the Dead in France,* 1750-1870 (London&New York: Routledge, 2012), 1-56. For a number of case studies for modern and contemporary Islam, attitudes towards *baraka* in tombs worldwide, and the cults of saintly tombs, see Margaret Cormack, ed., *Muslims and Others in Sacred Space* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
[9] Chih, *Sufism,* 111.
[10] Al-Nābulsī, *Ḥadīqa,* 1:183. Valerie J. Hoffman, "Intercession," *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān,* ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe. Available online at:https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-the-quran/intercession-EQCOM_00097?s.num=43&s.rows=100 (Last accessed: April 15th 2021). Also see Feras Hamza, "Temporary Hellfire Punishment and the Making of Sunni Orthodoxy," and Wilferd Madelung, "Al-Ghazālī on

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ensure saintly intercession,[11] the people would perform *ziyāra* around the year and often bring votive offerings to the shrines.[12] The cult of saints which gradually developed among the Muslims further impacted the people's religious customs, mobility and economy. The continuous proliferation of the Muslim networks of the holy ensured the existence of numerous newly-entombed *awliyā'* with every generation. The sheer number of holy graves in Syria and Palestine made the ethnographer Taufik Canaan remark that, "It is a pity that we have not countless sacred trees commemorating holy persons, for Palestine would then be more wooded and more healthy, fertile and beautiful."[13] Ottoman subjects crossed long distances to visit the shrines and graves of the Province of Damascus, which was known in Ottoman domains as *Shām al-Sharīf* ("honorable/venerable Damascus").[14]

This chapter examines the *ziyāra* traditions present among the subjects of eighteenth-century Ottoman Syria. Visits to the saintly graves today represent a prominent scholarly subject. Pilgrimages to shrines around the globe are researched in various historical contexts[15] and across

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Resurrection and the Road to Paradise," both in *Roads to Paradise,* ed. Günther, et. al.,371-406, 422-427. Further see Josef Van Ess, *Theology and Society in the Second and the Third Centuries of the Hijra vol. 4,* trans. Gwendolin Goldbloom (Leiden&Boston: Brill, 2018), 608, 661-663, or Francis Robinson, "Religious Inspiration in Islam," in *Inspiration in Science and Religion,* ed. Michael Fuller (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), 35-42.

[11] The intercession of saints is a common motif in scriptural religions. For comparative perspectives, see, for instance, Devin DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde: Baba Tükles and Conversion to Islam in Historical and Epic Tradition* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 455, R.N. Swanson, *Religion and Devotion in Europe c.1215-c.1515* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 35-42, Donald S. Lopez, Jr., "Sanctification on the Bodhisattva Path," in *Sainthood: Its Manifestations in World Religions,* ed. Richard Kieckhefer and George D. Bond (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 172-217, or Patricia Cox Miller, "Animated Bodies and Icons," in *The Corporeal Imagination: Signifying the Holy in Late Ancient Christianity* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 131-147. Finally, compare with Thomas, *Decline,* 28.

[12] For grave visitations, for instance, in medieval Damascus, see Chamberlain, *Damascus*, 118-120. Compare with Walsham, *Landscape,* 35-36.

[13] Canaan, *Saints,* 1. For the graves visited frequently in Damascus during the early modern period, see Appendix B.

[14] Rafeq, "Relations," 80.

[15] For instance, in the context of Islam, see Marco Schöller, "Muslim Theory," in *The Living and the Dead in Islam: Studies in Arabic Epitaphs II* (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz Verlag, 2004), 13-43, Josef W. Meri, *The Cult of Saints among Muslims and Jews in Medieval Syria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), I-58, Alex Weingrod, "Saints and Shrines, politics, and culture: a Morocco-Israel Comparison," René Dussaud, "Palmyre et la Damascène," in *Topographie historique de la Syrie antique et médiévale* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1927), 247-322, and Nancy Tapper, "Ziyaret: Gender, Movement, and Exchange in a Turkish Community," in *Muslim Travelers: Pilgrimage, Migration and the Religious Imagination,* ed. Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori (London&New York: Routledge, 1990),

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cultures and religious traditions.[16] For the sake of examining the eighteenth-century Syrian case, the following paragraphs focus on the early modern Ottoman customs related to building, commemorating, and visiting graves of Muslim saints and thaumaturgical experts. This chapter will show that the belief in *baraka* played a crucial role in such customs.

Shrines were of high importance for thaumaturgical rituals, due to the belief that the *baraka* within them improved a ritual's efficacy.[17] In a more practical sense, their significance was twofold. Firstly, tombs of the Muslim saints had an influence on the topography of both urban and rural hubs of Greater Syria. The people wished to be buried as close as possible to alleged wonder-workers, believing in continuous transmission of *baraka* from their shrines. This sometimes led to the forming of entire new graveyards, while some shrine complexes became centers of new urban districts. In addition, hallowed tombs often served as topographical references for the eighteenth-century Damascene authors, indicating the ways in which these individuals perceived their urban environment. Secondly, it shall be shown that the Ottoman administration, like other Muslim imperial structures, through history often considered graves of the *awliyā'* and other prominent individuals important geographical markers around which new urban quarters would grow, both in newly taken and previously controlled cities of the Empire. Furthermore, the economic and

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217-235, 236-255, Talmon-Heller, *Piety*, 152-161, 172-183, 199-203, Nelly Amri, *Les saints en islam, les messagers de l'espérance: sainteté et eschatologie au Maghreb aux XIVe et XVe siècles* (Paris: Cerf, 2008), 70-89, Sossie Andezian, *Expériences du divin dans l'Algérie contemporaine: adeptes des saints de la région de Tlemcen* (Paris: CNRS, 2001), 55-78, Christopher Schurman Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous: Ziyāra and the Veneration of Muslim Saints,* (Leiden and Boston, Brill, 1998), 62-79, Bartlett, *The Dead,* 13-22, 621-633, Smith and Haddad, *Death and Resurrection*, 183-192, Chamberlain, *Damascus*, 118-120, Trimingham, *Sufi Orders,* 179-180.

[16] For comparative purposes with other regions, and other religious traditions, see Issachar Ben-Ami, *Saint Veneration among the Jews in Morocco* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998), 131-180, Mohammed El Ayadi, Hassan Rachik, Mohamed Tozy, *L'Islam Au Quotidien: Enquête sur les valeurs et les pratiques religieuses au Maroc* (Casablanca: Editions Prologues, 2007), 60-63, 71, Azfar Moin, "The Politics of Saint Shrines in the Persianate Empire," in *The Persianate World,* ed. Abbas Amanat and Assef Ashraf (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 105-124, or Thomas, *Decline,* 717, and Parish, "False Miracles," 103-104. For a global perspective, see Dionigi Albera and John Eade, eds., *New Pathways in Pilgrimage Studies: Global Perspectives* (New York&London: Routledge, 2017). Each chapter focuses on a different region on the globe.

[17] See chapter 6.

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social significance of Muslim holy graves prompted the commissioning of entire complexes of buildings aimed to accommodate the pilgrims, as well as to host public activities of the Sufis that would facilitate the strengthening of imperial influence.[18] Such activities, in addition to dispensing divine grace and ministering to the people's religious needs, involved charity work and preaching. Over time, the Ottoman state's inclusion of sacred graves into its policies developed a complex economy of the pilgrimages, which shall be discussed in this chapter as well.

In addition to the belief in Muslim shrines' grace, this chapter examines the beliefs that *baraka* could spread from such locations to the natural environment. The "leaking" of *baraka* into nature was believed to come either from the entombed, or after a preternatural surge caused by a legendary event that was believed to have taken place at a given site.[19] This belief inspired the attribution of religious significance to certain natural objects, such as caves, trees, water sources, or rocks.[20] This chapter will analyze such objects as well, showing that they were for the most part connected to beliefs of saintly wonders occurring in their vicinity.

5.1. Everyday Life and the Graveside: *Ziyāra* and the Behavior of Deceased Saints in eighteenth-century Shām

Muslim premodern saint veneration inspired some scholarship to describe the *awliyā'* as superhuman entities.[21] Ethnographical works from the modern period compared the deceased Muslim saints with ancient *baalim*[22] and comparisons of Muslim saints to lesser deities sometimes

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[18] A good illustration of the significance of important graves for the economy and self-representation of the state in Damascus was the shrine complex of Ibn ʿArabī, which represented an Ottoman dynastic endowment. See Appendix, Figures 4 and 6. This shrine shall further be discussed in section 5.5.
[19] Canaan, *Saints,* 71.
[20] Comparable with Walsham, *Landscape,* 50-53.
[21] Grehan, *Twilight,* 73-74. For his sources, see Curtiss, *Primitive,* 73-74, or Canaan, *Saints,* 309.
[22] Paton, "Survivals," 55 and Curtiss, *Primitive,* 79. For the *baalim,* see Charles Russell Coulter and Patricia Turner, *Encyclopedia of Ancient Deities* (Chicago: Routledge, 2000), 86-87, and Richard R. Losch, *All the Places in the Bible:*

appear in scholarship throughout the modern and contemporary periods. For instance, some scholars interested in Sufism tended to interpret the *awliyā'* as incoherent and alien,[23] or as mystic kings and fulcrums of tomb veneration cults.[24] Such interpretations are, however, not entirely helpful for the understanding of the history of Ottoman Sunnism. The Ottoman network of the holy represented a chain of hierarchy under God, which is a point frequently stated by apologetic theology of the eighteenth century. According to popular beliefs, the saints were recipients of divine grace,[25] yet the theologians denied them the right to claim any higher authority or powers.[26] Although removed from humanity – for they were invisible after death – according to common beliefs, they were fully integrated into everyday life of eighteenth-century Syria. Their social significance further had a continuous impact on the everyday practices and religious *habitus* of the Ottoman Syrian subjects.

Working on the eighteenth-century Syrian context, James Grehan implies that Muslim premodern "agrarian religion" represented a religion of tombs.[27] Observing Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī's religious customs, James Grehan explains al-Bakrī's *ziyārāt* as the Khalwatīyya master's obsession with Muslim saints. Grehan states that there was no reason for al-Bakrī to hide such obsessions when even the Ottoman sultans endorsed saintly cults.[28] The case of Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī was far from exceptional during the eighteenth century. *Ziyāra* was practiced by most of the Ottoman subjects, with support of the eminent jurists of the Empire. Ibn ʿAbidīn insisted on showing respect to the Sufis due to their *baraka.* He encouraged visits to shrines because of the

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An A-Z Guide to the Countries, Cities, Villages, and Other Places Mentioned in the Scripture (Washington DC: Library of Congress, 2013), 129, 363, 428.

[23] Ian Richard Netton, *Ṣūfī Ritual: The Parallel Universe* (Richmond: Curzon, 2000), 145-186.

[24] Susan Bayly, *Saints, Goddesses and Kings: Muslims and Christians in South Indian Society 1700-1900* (Edinburgh: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 179.

[25] Chih, *Sufism,* 111.

[26] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, MR, 2:15, 25, and al-Nabhānī, *JK*, 1:11-20.

[27] Grehan, *Saints,* 83, 88. Also see Karamustafa, *Friends,* 72-78, Chih, *Sufism,* 22-24, Green, *Sufism,* 93.

[28] Grehan, *Saints,* 83-84, 101.

saints' wonders.[29] Arguing in favor of *ziyāra* practices against the rigorists of his time, ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī elaborated that the benefits of conducting religious practices in the vicinity of the *awliyā'* tombs came from Allah's grace. The wonders which saints caused post-mortem justified the visits to their graves. Sufis and the common people could hope to partake of the saintly grace while visiting the *awliyā'* shrines.[30] For him, visits to the saintly graves represented a common element of Islam. He criticized the reluctance to perform *ziyāra,* as well as the doubt in the mystical powers of the entombed saints. Denial to him represented folly (*jahl*).[31]

Religious professionals made a continuous effort to set examples of the proper expression of piety for the rest of the people.[32] During each of his pilgrimages, ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī visited more than a dozen of cities and villages. He attempted to visit all their important graves.[33] In his *riḥla*s, he recorded that his main goal of traveling was to see the holy sites and draw upon the *baraka* within them.[34] Al-Nābulsī's prominent disciple, Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī, spent a better part of his lifetime on pilgrimages to various destinations, including the Arabian Peninsula, Egypt, and Iraq.[35] Al-Bakrī echoes al-Nābulsī's primary motivation for the *ziyāra*. For this eminent Khalwatī master, *ziyāra* represented an invaluable opportunity to collect blessings from the saints, which he believed beneficial for his life and work. Al-Bakrī used the word *siyāḥa* to refer to grave visits.[36] In contemporary contexts, this word refers to tourism. The widespread custom of pilgrimages to the saintly tombs, both among the thaumaturges of the empire and the rest of the Ottoman subjects,

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[29] Ibn ʿAbidīn, *Radd,* 2:114-115, 9:505.
[30] Al-Nābulsī, "Kashf," 162A-164B, and Al-Nābulsī, *Fatḥ*, 171-172. Also see Ibn ʿAbidīn, *Radd,* 2:114-115. The proceedings of thaumaturgical rituals are in more detail examined in chapter 6.
[31] Ibid. 162A-174A, and al-Nābulsī, *Ḥadīqa,* 1:199-200.
[32] Richard J. McGregor, "Grave Visitation/Worship," *Encyclopaedia of Islam III,* ed. Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, and Everett Rowson (Brill Online, 2014). http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_27519 (Last Accessed: April 15th 2021).
[33] James Grehan offers a map of al-Nābulsī's longest itinerary. See Grehan, *Twilight,* 22. Also see Appendix B, Map 10.
[34] Al-Nābulsī, *Ḥaqīqa,* 37, as well as al-Nābulsī, *Lubnān*, 55-56.
[35] Al-Murādī, *Silk*, 4:220-228.
[36] Al-Bakrī, "KhH," 3A-5B, 13B. Also see Ibn Kannān, "MS," 4A-9B.

inspired many *ʿulamāʾ* to produce travel guides describing such sites. Elizabeth Syrriyeh notes that the *ziyāra* custom seems to have inspired the development of a literary genre committed to shrine pilgrimages in Syria.[37] For instance, the chronicler Muḥammad Ibn Kannān left behind an account of shrines and holy tombs within the Damascene al-Ṣāliḥīyya district.[38] Literature committed to describing the *ziyāra* and offering guides to pilgrimage sites was common across other Ottoman regions as well.[39]

In 1710, Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī's goal was to visit every place believed to contain divine grace. Al-Bakrī was in the hopes of locating every shrine he was aware of. While on his pilgrimages, he would continuously recite prayers and repeat the *dhikr,* broken only by the invocations within the shrines themselves.[40] He was determined to obtain thaumaturgical enhancements from Allah.[41] Ibn Budayr boasted about honoring identical customs. The barber recorded his visit to the tomb of Muḥammad's granddaughter Zaynab in Damascus, a saint particularly powerful against natural catastrophes.[42] He was accompanied by his younger and only surviving son, Sayyid Muṣṭafā. Together, they recited from the Qur'ān and repeated the *dhikr* both on their way to the shrine and back. Ibn Budayr wrote that their aim was to collect the saint's *baraka.*[43] The resemblance of Ibn Budayr's account to that of a prominent *ʿālim* further highlights the popular awareness of the Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* customs related to the *ziyārāt.*

Visiting graves and cemeteries in eighteenth-century Syria was also used for a number of social occasions. In Damascus, the Christian priest Burayk notes that the people often used the

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[37] See Sirriyeh, *Visionary,* 108-111.
[38] For a sample of his ample record of such sites, see for instance, Ibn Kannān, "MS," 5A, 8B. Further see Map 7 in Appendix B.
[39] For the North African and Egyptian cases, see Chih, *Sufism,* 24-25.
[40] Details of invocations shall be given in chapter 6.
[41] Al-Bakrī, "KhH," 10A-10B, 14A, 20A.
[42] See Taylor, *Righteous*, 130. This site today holds a mosque built in 1990.
[43] Ibn Budayr,"HDY," 69A-69B.

city's graveyards as picnic locations. During centuries, picnics, poetry reading sessions, or even the staging of theatrical plays at the shrines was not uncommon.[44] Burayk narrates that many spent almost every Saturday visiting the dead. Leisure activities would take place at the gravesites, and this cleric fumes about the popular use of coffee, tobacco and alcohol in the vicinity of the graves.[45] Aside from pastime activities, when people visited the graves of prominent saints, their aim was to pray within the shrines, often with hopes of fulfilling particular goals through saintly intercession. Trained thaumaturges recited their invocations, aiming to utilize saintly *baraka* to empower their prayers, or make their thaumaturgical rituals more efficacious.[46] They often assisted other individuals with performing various rites in these locations.

As previously indicated, Ottoman subjects held the very common belief that the dead were interactive, although most often unseen. In addition to spending times near their graves, the Syrian people involved the deceased saints in their everyday activities, where they were expected to fulfill several important social roles. In addition to interceding on behalf of the supplicants in front of Allah, the *awliyā'* were believed to ensure that the order was kept among the Ottoman subjects. For instance, it was believed that the saints were powerful defenders against all kinds of intrusions. The following account illustrates this point well. Locust infestations represented a recurrent problem in the greater Syrian region. Taufik Canaan, however, recorded a story about a sacred grove near the village of Yalo (*Yālū*), about thirteen kilometers southeast from Ramla. Although the locusts were thriving in the area, it was believed that no insect managed to approach the territory of the grove, which was protected by the saintly *baraka.*[47] Sacred places among the

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[44] Taylor, *Righteous*, 62-79. Also, Donald Swenson, *Society, Spirituality, and the Sacred: A Social Scientific Introduction* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 178-179. Further see Trimingham, *Sufi Orders*, 26.
[45] Burayk, *TS,* 63-64.
[46] See chapter 6 for ritual proceedings.
[47] Canaan, *Saints,* 36.

Muslims often functioned similar to protective talismans, as the rigorist judge al-Karmī rightly noticed while writing his treatise about the *ziyāra* customs.[48]

In addition to diverting natural hazards, the saints were expected to punish intrusions upon sacred sites. The Ottomans adopted a very old tradition of keeping valuables within the shrines in hopes that the saintly power protected the stored items from intruders. Such beliefs perhaps dissuaded some potential pilferers. Beliefs in protective powers of shrines were widespread. Temples in different regions often held treasures, valuables, treaties and other items of value.[49] In Damascus, the Umayyad Mosque held the state treasury during the reign of the same-named dynasty.[50] Common people shared the same custom. During most of their travels in the Syrian territories, Taufik Canaan and Samuel Curtiss wrote of many shrines that served as vaults for equipment and tools necessary for daily labor. It was believed that the commemorated saints would guard these items from thieves. At the same time, it seemed practical to leave equipment in spaces which were closer to the locations where people worked.[51] During his eighteenth-century

[48] Al-Karmī, *SfS,* 51.
[49] See Brannon Wheeler, "Treasure of the Kaʿbah," in *Mecca and Eden: Ritual, Relics, and Territory in Islam* (Chicago&London: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 19-46. The belief of saintly presence guarding property and people is old and seems ubiquitous. For an anthropological theoretical background, see See Mircea Eliade, "Sacred Space and Making the World Sacred," in *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (Orlando: Harcourt, Inc., 1959), 20-67, and David Carmichael, Jane Hubert, Brian Reeves and Audhild Schanche, "Introduction," in *Sacred Sites, Sacred Places,* ed. David Carmichael, Jane Hubert, Brian Reeves and Audhild Schanche (Abingdon: Routledge, 1994), 1-8. For a comparative perspective with a historical background, see Marty E. Stevens, *Temples, Tithes and Taxes: The Temple and the Economic Life of Ancient Israel* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006), 64-65, Diane Harris, *The Treasures of the Parthenon and Erechteion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 1-39, Reynold Higgins, *The Aegina Treasure: an Archaelogical Mystery* (London: British Museum Publications, 1979), 48-50, Antonaccio, *Ancestors,* 116-118, Schmidt, *Necromancy,* 58-61, Catherine Johns, "Faunus at Thetford: An Early Latian Deity in Late Roman Britain," in *Pagan Gods and Shrines of the Roman Empire,* ed. Martin Henig and Anthony King (Oxford: Oxford University Committee for Archaeology, 1986), 93-104, Charles G. Leland, *Etruscan Roman Remains and the Old Religion* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 31-32, 221. For a comparative perspective in later medieval and early modern times, see Benjamin David Brand, *Holy Treasure and Sacred Song: Relic Cults and their Liturgies in Medieval Tuscany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 17-43, John Martin Robinson, *Treasures of the English Churches* (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1995), 37, Sheila Blair, *The Ilkhanid Shrine Complex at Natanz, Iran* (Cambridge: Center for Middle Eastern Studies, 1986), 5-8, Stephen C. Berkwitz, *The History of the Relic Shrine: a Translation of the Sinhala Thūpavaṃsa* (Oxford&New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 208-244.
[50] Burns, *Damascus,* 138-141. This was the case elsewhere in Syria, see Ibid., 87-88. Further see Paul M. Cobb, *White Banners: Contention in ʿAbbāsid Syria, 750-880* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2001), 151.
[51] See, for instance, Canaan, *Saints,* 102, Curtiss, *Primitive*, 160, 183.

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pilgrimage, Henry Maundrell was caught by bad weather without adequate shelter. His party stopped near the village of Shulfatīyya, which was located north of Damascus, on the west bank of the Orontes river.[52] Reluctant to seek refuge in the village houses the hygiene of which did not satisfy the party members, they tried to bargain for shelter within a "*Sheck'*s House." The locals did not yield to pleads nor offers until Maundrell's guides assured them that they followed "Hamet and Aly" and not "Omar and Abu Bekar."[53] Villagers then allowed them to leave their possessions within the shrine. People and animals were, however, ordered to stay outside, along with any weapons they might have carried.[54]

Maundrell records an instance when the Virgin intervened against an attempted theft at the Saydnaya Monastery near Damascus. Built to venerate the Virgin, this site was known for its many miracles and was held in esteem both by the Christians and Muslims of the region.[55] The covenant chamber of the monastery contained an icon of the Virgin that was believed to assist in fulfilling one's prayers and facilitate curative processes.[56] According to a story told by the locals, one night the theft of the icon was attempted. While the thief was on the run, the icon allegedly transformed into a full body of flesh and blood. The thief was so frightened that he hurried back to return the

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[52] See Hugh Murray, *The Encyclopaedia of Geography Comprising a Complete Description of the Earth* (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea, and Blanchard, 1837), 259, fig. 555.

[53] This distinction implies Shi'te presence in the region.

[54] Henry Maundrell, *A Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalim at Easter A.D. 1697* (Oxford: Theater, 1703), 8-11.

[55] Kathryn Blair Moore, *The Architecture of the Christian Holy Land: Reception from Late Antiquity Through the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 146-147, Denys Pringle, *The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem: A Corpus* Vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 219, Amy G. Remensnyder, *La Conquistadora: The Virgin Mary at War and Peace in the Old and New Worlds* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 157-158, Ross Burns, *Monuments of Syria: A Guide* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2020), 151, Sajdi, *The Barber,* 31, and Grehan, *Everyday Life,* 133. Further see Mat Immerzeel, "Divine Cavalry: Mounted Saints in Middle Eastern Christian Art," in *East and West in the Crusader States, Contexts, Contacts, Confrontations*, ed. Krijnie Ciggaar and Herman Teule (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2003), 265-286. For the early modern context, see Burayk, *TS,* 74, or Josias Leslie Porter, *Five Years in Damascus, Including an Account of the History, Topography, and Antiquities of that City*, two volumes (London: John Murray, 1855), 1:337-347.

[56] See chapter 6 for more about talismanic and image magic.

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artefact and confess his sins.[57] In the nineteenth century, the priests in the region assured Josias Porter that this wondrous icon was comprised half from stone and half from flesh and blood.[58]

Muslim shrines, like shrines in many other religions, represented sites where no violence was allowed.[59] In eighteenth-century Ottoman Syria, the people honored this tradition, allowing for numerous holy shrines to become neutral negotiation sites. Diplomatic and business transactions were conducted upon sacred grounds, which was an almost universal custom.[60] Like the Christian saints, the *awliyā* were believed to tolerate no deception.[61] Canaan relates that the people used the shrines as places where popular trials would be held. The accused would swear to their innocence or pray at a shrine. It was expected that the saints would strike liars down.[62] The *awliyā'* were believed to respond to desecration acts as well. James Grehan takes note of al-Nābulsī's account about the shrine of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Ramathānī at Mount Lebanon. This shrine was connected to a spring which had dried up. The disappearance of the spring was explained by the allegation that some Druzes wanted to prepare pork meat in the blessed water. It was said that its patron saint, al-Ramathānī, got angry and arrested the water supply.[63]

According to the tales gathered by Taufik Canaan, a gendarme in Awarta (ʿAwartā; Nablus Governorate) took some grape branches from a vine that belonged to a local saint. The inhabitants warned him to stop, yet he did not listen. He soon started vomiting blood and nothing could help him.[64] Failure to remove footwear prior to entering a shrine would cause the soiling of the sacred grounds. Canaan recorded cases when people who soiled a shrine suffered paralysis. Other acts

[57] Maundrell, *Journey,* 130.
[58] Porter, *Damascus,* 1:343.
[59] This is a ubiquitous and an old tradition. See Eliade, "Space," 20-67. Further see Rebecca I. Denova, *Greek and Roman Religions* (Hoboken: Wiley Blackwell, 2019), 1-23, 99-103, or Thomas, *Decline,* 67.
[60] Grehan, *Twilight,* 98-99.
[61] Thomas, *Decline,* 717.
[62] Canaan, *Saints,* 128-129, 270.
[63] Grehan, *Twilight,* 132-133.
[64] Canaan, *Saints*, 36.

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that polluted the shrine grounds, such as disposing of excrement, inspired stories about the trees bending down to administer a furious beating.[65]

Exceptions existed of course. During the eighteenth century and later, the peace of some shrines was disturbed. Some were robbed, even in the larger cities, while Bedouin raids presented a constant danger to the pilgrims.[66] To protect the pilgrimage routes, the Ottoman administration maintained the function of the Pilgrimage Commander (*amīr al-ḥajj*), which was granted to both notables of Syria and Egypt.[67] Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī, for instance, documented the fear among the pilgrims to Palestine from the bandit and Bedouin raids.[68] Other crimes occurred as well. For instance, the Umayyad Mosque itself was recorded as a murder scene in the eighteenth century. Ibn Budayr narrates that the corpse of a man was found in the mosque. According to the rumors, he may have been slain during an attempt at petty thievery.[69]

The majority of Ottoman Syrian subjects, however, visited the shrines regularly to honor their saints and pray for a number of specific or more general purposes. An overview of the architecture and the interior layout of the Muslim saintly shrines can further illuminate the crucial role these sites played for early modern Ottoman Sunnism. The analysis of the interior of Muslim shrines uncovers an overlap between various types of prayer houses built by the Muslims during premodern centuries and further clarifies the utility of these structures. Relationships between the seen and unseen within the Ottoman network of *baraka* become clearer in light of such research.

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[65] Ibid., 93-96, and Burckhardt, *Bedouins and Wahhabys*, 168-176, Barbir, *Damascus,* 97-107, al-Mubaidin, "Damascus," 137-154, Shahi, *Truth,* 49, Zuhur, *Saudi Arabia,* 41.
[66] For instance, Canaan, *Saints,* 246.
[67] Rafeq, *The Province,* 53, and Chih, Sufism, 17.
[68] Al-Bakrī, "KhH," 19B-20A, 21B.
[69] Ibn Budayr, "HDY," 22A. The barber offers no official report.

5.2. Houses of the Dead: Shrines as Places of Power and Prayer in eighteenth-century Syria

To commemorate a saint, Muslims often erected a dome (*qubba*).[70] In some instances when resources were low, and the environment allowed, a *shaykh*'s corpse would be interred within a natural cave. Taufik Canaan described three such cave-shrines around the village of ʿAwartā. One was named after a Shaykh al-Surūr. Similar was with the *maqām* of Shaykh al-Sidrī in the Palestinian town of ʿAnata (*ʿAnātā*; Jerusalem Governorate). Additional work was commissioned on these caves, for instance to widen their entrance or set up the interior. When Canaan saw these sites in the early twentieth century, however, he noted their very poor condition.[71]

The cage-like grave of a saint (*ḍarīḥ*) would be placed under the dome.[72] Very often, the grave would be covered with coverlets (*sutūr;* lit. "curtains") that frequently bore verses from the Scripture.[73] Luxury materials were sometimes used, such as silk for the coverlet and gold for the embroidery. McCown finds that in Palestine some graves contained a footpiece to symbolize Munkar and Nakir, the angelic watchers over the deceased.[74] The walls of a *qubba* mostly held

[70] See Appendix A, Figures 1 and 2. Other terms were used, such as *mazār,* the place of visitation, *maqām,* the dwelling, or *mashhad,* the mark (these two words bear the technical meaning of "shrine"). For domes see Faḍl Allah Ibn Muḥibb Allah al-Muḥibbī al-Dimashqī, *Riḥlatān al-Rūmīyya wa al-Maṣrīyya* [Two Journeys to Europe and Egypt], ed. ʿImād ʿAbd al-Salām Raʾūf (Damascus: Dār al-Zamān li-l-Ṭibāʿa wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzīʿ, 2012), 74, and Muḥsin al-Amīn, *Khiṭaṭ* [The Topography of] *Jabal ʿĀmil,* ed. Ḥasan al-Amīn (Beirut: Maṭbaʿat al-Anṣāf, 1961), 147-149. Further see Maundrell, *Journey,* 9-11, Canaan, Saints, 10, 17, al-Nābulsī, *Tuḥfa*, 38, and al-Nābulsī, *Ḥaqīqa*, 86. Also see Chester Carlton McCown, "Muslim Shrines in Palestine," *The Annual of the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem,* Vol. 2/3 (1921/1922), 50.

[71] Canaan, *Saints,* 22, 42-44.

[72] For instance, al-Nābulsī, *Ḥaqīqa*, 86, 88, 91, 100, 103, 138.

[73] Al-Nābulsī, "Kashf," 162A-162B, 168B, Canaan, *Saints,* 29. Exceptions existed. The grave of Ismāʿīl Haqqī in Bursa does not have any coverlets. See, for instance, the online image at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ismail_Haqqi_Bursevi#/media/File:%C2%A6-.Hakk%C2%A6-_Bursevi_Hz._(1).JPG.

[74] McCown, "Shrines," 50-51. The author strangely interprets these footpieces as remnants of phallic worship, and both Curtiss and McCown seem to be noticing phallic imagery across the Syrian and Palestinian region, such as Curtiss, *Primitive,* 140, 188. Both such observations and Curtiss's insistence on the Palestinian villagers' habit to swear by the god's phallus representing religious behavior – see Curtiss, *Primitive,* 113 – indicate a considerable lack of a sense of humor. For similar instances problematized in European early modern contexts, see for instance Natalie Zemon Davis, *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and Their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), 31. Some types of jokes seem ubiquitous.

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niches. Oil was stored there, as well as censers which would be lit in honor of the deceased.[75] However, in some cases saints would be buried under simple domes that lacked any ornaments, as was the case with Abū Sall who was buried in Ein Karem (*ʿAyn Kārim*), which is today a Jerusalem district.[76] In some cases, shrines were erected without the placement of a *ḍarīḥ* within. These were usually standing to commemorate certain saints who might have prayed or caused a wonder during their stay in these locations. Taufik Canaan found several such sanctuaries, like the shrine of Abū Ismaʿīl in Beit Liqya (*Bayt Liqyā*), or the shrine of Shaykh Ḥusayn in Beit Sourik (*Bayt Sūrīk*) in Palestine.[77] Finally, some saintly graves lacked a proper dome, as was the case with the majority of such sites in Jericho.[78] Many shrines were forgotten and some were destroyed.[79]

Muslims would take caution to position the corpse of the deceased on its right side, propped by means of stones or earth, so that it faced the *qibla.*[80] A *miḥrāb* would often be installed within the dome to indicate the direction of Mecca.[81] Ibn ʿĀbidīn naturally insists on observing all the standard customs of praying while in such locations. However, mistakes caused by the lack of information of resources seemed to have been tolerable.[82] The more elaborate domes, especially in urban areas, held additional chambers which were used to host guests of a shrine. A *minbar*

[75] McCown, "Shrines," 51, Maundrell, *Journey,* 13, 131. Further see al-Nābulsī, "Kashf," 168B-169A.
[76] McCown, "Shrines," 50. The cemetary at this location held many important publically endowed gravesites. See the description and map in Louis Massignon, *Documents sur Certains Waqfs des Lieux Saints de l'Islam* (Paris: Librarie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1952), 119.
[77] Canaan, *Saints,* 50-52.
[78] Ibid., 50.
[79] Al-Nābulsī, *Ḥaqīqa,* 73-101, al-Amīn, *Khiṭaṭ,* 147, Canaan, *Saints,* 21, 53-56, Curtiss, *Primitive,* 213, McCown, "Shrines," 54-55.
[80] Lane, *Egyptians,* 2:266, Russell, *Aleppo,* 309. Also see Leor Halevi, *Muhammad's Grave: Death Rites and the Making of Islamic Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 190. This is a universal tradition regardless of the region. See Nathal M. Dessing, *Rituals of Birth, Circumcision, Marriage, and Death among the Muslims in the Netherlands* (Leuven: Peeters, 2001), 165. For a wider reading about different burial customs in the world, see Christine Quigley, *The Corpse: A History* (Jefferson: McFarland, 1996), 88.
[81] Maundrell, *Journey*, 14, Canaan, *Saints,* 14-17, McCown, "Shrines," 51. See Appendix A, Figure 4.
[82] See Ibn ʿAbidīn, *Radd.,* 2:114-115. The whole volume 2 is committed to proper ways of praying and conducting prayers.

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would often be constructed for an *imām* to conduct group prayers or teach students.[83] In addition, some shrines would have mosques built as part of the same complex. In Damascus, such was the case, for instance, with the shrines of Ibn ʿArabī and al-Nābulsī.[84]

A significant overlap is detectable between the functions of saintly *maqām*s and other mosques across Ottoman domains. In the Ottoman Syrian eighteenth-century context, James Grehan notes that wherever mosques were not present, saintly shrines fulfilled the functional role of prayer houses.[85] This was an old tradition which continued throughout modernity, where ethnographers recorded it as well.[86] Prominent mosques within the largest urban hubs continuously admitted many who traveled from the countryside to attend prayers, as well as to conduct their everyday transactions.[87] However, the *maqām*s admitted pilgrims throughout each year. In addition, it was common for the Sufi masters to teach their disciples within such buildings.[88] In efforts to optimize *maqām*s for these purposes, their domes were built so that they structurally correspond to mosques and be further used as prayer houses.

Similarly, the interior of *maqām*s was comparable to that of mosques to a high degree.[89] Various ulamaic groups within the Ottoman Empire wrote about these similarities. For instance, the Cairene Hanbalite al-Karmī, who was an adherent to the rigorist Taymīyyan thought, writes

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[83] For instance, Al-Karmī, *ShS,* 37, and Grehan, 23, 90. Further see Appendix A, Figure 4.
[84] See Appendix A, Figures 5 and 6, and Appendix B, Map 7.
[85] Grehan, *Twilight,* 23-31. Grehan provides a list of known praying houses across the Province of Damascus during the eighteenth century.
[86] Canaan, *Saints,* 17-18, McCown, "Shrines," 50.
[87] Ibid., 2.
[88] Al-Murādī, *Silk,* 3:95, for instance.
[89] For descriptions of the interior of domes during the early modern period, see al-Muḥibbī, *Riḥlatān,* 44-74 and al-Amīn, *Khiṭaṭ*, 146. Also see ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī, *al-Ḥaḍra al-Unsīyya fī al-Riḥla al-Qudsīyya* [The Human Presence at the Journey to Jerusalem], ed. Akram Ḥassan al-ʿUlabī (Beirut: al-Maṣādir, 1990), 137, 195, 203, 218. Also Massignon, *Documents*, 83. Further see Canaan, *Saints,* 48-51, for layouts he saw in the early twentieth century. For comparative purposes, see Akel Kahera, Latif Abdulmalik and Craig Anz, *Design Criteria for Mosques and Islamic Centers: Art, Architecture and Worship* (Amsterdam, Boston: Elsevier/Architectural Press, 2009), 4, 80, and Doğan Kuban, *Muslim Religious Architecture, Part II: Development of Religious Architecture in Later Periods* (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 19, 26, 31, 36. For comparisons towards the contemporary period, see Ismail Serageldin and James Steele, *Architecture of the Contemporary Mosque* (New Jersey: Wiley, 1996), 9, 53, 87, 115.

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disapprovingly about Muslims who treated saintly shrines as houses of prayer. Al-Karmī derisively compares saintly shrines to Christian churches.[90]

The functional overlap between the *maqām*s and the mosques in Muslim domains attracted scholarly attention, and some research has been done to further illuminate this issue in various historical periods, both in the Middle East and elsewhere in the world.[91] Samer Akkach indicates the terminological and taxonomic discrepancies that historically existed among the Muslims with regards to the definition of a praying site. It appears that the role of both the mosque and the saintly shrine among the Muslims historically developed through an entanglement of theological thought, the tradition of rituals and devotional arrangements, the popular belief in the preternatural power of certain sites, and popular consensus.[92] It further appears that such functional overlaps existed in other forms of religious practice as well.[93] The functional convertibility of saintly graves into prayer houses was made possible by the widespread beliefs in the *baraka* these sites contained due either to holy and popular thaumaturges entombed at these locations or through legends of powerful preternatural surges which took place there.[94] Such was the case both with sites of wide renown, such as al-Aqsa, or the Dome of the Rock,[95] and with humble shrines in the countryside

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[90] Al-Karmī, *ShS,* 58, 96-115.

[91] See, for instance, Finbarr Barry Flood, *The Great Mosque of Damascus: Studies on the Makings of an Umayyad Visual Culture* (Leiden&Boston: Brill, 2001), 15-113, Andreas Kaplony, *The Ḥaram of Jerusalem: Temple, Friday Mosque, Area of Spiritual Power* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2002), 115-122, Yürekli, *Architecture*, 79-134, 25-50, or Talmon-Heller, *Piety,* 172-199. For other regions, illustrative are Mehrdad Shokoohy, *Muslim Architecture of South India: The Sultanate of Ma'bar and the Traditions of the Maritime Settlers on the Malabar and Coromandel Coasts (Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Goa)* (London&New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003), 34-49, and Catherine B. Asher, *The New Cambridge History of India 1:4: Architecture of Mughal India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 292-334.

[92] Samer Akkach, "Architectural Order," in *Cosmology and Architecture in Premodern Islam: An Architectural Reading of Mystical Ideas* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2005), 149-206.

[93] Robert L. Wilken, "Eusebius and the Christian Holy Land," in *Eusebius, Christianity, and Judaism,* ed. Harold W. Attridge and Gohei Hata (Detroit: Wayne State University Press), 736-760. In certain cases, Christians built graves which were similar to Muslim ones. This was noticeable in the Zabadani region, Rif Dimashq Governorate. See J. Lauffray, "Monuments Funéraires Chrétiens de Zebéd," *Bulletin d'études orientales* 10 (1943-1944): 39-55.

[94] Rigorist thought, as expressed by the Hanbalite al-Karmī, fumed about the people attributing any special significance to these sites. See al-Karmī, *ShS,* 103-106.

[95] Ibid., and Oleg Grabar, "The Sanctuary in a New Muslim Order," in *The Dome of the Rock* (Cambridge&London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 159-204.

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which enclosed, allegedly, the corpses of local saints who never acquired wider popularity.[96] It is through belief in *baraka* that these sites acquired particular religious significance in the popular imaginary, and were therefore of much importance for the dynamic of Ottoman premodern Sunnism. The custom of building numerous prayer houses across the Ottoman domains further indicates the social significance of the belief in *baraka* for the people of Ottoman Shām.

In many cases, specific mosques would be visited in particular because of the beliefs that events of special religious significance took place there. In the eighteenth century, Damascus itself contained many sacred sites,[97] among which the Bāb al-Muṣalla mosque[98] was especially renowned for its power. Local legends narrated that the Companion Abū ʿUbayda Ibn al-Jarrāḥ (583-639), who was one of the commanders during the Arab siege of Damascus, chose the site of this mosque as appropriate for worship.[99] In the eighteenth century, this mosque, which lay in the Damascene al-Maydān district,[100] was believed to augment the efficacy of religious rituals conducted within. The people often flocked to Bāb al-Muṣalla to perform regular group rituals in struggle against natural disasters.[101]

Larger mosques of wider renown were frequented by many people of various origins, while the more humble, local edifices served the needs of the locals. Authors such as ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī took effort to record such smaller places, indicating an equality of significance among the various prayer houses which comprised the Ottoman topography of the holy. Many holy places also contained trees or water sources. Some were connected to caves as well. Due to the belief that

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[96] As explained in section 4.6., sainthood varied in terms of geographical reach. For al-Nābulsī's experiences with shrines of a purely local character, see section 5.4.
[97] See section 5.4. and Appendix B.
[98] See Appendix B, Map 8.
[99] See Abdul-Karim Rafeq, "The Social and Economic Structire of Bāb al-Muṣalla (al-Mīdān), Damascus, 1825-75," in *Arab Civilization, Challenges and Responses: Studies in Honor of Constantine K. Zurayk,* ed. George N. Atiyeh and Ibrahim M. Oweiss (Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 1988), 273.
[100] Ibid., and Rafeq, *Damascus*, 182-183. Further see Appendix B.
[101] See Ibn Budayr, "HDY," 92B., and the next chapter.

baraka resided in the shrines, the people believed that divine grace pervaded such natural objects, further enrichening their network of the holy.

5.3. Pools of Effluence: Muslim Folk Geology and the Network of the Holy

Across the Middle East lay caves where, according to belief, important events from the Old Testament tradition took place. A notable example is the Milk Grotto in Bethlehem. According to Christian and Muslim beliefs, Joseph and Mary hid in this cave with the baby Christ during King Herod's Infant Massacre.[102] A chapel was erected there in 1872. Numerous mysterious events are believed to occur within until the present day, reflected, for instance, in the stories about thaumaturgical healing of the pilgrims.[103] The Province of Damascus also had many caves that were believed to contain mysterious properties. The most important were located on the Damascene Mount Qasioun. Among them is the Cave of Blood, where it was believed that Cain murdered Abel. The people believed that Abel's blood gave a red tint to the rocks near the cave's entrance.[104] Close to this cave is the Cave of Hunger, committed to the Forty (or sometimes seventy)[105] Martyrs who have prayed within until they died of starvation.[106] There is a *qubba* on this site.[107] Until the present day, the caves on Mount Qasioun represent important pilgrimage destinations.[108] In the eighteenth century, the thaumaturges of Damascus spent time in them so as

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[102] Paul L. Maier, "Herod and the Infants of Bethlehem," in *Chronos, Kairos, Christos II: Chronological, Nativity and Religious Studies in Memory of Ray Summers,* ed. Ray Summers and E. Jerry Vardaman (Macon: Mercer Univesity Press, 1998), 169-175.
[103] Sera L. Young, *Craving Earth: Understanding Pica, The Urge to eat Clay, Starch, Ice and Chalk* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 47.
[104] Ibn Kannān, "MS," 11B-12A. Also see Sir Hamilton Alexander Rosskeen Gibb, ed., *The Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, A.D. 1325-1354, Part* I (Cambridge: Hakluyt Society, 1995), 145.
[105] Gibb, *Travels,* 145. Also, McCown, "Shrines," 55-59.
[106] Ibn Kannān, "MS," 5A.
[107] See Appendix A, Figure 8.
[108] See Map 6, Appendix B. For the source material produced in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see Ibn Kannān, "MS," 4A-5B, 11B-12A, or ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ibn Ibrāhīm Ibn ʿAbd al-Razzāq, *Ḥadā'iq al-Anʿām fī Faḍā'il al-Shām* [Blissful Gardens of the Damascene Curiosities] ed. Yūsuf Budaywī (Kuwait: Dār al-Ḍiyyā' li-l-Ṭibāʿa wa

to collect the *baraka* that was believed to reside within.[109] These sites were believed to augment the efficacy of thaumaturgical rituals. Aḥmad al-Manīnī (d. 1758) recalls how his Sufi master, Muḥammad Murād, performed wonders in these locations. Previous generations of the *awliyā'* were also believed to have performed wonders upon Mount Qasioun. Such was the case with Ibn Qudāma (d.1223), who belonged to a very important family of medieval Hanbalite scholars and mystics, and whose shrine was also located in Damascus.[110] In addition to caves where legendary events were believed to have happened, some caves were rumored to possess *baraka* because they were connected to the saintly *maqām*s. Such was the case with the tomb of Nabī ʿUzayr (brought in relation to Ezra) in ʿAwartā.[111]

Beliefs in the sanctity of certain caves represent an element inherent to all scriptural traditions and beyond.[112] In Ottoman Sunnism, sacredness of particular caves was most often based on legends that tied the site to a particular saint. Mount Qasioun was associated with numerous popular beliefs. In addition to the First Murder, the slopes of this mountain were famous during the eighteenth century because of the belief that Jesus and the Virgin prayed there. Nearby was the site where it was believed that Abraham observed the stars. In the vicinity were footprints left by

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al-Nashr wa Al-Tawzīʿ, 1989), 94-100, Henceforth: *FS.* The beliefs in the preternatural power of these caves survived into modernity. See Muḥammad ʿIzz al-Dīn ʿArabī al-Ṣayyādī Kātibī al-Rifāʿī al-Shāfiʿī, *al-Rawḍa al-Bahīyya fī Faḍā'il Dimashq al-Muḥammīyya* [Gorgeous Garden of the Curiosities of Sacred Damascus] (Damascus: Dār al-Maqtabas, 1911), 41-43. For literature concerned with these subjects, see Ross Burns, *Damascus: A History* (London&New York: Routledge, 2007), xix, Weismann, "Sufi Brotherhoods," 307, Mārī Dikrān Sarkū, *Dimashq fatrat al-Sulṭān ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Thānī* [Damascus in the Age of Sultan Abdulhamid II] *1293-1325h/1876-1908* (Damascus: Wizārat al-Thaqāfa, 2010), 77, or Ḥasan Zakī al-Ṣawwāf, *Dimashq: Aqdam ʿĀṣima fī al-ʿĀlam* [Damascus: The World's Oldest Capital] (Damascus: Dār al-Quṭayba li-l-Ṭibāʿa wa al-Nashr, 2004), 219-221.

[109] Ibn Kannān, "MS," 11B, al-Murādī, *Silk,* 3:276-278.

[110] Aḥmad Ibn ʿAlī Ibn ʿUmar Ibn Ṣāliḥ al-Manīnī, *al-Iʿalām bi-Faḍā'il al-Shām* [Highlights among the Virtues of Shām], ed. Aḥmad Sāmiḥ al-Khālidī (Jerusalem: Al-Maṭbaʿa al-ʿAṣrīyya, n.d.), 71-109. Henceforth: *IFS*. This scholar stems from a long line of Damascene saints. See next section. Further see Appendix B.

[111] Canaan, *Saints,* 40-41.

[112] For instance, Ian Richard Netton, *Islam, Christianity and the Mystic Journey: A Comparative Exploration* (Edinbrugh: Edinbrugh University Press, 2011), 84-89, Wilken, " Holy Land," 743-746, or Marion Dowd, "Chapter 8: Out of the Darkness, into the Light: The Early Medieval Period (AD 400-1169)," in *The Archaeology of Caves in Ireland* (Oxford&Philadelphia: Oxbow Books, 2015), 174-207.

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ʿAlī Ibn Abī Ṭālib, the site where al-Khiḍr prayed and where Moses struck rocks during his wandering, along with a memorial to the Archangel Gabriel.[113] Damascenes further believed that many saintly wonders took place on the slopes of Mount Qasioun.[114]

The extant eighteenth-century sources, however, indicate the possibility that many caves across the Syrian region were considered sacred only locally, or related to saints of a local character. Furthermore, the relation to a saint or a prophet may have been forgotten or altered over time. For instance, locals near Maaloula showed ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī one such cave, connected to a spring as well. Commenting on the cave's foreign name, *al-Murtaqala* (the *quṭb* explains that the locals mostly spoke Aramaic, yet understood Arabic), al-Nābulsī relates that the people believed the site had healing properties. Similar beliefs existed for the spring flowing near the cave. The locals believed that this cave was especially helpful for curing sick children.[115]

The dynamic pace with which caves of low-scale sacredness used to appear and disappear throughout the early modern and modern periods might have represented a consequence of popular belief combined with the openness of official religious opinions. There existed a number of phenomena which would inspire locals to attribute sacredness to a certain location. Mysterious sounds, especially if similar to music, sudden waves of scented fragrance, or green light visible within a grotto counted among such phenomena.[116] For instance, Taufik Canaan interviewed a man who was working as a guard and staff member of the Jesus Hilfe leper hospital in Jerusalem. At the same time, this man was receiving treatment as one of the institution's patients. He lived in a tent near Abu Dis (*Abū Dīs*), just outside Jerusalem. He told Canaan that there was a cave near his

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[113] Al-Ṣayyādī, *RB,* 41-42, al-Manīnī, *IFS,* 71-109, al-Razzāq, *FS,* 94-100. Also Maḥmūd al-ʿAdawī, *al-Ziyārāt bi Dimashq* [Pilgrimages in Damascus], ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid (Damascus: Maṭbūʿāt al-Majmaʿ al-ʿIlmī al-ʿArabī, 1956), 4-8. Henceforth: *ZD.* Also see Map 6, Appendix B.
[114] Al-Ṣayyādī, *RB,* 41-42.
[115] Al-Nābulsī, *Ḥaqīqa,* 98.
[116] Canaan, *Saints,* 135. Further see Al-Ṣayyādī, *RB,* 41-43.

tent. He heard faint music coming from it every Thursday. Out of curiosity, the guard once went to check for the origin of the music, and spotted faint green light within the cave. He was too poor to offer a candle to the cave every week. However, he told other locals about this site and more people soon started bringing tributes to the cave. Eventually, this custom ceased, and the cave was forgotten.[117] The Orthodox Christians in the Province of Damascus based the sacredness of certain locations upon witnessing similar phenomena. In 1766, three men were passing by the grave of the former Patriarch Silvester (d.1722). They saw a group of priests praying near this grave. According to their tale, the praying priests were suddenly illuminated by a mysterious light, and a pleasant fragrance pervaded the air. The three men went to spread this tale among the people, dispelling any doubts about the sainthood of the deceased patriarch.[118]

Like caves, trees could attract the belief in their sacredness. Among different species of trees, it appears that the olive, the fig, and the acacia had particular significance for the Ottoman subjects. These trees have been noted down as important in the scriptural canon[119] in addition to the mystical Zaqqum.[120] The sacredness of trees appears to represent a universal religious phenomenon.[121] Belief in the sanctity of certain types of trees, such as the acacia, predated the emergence of Islam,[122] while the religious significance of some others seems to have been imported into Muslim tradition during the territorial spread of Muslim polities.[123] Throughout

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[117] Canaan, *Saints*, 60.
[118] Burayk, *TS,* 85.
[119] Grehan, *Twilight,* 134-136, Canaan, *Saints,* 30-31
[120] Al-Azmeh, *Emergence,* 212-214, Said Mentak, "The Tree," in *Islamic Images and Ideas: Essays on Sacred Symbolism,* ed. John Andrew Morrow (Jefferson: McFarland&Co., 2014), 125-129, and Mark G. Boyer, *An Abecedarian of Sacred Trees: Spiritual Growth through Reflections on Woody Plants* (Eugene: Wipf&Stock, 2016), 1-6, 50-55, 112-120, 135-140, 212-215.
[121] Pierre Jurieu, *Histoire Critique des Dogmes et Cultes* (Amsterdam: Francois l'Honore & Co. 1704), 754.
[122] Al-Azmeh, *Emergence,* 212-214, Helene Danthine, *Le Palmier-Dattier et lest Arbres Sacrés dans l'Iconographie de l'Asie Occidentale Ancienne* (Paris: Librarie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1937), 100-125.
[123] Timothy Insoll, *The Archaeology of Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 294, Sharif Harir, "The Mosque and the Sacred Mountain: Duality of Religious Beliefs among the Zaghawa of Northwestern Sudan," in *Muslim Diversity: Local Islam in Global Contexts,* ed. Leif Manger (Richmond: Curzon, 1999), 200-223,

centuries, the juniper and the mulberry were treated by the Muslims as if they were particularly powerful as well.[124] Certain scholarship relates beliefs in the sanctity of trees directly to "Sufi Islam."[125]

Beliefs in sacred trees seemed to form in a similar fashion to the forming of beliefs in mysterious caves, especially if a tree was on a solitary outcrop, for instance. A glowing aura may have at times been spotted around a particular tree and attracted popular attention.[126] It was believed that the deceased saints sometimes explicitly stated that some trees belonged to them. Al-Nābulsī writes that the deceased would sometimes allow certain individuals to see them.[127] They would further enter one's dreams. The intruding saint might have then suggested that a particular tree belonged to him. Such was the case with the fig tree above the *maqam* of ʿAbd al-Salām in ʿAnāta.[128]

Legends about thaumaturgical events of varying scales often caused belief in a tree's sanctity. Sometimes the whole species would be assigned mystical properties. A grove of oaks above the village of Barouk in the Chouf district of Mount Lebanon contained a tree named after Sitt (lady) Sāra, Abraham's wife. In the middle ages, the people believed her footprint lay in the rock under the tree.[129] Many similar trees existed in the Province of Damascus. For instance, the people of the Zabadani region in the Rif Dimashq Governorate often told the story of a young woman named ʿArja ("lame;" this lady was sometimes named Fāṭima). She was handicapped. Once while doing her chores she chanced upon a saint. The saint touched her, administering full healing.

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[124] Jane Hathaway, "The Mulberry Tree in the Origin Myths," in *A Tale of Two Factions: Myth, Memory and Identity in Ottoman Egypt and Yemen* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2003), 135-142.
[125] Fabrizio Speziale, *Soufisme, Religion et Médecine en Islam Indien* (Paris: Karthala, 2010), 128.
[126] Canaan, *Saints*, 135, Curtiss, *Primitive,* 93.
[127] Al-Nābulsī, "Kashf," 166A-167B. Ibn ʿĀbidīn considers seeing deceased saints, prophets, angels, and sometimes even the *jinn* a wonder. See *MR,* 2:22-23. Canaan, *Saints,* 31, Hathaway, "The Mulberry Tree," 135-142, and Paton, "Survivals," 62.
[128] Canaan, Saints, 31. This *shaykh* also had a cave and a dome commemorating him. See Appendix A, Figure 2.
[129] Smith, *Rābiʿa*, 202.

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He blessed her and ordered her to return home. This happened on an ancient plateau covered with trees to which the divine grace of the saint was attributed. Canaan relates a legend according to which Aḥmad al-Rifaʿī (1118–1181) once cured a lame women by letting her touch the seams of his mantle.[130] The tree on the outcrop where thaumaturgical healing supposedly happened became "The Mother of Pieces" (*umm al-shaqāqif*).[131] It is alternatively known as *umm al-sharāṭīṭ* - "mother of rags." To this day, some people consider the Mother of Pieces sacred. According to certain beliefs, the *shaqāqif* tree would cause illness to those who would attempt to cut it. It was at times brought to relation with Prophet Elijah (Mār Ilyās).[132] This species, the Mount Tabor oak, is common to the Zabadani region.[133]

As *baraka* was believed to spread from the graves of saints into the environment, all trees that grew near a *maqām* would often be recognized as sacred. In Damascus, Ibn Kannān mentions a Shaykh Abd al-Hādī al-Ṣāliḥī (d.1548), who was the master of the Sufi ʿAfīfīyya lodge in al-Ṣāliḥīyya district. When this *shaykh* died, he was buried at the base of Mount Qasioun. In time, a tree grew over the tomb. It later became an object of *ziyāra*.[134] Trees that grew from saintly tombs were in general rendered sacred,[135] regardless of their species. Passing through ʿAwartā, Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī visited what he supposed to be the grave of Joshua Ibn Nūn. Al-Bakrī admired the carob there, one of the favorite jinnic habitats,[136] that grew over the saint's grave. It was attributed with *baraka,* and al-Bakrī stopped to pray and collect blessings from it.[137]

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[130] Canaan, *Saints,* 274.
[131] Curtiss, *Primitive,* 82-83, also see Grehan, *Twilight,* 138. Further see Appendix A, Figure 9.
[132] For instance, Ibrāhīm ʿAlā' al-Dīn, *Tashbīh al-ʿĀmī fī Manṭiqat al-Zabadānī: Dirāsāt fī al-Tashbīh al-ʿĀmī* [The Simile of Commoners in the Zabadani Area: Studies into the Simile of Colloquial] (Damascus: Wizārat al-Thaqāfa, 2010), 113.
[133] Ibid. Al-Dīn identifies the species, which can further be found in Uri Mayer-Chissick and Efraim Lev, "Wild Edible Plants in Israel Tradition Versus Cultivation," in *Medicinal and Aromatic Plants of the Middle East,* ed. Zohara Yaniv and Nativ Dudai (New York&London: Springer, 2014), 20-21.
[134] Ibn Kannān, "MS," 9AB.
[135] Curtiss, *Primitive,* 94.
[136] See chapter 3.
[137] Al-Bakrī, "KhH," 28B.

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Certain rocks would attract belief in their residual *baraka* through relations with mythical individuals. Curtiss finds that many rock formations which were believed to be mystical in Syria and Palestine represented spolia of various ancient edifices.[138] In eighteenth-century Bilād al-Shām, Ibn Kannān is careful to note an outcrop near Barzeh, to the north of Damascus.[139] According to beliefs, Abraham prayed at this location, and it was believed that his grace pervaded the rock. A prayer house was built to commemorate the spot and was standing near another shrine erected to al-Khiḍr which has since been destroyed.[140] Both sites represented important *ziyāra* destinations.[141]

The Ottoman subjects considered water among the most powerful natural conduits of *baraka.* The process of constructing a *maqam* often involved the installation of a cistern, or a widening of a natural water source. In case a cistern would be absent, the superintendents of certain shrines took care to fill pitchers with water and leave them there for the pilgrims. Such was the case, for instance, with the *maqām* of Shaykh Ḥamdallah in Biddu (*Biddū*; Jerusalem Governorate).[142] Water was often collected from the shrines, and was believed to possess wondrous properties.[143]

In addition to cisterns, many natural springs in the greater Syrian region were believed to carry blessings.[144] As previously mentioned, Al-Nābulsī was shown one such spring connected to an enchanted cave near Maaloula.[145] Canaan recorded tales of a marsh named al-Maṭbaʿa which was located near a north-Palestinian Arab village of Tel Shemmam (*Tall Shammām*). This was an

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[138] Curtiss, *Primitive,* 84-87.
[139] See the collection of maps in the frontmatter.
[140] Ibn Kannān, "MS," 4B-5A, al-Manīnī, *IFS,* 94, al-ʿAdawī, *ZD,* 17, and al-Ṣayyādī, *RB,* 71-75.
[141] Al-Ṣayyādī, *RB,* 41-42, al-Manīnī, *IFS,* 71-109, al-Razzāq, *FS,* 94-100.
[142] Canaan, *Saints,* 38-39, 55.
[143] Al-Bakrī, "KhH," 13A, al-Ḥanafī, "KFS," 85A, Canaan, *Saints,* 28, and see section 6.4. for various items of thaumaturgical power.
[144] McCown, "Shrines," 60-62.
[145] Al-Nābulsī, *Ḥaqīqa,* 98.

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Arab settlement village which has since been destroyed.[146] According to Canaan's sources, the marsh was brought in relation to an unnamed *walī*. The waters of the marsh were believed to have curative properties.[147]

The topography of the holy in the greater Syrian region inspired James Grehan to construct the coinage "Muslim folk geology" and use it to describe a system of caves and springs which were all interconnected in the popular imaginary. Ultimately, water sources were believed to wind towards the famous Zamzam spring in Mecca.[148] Its water was widely collected by the pilgrims to be stored in personal possessions or within one's household because of the grace it carried.[149] This dissertation further accounts for holy caves, trees, rocks, water sources and other natural phenomena as elements within the Ottoman network of the holy, or the network of Allah's *baraka* that interconnected people and places. Such natural objects represented additional sites where it was believed that *baraka* could be harvested by the Ottoman subjects.

As these natural objects were most often brought in relation to saints, they represented points of access[150] where the people were able to, according to beliefs, harvest Allah's grace. Due to the nature of the Ottoman network of the holy, Muslim shrines and sacred spaces, as access points towards the unseen, had potential to multiply over the passing centuries. The discussion of the Damascene holy topography that with its dynamics represented a crucial element for eighteenth-century Syrian religion further clarifies the history of the Ottoman networks of the holy.

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[146] Edward W. Said, "Afterword: The Consequences of 1948," in *The War for Palestine: Rewriting the History of 1948*, ed. Eugene L. Rogan and Avi Shlaim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 207.
[147] Canaan, *Saints,* 42.
[148] Grehan, *Twilight*, 132.
[149] Canaan, *Saints,* 99.
[150] See Eliade, "Space," 20-67.

5.4. Posthumous Privilege: Sacred Graves in eighteenth-century Damascus

In the countryside, the *shaykh*s would often be buried in elevated, or otherwise prominent ground. Such was the case with both Muslims and Christians in the Ottoman Bilād al-Shām.[151] Even in fully developed cities the importance of graves in high places was evident, as was the case with shrines on Mount Qasioun in Damascus.[152] However, in larger urban centers, many holy sites may have over time been hidden from sight due to the developing urban infrastructure. For instance, by the time Canaan conducted his ethnographical research, many shrines were already buried under residential buildings, while the mazes of streets and alleyways further obscured particular localities from sight.[153] The city of Damascus steadily grew over the centuries.[154] By the 1700s, its neighborhoods engulfed portions of the surrounding countryside and merged with nearby settlements to form new districts over time.[155]

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[151] Maundrell, *Journey,* 9-11, Curtiss, *Primitive,* 133, Paton, "Survivals," 55, or Burayk, *TS,* 27.

[152] See Muḥammad Ibn ʿĪsā Ibn Kannān, *al-Mawākib al-Islāmiyya fī al-Mamālik wa al-Maḥāsin al-Shāmīyya* [Islamic Processions among the Properties and Amenities of Syria] ed. Ḥakīm Ismāʿīl and Muḥammad al-Miṣrī (Damascus: Manshūrāt Wizārat al-Thaqāfīyya, 1993), 1:370-377. Also, al-Ḥanafī, "KFS," 83B-111B. Further see al-Manīnī, *IFS,* 71-72. Also see Map 6 in Appendix B.

[153] Canaan, *Saints,* 5.

[154] For the case of Damascus, see the collection of maps in the frontmatter. Further see, for instance, Rafeq, *The Province*, 182-183, Chamberlain, *Knowledge,* xiv-xv, Grehan, *Everyday Life*, 27-30, Samer Akkach, "Leisure Gardens, Secular Habits: The Culture of Recreation in Ottoman Damascus," *METU Journal of the Faculty of Architecture* 27 (2010): 73. doi: 10.4305/METU.JFA.2010.1.4, Linda Schatkowski Schilcher, *Families in Politics: Damascene Factions and Estates in the 18th and the 19th Centuries* (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 1985), 7-11, 31-35, ʿAbd al-Razzaq Moaz, "Domestic Architecture, Notables, and Power: A Neighbourhood in Late Ottoman Damascus. An Introduction," *10th International Congress of Turkish Art, Geneva. 17-23 September1995* (Geneve: Fondation Max van Berchem, 1999), 489-495, Colette Estabet and Jean Paul Pascual, "Damascene Probate Inventories of the 17th and 18th Centuries: Some Preliminary Approaches and Results," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 24, no. 3 (August, 1992): 383-384, 389, Barbir, *Ottoman Rule,* 44-46, Shimon Shamir, "Asʿad Pasha al-ʿAẓm and Ottoman Rule in Damascus (1743-58)," *Bulletin of the Shool of Oriental and African Studies* 26, no. 1 (1963): 1-28, or Jane Hathaway, *The Arab Lands under Ottoman Rule, 1516-1800* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2008), 108.

[155] Further for Damascus, see Giuliana Amanda Neglia, " Processus de formation de Damas à l'époque ottomane: La transformation d'une ville médiévale," *Bulletin d'études orientales* 61 (2012): 223-242, R. Stephen Humphreys, *From Saladin to the Mongols: The Ayyubids of Damascus 1193-1260* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1977), 1-15, Nancy Khaler, "Iconic Texts: Damascus in the Medieval Imagination," in *Damascus after the Muslim Conquest* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 135-174, Leila Hudson, *Transforming Damascus: Space and Modernity in an Islamic City* (London&New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2008), 1-32, Cyrille Jalabert, "Comment Damas est Devenue une Métropole Islamique," *Bulletin d'études orientales* 53/54 (2001/2002): 13-41, Jean-Luc Arnaud, "Corpus Cartographique pour l'Histoire de Damas, Syrie, à la fin de la Période Ottomane (1760-1924)," *Imago Mundi* Vol. 53 (2001): 46-70, Fulya Üstün Demirkaya, "Spatial Reflections of Social Change: The Change of

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After the early Muslim conquests and later over the centuries, many Christian sites in and around Damascus were converted into Muslim religious edifices. During his pilgrimage in the eighteenth century, Maundrell laments the conversions of the shrine of the Baptist, as well as the shrine to St. George built outside Beirut to mark the site where it was believed that the saint fought the infernal dragon.[156] Such was the case with some sites of wide renown in the Middle East, such as the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus, the al-Aqsa in Jerusalem, as well as with many other religious edifices across regions.[157] Over time, a large number of saintly *maqām*s was built within and around the premises of the larger Syrian sites.[158] It appears that since the early centuries of Muslim conquests there existed a habit of building *maqām*s in the vicinity of older sites of religious significance. It was furthermore considered a high honor for an individual to be buried close to an older and prominent saint.

The widespread belief in saintly *baraka* influenced the Ottoman subjects' aspiration to be buried in the vicinity of their saints. It was believed that those who acquired proximity to the *maqām*s continued to partake in the effluence of saintly *baraka* throughout their afterlife. This urge to be posthumously interred as close to a saint as possible due to their power represented a much older religious tradition.[159] Due to the popular preference to be buried in the vicinity of the *awliyā',* saintly *maqām*s often induced the development of entirely new cemeteries in the Middle

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Urban Pattern in the Ottoman Era," *Athens Journal of History* Vol. 3, Nr. 3 (2017): 205-224, and Burns, *Damascus,* 342-357.

[156] Maundrell, *Journey,* 38, 124.

[157] Further see Talmon-Heller, *Piety,* 184-190.

[158] For the commentaries about *awliyā'* graves under and around the Umayyad Mosque, the al-Aqsa, and the Dome of the Rock, see Abū al-Fatḥ al-Dajjānī, "Kitāb Jawāhir al-Qalā'id fī Faḍl al-Masājid" [The Book of Jewels in the Virtue of Mosques], MS Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Sprenger 819, Berlin, 71A. The text is an autograph. The author died in 1661. Also see Muṣṭafā Asʿad al-Luqaymī, *Laṭā'if al-Uns al-Jalīl fī Taḥā'if al-Quds wa al-Khalīl* [The Majestic Human Uniqueness in Jerusalem and Hebron], ed. Khālid ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Hamsharī and Hishām Abū Armīla (Nablus: Jāmiʿat al-Najāḥ al-Waṭanīyya, 2000), 126-154. Henceforth: *LU.* Further see Al-Nābulsī, *Ḥaqīqa,* 45-46, and al-Bakrī, "KhH," 10A-12B.

[159] For instance, see Rodolfo Amedeo Lanciani, *Pagan and Christian Rome* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1892), 51-167, 253-361.

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East and beyond,[160] leaving an influence on the local urban topography. In Damascus, such was the case, for instance, with the graveyard that developed around the *maqām* of the medieval Master Ruslān near Bāb Tūmā that over time grew towards the Bāb al-Sharqī.[161]

Many of the Damascene hallowed tombs were not Sufi-related and instead according to belief held individuals from earlier generations, such as the Companions of the Prophet. In addition to the significance of graves around the Umayyad Mosque, or the renown of Ruslān's tomb, Damascus contained scores of deceased Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* (and other members of the network of the holy) in its many cemeteries, of which Bāb al-Ṣaghīr was the oldest and possibly most significant for popular religion.[162] This cemetery was located to the south-west of the Inner City, close to the same-named gate. According to beliefs, this cemetery contained the graves of Muḥammad's daughter, Fāṭima, Abū al-Dardā, as well as of the Companions Aws Ibn Aws al-Thaqafī, and Bilāl Ibn Rabāḥ (Bilāl al-Ḥabashī).[163] To the southeast, there existed another cemetery close to Bāb Kaysān. On the north side of the Inner City lay Marj al-Ḍaḥḍāḥ that was named after Abū Daḥdāḥ al-Anṣarī, and which was previously known as Maqbarat al-Farādīs. In the vicinity lay the cemetery of Sūq Sārūja. To the east, the cemetery of Bāb Tūmā continued as the cemetery of Shaykh Ruslān, while Bāb al-Sharqī cemetery held the tomb of Ubayy Ibn Kaʿb. To the southwest in Maydān, two graveyards existed and have disappeared since. These were the al-Ṣūfīyya and al-Zaytūn, which to the south approached the graveyard of ʿĀtika Bint Yazīd, an Umayyad princess. Outside of the city walls and far to the north were the graves at the base of Mount Qasioun, especially concentrated around the al-Ṣāliḥīyya. This district contained high religious significance

[160] Canaan, *Saints,* 22-27.
[161] See Appendix A, Figure 1, and Map 4b. Further see Khaled Moaz and Solange Ory, *Inscriptions Arabes de Damas: Les Stèles Funéraires* (Damascus: Institut français de Damas, 1977), 10, 12.
[162] Elizabeth Sirriyeh, "'Ziyārāt' of Syria in a 'Riḥla' of 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (1050/1641 – 1143/1731)," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 2 (1979): 109-122, Moaz and Ory, *Inscriptions,* 9-12, and Bianquis Thierry, "Sépultures islamiques," *Topoi* 4/1 (1994): 212-214.
[163] Sirriyeh, "Ziyārāt," 109-122, Moaz and Ory, *Inscriptions,* 18-24.

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due to the large number of Sufi lodges and saintly tombs which lay there. It is possible that the Ottoman administration attempted to shift the religious focus of Damascus from the Umayyad Mosque towards this district through commissioning the Ibn ʿArabī complex.[164] Some other smaller cemeteries followed the roads towards the south.[165]

The city of Damascus was in the popular belief teaming with Allah's grace. According to a narrative tradition transmitted through time and in the eighteenth century, Kaʿab al-Aḥbār the Companion and the Prophet Hūd[166] were both claimed to have said that there were 1700 prophets and saints buried around the Province of Damascus, of which five hundred were entombed around its perimeter, while another thousand would be found along the Levantine shores.[167] Although these numbers are heavily exaggerated, they demonstrate the significance of sacred graves for the popular imaginary. It appears that the Ottoman subjects, in the cities as well as in the countryside, made an effort to accumulate as many saintly graves as possible in the vicinity of their habitats, due to the supposed benefits received from these sites. For instance, Taufik Canaan recorded the pride of ʻAnāta's inhabitants with seven saintly *maqām*s in its environment. In ʿAwartā, the number of sacred places was fourteen.[168]

The opportunities to bury a *shaykh* close to one's place of residence at times led to the escalation of conflicts between Syrian villages. James Grehan reads al-Nabhānī's records about a

[164] See next section.
[165] The number of important graves in Damascus was impressive. For a detailed, yet by no means complete list of religiously significant people who were believed to have been buried on Damascene grounds, see Appendix B. Further see Sirriyeh, "Ziyārāt," 109-122, Moaz and Ory, *Inscriptions,* 11-13. Also see Maps 4a, 4b, and Map 9 in Appendix B. Further see Ibn Kannān, "MS," 4A-12B, al-Ḥanafī, "KFS," 83B-111B, al-ʿAdawī, *ZD,* 9-103, al-Manīnī, *IFS,* 71-141, al-Razzāq, *FS,* 126-181, al-Ṣayyādī, *RB,* 61-101, al-Nābulsī, *Ḥaqīqa,* 45-96, Toru Miura, *Dynamism in the Urban Society of Damascus: The Ṣāliḥīyya Quarter from the Twelfth to the Twentieth Centuries* (Leiden&Boston: Brill, 2015), 50-82, Brigitte Marino,"Les espaces de notables," in *Le fauburg du Mīdān à Damas à l'epoque ottomane: Espace urbain, société et habitat (1742-1830)* (Damascus: Institut français de Damas, 1997), 315-341, or Wheeler, *Mecca,* 88-89, and Miura, "Ṣāliḥīyya," 129-181.
[166] Qur'ān 7:65-72, 11:50-60, 26:123-139, 38:11-13, 46:21-26, 50:12-14, 54:21-26.
[167] For the eighteenth-century context in which these "statistics" are quoted, see Al-Manīnī, *IFS,* 94, al-Razzāq, *FS,* 126, and Grehan, *Twilight,* 87. For Jerusalem, see al-Luqaymī, *LU,* 214-288.
[168] Canaan, *Saints*, 2.

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Sufi *shaykh* Ibrāhīm al-Saʿdī (d.1874). This thaumaturge, who was from the Palestinian town of Jenin (*Jinīn*), had a wife who lived in the village of Zir'in (*Zirʿīn*). He died in that settlement. As the villagers prepared his funeral, inhabitants of a neighboring village, al-Mazar (*al-Mazār*; Jenin district), arrived to Zir'in demanding the *shaykh's* corpse and explaining that one of al-Saʿdī's ancestors already lay entombed there. Furious argument escalated,[169] but the locals from al-Mazar got to carry the corpse away from Zir'in. During their trip, however, the funerary bier mysteriously grew too heavy to be carried any further. It was told that while the bier was firmly anchored to the ground, people who attempted to move it felt as if they were being shoved or fell on the ground completely thrown off their feet. The bier eventually started "pulling" the crowd towards a neutral and solitary spot between the two villages.[170]

Stories of Sufi masters who posthumously picked out their own entombment locations emerged frequently during the early modern and the modern period. Sometimes they flew to their graves. The power of flight was occasionally attributed to the *awliyā'*.[171] In many cases, however, beliefs in a *shaykh's* power of flight would emerge only after his death. During the funeral of such a thaumaturge, rumors would start that his bier flew towards the spot of his choice. The people would obey, and bury the *shaykh* there.[172] Similarly, Ibrāhīm al-Saʿdī was not the only thaumaturge rumored to physically shove his own procession towards his preferred burial site. Such rumors appeared to be very frequent instead.[173]

The eighteenth-century deceased added even more nodes to the existing Ottoman network of the holy. In addition to their significance for the urban tobography of early modern Damascus,

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[169] Contests between urban centers about the privilege to boast about a saintly tomb in the vicinity were widespread, even with large-scale important personalities. See Joseph Sadan, "Le tombeau de Moïse à Jericho et à Damas," *Revue des Etudes Islamiques* (1981): 59-99.
[170] Grehan, *Twilight,* 114.
[171] Ibn ʿAbidīn, *MR,* 2:30, and Canaan, *Saints,* 257-258.
[172] Ibid., 256-257.
[173] Lane, *Egyptians,* 2:259.

hallowed graves influenced the way in which the Damascene authors perceived the city. Scholars like al-Murādī often used prominent shrines as topographical references. For instance, chapter 4 previously discussed the case of al-Naḥlāwī, the "Benediction of Damascus," who was a wonder-worker, a theoleptic, and a teacher in the many *madrasas* of the provincial capital. When he died in 1744, he was buried under Madrasat al-Khātūnīyya (al-Ṣāliḥīyya district). Ever since, this place attracted popular *ziyāra*. People went to the building to perform the *tabarruk,* as they did if they passed by the *shaykh* while he was still alive.[174] Muslim thaumaturges would have the opportunity of their graves becoming *baraka*-dispensing sites regardless of their social rank or status. In the imperial capital, the famous ʿUthmān the Theoleptic's gravesite was handpicked by the sultan.[175]

Once a saint was buried at a certain site his *maqām* would often attract the graves of other hallowed or otherwise important individuals. Depending on the entombed saint's influence and popularity, in some cases members of the local elite would strive to be buried as close to him as possible throughout several centuries. The social status of such individuals seemed to play a significant role in this process of gravesite distribution. For instance, the Syrian nobility – the governors and military commanders – had their own interment spot within the Banī al-Zakī cemetery in al-Ṣāliḥīyya.[176] This site surrounded the tomb and mosque of Ibn ʿArabī, the patron saint of the Ottoman dynasty.[177] The biographers would over time emphasize the *ṣalāḥ* of those entombed in the vicinity of such prominent saints. This is evident on the case of Yūsuf Pasha Ṭūbāl

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[174] Al-Murādī, *Silk*, 1:228-234, and chapter 4.
[175] Al-Murādī, *Silk*, 3:170-171, and chapter 4.
[176] Al-Murādī, *Silk*, 3:192. Aleppine pashas were buried in the vicinity of *Shaykh* Abū Bakr. See Russell, *Aleppo,* 207. Egyptian nobility had their own preferred spots. In the nineteenth century, for instance, the family of Muḥammad ʿAlī had their burial places close to the al-Rifāʿī Mosque, named after this Sufi order's founder. An earlier edifice on this site was believed to hold the grave of this order's founder. See Yasser Elsheshtawy, "Urban Transformations: Social Control at al-Rifa'i Mosque and Sultan Hasan Square," in *Cairo Cosmopolitan: Politics, Culture and Urban Space in the New Globalized Middle East,* ed. Diane Singerman and Paul Amar (Cairo&New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2006), 298.
[177] Knysh, *Ibn ʿArabi*, 25-37, 113-120, 133-140, Yılmaz, *Caliphate,* 211-214, Rafeq, "Relations," 81, and Sirriyeh, *Visionary,* 126. Travelogues of the Sufi masters reveal many similarities in other urban centers. For instance, al-Nābulsī, *Ḥaqīqa,* 115.

(Tur. *Topal Yusuf*; d. 1715), who was appointed to the function of the Pilgrimage Commander. Under imperial directives, Yūsuf Pasha entered Damascus in 1713 with a military company to evict the rebellious governor Nasuh and arrange his execution.[178] Yūsuf Pasha's campaign was successful. He soon became extremely popular among all social strata in Damascus. Al-Murādī's biography of this notable teams with praise for the pasha, who was popular among the common people, the scholars, as well as the *ṣāliḥūn.* Only a few years later, however, Yūsuf Pasha suffered a fatal illness. After his death in 1715, ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī conducted a funerary oration for him in al-Sālimīyya. He was then buried close to the Ibn ʿArabī complex. The pasha's tomb was decorated and marked with an epitaph in verse composed personally by al-Nābulsī.[179]

Others under the rank of provincial governors shared the privilege of being buried in the vicinity of Muslim saints. However, since they were of a lower socio-political status, they had to be satisfied with lower-ranked saintly neighbors as well. Aḥmad Ibn Siwār, the scholar who had a dispute with his nephews over inheriting a tenure,[180] after death got a spot close to ʿĀtika Bint Yazīd, where he also lived for a longer period.[181] Aḥmad Ibn Hudhayb (d.1746) from ʿAnah in Iraq (hence the name al-ʿĀnī) was one of the numerous students of al-Nābulsī. He was twenty years old when he moved to Damascus to study. Soon he became the *imām* at the al-Daqqāq Mosque. He also taught in the district of Maydān. After he died, he was buried under the al-Daqqāq Mosque, close to a deceased medieval master thaumaturge al-Ḥuṣnī (d.1425).[182]

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[178] Nasuh Pasha's economic and military management was of much benefit for the subsequent success of the al-ʿAẓms as the Shāmī governors. Barbir, *Damascus,* 54-55.
[179] Al-Murādī, *Silk,* 4:305-306.
[180] See chapter 4.
[181] Al-Murādī, *Silk*, 1:129-130. For Ātika, see for instance Ghaleb Anabseh, "Holy Places that Have Played a Role in the Urban Evolution of Damascus," *International Journal of Islamic Thought* Vol. 5 (June, 2014): 30-31. Also see Maps 4a and 4b.
[182] Al-Murādī, *Silk,* 1:245-246. Al-Ḥuṣnī's grave was a significant *ziyāra* site. See Appendix B.

Having al-Nābulsī as a mentor might have brought al-ʿĀnī the necessary leverage to receive important tenures in Damascus, as well as a burial place close to a prominent saint. The importance of having acquaintances among the influential members of the Ottoman network of the holy is evident from the process of deciding where to bury scholar-thaumaturges as well. Badr al-Dīn Ibn Muḥammad (d.1773) was an eminent scholar who traveled across Syria and spent time working in Jerusalem, which got him the name al-Qudsī. Becoming a *ḥāfiẓ* early in life, Ibn Muḥammad was seventeen when he became a teacher in mosques. He pursued learning under approximately a dozen of highly important masters in Damascus, Jerusalem and Cairo. Among his Damascene *shaykh*s, he trained under al-Nābulsī and al-Manīnī, indicating that Ibn Muḥammad mingled with the members of a very powerful regional network.[183] In time he became an influential *mufassir*. He issued *fatwa*s in Jerusalem. His achievements in the end awarded this scholar a gravesite within the al-Yūsūfīyya segment of the Bāb al-Raḥma cemetery in Jerusalem.[184] In premodern times, this graveyard followed the eastern wall of al-Ḥarām al-Sharīf (the Temple Mount). Its northern section, al-Yūsūfīyya, was reserved for the burial of elite and other significant persons. In modern times it contained graves of modern warfare martyrs until the Israeli government banned burials at the site, conducting excavations and constructions around and within it ever since.[185]

In general, the *ṣāliḥūn* could hope to receive posthumous honors through a burial at an important site. For instance, remains of the Aleppine calligrapher al-Muʿṭī who suffered from polydactyly were in 1760 entombed next to a local saint ʿAbd al-Razzāq Abī Namīr. Al-Murādī the biographer seems satisfied that the *ṣāliḥ* received such an honorable place.[186] Similar was the case

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[183] See chapter 4.
[184] Al-Murādī, *Silk,* 2:5-7.
[185] Aḥmad Ḥussayn ʿAbd al-Jubūrī, *al-Quds fī al-ʿAhd al-ʿUthmānī* [Jerusalem in the Ottoman Era] *(1640-1799)* (Amman: Dār wa Maktabat al-Ḥāmid li-l-Nashr wa al-Tawzīʿ, 2011), 141, and Nazmi Jubeh, "The Bab al-Rahmah Cemetery: Israeli Enroachment Continues Unabated," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 48 (2018): 88-103.
[186] Chapter 4, and Al-Murādī, *Silk*, 3:153.

with Abū Yazīd the caretaker. He was buried in 1759 close to the *ḍarīḥ* of Shaykh Sarī al-Dīn.[187] As *ṣalāḥ* was in the popular imaginary brought in relation with *baraka,* those without an official status as scholars or thaumaturges had the chance to receive prominent gravesites due to their behavior in life. This fact further indicates the significance of Allah's grace as a social parameter.

In addition to socio-political rank, the influence of personal networks, or the traits of *ṣalāḥ,* some individuals automatically got their chances for a burial at a prominent *ziyāra* location. Their entombment was guaranteed through family relations, or their lodge's *silsila.* As other people in Syria, the *shaykh*s were often entombed close to their relatives.[188] Ibn ʿArabī complex held the remains of the Grandmaster's offspring,[189] while the influential family of the Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* who were the descendants of a very prominent scholar Ibn Qudāma (d.1155) and established authorities of the Hanbalite *madhhab* also had several important *ziyāra* shrines in the al-Ṣāliḥīyya.[190] Taufik Canaan recorded some exceptional cases of individuals buried in solitary or isolated graves, such as Shaykh al-Masālme in Yalo who was believed to posthumously forbid anyone's burial in his vicinity. Attempts to bury someone in the vicinity of this saint would end with bent pickaxes and other sorts of mischief.[191]

Adherents to one Sufi order, trained by a single master, would sometimes be interred together. Many lodges would have a grave of their founders or prominent *shaykh*s within the premises. The Damascene al-Ṣāliḥīyya had many examples of which the illustrative were the al-Khwārizmīyya, al-Qawwāmīyya or al-Shaybānīyya lodges.[192] Adherents to such lodges were often buried within the same grounds. Such was the case, for instance, with the Zāwiyat al-Maghāriba

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[187] Ibid., 1:86, and chapter 4.
[188] Ibn ʿAbidīn, *MR,* 3:43, al-Murādī, *Silk,* 4:112, Canaan, *Saints,* 300-302.
[189] See Appendix B.
[190] Ibid., Ibn Kannān, "MS," 1B-2A, and Miura, *Damascus,* 54-58.
[191] Canaan, *Saints,* 302.
[192] Ibn Kannān, "MS," 8B-9A.

in Jerusalem.[193] Servants of deceased *shaykh*s would sometimes be buried in their former master's vicinity.[194] Closer to the contemporary period, many elites buried their relatives close to sacred grounds to discourage political opponents from desecrating these graves through exhumations.[195]

The reproductive capacity of the Ottoman network of the holy, however, over time facilitated the emergence and subsequent entombment of so many Muslim saints that it seemed impossible for the Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* in office to keep track of all of them. This was especially the case in the countryside with many saints of a local character.[196] Finally, some shrines would over time be completely forgotten.[197] The response of the prominent *ʿulamāʾ* to the popular claims of certain individuals' holiness reveals from another angle that sainthood in premodern Islam represented a consequence of the imperial subjects' collective representations. Although James Grehan explains the leniency with which the eighteenth-century religious authorities accepted new low-scale saints as the "triumph of religion from below,"[198] it is more appropriate to interpret the continuous growth of the Ottoman network of the holy as in equal measure the consequence of official authorities' latitudinarianism and of popular beliefs, as was the case with defining holy sites, or prayer houses as well. The primary source material from the eighteenth century does not indicate a triumph, but a normal flow of things as they were before the advent of modernity.

The *ʿulamāʾ* response to new and previously unknown saints is clear, for instance, from ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī's travelogues. At numerous places in the countryside, al-Nābulsī would record that he was informed by the locals that a regional saint was buried within a shrine in the vicinity. His reports about such matters would usually start with phrases such as "it is told," or

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[193] Canaan, *Saints,* 300, and Massignon, *Documents,* 73-77.
[194] Canaan, *Saints,* 23.
[195] Ibid., 8-9.
[196] See the discussion in section 4.6. Further see Grehan, *Twilight,* 110.
[197] For instance, al-Amīn, *Khiṭaṭ,* 147, or al-Nābulsī, *Ḥaqīqa,* 74-76. See also Canaan, *Saints,* 60.
[198] Grehan, *Twilight,* 112.

"they informed me" (*yuqāl annahu/ukhbirnā annahu).* Al-Nābulsī would accept the information[199] and even make further effort (although this was rarely possible) to find relevant data and assemble the deceased *shaykh*'s biography. He would first listen to the locals, after which he would enter under the dome to perform his rituals and prayers.[200]

In addition to ambiguities generated by numerous saints who emerged with each generation of the Muslims, debates surfaced around the locations of shrines related to particular figures of wider religious significance. For instance, it was over centuries believed that the grave of the Companion Ubayy Ibn Kaʿab (d.649) lay in the Damascene Bāb al-Sharqī cemetery, while it was later believed that his grave was in Medina. This grave was attributed to other individuals, such as Ābān Ibn Ābān, while it later became commonly known as the *turba* of Ṣāḥib ʿUbayda. Similar was the case with Zaynab, who had a *maqām* in Damascus, while another lay in a nearby village. Caliph ʿUmar II also had a tomb in Damascus as well as one near Homs.[201] In some cases, several shrines would be erected in the name of the same figure to commemorate significant moments in their lives. For instance, James Grehan records that seven shrines to Moses existed in the greater Syrian territory.[202] Al-Khiḍr had a shrine in the Damascene al-Ṣāliḥīyya.[203] Paton recorded the existence of another *Maqām* al-Khiḍr in Baniyas, while al-Nābulsī noticed a third one during his journey from Beirut to Tripoli. The former was a cave, which was in the modern period in need of some maintenance, while the eighteenth-century *quṭb'*s account describes a more elaborately ornamented and furnished edifice.[204] The journal of the eighteenth-century court clerk from Homs,

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[199] James Grehan studies this in Ibid., 108-110.
[200] For instance, al-Nābulsī, *Ḥaqīqa,* 86.
[201] Sirriyeh, "'Ziyārāt'," 109-122, al-Manīnī, *IFS,* 71-141, al-Razzāq, *FS,* 126-181, al-Ṣayyādī, *RB,* 61-101. Further see Appendix B.
[202] Grehan, *Twilight,* 107-108. Also see Sadan, "Moïse," 59-99.
[203] See Appendix B.
[204] See ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī, *al-Tuḥfa al-Nābulusīyya fī al-Riḥla al-Ṭarābulusīyya,* [The Artwork of Nābulsī about a Journey to Tripoli], ed. Heribert Busse (Beirut: Argon Verlag, 2003), 43.

Muḥammad al-Makkī, identifies the fourth shrine to al-Khiḍr in Homs near the lodge of Saʿad al-Dīn al-Jabawī (the founder of the Saʿadīyya).[205]

Disputes sometimes arose over the authenticity and the whereabouts of various religious relics as well. A notable example is the head of al-Ḥusayn Ibn ʿAlī Ibn Abī Ṭālib, the location of which represented a subject of arguments over several centuries. Muslim rigorists in the early modern period quoted Taymīyyan opinions according to which these ambiguities rendered the whole purpose of *ziyāra* futile.[206] Al-Nābulsī counts some half a dozen shrines believed to contain al-Ḥusayn's head.[207] Debates about shrine relics resemble those among the Christians which could at times also last for centuries without a resolution. According to some Christian authorities, for instance, the head of the Baptist was, aside from the Umayyad Mosque, believed to have been in the church of St. Silvester in Rome, as well as the Cathedral of Amiens in France.[208] Cetinje in Montenegro, Wadi Natrun in Egypt, as well as Sozopol[209] and the monastery of St. Ivan (since 2010)[210] in Bulgaria also competed for the claim to this head. Al-Nābulsī furthermore records that a part of St. John's head may have resided within a chest under the Citadel of Aleppo.[211]

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[205] Al-Makkī the court clerk uses this site to give geographical data about the events he describes, showing that the site was widely known among the locals. Muḥammad al-Makkī, "Mudhakkarāt Aḥad Abnā' Ḥimṣ ʿan Ḥimṣ wa Abnā'ihā" [The Memories of a Son of Homs about Homs and its Sons], MS American University of Beirut, MS 956.9:T181A:c.1, Beirut. The text is catalogued under a wrong author's name of Khālid al-ʿAṭānī. It is dated to 1892. I used an edited edition to help locate the manuscript. The bibliographic data of this printout is as follows: Muḥammad al-Makkī Ibn al-Sayyid Ibn al-Ḥājj Makkī Ibn al-Khāniqā, *Tārīkh Ḥimṣ: Yawmīyyāt min Sanna 1100 ilā Sanna 1135* [The Daily History of Homs from 1677 to 1722], ed. ʿAmr Najīb al-ʿAmr (Damascus: Jaffan Traders, 1987). The texts proved to be identical.
[206] Al-Karmī, *ShS,* 113-115.
[207] Al-Nābulsī, *Ḥaqīqa,* 163.
[208] Eileen M. C. Kane, *The Church of San Silvestro in Capite in Rome* (Genoa: B.N. Marconi, 2005), 16-20, and Gali P. Streete, *The Salome Project: Salome and her Afterlives* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2018), 39.
[209] Andrew Phillip Smith, *John the Baptist and the Last Gnostics: The Secret History of the Mandaeans* (London: Watkins, 2016), 165.
[210] David Gibson and Michael McKinley, *Finding Jesus: Faith, Fact, Forgery – Six Objects that Tell the Remarkable Story of the Gospels* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2015), 14-16.
[211] Al-Nābulsī, *Ḥaqīqa,* 45-46. Disputes over relics are abundant. For Christ's Holy Prepuce, see Erik Thunø, "The Sancta Sanctorum Objects," in *Image and Relic: Mediating the Sacred in Early Medieval Rome* (Rome: L'Erma, 2002), 17-24, and Mary Dzon, *The Quest for the Christ Child in the Later Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), 220-222.

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Differing opinions over locations of shrines and relics indicate further their significance for religion of the Ottoman subjects in the early modern period. The existence of a shrine within a certain locality would, in addition to providing thaumaturgical benefits through supposedly dispensing divine grace, attract pilgrims of various origins. Pilgrimage was a source of revenue which gradually influenced the structure of shrine complexes. In addition, over time the Muslim shrines developed their own economy and the pilgrimage customs facilitated the development of a socio-political as well as economic use of such sites for the state administration. The involvement of the state administration in the use of such sites for socio-political purposes further illuminates the significance of *baraka* as a socio-anthropological fact during the eighteenth century.

5.5. Eternally Graced, Perpetually Endowed: The Management of Saintly Shrines

Regardless of whether they were solitary and humble or if they formed parts of larger complexes, most shrines were under Ottoman rule classified as *waqf*-type properties (endowments).[212] The *waqf* was maintained under more specific legal rulings than those which were in use for governing other types of properties in the Ottoman Empire. Most importantly, a *waqf* was subjected to lenient taxing policies.[213] A *waqf* was a legal asset that enjoyed the patronage of its endower and his descendants. In terms of the property's revenue, the endower had the right to list himself among the property's beneficiaries. This would make the *waqf* a hereditary property, under the perpetuity condition – a *waqf* could not be claimed by the government.[214]

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[212] Grehan, *Twilight,* 21, 96.
[213] Chih, *Sufism,* 11.
[214] Yıldırım, "Waqfs," 23-24. Also see Muhammad Zubair Abbasi, "The Classical Islamic Waqf: A Concise Introduction," *Arab Law Quarterly* Vol. 26, No. 2 (2012): 121-153, Heffening, "Waḳf," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, I (1913-1936)*, ed. M. Th. Houtsma, T.W. Arnold, R. Basset, R. Hartmann (Brill Online, 2012). http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2214-871X_ei1_COM_0214 (Last accessed: April 15th 2021).

The number of highly complex economic and legal mechanisms that were involved in regulating *waqf* endowments made some scholars express surprise as to the limited research which has so far been conducted on this topic. Some scholars provided a map of the ample sources which would facilitate the study of *waqf* history. Emphasis is placed on the significance of these endowments for the study of sociology, anthropology, law and urban history of the various Ottoman provinces. Existing research considers the function of the *waqf* as a religious, medical and charitable institution, analyzing how the *waqf*-properties financed mosques, lodges, hospitals, *madrasa*s, and so on.[215] The *waqf*s represented some of the earliest Ottoman establishments the number of which exponentially grew with the spread of the Empire. They were highly significant for the spread of religion during the early Ottoman conquests, especially with regards to the Ottoman dynasty's growing hold over the Balkans. Military campaigns were paralleled by the policies of commissioning new *waqf*s that would specialize in charity work, while performing proselytization functions.

Already in the early Ottoman period, religious edifices, Sufi lodges and important graves at times represented highly significant *waqf* properties. Such a *waqf* would frequently be comprised of a shrine, an accompanying *zāwiyā*, a *madrasa,*[216] a public bath house[217] as well as a community kitchen.[218] Sometimes the saintly grave would be located outside of the Sufi lodge, in

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[215] Randi Deguilhem, "The Waqf in the City," in *The City*, ed. Jayyusi et. al., 923-952. Also see Heath W. Lowry Jr., "The Ottoman *Tahrīr Defterleri* as a Source for Social and Economic History: Pitfalls and Limitations," in *Studies in* Defter*ology: Ottoman Society in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 1992), 3-18, and Hazim Šabanović, "Dvije najstarije vakufname u Bosni" [The Two Oldest *Waqf*s in Bosnia], *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju i istoriju jugoslovenskih naroda pod turskom vladavinom/Revue de Philologie Orientale et d'Historie des Peuples Yougoslaves sous la Domination Turque* [The Review of Oriental Philology and the History of Yugoslav Peoples under Turkish Rule] *II,* (Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša, 1951): 6-7.
[216] Emon, "Shari'a," 72-80.
[217] For public baths in Damascus, see Jacques de Maussion de Favières, "Note sur les bains de Damas," *Bulletin d'études orientales* 17 (1961-1962): 121-131.
[218] Yıldırım, "Waqf," 25-27 and McGregor, "Grave Visitation/Worship." Also see Boykov, "Urban Space," 33-34. Further see Trimingham, *Sufi Orders,* 179-180, and Yürekli, *Architecture,* 149. For Damascus, see al-Rihavi and Ouécheck, "Takiyya," 223-225, Miura, "Ṣāliḥīyya," 129-181, Miura, *Dynamism,* 174-204, Thierry, "Sépultures," 215, Rafeq, "Relations," 71-75, and Marianne Boqvist, "Contributions of Šamsī Aḥmad Pasha and Lālā Muṣṭafā Pasha to

which case a mosque would be erected in its vicinity, or directly over it.[219] In Damascus, such was the case with the Ibn ʿArabī and al-Nābulsī complexes which later had more holy graves in their vicinity. Some of these graves over time fell into oblivion.[220] The Ibn ʿArabī complex furthermore represented a very important Ottoman endowment in Damascus.[221] In lack of a tomb, the commissioning of architectural works on religious edifices could be allegedly inspired by dreams.[222] The locals around the Syrian countryside kept the same habit of commemorating events of religious importance for them until the modern period.[223] In other cases, state officials would convert an existing religious edifice into a mosque and commission works around it to build a centrally organized *waqf* structure (*ʿimāra*; Tur. *imaret*).[224] Such structures would then serve as urban fulcrums around which new neighborhoods would spread.[225] Watenpaugh presumes that Salim I commissioned both the Ibn ʿArabī shrine and al-Sulaymānīyya in Damascus out of similar reasons – to encourage urban growth and erect landmarks to compete with previous sites of religious significance.[226]

The reliance of the Ottoman administration on the *waqf* properties in Anatolia and the European provinces led some scholars to describe the political and strategic use of the shrines' and Sufi lodges' *waqf*s as an inherently Ottoman trait. In turn, such inferences led to the development

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the Urban Landscape of 16th century Damascus," *Bulletin d'études orientales* 61 (2012): 191-207. Also see Kafescıoğlu, "Patronage," 74, Dina Le Gall, *Sufism,* 51, or Amy Singer, "Imarets," in *Ottoman World,* 72-85.

[219] Al-Karmī, *ShS,* 45-55.

[220] Al-Nābulsī, *Ḥaqīqa,* 74-76, al-ʿAdawī, *ZD*, 30-34. Further see Knysh, *Ibn ʿArabi*, 25-37, 113-120, 133-140, Yılmaz, *Caliphate,* 211-214, Rafeq, "Relations," 81, and Sirriyeh, *Visionary,* 126. For how these sites may look like, see Appendix A, Figures 5 and 6.

[221] Kafescıoğlu, "Aleppo and Damascus," 70-96.

[222] Crane, "Mosques," 186. Further on dreams in chapter 6.

[223] Canaan, *Saints,* 2.

[224] See, for instance, Çiğdem Kafescıöğlu, "Lives and Afterlives of an Urban Institution and its Spaces: The Early Ottoman *ʿİmāret* as Mosque," in *Sunni Islam,* ed. Krstić and Terzioğlu, 255-307.

[225] Aptullah Kuran, "A Spatial Study of Three Ottoman Capitals: Bursa, Edirne and Istanbul," *Muqarnas* 13 (1996): 114-131, Boykov, "Urban Space," 33-34. During his travels, al-Nābulsī encountered numerous such examples, such as in *Ḥaqīqa,* 114-115.

[226] Watenpaugh, *Ottoman City,* 38-39.

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of theories about an Ottoman "mystical turn."[227] The tradition of using Sufi institutions for state purposes was, however, a much older custom. It was frequent under the Mongol rule. Sufi orders often enjoyed Mongol royal patronage even if the sovereigns would remain Buddhists.[228] Under the Ayyubids and the Mamluks, patronage over Sufi lodges became a matter of prestige,[229] allowing such establishments to support themselves by generating income from various activities. Furthermore, the received patronage enabled the lodges to feed and equip the traveling Sufis whose excursions did not represent *ziyāra*-inspired tourism only. These traveling dervishes were often on a state-appointed mission to proselytize within the newly taken regions.[230]

The early Ottomans adopted the custom of using Sufi lodges as an instrument for conducting state policies, which was a pragmatic and a strategic choice rather than just a "mystical turn"[231] in the imperial policy. Under the Ottoman rule, Sufi lodges were spreading religious as well as social values among the people in the newly conquered regions. Due to the success of the lodges' missions, the Ottoman administration retained the usage of the Sufis for strategic and urban policies over a number of centuries. In the eighteenth century, Ottoman provincial governors often called upon famous Sufi masters to assign important tasks to their disciples. These acolytes would be sent as state agents to proselytize further in various regions on the borders of the Empire.[232] During the nineteenth century, foreigners in the Ottoman Empire complained that Sufi disciples often served as state-appointed spies.[233] In addition to ministering to the people and conducting various thaumaturgical rituals, the Sufi-*'ulamā'* therefore played an important role for imperial

[227] Chih, *Sufism,* 5, and Yılmaz, *Caliphate,* 5-18, respectively.
[228] Pfeiffer, "Confessional Ambiguity," 135-136.
[229] Wolper, "Patron," 24-41. For the Mamluk period, see for instance Bethany J. Walker, "Popular Responses to Mamluk Fiscal Reforms in Syria," *Bulletin d'études orientales,* 58 (2008-2009): 51-68.
[230] Lowry, "'Soup Muslims'," 98-102, Chih, *Sufism,* 29.
[231] Yılmaz, *Caliphate,* 1-13.
[232] Yıldırımm, "Waqf," 24-29, Chih, *Sufism,* 2, 29.
[233] du Couret, *Life in the Desert*, 420-421.

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expansion, impacting the spread of Islam from Central Africa to China. The sheer expanse of the imperial realm led to the creation of an immense knowledge circulation network.[234]

The Ottoman officials invested considerable trust in the Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ*,[235] and in such way continued the prestige game of political patronage that started with the Ayyubids. The elites bequeathed various Sufi orders with rich financial and material endowments. Evidence of their support remained traceable even on a smaller scale through inscriptions on shrines which identified the endower, the entombed, and the current ruler. Taufik Canaan reads some inscriptions of this kind during his travels in Syria and Palestine.[236] On a much larger scale, illustrative is the history of the famous Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmet Pasha (1506-1579), who was famous for his support to religious activities of the Sufis.[237]

The sultans had an exclusive hold over the many shrine complexes on the main *Ḥajj* routes.[238] This secured the ruler an unparalleled revenue, accumulated through accommodating pilgrims on *ziyāra* routes. *Khān*s would often be built as parts of the shrine complexes. These institutions were popular among both the common people as well as the prominent Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* of the eighteenth century.[239] In case a *khan* was absent, guests would often lodge in a *zāwiya,*[240] or at least within a designated guest chamber.[241] In certain cases, whole caravanserais would be erected to tend to the visitors.[242] ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī tended to spend extended amounts of

[234] See Chih, *Sufism,* 5, or Knysh, *Sufism,* 104.
[235] See for instance a case study by Haim Gerber, "The *Waqf* Institution in Early Ottoman Edirne," in *Studies in Islamic Society: Contributions in Memory of Gabriel Baer,* ed. Gabriel Warburg and Gad Gilbar (Haifa: n.p., 1984), 29-45.
[236] Canaan, *Saints,* 17-22.
[237] Zeynep Yürekli, "A Building between the Public and Private Realms of the Ottoman Elite: The Sufi Convent of Sokollu Mehmed Pasha in Istanbul," *Muqarnas,* vol. 20 (2003): 161-169.
[238] Chih, *Sufism,* 24.
[239] See al-Bakrī, "KhH," 6B. Further see Colette Estabet and Jean Paul-Pascal, "Le logement des pèlerins à Damas au debut du XVIIIe siècle," *Revue du monde musulman et de la Mèditerranèe* 77-78 (1995): 275-286, and A. Abdel Nour, "Le résau routier de la Syrie ottomane (XVIe-XVIIIe siècles)," *Arabica* (1983): 169-189.
[240] In some cases, guest-oriented establishments were inseparable from such sites, as shown by Lowry, "'Soup Muslims'," 100-102, 120-132.
[241] Canaan, *Saints,* 16.
[242] Grehan, *Twilight,* 23, 97.

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time at some hallowed sites and perform multiple prayers there on a number of days. Afterwards, he would enjoy the hospitality within the guesthouses at these sites.[243] Pilgrimage travel guides sometimes recorded the whereabouts of popular *khans* for the convenience of the pilgrims.[244]

Similar to the sultans, the *ayān* of the Ottoman period also supervised their own endowments, albeit usually less lucrative. The *ʻulamā'* were traditionally counted among the endowers. This tradition was much older than the Ottoman Empire, and usually involved *waqf*s as gifts from the important judges.[245] By the eighteenth century, influential *shaykh*s and otherwise state-endorsed notables typically were the beneficiaries of lucrative *waqf* properties.[246] In addition to other opportunities for networking, endowing shrines represented another chance for social mobility among the various groups of Ottoman elites, as it benefited the social status of the endower. The endowments of the Sufi-*ʻulamā'* were capable of producing ample revenue for their beneficiaries.[247] These *waqf*s would stay under the patronage of influential families during lengthy periods. In Damascus, ʻAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī commissioned the construction of his own shrine-complex, which then stayed in the family along with the saint's land holdings. When the time came for his funeral, the whole city of Damascus entered a virtual lockdown as throngs gathered to part with the eighteenth-century *quṭb* in al-Ṣāliḥīyya.[248] Since the medieval period, the Qudāma family complex stayed under the patronage of the same-named family.[249] Aḥmad al-Manīnī recollects that his Sufi master, Muḥammad Murād (the famous biographer al-Murādī's grandfather)

[243] The *quṭb* was rarely pleased with the quality of service, yet a difference is noticeable between services available at shrines of local prominence and those commited to widely venerated saints. Compare reports in Al-Nābulsī, *Ḥaqīqa,* 103, 138.
[244] Al-Muḥibbī, *Riḥlatān,* 56.
[245] Al-Azmeh, *Times,* 223.
[246] Yıldırımm, "Waqf," 23-28, Chih, *Sufism,* 18.
[247] Ibid., 126-128.
[248] Al-Murādī, *Silk,* 3:44.
[249] Ibn Kannān, "MS," 1B-2A, and Miura, *Damascus,* 54-58.

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commissioned restorational works and extended his patronage over several al-Ṣāliḥīyya shrines, including the shrine committed to al-Ḥusayn's head.[250]

Later during the nineteenth century, the scholar-thaumaturges of the Empire continued to play significant roles in terms of governing *waqf* properties. Colonel du Couret observes that the Ottoman network of the holy either counted as patrons of these *waqf*s, or were otherwise appointed as superintendents of such complexes by the endower *ayān.*[251] In Jerusalem during the early twentieth century, Taufik Canaan documents several *waqf*s which over a long time stayed under the patronage of the same family. They contained graves of their founders, Sufi lodges and auxiliary establishments. Among them, the most prominent were the al-Maghāriba and the al-Asʿadīyya lodges.[252]

The smooth operation of various establishments within a shrine complex necessitated the appointment of superintendents (sg. *khādim,* pl. *khuddām*; lit. "servants;" these were functionaries who supervised the activities within the shrine, however in most cases without access to financial management). In some instances, these individuals would receive such respect that they would be addressed as *shaykh*s. Samuel Curtiss described these superintendents in Syria and Palestine as "virtual priests," or "ministers" of Muslim shrines.[253] Although this is an exaggeration, the superintendents were responsible for the maintenance of *waqf*s as well as the collection of donations exchanged for assistance with religious rituals.[254] They took care of the quotidian matters of a shrine. They made sure that any crops within the shrine, such as fruit trees, for instance, continued to yield. Furthermore, the superintendents assisted the pilgrims with their prayers, as

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[250] Al-Manīnī, *KFS,* 123.
[251] du Couret, *Life in the Desert*, 420-421.
[252] Canaan, *Saints,* 301, and Massignon, *Documents,* 73-77.
[253] Curtiss, *Primitive,* 144-147, 163.
[254] This practice continued to the modern period. See Canaan, *Saints,* 134, and Curtiss, *Primitive,* 144-150.

well as in matters connected to sacrifice,[255] which brought them in comparison to the superintendents of the pre-Islamic Arab shrines called the *sādin.* These functionaries performed similar roles.[256] Finally, it was the task of the superintendents to take care of the shrines' guests. Al-Nābulsī sometimes enjoyed their hospitality.[257]

Superintendents commanded considerable social respect, especially in large cities of the greater Syrian region. They would often keep the keys to various Muslim shrines.[258] They would charge entrance fees, and Henry Maundrell often complains about the steep prices these functionaries demanded. In some cases, Christians would be required to pay more than Muslims to enter a shrine, or they would be entirely denied entry.[259] The social rank of the *khuddām* often depended on the social rank of the saint who was believed entombed within the location under their responsibility. For instance, Shaykh Aḥmad Ibn Yaḥyā served the Ibn ʿArabī complex until his death in 1692, acquiring the name al-Akramī ("the most generous"). The biographer al-Murādī attributes the Most Generous Aḥmad with the highly praised *ṣalāḥ* and describes the superintendent as a competent author and poet. Samples of his verse fill two pages of his obituary.[260] It was sometimes common to appoint a superintendent for a widely venerated shrine among those members of society who were themselves highly prominent. For instance, the Ottoman state-endowed al-Badawī complex in Egypt fell under the responsibility of the Egyptian eighteenth-century *quṭb* al-Ḥifnī.[261] However, the *khuddām* would be present virtually

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[255] See chapter 6.
[256] Al-Azmeh, *Emergence,* 238, Zeitlin, *Muhammad,* 55.
[257] Al-Nābulsī, *Ḥaqīqa,* 138.
[258] Grehan, *Twilight,* 96.
[259] Maundrell, *Journey,* 4, 78, 128-129.
[260] Al-Murādī, *Silk,* 1:246-248.
[261] Chih, *Sufism,* 126.

everywhere, and Curtiss takes note of the superintendents of the Mother of Pieces plateau in the Zabadani region, even though no shrine was documented to have stood erect at this location.[262]

According to popular beliefs, anything that grew around the shrine counted as the *walī'*s property. For instance, the fruit of a sacred tree, or any animal that lived in it counted as the belongings of the deceased saint.[263] Waters accumulated within a shrine counted as the *maqām'*s *sabīl.* Stealing such items was strictly forbidden. The general intent was for these goods to remain available to all pilgrims. However, the superintendents of a given Muslim shrine had the right to collect such items and sell them for profit.[264] Donations collected by the superintendents represented a significant additional source of income, while the *khuddām* would often be rewarded for their assistance with conducting rituals within sacred grounds.[265] Religious establishments that belonged to other confessions in Syria generated comparable profit. For instance, Curtiss records that the abbot of the Monastery of St. George in Palestine was able to afford buying an entire bishopric in the early twentieth century.[266]

The significance of Muslim shrines would, however, drop or rise depending on the entombed saint's renown, or with the passage of time. While most shrines were shown much respect in the premodern period, some lost public attention in the later times. In some cases during the modern period, state authorities seemed too busy to deal with issues of a particular locality, especially in the countryside. For instance, McCown visited the village of al-Nabī Samū'il in the

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[262] Curtiss, *Primitive,* 144.
[263] Canaan, *Saints,* 31-35. See Curtiss, *Primitive,* 213 for beehives that belonged to a dead saint.
[264] Canaan, *Saints,* 31-40.
[265] The price of thaumaturgical assistance is in more detail analyzed in chapter 6.
[266] Curtiss, *Primitive,* 148. Christian religious edifices were at times governed under slightly different laws. For instance, see Oded Peri, "The Legal Status of the Holy Sites under Ottoman Rule," and "The Ottoman State and the Inter-Church Struggle over the Holy Sites," in *Christianity under Islam in Jerusalem: The Question of the Holy Sites in Early Ottoman Times* (Boston: Brill, 2001), 50-96, 97-154, Charles A. Frazee, "The Eighteenth Century," in *Catholics & Sultans: The Church and the Ottoman Empire 1453-1923* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 153-311, or Tom Papademetriou, "The Patriarchal Tax Farm," in *Render unto the Sultan: Power, Authority, and the Greek Orthodox Church in Early Ottoman Centuries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 107-178.

Jerusalem Governorate. There he saw a dilapidated shrine that the locals were attempting to repair by petitioning the government for over a year without any concrete response.[267]

In the early modern period, it was possible to expect that the revenue of the damaged *waqf* would be collected and used to restore a holy tomb.[268] As it was shown, tombs of the *awliyā'* as well as other sacred sites, such as trees, caves, or rocks, represented access points towards the unseen where the people came to interact with the network of the holy. According to beliefs, even the standard prayers had more effect if performed in the vicinity of the entombed *awliyā'* because of their *baraka.* In addition, the Ottoman Sufi-*'ulamā'* preferred to perform their rituals in such locations, as it was believed that the results of their efforts would become exponentially more powerful. The Ottoman network of the holy therefore contained its own topography of holy sites where all Ottoman subjects came to perform their rituals and interact with their saints, who were believed to intercede between them and god. The details of thaumaturgical rituals performed by the people in the eighteenth century represent the subject of the following chapter.

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[267] McCown, "Shrines," 58.
[268] For instance, Sylvia Auld, Robert Hillenbrand, and Yusuf Natsheh, *Ottoman Jerusalem: The Living City, 1517-1917* (London: Altajir World of Islam Trust, 2000), 164, 280, 422.

6. Artes Magicae: Thaumaturgical Rituals among the *Sufi-ʿulamāʾ* of the Eighteenth Century

Throughout the premodern centuries, and sometimes in later periods as well, it was expected that the Sufi masters gained access to skills and knowledge that would range beyond what is humanely possible. The mystical capacities of the Sufis were believed to represent the consequence of their devoutness that earned them divine grace. Similar beliefs were tied to the Catholic and Orthodox priests in Europe, as well as in other regions of the world.[1]

This chapter discusses the thaumaturgical practice of the premodern Muslims of eighteenth-century Ottoman Syria. Such analyses are not encountered often in scholarly works. However, socio-anthropological studies into the practices which were popular in a given period may yield highly relevant data about popular religion of the studied peoples and help understand a region's history better. Furthermore, studying religious practice in eighteenth-century Ottoman Syria may illuminate the reasons for the popularity of the Sufis and clarify some means through

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[1] See Thomas, *Decline,* ix, 27-29. For a study of Christianity in India, see R. L. Stirrat, "Holy Men and Power," in *Power and Religiosity in a Post-Colonial Setting: Sinhala Catholics in Contemporary Sri Lanka* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 122-149.

which they claimed their exclusive place within the Ottoman social setting.[2] The discussion that follows aims to improve the scholarly understanding of Syrian (and in general Ottoman) premodern Sunnism, as well as to underline the continuous necessity for thaumaturgical practice present among the Ottoman subjects regardless of rank or occupation.

The procedures of Sufi thaumaturgical rituals, along with the expectations that they might bring immediate results according to the supplicants' wishes, may make thaumaturgical practice in early modern Syria highly comparable with various magical traditions[3] which were present across regions.[4] Relations between thaumaturgy and magic represent a significant scholarly topic, mainly focused on early modern Europe. Academic research previously showed that these categories became fully separate only with the advent of European Enlightenment and due to the Protestant theological opinions' influence on religious behavior.[5] Scholarship further theorizes that the difference between a prayer and a spell[6] became problematized only with the rising Protestant thought in Europe.[7] Similar to the rise of Protestantism and its impact on European Christianity, the engagement of Muslim reformers during the modern period seems to have influenced the change in crucial distinctions between religion and magic, casting thaumaturgy aside as a predominantly magical practice.[8]

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[2] Knysh, *Sufism,* 7. The author duly notes the significance of studying Sufi practice for the improvement of historical knowledge of the studied regions.
[3] Chapter 2 deals with these questions in detail. Further compare Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima*, 132-139, 143-143, 146-157, 398-403, 572-574, 584-597, with Thomas, *Decline,* 27-48, 60-70, 152-153, 215-229, 318, 327-330.
[4] The Protestant thinkers attacked Christian thaumaturgy as magic exactly through such arguments. See Thomas, *Decline,* 69.
[5] Ibid., 69, 318, Styers, *Making Magic*, 219-226, David J Collins, *History of Magic*, 521-575, Josephson-Storm, *Disenchantment*, 41-178, Bremmer, "Birth," 1-6, 9-12, and Benussi, "Magic," 1-16, Winthrop, *Dictionary*, 167-170, and Saif, *Influences*, 1-8.
[6] Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī advised prayers for many various immediate effects and defended them from detractors. See "MA," 8B-9A.
[7] Thomas, *Decline,* 69, Bremmer, "Birth," 1-12, and Benussi, "Magic," 1-16. Also see section 2.1. Further see Matthew Melvin-Koushki, "Magic in Islam between Protestantism and Demonology: A Response to Gunther and Pielow's Response," *Magic, Ritual and Witchcraft,* Vol. 15 Nr. 1 (2020): 132-139.
[8] Ernst, *Sufism,* 8-18, al-Azmeh, *Times,* 47-66, al-Azmeh, "Revivalism," 39-59, Hourani, "Sufism," 90-102.

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During the medieval and premodern period, Muslim scholars maintained another set of distinctions according to which magic (*siḥr*) was opposed to thaumaturgy (the causing of wonders, *karāmāt*) because it was not the consequence of Allah's grace. Instead, it was believed that occult daemonic forces empowered magic.[9] In practice, however, the proceedings of many thaumaturgical and magical rituals remained comparable, and the Muslim *ʿulamāʾ* over time narratively used *baraka* to make the distinction between these two categories. Protected by their *baraka,* the Sufis were allowed to practice many varieties of occult arts. Other people who would engage in the same craft were considered illicit magicians.[10]

Sufi thaumaturgical practice was usually aimed at acquiring specific goals which could vary between protection of one's self, groups of people or entire regions, over thaumaturgical healing and preventing illnesses, to battling natural disasters and influencing the weather. Rituals were usually comprised of preparatory acts such as ablution[11] and fasting.[12] In certain cases, supplicants were advised to further purify themselves through charitable acts before attempting some rituals. Sufi texts copied during the eighteenth-century retell that the Sufi Shaykh Abū al-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī (1196-1258)[13] recommended purification through donating to the poor.[14] After the preparations, the supplicants would commence with the reading of scriptural chapters of which

[9] See chapter 2. Further see Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:14-18, 25-28, 36-37, 42-45, al-Nābulsī, *Fatḥ,* 177-178, al-Nābulsī, *Ḥadīqa,* 2:390-392, Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima,* 132-138, 628-630, 689. For comparative purposes, see Aigle, "Charismes," 15-36, or Butler, *Magus,* 1-12.
[10] See the following section.
[11] Al-Nābulsī, *Nihāya,* 68-70, and Ibn ʿAbidīn, *Radd,* 2:464-465.
[12] "MMKF," 28B, 31A. The three days and nights of fasting before venturing a ritual were common in scriptural traditions. See Thomas, *Decline,* 323. Further see Ronald L. Eisenberg, *Dictionary of Jewish Terms: A Guide to the Language of Judaism* (Rockville: Schreiber Publishing, 2008), 130. The tradition was very old. See S. H. Mathews, "Fasting in Old Testament and Ancient Mediterranean World," in *Christian Fasting: Biblical and Evangelical Perspectives* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015), 25-52, Jonathan Harris, "The Passage of the First Crusade," in *Byzantium and the Crusades* (London: Bloomsbury, 2003), 59-76, or Hermann Oldenberg, "Cult Observances," in *The Religion of the Veda,* trans. Shridhar B. Shrotri (Delhi: Motilal Banrsidass Publishers, 1988), 224-231.
[13] The medieval founder of the Shādhilīyya order. See, for instance, Ramzi Rouighi, *The Making of the Mediterranean Emirate: Ifriqiya and its Andalusis, 1200-1400* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 141-142.
[14] "INAR," 17B.

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al-Fātiḥa was common prior to any ritualistic endeavor. The beginning chapter of the Qur'ān would then be followed by theurgical supplications to God which would express the supplicant's needs. Additional objects may have been used, such as talismans or other items of power, which will further be discussed in this chapter.

In addition to the living Muslim saints, the people often sought for the power of the deceased *awliyā'* in hopes of saintly intercession. In return, they would often vow to repay saintly assistance, offering an assortment of goods, commodities, as well as blood sacrifice. These acts created a particular economy of *baraka* which will be discussed as well.

The effects of both thaumaturgical and magical rituals were widely believed in. Muslim thaumaturgical rituals were presumed to be efficacious if those who conducted them were punctilious in their performance. They are correspondent to the scholarly definition of religious rituals as learned sets of actions, consciously attributed with specific results, which are believed to be able to override natural causalities and achieve particular goals. Sax and Sorensen presume that the absence of results may lead to the diminishing of the belief in a certain ritual.[15] The case of eighteenth-century Syrian Sunnism, however, shows that the widespread belief in the causal relationship between *ṣalāḥ* and *baraka*, and *karāma* as their consequence,[16] usually caused the interpretation of the absence of a ritual's results as the failure of the supplicant to observe all the necessary ritual requirements. Through the discussion of thaumaturgical rituals, this chapter will show that the supposed relation between *baraka* and *ṣalāḥ* often led to the immediate questioning

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[15] For the discussion, see William S. Sax, "Agency," and J. Podemann Sorensen, "Efficacy," in *Theorizing Rituals: Issues, Topics, Approaches, Concepts*, ed., Jens Kreinath, Jan Snoek, and Michael Stausberg (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006). See also William S. Sax, "Ritual and the Problem of Efficacy," and Johannes Quack, "Bell, Bourdieu, and Wittgenstein on Ritual Sense," in *The Problem of Ritual Efficacy,* ed. William S. Sax (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), Cristine H. Legare and André L. Souza, "Evaluating Ritual Efficacy: Evidence from the Supernatural," *Cognition* 24, no. 1 (July, 2012): 1-15, and Catherine M. Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 140-142.
[16] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:14-15, al-Nābulsī, *Fatḥ,* 177-178.

of other popular habits and practices, first among the common people, but at times among the Sufis who conducted the rituals as well. Discussing monotheistic traditions, William James indicates that divine omnipotence renders a monotheistic god pure and sinless, while all responsibilities for potential failures are usually attributed to the people.[17] It appears that such was the case with eighteenth-century Syria, where the efficacy of most powerful wonders and miracles was based on the belief in divine grace.

6.1. The Forbidden Arts: Sourcery in eighteenth-century Province of Damascus

In the popular imaginary, prophets (*anbiyāʾ*) were the most powerful within the Ottoman network of the holy. They were capable of performing miracles (*muʿjizāt*). Ibn ʿĀbidīn writes that they could raise the dead, dry out seas or influence natural elements.[18] He adds that the Muslim saints (*awliyāʾ*) could cause wonders (*karāmāt*) which were less potent than the powers of the prophets due to the absence of prophetic calling.[19] The saints were believed to wield many powers, such as healing the sick, communicating with animals, speaking to and raising the dead, drying up bodies of water, walking on them or flying.[20] The judge al-Nabhānī adds a crucial power to the tally – the potency and efficacy of saintly supplications to God.[21] Saintly wonders and prophetic miracles seemed similar. The difference between them was prophetic challenge, as the saints were forbidden to claim prophethood, and their wonders were weaker. Unlike *muʿjizāt, karāmāt* could fail.[22] Ibn

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[17] James, *Religious Experience*, 27-28. For illustrations, see section 6.6.
[18] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:14-18. These beliefs were an old tradition. See Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima,* 134-143. For comparative purposes, see Butler, *Magus,* 1-12.
[19] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:15-18. Also see al-Shawbarī, "AA," 45B-46A, and Canaan, *Saints,* 255.
[20] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR*, 2:15, al-Nābulsī, *Ḥadīqa,* 1:199-200.
[21] Al-Nabhānī gives a lengthy list at *JK,* 1:41-51.
[22] Ibid., 13-14, 19-20, Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR*, 2:5-18, 32-37. Also see al-Shawbarī, "AA," 45B-46A, and Canaan, *Saints,* 255. Compare with Ibn Khaldūn, al-*Muqaddimah,* 132-157.

ʿĀbidīn warns that a *walī* should not dare to claim prophetic powers since that would antagonize the divine.[23]

Defending the Muslim cult of saints from accusations of magic, Ibn ʿĀbidīn and al-Nābulsī emphasized that *karāma* was a consequence of divine will.[24] Thaumaturges needed to abstain from intentionally bringing harm through practicing their art. It was forbidden to attempt to manipulate the *shayāṭīn*, for instance, and use their power to achieve personal goals.[25] Intent seems to have represented an important difference between thaumaturgy and magic during the premodern periods. Although in practical terms, deliberate intent played a crucial role for performing both thaumaturgical and magical rituals, apologetic works authored by the eighteenth-century Damascene Sufi-*ʿulamā* placed the agency behind *karāma* exclusively with God. Causing mystical effects (*khawāriq*) with clear intent indicated magical activity (*siḥr*) which was forbidden.[26] Furthermore, it was believed throughout centuries that the *jinn* would sometimes teach magic to humans or grant them the knowledge of talismanics which would facilitate interaction with daemons.[27] Ibn ʿĀbidīn and al-Nābulsī considered such magicians (*sāḥir*) a "plague upon everything good in Islam" (*al-sāḥir fa-huwa al-ṭāʿūn fī al-ʿafāʾid al-islāmīyya kullihā*) who denied the unity of god (*tawḥīd*) and worshipped devils (*shayāṭīn*).[28] It was further believed that the

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[23] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:25.
[24] Ibid., 2:15-18, 25, 32-35, and al-Nābulsī, "Kashf," 162A-174A.
[25] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR*, 2:15-18, 26-30, 36-42.
[26] See, for instance, Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:15, 25-26, and al-Nabhānī, *JK*, 1:21-40, 51-56. This is comparable to the Christian premodern history. See Thomas, *Decline,* 69. Further see Michael Muhammad Knight, *Magic in Islam* (New York: Tarcher Perigee, 2016), 27-54, John D. Martin III, *Theurgy in the Medieval Islamic World: Conceptions of Cosmology in al-Buni's Doctrine of Divine Names* (Cairo: The American University of Cairo, 2011), 3-5, Hassan Elboudrari, "De la magie en Islam: entre licéité et illicéité. Paradoxes et ambivalences," *Correspondances* 49 (1998): 10-15, Mahmoud Haggag, "Magie im teologisch-rechtlichen Diskurs der arabisch-islamischen Gelehrsamkeit," and Hans Daiber, "Magie und Kausalität im Islam," in *Die Geheimnisse der oberen und der unteren Welt: Magie im Islam zwischen Glaube und Wissenschaft,* ed. Sebastian Günther and Dorothee Pielow (Leiden&Boston: Brill, 2018), 135-154, 155-168, and Koushki, "Magic": 256-287. For comparative purposes, see Thomas, *Decline,* 301-303.
[27] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:18, 28-31. The *jinn* were claimed to have inspired the pre-Islamic sorcerers or *kuhhān* (sg. *kāhin/kāhina*). See Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima,* 142-143, or Lane, *Egyptians,* 1:283-286. Further see al-Azmeh, *Emergence,* 207. Similar was the case in Catholic Europe. See Thomas, *Decline,* 265, 564.
[28] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:28, Al-Nābulsī, *Fatḥ,* 136-137. Further see Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima,* 134-143, 151.

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sāḥirūn would even unintentionally cause harm to others.[29] *Siḥr* was evil as it corrupted the world and the human character. Ibn ʿĀbidīn warned Muslims not to dabble in such practices. He additionally dubbed magicians the "obstinate people" (*ahl al-hawāʾ*; also "people of passion") who did not believe in Allah and thus harmed both themselves and the created world.[30] Al-Nābulsī considered the practice of magic a challenge to divine supremacy which was equivalent to blasphemy.[31]

Mystical effects caused through practicing *siḥr* were forbidden, yet never denied.[32] Ibn ʿĀbidīn instead warned about infernalists who conspired with devils, sorcerers who were able to fly, or turn people into animals such as donkeys.[33] In the case of the Sufis and their thaumaturgical rituals, it was believed that their *baraka* protected them from sinful behavior. Even if they would by accident engage in magical practice, this would be permissible because of their grace.[34] However, they needed constant supervision, as Muḥammad al-Kīlānī emphasized in his writings.[35] ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī and Ibn ʿĀbidīn believed that the untrained would not be able to recognize the difference between *muʿjiza* and *siḥr.* Thaumaturgical practice performed by the uninitiated represented illicit innovation (*bidʿa*).[36]

During the eighteenth century, magic did not represent only a subject of jurists' and theologians' mental exercise within the Ottoman Province of Damascus. Although rarely, the extant source material offers cases when magic represented a practical issue as well. For instance,

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[29] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR*, 2:27-31. Further see al-Nābulsī, *Ḥadīqa,* 2:202.
[30] Ibid., 2:18, 27-31.
[31] Al-Nābulsī, *Fatḥ,* 136-137.
[32] See for instance, Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima,* 134-143. For the eighteenth-century context, see al-Nābulsī, *Ḥadīqa,* 1:202. Belief in all kinds of preternatural powers persisted until the modern centuries. See al-Nabhānī, *JK,* 13-16.
[33] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR*, 2:29. Further see al-Nābulsī, *Ḥadīqa,* 2:390-392.
[34] Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima,* 134-157, 601-605, 623-631, 631-641, 653-671.
[35] Al-Kīlānī, "DB," 10B.
[36] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:25-26, and Al-Nābulsī, *Ḥadīqa*, 2:389-393. As shown in chapter 2, this dichotomy is ubiquitous in scriptural religions prior to the modern period. Neusner, et. al., *Religion,* 4-5.

in 1747 a Damascene neighborhood worried that a witch lived among them. Some people accused a woman from their area that she was luring boys and men to her house to perform magic on them. Their stories caused sufficient alarm to involve the authorities. Vigilantes took the woman to a judge. Her properties were seized and examined thoroughly. No evidence of sorcery was found. Her neighbors later told to the officials that the accused was poor and lived alone in her house for a long time. The stories of "poor old women" represented a ubiquitous leitmotif in witch trials. In Europe, many women were freed based on positive testimonies from their neighbors.[37] Similar stories seemed sufficient for the judge in Damascus as well, who declared the accused's innocence and freed her.[38] Others were not so fortunate. In 1746, a geomancer[39] arrived to Damascus. The accuracy of his predictions soon acquired him a reputation. The Damascene treasurer (*defterdār*) Fatḥī al-Falāqinsī (d.1746) summoned the diviner. He first bullied him into giving several predictions one after another, and then ordered the geomancer to be fined, beaten, fettered, and banished from the city.[40]

Prosecutions of alleged magicians continued into the following centuries as well. Edward Lane records two Cairene cases when magicians attracted the attention of the authorities. The first one involved a man who was allegedly able to summon apparitions via candle flame and command them into obedience. These apparitions were believed to have been the *jinn.* The other man allegedly influenced a Muslim woman so that she would fall in love with a Cairene Coptic Christian.[41]

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[37] Witches were often freed or accused based on their neighbors' testimonies. Many "poor old women" were released from trial if their cohabitants vouched for them. See Thomas, *Decline,* 310-312.
[38] Ibn Budayr, "HDY," 36B.
[39] Geomancy was considered magic. See Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:15-18, 36-37, 42-45, and Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima*, 141-165, 623-624, 630. Further see chapter 2.
[40] Burayk, *TS,* 14.
[41] Lane, *Egyptians,* 1:345-346.

Damascene Christians had their own concerns about magicians in their midst. This is best illustrated by the effort of Mikhā'īl Burayk to copy an entire letter sent by the governor of Russian Astrakhan. This entry is unusually long and detailed. The governor of Astrakhan worried that the two doomsayers who appered in his province may have been magicians. He imprisoned them for questioning, yet found little information about them before they disappeared from their cell overnight. They left a prophecy which cautioned about the end of the world and, prior to the advent of the Messiah, announced the fall of Istanbul. The text of this letter seems to have been circulated between Orthodox Christian religious authorities in Istanbul and Greece before its arrival to Damascus during 1756.[42]

Several years earlier, in 1749, Burayk writes about the appearance of Hindīyye in Kesrouan on Mount Lebanon with absolute hostility. During the eighteenth century, there existed the belief among the Levantine Christians that a Maronite nun, Hannah al-ʿUjaimi (1720-1798) had a special connection with Christ. It was believed that the Messiah visited her on several occasions to deliver divine grace. Her trances were famous among the people and at times severely provoked the Christian ecclesiastical circles.[43] Burayk is fuming about Hannah al-ʿUjaimi, better known among the people as Hindīyye, saying little about her except that she was a Maronite nun,[44] an impostor, a liar, and a false saint.[45]

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[42] Burayk, *TS,* 53-58. Further see Dana Sajdi, "In Other Worlds? Mapping out the Spatial Imaginaries of 18th-century Chroniclers from the Ottoman Levant (Bilād al-Shām)," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 44 (2014): 370-371.

[43] More on this nun in Avril M. Makhlouf, "Hindiye Anne Ajeymi in her Ecclesiastical and Political Situation," *Parole de l'Orient* vol. 16 (1990-1991): 279-287.

[44] Antagonism between the Orthodox and Maronite Christians in Lebanese territories was a long-lasting phenomenon. See Nabil Matar, "Christians in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Mashriq," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* Vol. 47, Nr. 2 (2014): 177-194, William Harris, "Mountain Lords, 1633-1842," in *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 104-146, Akram Khater, "God has Called me to be Free: Aleppan Nuns and the Transformation of Catholicism in 18th-Century Bilad al-Sham," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 40 (2008): 421-443.

[45] Burayk, *TS*, 23-24. For Hindīyye, see Bernard Heyberger, *Hindiyya, Mystic and Criminal, 1720-1798: A Political and Religious Crisis in Lebanon*, trans. Renée Champion (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2013), 16-24, 157-193. Avril M. Makhlouf, "Hindiye Anne Ajeymi in her Ecclesiastical and Political Situation," *Parole de l'Orient* vol. 16 (1990-1991): 279-287.

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Accounts such as these show that the Syrian religious authorities in office exercised caution when it came to practicing magic during the eighteenth century. The texts that offer legal opinions about the differences between thaumaturgy and magic further established boundaries between religious professionals – the Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* – and the rest of the people. If overlaps between thaumaturgy and magic occurred in Sufi performance, they would be justified through the belief in Allah's *baraka* gracing the Sufis and the Muslim saints.[46] This resembles the premodern attitudes towards magic and religion in Europe, where the church attitude towards a certain practice seemed the most decisive factor for dubbing it magical or religious.[47] Since the saints were believed to be protected by their *baraka*, they frequently dabbled in arts which were otherwise forbidden to the common people, such was the case with various techniques for divination.

6.2. Second Sight: Visions, Omens and Portents

According to the long tradition, Muslim jurists had a low opinion of practices such as divination, various forms of soothsaying, as well as astrology. Ibn ʿĀbidīn explains that through such activities, people wished to obtain knowledge that was accessible only to God, defying therefore the supremacy of Allah.[48] However, throughout the early modern period, as well as in earlier centuries, the Sufis frequently employed certain methods to divine what was considered truths about the future, the present and the past. It was believed possible to obtain answers about one's self and one's life through employing mechanical devices, certain types of inscriptions, as well as

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[46] See Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:14-15, 25-28, 41-42.
[47] Thomas, *Decline,* 303.
[48] For the eighteenth century, see for instance Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:15-18, 28, 36-37, 42-45, or al-Nābulsī, *Ḥadīqa*, 2:389-392. Further see Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima*, 141-165, 398-413, 623-630, 677-682, Lane, *Egyptians,* 1:342-342, and Saif, "Medicine and Magic," 315-319. Such opinions are comparable to the uneasiness of attitudes towards astrology in Europe. For comparative purposes, consult Thomas, *Decline,* 425-426, 755-756.

through interpreting one's dreams. The practice of divination in general often involved the recitation of certain words or Qur'ānic chapters, as well as preparation through prayer and ablutions.

The interpretation of dreams was an important practice that, as already indicated in chapter 4, represented a common activity within the Sufi lodges during the eighteenth century. Dreaming had religious significance for various people in various geographical regions over a long span of centuries as well.[49] Even the common narratives about important historical events in Syria (and wider) usually involved dream visions as omens of what transpired afterwards. For instance, according to widespread legends, Selim I dreamt of Ibn ʿArabī. The Grandmaster showed the sultan the conquest of Syria and Egypt.[50] This legend may have been used to add legitimacy to the Ottoman dynasty's rule in the newly taken territories.[51] Dream visions were, however, involved in many older Ottoman myths. It was believed that the legendary founder of the Ottoman dynasty received oneiric visions of his future grand empire.[52]

According to the old beliefs, it was possible for the *jinn* or the Muslim saints to enter one's dreams and deliver a message or make a request.[53] ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī believed that the dead

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[49] See Kelly Bulkeley, *Visions of the Night: Dreams, Religion and Psychology* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1999), 1-30, Kelly Bulkeley, *The Wilderness of Dreams: Exploring the Religious Meaning of Dreams in Modern Western Culture* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1994), 81-204, or Iain R. Edgar, "A Comparison of Islamic and Western Psychological Dream Theories," in *Dreaming in Christianity and Islam: Culture, Conflict, and Creativity*, ed. Kelly Bulkeley, Kate Adams and Patricia M. Davis (New Brunswick: Rudgers University Press, 2009), 188-199. For the Muslim context, see John C. Lamoreaux, *The Early Muslim Tradition of Dream Interpretation* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2002), 1-14, or Kelly Bulkeley, "Islam," in *Dreaming in the World's Religions: A Comparative History* (New York&London: New York University Press, 2008), 192-212. For other regions, further see other chapters in ibid., or M. C. Jędrej and Rosalind Shaw, eds., "Introduction: Dreaming, Religion and Society in Africa," in *Dreaming, Religion and Society in Africa* (Leiden&New York: 1992), 1-20. Further see Thomas, *Decline,* 152-153.

[50] Dream visions of future conquests were a common trope in history. For a notable example, see John Pratt Bingham, *Gods and Dreams: Is there a Connection* (Eugene: Resource Publications, 2010), 38, or Alan Kreider, "'Converted' but not Baptized: Peter Leithart's Constantine Project," in *Constantine Revisited: Leithart, Yoder, and the Constantinian Debate,* ed. John D. Roth (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2013), 42-43.

[51] Kafescıoğlu, "Patronage," 74.

[52] See Caroline Finkel, *Osman's Dream: The History of the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Basic Books, 2005).

[53] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR*, 2:23-25.

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would sometimes appear in one's visions or dreams,[54] when they might decide to give positive or negative criticism of one's actions.[55] In the previous chapter, it was indicated that some saints would claim a tree or a similar natural object via oneiric visions.[56] In Damascus, a *muftī* ʿAlī al-Murādī once dreamt of the Virgin which compelled him to commission additional works on the Ṣaydnaya complex. Burayk the priest praises the occasion.[57] During the seventeenth century, Ismāʿīl Agha of Aleppo commissioned the construction of the Bektashīyya lodge due to the request of a deceased patron saint of this order, Abū Bakr (d.1583).[58] Commoners employed stories of dream visions in their self-representative narratives as well. Ibn Budayr the barber claimed that he received sanction from Allah in his dreams to address his sons as *sayyid*s.[59] Exaggerations occurred, such as in the case of a North African Sufi, Muḥammad al-Zawāwī (d.1477). Al-Zawāwī left a dream diary in which he recorded his visions of the Prophet Muḥammad. According to his narrative, he was seeing the Prophet very frequently in his dreams. Their relationship often led to petty bickering about quotidian affairs. The Prophet of al-Zawāwī's dreams was keen on giving advice such as which groceries are to be bought, or to severely admonish decisions to trade donkeys for female slaves.[60]

Sufis of the Ottoman Empire maintained a long oneirocritical tradition[61] due to the interest to decipher dreams and uncover their relevance for their everyday. Muslim thinkers therefore left a large body of literature committed to dream interpretation.[62] In the eighteenth century, al-Nābulsī

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[54] Al-Nābulsī, "Kashf," 166A-167B.
[55] Yılmaz, *Caliphate,* 115-120, 239-240.
[56] Section 5.3. Further see Hathaway, "The Mulberry Tree," 135-142, and Paton, "Survivals," 62.
[57] Burayk, *TS,* 74, Sajdi, *The Barber,* 79.
[58] This was an important early modern saint in Aleppo, who was believed to help prayers come true. See Watenpaugh, *Ottoman City,* 139-143.
[59] Ibn Budayr, "HDY,“ 24B-25A
[60] See Katz, *Dreams,* 36-73.
[61] Some scholars consider Ibn Sīrīn (d. 729) the eponymous founder of Muslim oneirocritical tradition. See, for instance, Lamoreaux, *Dream Interpretation,* 19-25.
[62] See Sajdi, *The Barber,* 54-131. Oneirocritical literature was produced in many different cultures. See, for instance, Steven M. Oberhelman, "Dreams in Greek Thought before Achmet," in *The Oneirocriticon of Achmet: A Medieval*

wrote one text in this genre himself – the *Interpretation of Dreams*.[63] Juxtaposing this text to older oneirocritical records reveals that the ways of interpreting the appearance of particular phenomena in one's dreams did not change much over the passage of centuries. For instance, al-Nābulsī wrote that dreams of an ocean, due to its vastness, indicated a vision of a ruler. Dreams of a serpent in various contexts indicated a threatening enemy.[64] Ibn Khaldūn reported the same associations in his own medieval texts.[65]

Ibn Khaldūn explains that dreams could at times be products of imagination, while at others they represented visions about the real world. He theorizes that the absence of other senses during slumber, combined with the balance of bodily humours[66] and the outside temperature

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Greek and Arabic Treatise on the Interpretation of Dreams (Lubbock: Texas University Press, 1991), 23-64, Hans Jürgen Bachorski, "Interpreting Dreams in Medieval Literature," in *Dreams and History: The Interpretation of Dreams from Ancient Greece to Modern Psychoanalysis,* ed. Daniel Pick and Lyndal Roper (London&New York: Routledge, 2004), 57-90, Ann Marie Plane and Leslie Tuttle, eds., "Introduction: The Literatures of Dreaming," in *Dreams, Dreamers and Visions: The Early Modern Atlantic World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 1-32, and Ann Marie Plane, "Lived Religion and Embedded Emotion in Midcentury Dream Reporting," in *Dreams and the Invisible World in Colonial New England: Indians, Colonists, and the Seventeenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 104-126.

[63] See ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī, *Ta ṭīr al-Anām fi Tafsīr al-Aḥlām* [The Scent of Sleep with Interpretation of Dreams] (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n.d.). Henceforth: *TA*.

[64] Al-Nābulsī, *TA,* 263, and 28, respectively.

[65] Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima*, 597-601. In the early modern period, dream interpretation represented the focus on many Ottoman authors everywhere around the Empire. Bašeskija's Sarajevo chronicle contains a section about dreams. See Bašeskija, *Ljetopis,* 407-417. Even in the contemporary era, in the Balkans many magazines and almanacs include dream interpretation sections. With extremely rare exceptions, all such publications are considered yellow print.

[66] Theories of bodily humors partially represented the foundation of many medical as well as esoteric schools of thought in the Eurasian region, and wider. For the Muslims, see Emilie Savage-Smith, "Were the Four Humours Fundamental to Medieval Islamic Medical Practice?" in *The Body in Balance: Humoral Medicines in Practice,* ed. Peregrine Horden and Elisabeth Hsu (Oxford: Berghan Books, 2013), 89-106, or Özgen Felek, "Epilepsy as 'Contagious' Disease in the Late Medieval and Early Modern Ottoman World," in *Plague and Contagion in the Islamic Mediterranean: New Histories of Disease in Ottoman Society,* ed. Nükhet Varlik (Kalamazoo: ARC Humanities, 2017), 158. For a wider, and much older context, see Virginia Langum, "Medicine, Sin and Language," in *Medicine and the Seven Deadly Sins in Late Medieval Literature and Culture* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 29-82, Thomas Acquinas, *Summa Theologiae vol. 55: The Resurrection of the Lord*, trans. Thomas Moore (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 27-28, Thomas F. Glick, Steven Livesey and Faith Wallis, eds., *Medieval Science, Technology, and Medicine: An Encyclopedia* (New York&London: Routledge, 2005), 337-339, Danielle Jacquart, "Moses, Galen and Jacques Despars: Religious Orthodoxy as a Path to Unorthodox Medical Views," and Peregrine Horden, "Religion as Medicine: Music in Medieval Hospitals," in *Religion and Medicine in the Middle Ages,* ed. Peter Biller and Joseph Ziegler (Suffolk: York Medieval Press, 2001), 33-46, 135-154, C.J. Duffin, "Lithotherapeutical research sources from antiquity to the mid-eighteenth century," and "The gem electuary," in *A History of Geology and Medicine,* ed. C.J. Duffin, R.T.J. Moody and C. Gardner-Thorpe (London: The Geological Society, 2013), 7-44, 81-112, Laura Linker, *Lucretian Thought in Late Stuart England: Debates about the Nature of*

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facilitated the process through which the soul of a human being received visions about the world around it. The dreamer would associate elements of their visions with a number of images they would see in their dreams. It was the responsibility of the interpreters to afterwards decipher a vision and uncover its meaning. Ibn Khaldūn suggests that some training was necessary, as well as that the interpreters were capable of deciphering dreams due to their special competences, indicating the Sufis and their disciples. For the medieval scholar, oneirocriticism represented a science.[67]

Furthermore, Ibn Khaldūn indicates that it was possible to induce dreams about certain matters which were of personal interest to the dreamer. Prior to falling asleep, oneiromancers would pronounce particular "dream words" (*al-ḥālūma;* the "dream incantation") and then hope to receive answers to their queries during slumber. Ibn Khaldūn writes that he tried this technique himself with a satisfatory result. He does not offer specific details. The *ḥālūma* are written down as *tamāghis baʿadān yaswādda waghdās nawfānā ghādis.*[68] Franz Rosenthal presumes that these words are Aramaic and ventures a translation that goes, "You say your incantations at the time of the conversation and the accident of sleep happens."[69] There seems to be no affirmative causes for Rosenthal's presumptions about the origin of the dream incantation.

In addition to the dream words, combinations of disconnected Arabic letters were believed to assist the incubation of diviners' visions. During a long period, Muslims believed in the magical properties of Arabic letters and it was common to encounter them, sometimes in combination with

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the Soul (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 1-12, or Simone Macdougall, "Health, diet, medicine and the plague," in *An Illustrated History of Late Medieval England,* ed. Chris Given-Wilson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 82-102. The broadness of this topic does not allow its proper treatment within this dissertation.
[67] Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima,* 143-154, 597-601.
[68] Ibid., 146-147.
[69] Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History,* 3 volumes, trans. Franz Rosenthal (London: Routledge, 1958), 1:213. At the present times, these words may be found in several fantasy novels where they have the same purpose.

numbers, on various objects ranging from talismans[70] to scriptural texts. Lloyd Graham explains that certain combinations of disconnected letters were believed so powerful that they over time acquired the status of divine attributes.[71] At times, these letters would be combined in seals (sg. *khātam*) or "names" (sg. *ism*) that were believed to help diviners acquire their answers. For instance, the *Compendium of All Arts* suggests several strategies for catching thieves. Should a theft occur in a shop, the *Compendium* advises the usage of a name created by drawing four Arabic letters *sīn* (س) in a swastika shape.[72] When inscribed, one would keep it at their side while writing down the names of all suspects on a piece of paper and then kneading them into dough. They should then take care to recite the *Sūrat al-Qadr* (Q97:1-5) and *Sūrat Yā Sīn* (Q36:1-87) over the mix. The name of the thief was expected to fall out.[73]

The *Compendium* suggests a slightly more complicated seal in case the names of the suspects were unknown. Its activation required the involvement of oneiric visions. The victim of a theft would be instructed to keep this seal in their hand while falling asleep. The *Compendium* emphasizes that the purity of the diviner was required. If it was honored, the diviner would see the

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[70] Talismanics shall be discussed in a later section.

[71] See Lloyd D. Graham, "Qur'ānic Spelling: Disconnected Letter Series in Islamic Talismans," (2011): 1-28. Available online at http://www.academia.edu/516626/Qur_anic_Spelling_Disconnected_Letter_Series_in_Islamic_Talismans (Last accessed: April 15th 2021). Further see Venetia Porter, "The use of Arabic script in magic," *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* Vol. 40 (2010): 131-140. Also see Edmond Doutté, *Magie & Religion dans l'Afrique du Nord* (Algiers: Typographie Adolphe Jourdan, 1909), 170-179, Pierre Lory, *La science des lettres en Islam* (Paris: Dervy, 2004), Fatih Usluer, "Les Themes Bibliques Dans le Houroufisme," *Ишрак/Ishraq* Vol. II (2011): 426-443, Noah Gardiner, "Forbidden Knowledge? Notes on the Production, Transmission, and Reception of the Major Works of Aḥmad al-Būnī,"*Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies* 12 (2012): 81-143, Matthew Melvin-Koushki, "The Occult Challenge to Philosophy and Messianism in the Early Timurid Iran: Ibn Turka's Lettrism as a New Metaphysics," in *Unity in Diversity: Mysticism, Messianism and the Construction of Religious Authority in Islam,* ed. Orkhan Mir-Kasimov (Leiden&Boston: Brill, 2014), 247-276, or Knight, *Magic,* 55-78, Geoffroy, *Sufism,* 21-22, Knysh, *Sufism,* 56. Further see Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima,* 631-641.

[72] For this symbol, see for instance George Lundskow, *The Sociology of Religion: A Substantive and Transdisciplinary Approach* (Los Angeles: Pine Forge Press, 2008), 118.

[73] "MMKF," 65B. Also see Appendix C, Figure 10.

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thief in their dream.[74] Such methods were many. With the supposed assistance of another seal, diviners would need to perform two rakas and recite *Sūrat al-Ḍuḥā* (Q93:1-11).[75]

In certain cases, attempts at divining the outcome of a certain situation required the presence of other individuals as proxies. This was most evident in case of diviners who had patients in their care. The *Verses* offer a seal that needed to be placed in the hand of the patient. The diviner would observe the patient's reactions – if they laughed, they would live. Crying announced death.[76] Edward Lane narrates of the curious case of ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Maghribī who acquired a reputation in Cairo as a *shaykh* who induced visions with the help of young boys. This *shaykh* openly claimed to work with the assistance of two *jinn*, underlining, however, that they were benevolent. He would use particular incantations written on a piece of paper to conjure these creatures. For his performances, the *shaykh* required the presence of a young boy who did not reach puberty. He explained that virgins, black female slaves or pregnant women would be able to replace the boys.[77] The *shaykh* would put a piece of paper with the text of *Sūrat al-Qāf* (Q50:1-45) under the boy's cap. The inscription was there to "make [the boy's] sight pierce into what [was] [to Lane and the *shaykh*] the invisible world." The diviner would then draw a "magic square" into the palm of the boy.[78] In the middle, he would insert a blot of ink and require from the boy to stare at it until he

[74] "MMKF," 65B. Further see Appendix C, Figure 11.
[75] MMKF," 65B and Appendix C, Figure 12.
[76] "INAR," 21A.
[77] Such categories symbolize purity and innocense, that represented crucial elements in many religious rituals in various regions of the world. For instance, Moshe Blidstein, *Purity, Community, and Ritual in Early Christian Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 3-106, John D. Caputo, "Insistence and Hospitality: Mary and Martha in a Postmodern World," in *The Insistence of God: A Theology of Perhaps* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 39-58, or Mary F. Foskett, "The Child Mary in the *Protevangelium of James*," in *"Non-canonical" Religious Texts in Early Judaism and Early Christianity,* ed. Lee Martin McDonald and James H. Charlesworth (London: T&T Clark International, 2012), 195-204. For Africa, see David Chidester, "Purity," in *Wild Religion: Tracking the Sacred in South Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 132-151. For a wide variety of pre-monotheistic contexts, consult the chapters in Christian Frevel and Christophe Nihan, eds., *Purity and the Forming of Religious Traditions in the Ancient Mediterranean World and Ancient Judaism* (Leiden&Boston: Brill, 2013).
[78] This magic square was a 3x3 table with the central field larger than the rest. Digits were arranged between the fields in a way that presumably worked towards the efficacy of the act. See Appendix C, Figure 13.

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would see his own reflection. The boy needed to receive a sequence of visions before the audience was allowed to ask questions. The *shaykh* would burn incense, coriander, and charcoal in the room. Lane with astonishment recorded that the *shaykh*'s method was mostly accurate and resulted in various private information recited by the several boys which the *shaykh* brought during a number of days.[79]

The eighteenth-century *Compendium* of Sufi rituals and prayers offers instructions into drawing an identical diagram for catching thieves or discovering secrets and finding out truths about various matters. Very similar to al-Maghribī's instructions, the diagram was supposed to be drawn and placed in the hand of a boy who did not reach puberty, a pregnant woman, or a slave. The text further describes a sequence of visions that the assistants needed to receive as an indication of the ritual's success. These visions were almost identical to those that Lane described. It would appear that the "magic square" diagram was known across regions and at least over several centuries before the modern period.[80] Cases such as these further illustrate the overlap between thaumaturgy and magic which has been discussed mainly in chapter 2. The Sufis were, through their devoutness, the recitation of *dhikr* that protected them from spiritual attacks, and their *baraka,* allowed to execute rituals which would otherwise be dubbed *siḥr.*[81]

Time was an important factor for both religious and magical rituals. On the first day when he arrived to Lane's house, Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Maghribī complained about "unpropitious" weather and demonstrated but flimsy results.[82] His divination improved during the following days. In the eighteenth century, times of the day, days of the week, as well as the months of the lunar

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[79] Lane, *Egyptians,* 1:349-357.
[80] "MMKF," 147A. Further see Appendix C, Figure 13.
[81] Ibn Khaldun, *al-Muqaddima,* 1:139-165, 623-641, Al-Nābulsī, *Ḥadīqa*, 2:389-392, Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:4-18, 32-47. This state of affairs was highly comparable to Catholic Europe. See, for instance, Thomas, *Decline,* 52-53, 298-303.
[82] Lane, *Egyptians,* 1:348.

year were important, along with the position of celestial bodies and the four seasons.[83] It was believed that the recitation of certain words, as well as inscriptions of certain seals and amulets had particular power if performed during a particular time.[84] The *Writings on Alchemy* present a tabular seal the invention of which was attributed to Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazalī (c.1058-1111). The seal was to be drawn over a number of days, with particular words inscribed at particular moments of the solar cycle. The owner of the seal would be able to receive otherwise hidden knowledge of the world.[85]

The importance of the position of celestial bodies for Muslim ritual performance over time preserved the significance of astrology and astronomy for religion and belief in the Middle East and North Africa.[86] The importance of astrology did not represent a phenomenon exclusive to Islam and it had a long history.[87] In various Muslim states over the centuries, astrology had a significant influence on politics and economy, as well as on common affairs. The signs of the

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[83] Time remained to be of importance in the later centuries as well. See Lane, *Egyptians,* 1:339-340.

[84] For instance, "MMKF," 69A-72B.

[85] Shihāb al-Dīn al-Shuhrī al-Ḍamīrī, "Risāla fī al-Kīmīyya," [Writings on Alchemy] MS Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Hs. or. 14418, Berlin, 24A-26B. This manuscript was copied in 1769. Henceforth: "RFK."A number of texts composed by anonymous authors seem to have been added into the same binding. These additional texts mostly deal with astrological matters and are jointly entitled "ʿIdat Rasā'il al-Mukhtalifa" [Various Treatises]. See Appendix B, Figure 14, for my copy of this seal.

[86] See Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima*, 141-165, 398-413, 623-630, 677-682, Lane, *Egyptians,* 1:341-342, Saif, "Medicine and Magic," 313-319, al-Azmeh, *Arabic Thought,* 72-75, or Melvin-Koushki, "Magic," 255-287. Also see Annick Regourd, "Astres et Astrologie chez Ibn al-Qalānisī," *Bulletin d'études orientales* 44 (1992): 69-77, Zeina Matar, "The Chapter on Death Prediction (Qaṭ/Quṭū) from the Kitāb Faraj al-Mahmūm by Ibn Ṭāwūs," *Bulletin d'études orientales* 44 (1992): 119-125, M. Kubilay Akman and Donna M. Brown, "Ahmad al-Buni and His Esoteric Model," *The Esoteric Quarterly* 13/4 (Spring 2018): 51-75, and Daniel Martin Varisco, "Illuminating the Lunar Mansions (*manāzil al-qamar*) in *Šams al-maʿārif,*" *Arabica* 64 (2017): 487-530. For comparative perspectives, see Thomas, *Decline,* 425-426, 755-756. Hegedus, "Astrology", 125-138, Greenbaum, "Stars," 102-139, Greenbaum, *Astrology*, 1-11, or Wedel, *Astrology*, 60-75.

[87] Franz Cumont, *Astrology and Religion Among the Greeks and Romans* (New York: Cosimo, 2006) 3-56, Edward Grant, "The Mystery Religions and Astrology," in *Science and Religion 400BC-AD1550* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2004), 97-101, William Eamon, "Astrology and Society," Steven Vanden Broecke, "Astrology and Politics," and Brendan Dooley, "Astrology and Science," in *A Companion to Astrology in the Rennaissance,* ed. Brendan Dooley (Leiden&Boston: Brill, 2014), 141-192, 193-232, 233-266. Chapters in Nicholas Campion, ed., *Astrology and Cosmology in the World's Religions* (New York&London: New York University Press, 2012), study the history of astrology and its significance for religion in various parts of the globe, while Nicholas Campion, *Astrology and popular Religion in the Modern West: Prophecy, Cosmology, and the New Age Movement* (London&New York: Routledge, 2012), gives insight into the status of this discipline today.

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zodiac corresponded to the four elements,[88] which were further connected to bodily humours and they together portrayed a world of interdependence. Muslims believed that this world could be read for signs about the future, as well as sometimes influenced for mystical benefits.[89] Among the Arabs there existed a mechanical device dubbed *zā'īrja* which would through algebraic calculations produce answers to diviners' questions based upon the interdependence of celestial bodies, humours, and astrological signs.[90] There exist speculations that the mechanics of the *zā'īrja* influenced the Christian philosopher and thaumaturge Ramon Llull (1232-1316) to develop his own *Ars Magna.*[91] Edward Lane records the ample usage of the *zā'īrja* in Egypt during the early modern period.[92]

Reading the omens in the skies seemed to have been important in the eighteenth century. The significance of celestial phenomena is visible from the way the common people narrated daily events around them. Ibn Budayr leaves an ample record of such occurrences for eighteenth-century Damascus. For instance, the barber documents the appearance of a comet on April 11th 1742

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[88] See "MMKF," 89B, 163A, and "Risāla fī al-Raml," [Letters in Sand], MS Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Hs. or. 14419, 44A. This manuscript contains material in Arabic and Ottoman languages. Most of the work is concerned with the mystical power of letters. The investigation done upon the source text by the archivists of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin uncovers only that the text was copied during the eighteenth/nineteenth centuries. One date indicated on the folio 74A is 1277 hijri year, corresponding to 1860CE. The signature and the rest of the commentary is, however, unclear. The pages are not numbered. I am marking the first folio as 1AB. Henceforth: "RFR." Further see al-Azmeh, *Arabic Thought,* 69-80.

[89] Azfar Moin comprehensively presents this web of interconnected elements in his Moin, *Sovereign,* 66, 113-121. Astrology and its entanglement into the common and political affairs of Muslim polities represents a large subject which cannot be treated in detail within the framework of this dissertation.

[90] The device is best described in Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima,* 642-656. An illustration of it is presented in Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimah,* 3: 204-205. The author claims he tried it himself with satisfactory results. The way the device operated was investigated thoroughly in David Link, "Scrambling T-R-U-T-H: Rotating Letters as a Material Form of Thought," in *Variantology 4: On Deep Time Relations of Arts, Sciences and Technologies in the Arabic-Islamic World and Beyond,* eds. Siegfried Zielinski, Eckhard Fürlus and Gloria Custance (Köln: König, 2010), 215-266.

[91] See Mark D. Johnston, *The Evangelical Rhetoric of Ramon Llull: Lay Learning & Piety in the Christian West Around 1300* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 1-35, Mark D. Johnston, "Ramon Llull, ca. 1232-1316," and Gregory Stone, "Ramon Llull and Islam," in *A Companion to Ramon Llull and Llullism,* ed. Amy M. Austin and Mark D. Johnston (Leiden&Boston: Brill, 2018), 3-17, 119-145, Dominique Urvoy, "La place de Ramon Llull dans la pensée árabe," *Catalan Review* 4 (1990): 201-220, or Lawrence Stevens, *Artificial Intelligence: The Search for the Perfect Machine* (Hasbrouck Heights: Hayden Book Company, 1985), 8.

[92] Lane, *Egypt,* 336-338.

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(which coincided with the fifth day of the new lunar year 1155). The comet was interpreted as an omen of good things to come during that year and inspired the barber's Qādirīyya master to compose a short poem to celebrate the coming period and divine grace that followed it.[93] The barber's record indicates the widespread belief in celestial omens among the people of eighteenth-century Shām. Muslim authors committed to memory many important events which were preceded by such omens. For instance, the mystical locust-destroyer Samarmar[94] appeared to dispatch the locusts thriving in the Baqa'a Valley and around Ba'albek in 1796. The infestation was preceded by the appearance of an ominous celestial body that was visible for three months afterwards.[95]

Many bad omens were recorded by eighteenth-century authors. The severity of a narrated event seemed to influence how thoroughly would an omen be described. Eighteenth-century Syrian authors seem to have preferred to employ anomalies allegedly connected to the sun and the moon for their narratives. In the barber's chronicle, a 1745 revolt against the high prices of common goods which ended in violence as the judge led armed forces against the gathered crowd occurred almost simultaneously with an eclipse of the moon.[96]

Eclipses and comets can today be verified on the NASA website,[97] which indicates that the barber at times might have witnessed such phenomena while at others he employed omens only as literary devices to give more significance to his narrative. For instance, during the 1745 popular revolt, two eclipses of the moon occurred, yet only one was visible from the Middle East, and took

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[93] Ibn Budayr, "HDY," 3B.
[94] People of Syria and Iraq believed in this mystical bird that ended locust infestations. It shall be discussed further later during this chapter.
[95] See "Hadhā Tārīkh Jabal al-Durūz wa al-Qaṭrayn al-Shāmiyya wa al-Maṣr bi-l-Tamām wa al-Kamāl," [The Complete History of Jabal al-Durūz and The Syrian and Egyptian Regions], MS Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Wetzstein 377, 58A-B. The author is unknown. The text was copied in 1815. The author seems to interpret the whole locust infestation as a punishments for popular misbehavior.
[96] Ibn Budayr, "HDY," 28B.
[97] The website url: http://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/SEcat5/SEhybrid5.html (Last accessed: April 15th 2021). Further see Pantić, "Faith," 79-84.

place approximately a month after the chronicled event.[98] It is apparent from such literary strategies that the importance of such phenomena seemed high during the eighteenth century.

Other natural phenomena at times featured in chroniclers' narratives. For instance, during the Damascene governor's campaign against the Druzes in 1748, Ibn Budayr connects a locust infestation and heavy thunderstorms to the misdeeds of the soldiers.[99] The deposition of the very popular governor, Asʿad Pasha al-ʿAẓm[100] in 1758 brought about another eclipse of the moon, then of the sun, as well as an earthquake which lasted for several days.[101] Right before the destructive earthquake series which during 1759 caused massive damage around the entire Shāmī region,[102] the barber writes about a terrifying roar audible around Damascus. The roofs of houses disappeared to allow the stars to be clearly seen by the residents. Eventually, the rooftops went back into their places and some days later a star after the evening prayer traversed the sky from west to east, illuminating the mountains. Its subsequent fall from the sky created a noise which was "stronger than any cannon."[103] Such accounts show that anomalies in the expected natural cycles were often believed to be the portents of human misdeeds and, generally, vile behavior.

In addition to ways of divining future chains of events, Muslims and the Sufis among them had religious rituals which would secure *baraka* for them and their close ones. Through *baraka,* they were hoping to cause a chain of causalities which would lead to their desires, ranging from general good fortune to particular ambitions, such as having more money, or driving out bad

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[98] The data about lunar eclipses is available on the website of NASA. URL: http://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/LEcat5/LE1701-1800.html (Last accessed: April 15th 2021).
[99] Ibn Budayr, "HDY," 37B.
[100] Rafeq, *The Province of Damascus*, 169-180.
[101] Ibn Budayr, "HDY," 85A-85B.
[102] See Riyāḍ al-Darāwisha and Nīqūlas Ambrīsīz, "Zilzāl ʿĀm 1759 fī Wādī al-Buqāʿ: Dalālāt fī Taqdīr al-Makhāṭir al-Zilzālīyya fī Manṭiqat Sharq al-Mutawassiṭ," Bulletin d'études orientales 47 (1995): 235-246. In Damascus, public prayers were held to stop the earthquakes. This shall be discussed later in this chapter.
[103] Ibn Budayr, "HDY," 92A. For a more detailed account of omens in the barber's text, see Pantić, "Faith," 79-84.

neighbors. *Baraka* was most often harvested through prayer with particular supplications that expressed the intent of the ritual performers.

6.3. Invocatio Domini: Supplications to God during Thaumaturgical and *Baraka*-Harvesting Rituals

In addition to the *dhikr,* the most common way to communicate with God was the *duʿa.* This was a supplication pronounced either on its own, or after an official prayer. The supplicants were hoping to attract divine attention and through *duʿa* express their wishes and needs in front of Allah.[104] Eighteenth-century Sufi texts recommend the usage of these supplications at all times.[105] Contemporary historians discovered an abundance of prayer books written in Arabic, Persian and Turkish in the Ottoman Empire during the eighteenth-century. The significance of the Sufi role for the distribution and recitation of prayers was duly acknowledged as well.[106] Some invocations were expected to bring about a number of preternatural effects. The *Compendium* quotes the critically acclaimed medieval scholar Aḥmad al-Būnī Raḍwān (d.1225), as the mystic who left behind some very potent *duʿa*s.[107]

The *duʿa* supplications usually did not have a strict form. However, most of them shared certain elements. A *duʿa* was usually composed of a *basmala,* followed by the divine names,

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[104] "Dua," In *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, ed. John L. Esposito. *Oxford Islamic Studies Online*, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e561 (Last accessed: April 15th 2021), L. Gardet, "Duʿāʾ," in Bearman, et. al., *Encyclopaedia of Islam II.* http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0195 (Last Accesed: April 15th 2021), or Jenny Berglund, "What Takes Place in the *Quran* Class?" in *Religion, Spirituality and Identity*, ed. Kirsi Tirri (Bern&Berlin: Peter Lang, 2006), 207-208.
[105] "INAR," 2A-3A.
[106] See Guy Burak, "Prayers, Commentaries, and the Edification of the Ottoman Supplicant," in *Sunni Islam,* ed. Krstić and Terzioğlu, 232-253.
[107] "MMKF," 27B-28A. Aḥmad al-Būnī Raḍwān was a highly influential medieval Sufi. He is best known for his texts about talismanics and hurufism. He authored the famous *Shams al-Maʿārif.* See Nicole B. Hansen, "Ancient Execration Magic in Coptic and Islamic Egypt," in *Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World,* ed. Paul Mirecki and Marvin Meyer (Leiden&Boston: Brill, 2002), 428-432.

arranged into a *dhikr*. The *dhikr* was believed to protect the supplicants from spiritual attacks.[108] Among the divine names, those that emphasized mercy and forgiveness were the most frequent. Through the supplication, Muslims first asserted their submission to the divine, celebrating the omnipotence and glory of Allah. They would then pose their requests. Sufi manuals offered supplications intended for a range of outcomes – from gaining material resources, through healing the infirm, to receiving hidden knowledge.[109] Recitation of certain Qur'ānic chapters was at times included in a supplication. Most frequent was *al-Fātiḥa.* The supplicants would express humility under Allah. The *shahada* would at times conclude a *duʿa.*[110]

All Muslims could recite these supplications. An illustrative example of a standard *duʿa* was the supplication which was supposed to be recited at the beginning of the new lunar year. One was to recite it early during Muḥarram. The text was rather brief and it follows," My god, who is eternal, [who is] the cause of all that is good, [who is] care eternal, the new year [is here] and you are the ancient king. I ask from you the strength against the devil and absolution from the fires, [I ask] for pardon and forgiveness upon this subjected and committed soul that is striving to do and say only what shall bring it closer to you, oh honorable one, oh venerable and fair one." *Verses* guarantee that this supplication directs grace to the supplicant,[111] which identifies its function as an incantation. A highly similar supplication was supposed to be pronounced at the end of the lunar year.[112]

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[108] Ibn Khaldun, *al-Muqaddima,* 1:139-165, 623-641, Al-Nābulsī, *Ḥadīqa*, 2:392, Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:25-26. Further see Grehan, *Twilight*, 150-156.
[109] Production of the manuals containing these *duʿa*s was parallel to the production of manuals for prayers and litanies aimed at identical effects in western Europe. See Thomas, *Decline,* 131-141.
[110] "RFR," 20B-21A. Further see, "INAR," 2A-3A, 5A-8B, 14A-17A, 25B, 45A-46A, 47A-48A.
[111] "INAR," 12A.
[112] Ibid., 25B.

According to eighteenth-century beliefs (that seem to have had a much longer and older tradition), the *duʿa* of the Sufis brought special benefits because of their *baraka.*[113] Some Sufis were remembered by the Muslim authors in particular because of the quality of their *duʿa* performance, which further strengthened the belief in the efficacy of their supplications.[114] For instance, in eighteenth-century Damascus, a highly influential Hanbalite, Abū al-Mawāhib Ibn ʿAbd al-Bāqī al-Ḥanbalī (d.1714)[115] had a reputation due to the efficacy of his rain summoning prayers. This is comparable to western European regions, where the prayers of certain saints or other members of the Catholic Church enjoyed particular renown both because of their efficacy and the eloquence of the performers. Analysis of such beliefs led to scholarly statements that but a thin line existed between prayers and spells in the Eurasian region prior to the modern period.[116]

Certain *duʿa*s were believed to originate from much earlier centuries. For instance, *Verses* offer a legend about a trader in Baghdad who possessed knowledge of a special supplication. Its usage shielded his household from a massive epidemic that has caused numerous fatalities. *Verses* narrate that 12,000 boys, each of them a *ḥāfiẓ*, succumbed to the disease. This particular *duʿa* was revealed to the trader by the greatest *imām* (*al-imām al-aʿẓam*). The title implies Abū Ḥanīfa (699-767), the presumed founder of the Hanafite *madhhab*.[117] *Duʿa*s were usually recommended for various diseases and afflictions. Disease-combating supplicants usually begged for divine mercy, taking efforts to glorify Allah through various divine attributes. The supplicants were to request

[113] These beliefs persisted until the modern period. For instance, al-Nabhānī, *JK,* 1:42.
[114] Ibid., 2:72, is an example.
[115] See Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid, *Muʿajam al-Muʾarikhīn al-Dimashqiīn wa ʿĀthāruhum al-Makhṭūṭa wa al-Maṭbūʿa* [The Dictionary of Damascene Historians and their Manuscripts and Printed works] (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Jadīd, 1978), 334, and Ibn Kannān, *Yawmiyāt*, 226B-227A. His grave was an important *ziyāra* location in Damascus. See Appendix B. Also see the last section of this chapter.
[116] Thomas, *Decline,* 45-69. Further see Bremmer, "Birth," 1-12, and Benussi, "Magic," 1-16, Melvin-Koushki, "Magic," 132-139. Also see section 2.1.
[117] "INAR," 16B.

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healing and pardon, pleading for God's mercy.[118] *Compendium* adds that in all cases even *al-Fātiḥa,* highly comparable to the Christian Paternoster in premodern belief,[119] had wondrous powers.[120]

According to the Sufi manuals, it was believed that supplications' efficacy grew with their repetition.[121] During his *ziyāra* campaigns, Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī was in the habit of repeating his supplications during many hours.[122] Ibn Budayr the barber writes that his Sufi master believed that eighty-seven repetitions of the words *yā ʿazīz* ("my dear," or "my precious," yet the word *ʿazīz* is generally applied for God, when it means "mighty") after praising the Prophet during the morning prayer[123] brought the supplicants' loved ones to them.[124] Supplications aimed at particular goals, like obtaining more resources, required several dozens of repetitions,[125] such was the case with *al-Fātiḥa* as well.[126] Some invocations were supposed to be repeated an excrutiating number of times over several days, or weeks. Following the correct procedure would result in acquiring hidden knowledge.[127]

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[118] Ibid., 17B.

[119] See Thomas, *Decline,* 211.

[120] "MMKF," 33B, 119B. Added to *al-Fātiḥa* was the potency of *al-Ikhlāṣ*.

[121] Repetition represents a universally important element in many religions. See, for instance, Thomas, *Decline,* 211, Jonathan Z. Smith, *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* (Chicago&London: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 54, Robert Wuthnow, *What Happens when we Practice Religion?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020), 43, 159, Robert N. McCauley, "Putting Religious Ritual in its Place: On Some Ways Humans' Cognitive Predilections Influence the Locations and Shapes of Religious Rituals," in *Locating the Sacred: Theoretical Approaches to the Emplacement of Religion*, ed. Claudia Moser and Cecelia Feldman (Oxford&Oakville: Oxbow Books, 2014), 144-164, John F. Schumaker, *The Corruption of Reality: A Unified Theory of Religion, Hypnosis, and Psychopathology* (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 1995), 141-143, Robert Yelle, *Semiotics of Religion: Signs of the Sacred in History* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 50-53, or Whitehouse, *Modes,* 8, 66. On the development of believs in ritual efficacy and repetition, see Pascal Boyer, *Religion Explained* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 3-50. Further on making conclusions about ritual efficacy and the way through which new rituals are developed and retained in Weber, *Sociology*, 1, Styers, *Making Magic,* 7-12, and James E. Alcock, "Propensity to Believe," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 775 (1995): 64-78.

[122] Al-Bakrī "KhH," 4A-5B.

[123] *Ṣalā ʿalā al-Nabī*. In Islam, this is a formal phrase commonly placed after the names of the prophets. It is commonly translated as "Peace be upon him" (Ar. *ṣallā allah ʿalayhi wa sallama*).

[124] Ibn Budayr, "HDY," 43A.

[125] "INAR," 45A-46A. This prayer is written in both Arabic and Ottoman languages.

[126] "MMKF," 119B.

[127] For instance, "MMKF," 27A-28B, 119AB, 140B-141A.

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The Sufis, as well as the common people, were in the habit of reciting *duʿa*s after the five standard prayers, as well as while harvesting *baraka* from a saintly tomb. It was believed that *duʿa*s were particularly potent if recited within shrines. Muslims hoped that the prayers at saintly *maqām*s would, in addition to the collection of *baraka*, persuade saints to provide their assistance. Like the Christian believers who went to the saintly shrines for numerous benefits ranging from blessings to averting natural disasters, such was the case with the Muslims as well.[128] Some Catholic saints were believed to have been specialized in averting particular disasters.[129] The history of the Muslims demonstrates comparable beliefs. In Damascus, for instance, *Maqām* Zaynab was visited to avert natural catastrophes.[130] In some instances, the saints were believed to respond swiftly. Burayk the priest narrates of a man who was virtuous but poor. He was praying at the grave of the deceased Patriarch Sylvester. Soon he was granted assistance.[131]

Chancing upon a shrine, one would in passing recite the *basmala,* perhaps adding the *shahāda* and performing the *tabarruk.* Canaan notices this habit in the early twentieth century.[132] If one intended to enter, doing so unannounced was considered to bespeak a lack of manners. It was customary to pronounce the same *dastūr* formula that was used when entering someone's home, or a place which was believed a jinnic territory.[133] Entering a *maqām,* one would say, "*dastūr, yā walī Allah*" (permission [to enter], saint of god). The superindendents of shrines would sometimes refuse to admit visitors, perhaps because a female group was already gathered within the premises.[134] To attract the attention of the saintly presence, Muslims would recite *al-Fātiḥa* for

[128] For comparison, see Thomas, *Decline*, 28-31.
[129] Ibid., 30.
[130] See Taylor, *Righteous*, 130.
[131] Burayk, *TS,* 82-83.
[132] Canaan, *Saints,* 91-96.
[133] See section 3.2.
[134] Canaan, *Saints,* 86-88.

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the saint's soul and activate the *baraka* within.[135] Canaan reads the saintly graves' epitaphs that urged pilgrims to recite *al-Fātiḥa* for the souls of the buried.[136] At times they would invoke the name of the saint who was commemorated by the shrine.[137] Afterwards, supplicants would recite *duʿa*s to receive *baraka* from Allah, or attempt to resolve their affairs.[138] It was customary to circumambulate a shrine. This is still performed during the *Ḥajj* in Mecca. People would further attempt to touch a shrine's *ḍarīḥ,* or kiss it.[139] In case the *maqām* held no *ḍarīḥ,* it would functionally fulfill the purpose of an icon.[140] After the pilgrims were done, it was common for them to establish physical contact with their loved ones.[141] They were hoping to distribute the shrine's *baraka* among their friends and family. If one suffered from a medical condition of a particular organ or limb, this body part would receive particular attention.[142]

During his pilgrimages, ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī documented briefly the proceedings of his prayers. In each shrine, he would "read *al-Fātiḥa* and then a *duʿa*," (*wa sharaʿnā fī qirāʾat al-fātiḥa wa al-duʿa*), or, "read *al-Fātiḥa* for [the saint] and then invoked god" (*qaraʾnā lahu al-fātiḥa wa daʿawnā Allah*).[143] Sometimes he would stay to perform one or more of the five standard prayers in a shrine.[144] It was not unusual for him to spend his time enjoying the hospitality of the superintendents and praying in the vicinity of tombs.[145] Al-Nābulsī was not an exceptional case.

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[135] Among many other instances, see Al-Nābulsī, *Ḥaqīqa,* 45, 86, 88, 100, 103. Further see al-Nābulsī, *Lubnān,* 87, 88, 106, 117. The function of the *sūra* was comparable to the purpose of reciting *talbiya* when entering a pre-Islamic shrine. See al-Azmeh, *Emergence,* 227-228.
[136] The usual phrasing would be, "… for his [the saint's] soul, recite *al-Fātiḥa…*" See Canaan, *Saints*, 21.
[137] Ibid., 86-88.
[138] Al-Nābulsī, *Ḥadīqa,* 2:429, and *Lubnān*, 106. "MMKF," 140B-142A, suggests some supplications suitable for the gravesites.
[139] Al-Karmī, *ShS,* 37-44, and al-Nābulsī, "Kashf," 163B, 168A-174A.
[140] More detail on icons may be found in the following section of this chapter.
[141] In some regions of modern Turkey, as well as some parts of the Balkans, it is still common to approach a pilgrim or a *shaykh* and clasp their hand from both sides. A *shaykh'*s hand would be kissed as well.
[142] Canaan, *Saints,* 99.
[143] For instance, Al-Nābulsī, *Ḥaqīqa,* 45 and 138 respectively. Similar proceedings may be found on almost every page of al-Nābulsī's pilgrimage accounts.
[144] Ibid., 138.
[145] Ibid., 138-142.

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Other members of the Ottoman Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* network conducted similar rituals in shrines. Al-Bakrī performed the same in Jerusalem.[146] Common people followed these customs as well. Traveling guides produced during the eighteenth century to list the many *maqām*s of Bilād al-Shām continuously emphasize the benefits of reciting *duʿa*s in shrines.[147]

The Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* had a practice of performing the *dhikr* within shrines. In addition, it was common to practice night vigils (*tahajjud*) within such locations.[148] A vigil was sometimes treated as the "sixth" daily prayer. Among the Sufis, it was praised for its supposed efficacy in collecting Allah's *baraka.* In addition, it was believed that the night vigil brought additional benefits, such as safe passage into the afterlife, in case one's death comes during sleep. Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī held the *tahajjud* in particular praise among the rituals performed in Muslim shrines.[149] In addition to vigils, sleeping at *maqām*s was a widespread practice among the Muslims. It was believed that sleep within a shrine may bring healing, or dreams which would inform the sleeper about their lives. This practice was called incubation (*istikhāra*) and represented a fairly widespread phenomenon in many world religions.[150]

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[146] Al-Bakrī, "KhH," 9A.

[147] Ibn Kannān, "MS," 4A-12B, al-Ḥanafī, "KFS," 83B-111B, al-ʿAdawī, *ZD*, 9-103, al-Manīnī, *IFS*, 71-141, al-Razzāq, *FS*, 126-181, al-Ṣayyādī, *RB*, 61-101, al-Nābulsī, *Ḥaqīqa*, 45-96.

[148] See Zain-ud-Din Ahmad bin Abdul-Lateef Az-Zubaidi, *The Translation of the Meanings of Summarized Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhāri, Arabic-English,* trans. Muḥammad Muḥsin Khān (Riyadh: Maktabat Dār al-Salām, 1996), 300-301. Also see Muhammad Imran, *Salat-ul-tahajjud* (Chicago: Kazi Publications, 185), 50-51. Night vigils are ubiquitous in religions. See, for instance, Moshe Weinfeld, "The Decalogue: Its Significance, Uniqueness, and Place in Israel's Tradition," in *Religion and Law: Biblical-Judaic and Islamic Perspectives,* ed. Edwin B. Firmage, Bernard G. Weiss and John W. Welch (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 42-43, Núria Montserrat Farré-i Barril, "Sleep Deprivation: Asceticism, Religious Experience and Neurological Quandaries," in *Religion and the Body: Modern Science and the Construction of Religious Meaning,* ed. David Cave and Rebecca Sachs Norris (Leiden&Boston: Brill, 2012), 217-234, or Yitzhak Hen, *Culture and Religion in Merovingian Gaul: A.D. 481-751* (Leiden&New York: Brill, 1995), 85. Finally, see Thomas, *Decline,* 151, for nocturnal vigils in shrines of Catholic saints.

[149] Al-Bakrī, "MA," 5B.

[150] See Bulkeley, *Dreaming,* 138-139, John Spencer Trimingham, *Islam in West Africa* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), 122-123, and F.E. Peters, *The Hajj: The Muslim Pilgrimage to Holy Places* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 15-16. Further see Gil Renberg, "General Introduction," in *Where Dreams May Come: Incubation Sanctuaries in the Greco-Roman World* (Leiden&Boston: Brill, 2016), 3-35, Peter Kingsley, *In the Dark Places of Wisdom* (Inverness: Golden Sufi Center, 1999), 80-105, Kimberley C. Patton, "A Great and Strange Correction: Intentionality, Locality, and Epiphany in the Category of Dream Incubation," *History of Religions* 43/3 (February 2004): 194-223, and Gary B. Frengren, *Medicine & Religion: A Historical Introduction* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins

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Rituals performed in *maqām*s often coincided with many leisure activities, as was previously indicated during chapter 5. Shrines were often visited by groups of Sufis. Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī enjoyed the company of his peers during his *baraka*-harvesting rounds in Palestine.[151] Pilgrimages represented networking opportunities. In 1693, ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī arrived to Joub Jannine (*Jubb Jinīn*) in West Beqaa. He was greeted by the Sufi master Kamāl al-Dīn. Al-Nābulsī writes with praise of this man. An entire group of Sufis escorted al-Nābulsī to the shrines which were located in the vicinity. The axial saint led rituals for the fraternity, after which he enjoyed some pastime under the canopy of the local sacred tree.[152] He did the same in Hama, leaving a record in which he stated that he collected *baraka* for the entire Sufi lodge there.[153]

In addition to praying at the *maqām*s which were believed to augment the power of religious rituals, the people of eighteenth-century Syria were (similar to elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire) in the habit of using various items and objects which were believed sacred. Some of them were considered relics. Others lay within *maqām*s until beliefs developed that the *baraka* of a shrine "leaked" into them. Finally, Muslims had their own talismans which were often produced both by the Sufi masters and disciples, as well as the magicians among the people.

6.4. Conduits of Energy: *Baraka*-Laden Items and Talismanics

Due to the belief that certain items were in close contact with the Muslim saints or prophets, these objects were widely believed to bring mystical benefits to those in their vicinity, or those who kept them on their person. A proponent of the classical theory of magic, James Frazer explains this

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University Press, 2014), 55-70, 118. Also see Koowon Kim, "Introduction," in *Incubation as a Type-Scene in the 'Aqhatu, Kirta, and Hannah Stories: A Form-Critical and Narratological Study of KTU 1.14 I-1.15 III, 1.17 I-II, and 1 Samuel 1:1-2:11* (Leiden&Boston: Brill, 2011), 1-26.

[151] Al-Bakrī, "KhH," 5A-20A.

[152] Al-Nābulsī, *Lubnān,* 116-120.

[153] Al-Nābulsī, *Ḥaqīqa,* 162.

belief through the principle of contagion. This principle dictated that items which were once in contact with each other in belief retained properties of each other long after they have been separated.[154] Among the most famous sacred relics, the Ottoman dynasty kept items that supposedly belonged to Prophet Muḥammad, along with strands of his beard, in the Topkapı Palace of Istanbul. These relics still represent a popular exhibit.[155] During the eighteenth century, ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī paid great respect to the head of the Baptist in the Ummayad Mosque, and that of al-Ḥusayn. Al-Nābulsī believed that al-Ḥusayn's head was buried near Hama.[156] Relics were significant in various religions through history, and until today.[157] During his eighteenth-century pilgrimage, Henry Maundrell writes about St. Nicephorus of Beirut who refused a pact with the devil to be rewarded with the miraculous growth of his beard – according to the legends, he previously suffered greatly for not having any facial hair. Statues of the saint with exquisite beard length were quite common, as the beard symbolized the struggle against the infernal.[158]

Objects in close proximity to hallowed tombs were considered extremely potent. In 1710, during Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī's *siyāḥa*, he suddenly got a strong headache. In the Shrine of Moses (*maqām al-nabī mūsā*) on the Jericho-Jerusalem road, he first said a prayer common upon entering

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[154] Frazer, *Golden Bough,* 14-16.
[155] Çiğdem Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul: Cultural Encounter, Imperial Vision, and the Construction of the Ottoman Capital* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009), 20. J. Gordon Melton, "Topkapi Palace," in *Encyclopedia of Religious Phenomena* (Detroit: Visible Ink Press, 2008), 337-338, and Chih, *Sufism*, 78.
[156] Al-Nābulsī, *Ḥuḍra,* 50, and *Ḥaqīqa,* 163.
[157] Wheeler, *Mecca,* 70-100, and Thomas, *Decline,* 34, 50-51. Further see Swanson, *Religion,* 158-165, Daniel Rock, *Hierurgia or Transubstantiation*, *Invocation of Saints, Relics, and Purgatory* (London: C. Dolman, 1851), 259-287, Ian G. Williams, "Relics and *Baraka:* Devotion to the Prophet Muhammad among Sufis in Nottingham, UK," in *Reading Religion in Text and Context: Reflections of Faith and Practice in Religious Materials,* ed. Elisabeth Arweck and Peter Collins (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 65-82, George C. Coulton, "Relics," in *Five Centuries of Religion vol. III: Getting&Spending* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936), 87-108, Cynthia Hahn, *Passion Relics and the Medieval Imagination: Art, Architecture and Society* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2020), 63-100, James B. Tschen-Emmons, "Religion," in *Artifacts from Medieval Europe* (Greenwood: ABC-Clio, 2015), 203-246, or Sergius Bulgakov, "On Holy Relics (In Response to their Desecration)," in *Relics and Miracles,* trans. Boris Jakim (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans, 2011), 1-42. Further see Kevin Trainor, "Buddhist relic veneration in India," in *Relics, Ritual and Representation in Buddhism: Rematerializing the Sri Lankan Theravada Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 32-65.
[158] Maundrell, *Journey,* 41.

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a praying house (*ṣallāt taḥīyyat al-masjid*). Observing the common proceedings of the rituals performed within shrines,[159] al-Nābulsī's student turned towards the *qibla,* recited *al-Fātiḥa* and commenced with his invocation. After he was done, al-Bakrī placed his head under the coverlet of the grave and rubbed it against the *ḍarīḥ*. His headache disappeared almost instantly. It did not bother him again.[160]

Any object found within the sacred grounds was believed to carry the *maqām*'s grace. People would sometimes rub against the rocks that may have been located in the vicinity of a shrine to alleviate pains,[161] roll on the shrine's ground, or rub soil into their bodies.[162] ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī writes about a dialogue between a Damascene Shaykh Maḥmūd and al-Nābulsī's mother. She was to bring young al-Nābulsī to Maḥmūd's grave after he died. There she would rub the baby with the soil of the grave to grant *baraka* to him. Maḥmūd was later buried in al-Sāliḥīyya.[163] Edward Lane narrates that early nineteenth-century Egyptians believed in the curative powers of the earth from Muḥammad's grave. This soil was frequently collected and sometimes baked into cakes which would be worn as amulets or hung around the households.[164] It was furthermore frequent for the commoners to rush to a place where a *shaykh*'s funeral was being prepared. They would attempt to touch the objects in close proximity to the corpse, dip their headwear into the water intended to wash the corpse, and so on.[165]

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[159] See previous section.
[160] Al-Bakrī, "KhH," 11A.
[161] McCown, "Shrines," 63.
[162] Taylor, *Righteous*, 62-79. Also Donald Swenson, *Society, Spirituality, and the Sacred: A Social Scientific Introduction* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 178-179. See also Trimingham, *Sufi Orders*, 26.
[163] This Achilles-like myth is read by Sirriyeh, "Ziyārāt," 112.
[164] Lane, *Egyptians,* 1:330-331.
[165] For instance, Talmon-Heller, *Piety,* 161-163.

In addition, people would collect small items that in popular belief had amuletic properties.[166] Pilgrims brought pieces of a sacred grave's coverlets (*sutūr*) back to their homes. If the *sutūr* were absent, any bit of cloth within the shrine would do as well.[167] The *Nabī Mūsā* shrine in Palestine was famous for its black stones that the people often collected. Oil which burnt in the censers at shrines was frequently gathered by the pilgrims. It was massaged into the infirm, especially to alleviate rheumatism. Vegetation that grew around shrines was at times used to fumigate the ill.[168] Canaan records that the waters of al-Maṭbaʿa marsh near Tel Shemmam (Tal al-Shammām) were believed especially efficacious in combating rheumatism and sterility.[169] It was customary to recite *al-Fātiḥa* for the saint before taking an object from a hallowed site.[170]

As previously indicated, water was believed to represent a powerful energy conduit.[171] Pilgrims regularly collected water from a shrine. Water collected in cisterns within shrines fulfilled similar functions as holy water did for the Christians.[172] Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī writes that the people of eighteenth-century Palestine frequently drank rainwater which was collected in the *maqām*s.[173] Water from the Zamzam probably represented the most potent *baraka* conduit in the popular imaginary.[174] Edward Lane narrates that people in Cairo were in the habit of dipping toothpicks into it, since it was believed that the sacred water would help preserve oral hygiene and health.[175]

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[166] Nabulsi, "Kashf," 168A-174A, Sajdi, *The Barber,* 62-63, or Masood Ali Khan and S. Ram, ed., *Encyclopaedia of Sufism: Basic Principles of Sufism in Islam* (New Delhi: Anmol Publications, 2003), 125, 147, 275.
[167] Canaan, *Saints*, 99-105.
[168] Canaan, *Saints,* 105-118, 210.
[169] Ibid., 42.
[170] Ibid., 31-35.
[171] Ibid., 38-39, 55.
[172] Ibid., 28.
[173] For instance, such was the arrangement in the Shrine of Moses near Jerusalem. Al-Bakrī, "KhH," 13A.
[174] Grehan, *Twilight*, 132, and Canaan, *Saints,* 99.
[175] Lane, *Egyptians,* 1:330.

Scripture itself represented a powerful talisman.[176] ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī praised the fact that a copy of the *muṣḥaf* was kept in the Aleppine citadel. He believed that this object bestowed blessings on its environment.[177] In chapter 3, it was discussed that verses from the Scripture, as well as its pages, were dissolved in water to create curative potions.[178] It was believed that the Qur'ān contained six particularly curative verses, jointly known as the Healing Verses (*ayāt al-shifā'*).[179] The *Verses on Exorcism* suggest that these *ayāt* should be written down and boiled in a pot. If true believers drank them, they would experience thaumaturgical healing.[180]

Baraka-harvesting acts would at times lead to excessive fervor. Wicks of the lamps that burned in shrines would be swallowed. This was often performed by women who wished to induce pregnancy in the shrine of Nabī Mūsā but was common in other shrines as well.[181] The chalk of the Milk Grotto in Bethlehem was believed to induce lactation.[182] According to beliefs, while the Virgin breastfed Christ, some milk fell on the ground, painting the rocks within the grotto white.[183]

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[176] Al-Azmeh, *Times,* 107, Campo, *Islam,* 40-41, Mattson, *Qur'an,* 148, William Albert Graham, *Islamic and Comparative Religious Studies: Selected Writings* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 193-298, Venetia Porter, "Talismans and Talismanic Objects," in *Medieval Islamic Civilization: An Encyclopedia, vol. 1,* ed. Joseph W. Meri (New York&London: Routledge, 2006), 794-795, Daniel W. Brown, *Introduction to Islam* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 78, Gilbert Delanoue and Jacques Jomier, "Les Musulmans," in *L'Egypte d'aujourd'hui: permanence et changements*, *1805-1976* (Paris: Editions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1977), 27-67, or Jacques Jomier, "La place du Coran dans la vie quotidienne en Égypte," *l'Institut des belles-lettres arabes* 15 (1952): 131-165. This is comparable to the Christian approach to the Bible. See Eyal Poleg, "The Bible as Talisman: Textus and Oath-books," in *Approaching the Bible in Medieval England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 59-107. Comparative cases can be found elsewhere as well. See Paul Copp, "Scripture, Relic, Talisman, Spell," in *The Body Incantatory: Spells and the Ritual Imagination in Medieval Chinese Buddhism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 29-58.

[177] Al-Nābulsī, *Ḥaqīqa,* 111.

[178] Lane, *Egyptians,* 1:318, 328, Grehan, *Twilight,* 149.

[179] See Qur'ān, 9:14, 16:69, 10:57, 26:80, 17:82, and 41:44. Further see, for instance, Gerda Sengers, *Women and Demons: Cultic Healing in Islamic Egypt* (Leiden&Boston: Brill, 2003), 44. The curative properties of these verses are still believed in. For instance, see Lance D. Laird and Wendy Cage, "Muslims, Medicine, and Mercy: Free Clinics in Southern California," in *Not by Faith Alone: Social Services, Social Justice, and Faith-Based Organizations in the United States,* ed. Julie Adkins, Lauri Occhipinti, and Tara Hefferan (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2010), 107. Further see Lane, *Egyptians,* 1:328.

[180] "INAR," 13A. This was frequently done in the early modern and modern periods. See Lane, *Egyptians,* 1:318, 328.

[181] Canaan, *Saints*, 105-118.

[182] Maundrell, *Journey,* 89-90. See also Grehan, *Twilight,* 129.

[183] Young, *Craving Earth,* 47.

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People usually rubbed this chalk into the skin[184] or kept it under their beds. It was not unusual, however, to eat it on the spot.[185] Collective effervescence[186] could become dangerous. Maundrell recounts how the people gathered in front of the Holy Sepulcher attempted through *tabarruk* to collect some of the Holy Flame and rub it in their skin and beards. Collective excitement grew so much that the gendarmerie had to get involved and break up the crowd. Despite their efforts, Maundrell witnessed people getting singed in the struggle for divine grace.[187]

Items collected during pilgrimages would at times further serve as key elements to produce other talismanic or amuletic devices. One of the most illustrative examples is a type of sacred bread called *quddāsa.* Canaan recorded the making of this bread in Jerusalem. People would collect the corn that grew on the grounds of Abū Madyān shrine. This *maqām* belonged to the al-Maghāriba Lodge complex. It was believed that the saint's hands were kept within.[188] According to beliefs, the bread brought no additional benefits unless it was produced during the holy month of Ramaḍān. During this holy month, dough was made from Abū Madyān corn. While it was kneaded, people would gather to recite the Scripture. *Al-Fātiḥa* would be read seven times, followed by ten repetitions of *al-Ikhlās*, after which the gathering would recite the scriptural chapters *al-Falāq* and *al-Nās* - *al-muʿawwidhatān*[189] – three times each. After the reading was done, people would bake bread out of this dough and expect to benefit from its curative powers. Pieces of the *quddāsa* would be consumed by the ill, both Muslim and Christian. In other cases, the bread would be suspended

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[184] Canaan, *Saints,* 105-118.
[185] Young, *Craving Earth,* 47.
[186] Durkheim, *Elementary Forms*, 212-215. See also Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry Into the Non-rational Factor In the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Rational* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), 71-77.
[187] Maundrell, *Journey,* 95-96.
[188] Massignon, *Documents,* 82-87. Also see section 5.5.
[189] See chapter 3.

over the patients' heads or placed under their pillows. It was customary to perform one's ablutions before consuming the *quddāsa*.[190]

Other shrine objects were employed to similar ends. The bituminous stones of Nabī Mūsā would be cut into squares or triangles. The *shaykh*s would make talismans out of them afterwards.[191] Talisman-making represented a long tradition among the Muslims and was widespread in other religions as well.[192] Ibn Khaldūn believed that talismanics represented a science which allowed a human being to influence the world with the assistance of celestial bodies.[193] For the creation of a talisman, time was essential. Depending on their intended purpose, talismanic objects needed to be crafted at particular dates, under particular astrological signs, or during particular periods of the day. The *Compendium* contains a list of talismans which were supposed to be produced during different days of the week. Other parameters mattered, such as the choice of materials and inscriptions used. In addition to paper, the materials used for production were silk, wood, or iron, and it was at times preferred that the color of the material would be red, blue, or yellow. These talismans were believed to bring many benefits to their holders, ranging

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[190] Canaan, *Saints,* 114. Canaan adds that the whole Qur'ān used to be recited by a number of readers in shifts.
[191] Ibid., 105-118.
[192] See Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima,* 623-630, and Thomas, *Decline,* 33-35. Further see Knysh, *Sufism,* 54, Knight, *Magic,* 69-70, al-Azmeh, *Times,* 223, Campo, *Islam,* 40-41, Graham, *Writings,* 187, 212, Sir Ernest Alfred Wallis Budge, "Arab and Persian Amulets and Talismans," in *Amulets and Superstitions* (New York: Dover Publications, 1978), 33-81, C. Burnett, "Talismans: Magic as science? Necromancy among the Seven Liberal Arts," in *Magic and Divination in the Middle Ages: Texts and Techniques in the Islamic and Christian Worlds* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996), 1-15, W.E. Staples, "Muhammad, a Talismanic Force," *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* Vol. 57, No. 1 (January, 1940): 63-70, Taufik Canaan, "The Decipherment of Arabic Talismans," *Berytus Archaeological Studies* 4 (1937): 69–110, and 5 (1938): 141–51, Emilio Spadola, "Summoning in Secret: Mute Letters and Veiled Writing," in *The Calls of Islam: Sufis, Islamists and Mass Mediation in Urban Morocco* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), 64-80, Travis Zadeh, "An Ingestible Scripture: Qur'ānic Erasure and the Limits of "Popular" Religion," Kevin Bond, "Buddhism on the Battlefield: The Cult of the "Substitute Body" Talisman in Imperial Japan (1890-1945)," and Justin McDaniel, "The Material Turn: An Introduction to Thai Sources for the Study of Buddhist Amulets," in *Material Culture and Asian Religions: Text, Image, Object,* ed. Benjamin J. Fleming and Richard D. Mann (New York&London: Routledge, 2014), 97-119, 120-134, 135-150, Michael Levi Rodkinson, *History of Amulets, Charms and Talismans: A Historical Investigation into their Nature and Origin* (New York: New Talmud Pub. Co., 1893), 4-93, or Alison Marshall, "Shamanism in Contemporary Taiwan," in *Chinese Religions in Contemporary Societies,* ed. James Miller (Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio, 2006), 123-146.
[193] Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima,* 623-630.

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from hidden knowledge to wishes coming true.[194] For the efficacy of all talismans, it was important that their makers were pure in their faith and behavior.[195]

Place was of importance as well, and it was widely believed that talismans produced in *maqām*s yielded potent results.[196] In addition, other requisites would be employed, such as a *shaykh*'s spittle. Particular texts were to be pronounced during the making of these objects. These included chapters from the Scripture, or other invocations. The *duʿa*s could often be written on the talisman itself.[197] However, while it was believed that *duʿa*s in general served curative and meliorative purposes, the talismans were mostly of a prophylactic value.[198] Particular symbols were to be inscribed on the material.[199] Muslim talismans would often bear individual letters of the Arabic alphabet that were believed to contribute to their power.[200] Special meanings were attributed to each letter. Inscriptions of any letter would often be followed by divine attributes.[201]

Some talismans would be produced to influence people. For instance, to reconcile spouses, friends, or siblings, the thaumaturge would first know the names of both parties, which would be written down on the material. Afterwards, the thaumaturge would recite a *duʿa* to express the wish for reconciliation. In cases of spouses, they might also acquire threads of their clothing that would be woven into the talisman.[202] An object which was believed to drive bad neighbors away was

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[194] "MMKF," 45A-48B.
[195] "INAR," 17B.
[196] Canaan, *Saints,* 115-118.
[197] "INAR," 16B.
[198] For instance, "MMKF," 34A-35B, or "INAR," 16A-17B. Further see Canaan, *Saints,* 115-118, and al-Azmeh, *Times,* 223, Graham, "Spell-ing," http://www.academia.edu/516626/Qur_anic_Spell-ing_Disconnected_Letter_Series_in_Islamic_Talismans (Last accessed: April 15th 2021). Saif, "Medicine and Magic," 332-335, Varisco, "Lunar Mansions," 487-530. For the illustrations of some talismans, see Appendix C, Figures 15-17.
[199] Graham, "Spell-ing."
[200] Ibid.
[201] "RFR," 6A-9B.
[202] "INAR," 101B-102A.

supposed to be buried under the threshold of the targets' household. Ideally, the neighbors would move to another location.[203]

Despite functional similarities between talismans, ulamaic circles clearly classified some of them under the domain of *siḥr.* Ibn Khaldūn leaves an example of a talisman which was supposed to influence rulers. This talisman was made from a thimble upon which a lion was drawn. At its feet was the drawing of a coiled snake. It carried a scorpion on its back. The talisman should have been made at the time when the Leo constellation was in conjunction with the sun.[204] It was previously discussed that some talismans were believed capable of manipulating the *jinn.*[205] This belief was very old. Ibn Khaldūn gives an example of a *jinn*-manipulating talisman with the purpose of sending daemons against an individual. The magicians would write down words associated with the target's attributes to draw a mental image of them. They would then write down words associated with the attributes the magicians wanted their victim to adopt. They would invoke the *jinn* and invite them to spit on the talisman together with the magician, tying a knot around it. The *jinn* were supposed to make the magicians' curses manifest on the victim.[206] In the eighteenth century, the practice of making similar talismans persisted, which is apparent from Ibn ʿĀbidīn's writings. Ibn ʿĀbidīn forbade the usage of talismans to compel the *jinn* or bring harm to others.[207]

In addition to talismans, Christians of eighteenth-century Bilād al-Shām, as well as Christians everywhere, believed in the mystical power of icons. Icons were believed to operate through a similar magical process as talismans and amulets. In classical scholarship, it was

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[203] "RFR," 20B.

[204] Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima,* 626, and Mushegh Asatrian, "Ibn Khaldūn on Magic and the Occult," *Iran & the Caucasus* Vol. 7, No. 1/2 (2003): 97.

[205] See chapter 3 for eighteenth-century examples. Also see Lane, *Egyptians,* 1:349-357.

[206] Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima,* 625.

[207] Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *MR,* 2:18, 36-47. In Catholic Europe some talismans were also identified as daemonological implements. See Thomas, *Decline,* 265, 564.

considered that icons were believed to be homeopathically connected[208] to the saint whose portrait they displayed. Icons were believed to perform the role of proxies[209] for supplicants seeking saintly intercession.[210]

In the eighteenth century, Burayk the priest records some mystical events tied to the icons of the Virgin, venerated by both the Christans and the Muslims of the province. In 1745, orders came from Dayr Qamar in south-central Lebanon for the Matāwila Shi'ites of south Lebanon to be attacked. Soldiers were instructed to kill all inhabitants even though some Christian families inhabited the region. Burayk retells that a Christian man who was considered pious and honorable prayed to the Virgin's icon before the attack. Although the soldiers ransacked the area, the family of the supplicant remained unharmed, as no one could enter this house.[211] Icons of other Christian saints were considered to contain mystical power as well. A woman in Damascus prayed to an icon in hopes to be assisted by the sainted Patriarch Sylvester (d.1722). Burayk narrates of this good, but poor and suffering woman who was tortured by her husband. According to his tale, the saint appeared in the man's dreams and ordered him to fix the relationship with his wife.[212]

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[208] Frazer, *Golden Bough,* 16-18.

[209] Instances of similar image magic were recorded in many regions. See Klaasen, *Magic,* 33-57, Sophie Page, *Magic in the Cloister: Pious Motives, Illicit Interests and Occult Approaches to the Medieval Universe* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013), 74, Jessica Dell, "'A witch, a quean, an old cozening quean!' Image Magic and Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor,*" in *Magical Transformations on the Early Modern English Stage,* ed. Lisa Hopkins and Helen Ostovich (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 185-202, Anne Lawrence-Mathers and Carolina Escobar-Vargas, "Astral and image magic: the bases of ritual magic," in *Magic and Medieval Society* (London&New York: Routledge, 2014), 35-37, Marla Segol, "Word and Image in Medieval Kabbalah: Interpreting Diagrams from the *Sefer Yetsirah* and its Commentaries," in *Word and Image in Medieval Kabbalah: The Texts, Commentaries, and Diagrams of the Sefer Yetsirah* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 1-20, and David Morgan, "Image," in *Key Words in Religion, Media and Culture,* ed. David Morgan (New York: Routledge, 2008), 96-110. Also see Jamal J. Elias, "Seeing the Religious Image in the Historical Account: Icons and Idols in the Islamic Past," in *Material Culture,* ed. Fleming and Mann, 284-302.

[210] Beliefs in the power of icons are well documented in Christianity. See Lundskow, *Sociology,* 214, or Zuzana Skalova, "The Icon of the Virgin *Galaktotrophousa* in the Coptic Monastery of St Antony the Great at the Red Sea, Egypt: A Preliminary Note," in *East and West,* ed. Ciggaar and Teule, 235-264, Michelle Lang, "A Secular Trinity? The Transformation of Christian iconography in a Post-Christian Age," in *Beyond Belief: Theoaesthetics or Just Old-Time Religion?* ed. Ronald R. Bernier (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2010), 98-112.

[211] Burayk, *TS*, 43-44.

[212] Ibid., 82-83.

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Powerful objects and words were abundant in premodern Syria, across social strata and religious confessions. Like shrines, these objects in time inspired the development of a particular economy focused on the distribution of spells and thaumaturgical artifacts. Sufi services usually did not count among the cheap commodities for the people. The Sufis in some cases managed to secure a decent living in the Middle East under Ottoman rule.

6.5. The Price of Divine Grace: Economy of Rituals

The price of *shaykh*s' assistance was at times too steep for some people. Stephan relates a case when a *shaykh* from Jerusalem requested five Egyptian pounds and a sheep to perform an exorcism on a sick child. The father could not afford the price and the child had to endure the affliction.[213]

In general, early modern Muslim *shaykh*s had a lucrative craft. Considerable profit was generated from talisman-making. James Grehan writes about a Damascene Shākir al-Mīdanī (d.1850), who enjoyed high popularity among women. His clientele was mostly interested in love charms and amulets that would help them conceive male children.[214] There was a constant market for curative amulets. A Damascene Sufi Abū Bakr al-Dusūqi (d.1779) had a reputation because of the imagined efficacy of his curative talismans.[215] People of all religious confessions traded with the talisman-makers.[216] In addition to coin, they would at times pay with various goods, such as tobacco pouches and other accessories.[217] Engaging in such trade, many *shaykh*s earned more than

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[213] Stephan, "Lunacy," 7.
[214] Grehan, *Twilight,* 150-151.
[215] Ibid., 152-153.
[216] Ibid, 180.
[217] Canaan, *Saints,* 134.

a decent living,[218] similar to the Christian clergy in the Middle East. Christian believers frequently furnished churches or sent robes and other items to the priests in exchange for their services.[219]

Vows and votive offerings were frequent at the Muslim shrines. It was considered hazardous to break them.[220] People would promise certain goods or valuables to a shrine provided their prayers were answered with saintly intercession. Starting a new military campaign against Nablus militias in 1735, the strongman-governor Ẓāhir al-ʿUmar first went to Nazareth where he publicly prayed in the shrine of the Virgin.[221] Kneeling down, he rubbed his face in the soil of the shrine and vowed that he would send regular tribute should he win the battle. He emerged victorious and honored his vows to the fullest.[222]

Some people did not have the means to pledge and endow luxurious votive offerings to shrines. Other kinds of bargains were then made. In 1743, a man in Damascus fell ill. His lover, who worked as a prostitute, prayed at the *maqām* of Shaykh Ruslān, promising that she would celebrate the saint's *mawlid* should her lover recover. When the man was back to his health, the prostitutes of Damascus paraded the city escorted by musicians. Their hairs were loose, and they

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[218] du Couret, *Life in the Desert*, 420-421.
[219] Canaan, *Saints,* 134.
[220] Taking vows at shrines has a long tradition among the Arabs. See, for instance, Grehan, *Twilight,* 169-173. Also James Grehan, "The Mysterious Power of Words: Language, Law, and Culture in Ottoman Damascus (17th-18th Centuries)," *Journal of Social History* 37, No. 4 (Summer, 2004), 992. It would seem that the strength of the spoken word related to many more contexts in addition to vowing in front of Muslim saints. To compare with regions throughout the Mediterranean Basin, see Peter Burke, *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy: Essays on Perception and Communication* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 10-14, or Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, "'I Also Have a Moustache': Anthropology and Mediterranean Unity," in *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 485-523, Sadok Masliyah, "Oaths in Spoken Iraqi Arabic," *Journal of Semitic Studies XLIV/1* (Spring, 1999): 83-103, Moshe Piamenta, *Islam in Everyday Arabic Speech* (Leiden: Brill, 1979), 39-42.
[221] Paying equal respect to Muslim and Christian shrines in Syria represented a common habit of the people that belonged to all confessional groups. See Anna Poujeau, "Sharing the *Baraka* of Saints: Pluridenominational Visits," in *Sharing Sacred Spaces in the Mediterranean: Christians, Muslims and Jews at Shrines and Sanctuaries,* ed. Dionigi Albera and Maria Couroucli (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 202-218. For further comparisons, see Cory Thomas Pechan Driver, *Muslim Custodians of Jewish Spaces in Morocco: Drinking the Milk of Trust* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 38-41, 55-58, 76-86, 127-129.
[222] Grehan, *Twilight,* 183. In front of a military retinue, this was doubtlessly a very powerful self-representative act.

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wore provocative clothing.[223] Early modern Province of Damascus at times faced legal difficulties with prostitution in urban centers. Prostitutes would be expelled or faced prohibitions from time to time.[224] This parade's purpose was to redeem a vow and it attracted no repercussions.[225]

The people of Syria and Palestine often vowed to donate other goods in exchange for intercession. Grain was offered to shrines in exchange for thaumaturgical healing,[226] while many peasants promised to take a portion of their harvest to a shrine during the following season, if the yield was rich.[227] In such ways, many shrines managed to support themselves, accepting other necessities as well, such as lamps or oil. The deceased *awliyā'* were rumored to have been fair. They would accept no more than what was vowed to them. Canaan records that a Christian woman vowed to bring some oil to the Palestinian St. George shrine in exchange for curing her child. The child grew healthy, and she brought more oil than she promised. The surplus kept spilling out of the lamps within the shrine until the priests told the woman that the saint received what was promised and required no more.[228]

It was customary for the people to leave a testimony (*mashhad*) to their vow. They would also leave *mashhad*s to their pilgrimages. Simple symbols were sufficient, such as a piece of cloth tied to a convenient place within or near a shrine. People would often tie cloths to sacred trees in the vicinity of shrines.[229] Piles of rocks would be heaped somewhere around the premises. The custom of placing *mashhad*s survived into the modern period and was followed by a spoken

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[223] Ibn Budayr, "HDY," 45A-45B.
[224] See Elyse Semerdjian, *"Off the Straight Path": Illicit Sex, Law, and Community in Ottoman Aleppo* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2008), 94-137, 182. Specifically for the Damascene case, see Ibn Budayr, "HDY," 24A-24B.
[225] Ibn Budayr, "HDY," 45A-45B.
[226] Canaan, *Saints*, 141.
[227] Curtiss, *Primitive,* 162, Canaan, *Saints,* 145-150.
[228] Canaan records that the woman invoked St. George as *al-Khiḍr*. See Canaan, *Saints,* 145.
[229] This was recorded in McCown, "Shrines," 62. Tying rags to trees was a more universal custom. See, for instance, Ceri Houlbrook, "Roots of a Ritual," in *The Magic of Coin Trees from Religion to Recreation* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 25-70.

formula that was, "I testify for your today, so that you shall testify for me upon the Resurrection Day" (*anā ashhad maʿak al-yawm wa anta tashhad maʿī yawm al-qiyāma*, or in colloquial, *anā bashad maʿak al-yūm wint tashad maʿī yūm al-qiyāmi*).[230] This formula was a request for saintly intercession. Grehan records that *mashhad* rocks would sometimes be used to check if the supplicants' prayers would be answered. For instance, at the grave of Aḥmad al-Dajānī in Jerusalem, people would recite their requests and cast rocks. If an unseen force flung a rock away, that was telling of a rejected supplication.[231]

Objects left to testify to one's pilgrimage served as collectible amulets for future pilgrims. To take such an object, however, a pilgrim would need to leave something of their own possessions in the shrine. Maundrell observes that many eighteenth-century *maqām*s were like button makers' or textile shops with their numerous beads, linen hangings and other trinkets.[232] These symbolic transactions had a curative purpose as well. The ill would enter a *maqām* and leave something from their possessions. They would recite, "I have cast my burden upon you, saint of God," (*ramayt ʿalayk ḥamalī yā walī Allah*), in hopes to part from their illness which the saint would dispatch. Afterwards, they would collect another item from the *maqām,* expecting a cure.[233]

In exchange for saintly assistance, people frequently offered sacrifice to the *awliyā'*. Occasionally, the people would vow an animal that would then be sacrificed at a later point in time. If someone would promise half a cow to a *walī,* from that moment onwards and until the animal was sold, half of its milk, its offspring, and anything which would accompany the animal represented the shrine's property. If the animal was sold, half of the profit was sent to the shrine.[234]

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[230] McCown, "Shrines," 65-68. Also, Canaan, *Saints,* 75.
[231] Grehan, *Twilight,* 104.
[232] Maundrell, *Journey,* 12-13.
[233] Canaan, *Saints,* 103-104.
[234] Ibid., 156-158. Also see Ibn ʿAbidīn, *Radd,* 9:457-482.

Edward Lane notices that sacrificial animals were allowed to walk and graze wherever they wished until the sacrifice was performed.[235]

It was considered obligatory that the sacrificial animal (*dhabīḥa* or *ḍaḥīyya*) should bleed.[236] In the modern period, Curtiss listened to one of the Ismāʿīlīyya adherents who explained that the most important part of ritualistic sacrificing was the "bursting forth of blood."[237] It was imperative that the *ḍaḥīyya* was healthy. Wounded or sick animals were unacceptable.[238]

The *ḍaḥīyya* would be taken to the shrine and forced to lie on its left side. Its head would be pointed towards the *qibla* (Christians and Jews turned their animals towards Jerusalem).[239] The actual slaughter would be carried out by the supplicant, or an adjutant.[240] The shrine's superintendent (*khādim*) would at times assist as well.[241] It was necessary for the supplicant to establish close proximity with the sacrifice. If an adjutant was appointed, the supplicant would usually lay their hand on the animal.[242]

The ritual would start with the mandatory *basmala*. Through a *duʿa,* organized to express the intent of the sacrifice, the supplicant would invoke God. Ibn ʿĀbidīn considers the *duʿa* compulsory while performing a sacrifice.[243] *Verses* suggest to the Sufis to structure the *duʿa* to ask Allah to accept the sacrifice performed that day like the sacrifice of Abraham was accepted in its own time.[244] Invocations should have been performed without pause and with intense focus. In case the supplications would be interrupted, supplicants would immediately recite the *basmala*.[245]

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[235] Lane, *Egyptians,* 1:306-307.
[236] Ibn ʿAbidīn, *Radd,* 9:423-425, 438-444.
[237] Curtiss, *Primitive,* 197, 211. Compare with Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *Radd,* 9:425.
[238] Ibid., 9:444-445.
[239] Canaan, *Saints,* 161-164, Curtis, *Primitive,* 173-174, 223-225.
[240] Ibid., 148-149, 223-225, Canaan, *Saints,* 162.
[241] Curtis, *Primitive,* 144-147, 163. Compare with the pre-Islamic shrine superintendents in al-Azmeh, *Emergence,* 238, Zeitlin, *Muhammad,* 55.
[242] Curtiss, *Primitive,* 148-149.
[243] Ibn ʿAbidīn, *Radd,* 9:437. This can be seen in the twentieth century as well. See Canaan, *Saints,* 136.
[244] "INAR," 19A.
[245] Ibn ʿAbidīn, *Radd*, 9:437-438.

The ritual would then proceed to the end. The appointed butcher would recite a quick *basmala* right before driving the blade into the *ḍaḥīyya.* Ibn ʿĀbidīn advises a quick killing blow where the neck met the jaw.[246] Unnecessary torturing of the animal was frowned upon.[247]

After the sacrifice, the corpse of the animal would be cut and processed. At times the meat would be prepared on the spot. This food was not intended to turn profit. It was customary instead to arrange a public feast, the aim of which was charity (*ṣadāqa*).[248] Supplicants who offered the sacrifice would feed the hungry and the mendicant, but other people equally as well.[249] The *walī* received the beast's soul,[250] while the people satisfied with the rest.

The purpose of the sacrifice was often to seek saintly assistance in healing, to redeem a vow, or ask for general good fortune. Apotropaic sacrifices have already been discussed in chapter 3. If one sacrificed to protect a household,[251] the bloody hand-print on the façade represented a *mashhad.* This type of *mashhad* would be seen on walls of the *maqām*s as well. In the absence of blood, red henna would be used to paint such a marker.[252] People sometimes sacrificed to do penance. For instance, chapter 5 mentioned a gendarme who took grapes from a shrine in ʿAwartā without permission.[253] As a punishment, he vomited blood until he offered blood to the shrine.[254] Sometimes the saints manifested in one's dreams to demand sacrifice. A green-clad spear-wielding

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[246] Ibid.,9:439, 448. These instructions apply to any sort of butchering work and represent until today the procedure of producing *ḥalāl* food. In the contemporary period, the practice attracted criticism from various animal protection activism groups. See Katherine Wills Perlo, "Islam," in *Kinship and Killing: The Animal in World Religions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 95-114. The rest of the chapters discuss other Old Testament traditions as well as Buddhism. Also see Jordan Curnutt, "Ritual Slaughter of Animals," in *Animals and the Law: A Sourcebook* (Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio, 2001), 176-182.
[247] Ibn ʿAbidīn, *Radd*, 9:427.
[248] Ibid., 9: 457, 463-475. Further see Canaan, *Saints,* 177-178, and Curtiss, *Primitive,* 172, 223-225.
[249] Ibn ʿAbidīn, *Radd,* 9: 463-482.
[250] Canaan, *Saints,* 174.
[251] See section 3.5.
[252] Ibid. Also Maundrell, *Journey,* 13 and McCown, "Shrines," 51. McCown interprets these marks as symbols of happiness.
[253] See section 5.1.
[254] Canaan, *Saints*, 36.

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figure symbolizing al-Khiḍr oneirically inspired members of several different confessional groups to gather in al-Khiḍr's shrine south of Damascus early in the twentieth century. Paton saw several hundreds of people on this ceremony. They were offering sacrificial animals in the belief that al-Khiḍr required them to dispatch the ongoing cholera epidemic.[255]

In addition to votive offerings and making penance, people of the Ottoman Empire sacrificed for a wide number of other reasons. Aside from Eid al-Fitr and the most important *mawlid*s, birthdays of the popular saints were celebrated as well. Sacrifice would be offered on such occasions.[256] Up to the twentieth century, Ottoman authorities would additionally sacrifice prior to commencing any large-scale endeavors,[257] such as opening new railway connections.[258] Grehan emphasizes the impact such acts had on imperial economy along with communal prayers as well as other ceremonies held by the Ottoman authorities within different regions of the Empire.[259]

Sacrificing, as well as talismanics and supplications performed by the Sufi masters at times represented parts of the same ritual. Such rituals were most often large-scale events, usually involving the participation of the commoners along with the elites. Some of them represented official state endeavors, while others were organized *ad-hoc* in attempts to prevent natural disasters or some other form of an impending danger.

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[255] Paton, "Survivals," 62. The Christian people present at the ceremony prayed to St. George.
[256] Al-ʿAsalī, *al-Nabī*, 101-150, Grehan, *Twilight,* 172-175, or Chih, *Sufism,* 2, 96.
[257] For instance Stephen P. Blake, "Ceremony," in *Time in Early Modern Islam: Calendar, Ceremony, and Chronology in the Safavid, Mughal, and Ottoman Empires* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 76-106, Selçuk Akşin Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire, 1839-1908* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 141, James Grehan, "Fun and Games in Ottoman Aleppo: The Life and Times of a Local Schoolteacher (1835-1865)," in *Entertainment among the Ottomans,* ed. Ebru Boyar and Kate Fleet (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 90-120, Ehud R. Toledano, *As if Silent and Absent: Bonds of Enslavement in the Islamic Middle East* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 229-230, and Yürekli, *Architecture,* 149-150.
[258] Curtiss, *Primitive,* 189.
[259] Grehan, *Twilight,* 172-175.

6.6. United We Stand: Public Religious Rituals in eighteenth-century Damascus

Among the most illustrative examples of a state-endorsed public ritual containing thaumaturgical elements was the rain-summoning prayer (*ṣalāt al-istisqā'*). Rain prayers had a long tradition which continued in Ottoman Syria during the early modern and the modern period. Grehan notices that members of all religious confessions often participated in this ritual.[260] Ibn Khaldūn considered rain prayers the responsibility of the caliph that was outsourced to the *imams* of large congregational mosques.[261] A Sufi *shaykh* would usually be appointed as the ritual leader.

In eighteenth-century Damascus, Abū al-Mawāhib Ibn ʿAbd al-Bāqī al-Ḥanbalī (d.1714) enjoyed particular renown because of the belief in his meteoromantic skills. Ibn ʿAbd al-Bāqī was also a very influential Hanbalite scholar, remembered as a chronicler and a historian, and respected widely for his erudition.[262] Ismāʿīl al-Nābulsī, the son of al-Nābulsī the *quṭb,* stood out among his many Syrian and Egyptian mentors. In turn, Ibn ʿAbd al-Bāqī taught Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī,[263] Ḥusayn al-Baytimānī and Aḥmad Ibn Siwār.[264] Possibly the most renowned of his students was Aḥmad al-Manīnī.[265] It appears that Ibn ʿAbd al-Bāqī was an integral part of a very important network of scholars and thaumaturges in the eighteenth-century Province of Damascus. He became a *walī,* and his grave was frequently visited in al-Ṣāliḥīyya during the eighteenth century.[266]

During the winter months of 1698/1699, severe droughts forced the Damascenes to organize an *istisqā'* ceremony. Religious authorities instructed the Damascenes to fast for three

[260] Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima,* 274. Further see Grehan, *Twilight,* 164-165, Russell, *Aleppo,* 195, and Canaan, *Saints,* 219.
[261] Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Muqaddima,* 274.
[262] See Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid, *Muʿajam al-Mu'arikhīn al-Dimashqiīn wa 'Āthāruhum al-Makhṭūṭa wa al-Maṭbūʿa* [The Dictionary of Damascene Historians and their Manuscripts and Printed works] (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Jadīd, 1978), 334, and Ibn Kannān, *Yawmīyāt,* 226-227.
[263] Al-Murādī, *Silk*, 4:220-228.
[264] Ibid., 2:60-62, and 1:129-130, respectively. The biographies of these gentlemen were discussed in chapter 4.
[265] Ibid., 1:153-166. Also see chapters 4 and 5.
[266] See Appendix B.

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days and nights. Their purity was required. Ibn ʿAbd al-Bāqī was assigned as the *imām* for the occasion. It was decided that the celebrated Bāb al-Muṣalla Mosque shall be the site where the ceremony would take place, due to the beliefs in its mystical properties.[267]

After the three days of fasting, people flocked into the mosque. They brought sacrificial animals, mostly goats and sheep. They directed supplications to Allah or raised their voices in theatrical cries. The notables of Damascus arrived at the scene along with the important *ʿulamāʾ*. Ibn ʿAbd al-Bāqī placed a chair in the center of the edifice and settled down to commence with a *duʿa.* The scene lasted a longer while before Ibn ʿAbd al-Bāqī, seeing no results of the ritual, grabbed his beard and yelled to God: "My God, do not expose this old man [to shame] in front of your worshippers (*yā allahī lā tafḍaḥ al-shayba bayna ʿubādik*)!" It was previously discussed that the popular imaginary for the most part understood that there was a link between thaumaturgical power and the *ṣalāḥ* of an individual. The Hanbalite saint was sitting in front of many of his peers, as well as the common people of Damascus. His reputation was at stake. He snapped at Allah, and according to al-Murādī, black clouds soon appeared to the west. The crowd was pleased and soon dispersed. The "gates of the sky opened" (*infataḥat abwāb al-samāʾ*) at sundown, gracing Damascus with heavy rains that lasted for three days.[268]

Sufis were preferred as prayer leaders even in the most peaceful of times. For instance, after seven days of feasts to celebrate Defterdār al-Falāqinsī's daughter's marriage, the treasurer appointed several Sufi *shaykh*s to lead a public prayer for the benefit of all Damascenes.[269] Prominent names within the Damascene eighteenth-century network of the holy tended to surface whenever the situation required a public prayer. This was especially visible in times of crises,

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[267] Zurayq and Oweiss, *Arab Civilization,* 273, Rafeq, *Damascus*, 182-183, and Ibn Budayr, "HDY," 92B.
[268] Al-Murādī, *Silk*, 1:79-81. Also, Grehan, "Social Imagination," 218, footnote 10. During spring 2014, this footnote provided important inspiration as it prompted initial questions that this dissertation is answering.
[269] Ibn Budayr, "HDY," 13B.

when the people considered the reliance on thaumaturgical assistance mandatory. For instance, the devastating earthquakes of 1759[270] demolished much of the Damascene infrastructure. Qubbat al-Naṣr on Mount Qasioun was heavily damaged[271] along with the Umayyad Mosque, while the city's water supply remained cut off during approximately eleven days.[272] The freshly appointed governor after Asad al-ʿAẓm's deposition, ʿAbd Allah Pasha Al-Shatajī (r.1758–1759),[273] ordered a public prayer.

Al-Shatajī ordered the people to fast for three days and nights. It was decided that the ritual would take place in Bāb al-Muṣalla. On the fourth day, the governor came to attend the ceremony, surrounded by his retinue and the Damascene scholars and elites. Aḥmad Ibn Siwār, an apprentice of Ibn ʿAbd al-Bāqī al-Ḥanbalī, was assigned as the prayer leader. Common people flocked to the place of power as well, and according to Ibn Budayr the barber, prayers lasted for three full days. People were shouting and crying "as if it was the Judgement Day."[274] Ibn Siwār recited his *duʿa*s that were then repeated by the people.[275] The Orthodox cleric Burayk viewed these earthquakes as divine punishment. During the quakes, the Christians sought refuge in their own place of power, the Church of St. Nicholas. The priests led public prayers there during the crisis.[276]

In light of some disasters which were specific to the region, the Province of Damascus had other mystical means of repelling them. For instance, legends told about a mystical water which

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[270] Al-Darāwisha and Ambrīsīz, "Zilzāl ʿĀm 1759," 235-246.
[271] This is a large religious structure, see Samer Akkach, "Leisure Gardens, Secular Habits: The Culture of Recreation in Ottoman Damascus," *METU Journal of the Faculty of Architecture* 27 (2010): 73.
[272] Ibn Budayr, "HDY," 91B-92B.
[273] The nickname corresponds to the Turkish word *çeteci* which indicates a military commander, and this pasha in fact had a prolific campaigning career. For Damascus specifically, see Grehan, *Everyday Life,* 90-91, Barbir, *Damascus,* xv, Moshe Sharon, *Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum Palestinae: Volume Five* (Leiden&Boston: Brill, 2013), 225-230.
[274] Ibn Budayr, "HDY," 92B.
[275] Al-Murādī, *Silk,* 1:128.
[276] Burayk, *TS,* 110-111.

lured a giant black bird called Samarmar.[277] Followed by a flock of other black birds, Samarmar was believed to be a locust-devourer with much importance for Syrian popular belief. Locust infestations in greater Syria represented a common occurrence.

Damascenes believed that Samarmar's water flowed somewhere between Shiraz and Isfahan.[278] During 1747, when a particularly severe infestation thrived in the region, Asʿad Pasha al-ʿAẓm assigned two Sufi-*ʿālim*s to fetch some of this water.[279] One of them was Alī al-Maṣrī the Shafi'ite (d.1749), who was a prominent lecturer in the *madrasa*s around the Umayyad mosque. The other one remains remembered as ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Kafarsūsī. According to the old belief, the pair was supposed to collect Samarmar's water and then travel back without looking over their shoulders, leaving water containers on the ground or passing under roofs. If they would fail, they would make the quest futile. Otherwise, Samarmar would come.[280]

The *shaykh*s returned with the water and the Sufi disciples formed a welcoming procession. They carried colorful flags and flowers. They were beating drums to celebrate the arrival of the pair. Mystical water was poured in smaller containers and suspended all over Damascus – especially at prominent places, such were the minarets of the Umayyad Mosque.[281] The governor ordered some water to be sent to Hawran to deal with the infestation there.[282]

Ibn Budayr writes that the locusts still plagued the countryside throughout the season. In his narrative, he immediately questions the people's behavior prior to the arrival of the Sufis and

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[277] Volney, *Travels,* 307-308. The people of Iraq seem to have believed in this bird as well. See for instance, "Home of the Locusts," in *Every Saturday: Volume V, January to June 1868* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1868), 71-75.
[278] Aḥmad ʿIzzat ʿAbd al-Karīm, one of the modern editors of al-Qāsimī's version of the barber's diary, gives a short account about this bird in Al-Budayrī, *HDY*, 73, n. 1, while some centuries before him, Al-Murādī the biographer does the same in *Silk*, 3:226-228. Also, see Grehan, *Twilight,* 1-3. James Grehan has done a lot of work on the Samarmar. Finally, see Pantić, "Faith," 95-97.
[279] Ibn Budayr, "HDY," 31B.
[280] Al-Murādī, *Silk,* 3:227.
[281] James Grehan traces some other occasions when Samarmar was called, such as one instance in the sixteenth-century Aleppo, when the authorities, however, refused the water to be hung on the citadel, stonewalling the people with the sultan's authority. See "The Legend of the Samarmar," 122.
[282] Ibn Budayr, "HDY," 33A.

Samarmar's water. As it was discussed in the beginning of this chapter, in the case of a ritual's failure, blame would be transferred to the people.[283] Allah's wonders would not be doubted in. Rumors abounded about sinfulness, transgressions against faith, and provocations of Allah's wrath. In Ibn Budayr's narrative, virtue, purity, and the absence of sin became luxurious commodities the popular imaginary was in dire need of. The Damascene barber writes that the people were corrupt, ill-behaved and evil.[284] At one point during the crisis, the Saʿadīyya Shaykh Ibrāhīm al-Jabāwī led a public prayer at the shrine of Zaynab. To the beating of drums and under the order's flags, the people then turned to the citadel which they circumambulated. Finally, the Saʿadīyya disciples performed their trademark act, the *dawsa.* Al-Jabāwī admonished the people for their behavior. He fumed because of sinful women, prostitutes in public spaces, and popular unrest caused by the many militant factions in Damascus. Ibn Budayr took the opportunity to portray himself as one of the righteous who suffered so much because of the evil in the world around him.[285] Similarly, James Grehan records an *istisqā'* ritual in Damascus during the winter of 1662/1663. The ceremony was organized twice in the Umayyad Mosque with a procession towards the suburbs. There was no rain and the people immediately raised complaints about the vile behavior of their neighbors, emphasizing humility and modesty as the highly needed traits.[286] As for the locust plague of 1747, Ibn Budayr celebrated the arrival of Samarmar only during the following season, after the people took many pains to exterminate the insects. For instance, under governor's orders, the residents were to hunt down the locusts and bury them around Damascus.[287]

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[283] James, *Religious Experience*, 27-28.
[284] Ibn Budayr, "HDY," 36B.
[285] Ibid. 36B-37B.
[286] Grehan, "Violence," 218.
[287] Ibn Budayr, "HDY," 35B-37B, al-Murādī, *Silk*, 3:227.

An analysis into the form and the mechanics of the premodern Muslim ritual on the case of eighteenth-century Bilād al-Shām demonstrates that the ritual proceedings would remain the same in most cases, regardless of scale. Certain standard requirements needed to be honored, such as ritualistic purity induced through fasting and ablutions. The *duʿa* represented a common element in most rituals, and was crucial due to its function of expressing the supplicant's needs in hopes of communicating them to the deity. The deceased saints' intercession was often solicited in times of dire needs as well as for individual well-being.

Throughout the premodern period, there existed the belief that the Sufis' *duʿa*s were particularly potent and efficacious. It was therefore that the prominent members of the Ottoman network of the holy often stood as *imām*s regardless if the prayer was public and counted as a state ceremony, or more private and aimed at particular personal goals of the supplicant. The function of the Sufi-*ʿulamāʾ* as the leaders of particularly efficacious rituals indicates another angle through which the entanglement between religion, thaumaturgy and magical practice can be studied in comparative religions.

It was further shown that many religious practices in the early modern period resembled magical practices that were germane to the same regions. While writing down their theological opinions, the *ʿulamāʾ* throughout the centuries developed the distinction between thaumaturgy and magic based on its supposed origin. Because of their *baraka,* the Sufis could delve into the magical arts without any repercussions. Practitioners of various magical rituals without official training supposedly acted upon daemonic inspiration. In practice, however, it would seem that the proceedings of many magical and thaumaturgical rituals followed the same form.

In addition to maintaining distinctions between wonder-working and magic in their writing, the ulamaic circles of eighteenth-century Damascus could have acted upon allegations of sorcery,

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taking care to run investigations, and if necessary, dispatch any threats. Early modern Ottoman Sunnism continued to maintain its thaumaturgical elements during and after the emergence of modern reformist thought. Thaumaturgical elements of premodern Islam were continuously maintained and developed by the Ottoman networks of the holy. Among their eighteenth-century members, the Syrian *ʿulamāʾ* such as al-Nābulsī, al-Bakrī or al-Ḥanbalī qualified as individuals of high importance for matters of religion in early modern Damascus. The state of affairs among the Syrian societies remained largely unchanged even after the emergence of Muslim reformist thought that brought alterations to attitudes towards religion among the ulamaic circles. These changes appeared only gradually, over the course of the following centuries.

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7. Conclusion

After the advent of modern Muslim reformism, Sufism slowly began to acquire the reputation as a body of superstitions. Depicted as a collection of popular heterodoxies, Sufism did not correspond to the orthodox Sunnism of modern Muslim theologians anymore. There was never a clear cut between Sunni mainstreams and various types of Sufi doctrines. The extent of reformists' success varied across regions and periods, and depended on the social and political contexts within particular locations. During the nineteenth century, Ottoman provinces which gradually grew in autonomy witnessed the rise of certain political streams for which Sufi doctrines were crucial. The teachings of Aḥmad Ibn Idrīs (d.1837) and of his Sanūsīyya order, as well as the growth of the Tijānīyya order[1] in North Africa illustrate such movements. Doctrines of Ibn Idrīs and Aḥmad al-Tijānī (d.1815), who drew on the former's teachings and in the style of Ibn ʿArabī proclaimed himself the "Seal of the Saints,"[2] inspired later scholarship to formulate theses about the

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[1] See, for instance, R. S. O'Fahey, *Enigmatic Saint: Ahmad Ibn Idris and the Idrisi Tradition* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1990), 1-9, or Zachary Valentine Wright, *On the Path of the Prophet: Shaykh Ahmad al-Tijani and the Tariqa Muhammadiyya* (Atlanta: African-American Islamic Institute, 2005), 1-24, 134-139. Both Ibn Idrīs and the Tijānīyya represented the ideological legacies of the Khalwatīyya spread in the eighteenth century, influenced by Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī. See Chih, *Sufism,* 92-95.

[2] Ibid., and Alī Ṣāliḥ Karrār and Yaḥya Muḥammad Ibrāhīm, "A Sudanese Tijānī Shaykh: Muddathir Ibrāhīm al-Ḥajjāz," *Sudanic Africa* 14 (2003): 61-75, and Rüdiger Seesemann, "The Takfīr Debate: Sources for the Study of a

development of "Neosufism" along with Muslim reformism. The Neosufism thesis maintains that modern Sufism represents a reformed version of early modern mysticism that more heavily leans on Muḥammad's prophetic legacy for justification. However, the Neosufism thesis fails to demonstrate significant novelties in the development of Sufi orders, as Rachida Chih observes.[3]

During the contemporary period, Sufism continues spreading and attracting disciples across the globe, with varying impact on mainstream religions in a given region.[4] Social media platforms and various online forums serve as methods to promote the values of Sufi orders and at times allow for a wider access to Sufi lore.[5] Some states in the Middle East recently witnessed the Sufi orders' effort to engage more actively in politics. Such is the case with contemporary Yemen, where the political situation is analyzed by Alexander Knysh.[6] In Syria, the reformists gained influence only gradually.[7] Even today, large Sufi orders maintain a noticeable presence there, such

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Contemporary Dispute Among African Sufis. Part 1: The Nigerian Arena," *Sudanic Africa* 9 (1998): 39-70. Further see Zachary Wright, "Afropolitan Sufism: The Contemporary Tijaniyya in Global Contexts," in *Global Sufism: Boundaries, Structures, and Politics,* ed. Francesco Pirano and Mark Sedgwick (London: Hurst&Company, 2019), 55-74.

[3] For Neosufism, see Sir Hamilton Gibb, *Mohammedanism: An Historical Survey* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), 168-171, Fazlur Rahman, *Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 195-206, Trimingham, *Sufi Orders,* 106 and John Obert Voll, *Islam: Continuity and Change in the Modern World* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1982), 29, 48, 102, R. S. O'Fahey and Bernd Radtke, "Neo-Sufism Reconsidered," *Der Islam: Journal of the History and Culture of the Middle East* 70 (1993): 61-64, or Mark Sedgwick, "Neo-Sufism," in *The Cambridge Companion to New Religious Movements,* ed. Olav Hammer and Mikael Rothstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 198-214. For a well-formulated critique of the Neosufism thesis, see Chih, *Sufism,* 7-12, 79-86.

[4] For instance, Knysh, *Sufism,* 176-230, Geoffroy, *Sufism,* 126-141, Justine Howe, "Contemporary *Mawlid*s in Chicago,“ William Rory Dickson and Merin Shobhana Xavier, "Disordering and Reordering Sufism: North American Sufi Teachers and the *Tariqa* Model,“ Florian Volm, "The Making of Sufism: The Gülen Movement and its Effort to Create a New Image,“ or Simon Stjernholm, "Sounding Sufi: Sufi-oriented Messages on Swedish Public Service Radio,“ in *Global Sufism,* ed. Pirano and Sedgwick, 119-136, 137-156, 177-192, 193-208, David Westerlund, "The Contextualization of Sufism in Europe,“ Marcia Hermansen, "What's American about American Sufi Movements?“ and Ravil Bukharaev, "Sufism in Russia: Nostalgia for Revelation,“ in *Sufism in Europe and North America,* ed. David Westerlund (London&New York: Routledge Curzon, 2004), 13-35, 36-63, 64-94, or Jamal Malik and Saeed Zarrabi-Zadeh, "Introduction,“ in *Sufism East and West: Mystical Islam and Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Modern World,* ed. Jamal Malik and Saeed Zarrabi-Zadeh (Leiden&Boston: Brill, 2019), 1-30.

[5] For instance, Margaret J. Rausch, "Encountering Sufism on the Web,“ in *Sufism Today: Heritage and Tradition in the Global Community,* ed. Catharina Raudvere and Leif Steinberg (London&New York: I.B. Tauris, 2009), 159-176.

[6] See Knysh, *Sufism,* 210-214.

[7] Commins, *Islamic Reform,* 45-56, 63-64, 100-118.

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is the case with the Qādirīyya.[8] Across the globe, Sufism kept its influence throughout the Muslim reforms and beyond. However, its impact on Muslim states' economy, society and politics is incomparable to the premodern centuries.

The belief in Allah's grace, *baraka,* as the fuel for wonders as well as other Muslim rituals and prayers, declined since the eighteenth century, as Muslim states began to follow the global secularization tendencies.[9] It gradually separated from the official versions of Sufism and got pushed to the margins of political systems. However, through reading the early twentieth-century primary material, this dissertation demonstrated that the common people retained many customs and beliefs which were considered mainstream prior to the modern reforms in Islam. Such is still the case today.

In eighteenth-century Bilād al-Shām, as well as in other Ottoman provinces, *baraka* was widely believed in as crucial for practiced religion. The ulamaic circles used *baraka* in their texts as a social marker that helped maintain the distinctions between religious professionals, exemplary individuals and the rest of the people. Individuals of exemplary behavior, remembered as pious and devout, would often enjoy beliefs in their *baraka* that distinguished them from the rest of the Syrian people. Similarly, *baraka* would usually be attributed to religious professionals who underwent Sufi training and who, at times, pursued further education in the many *madrasa*s of the Syrian region. It was widely believed that the individuals graced with *baraka* could perform wonders and thus override the expected chains of natural causalities. These wonders brought mystical benefits to the population, ranging from curing diseases to banishing malevolent invisible

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[8] Paulo G. Pinto, "The Tariqa Qadiriyya in Aleppo, Syria," in *Sufism Today,* ed. Raudvere and Stenberg, 117-136.
[9] This is still a landlocked debate. See Rajeev Bhargava, ed., *Secularism and its Critics* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), Fenella Cannell, "The Anthropology of Secularism," in *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 39 (2010): 85-100, and Jose Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1994), 1-74, compared to Charles Taylor, "Western Secularity," in *Rethinking Secularism*, ed. Craig Calhoun and M. Juergensmeyer (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 31-53.

entities and keeping them at bay. The most prominent of those individuals whose *baraka* was believed in remained remembered as Muslim saints, the *awliyāʼ,* who could predict future events, develop inhuman capabilities such as strength or the power of flight, or influence the weather. The modern official versions of Sunnism later cast doubt on the powers of Muslim saints, denying their *baraka* and dubbing their thaumaturgical works sorcery, as was the case after the emergence of Protestantism in Europe.[10]

According to common beliefs in eighteenth-century Province of Damascus, *baraka* poured out from the divine and graced numerous Muslim saints, passing down to the Sufi *shaykh*s and the most prominent among the *ʻulamāʼ.* It was further believed to remain around the tombs of these individuals. The belief in the *baraka* of hallowed tombs induced the development of pilgrimage traditions, the *ziyārāt,* with the purpose of collecting divine grace from these sites. The pilgrimage traditions slowly acquired a significant economic influence. Patronage of sacred places developed into a game of prestige and the sacred places, as endowments, represented a marker of social rank for their overseers and patrons. Complex economy developed around the Muslim shrines with the purpose of hosting and accommodating the pilgrims and the wandering mystics. Establishments that formed with these aims, such as *khān*s for instance, generated significant amounts of revenue each year.

Allah's grace was further believed to leak into the surroundings of Muslim shrines, or to remain as a residue behind religiously significant legendary events, such as a prophet's prayer or a vision. It empowered trees, caves, rocks, and items which lay in the vicinity of the shrines. The Syrian people of all social ranks eagerly collected such items in the hopes that they would gain access to the *baraka* within. Such items, enchanted natural phenomena (such as caves, or trees),

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[10] See Thomas, *Decline,* 69, or Bartlett, *The Dead,* 85-92.

along with the Muslim shrines represented a network of *baraka* that further extended across the *awliyā'* and other recipients of Allah's grace. This network of Allah's *baraka* represented the eighteenth-century Syrian network of the holy that was a fundamental element of Ottoman early modern Sunnism. In addition, the network of the holy served as a means of legitimization for the establishment of religious professionals which may sociologically and anthropologically (but not theologically) be described as the Ottoman priestly sodality.

The Ottoman priestly sodality is identified through the overlap between the Sufi and ulamaic networks and best represented by those individuals trained in Sufism and accomplished as the *ʿulamā'*, who during their lives acquired official state appointments. With official tenures, such individuals commanded significant authority over social, jurisprudential, as well as religious matters in eighteenth-century Syria, enjoying meanwhile the popular belief in their *baraka.* Prominent members of the eighteenth-century priestly sodality in Damascus were ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī and Abū al-Mawāhib Ibn ʿAbd al-Bāqī al-Ḥanbalī, who were both considered prominent saints. Al-Nābulsī's disciples such as Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī, or the *Fatwa* Secretary Muḥammad Ibn ʿĀbidīn of the next generation further illustrate prominent members of the Syrian priestly sodality.

Such eminent individuals who, in addition to beliefs in their *baraka,* and their official tenures, represented persons of much wealth and social power, indicate the significance of divine grace and the beliefs in the efficacy of thaumaturgical rituals and rites among all social strata of eighteenth-century Ottoman Syria. In addition, Ottoman early modern Sunnism was maintained and developed through the written works of such individuals. Their belief in thaumaturgical aspects of Islam and the importance of Sufism for matters ranging from the everyday to complex political strategies, indicate the inseparability of Sufism and of mechanical aspects of religion from premodern Ottoman Sunnism. Members of the eighteenth-century Damascene priestly sodality

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formed a tight network through granting *ijāza*s and thus restricting their knowledge transmission by means of certification, carving a further specialized niche for themselves as religious authorities of the eighteenth century. Individuals aspiring to join the Ottoman priestly sodality needed to rely heavily on the validation of this network. In addition, the most prominent *awliyā'* were to the most part the members of this select group of professionals.

As religious and thaumaturgical experts of the Ottoman Empire, in popular belief the Sufi-*ʿulamā'* stood at the boundary of the visible and invisible worlds, serving as intercessors between the people and Allah, and as defenders from the forces of evil. The Ottoman priestly sodality in eighteenth-century Syria fulfilled many important social roles as ministers to the people. They attended to various problems ranging from diseases or madness to highly destructive natural disasters such as locust infestations, or earthquakes. The popular belief attributed them with many other superhuman feats and wonders. Since the early middle ages, the ulamaic sodalities developed ritualistic procedure through which they hoped to invoke *baraka* – ideally from a powerful site, such as a shrine – and influence a certain chain of events.

The change in the attitude towards Sufism and its thaumaturgy among theologians inspired by Muslim modern reforms resembles the change in attitudes towards the wonders and cults of saints of the Christian Church after the advent of Protestantism. The study of premodern Sufism opens possibilities for further studies in comparative religion which may help better understand the historical developments of various scriptural religions over the passage of time. In addition, such studies would contribute to the more appropriate positioning of the socio-anthropological categories of religion, thaumaturgy and magic prior to the advent of Enlightenment and later, Muslim reformism.

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With the case study of eighteenth-century Syria, along with brief analyses of different regions and periods with the purpose of highlighting the significant comparative potential of this topic, it has been shown that early modern Sufism was inseparable from official Ottoman Sunnism as its body of mysticism that contained many mechanical elements of Islam, such as its thaumaturgy. As such, it did not represent a stand-alone stream of Islam, nor did it reflect heterodoxies or antinomian religious behavior. Instead, it served its adherents as a means to harvest and utilize divine grace in hopes of improving the living conditions of themselves and the people they ministered to in their capacity as intercessors between the commoners and God. Further studies into the relationship of premodern thaumaturgical, religious, and magical beliefs and practices may additionally illuminate comparative possibilities between scriptural religions in the Eurasian region (and wider) and help scholarship understand better the relationship between these concepts and their relevance to the social, political, economic and quotidian history of various peoples and regions.

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Appendices

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Appendix A: Saintly Domes, Exterior and Interior

Figure 1. The shrine of Ruslān al-Dimashqī, Damascus. Domes within urban centers were in general better kept. Source: ʿUzza Aqbīq and ʿAmr al-Mālikī, "Maqām al-Shaykh Ruslān min Qubbat Khālid ilā Mazār al-Bustān," [The Shrine of Shaykh Ruslān from Khālid's Dome to Mazār al-Bustān], *www.esyria.sy,* 2012.
http://esyria.sy/sites/code/index.php?site=damascus&p=stories&category=places&filename=201211221210011 (Last accessed: April 15th 2021).

Figure 2. The *maqām* of *Shaykh* ʿAbd al-Salām, ʻAnata, Jerusalem Governorate. Domes in the countryside were somewhat disorderly. Source: McCown, "Shrines," 70.

Figure 3. The *ḍarīḥ* of ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī, in his shrine in Damascus. Source: Nabīla al-Qawṣī, "al-ʿĀrif bi-l-Lah al-Shaykh ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī," *www.Naseemalsham.com,* 2011. https://www.naseemalsham.com/subjects/view/28362 (Last accessed: April 15th 2021).

Figure 4. *Minbar* in the shrine of al-Nābulsī. Source: al-Qawṣī, "Al-Nābulsī," https://www.naseemalsham.com/subjects/view/28362 (Last accessed: April 15th 2021).

Figure 5. The Mosque of the al-Nābulsī shrine. Source: “Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulsi Mosque,” MIT Libraries, 1989. http://hdl.handle.net/1721.3/46481 (Last accessed: April 15th 2021).

Figure 6. The mosque of the Ibn ʿArabī shrine. Source: User: Noreen, “The Shaykh Mohideen Mosque against Jabal (Mountain) Qassiyoun, Damascus,” flickr.com, 2009. https://www.flickr.com/photos/n_a_kassem/3319356495 (Last accessed: April 15th 2021).

Figure 7. The *miḥrāb* in the shrine of Ibn ʿArabī. Source: Çigdem Kafesçioglu, "Interior detail; mihrab," *Jami' wa-Turba Muhi al-Din Ibn al-'Arabi*, [The Mosque and Grave of Muḥī al-Dīn Ibn al-ʿArabī], *archnet.org,* 1990. https://archnet.org/sites/1837/media_contents/4321 (Last accessed: April 15th 2021).

Figure 8. The Shrine of the Forty. Source:
https://sufipathoflove.files.wordpress.com/2019/04/mosque_arbain.jpg (Last accessed: April 15th 2021).

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Figure 9. The Mother of Pieces plateau in the Zabadani region, Rif Dimashq Governorate. Source: Curtiss, *Primitive,* 45.

Appendix B: Some Hallowed Sites within and around Damascus listed as *Ziyāra* Destinations for *Baraka*-collection in eighteenth-century (and older) Travel Guides

Cemetery	***Name***	***Notes***
Al-Daqqāq Mosque/Al-Qubaybāt District	Taqqī al-Dīn al-Ḥuṣnī (1335-1425)	
Al-Qaymarīyya Neighborhood	Rābiʿat al-Shāmīyya (n.d.)	She was the wife of a famous *ʿālim* Aḥmad Ibn Abī al-Ḥiwārī (d.844). A mosque was named after her. It lay between the al-Qaymarīyya neighborhood and the Bāb al-Salām.
Bāb al-Ṣaghīr	Aws Ibn Aws al-Thaqafī (n.d.)	Died at some point during ʿUthmān I's reign.
	Bint Ḥamza (n.d.)	Muḥammad's cousin. Located in the Fāṭima cluster.
	Ibrāhīm al-Nājī (n.d.)	The grave was to the west of Muʿāwīyya I.
	Khadīja (n.d.)	Granddaughter of ʿAlī. Located in the Fāṭima cluster.
	Sahl Ibn Rabīʿ/Ibn al-Ḥanẓalīyya (n.d.)	Located in the Fāṭima cluster.
	Three of the Prophet's wives	Located in the Fāṭima cluster.
	Muʿāwīyya I Ibn Abī Sufyān of the Umayyads (r.661-680)	
	Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyya (1292-1350)	
	Ibn Rajab (1335-1393)	A renowned Hanbalite scholar.

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Al-Walīd I Ibn ʿAbd al-Mālik (668-715)	
ʿUmar II Ibn Marwān (682-720)	The *ḍarīḥ* was believed to be in Damascus. However, another grave of this ruler was built near Homs. It was recently raided and pilfered by an unknown party.
Naṣr al-Maqdisī Ibn Ibrāhīm al-Nābulsī (d.1096)	The shrine was outside of Abū al-Dardā', and next to it, rumors had it that a *Shaykh* al-Ṣamṣamānī was buried in a solitary grave.
Ḥammād Ibn Muslim al-Dibbās (d.1130)	Shaykh Ḥammād Mausoleum.
Abū al-Bayān al-Maḥfūẓ (d.1156)	The eponymous founder of the Bayānīyya Sufi order.
Ibn ʿAsākir (d.1175)	Famous historian. Alternatively, it was believed that his grave was outside the city walls in Maqābir al-Ṣūfīyya.
Aḥmad Abū al-ʿAbās al-Maghribī (d.1288)	The grave was between Bilāl and Ḥammād Ibn Mālik.
Al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī (d.1347)	A prominent *ʿālim.*
Muḥammad Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Sulṭān (d.1543)	The Qalandarīyya Mausoleum.
Saʿad Ibn al-Rabīʿ (d.624)	
Fāṭima (d.632)	Muḥammad's daughter. A whole grave cluster was organized around her tomb.
Bilāl Ibn Rabāḥ (d.640)	
Abū Dardā' (d.652)	His wife was buried with him.
Kaʿab al-Aḥbār (d.655)	

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	Uways al-Qaranī (d.656)	The grave was close to Bāb al-Jābīyya. There was a shrine committed to al-Qaranī in Raqqa. It was destroyed by ISIS.
	ʿAlī Ibn ʿAbd Allah Ibn al-ʿAbās (d.665)	Entombed in the vicinity of his cousin and his wife. Located in the Fāṭima cluster.
	Faḍāla Ibn ʿAbīd (d.672)	
	Zaynab Bint ʿAlī (d.682)	Zaynab had a shrine in Bāb al-Ṣaghīr. However, south of Damascus in the suburbs, the saint gave her name to a town (previously named Rāwīyya) whose inhabitants also believed she was buried there. A Companion al-Farāzī was believed entombed in the same village.
	Athla Ibn al-Asqaʿ (d.704)	
	Makḥūl (d.734)	
	Sukayna Bint Husayn (d.735)	Granddaughter of ʿAlī Ibn Abī Ṭālib. Located in the Fāṭima cluster.
	Dhū al-Nūn al-Maṣrī (d.759)	The *maqām* was located in the western part of the cemetery. In the eighteenth century there was a debate whether Dhū al-Nūn was actually entombed there, or was it someone else.
	ʿAmr Ibn al-Ḥasan al-Kharqī (d.945)	Located under the Jarrāḥ Mosque.
Bāb al-Sharqī	Sahl Ibn al-Rabiʿ (d.642)	
	Ḍirār Ibn al-Azwar (d.640)	

	Ubayy Ibn Kaʿb (d.649)	It was long believed that Ubayy Ibn Kaʿb was buried here. Ibn Kaʿab was probably entombed somewhere in Medina.
Bāb Tūmā	Shurḥabīl Ibn Ḥasana (d.639)	Close to Shaykh Ruslān.
	Ruslān al-Raḥman, "Protector of Damascus" (d.1077)	Cemetery of Shaykh Ruslān.
	Badr al-Dīn al-Ghazzī (d.1576)	Close to Shaykh Ruslān.
Darayya, Rif Dimashq	Abū Sulaymān al-Dārānī (d.830)	
	Abū Muslim al-Khawlānī (d.684)	Suffered damage under ISIS attacks.
Marj al-Daḥdāḥ/Maqbarat al-Farādīs	ʿAbd al-Raḥman Ibn Abī Bakr al-Ṣadīq (d.666)	
	Abū Shāma al-Maqdisī al-Dimashqī (d.1266)	A prominent historian.
	Shrine to al-Khiḍr	
	Ayyūb Ibn Aḥmad Ibn Ayyūb (d.1660)	
	Ibrāhīm Ibn Manṣūr (d.1686)	
	Abū al-Mawāhib Ibn ʿAbd al-Baqī al-Ḥanbalī (d.1714)	
Maydān	Ṣuhayb Ibn Sinān al-Rūmī (d.658)	His grave is today believed to also lie in Medina.
Maydān/Maqābir al-Ṣūfīyya	Ibn Taymīyya (1263-1328)	
	Ibrāhīm Ibn ʿAbd al-Razzāq (d.1295)	
	Masʿūd Ibn Muḥammad (d.1182)	

	Taqqī al-Dīn ʿUthmān Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ al-Kurdī al-Shahrazūrī (d.1245)	
	Yūsuf Ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥman (d.1341)	West of Ibn Taymīyya.
	ʿImād al-Dīn Ibn Kathīr (d.1372)	Buried close to Ibn Taymīyya.
Mneen (Manin)	Muḥammad Jandal (d.1262)	A shrine to this saint was located in Damascus as well. Location is unspecified.
Mount Qasioun/al-Ṣāliḥīyya	Dhū al-Kifl, prophet, sometimes identified with Ezekiel	This is one of the four sites where it was believed that this prophet is entombed. Two of them are in Syria.
	Abū ʿAmr Muḥammad Ibn Qudāma (1124-1210)	Qudāma complex
	Ibn ʿArabī (1165-1240)	Banī al-Zakkī graveyard grew around the Ibn ʿArabī complex.
	Muḥammad Saʿad al-Dīn (1221-1252)	Son of Ibn ʿArabī. Interred with his father.
	Abū al-ʿAbās Ibn Qudāma (d.1155)	Qudāma complex.
	Abū al-Suʿūd (d.1208)	His brother was believed entombed somewhere on the stretch between this tomb and that of Ruslān al-Dimashqī.
	ʿAlī al-Faranthī (d.1224)	He had a lodge named after him at the base of Mount Qasioun.
	ʿAbd Allah Ibn Yūnus al-Armānī (d.1233)	There was a lodge named after him.
	Yūsuf al-Qamīnī (d.1258)	

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	Abū Bakr Ibn Qawwām (d.1259)	The Qawwāmīyya lodge.
	Abū Bakr al-ʿArūdkī (d.1273)	Al-ʿArūdkīyya Lodge.
	Abū ʿAbd Allah Ibn Mālik (d.1273)	
	Ibrāhīm Ibn Aḥmad al-Mawṣulī (d.1295)	
	ʿAbd al-Raḥman al-ʿAyyanī (d.1488)	Buried under the al-Jadīd Mosque.
	ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī (d.1731)	
	Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ (d.674)	
Outside Damascus/East	Muʿādh Ibn Jabal (d.639)	
	ʿAbd Allah Ibn Masʿūd (d.650)	It is today believed that his grave is in Medina.
The Citadel	Nūr al-Dīn al-Zangī (1118-1174)	His grave was later moved to the Madrasa Nūr al-Dīn.
	ʿAbd Allah Ibn ʿAṣrūn (d.1189)	He was teaching Ibn ʿAsākir. There was a *madrasa* named after him in the citadel complex.
Umayyad Mosque	Hūd the Prophet	
	John the Baptist (Yaḥyā Ibn Zakarīyya)	
	Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Ibn Yūsuf (1137-1193)	

Sources: Ibn Kannān, "MS," 4A-12B, al-Ḥanafī, "KFS," 83B-111B, al-ʿAdawī, *ZD*, 9-103, al-Manīnī, *IFS*, 71-141, al-Razzāq, *FS*, 126-181, al-Ṣayyādī, *RB*, 61-101, al-Nābulsī, *Ḥaqīqa*, 45-96, Miura, *Dynamism*, 50-82, Marino,"Les espaces,", 315-341, Wheeler, *Mecca*, 88-89, Sirriyeh, "Ziyārāt," 109-122, Moaz and Ory, *Inscriptions*, 11-13.

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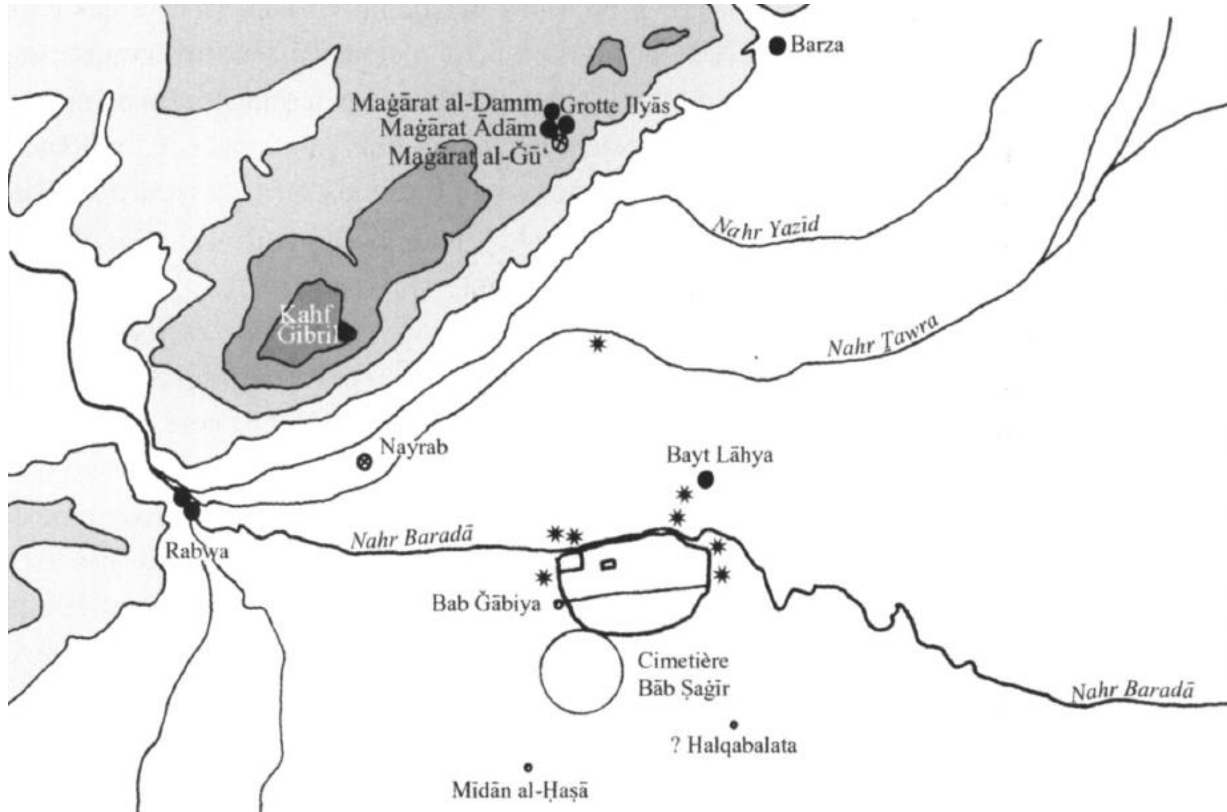

Map 6. Caves on Mount Qasioun and their position vis-à-vis the Inner City of Damascus. Source: Jalalbert, "Damas," 26.

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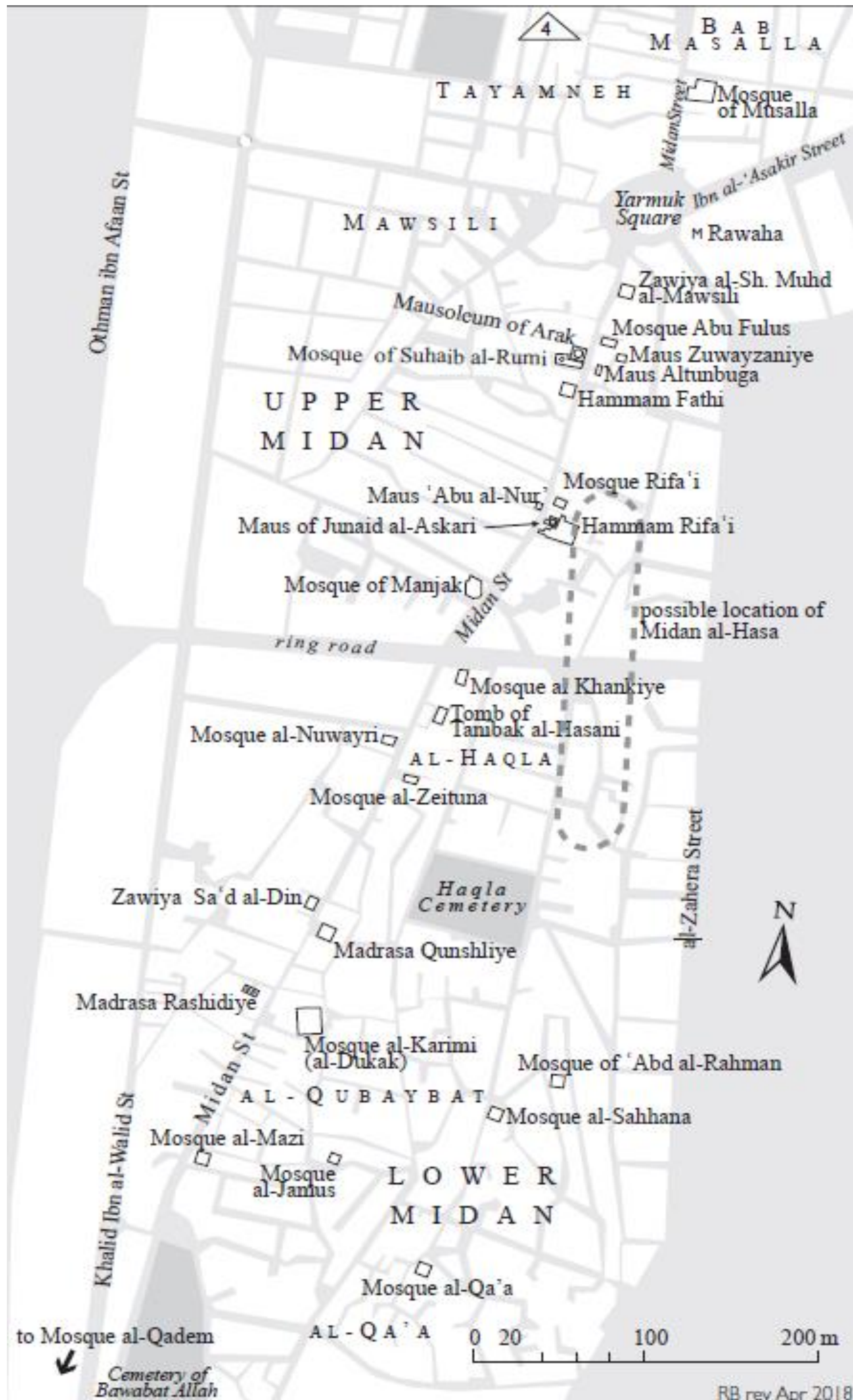
Map 7. The al-Ṣāliḥīyya with its holy graves. Source: Burns, *Damascus,* 353.



Map 8. The al-Maydān district with the al-Muṣalla Mosque to the north. Source: Burns, *Damascus,* 351.

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Map 9. Cemeteries in Damascus. Those that have disappeared over the passage of time are portrayed in lighter shades of red. Source: Moaz and Ory, *Inscriptions,* Plate 1.

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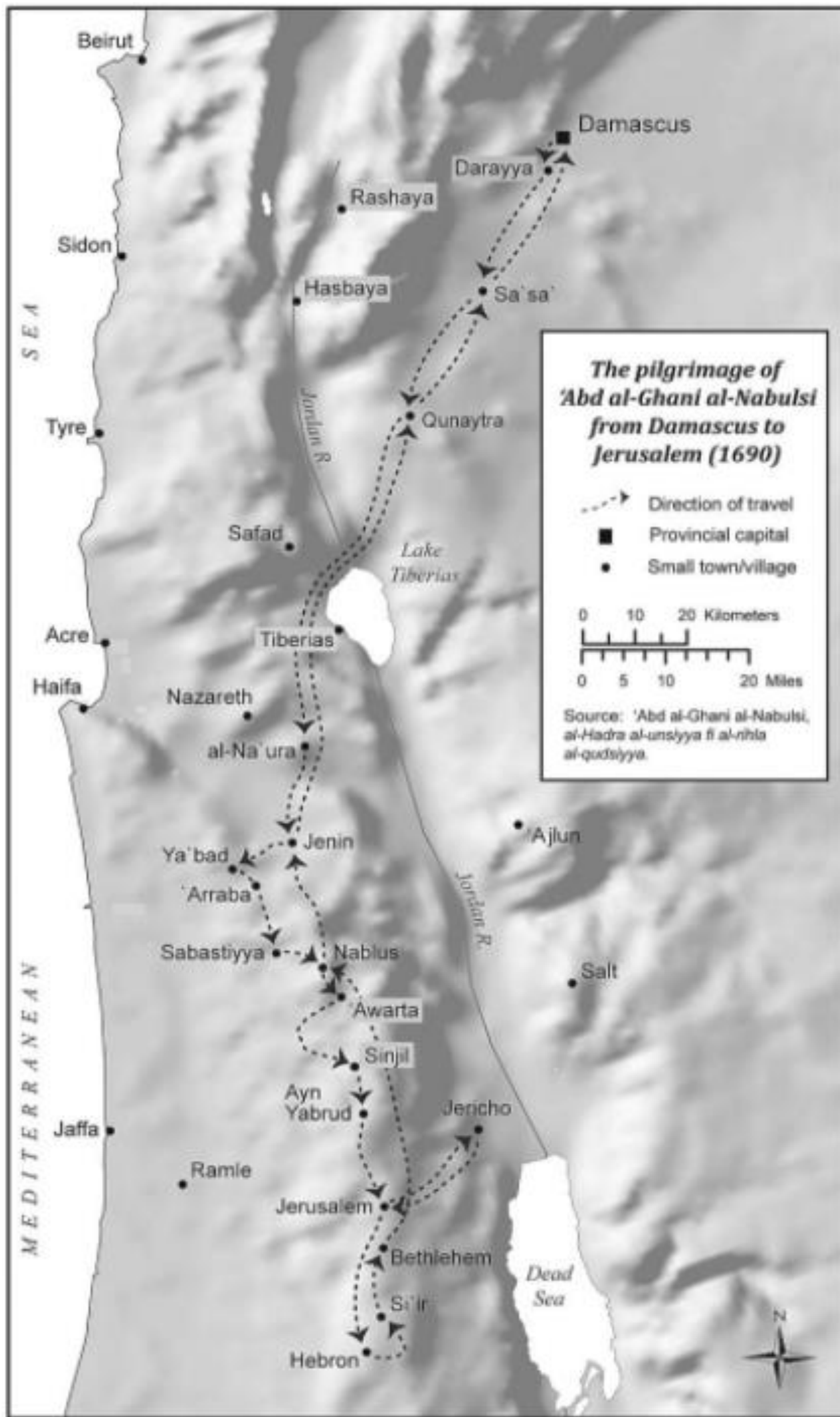

Map 10. Al-Nabulsi's *ziyāra* itinerary from 1690. Source: Grehan, *Twilight,* 22.

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Appendix C: Arabic Seals and Talismans

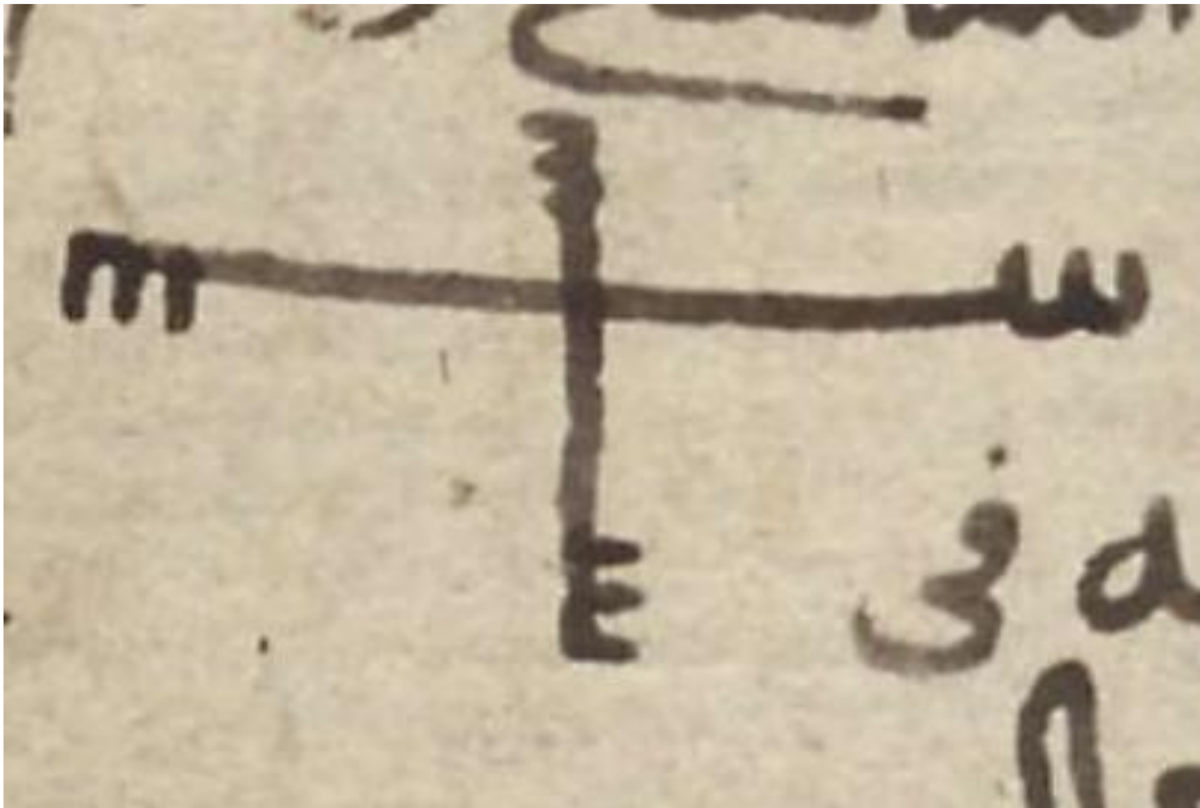

Figure 10. The seal for catching thieves if one knows the names of the suspects. Source: “MMKF,“ 65B.

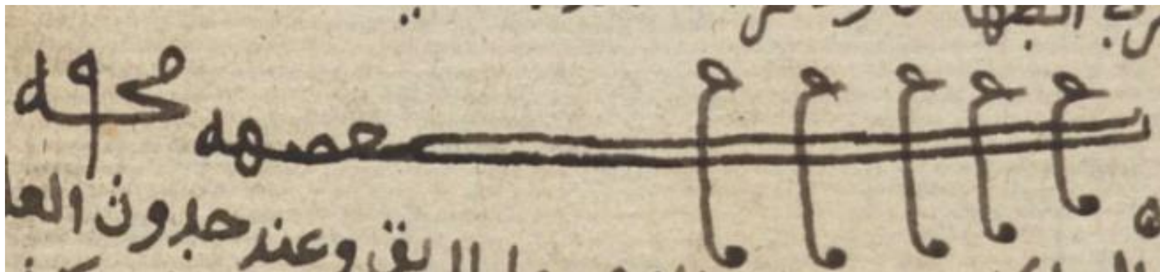

Figure 11. The seal for inducing dreams about a thief. Source: “MMKF,“ 65B.

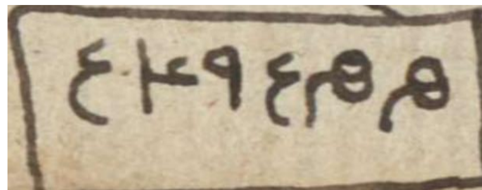

Figure 12. The seal for identifying thieves through prayer. Source: “MMKF,“ 65B.

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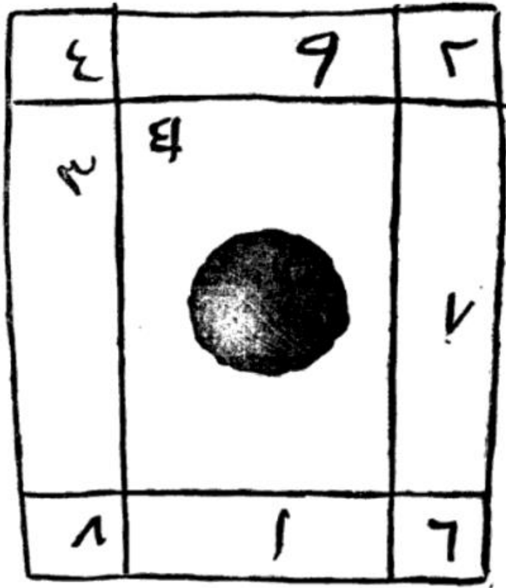

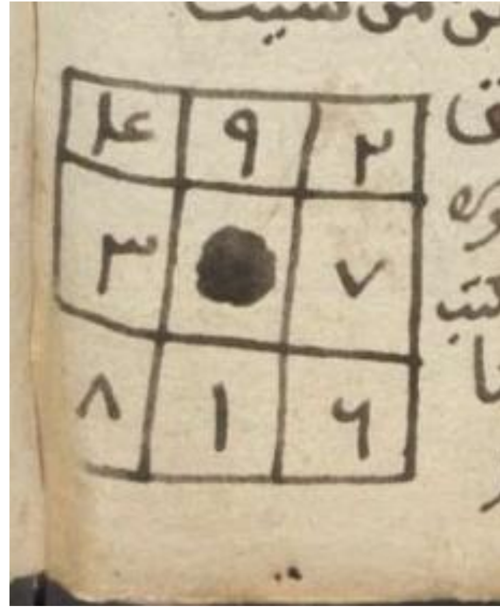

Figure 13. The "magic square" with the mirror of ink**.** On the left is the one used by ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Maghribī. The black shape in the middle is a blot of ink that would represent the mirror. Source: Lane, *Egyptians,* 1:351. On the right is the diagram found in the eighteenth-century *Compendium of All Arts,* "MMKF," 147A.

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يوم الاحد عقرب رطب ح٦ مزوج	يوم السبت زخل رطب مفرد	يوم لاربع عقاب يابس ٢ مزوج
يوم الجمعة زهره رطب ٣ مفرد	يوم الثلاث مريخ يابس ٥ مفرد	يوم خميس مشترى رطب ٧ مفرد
ملىح رطب ٨ مزوج	يوم الاثنين قسر يابس ١ مفرد	زر شيخ يابس ٦ مزوج

Figure 14. The seal attributed to Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazalī. My copy. Source: al-Ḍamīrī, "Risāla fī al-Kīmīyya," 24A-26B.

Figure 15. An example of a talisman found in "MMKF," 116B. The diagram follows lengthy numerological and astrological explanations, along with mention of the powers of certain letters. Depending on the prayer read over these symbols, and the time they are inscribed (with attention paid to the day of the week, the position of the celestial bodies and the zodiac), they could alleviate pains, protect from evil, and bring various blessings.

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Figure 16. An example of a talisman found in “MMKF,” 30A. It was believed to function as a protective ward, fulfill the supplicant’s desires, as well as to drive off sinful people and evil forces.

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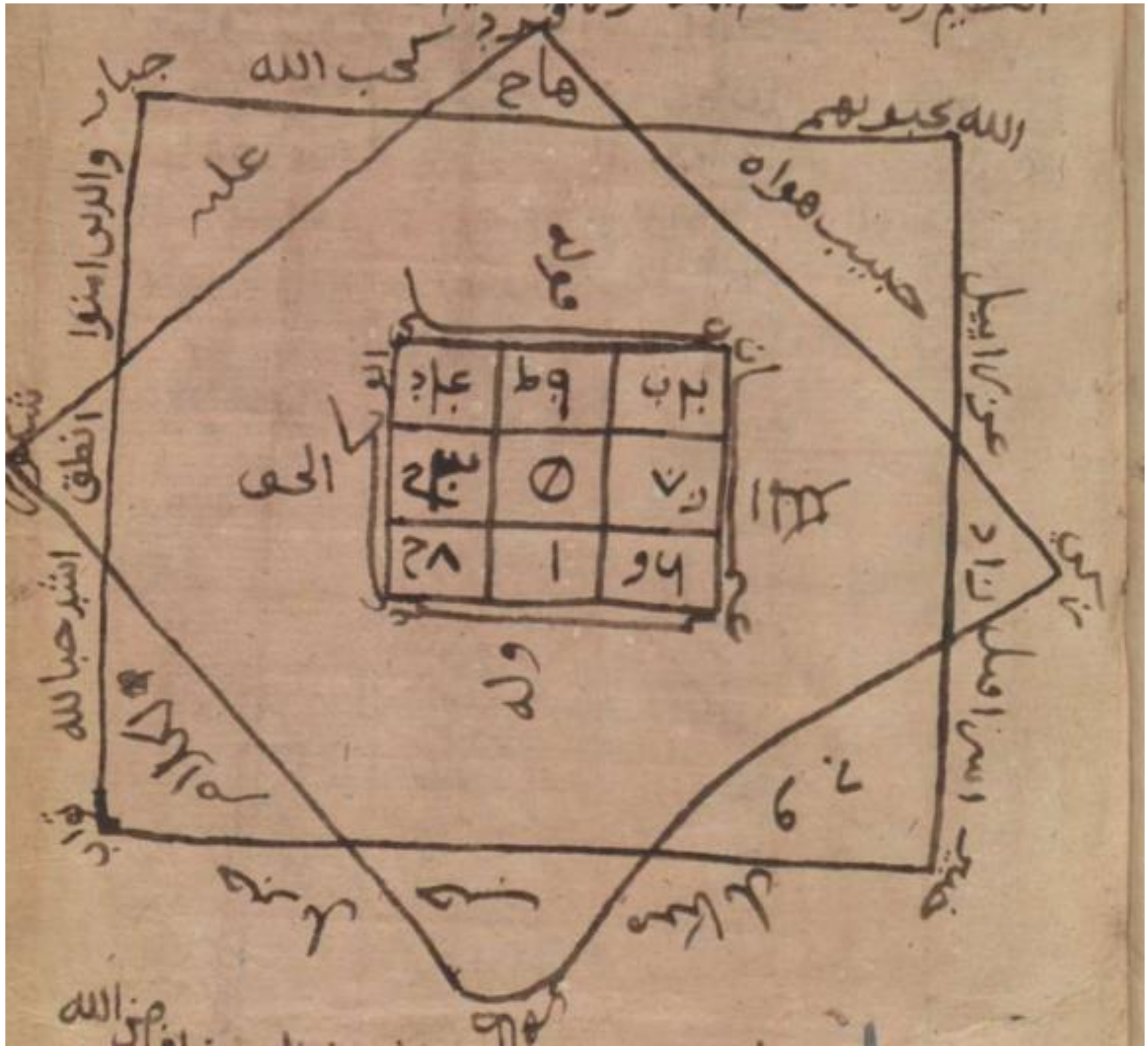

Figure 17. An example of a talisman found in "MMKF," 34B. It was aimed at helping with romance.

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