Ottomans and the Supernatural

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Nature and the Limits of Knowledge in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire

MARINOS SARIYANNIS

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[1] For the publications of the project, see https://ghost.ims.forth.gr/publications/; more particularly for the online journal, https://ghost.ims.forth.gr/acaib/.

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Note on Transliteration

The transliteration of names, titles, terms, and phrases from Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman Turkish follows the IJMES transliteration system. Arabic and Ottoman systems are used according to the context of each reference: for instance, I write *ʿajāʾib* when referring to Arabic or Persian authors and *ʿacāʾib* for Ottoman ones.

Introduction

The State-of-the-Art, Concepts, and Sources of Our Topic

Man is part of nature, we say, and perhaps for most of us nature includes all that exists (at least in a tangible way—i.e. if we want to exclude our own thought, ideas, or emotions). Yet for some of us there is also another world, unbound from the yoke of natural laws, a world of spiritual existence governed by divinity: the supernatural world. In this view, the supernatural world interferes with the natural. Either everything that happens is ordered by the divine entity or spiritual activity is the cause of extraordinary and inexplicable natural phenomena. This book aims to investigate these belief systems in the case of the Ottoman Empire, in the premodern period: that is, before the westernization process that started in the nineteenth century. It will explore the changing borders between natural and supernatural and the shifts from knowledgeable to unknowledgeable, seeking to connect such changes and shifts to cultural developments and various social actors. My ultimate goal is to explore the place of the Ottoman world in early modernity, with a special focus on disenchantment with the world and the Enlightenment.

Notions and belief systems concerning nature and the supernatural constitute a little-explored aspect of Ottoman culture. As far as other Islamicate cultures and especially medieval times are concerned, recent decades have witnessed several scholarly studies on magic, occult sciences, and marvellous geography, a scholarship which first appeared long ago. Alchemy and other occult sciences in the Middle Ages have been studied by eminent historians such as Armand Abel, Georges-Henri Bousquet, Paul Kraus, Manfred Ullmann, and Julius Ruska; the proceedings of a pioneering colloquium on the strange and the marvellous in medieval Islam were published in 1978, and in 1987, after a series of fundamental articles and encyclopedic entries on Arabic occultism, Toufic Fahd published his famous book on Arabic divination, followed by numerous studies by scholars such as Richard Lemay, Pierre Lory, and Emilie Savage-Smith.[1] During the 2010s we witnessed a new blooming of studies in the Islamic occult, from several

[1] Fahd, *La Divination arabe*; Collective work, *L'Étrange et le merveilleux*; Lemay, 'L'Islam historique et les sciences occultes'; Regourd and Lory (eds), *Sciences occultes et Islam*; Lory, *Alchimie et mystique*; Lory, 'Soufisme et sciences occultes'; Lory, *La Science des lettres*; Gyselen (ed.), *Charmes et sortilèges*; Savage-Smith and Smith, *Islamic Geomancy*; Savage-Smith, *Magic and Divination*.

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authors still producing exquisite works: Jean-Charles Coulon and Noah Gardiner on al-Būnī's magical universe, Matthew Melvin-Koushki on lettrism and the expansion of occultism in the late medieval Islamicate world, and Liana Saif on the *Ikhwan-i Safa* and medieval Islamic esotericism.[2] Significantly, a number of colloquia resulted in several influential volumes that brought Islamicate occult sciences and esoterism to the forefront.[3] The international workshop 'Islamic Occult Studies on the Rise' (IOSOTR) began to organize regular meetings and maintain a website (https://islamicoccult.org). Its francophone counterpart, 'Le Monde des djinns: magie et sciences occultes dans l'Islam médiéval', presents a series of seminars and lectures at https://djinns.hypotheses.org.

In comparison to this vibrant field dealing with the earlier Islamicate world, little work has been conducted in Ottoman studies, although Ottoman history shows great potential thanks to its rich surviving narrative, archival, and visual sources. There have been a few pioneering studies focusing mainly on specific occult sciences (astrology, alchemy, physiognomy), such as the work of the late Cornell H. Fleischer, who can be said to be the first scholar who studied Ottoman sixteenth-century occultism seriously. Yet, these studies are few and we still know very little about the concepts of the supernatural and the practices of magic in an Ottoman context.[4] We do not have any study of Ottoman magical practices comparable to the rich literature on European occultism or that of medieval Islam. We lack a history of Ottoman magic, as well as other occult sciences such as talismans, exorcisms, and the various types and branches of divination.[5] There are also very few studies of the Ottoman uses of talismanic artifacts.[6] The preliminary work of providing a list of Ottoman manuscripts dealing with occult sciences has

[2] Coulon, *La Magie en terre d'islam*; Gardiner, 'Forbidden Knowledge?'; Gardiner, 'Stars and Saints'; Gardiner, 'Esotericist Reading Communities'; Gardiner, 'Lettrism and History'; Melvin-Koushki, 'The Occult Challenge'; Melvin-Koushki, 'Astrology, Lettrism, Geomancy'; Melvin-Koushki, 'In Defense of Geomancy'; Melvin-Koushki, 'Powers of One'; Saif, 'Between Medicine and Magic'; Saif, 'From *Ġāyat al-ḥakīm*'; Saif, 'Magic and Divination'; Saif, 'Physiognomy'. See also Francis, 'Magic and Divination'; Raggetti, 'The "Science of Properties"'.

[3] Melvin-Koushki and Gardiner, 'Islamicate Occultism'; Günther and Pielow, *Die Geheimnisse*; El-Bizri and Orthmann, *The Occult Sciences*; Saif, Leoni, Melvin-Koushki, and Yahya, *Islamicate Occult Sciences*. See also the massive collection of essays on the Christian, Jewish, and Muslim worlds in Heiduk, Herbers, and Lehner, *Prognostication in the Medieval World*.

[4] Schmidt, 'The Occult Sciences'; Fleischer, 'Seer to the Sultan'; Fleischer, 'Shadow of Shadows'; Fleischer, 'Ancient Wisdom'; Tunalı, 'An Ottoman Astrologer'; Artun, 'Hearts of Gold'; Artun, 'Bâyezîd-i kîmyâ'î'; Şen, 'Astrology in the Service of the Empire'; Şen, 'Reading the Stars'; Şen, 'Practicing Astral Magic'; Kırkoğlu, *Sultan ve müneccim*; Lelić, 'Ottoman Physiognomy'; Kırkoğlu, 'Physiognomy (*'ilm-i firāsat*) and Ottoman Statecraft'; Kırkoğlu, '"The Greatest of Tribulations"'; Melvin-Koushki, 'Toward a Neopythagorean Historiography'; Melvin-Koushki, 'Taşköprīzāde on the (Occult) Science'. A rare publication on Seljuk occultism is Peacock, 'A Seljuq Occult Manuscript' (cf. Peacock, 'Metaphysics and Rulership').

[5] Some material can be found in Turkish in e.g. Anadol, *Büyü (sihir—tılsım)*; Uluğ, *Osmanlı'da batıl itikatlar*.

[6] Nünlist, 'Entzauberte Amulettrollen', 277–287; Aytekin, 'Topkapı Sarayı koleksiyonlarındaki'; Felek, 'Fears, Hopes, and Dreams'; Gruber, 'Go Wherever You Wish'; Leoni, 'A Stamped Talisman'; cf. Gruber, 'A Pious Cure-All' and 'From Prayer to Protection'; Porter, Saif, and Savage-Smith, 'Medieval Islamic Amulets'; Probert and Sijpesteijn, *Amulets and Talismans*.

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hardly begun.[7] Moreover, we know even less about Christian, Armenian, and Jewish sources, which are an integral part of Ottoman culture.[8]

Ottoman cultural history is a relatively new field anyway: this is partly due to the emphasis of Ottomanists on archival sources and the economic and social realities they reveal, which dominated Ottoman studies until quite recently. Only since the last decades of the twentieth century have historians begun to tackle issues of culture, and then again there was little interest in what can be called non-scientific, non-religious ways of viewing the world. The difficulty of deciphering and understanding complex manuals of magic or astrology, as well as the apparent absence of major instances when these concepts and practices influenced political or social life (as was the case with witchcraft in Christian Europe) contributed to the lack of interest. Scholars working in manuscript libraries tended to focus on literature, political advice, historiography, and geography, as well as intriguing sources like diaries and travel accounts, dismissing manuscripts dealing with occult practices as irrelevant. In their turn, historians of Ottoman science tended to concentrate on the advances in astronomy or mathematics and the cultural transfer of European science from the second half of the seventeenth century onwards, ignoring whatever could be termed as 'pseudoscience', such as astrology, physiognomy, and alchemy. Arguably, one might also detect a benign concern not to show the Ottomans as backward-looking irrationalists (although, as we will see, for historians of European science the role of occultism and its close interaction with scientific production from the Renaissance until at least the late seventeenth century is commonplace now).

Furthermore, since pre-Ottoman Islamic magic and divination have been objects of study for decades, it has perhaps been commonly assumed that (as in other fields of knowledge) Ottomans just kept on copying and commenting upon the material they inherited from their predecessors.[9] For all these reasons, even now, when there is a growing trend to study and re-evaluate Islamic occult sciences, there are very few works studying the Ottoman case. There has been some path-breaking research on Ottoman astrology, alchemy, and dream interpretation; still, most students of Islamic occultism tend to neglect any work on the Ottoman tradition.

[7] To my knowledge, the only publication in this direction, which moreover only deals with manuscripts from the Netherlands, is that of Schmidt, 'The Occult Sciences'; on manuscripts concerning divination, see also Ertaylan, *Falnâme*, 30–31; Boyraz, *Fal kitabı*.

[8] On Greek occultist literature, there is very rich material in Delatte (ed.), *Anecdota atheniensia*; see also Hartnup, *'On the Beliefs of the Greeks'*; Nicolaidis, *Greek Alchemy*; Litinas, 'Perceptions of Magic'; Litinas, 'The Views of Gerasimos Vlachos'; Sariyannis, '*Ο "Βερναρδάκειος κώδικας*"'; Sariyannis, 'Transculturality in Magical Practices'. On the relations between Greek and Jewish occultist currents, see Koutzakiotis, *Attendre la fin du monde*. See also Pippidi, 'Mysticisme et rationalism', 193–194; Pissis, *Dimitrie Cantemir*; Pissis, 'Epistemic Entanglements'. Byzantine magic and occult is the subject of a significant body of literature: see e.g. Magdalino and Mavroudi, *The Occult Sciences*; Foskolou, 'The Magic of the Written'.

[9] As has also been the case with Ottoman political thought: Sariyannis, *A History of Ottoman Political Thought*, 1–2, 4.

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Nature, Supernatural, and Preternatural

But what exactly is our subject here? The concepts of 'nature', 'supernatural', and 'preternatural' and the practices of 'magic', 'occultism', and 'science' are central in our quest. Yet, analysing pre-modern mentalities using such modern categories could lead to serious anachronisms, all the more so since these categories were conceived in the framework of European culture. Modern concepts and historical notions do not directly correspond to each other. In other words, from an anthropological perspective, there is the well-known divergence between 'etic' approaches, which are based on the researcher's notions, and 'emic' ones, which are structured around the historical cultures' perceptions of the object of research (in other words, the view of 'here and now versus the view of the society under examination). To quote Carlo Ginzburg, 'one starts from etic questions aiming to get emic answers'.[10] Let us first, then, clarify the 'etic' questions we ask and the rich scholarship they have produced, before we turn to the 'emic' answers provided by the Ottomans. What did the Ottomans perceive as supernatural? What mental categories did they use to describe strange or extraordinary events? Such are the questions this book will seek to answer.

We now call supernatural those phenomena that seem to escape the natural laws, being difficult or even impossible to explain in rational terms. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, for instance, 'supernatural' means 'of or relating to an order of existence beyond the visible observable universe; especially: of or relating to God or a god, demigod, spirit, or devil', but also '(a) departing from what is usual or normal especially so as to appear to transcend the laws of nature (b) attributed to an invisible agent (such as a ghost or spirit)'.[11] Thus, one crucial factor for the definition of the term is visibility (the observable world), whereas another is normality and nature. Yet, the very notion of nature is not neutral and ahistorical: for the mental category of 'supernatural' to have any meaning, one needs to have an understanding of 'nature' as a field of explicable phenomena, which are repeated in an ordinary fashion and can be understood by observation and theoretical thinking.

In their modern sense, the notions of both nature and the supernatural were developed by medieval Christian theologians and philosophers such as Peter Lombard (Petrus Lombardus, d. 1160) and Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274), in the course of debates on how real miracles can be distinguished from extraordinary yet natural phenomena.[12] These thinkers connected the 'supernatural' to God: God had the power to produce miracles—that is, events that exceeded all nature,

[10] Ginzburg, 'Our Words, and Theirs'.
[11] https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/supernatural (accessed February 2024).
[12] See the short yet excellent account by Bartlett, *The Natural and the Supernatural*. See also below, Chapter 2.

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all orderly repetition of things through intelligible reasons. This 'order of natural causes', as termed by scholastic philosophy, is what we conceive as natural and ordinary, even if we do not understand it completely.

Aside from nature and the supernatural, another notion, also developed by medieval scholasticism, found its place in this discussion: the 'preternatural' (literally 'beyond nature'), exceptional and strange phenomena that were not miracles, but the product of causes that were natural, yet concealed from the human intellect. These were the marvels, the medieval *mirabilia*, wonders that produced awe but were not necessarily miraculous; a more modern rendition would be 'paranormal activity'. This notion also encompasses esotericism and occultism: the idea that there are secret phenomena and procedures that can be understood only by chosen initiates. This is the case with Hermeticism, a current that had a prominent presence in Islamic and Christian worlds during the Renaissance period, including, as we will see, the Ottoman world. The conflict between an interpretation of inexplicable phenomena based on angels and demons, on the one hand, and an interpretation based on hidden laws of nature (including a hierarchy and homologous chains associating stars, planets, minerals, animals, and so forth), on the other, is a conflict that, we could say, was the driving force behind the history of magic and occultism. We must bear in mind that magical and thaumaturgical operations do not lack causality; what should be stressed is the *explicability* of causality—in other words, the degree to which it can be explained and understood by the intellect.

We need to note here that in this book I will not study religion per se. I choose not to deal with the direct relation of humanity with God, or with institutionalized behaviours, practices, and beliefs. My aim is to explore how a pre-modern society, whose world view and everyday life from ethics to law depended on a religious framework, dealt with alternative ways of approaching this world view, particularly the ability of man to have knowledge of, and access to, the supernatural. Thus, I will refrain from studying communal and institutionalized beliefs and practices that involve personal and direct contact with God. I will survey the prevailing cosmological beliefs, but only in order to see their function in individually oriented practices; I will talk of the miraculous deeds of saints, but only in order to examine the degree to which individual human beings are accepted as capable of interfering with God's order and of bringing the supernatural into personalized contact, and not, as prophecy does, with the whole community of potential believers.[13]

[13] On these characteristics of religion, see Geertz, 'Religion as a Cultural System'; Smith, 'Religion, Religions'; McCutcheon, *Manufacturing Religion*. On the distinction between religion and magic, see the survey by Versnel, 'Some Reflections'.

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Magic, Occultism, and Science

Magic plays a major role in our enquiry.[14] In the words of Bert Hansen, '[a]t its most general…magic may be characterized as the utilization of "occult forces" (that is, forces either supernatural, or natural but hidden) to accomplish specific desired ends, often by means of words or symbols'.[15] As it comprises various beliefs and practices considered separate from both religion and science (and these juxtapositions are themselves subject to debate), magic has been approached by various methods and theories, both emic (i.e. based on the categories used by the culture under study) and etic (based on the categories used by the historian's or anthropologist's culture). Thus, a series of different approaches of an anthropological or sociological nature sought to define magic, based on a contrast either with science[16] or with religion. The outburst of studies on witchcraft in the second part of the twentieth century aimed to historicize magic and its forms.[17] To this end, the social context of the witch-hunt gained some precedence, whereas a distinction between popular 'witchcraft' and learned magic also emphasized the social status of the practitioners of magic and their customers.[18] Furthermore, when studying non-Western cultures, scholars have even begun to wonder whether 'magic' is a meaningful and useful term, suggesting that it may just be an extension of Western and Christian categorizations into beliefs that other cultures saw as belonging to religion.[19] Thus, besides 'magic' other terms have found their place in scholarship: namely, 'occult/occultism' and 'esotericism'. Again, there are numerous definitions and approaches. Scholars such as Antoine Faivre adopted a

[14] 'Magic' is a problematic term and there is no need to delve in detail into various debates concerning its definition and its relation to other systems of thought (indeed, its very being a system of thought itself). On these discussions, one may consult the introduction to Vickers, *Occult and Scientific Mentalities*; Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, 8–17; Copenhaver, *Magic in Western Culture*, 3–24; Boudet and Weill-Parot, 'Être historien des sciences'; Klaniczay, 'A Cultural History of Witchcraft'; Marrone, *A History of Science*; Coulon, *La Magie en terre d'islam*, 291–299; Hanegraaff, 'The Notion of "Occult Sciences"'. For the various definitions of magic, from Plato to contemporary scholarship, see Otto and Stausberg, *Defining Magic*.

[15] Hansen, 'Science and Magic', 484.

[16] For a more recent version of this approach, see Vickers, 'Analogy versus Identity'. On the epistemological basis of the divergence of divinatory sciences (or arts) from modern scientific disciplines, cf. Fidora, 'Divination and Scientific Prediction'; see also Vanden Broecke, 'Astrological Contingency'.

[17] See e.g. Otto, 'Historicising "Western Learned Magic"'. A recent emphasis on the magic function of material objects can be seen e.g. in Iafrate, *The Long Life of Magical Objects*.

[18] The witch-hunt of the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries brought to the forefront a vernacular, rural magic that has been the subject of long scholarly debates: *pace* Margaret Murray postulating that this concerned a pre-Christian, pagan fertility cult, the general consensus now is that there was no reality in the descriptions of Sabbath meetings, which were formulated solely by the Inquisition questionnaires and guidebooks. However, Carlo Ginzburg showed convincingly that European folklore, from the Italian peninsula to the Baltic Sea and Siberia, shares a common shamanistic background of flying witches fighting over fertility (Ginzburg, *Ecstasies*). Among recent studies in Christian magic and witchcraft, see also Klaniczay and Pócs, *Witchcraft Mythologies and Persecutions*; Pócs and Klaniczay, *Christian Demonology*; Bever, *The Realities of Witchcraft*. A concise survey of the relevant literature can be found in Klaniczay, 'A Cultural History of Witchcraft'.

[19] Cf. Otto, 'Magie im Islam'.

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Weberian approach and put esotericism in the context of the disenchantment process, identifying it with a world view that stays 'enchanted'. In a similar vein, Wouter Hanegraaff defined esotericism as a category in the study of religions, which includes 'all attempts by esotericists to come to terms with a disenchanted world or, alternatively, by people in general to make sense of esotericism from the perspective of a disenchanted secular world'.[20] For Hanegraaff, European esotericism comprises all 'rejected knowledge', beliefs, and practices that are dismissed by both the religious and the scientific establishment.

Both occultism and esotericism include what is perceived as knowledge of things unseen (or of things not measurable, not 'normal', not rationally explicable)—often including knowledge reserved for the few, the elect (Hermeticism). In the sixteenth century, the term 'occult sciences' grouped together various crafts, each of which 'engaged in a systematic investigation of nature and natural processes, in the context of theoretical frameworks that relied heavily on a belief in occult qualities, virtues or forces'.[21] As Noah Gardiner has argued, there is an Islamic esotericism, of which the exoteric/esoteric meaning of the Qur'an (like that of the Torah for Jewish Kabbalists) is a basic pillar (combined with an emphasis on elitism and secrecy, elements in common with the Western conceptualization of the esoteric).[22] However, in an Islamicate context the term 'esotericism' may create some confusion with the common Sufi doctrine of 'esoteric knowledge' (*bāṭin*), meaning a wide range of mystical interpretations and doctrines that mostly belong to the field of religion. Although in several cases *bāṭin* was identified with occult sciences, in general the term is much wider than what was described above as 'esotericism'.[23] Thus, it may be more beneficial to use 'occultism': this term may be defined as the belief in the possibility of manipulating natural forces and states (including visions of the future) by the use of (usually, but not always, secret) knowledge and supernatural powers (through magic, miracle-working, appealing to angels or jinn, etc.).

A short survey of the developments in Islamicate and then Christian occultism in the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance is not out of place here, especially since I will have to revert continuously to these during my discussion of Ottoman esoteric and occultist theories and practices[24] (I will consistently use Marshall Hodgson's term, 'Islamicate', in order to emphasize that pre-modern Islamic societies included non-Muslim peoples who, however, shared common beliefs and practices with their Muslim neighbours). By the twelfth century CE, Islamicate

[20] Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion*, 422. [21] Hanegraaff, 'Occult/Occultism', 887.

[22] Gardiner, 'Esotericist Reading Communities', 409–410.

[23] Cf. Hamza, 'Locating the "Esoteric"'; Saif, 'What Is Islamic Esotericism?'; see also Hanegraaff, 'The Globalization of Esotericism'; Strube, 'Towards the Study of Esotericism'.

[24] The sketch that follows is based on several works; for some recent and complete surveys, see Coulon, *La Magie en terre d'islam*; Günther and Pielow, 'Magie im Islam'; Zadeh, 'Magic, Marvel, and Miracle'; the relevant essays in Heiduk, Herbers, and Lehner, *Prognostication in the Medieval World*.

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science, through major works such as the epistles of the Brethren of Purity/*Ikhwān al-Safā'*, or the famous *Ghāyat al-ḥakīm* by Maslama al-Qurṭubī, known in the West as *Picatrix*, had formulated a theory of magic based on natural hierarchies and correspondences, where talismanic techniques could use powers inherent in nature and hidden from the common intellect. A major revolution followed by the early thirteenth century: the astral magic of *Ghāyat al-ḥakīm*, combined with a strong Sufi strand of letter magic, especially through Ibn 'Arabī's tremendously influential works, gave rise to what has been called lettrism—that is, a theory of nature and magic in which Arabic letters, being essential elements of the divine order, dominate the universe and the ways of exerting human influence on it.[25] The work of al-Būnī (d. 1225?), together with a series of works attributed to him (the so-called *corpus Bunianum*) or, alternatively, to Hermes Trismegistus, established a talismanic magic based on magic squares (*wafḳ*), letters and numbers. With al-Būnī and his followers, the *ghayb*, the invisible or supernatural, begins to contain spiritual powers such as the *rūḥāniyyat*, which until that time were explained on the basis of astrology and a vision of the universe founded on a more natural causality. In other words, forces that today appear magical were until the thirteenth century considered part of the natural (spiritual part of nature), but now became situated more in the supernatural domain, inaccessible to the human intellect and linked to angels, demons, or jinn.[26]

This approach, which has been named 'neo-Pythagorean' due to its mathematical dimension, especially in occult sciences such as geomancy and astrology, combined with a neo-Platonic theory of emanation, was popularized through a network connecting Egypt, Anatolia, Iran, and central Asia under such figures as Ibn Turka and 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Bisṭāmī (d. 1454).[27] It seems that throughout the fourteenth century CE several scholars, including Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) and Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1406), fought bitterly against this trend,[28] only to lose the battle in favour of an increasingly 'occultist' turn that tended to include more and more powers, which older scholars such as Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) and the Brethren of Purity considered natural, into a supernatural sphere of angels, demons, and jinn.[29]

[25] However, it can be noted that this 'science of letters' is only a development of the 'science of balances', part of early medieval Islamic alchemy, as we see it in the Jabirian corpus attributed to Jābir ibn Ḥayyān; see e.g. Lory, *Alchimie et mystique*, 130–150; Lory, *La Science des lettres*; Acevedo, *Alphanumeric Cosmology*, 188–198.

[26] Saif, 'Between Medicine and Magic'; Zadeh, 'Commanding Demons and Jinn'.

[27] On these developments, see Coulon, 'Building al-Buni's Legend'; Coulon, *La Magie en terre d'islam*, 229–232; Melvin-Koushki, 'The Occult Challenge'; Melvin-Koushki, 'In Defense of Geomancy'; Melvin-Koushki, 'Powers of One'; Gardiner, 'Forbidden Knowledge?'; Binbaş, *Intellectual Networks*. On Bisṭāmī, see also Gril, 'Esotérisme contre hérésie'; Fleischer, 'Ancient Wisdom'; Gardiner, 'Lettrism and History'. On the philosophical (mostly neo-Platonic) foundations of such beliefs, cf. Daiber, 'Magie und Kausalität im Islam'; Fazlıoğlu, 'Between Reality and Mentality'.

[28] Coulon, *La Magie en terre d'islam*, 251–256; Melvin-Koushki, 'In Defense of Geomancy'; Gardiner, *Ibn Khaldūn versus the Occultists*.

[29] Saif, 'Between Medicine and Magic'; Saif, 'From *Ġāyat al-ḥakīm*'.

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In a series of articles, Matthew Melvin-Koushki has postulated that this neo-Pythagorean, mathematicized perception of the Unseen actually led to an occultist turn, which functioned in tandem with the formation of the major Islamicate empires of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to form an 'occult-scientific imperialism'.[30]

In a parallel course, in western Europe, where the early medieval Church had confronted various magical practices and popular beliefs, incorporating some of them with a careful dose of human agency and Christian elements,[31] the translation of classical Arabic works such as *De radiis*[32] and *Ghāyat al-ḥakīm* (famously known as *Picatrix*) into Latin led to the rise of a scholarly tradition of natural or astral magic connected with the ideas of Hermeticism. This tradition coexisted with another one—namely, ritual or demonic (Solomonic) magic, based not on powers and properties of nature but on handling and manipulating demonic forces.[33] Scholasticist approaches to magic, both by Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274), who condemned it while accepting astral causality and the influence of planets upon humans ('*astra inclinant, non urgent*'), and by Roger Bacon (d. *c.*1292), who considered it a *scientia experimentalis*, rejected demonic magic and accepted natural magic as far as it was presented as a science or a natural marvel. Under Arabic influence, other sorts of divination—for example, geomancy,[34] physiognomy, new interpretations of dreams, etc.—made their appearance in European courts and markets. From the late fifteenth century on, Renaissance scholars often turned to natural magic, combining it with neo-Platonism, Hermeticism, and Kabbalah.[35] In the work of scholars such as Marcilio Ficino (d. 1499) and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (d. 1494), the world was considered a continuum, in which the human soul is capable of influencing its environment, since macrocosm and microcosm correspond to one another. These ideas culminated during the sixteenth century with Pietro Pomponazzi (d. 1525), Agrippa of Nettesheim (d. 1535), and Paracelsus (d. 1541). In the work of Robert Fludd (d. 1637), a Paracelsian physician and alchemist, numerology was combined with the unity of microcosm

[30] Melvin-Koushki, 'Astrology, Lettrism, Geomancy'; Melvin-Koushki, 'Toward a Neopythagorean Historiography'. Cf. Izdebska, 'The Attitudes of Medieval Arabic' on the image of Pythagoras in medieval Islamic philosophy.

[31] Flint, *The Rise of Magic*.

[32] Recently it has been convincingly suggested that *De radiis* (known only from its Latin translation, attributing it to al-Kindī) may have been misattributed, being a product of Christian thought after all: see Matton, 'An Irradiation of Latin Grammarians'.

[33] On the history of magic and astrology in the twelfth through to the fifteenth centuries, see Boudet, *Entre science et nigromance*; Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*; Forshaw, 'The Occult Middle Ages'; see also the very concise survey of recent research in Collins, 'Magic in the Middle Ages'; the relevant essays in Heiduk, Herbers, and Lehner, *Prognostication in the Medieval World*. On astrology after the period covered by Boudet, see Dooley, *A Companion to Astrology*.

[34] Boudet, *Entre science et nigromance*, 108–111; Charmasson, *Recherches sur une technique divinatoire*.

[35] On the forms magic took during the Renaissance, see e.g. Copenhaver, *Magic in Western Culture*; Zambelli, *White Magic, Black Magic*.

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and macrocosm as well as aspects of Kabbalah. And finally, the hermeticism of the Jesuit polymath Athanasius Kircher (d. 1680) made him the most 'un-supernatural' proponent of natural magic, as he sought to explore all aspects of nature using rational if occultist explanations.[36]

The Renaissance ideas about the human magus and his powers over the natural world have been held responsible for the Scientific Revolution, a theory enhanced by the occultist occupations of major scientists such as Johannes Kepler (d. 1630) and Isaac Newton (d. 1726). Yet, this theory, suggested by Frances Yates, is now considered extreme and outdated, although the history of science now gives more attention to the development of occult sciences and their role. The definitive (or not-so-definitive) marginalization of magic began with the rationalism of Descartes (d. 1650) and the Enlightenment philosophers in the eighteenth century.[37]

Some words here on science and its relationship with the 'supernatural' field are not out of place. Traditionally, historiography of science straightforwardly dismissed occult theories and techniques, considering them pseudosciences (in the spirit of much of the European Enlightenment); in this view, the history of science is conceived as a history of the gradual approach of humanity to the objective, scientific truth, a course that goes in parallel with the decline of 'occult sciences', which represent the superstition that real scientific knowledge is struggling against. Yet, in the 1950s and 1960s there was a rise in scientific interest in the occult occupations not only of Renaissance scholars, but also of pioneers of the Scientific Revolution such as Kepler and Newton. This interest culminated in the famous thesis by Frances Yates, expressed in her 1967 work, *The Hermetic Tradition in Renaissance Science*: according to Yates, by emphasizing the potential control of the magus over the universe, the neo-Platonism and Hermeticism of Ficino and Pico della Mirandola paved the way for the Scientific Revolution, together with the occultist methods and the interest of sciences such as alchemy and astrology in things astral and terrestrial. In the last decades of the twentieth century, however, historians adopted a much more nuanced view, moving from an initial positivism, which only saw superstition and pseudoscience in occultism, to a relativism of sorts, distinguishing between the occult and scientific mentalities. In this distinction, according to Brian Vickers' definition, the occult mentality does not discriminate between literal and metaphorical language; for this mentality, words and things are equivalent, and thus manipulating the one means also manipulating the other.[38] Modern scholarship admits that both mentalities could

[36] Cf. also the case of Francis Bacon (d. 1626), who suggested the validity of magic purified of religious and esoteric influences in a world populated by spirits (Josephson-Storm, *The Myth of Disenchantment*, 46–51).

[37] See Vickers (ed.), *Occult and Scientific Mentalities*; Josephson-Storm, *The Myth of Disenchantment*. On the complex relationship between science and secularization, see Harrison, 'Science and Secularization'.

[38] Vickers, 'Analogy versus Identity'.

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coexist in a world view and that occult techniques should be integrated into cultural history.[39]

Regardless of the discussion about the contribution of magic and occultism to the Scientific Revolution, we have to make a distinction between studying occult practices in the context of the history of science, on the one hand, and in the context of cultural/intellectual history, on the other.[40] Occult knowledge (and all 'knowledge', as a matter of fact), as a part of one's understanding of the world, is no doubt an integral part of pre-modern and early modern cultural history; it forms part and parcel of the *Weltanschauung* of most cultures and as such has to be taken and studied seriously.[41] 'History of knowledge', integrating artisanal or other non-scientific practices and skills, but also ways of dealing with failure, ignorance, and the unknown, is perhaps a more appropriate term for the field this book seeks to explore.[42]

From the point of view of the history of science, moreover, it has traditionally been held that Islamic science, blooming under the Abbasids and the central Asian rulers, declined sharply after the eleventh or twelfth century. This approach is often coupled with an emphasis on an 'occultist turn' that replaced 'science' with 'superstition'.[43] Western observers' remarks on the Ottoman Empire played an overwhelming role in this perception of progress, or rather decline, and the 'internal' or 'emic' observations of Muslim scholars such as Ibn Khaldūn and Kâtib Çelebi only enhanced these views. However, apart from the problems with the very notion of 'decline', more recent research has shown that sciences such as logic and astronomy continued to thrive. Thus, the image we now have is far more nuanced.[44] This book will not deal with the conflict between 'occult' and

[39] For an account of the debate, see the introduction to Vickers, *Occult and Scientific Mentalities*. For a recent attempt to produce a unified narrative of magic, religion, and science, see Marrone, *A History of Science*. For a conceptual history approach that challenges the very idea of a 'Scientific' Revolution, see Hatfield, 'Was the Scientific Revolution'.

[40] On the pitfalls of integrating occult sciences into the history of sciences, cf. Brentjes, 'Research Foci', 273–276, 279–280.

[41] Cf. Hanegraaff, 'From Imagination to Reality', 59–63.

[42] On this term, see Bourmaud and de Tapia, 'Introduction'; Burke, *What Is the History of Knowledge?*; Zwierlein, *The Dark Side*; Dupré and Somsen, 'The History of Knowledge'; Östling and Larsson Heidenblad, *The History of Knowledge*; see also the 'Forum: What Is the History of Knowledge?' in the first issue of *Journal for the History of Knowledge* (2020), edited by Dupré and Somsen.

[43] For a very recent expression of this view, see Gutas, 'Alternative Facts'.

[44] On astronomy, the work of George Saliba was fundamental in showing that Islamicate astronomical and mathematical sciences continued to feed their European counterparts even after the Renaissance, including during the Ottoman period (see e.g. Saliba, *Islamic Science*; Ragep, "Alī Qushjī and Regiomontanus'; Ragep, 'Copernicus and His Islamic Predecessors'). See the surveys of the relevant debates in Brentjes, 'The Prison of Categories'; Brentjes, 'Research Foci'; Mavroudi, 'Byzantine Translations', 283–288; cf. El-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History*; Stearns, 'Writing the History'. On some problems with the concept of 'Scientific Revolution' in the light of global history, cf. Raj, 'Thinking without the Scientific Revolution'; Roberts, 'Situating Science'. Brentjes' remarks in her 'What Could It Mean to Contextualize' offer a very promising agenda for future research, only partially accomplished in the fifteen years that have passed since.

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'scientific' knowledge; after all, intellectual history is interested in the content, rather than the 'worth' of ideas and of systems of thought. Yet, one of our main concerns will be whether more and more (or fewer) phenomena of the natural world were considered 'explicable' and 'understandable'; whether the supernatural factor, though never denied in its entirety, was considered omnipresent or gradually retiring from the course of things observable in nature.

Looking for Ottoman Notions

Ottoman Islam and religiosity has been the subject of numerous recent studies, with some significant contributions being the work by Tijana Krstić and Derin Terzioğlu on confessionalization; Gottfried Hagen's study of *pietas Ottomanica*; and Baki Tezcan's attempt to stress its social dynamics.[45] Confessionalization or, perhaps more precisely, 'Sunnitization' is meant as the transition from a syncretic and latitudinarian attitude against religion, prevailing in the rural (but also urban) populations of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, to an alliance of the political with the religious authorities aiming to impose religious indoctrination and social discipline. In this context, religious norms were crystallized, and doctrinal exigencies clarified, to delimit the credo and strengthen the barriers dividing orthodoxy and orthopraxy from heresy and unbelief, as well as from other religions, where ambiguities did not have a place. Confessionalization, on the other hand, went in parallel with the proliferation and multiplication of Sufi brotherhoods, which ended up comprising practically every Muslim, especially in urban environments: large and powerful networks of dervish orders such as the Bektaşīs, the Bayramīs, the Ḫalvetīs, the Mevlevīs, and later the Naḳşibendīs promoted a devotion centred around the local sheikh as the mediator of the community with the supernatural.

The confessionalization process, which had begun as a state-led initiative in the sixteenth century in the context of the rise of Safavid Shiism which threatened the imperial political and religious order, took a 'bottom-up' form during the seventeenth century thanks to the influential 'fundamentalist' movement of the Ḳāḍızādeli preachers.[46] Ultimately, a new form of religiosity was shaped, one in which every believer had a personal responsibility for observing the right tenets and practices; this emphasis on the individual ability to reach the truth came together with an emphasis on morality.[47] It may be said that both the Ḳāḍızādelis

[45] Terzioğlu, 'How to Conceptualize'; Krstić and Terzioğlu, *Historicizing Sunni Islam*; Krstić and Terzioğlu, *Entangled Confessionalizations?*; Hagen, 'Pietas Ottomanica'; Tezcan, 'A Populist Reformation'.

[46] See below, Chapters 2 and 6.

[47] Ottoman confessionalization did not abolish confessional ambiguity, as shown by Terzioğlu, 'Confessional Ambiguity'.

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and their Sufi opponents eventually adopted this new form of piety, expressed with an 'effusive emotionality' (to use Gottfried Hagen's words) and a community of personal pieties, so to speak, taking place either in the mosque or in the Sufi lodge. On the other hand, as James Grehan showed, vernacular practices of making contact with the supernatural often belonged to a wider field of popular representations and techniques, which was unrelated to religious beliefs (Islamic or not) and yet was often tolerated, if not accepted, by the religious and secular authorities alike. Whereas 'etic' approaches tend to describe this field as superstition and nonsense, it was often perceived as an integral part of the cosmos, even when it was not contained in the normative, scriptural, and ritual configuration of religion.[48] Grehan suggests that this field may be named 'agrarian religion' (connecting it with illiteracy and ritual insouciance); yet one can discern it in urban settings as well, as will be seen in this book.

Classical Ottoman language has no word for the 'supernatural', and one could argue that even the very notion is absent since the notion of 'nature' was practically very near to that of 'God', as a reflection of his omnipotence.[49] The 'extraordinary', however, is in some circumstances a notion that resembles the supernatural. In Islamic theology, as we will see in detail, the general term for anything extraordinary is *khāriq al-'āda* (Ott. *ḫāriḳü'l-'āde*): that is, 'what breaks the custom' of God, or rather of the things God has ordained and to which we are accustomed. This term is mostly used to interpret and denote miracles: God grants to prophets or saints such cases that contradict the usual course of things. But besides the supernatural of the miraculous, there is also the 'marvellous', a mental category that played a major role in the ancient and medieval imagination, in both the East and the West, and which is closer to the medieval and early modern notion of the 'preternatural'. A major source for the understanding of what was conceived as 'marvellous' is the so-called *'ajā'ib* (Ott. *'acā'ib*) literature: that is, cosmographies depicting the strange and extraordinary items of nature and civilization. *Aja'ib* ('marvels'), in general, refer to the marvels of antiquity and any kind of extraordinary (but not inexplicable by reason) natural phenomenon or man-made monument. Apart from cosmographical works, other scientific works, treatises of the occult sciences, histories, chronicles, Sufi biographies, and fiction contain narrations of 'marvellous', 'preternatural' and 'supernatural' events and phenomena.

Another pillar for understanding the Ottoman conceptions of 'supernatural' is the vast literature on different magical and occult practices. Occult practices of divination such as astrology, bibliomancy, and the interpretation of dreams were widely used, and encyclopedists described magic and divination as branches of

[48] Grehan, *Twilight of the Saints*.

[49] A close inspection of Islamicate philosophy may reveal some modifications of this statement; see below, Chapter 6.

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science, following older taxonomies of the Islamic world. The Ottoman interpretations were based, on the one hand, on conjuring and commanding jinn and demons, and on the other hand, on knowing the secret hierarchy and relationships dominating all of the cosmos, from human beings to the metals, plants, and stars. Students of European magic have described this distinction as one between demonic/ritual and natural/astral magic, or, to use the common catchwords, Solomonic and Hermetic magic. Here the so-called 'supernatural' again seems to melt into what is deemed natural; what distinguishes this notion from the natural is its 'strangeness' or 'marvellousness'—that is, the inability of the normal human mind to perceive a hidden reality. It is important to keep in mind that the belief in the existence of jinn or spirits, being an essential part of Qur'anic cosmology, was universally accepted not only in folk tales and traditions, but also in more educated and even sceptic circles. Recourse to these beliefs was often used to explain phenomena or traditions that would nowadays be deemed 'irrational' or 'supernatural'. In this respect, one should also take into account the use of technology and artisanal knowledge. These are opposed to the idea of 'secret' aspects of nature, as they presuppose the possibility of knowledge and manipulation of natural phenomena. The evolution of ideas concerning those phenomena that may be easily attributed to God's wrath, such as earthquakes and fires, is especially relevant. Occult sciences transcended the modern dichotomy between 'scientific' and 'irrational' explanations: they were developed in continuous dialogue with the 'rational' sciences, and esotericism was a stage rather than a permanent feature in this process.

To summarize, categories of phenomena and systems of ideas that help us understand how Ottomans (or, more accurately, different groups of Ottomans in a complex historical perspective) perceived the cosmos beyond its natural, everyday course concern two main areas involving the unusual phenomena of the world: (a) things perceived as supernatural or preternatural, including the marvellous (i.e. the inexplicable) and the miraculous or demonic (i.e. the uncontrolled supernatural), and (b) the fields of magic/occult—that is, human ways and practices of connecting with the supernatural, conceptualizing and explaining or even controlling it. These categories constitute a kind of 'emic' approach to the subject; yet, one has to pay particular attention to the development of the terms used through time. The intertwining of popular beliefs with Sufi culture and with ulema (religious scholars') and independent/artisanal scholarship led to specific phenomena being pushed into different categories according to different social groups and historical periods.

Just as 'Islamicate' is a generic term unifying diverse cultures, sociopolitical structures, and historical periods, so is 'Ottoman'. Although intellectual history of the Ottoman world is still in an embryonic stage, it is clear that there is no single 'Ottoman culture', even if we confine ourselves to the Muslim Turkish-speaking part of the population, which is the main focus of this study. Different social groups, local traditions, gender hierarchies, and ideological trends influenced

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every individual's *Weltanschauung*. Moreover, historical development is manifest in ideas pertaining to other fields (e.g. political thought or medicine), and one would surely expect it in the general world view as well. What is really important in terms of social history is to take the field described above as 'supernatural' or 'preternatural' as a vantage point from which to observe the interplay of different layers of culture representing varying layers and groups of society. Thus, one may presuppose the existence of a 'popular' or folk culture,[50] as well as of a Sufi one, slanting more towards a 'magical' world view, while one would expect ulema circles to interpret or reject such traditions within a very rational and strict framework of ontological hierarchy. Of course, such qualification needs careful scrutiny, and moreover, this narrative is not static and unaltered over time: not only is 'Sufi' an extremely generic term that unifies vastly different ideas and beliefs, but also Sufi and ulema often shared common ideas. Moreover, 'popular' or vernacular culture was in a constant interaction and dialogue with scholarly traditions, an entanglement that we are going to see often in this book before revisiting it in the Epilogue.

Sources and Structure of the Book

The main objectives of this book are: to explore the meaning and content of what different sociocultural groups in Ottoman society meant by 'miraculous', 'strange', or 'extraordinary'; to explore Ottoman attitudes against beliefs in such phenomena or the practice of such methods, both holy (e.g. miracles of dervishes) and suspect (magic, witchcraft); to localize these beliefs in the Ottoman *Weltanschauung*, or rather, in the various Ottoman systems of thought; to analyse the various ways changes took place in the period from the emergence of the Ottoman state up to the Tanzimat reforms, and to associate these changes with emerging or declining layers of culture of specific social groups, in connection with social changes and especially with the emergence of new forms of a self-conscious artisanal and urban stratum throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

To this end, the book will explore a variety of sources, covering a wide array of published and unpublished materials and a period from the late fourteenth to the early nineteenth centuries:

(a) Geographical/cosmographical treatises, with an emphasis on the *'ajā'ib* genre, in order to show the presence of the earlier Arabic and Persian motifs concerning the 'marvellous', the emergence of new such motifs in Ottoman literature, and the infiltration by more 'rational' views of Earth

[50] Cf. the versions of Qur'anic lore in modern Bulgarian Islam as studied in Badalanova Geller, *Qur'ān in Vernacular*.

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and nature. These works include early Ottoman cosmographies that translate or adapt the *'ajā'ib* model works by Qazwīnī and Ṭūsī, including the famous late-fifteenth-century *Dürr-i meknūn*[51] and the monumental cosmography composed *c.*1598 by Mehmed 'Āṣıḳ.[52] We can also find interesting insights in an early-sixteenth-century account of China, composed in 1516 by a central Asian merchant, 'Alī Akbar Ḫeṭā'ī, for Selim I.[53] Our source material also includes later geographies of a more 'scientific' kind, first and foremost the *Cihānnümā* by Kâtib Çelebi (also known as Hadji Khalifa, d. 1657), the polymath, encyclopedist, historian, and famous geographer, whose programmatic translation and adaptation of European sources resulted in a significant change in the Ottoman scientific paradigm.[54] To this corpus, we also add the recently published geography by Mehmed Hâşim, completed in 1799, a work of extraordinary interest since it incorporates local traditions, customs, and legends, among which are several stories of folklore sorcery and even vampirism.[55]

(b) Other works of a 'scientific' nature: that is, encyclopedic treatises on philosophy, theology, medicine, etc. Among well-known examples, we should note some early works such as Manyasoğlu's (Mahmud b. Kadı-ı Manyās) early-fifteenth-century *A'cabü'l-'uccāb*, a work of encyclopedic ambition but actually more of a compendium of alphanumerical magic,[56] and Şükrullah Efendi's (d. after 1464) *Behcetü'l-tevārīḫ*, a universal history in Persian that contains cosmological and mythical information.[57] One should not neglect works of Sufi theory: some prominent specimens are the works of Sinan Pasha (d. 1486), a former vizier who wrote a compendium of knowledge and ethics towards the end of the fifteenth century, the *Ma'ārif-nāme*, as well as of İsmā'īl Ḥaḳḳı Bursevī (d. 1725), a Celvetī sheikh and author of numerous mystical works and his master's biography in Arabic, *Tamāmu l-feyẓ fī bābi r-rijāl*.[58]

[51] Yazıcıoğlu [Anonymous], *Dürr-i meknūn*, ed. Kaptein (with German translation); ed. Demirtaş (a full and reliable transliteration); ed. Sakaoğlu (a problematic transcription); ed. Mattei (French translation of a later copy). The common attribution to Yazıcıoğlu Ahmed Bīcan has been rejected by modern scholarship. On the authorship of *Dürr-i meknūn*, see Yazıcıoğlu [Anonymous], *Dürr-i meknūn*, ed. Kaptein, 44–66; Grenier, 'Reassessing the Authorship'; the work was so famous that is still referred to in Mehmed Hâşim, eds Emecen and Şahin, *Îmâ-yı törehât-ı büldânân*, 88, at the end of the eighteenth century! On this sort of cosmography, see the survey by Coşkun, 'Osmanlı coğrafya literatürü'.

[52] Âşık Mehmed, ed. Ak, *Menâzırü'l-avâlim*.

[53] Ḫeṭā'ī, ed. Afšār, *Ḫeṭāy-nāma*; cf. Hemmat, 'Children of Cain'. I wish to thank Kaveh Hemmat, who generously shared with me parts of his forthcoming translation from the Persian original.

[54] Kâtib Çelebi, eds Hagen and Dankoff, *An Ottoman Cosmography*; cf. Hagen, *Ein osmanischer Geograph*.

[55] Mehmed Hâşim, eds Emecen and Şahin, *Îmâ-yı törehât-ı büldânân*.

[56] Manyasoğlu, ed. Buçukcu, 'Mahmud bin Kadı-ı Manyas'ın *'Acebü'l-üccab*'. Cf. Sucu, 'The Marvelous Sciences in *'Acebü'l-'uccāb*'.

[57] Şükrullah, ed. Almaz, *Behcetü't-tevârīh*.

[58] Sinan Pasha, ed. Tulum, *Maârif-nâme*; İsmâil Hakkı Bursevî, eds Muslu and Namlı, *Tamâmü'l-feyz*. On Bursevī, see Atanasova, 'The Sufi as the Axis'.

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Among the works of a scientific nature, three encyclopedias will provide us with guidance throughout the journey. First are the two major encyclopedic works in Ottoman history, *Miftāḥ al-saʿāda* by Ahmed Taşköprüzāde (d. 1561) and Kâtib Çelebi's bibliographical *Kashf al-ẓunūn*.[59] Towards the end of the eighteenth century, İbrahim Hakkı Erzurumī (d. 1780) would try again to summarize knowledge in his *Māʿrifetnāme*, a strange combination of Sufi thought and scientific information.[60] All three works will appear regularly in the course of this book, as we have three Ottoman literati, a sixteenth-century judge, a seventeenth-century independent scholar, and an eighteenth-century Sufi, respectively trying to explain to their audiences the cosmos and various ways to understand and manipulate it. Their writings provide a unique opportunity to observe how they define the concepts under study.

(c) Literary works, where one may explore the presence of 'supernatural' motives and their respective position between fiction and reality. Such works include Dervīş Ḥasan Medḥī's 1592/3 account of the Anatolian legends concerning Ebū 'Alī Sīnā (and his twin brother, Ebū'l-Ḥāris)—that is, Avicenna seen as a master magician[61]—and *Bedāyiʿü'l-āṣār*, a collection of stories and *mirabilia* composed in 1590 by the poet Mustafa b. Mehmed Cinānī (d. 1595).[62] Towards the end of the period we study, there is rich material to be found in 'Azīz Efendi's (d. 1798) famous late-eighteenth-century novel *Muḥayyelāt*, considered as a precursor of the modern Ottoman novel and incorporating a rich substratum of folk stories and tropes.[63]

(d) Non-fictional narratives, including historiography, travelogues, biographies of poets, scholars, and dervishes, and so forth, where 'miraculous events' and other *mirabilia* may be recorded. Among these works, we have to highlight some local histories with strong legendary overtones, such as an early-sixteenth-century history of Edirne, structured around the physician Beşir Çelebi,[64] and a 'history of Antioch/Antakya', composed in the mid- or late sixteenth century and full of legends, myths, and folk tales.[65]

[59] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-saʿāda*; Kâtip Çelebi, eds Yaltkaya and Bilge, *Keşf-el-zunun*. For more on these works, see below, Chapter 3.

[60] Erzurumī İbrahim Hakkı, *Māʿrifetnāme*, University of Michigan, and ed. Meyan, *Mârifetnâme*. Literature on İbrahim Hakkı Erzurumī and his *Māʿrifetnāme* is remarkably scarce; see Michot, 'Sufi Love and Light'; Erzurumlu İbrahim Hakkı, ed. Fazlıoğlu, 'Taʿlîm ile İrşâd arasında'.

[61] Medḥī, ed. Öztürk, 'Türk tarihinde İbn-i Sînâ destânları'. A more elaborate version was composed in 1629 by Seyyid Ẓiyaeddīn Yaḥya (ed. Şenocak, 'İbn Sînâ Hikâyeleri'). On these stories, see Ateş, 'Türk halk hikâyelerinde'.

[62] Cinānī, ed. Ünlü, *Bedâyiü'l-âsâr*.

[63] 'Azīz Efendi, *Muhayyelât*, ed. Alacatlı or Duymaz. Cf. Tietze, "Azīz Efendis *Muhayyelat*"; Uysal, *Olağanüstü masaldan*.

[64] Erdoğru, 'Hikâye-i Tabib Beşir Çelebi'. On the text, see Yérasimos, *La Fondation de Constantinople*, 207–209.

[65] Nazmī, ed. Köksal, 'Tevārīḫ-i Anṭākiye'.

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Rich material related to the supernatural can also be found in Gelibolulu Muṣṭafā ʿĀlī's (d. 1600) universal history *Künhü'l-aḫbār*, as in other histories (including Şükrullah Efendi's work, mentioned above). Evliya Çelebi's (d. after 1684) travelogue is a veritable mine of information on every aspect of our topic, partially due to Evliya's acute instinct for registering folk traditions.[66] Among the biographies of ulema and sheikhs, we should note some exceptional collections such as Nev'īzāde ʿAṭāʾī's (d. 1635) classic,[67] Cemâleddin Ḥulvî's early-seventeenth-century *Lemeẓāt-ı ḥulviyye*, and the more urban biographies of Istanbul Sufis and holy fools, *Teẕkiretü'l-müteaḫḫirīn*, by Enfî Ḥasan Ḫulûṣ Efendi (d. 1729).[68] Finally, there are some extraordinary works such as Balıkesirli Rāsiḫ's (d. 1731) *Bülgatü'l-aḥbāb*, a treatise on good manners and conversation that actually preserves a treasure of urban and rural folklore.[69]

(e) Treatises on occult sciences, such as *falnâme*s (books of fortune-telling), grimoires, and astrological and alchemical works. We will see a lot of such texts in Chapters 3 and 4 below; if we have to stress the importance of some of them, we should note the works by the immensely influential ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Bisṭāmī (d. 1454); Uzun Firdevsî's (or Firdevsî-i Ṭavîl, d. after 1517) *Daʿvet-nâme*, a compendium of ritual magic composed in 1478; the treatise on talismans (*Risāle-i ṭılsımāt*) by the astrologer Riyāzī Ali Çelebi (d. 1537/8), long attributed to Ibn Kemāl; some treatises on lettrist magic authored by the Bayrami sheikh İlyas b. Īsā Sarūḫānī, notably his 1559/60 *Ḳavāʿid-i tesḫīrāt*; and a treatise on plague, *Risālat al-shifāʾ li-adwāʾ al-wabāʾ*, penned by none other than Taşköprüzāde.[70]

(f) Administrative documents, especially collections of *fetva*s (legal rulings over specific questions), mentioning magical practices and superstitious traditions, and judicial registers or collections of imperial orders, where references to various forms of witchcraft may be found.

The variety and range of this source base is admittedly unusual, as most studies focus either on a specific genre or on a narrow topic, such as a particular occult science, that has its own particular source bases. It is the wide scope of my research that requires a similarly wide array of source material: we need to study

[66] On Evliya, see Dankoff, *An Ottoman Mentality*; Özay, '*Evliyâ Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi*'nin *Acâib* Edebiyatı'.

[67] Niyazioğlu, *Dreams and Lives*.

[68] Ḥulvî, ed. Süer, 'Cemâleddin Hulvî'nin *Lemezât-ı hulviyye*'; Enfî Hasan Hulûs Halvetî, eds Tatcı and Yıldız, *Tezkiretü'l-müteahhirîn*.

[69] Balıkesirli Râsih, ed. Önler, '*Bülgatü'l-ahbâb*'; cf. Yazar, '*Ve mine'l-müdhişâti'l-acîbe*'.

[70] Firdevsî, ed. Büyükkarcı, *Firdevsî-i Ṭavîl and His Daʿvet-nâme*; Riyāzī [Ibn Kemal], ed. Dalkıran, 'İbn-i Kemal'in tılsımat risâlesi' (cf. Şen, 'Practicing Astral Magic'); Saruhânî, ed. Kaçar, 'İbn-i İsa'nın *Ḳavāʿid-i tesḫīrāt*'; Melvin-Koushki, 'Taşköprīzāde on the (Occult) Science'. On the authorship of *Risāle-i ṭılsımāt*, see Velioğlu, 'Müneccim Riyâzî', 113–117.

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as much material written and read by Ottomans as possible to approach the issue in a holistic way. Thus, I had to consider all kinds of texts, from scrapbooks and recipes noted in haste to highly elaborate treatises, and from folk stories to scientific accounts of history or geography. As most of these sources are difficult to access, especially for non-Ottomanists, I preferred translating even lengthy passages to offering their abstracts, so as to make these voices heard and render their world view visible.

The book is conceived in three parts (each of two chapters) and an Epilogue. The first part will deal with the supernatural field—that is, things pertaining to God and angelic beings, including miraculous appearances; the second part concerns human access and control over this field—that is, occult knowledge and sciences; the third part deals with the preternatural field—that is, the domain of things that belong to the order of nature but cannot be explained by the human intellect. We have to note that most of the chapters follow a thematic structure, centred on topical discussion and often using sources from different periods. The last chapter, in contrast, tries to follow the development of these beliefs over time.

Chapter 1 seeks to locate Ottoman perceptions of nature and the supernatural. It surveys theories and beliefs about the creation and structure of the universe, in both its material and spiritual aspects, ranging from philosophical approaches to Sufi mystical visions. Theories on the interdependence of the terrestrial world with the celestial spheres, as well as the belief in lettrism, will be examined. Finally, the chapter analyses the role of angels and jinn in the Ottoman world vision.

Chapter 2 deals with miraculous phenomena that contradict the usual course of things. It delves into philosophical and Sufi theories on miracles, stressing the 'de-supernaturalization' of miracles from the late seventeenth century onwards due to the influence of the Ḳāḍızādeli movement. It also deals with the Sufi belief in different spheres of existence and tries to put accounts of vampirism and revenants in the context of various theories on the travels of the soul during sleep and wakefulness. In this vein, dreams and their relation to the supernatural element will also be analysed.

In Chapter 3, the focus turns to the field of magic or rather of occult sciences: that is, the ways and practices of connecting with the supernatural, conceptualizing, explaining, and even controlling it. This chapter deals with the theory of the occult, analysing the terminology concerning magic and the position of sciences such as astrology and talismanic techniques in Ottoman encyclopedias and taxonomies of knowledge. Moreover, it seeks to classify the various Ottoman approaches that tried to explain how occult arts worked: from demonic actions to astral influences and from lettrist interpretations to the understanding of nature as a series of correspondences. Furthermore, the chapter delves into polemics concerning occult sciences and their legitimacy, as well as their persecution in Ottoman times.

Turning to the practical aspects of occultism, Chapter 4 deals with the various forms of occult science as practiced in Ottoman society. Views and information

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on the various sorts of magic, astrology, geomancy, dream interpretation, alphanumerical divination, and alchemy will be examined, stressing the methods used. We will also try to find out whatever information is available on the practitioners of such arts in the context of social history.

Chapter 5 deals with what we call marvels and wonders of nature. After examining the pre-Ottoman tradition of *'ajā'ib* literature, it will investigate the form this corpus took in Ottoman literature, as well as theories on the 'properties' of things, considered secret and marvellous but being grasped by experience. Furthermore, the chapter analyses various ideas about the knowability of occult things: the role of experiment, Hermetic theories stressing a revealed wisdom of ancient origin, and the way these theories gave rise to the idea that knowledge is not for the masses and must be concealed.

Chapter 6 explores the ways in which the field of natural sciences—that is, the portion of the world that was considered understandable and controllable—begins to expand from the mid-seventeenth century on. Geography, astronomy, and medicine will be briefly surveyed, and special attention will be given to some possibly materialist or even atheistic strands that are witnessed throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These developments are seen in the light of theories on global Enlightenment as well as Weberian disenchantment with the world, focusing on the shift in occultist beliefs, the transformation of historical thought, the existence of a 'mechanized' image of the world, and finally in a survey of emotions vis-à-vis the supernatural as seen in Ottoman fiction, from the fifteenth through to the eighteenth centuries.

In the Epilogue, some conclusions will be drawn from the previous discussions. It will focus on three points: firstly, how we can position Ottoman esotericism and occultism in a global context, looking both westwards and eastwards; secondly, what we can say about the social context of the various developments seen in Ottoman magic and science; and thirdly, what the relations are between scholarly and vernacular knowledge, as well as between the different cultures interacting in the eastern Mediterranean.

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PART I

THE SUPERNATURAL FIELD

1
Nature within the Supernatural

For an Ottoman, nature—in other words, the visible and tangible world we live in—was God's creation; as such, it was somehow *contained* in the supernatural. A complex system of interdependencies connected God's will, the supralunar world of multiple heavens and spheres, as well as angelic entities, with man's fate, terrestrial geography, flora, and fauna. In this chapter, I will seek to describe this context and to analyse these cosmic hierarchies, as the Ottomans inherited them from earlier Islamic philosophy and cosmology, in order to understand how they (or more accurately, Ottoman scholarship) dealt with these mechanics of the universe. Thus, I intend to provide the setting of my topic, to reconstruct the Ottoman views of the cosmos, within which the supernatural existed and interfered with this world. I will study various views of how the world was created, the hierarchy and structure of spiritual and material entities of the universe, and the doctrines concerning emanation and the Chain of Being, before surveying the powers that were thought to exercise influence upon the sublunary world: namely, celestial movements and—strange as it may seem to the unfamiliar reader—the Arabic letters. I will close this survey of supernatural entities surrounding and regulating the life of humanity with the hierarchy of invisible beings: namely, God's angels and the jinn.

The Mechanics of the Material and Spiritual World

There is a particular term in the Islamicate vocabulary, the *ghayb*, meaning 'unseen, hidden, concealed', that comprises a whole range of supernatural but also preternatural agents and actions: in short, although it bears a variety of meanings, the term denotes what is inaccessible to the senses and to the human intellect, and is thus understood only by the divine wisdom (or by revelation). The absolute mystery of God and of the Divine Decree, the future and destiny, the mystic reality beyond the senses (including Paradise and Hell), the invisible world (supernatural entities and energies including magic, spiritual, and mystic interconnections of the various powers and bodies acting in the universe), all fall within the limits of the *ghayb*, the 'unseen' world, in contrast to the seen, visible one (*ʿālam al-shahāda*). Angels, jinn, and demons, the power of letters, of numbers, and of the names of God, as well as astral and mineral properties, all belong to this world,

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accessible to occult science up to a point and to saints according to their degree. God alone has knowledge of this world in its entirety.[1]

Magic, astrology, and other forms of occult divination draw their material from (or claim to have access to) this space of causes and hierarchies, which does not exclude supernatural beings as actors—angels, jinn, and demons, as well as the famous 'properties' of things, the incomprehensible (in their cause) homologies of the astral, the mineral, the vegetal, and the human world, established through correspondences of numbers and letters. As established by the recent studies of Matthew Melvin-Koushki and Liana Saif (corroborating somewhat the results of earlier scholarship), the significance of the *ghayb* rose considerably from the thirteenth century onwards: not only were more and more natural procedures (e.g. medical conditions and cures) explained by recourse to this hidden world, but also the *ghayb* itself began to contain spiritual powers (the *rūḥāniyyat*), now interpreted as supernatural entities, rather than properties based on a rational connection with astrology.[2] Thus, the *ghayb* became a contested domain, a field for the legitimate control of which occultists, sorcerers, lettrist scholars, Sufi sheikhs and orthodox scholars struggled.

The mystical or psychological descriptions of the levels of existence and the world of images, which we will see in detail in Chapter 2, were only a part of Islamic cosmology—what we can describe as spiritual cosmology. Beyond this spiritual part, elaborate descriptions of the universe connected its material components (the planets including the earth and all that existed on it) with the supernatural powers belonging to the *ghayb*.[3] The world view the Ottomans inherited from medieval Islamicate cultures was one of a universe full of intertwined and interacting forces, where the supernatural was connected to the natural in various ways: from astral influences to the power of Arabic letters, and from the inexplicable properties of minerals or plants to the repetition of historical cycles. Following Aristotle, the world was in general divided into two parts: a supralunary: that is, the realm of quintessence and permanence—and a sublunary, the realm of corruption and change. The supralunary world, with its celestial bodies and spheres, influenced the sublunary one, to a degree that varied according to different epistemological traditions (the incorporation of the planetary movements into the celestial influences upon the sublunary world was an addition of later Hellenistic and Islamicate philosophy to the Aristotelian tradition).[4] From the thirteenth

[1] *EI*[2], s.v. 'al-Ghayb' (D. B. Macdonald [L. Gardet]); Kurz, *Ways to Heaven*, 176; Terrier, 'Sufi Hierarchies of the Worlds'. On the names of God on a more global scale, focusing on Christianity, see Izmirlieva, *All the Names of the Lord*.

[2] Melvin-Koushki, 'Powers of One'; Saif, 'Between Medicine and Magic'. On the notion of the 'unseen', cf. Akkach, '*Naẓar*'.

[3] We lack a comprehensive description of Islamicate cosmological philosophies of the Middle Ages, comparable e.g. to the monumental early-twentieth-century work by Duhem, *Medieval Cosmology*.

[4] On this process, see Freudenthal, 'The Astrologization of the Aristotelian Cosmos'. On Islamicate astrology, see e.g. Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften*, 271–358.

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century onwards, the supernatural element was gradually conquering this supralunary world, at least in some scholarly and occultist circles (even though theology resisted): spiritual powers were now (under the influence of Avicenna and the *corpus Bunianum*) acting on their own—for example, in connection with planets—rather than being reduced to a result of rational and explicable powers of the celestial movements.[5] As for the sublunary world, this was a result of the complex combinations of the four elements (*'anāṣir*: earth, water, fire, and air), each with its respective properties and natural inclinations (*mayl*), with the qualities of hotness or coldness (active powers, following upon the form) and wetness or dryness (passive powers, following upon the matter). Thus, for Avicenna the four terrestrial elements were: fire, which was hot and dry with an absolute upward motion; air, hot and wet with a relative upward motion; water, cold and wet with a relative downward motion; and earth, cold and dry with an absolute downward motion. Celestial bodies, in contrast, had none of these qualities, as they were 'solely identified in term [*sic*] of their natural circular motion'.[6]

This philosophical, more or less neo-Aristotelian model was seriously challenged by the 'occultist turn' of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Under the enormous influence of Akbarian thought, as the philosophy of Ibn 'Arabī's (the 'greatest sheikh', *shaykh akbar*) came to be known, further elaborated by al-Būnī and his followers, the supralunary world became 'supernaturalized', as we saw, with more and more forces being considered entities with their own spiritual capacity (although always subject to God's will). Furthermore, its effects upon the sublunary realm were 'denaturalized': in addition to being a result of known forces—for example, the heat of the sun or the cold of the moon—they became entangled in a system of hierarchies and homologies that included the flora, the fauna, and the mineral world, interconnected via mysterious forces such as emanations of the universal soul or (in Illuminationist thought) of light.[7]

Creation of the World, Multiple Worlds

One should stress that Ottoman geographical and cosmographical knowledge belonged to two distinct traditions, both of which go back to the medieval Islamicate literature: as described by Gottfried Hagen, there is a 'philosophical' cosmology, based on Ptolemy and describing a spherical earth divided into seven zones or climes (*iḳlīm*); and a 'theological' one, based on *hadith* tradition and describing God's Throne, Footstool, Tablet, and Pen, the seven heavens, the earth being supported by supernatural beings, and so forth.[8] Yet, up to the mid-seventeenth

[5] Melvin-Koushki, 'Powers of One'; Saif, 'Between Medicine and Magic'.
[6] McGinnis, 'Ibn Sina's Natural Philosophy'.
[7] On emanations in Sufi thought, see Ebstein, 'Emanation (*Fayḍ*)'.
[8] Hagen, 'Afterword', 216–223; Hehmeyer, 'The Configuration of the Heavens'. This kind of cosmology was exposed in detail in al-Suyūṭī's (d. 1505) much-read work (Suyūṭī, ed. Heinen, *Islamic Cosmology*).

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century, very few geographical works had a purely 'theological' or 'philosophical' orientation: a typical cosmography would begin with 'Islamic' descriptions of the universe and then proceed with alphabetical lists of mountains, lakes, rivers, islands, seas, and cities categorized along the seven climes.[9] Thus, the description of a multilayered universe on the basis of the number seven underpinned all approaches to reality, be they 'theological' or 'philosophical' (a distinction that was flexible in itself).[10] In this description, the cosmos is constructed in a vertical sense, composed of subsequent horizontal levels, with God's Throne and Footstool (which in most traditions is vaulted and hollow, containing the world underneath) at the top. These entities were considered as physical structures, consisting of concrete substance: that is, they were not merely symbolic concepts—and, in fact, the physical essence of the Throne served as an argument against pantheist beliefs, as it depicted the whole cosmos as a creation of God, who resided above it.[11] God's Tablet and Pen (identified at some time with the universal soul and universal reason, respectively) were also physical entities, although their exact place in the universe is vague (the Tablet might include the area around the zodiac in the sky);[12] the heavenly prototype of the Qur'an was engraved in the Tablet in eternity, and the physical position of these divine objects above the stars gave a theoretical basis to the importance of astrology. Then, seven heavens, in the form of seven domes of different material vaulting over earth, contained the orbits of a planet each (including the sun and the moon). These domes were actually homocentric spheres, which all moved around the earth carrying their planet in their orbit. More elaborate cosmologies, we have to add, positioned nine heavens so as to accommodate the stars and their movement. The earth itself, in the centre of the cosmos, comprised seven earths, one beneath the other, alternating with water; in the most common tradition, the six under the one we live on were identified with the levels of hell (see Fig. 1.1). Finally, some traditions had the lowest part of the universe carried on the horns of a colossal bull.[13]

Under the influence of Akbarian Sufism, this cosmology was often merged with the mystic cosmology of the universal soul and of the multiple levels of existence, which we will see in more detail in Chapter 2.[14] Early Ottoman cosmological texts, in particular, were also influenced by gnostic elements and a theory

[9] For a short survey in a Sufi work, including a map of the seven climes with the principal cities and peoples in them, see Yazıcıoğlu Ahmed Bîcan, ed. Beyazit, 'Ahmed Bîcan'ın *Müntehâ* isimli', 347–348. Cf. also Bisṭāmī, ed. Yağmur, '*Terceme-i kitāb*', 87–90.

[10] Anton Heinen analyses these beliefs and their sources in Suyūtī, ed. Heinen, *Islamic Cosmology*, 77–88.

[11] Suyūtī, ed. Heinen, *Islamic Cosmology*, 80.

[12] This is the hypothesis of Anton Heinen: Suyūtī, ed. Heinen, *Islamic Cosmology*, 83.

[13] For a rather late (1720) description of the seven earths and what is beyond, see Kostantinî, ed. Akın, 'İlk müstakil deprem kitabi', 15–23.

[14] For visual representations and descriptions of Sufi cosmologies, see Karamustafa, 'Cosmological Diagrams'; Karjoo-Ravary, 'Mapping the Unseen'; Martini, *Visualizing Sufism*.

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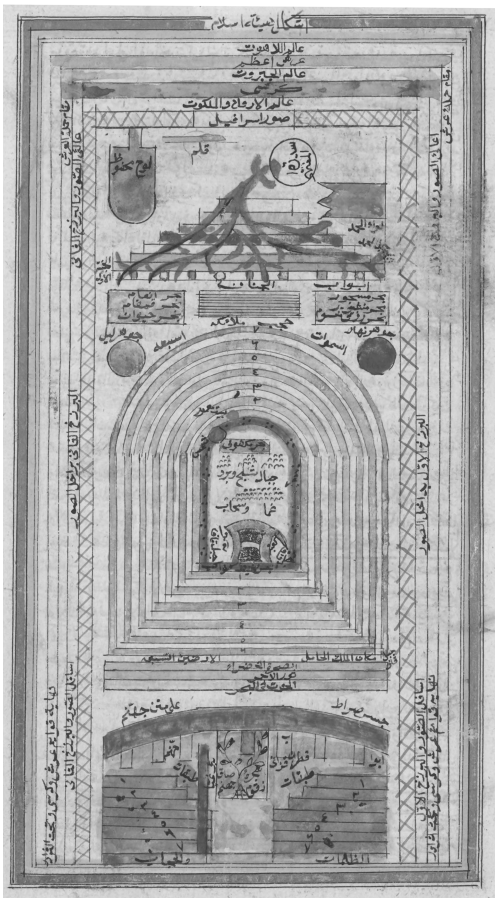


Fig. 1.1 Depiction of the cosmos. At the bottom: Hell with its seven levels, and Darkness below it. Above it, the fish, the bull, and the green stone carried on his horns and forming the basis of earth. The seven earths are covered by the atmosphere (one may see the Ka'aba, the clouds, the snow, and the sun in the brown zone) and by the seven heavens. The horizontal lines above are the domain of angels, and the pyramid-like form is Paradise. Above it the Pen, with the Tablet on its left, and then: Israfil's wall, the world of souls (*ālemü'l-ervāḥ ve'l-melekūt*), God's Footstool, the world of *ceberūt*, the Throne, and the world of Divine Essence or *lāhūt*. The vertical lines show Israfil's wall, the *barzaḫ*, the pillars of the Footstool. Erzurumī İbrahim Hakkı, *Mā'rifetnāme*, University of Michigan, Special Collections Research Center, Isl. Ms 826, f. 14b (1806).

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of multiple worlds, created and destroyed in a series of cosmic cycles; these theories, originating in early-tenth-century Isma'ilī thought and Kabbalah scholarship, were popularized through the *Ikhwān-i Ṣafā'* tradition, which was brought to relevance once more by the occultists of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.[15] In general, this tradition of 'astrological history', connecting periods of historical time with different planets (but not necessarily involving the creation and destruction of successive worlds) goes back to the early Abbasid period.[16] In Ottoman culture, it probably came back into fashion through 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Bisṭāmī (d. 1454), the occultist and encyclopedist whose influence on fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Ottoman scholarship was tremendous.[17] Thus, we read in *Dürr-i meknūn*, a famous cosmography of the late fifteenth century often (but wrongly) attributed to Yazıcıoğlu Ahmed Bīcān (d. *c.*1466), that

> God created 18,000 worlds, full of various creatures; some inhabited by angels, others by other sorts of creatures; one of them is the world of Simurg, where it used to fly together with her mate.[18]

The period dominated by each planet, the author continues, lasts for 1,000 years; Adam lived under the reign of Saturn, whereas Muhammad came under the reign of the Moon. The world is to last for 70,000 years; Adam was created 62,960 years ago, and man is to reign for another 7,000 years, but according to the astronomers (*'ilm-i nücūm*) the world is to remain deserted for another 40 years before it is destroyed. Moreover, the age of humans fluctuated according to the rotation period of the planet governing each era (and following a Hesiodian sense of decline): thus, in Adam's age, governed by Saturn, which stays for 2½ years in each sign of the zodiac, men lived for 1,000 years and were taller; as the planets governing subsequent ages rotate in smaller and smaller periods, man's life and stature also became shorter.[19] Similar calculations can be found in Ahmedī's

[15] Corbin, *Cyclical Time*; de Callataÿ, *Annus Platonicus*; de Callataÿ, 'World Cycles'; Saif, 'Astrological and Prophetical Cycles'; Krinis, 'Cyclical Time'; cf. Zambelli, '"Creating Worlds and then Laying them Waste"' on the European Renaissance counterpart of this belief. We may see a reflection of these theories in Uzun Firdevsī's late-fifteenth-century account of many Solomons preceding Solomon, son of David (Grenier, 'Solomon, His Temple', 36–39). On some vernacular alternative cosmologies, flourishing in heterodox environments, see Stoyanov, 'Islamic and Christian Heterodox Water Cosmogonies'.

[16] Borrut, 'Histoires astrologiques'; Kennedy, 'Al-Battānī's Astrological History'. Ultimately, such traditions can be traced to Mandaean literature of the Sasanian era: see Häberl, *The Book of Kings*.

[17] Fleischer, 'Ancient Wisdom', 235–236. On Bisṭāmī, see also Gril, 'Esotérisme contre hérésie'; Gardiner, 'Forbidden Knowledge?'; Gardiner, 'Lettrism and History'.

[18] This pair of birds flew to our world; the male, exhausted, died and the female lives on Mount Ḳaf alone. On the 18,000 worlds in Ottoman literature, cf. Karaköse, 'Klâsik edebiyatımızda'.

[19] Yazıcıoğlu [Anonymous], *Dürr-i meknūn*, ed. Kaptein, 91=371–372, 218–219=488, 290=544, 294–295=546; ed. Demirtaş, 103, 172, 208–209; ed. Sakaoğlu, 31, 89, 114–116; ed. Mattei, 45–46, 117–118, 149.

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İskendernāme,[20] wherein both the *şeyhülislam* Ibn Kemal (Kemalpaşazāde, d. 1534) and an anonymous mid-sixteenth-century author try to calculate the remaining time until the end of the world, taking as their basis an allotted 7,000 years for the time span of humanity.[21] On the same grounds, İsmāʿīl Ḥaḳḳı Bursevī (d. 1725), a Celvetī sheikh and author of numerous mystical works, estimates in the early eighteenth century that the Mehdī will appear at the beginning of either the thirteenth or the fourteenth Hijri century (*c.*1785 or 1882).[22]

In his mid-fifteenth-century universal history in Persian, *Behcetü'l-tevārīḫ*, Şükrullah Efendi (d. after 1464) gives a highly systematic account of such theories of 'astrological history'. He insists that human history is governed by the planets: thus, the first 1,000 years after Adam were under Saturn's influence, the next 1,000 under Jupiter, and so forth up to the age of the Moon, which will finish with the End of Days; in the same vein, a series of doomsday events correspond to this hierarchy: the small doomsday (*ḳıyāmet*), which destroys part of the world every 1,000 years; the great one, every 7,000 years, when seven stars gather in the same sign of the zodiac and when one element prevails (e.g. when fire prevails, the world is on fire); and the greatest one, when the whole world is destroyed and all begins anew. Of course, Şükrullah hastens to add that this is the opinion of 'philosophers', which is not accepted by people of the faith.[23] We can see the same scepticism against 'philosophers' in his account of the creation of the world: after describing a tradition of successive creations and destructions of worlds by God before the creation of Adam, Şükrullah states that philosophers have suggested a different opinion on the creation of the world; also motivated by God, the succession in this theory follows a more philosophical course, beginning with the mind and the soul before proceeding to the heavens, the stars, the four elements, etc.[24] In short, on God's order the intellect was born; from the intellect, the spirit (*nefs*); from the spirit, the heavenly spheres and the stars; from the spheres, the natures (hot, humid, etc.) and the matter; from the natures, the elements and principles (*rükn*). Struggling to dominate one another, the four elements under the influence of the spheres resulted in the creation of the seven main metals (gold, silver, copper, iron, tin, lead, and mercury). When the natures of these metals found an equipoise, the power of vegetative growth emerged and the realm of the flora was born. Then, as soon as the natures of trees and flowers grew along with their respective power, the vegetative power found its perfection and created vegetables such as the mandrake and the *Wāqwāq* tree; in fact, the animal power also emerged and the four humours were created. At this moment, the road was open

[20] Sawyer, 'Alexander, History, and Piety', 104.

[21] Şenödeyici, 'Kemal Paşazade tarafından tercüme'; Şen, 'A Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Reader'. See also a mid-seventeenth-century author: Ḥarīrī, eds Öztürk and Kalaycı, 'Bir 11./17. Yüzyıl Aliminin', 401–402.

[22] İsmâil Hakkı Bursevî, *Tamâmü'l-feyz*, eds Muslu and Namlı, 154; cf. also ibid., 270.

[23] Şükrullah, ed. Almaz, *Behcetü't-tevârîh*, 119–121.

[24] Ibid., 75ff.

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for the creation of the three realms of nature, all combined within the animal kingdom: the bones in the degree of metals, the nerves and meat in the degree of plants, and the soul and (animal) movement in the degree of animal power. The completion of these animals, the last of which was the monkey, was man, whereby another power, the human power and speech, were also born.[25] Similar mystic cosmologies can be found in many other sources.[26]

A very complete account of this sort of cosmology can be found in İbrahim Hakkı Erzurumī's (d. 1780) *Mā'rifetnāme* (interestingly, as we will see later, at the same time this work contains a description of Copernican heliocentrism). Erzurumī explains that from the primordial substance from which the universe was created (a substance identified as a number of concepts, such as the Muhammedan light, God's Tablet, or universal reason), God created first the universal soul (*nefs-i küllī*) and then the souls (*ervāḥ*) of (successively) the angels, the prophets, the saints, the mystics and devotees, the faithful, the infidels, the jinn, the demons (*şeytān*), the animals, the plants, and finally the minerals (*ervāḥ-i ṭabā'ī'*, 'natural souls'), all distributed along the different spiritual worlds or levels of existence. After 2,000 years, from the same primary substance, God created the world of bodies (*'ālem-i mülk*): the Throne, Paradise and Hell, the seven heavens, and finally the four elements. Again the highest of these constitute the celestial world (*'ālem-i 'ilvī*) or the world of bodies, or of eternity (*beḳā'*), or of the Hereafter (*aḫiret*); those in the middle, the world of ethereal bodies (*ecrām-i eṯīriyye*), or of the heavens (*eflāk*), or of the skies (*semevāt*); and the lowest ones, the inferior world (*'ālem-i siflī*), or the world of the elements, or of creation and corruption (*'ālem-i kün ü fesād*), or the *'ālem-i dünyā*. Thus, fourteen kinds of soul (from the primordial substance to the souls of the minerals) and fifteen kinds of body (from the Empyrian and the Throne to the four elements) correspond to the twenty-nine letters of the Arabic alphabet; and just as all names and words are formed by combining the letters, so are the composite bodies (*ecsām-i mürekkebe*, i.e. minerals, plants, and animals) formed by the arrangement of these twenty-nine components (*müfredāt*, i.e. the sorts of souls and bodies).[27]

Erzurumī later proceeds with describing the minerals, plants, and animals using the theory of combinations of the four elements under the influence of the celestial bodies: the four elements transform to smoke, vapour, and dust (*edḫine*

[25] Ibid., 83–85.

[26] In Ahmedī's *İskendernāme*, Alexander asks a philosopher about the creation of the world: the answer, 'by the way of wisdom' (*be-ṭarīḳ-i ḥikmet*; a term with clear Illuminationist connotations), begins with the creation of [universal] reason (*aḳl*), from which emanates the universal soul (*nefs-i küllī*), and in its turn the matter (*heyūlā*), the skies, and earth. The philosopher then describes the zodiac signs, and explains that the nine heavens are the fathers as the four elements are the mothers of the three realms: minerals, animals, and plants (*kān u ḥayvān u nebat*): Ahmedî, eds Akdoğan and Kutsal, *İskendernâme*, 410–433 (for the meaning of *kān*, see ibid., 417fn).

[27] Erzurumī İbrahim Hakkı, *Mā'rifetnāme*, University of Michigan, 2b–3a; with some misunderstandings in ed. Meyan, *Mârifetnâme*, 13–17. On these theories, cf. Todd, 'Levels of Being'; Chittick, 'Iblīs and the Jinn', 100–101.

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ve buḫārāt ve ʿaṣārāta istiḥāle ve tebdil ėder) under the sun's heat, and mix with the components of the earth, forming thick fluids that (again with the sun's heat) boil and form minerals, flora, and ultimately fauna. This chain of existence links thick earth to the angelic essence:

> For the first of the minerals is adjoining the earth and water, its last adjoins the plants; the first of the plants adjoins the minerals and its last the animals; and as the first of the animals adjoins the plants, its last reaches man. The first human spirit adjoins the animal, while its last reaches angels and the pure spirit, and only there finds its perfection.[28]

Thus, the Creation may be drawn as a series of concentric circles, starting from the elements and proceeding with the minerals, the plants, the animals. These circles approach more and more a well-moderated arrangement of the elements (*iʿtidāl-i mizāc-i ʿanāṣır*). In the ultimate stage, the human being, the disposition of the elements, reaches perfection.[29]

Astral Influences

The doctrine of the supralunary and the sublunary worlds, but also the general *Weltanschauung* of the medieval and early modern Eurasian cultures, made belief in the influence of celestial movements upon terrestrial life almost inevitable and self-evident. Even if there might be objections against astrology, or more particularly against the possibility of human knowledge and understanding of astral influences (objections that we will examine below), no one seriously doubted the Hermetic motto 'as above, so below', which dictated that the movement of the celestial bodies had something to do with what happened on earth and with the lives of people (see Fig. 1.2). The astrologer Riyāzī Ali Çelebi (d. 1537/8) found it strange that some people denied the influence of the planets, whereas they never questioned that of earthly powers, and insisted that fumigations or invocation of spirits (*esmā-i ervāḥ*) were of minimal importance next to the determination of nativities.[30] In the *şehnameci* Eflātūn's treatise on a 1563 disastrous flood in

[28] Erzurumī İbrahim Hakkı, *Mā'rifetnāme*, University of Michigan, 210; ed. Meyan, *Mârifetnâme*, 290. Elsewhere the author describes the creation of the minerals based on sulphur and mercury (ibid., University of Michigan, 211; ed. Meyan, 292).

[29] See the diagram in Erzurumī İbrahim Hakkı, *Mā'rifetnāme*, University of Michigan, 217; ed. Meyan, *Mârifetnâme*, 301. In another point, Erzurumī uses a circular diagram to show the correspondences of the cosmos with the states of the soul and the philosophical categories of existence: ibid., University of Michigan, 62; ed. Meyan, 62.

[30] Riyāzī [Ibn Kemal], ed. Dalkıran, 'İbn-i Kemal'in tılsımat risâlesi', 198, 202; Şen, 'Practicing Astral Magic', 75, 78. Şen considers these to be 'planetary spirits', but the term could also refer to jinn, and we know from other Ottoman works of the same period that these were considered to be connected to the planets and the zodiac (see below).

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Fig. 1.2 Mercury and Gemini. Untitled astrological treatise, Bibliothèque nationale de France, turc 196, f. 32a.

Istanbul, we read that 'for every intelligent mind, the world is full of chosen folios to be read'; future events are already written in the skies, and hence 'strange manifestations (*żuhūr-i ʿacāīb*) in the skies can serve as guides for extraordinary events (*ġarāīb*) on earth.'[31]

[31] Eryılmaz Arenas-Vives, 'The Shehnamecis of Sultan Süleyman', 213; Eryılmaz, 'The Manipulation of Ancient and Medieval Knowledge', 124.

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There was a consensus about the seven planets governing different heavens and, respectively, different areas on earth. As we read in *Dürr-i meknūn*, God appointed a star to reign in every heaven (*her göge bir yılduzı pādişāh ḳodı*): for instance, Saturn was the king of the highest heaven. Moreover, every clime depended on a planet: India on Saturn; Iran and the Iraqs on Mars; Turkestan, the Kipchak, and Mongol lands on the Sun; China, Khorasan, and Samarkand on Jupiter; Arabia and Anatolia (*Rum*) on Venus; the Balkans (*Rumili*), Russia, and Hungary on Mercury; and Europe (*Efrenc*) up to the Maghrib on the Moon (these localizations follow the pre-Ottoman and ultimately Ptolemaic division of the earth into seven climes, whereas the correspondence with planets is a mixture of Abū Maʿšar's astrology and the *Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'*).[32] Other cosmographies of the same period invariably contain information about the astral movements and influences. A late-fourteenth-century adaptation of *ʿAjā'īb al-maḫlūḳāt*, for instance, gives a detailed description of the stars, the planets, the signs of the zodiac, and their movements, as well as of their influences (because 'with God's order, whenever the moon passes from these signs, an influence is produced upon this world, so that it is auspicious for some things and inauspicious for some other').[33] Astral influences were seen even in professional vocations: a late-sixteenth-century book on divination translated and amended for Murad III contains an illustrated chart correlating the heavenly bodies with personality types and professions: Saturn corresponds to blacksmiths, stone masons, firework-makers, pitch-sellers, porters, drain cleaners, and tanners; Jupiter to judges, merchants, preachers, monks, market inspectors, boot-makers, and candle-makers; and so forth. Interestingly, the chart also contains depictions of the planets themselves: Jupiter is an old bearded black man, Saturn and Mercury are clad in white, Venus is a dancer; the Sun and the Moon are shown as the heavenly bodies they are, seen from Earth.[34] As late as the end of the eighteenth century, İbrahim Hakkı Erzurumī (who, as we saw, also describes heliocentrism) associates the zodiac signs and the planets with the four elements, the four properties (wet, hot, etc.), different human activities or virtues, as well as with pairings such as male/female and day/night.[35] Erzurumī devotes a whole chapter to the influence of the moon and the planets on earth: he enumerates phenomena such as the ebb and flow of tides and the strengthening of human and animal bodies according to the phases

[32] Yazıcıoğlu [Anonymous], *Dürr-i meknūn*, ed. Kaptein, 90=371, 145–146=420; ed. Demirtaş, 102, 132; ed. Sakaoğlu, 31, 55; ed. Mattei, 45, 78. On other deterministic approaches to the regions or climes in (pre-Ottoman) cosmographies, see Olsson, 'The World in Arab Eyes'; de Callataÿ, 'The Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' on the Ṣūrat al-Arḍ'.

[33] 'Alī b. Abdurrahman, ed. Göl, "Acâibü'l-mahlūkât (1.–35. varak)', 52–63 (ff. 5a–15b). The quotation (*bu ʿālemde bir teʾsīr ḥāṣıl olur ve baʿżı işlere yarar ve baʿżı işlere yaramaz*) is on pp. 54–55 (f. 7b).

[34] Bağcı, Çağman, Renda, and Tanındı, *Ottoman Painting*, 192–193 and fig. 154; cf. And, *Minyatürlerle Osmanlı-İslâm mitologyası*, 329–365.

[35] Erzurumī İbrahim Hakkı, *Mā'rifetnāme*, University of Michigan, 91–92; ed. Meyan, *Mârifetnâme*, 103. On these common correspondences, see Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften*, 348–358.

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of the moon (because of the increase in heat and wetness), but also provides advice such as to marry when the moon is in Taurus or to travel by sea when it is in Pisces.[36] The combination of the elements, the heavenly bodies, and their properties influence in definite ways the inhabitants of the earth:

> The first part of the inhabited world, Europe, is related to the first triad [of the zodiac]…[The inhabitants] are prone to use weapons, meddle with politics, endure hardship, be polite and witty; because the night is shared under the dominance of Jupiter and Mars…Especially the English and the Hungarian resemble the sign of Aries and to Mars, this is why they are wild and impetuous…[37]

Astrological manuals reveal a highly rational, deterministic, and structured view of the universe, which begs for a structuralist interpretation: the interdependence of planets and of their place in the sky at a given moment corresponds to an interdependence of social structures, with different series of effects upon different classes and professions, or upon different lands, or concerning different classes of events—dearth and famine, wars, floods, and so on (see Fig. 1.3).[38]

Now, if the belief in the reality of astral influence was self-evident in Ottoman times, this does not mean that there was a consensus of the explanations thereof.[39] We mentioned above that the 'occult turn' of the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries, which reached the Ottoman realm with the work of al-Bisṭāmī (but also the Akbarian tradition), promoted the idea that this influence was due to the spiritual essences (*rūḥāniyyat*) of the planets, rather than the mechanical impact of their natural characteristics (e.g. of their heat). The very idea of predestination could justify the fact that one's fate was, so to speak, already inscribed in the stars;[40] yet, at the same time the belief that safe predictions could be made by studying the stars was always an object of debate, as it went contrary to the principle of man's free will. The arguments used in this debate, which necessarily had to take into account the discussion of the nature of astral influences, were impressively similar to those in Christian Europe.[41] Refuted vehemently by al-Khatīb

[36] Erzurumī İbrahim Hakkı, *Mā'rifetnāme*, University of Michigan, 123–128; ed. Meyan, *Mârifetnâme*, 160–181. Cf. the table in Erzurumī İbrahim Hakkı, *Mā'rifetnāme*, University of Michigan, 135; ed. Meyan, *Mârifetnâme*, 179. Similar information is to be found in an early-seventeenth-century manual of astrology, composed by the chief astrologer: Müneccimbaşı Mehmed Çelebi, ed. Önler, '*Uṣūl-i aḥkām-ı sāl-i 'ālem*'. Cf. a similar early-eighteenth-century compendium: Kundakçı, '*Ahkâmü'l-külliyye*'.

[37] Erzurumī İbrahim Hakkı, *Mā'rifetnāme*, University of Michigan, 189–191; ed. Meyan, *Mârifetnâme*, 258–261. Yet, this same author finds the study of astrology vain and perilous in a manual in verse, aiming to provide the basic bibliography for medrese students: Erzurumlu İbrahim Hakkı, ed. Fazlıoğlu, 'Ta'lîm ile İrşâd arasında', 128 (vv. 102–103).

[38] This can be seen very clearly in Kundakçı, '*Ahkâmü'l-külliyye*'. For a less elaborate approach, see e.g. Dervîş Ahmed Dede [?], ed. Şuşar, '1093/1682 tarihli müneccimbaşı defteri'.

[39] Cf. Saliba, 'Astronomy and Astrology'.

[40] Lory, 'Geomancy, Divination and Islam', 455–456.

[41] Adamson, 'Abū Ma'šar, Al-Kindī'; Şen, 'Astrology in the Service of the Empire', 79–103; Noble, *Philosophizing the Occult*, 200–208; Boudet, *Entre science et nigromance*, 68–74, 205–239.

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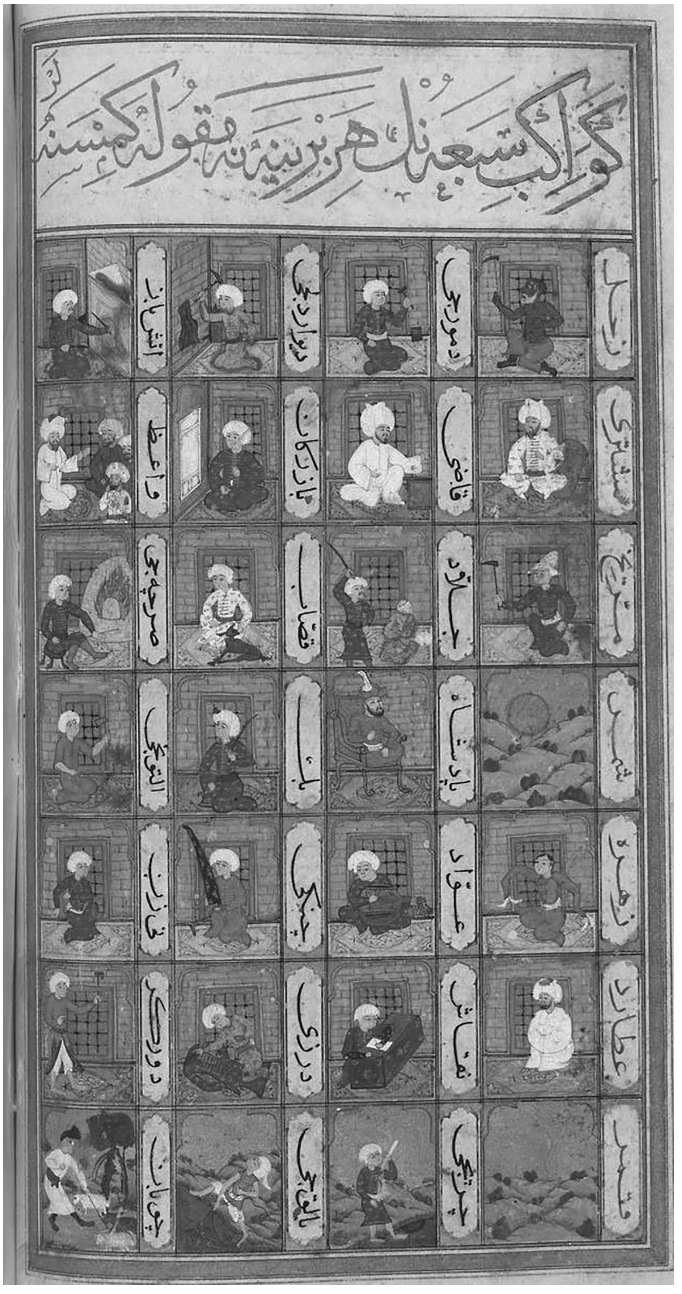


Fig. 1.3 Professions favoured by each planet. Meḥmed es-Suʿūdī, *Meṭāliʿu'l-saʿādet*, Bibliothèque nationale de France, suppl. turc 242, f. 32b (1582).

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al-Baghdādī in the eleventh century on the grounds of its uncertainty and even its reliance on arbitrary conventions—such as the division of the zodiac or the coordination of the mansions with the planets—rather than on sound reason,[42] astrology was frequently distinguished both from astronomy and from theologically sound knowledge. The most usual argument was, of course, the ineffectiveness of current astrology; thus, in order to discredit the prognostications of a saint's relics in Serbia, the historian Ta'līkīzāde (d. 1599) relates a story about an astrologer who, using 'the science of geomancy and astrology and the knowledge of material bodies and of the lord of the ascendant' (*fenn-i reml-ü-nücūm ve 'ilm-i heylāc-u-ketḫüdā*), predicted the caliph's imminent death but could not foresee his own.[43] There were more elaborate arguments as well. Answering to an objection that a baby born in the seventh or the ninth month would survive, while in the eight month it would die, Şükrullah Efendi first mentions the opinion that each month the embryo is under the influence of a planet, and the eighth month is influenced by Saturn, which, its nature being dry and cold, brings misfortune. Then he argues that this opinion must be false, since in this case the embryo would be under Saturn's influence from the beginning and thus should never have been formed in the womb. Şükrullah suggests instead that it is the number eight that is unfortunate.[44] Responding to a similar objection—namely, the problem of twins with different fates—the scholar and Bayezid II's adviser Müʾeyyedzāde Abdurrahman (d. 1516) argues that it is really the time of conception that matters (presumably different for each twin) and that even a slight change in the celestial degrees can produce radical change in the terrestrial world.[45] Such objections were raised by authors who would also include astrological considerations in their work; the anonymous adapter of a Persian cosmography remarks that

> Some ignorants declare that 'Anybody who says that there is an influence of the sun and an influence of the stars, is an infidel.' But to say this is a mistake, because God Almighty has given a special quality (*ḫāṣṣiyyet*) to every creature. Still, it is not the case that every star or planet has its own influence by itself, as the only one who has influence is God…
>
> Astrologers claim that the quality of Saturn is unpropitious, dry and cold, the quality of Venus moist and joy-increasing [and so forth]…But this judgement is far from incontestable; so that no one may know and prove the influences on

[42] Suyūtī, ed. Heinen, *Islamic Cosmology*, 29–34.

[43] Ta'līḳī-zāde, ed. Woodhead, *Ta'līḳī-zāde's* Şehnāme-i hümāyūn, 194–195.

[44] Şükrullah, ed. Almaz, *Behcetü't-tevârīh*, 99–100. This theory comes directly from the epistles of the Brethren of Purity, but is also repeated in later medical works: Saif, 'The Universe and the Womb', 192–195.

[45] Şen, 'Practicing Astral Magic', 87–88. On the medieval theories about the astral influences upon conception, see Saif, 'The Universe and the Womb'.

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> one's own temperament. Take a dervish who stays alone in the cold: he will become so low spirited that Saturn will surprise him; but if he is given a robe and some gold coins, Venus will become happy and surprise him on her turn.[46]

And Nev'î's (d. 1599) sixteenth-century encyclopedia summarizes the arguments of the opponents of astrology as follows:

> [T]hose who believe that the order of the stars is completely independent and not subordinate to the Divine order are infidels…According to the usual practice it is possible that certain events cause other ones. Thus, it has been established through the senses that fire is the cause of blaze. But there is no evidence that stars are the causes of good fortune or are reasons for misfortune, neither on the basis of the senses, nor from rational evidence, nor from oral tradition…Just as they say that the heavenly bodies are a fifth element and do not consist of the four basic elements, then they established a nature for each star, such as cold and dry for Saturn, and hot and humid for Jupiter: this is a contradiction in itself.…So, they say that the burning of the stars in their own celestial sphere is because they approach the sun for one degree and one second. They say this has a bad influence, too. And this too is something attributed: it is not true, because in the place where the stars are located nothing is burning, so how could [all this] have an influence?…
>
> There are three reasons for the prohibition [of astrology by religious law]. The first reason is this: In the soul of someone who ties his heart to the rules of the stars grows a veneration for the stars and he believes in the influence of the stars…Such a belief is contrary to the belief in one God and leads to the emergence of polytheism. The second reason is this: The above-mentioned science is pure ignorance…The reasons and conditions for this science are beyond the boundaries man can reach…There are 1,029 fixed stars that are set up in the sky of the constellations. According to the astrologers each of them has its rules, just like the rules of the planets…To understand the above-mentioned numerous conditions is beyond the limited human power…When at a star's rise an astrologer takes an astrolabe in his hands and sets it well and right, and in the sweet moment when he thinks he set it right, the sun meanwhile has moved some thousand parasangs [until he has finished his calculations].
>
> The third [reason] is this: There is no use in knowledge of the occurrence of certain events in advance, because the Prophet said, 'There is no use of warnings of what has already been destined.'[47]

[46] Sarıkaya (ed.), *Tercüme-i Acâibü'l-mahlūkat*, 143–144.
[47] Nev'î, ed. Procházka-Eisl and Çelik, '*The Yield of the Disciplines*', 120–122.

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This emphasis on the fact that the constellations were arranged by God, and that whoever says that they were created by anybody else is an idolater and denies God's existence,[48] was accompanied by the claim that the influence of the planets was a matter of their quality (*ḫāṣṣiyyet*) rather than their essence or *rūḥāniyyet*. To this effect, İbrahim Hakkı Erzurumī uses the metaphor of a painter, whose work is being discussed by two ants: one perceives that the pen draws the pictures, just as the naturalists (*ṭabiʿī*) explain everything with recourse to the properties (heat, dryness, etc.); another sees the painter's fingers and attributes the picture to them, just as the astrologers explain the universe with recourse to the heavenly bodies. Both are right, but they do not see the ultimate cause of things: the painter himself—that is, God.[49]

Yet, this approach coexisted with traces of the 'occultist' belief in 'souls' of the planets, especially in fifteenth- and early-sixteenth-century sources. This can be seen quite clearly in Şükrullah's interpretation of astral influence:

> Know that God the most High created the stars from light. He created them from the light of divinity, which influences the minds and souls, and He gave each star a peculiar feature…It is said that each of these seven planets…has an intelligence and a soul, and each one directs and governs a climate; each one makes its climate to perpetuate and be empowered. According to the influence of the house of each planet, whenever this planet becomes weak, so become the inhabitants of this climate.[50]

In the same vein, a 'history of Antioch/Antakya', composed in the mid- or late sixteenth century and full of legendary and mythical, even folk-tale material, has a striking excerpt: the builders of the city could not dig its foundations, and some astrologers and soothsayers suggested that this was due to Mars (*Mirrīḫ*). The people built his statue and various enchanters (*ʿazāyīm-ḫānlar*, who were 'fourteen monks', *ruhbān*) called on him to remove the obstacle; indeed, Mars ordered one of the kings of the jinn to fix the problem.

> They saw that the obstacle was Mars, and they verified it. They used their utmost strength and made him offers until a voice was heard, saying that this place was inhabited by seven kings of the jinn, who might have the power [to dig the foundations]; so they came back and made sacrifices and burnt incense and read charms and called Mars from the fifth heaven (*ʿazāyimler oḳuyup beşinci felekden*

[48] Sarıkaya (ed.), *Tercüme-i Acâibü'l-mahlūkat*, 131.

[49] Erzurumī İbrahim Hakkı, *Māʿrifetnāme*, University of Michigan, 131–132; ed. Meyan, *Mârifetnâme*, 185–187.

[50] Şükrullah, ed. Almaz, *Behcetü't-tevârīh*, 78. For another reference to the dependence of the characteristics of the people in each climate on the respective stars and planets, see ibid., 109; cf. Sarıkaya (ed.), *Tercüme-i Acâibü'l-mahlūkat*, 146–149.

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> *Mirrīḫ'i da'vet itdiler*)…As soon as Mars learnt [about the statue], he became obedient (*muṭī' oldı*) and ordered one of the kings of the jinn to draw a circle.[51]

The story most probably translates an ancient Greek foundation myth that obviously refers to the ancient god, but the Ottoman author seems to have understood him as the planet.

Similarly, the manual of magic by Firdevsī, while declaring that the cause of the influence of the moon is its humidity, just as the cause of the sun's influence is its heat (significantly, also, the influence of the moon on the human body, animals, and so forth is named its 'properties', *ḫavāṣṣ*),[52] does not hesitate to mention conjurations of the planets themselves (*on iki kerre Mirrīh da'vetin oḳuya / Müşteri da'vetin oḳuyup yaza / Ḳamer da'vetin oḳuyup*).[53] The cause of the rotations of the celestial spheres is spiritual but explained in a rather mechanical way:

> Now in order to assign the correct reason: the cause of the movement is spiritual, not material (*nefsānīdür, cismānī degüldür*). That is, God the Highest has put such a power (*ḳuvvet*) in the greatest sphere that is able to move the greatest sphere, the other spheres and the heavenly bodies in them (*anlarda olan felekiyyāt*), but cannot surpass these bounds.[54]

These views may originate in an inherent contradiction of Aristotelian cosmology: namely, that the movement of the spheres should be considered voluntary since it exhibited individual motions, according to the needs of Aristotle's theory of movement, and yet it was predictable. An Ottoman astronomer who addressed this problem, Ghars al-Din al-Ḥalabī (d. 1563), argued that, contrary to the opinion of most philosophers, this motion should be natural rather than voluntary, if only because 'it follows a specific pattern'.[55] One wonders if this confusion should be attributed to scepticism, fear of censorship of some kind, or just to the eclecticism of Ottoman science that often tried to reconcile different opinions of the traditional authorities.[56] Even a serious encyclopedist such as Taşköprüzāde (d. 1561) considers calling upon stars (*da'wa al-kawākib*) a possibility and, even more, talks explicitly of the *rūḥāniyya* of the stars and especially the planets, which, moreover, it is possible to subjugate.[57] Elsewhere, however, he defines astrology

[51] Nazmī, ed. Köksal, 'Tevārīḫ-i Anṭākiye', 63.

[52] Firdevsī, ed. Büyükkarcı, *Firdevsī-i Ṭavīl and His Da'vet-nāme*, 118–119 (or ibid., 120–121 for the sun).

[53] Ibid., 157, 159, 170.

[54] Ibid., 140.

[55] Saliba, 'Aristotelian Cosmology', 262–263.

[56] Cf. Sariyannis, '*Ajā'ib ve gharā'ib*', 461–462.

[57] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-sa'āda*, 1: 367; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 336–337. Note here that the term *rūḥāniyyet* could also mean 'spirituality' without implying the concept of a 'soul', as when Evliya refers to 'the spirituality of the miracle of the Prophet Joseph' (*mu'cīze-i Ḥażret-i Yūsuf rūḥāniyyeti*): [Evliya Çelebi], eds Dankoff, Tezcan, and Sheridan, *Ottoman Explorations of the Nile*, 356; Evliya Çelebi, eds Kahraman, Dağlı, and Dankoff, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, X. Kitap*, 515.

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(*ʿilm aḥkām al-nujūm*) as 'a science by which the shapes of the celestial spheres are deduced from their situations—that is, the locations of the celestial spheres and the stars…and according to the events that come to pass in the world of generation and corruption—such as weather conditions, minerals, plants, animals'.[58] Taşköprüzāde also accepts that similar methods are applied to determine auspicious moments for various sorts of endeavour (this is the 'science of choices' or hemerology, *ʿilm al-ikhtiyārāt*), since 'every moment has a special relation to some good things, and some of them to bad things, depending on the occurrence (*kawn*) of the sun in the zodiac, and the moon in its mansions, and the positions occurring between the two of them, in terms of opposition, quadrature, hexagonal relation, and the like'.[59] As for its legitimacy, he writes:

> Know that many scholars consider the science of astronomy absolutely forbidden. And some of them consider forbidden the belief that the stars have an impact in themselves (*muʾaththira bi-l-dhāt*). It has been transmitted on the authority of al-Shāfiʿī, may God have mercy upon him, that he said: If the astronomer believes that there is nothing with the power to affect except God…then there is, in my opinion, no harm in this. And as for blame, it must be brought upon those who believe in the power of stars to affect [the course of events].[60]

Kâtib Çelebi (d. 1657), who copied and amended large parts of Taşköprüzāde's encyclopedia into his own, adds that the goal of this kind of astrology is 'the knowledge of what will be, in terms of what God brings about from [his] custom' (*min al-ʿāda*).[61] He is also much more explicit in refuting the idea of direct and deterministic effects of the planets upon earth, drawing from the same sources as Nevʿī. He explains that 'deducing the events of the lower world (*al-ḥawādith al-sufliyya*), in terms of good and bad, from the connections (*ittiṣālāt*) of the planets' has no legal basis, and he argues that, whereas the astrologer may infer some future events like the doctor can predict a situation from the patient's pulse,

> It is said: It is possible, by way of the running of custom (*ʿalā ṭarīq ijrāʾ al-ʿāda*), that some events are the cause of others, but there is no proof (*dalīl*) that the stars are the causes of felicity or bad luck—neither by the senses, nor by reason, nor by revelation.[62]

[58] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-saʿāda*, 1: 337; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 307.
[59] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-saʿāda*, 1: 360; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 326–327.
[60] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-saʿāda*, 1: 338; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 307.
[61] Kâtip Çelebi, eds Yaltkaya and Bilge, *Keşf-el-zunun*, 1: 22; cf. *Keşfü'z-zunûn*, tr. Balcı, 1:70.
[62] *lā ḥissan wa-lā ʿaqlan wa-lā samʿan*; Flügel's edition reads *sharʿan* ('legally'), instead of *samʿan*.

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Kâtib Çelebi then repeats the contradictions of astrologers: for instance, that they claim the planets to be of a fifth element and yet 'they argue for the coldness of Saturn and its dryness'.[63]

To end this survey, let us note that the view of the cosmos as a system of interdependent hierarchies, governed by God's will through celestial movements, allowed for a theoretical basis for methods of divination (and magic) pointing to the sublunary world. Whereas in the European context astral and ritual magic are usually distinct, even a manual of mainly demonic magic (as it was based on invocations of angels and jinn) such as Uzun Firdevsī's 1487 *Da'vet-nāme* contains lists of the signs of the zodiac and their properties (which work should begin on each etc.), of the revolving heavens, the correspondences thereof, etc., and insists that the summoning of angels and jinn should be done according to the zodiac hours and the phases of the moon:[64]

> Because if somebody wishes to conjure [jinn or angels] (*da'vet*) or to act through charms (*nār-ı necāt*; recte *narencāt*) or talismans or magic squares and other ways, all these actions cannot be valid unless one knows the hours, the mansions, the auspicious and unlucky times of the moon, and also the situation of the six planets.[65]

The same manual contains a story (possibly added by a copyist) about a certain magician from Maghrib who found a special conjunction while observing the skies (*bir ṭāli' buldı*); he had a golden box with a figure made and demonstrated how he could find treasures with its help:

> The goldsmith asked in awe: 'O master of the world! What is the essence of this figure that moves as soon as it sees the coin?' Süleyman-i Mağribī answered: 'For thirty years now I was looking for this hour and this contiguity. I just reached it. And I was granted such a miracle (*bir kerāmete vāṣıl oldum*) that now I can find a treasure, wherever it is hidden: as soon as I put this box upon it, it moves.' The goldsmith remained in awe, and Süleyman left the city.[66]

Most notably, geomancy (*raml*)—that is, the interpretation of random points on the sand, through a complex and very mathematicized system of transformations—could also be considered a branch of astrology; this is how Taşköprüzāde shows the connections between its function and the celestial bodies:

[63] Kâtip Çelebi, eds Yaltkaya and Bilge, *Keşf-el-zunun*, 2: 1930–1931; cf. *Keşfü'z-zunûn*, tr. Balcı, 4: 1545.
[64] Firdevsī, ed. Büyükkarcı, *Firdevsī-i Ṭavīl and His Da'vet-nāme*, 115–141, 162 and facsimile, 251.
[65] Ibid., 113. [66] Ibid., 175 (I read *şahs* instead of *şaḥż*; cf. the facsimile, 272).

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> Most of the matters are affairs of clear estimation, pursuant to insufficient experiences (*ʿalā tajārib ghayr kāfiyya*). That is because they say that there are twelve signs of the zodiac, and each one of them necessitates (*yaqtaḍī*, 'makes necessary') a particular letter, and a particular shape of the shapes mentioned. So the time of the question of what is desired necessitates [some particular] positions of the signs of the zodiac and the faculties of the particular shape from the sand. These shapes—because of their meanings (*madlūlāt*) from the signs of the zodiac—indicate special decrees (*aḥkām makhṣūṣa*), which correspond to the positions of the signs of the zodiac. But they are relative (*umūr taqrībiyya*), not certain (*lā yaqīniyya*).[67]

Similar things could be said about the science of casting lots (*ʿilm al-qurʿa*), but also omens (*ʿilm al-fāl*), although the latter are sanctified by the Qur'an.[68] However, as we will see, sublunary divination could also be explained by simple recourse to divine mysteries. ʿAlī b. Abdurrahman's late-fourteenth-century cosmography, for instance, contains a list of the days of the week, with details of what is permissible, ominous, etc. on each day. These properties are mostly explained via events of sacred history and especially of the Creation: for example, Tuesdays are difficult days because on Tuesday, God created the mountains.[69]

Lettrism

As we saw above, with the 'occultist turn' of Akbarian and Bunian philosophy, the 'supernaturalization' of the supralunary sphere went hand-in-hand with a 'denaturalization' of its influence upon the sublunary one, now explained as an effect of mystic, supernatural forces. The main development in this turn was the elaboration and predominance of lettrism, which (itself actually a highly mystical reworking of the 'science of balances', part of early medieval Islamic alchemy) became an integral part of the Islamicate world view after the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.[70] This meant that the Arabic alphabet, being part of God's

[67] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-saʿāda*, 1: 360; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 327.

[68] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-saʿāda*, 1: 361–362; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 328–329.

[69] Ali b. Abdurrahman, ed. Al, "Acâ'ibü'l-mahlūkât (35.–70. varak)', 15–18 (ff. 39b–41b). The same cosmographer (Ali b. Abdurrahman) explains in detail the theory of the four elements and properties, as well as meteorology: Ali b. Abdurrahman, ed. Göl, "Acâibü'l-mahlūkât (1.–35. varak)', 68–74 (ff. 19b–25a). Cf. a similar treatise in Procházka-Eisl and Çelik (eds), *Hidden Treasures*, 171–196.

[70] Lory, *La Science des lettres*; Knight, *Magic in Islam*, 55–77; Saif, 'From *Ġāyat al-ḥakīm*', esp. 326–344; Barone, 'L'ermeutica simbolica'; Mayerà, *La scienza islamica*. On the common ground with the Jewish Kabbalah, see Wolfson, 'Embodied Letter'; Wasserstrom, 'Sefer Yeşira and Early Islam'; for a comparative and genealogical study of lettrist theories in the Hellenistic, Christian, Jewish, and Arabic worlds up to the end of the Middle Ages, see Acevedo, *Alphanumeric Cosmology*. On the importance of the oral and written word in Islam, see the survey by Saleh, 'Word'.

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uncreated properties and co-eternal with Him (as the prototype of the Qur'an, *umm al-kitāb*, was written in the heavens—a firm belief after the ninth-century debate with the Mu'tazilites was solved), was considered to be fully incorporated in the universe. The letters and their respective numbers corresponded with angels, with *sūra*s of the Qur'an, with divine properties, and with material and spiritual entities; in al-Būnī's words:

> [T]he secrets of God and the objects of His science…the realities of the upper (*al-ʿulwiyyāt*), the lower (*al-sufliyyāt*), and the intermediary angelic worlds (*al-malakutiyyat*) are of two categories: numbers and letters…The numbers, being the realities of the upper world, correspond to the spiritual entities (*al-rūḥāniyyāt*), whereas the letters show the material and intermediate realities.

The spirit of the letter corresponds to the spiritual world (*ʿālam al-jabarūt*), the pronounced letter to the world of subtle entities (*ʿālam al-malakūt*), and the written letter to the world of dense bodies (matter).[71] Thus, according to the principles of this doctrine, every entity (every one of angels, heavens, planets, zodiac signs, days of the week, hours of the day, natural elements, etc.) has one or more letters ascribed to it. These attributions follow the various polarities of the Arabic alphabet: there are fourteen luminary letters (*al-ḥurūf al-nūrāniyya*, also called openers of *sūra*s or *fawātiḥ al-suwār*) and isolated letters (*muqaṭṭaʾāt*, i.e. the mysterious letters preceding certain Qur'anic *sūra*s),[72] and fourteen 'tenebrous' letters (the rest), as there are fourteen solar and fourteen lunar letters in Arabic grammar (*al-shamsiyya*, *al-qamariyya*; the distinction is based on whether the consonant causes assimilation with the definite article). The total of twenty-eight letters, being the product of seven and four, was prone to divisions according to the seven planets, heavens, or days, the four cardinal points, elements, or virtues, the twenty-eight lunar mansions, and so forth. Furthermore, the science of letters (*ʿilm al-ḥurūf*) made extensive use of *abjad*, the system attributing letters to numbers:[73] the main practical ways were the decomposition of words and letters by alternating alphanumeric values (*bast*, *taksir*), on the one hand,[74] and the use of magic squares (*wafḳ*), which reached high levels of mathematization and elaboration, on the other.[75]

Of course, this also meant that the forces of nature could in their turn be manipulated by those who knew the secrets of letters, through elaborate talismans mainly based on magic squares. Al-Būnī's *Shams al-maʿārif* and the other works

[71] Lory, *La Science des lettres*, 42–43.
[72] On the theories concerning these letters, see the comprehensive survey by Nguyen, 'Exegesis of the *ḥurūf al-muqaṭṭaʿa*'.
[73] Lory, *La Science des lettres*, 43–45 and *passim*.
[74] Coulon, *La Magie en terre d'islam*, 235–237.
[75] See the exhaustive study by Hallum, 'New Light'.

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of the *corpus Bunianum* are full of diagrams and squares, mostly with letters rather than numbers (but whose numeric values add up to make a magic square); the precise idea is that the letters would invoke the mystic properties and homologies of the universe and activate the angels or jinn responsible for an action or protection (I will examine these techniques in more detail in Chapter 4 below). Broadly speaking, when these methods were used to obtain knowledge of the future, rather than for talismanic manipulation of the elements, this was called *jafr/cifr*. According to early Shi'ī sources, 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib had written on a camel's skin (*jafr*) knowledge pertaining to eternal wisdom and more particularly to future events. This obscure prognosticon gradually became a topos in Sunni literature as well; the tables foretelling the future were attributed to various personalities of Islamic history, including al-Ghazālī, and by the late Middle Ages were associated with the science of letters.[76] A detailed history of *jafr* is yet to be written, but it may be said to concern more eschatology and divinatory revelation than lettrism itself, although of course it intersects widely with the lettrist tradition. I will deal with these occult arts later, in Part II (Chapters 3 and 4).

As with most of the 'occultist turn', it was 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Bisṭāmī (d. 1454) who introduced the 'science of letters' to Ottoman culture (although there are earlier traces, such as the lettrist principles of dream interpretation in a Persian manual translated by Aḥmed Dā'ī in the late fourteenth century).[77] Bisṭāmī wrote extensively both on *jafr* and on lettrist interpretations of history, and his influence was immense throughout the remainder of the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries.[78] Lettrist approaches to the universe were further enhanced by the influence of Hurufism, the doctrine of Faḍlallāh Astarābādī (d. 1394), for whom the letters of the Persian (not Arabic) alphabet constituted the backbone of the universe and of the human form; Ḥurūfī thought left a deep trace on Bektaşī doctrine and thus on Ottoman Sufism, especially its vernacular forms.[79] Not all Ottoman authors adopted the belief in the special role of the Arabic alphabet in the universe. For instance, we find no reference at all to the divine origin and supernatural role of Arabic letters in Mollā Luṭfī's (d. 1495) encyclopaedia, *al-Risāla fi al-'ulūm al-shar'iyya wa al-'arabiyya* (also known as *Mawẓū'āt al-'ulūm*), probably composed in 1481: the letters are a human invention, made for the sake of communication, he writes.[80] Yet, Molla Lutfi, a major figure of early Ottoman mathematics and occultism, refers to the use of Qur'anic *sūra*s to predict the

[76] Fahd, *La Divination arabe*, 219–224; Chahanovich, 'Ottoman Eschatological Esotericism', 66–79. On the Shi'a connotations of *jafr*, see Kaplan, 'Ehl-ı Beyt'in gizli ilmi'.

[77] Ahmed-i Dâ'î, ed. Çebi, *Tercüme-i kitâbü't-ta'bîr*, 172–173. These principles are connected with the Hermetic tradition of the Prophet Daniel.

[78] On Bisṭāmī's influence, see Gril, 'Esotérisme contre hérésie'; Fleischer, 'Ancient Wisdom'; Binbaş, *Intellectual Networks*, 104–113; Gardiner, 'Forbidden Knowledge?'; Gardiner, 'Lettrism and History'.

[79] Bashir, 'Deciphering the Cosmos'; Bashir, 'The Alphabetical Body'; Mir-Kasimov, 'The Occult Sciences in Ḥurūfī Discourse'; Şenödeyici and Akdağ, 'Hurufilikte ebced hesabının'.

[80] Arslan, 'Molla Lutfi'nin ilimlerin tertibine dâir', 59–62.

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future (by calculating their numeric values), and actually made such predictions himself.[81] More generally, Ottoman scholarly and mystic literature is full of references to 'sacred languages' other than Arabic: Syriac most of all, since it was widely considered the language of Adam, but also Greek and Hebrew, and of course Persian, the topic of a major debate in the seventeenth century (involving the Mevlevī sheikhs and the attacks of the Ḳāḍızādelis against them)—while a similar debate enquired whether a prayer in Arabic, in order to be effective, should have been understood by the supplicant, or whether the sheer power of the words would suffice (with Sufi authors taking sides with the first option).[82] Still, it appears that belief in the powers and mystic significance of the Arabic alphabet was quite widespread, regardless of the degree to which one cared to justify it.[83] The poet Medḥī's late-sixteenth-century fictional account of Ebū 'Alī Sīnā (making a magician out of Avicenna, following a widespread folk tradition), for instance, mentions that the sage was born in a village, whose name in *ebced* shows the date of his birth (H. 373, as given in the text); the same applied to the town where he died, numbering 427. Such calculations may be found occasionally even in late-eighteenth-century texts, such as Mehmed Hāşim's geography.[84] The famous seventeenth-century traveller Evliya Çelebi's description of a Muslim tribe in Ethiopia involves an example of lettrist magic that brings to mind the Kabbalah:

> They made me a figure of a cat out of leather; their ruler's imam incised six *alif*s and one *mim* on the cat's belly and one *sin* on its head, and the leather cat immediately got up and walked away. He wrote these same letters on an egg, which then rolled out of our tent…[85]

Sufi authors, influenced by Ibn 'Arabī, would often devote numerous pages to the secrets of letters: for instance, the Ḫalvetī-Şa'bani sheikh 'Ömer Fu'ādī (d. 1636) on the letters of *lā illāha illā Allah*,[86] and the Bayrāmī/Melami sheikh Oğlanlar Şeyhi İbrahim (d. 1655) on the dot (*noḳṭa*) of the letter *ba* in *bismillāh* (a topic especially important to Ibn 'Arābī).[87]

[81] Arslan, 'Molla Lutfī'nin ilimlerin tertibine dâir', 100–101; Melvin-Koushki, 'Toward a Neopythagorean Historiography', 405, 409; Şen, 'Molla Lutfī'nin idam', 183–185. On Lutfi as an occultist mathematician, see also Kurz, *Ways to Heaven*, 237–241; Hallum, 'New Light', 110.

[82] Sariyannis, 'Languages of Ottoman Esotericism'; Gürbüzel, 'Bilingual Heaven'; Burak, 'Prayers, Commentaries'. It is strange and noteworthy that at the end of the eighteenth century Mehmed Hâşim speaks of *elinika* (Gk. *Ελληνικά*, '[ancient] Greek') for ancient inscriptions and of Syriac for the Greek language (especially, it seems, its ancient or liturgical form): Mehmed Hâşim, eds Emecen and Şahin, *Îmâ-yı törehât-ı büldânân*, 36, 185 (*Elinika*), 47, 56, 721, 180–181 (Syriac).

[83] Cf. Sariyannis, 'Languages of Ottoman Esotericism', esp. 43–55.

[84] Medḥī, ed. Öztürk, 'Türk tarihinde İbn-i Sînâ destânları', 70–71; Mehmed Hâşim, eds Emecen and Şahin, *Îmâ-yı törehât-ı büldânân*, 55.

[85] [Evliya Çelebi], eds Dankoff, Tezcan, and Sheridan, *Ottoman Explorations of the Nile*, 338; Evliya Çelebi, eds Kahraman, Dağlı, and Dankoff, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, X. Kitap*, 497.

[86] Curry, *The Transformation*, 237–238.

[87] Oğlanlar Şeyhi İbrahim, ed. Kemikli, *Müfīd ü Muhtasar*, 122–128. On his Hurufi influences, see ibid., 48–50. See also Ḳirīmī [Hüdâyî], ed. Güven, 'Çeşitli yönleriyle', annex p. 9 (ff. 8b–9a).

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It seems that the Bayrāmī order of dervishes played a great role in diffusing the belief in the science of letters. A major figure in this diffusion must have been Mecdüddīn Īsā Aḳḥisarī (d. 1530), as well as his son, İlyas b. Īsā Sarūḫānī (d. 1559).[88] The latter describes his father's spiritual journey to Baghdad and how he learnt the science from a mysterious Sufi; he also relates several of his lettrist prophecies for the future of the Ottoman dynasty, based on the letters of the Qur'anic surah al-Fatiha (we will see these prophecies in more detail below). Sarūḫānī explains thus the function and significance of letters:

> Letters of fire…point to food; letters of earth point to towns and castles, letters of water to rivers, letters of air to armies…This illustrious knowledge is contained in these quotations, and it was discovered from them…Every great city in land and sea, in the seven climates, has one of the letters pertaining to earth; if one subtracts two each time [successively] from the number of this letter, the result will show the life-span of the city's ruler. If a letter of fire is redundant in a ruler's chart (*cedvel*), the ruler will be wrathful; if a letter of earth, he will be mean; if a letter of air, he will be constantly on the move…[89]
>
> When this author was a child, I was reading the Qur'an and conquered its meaning; from every letter a voice was coming, and I had news of anything I wished, and what was said was revealed to me. After forty years passed in this state…I looked upon the great and the small charts (*cedvel*) and wrote down the letters of the treasures of ciphers, whenever they were established, along with my previous power of revelation. Let the readers choose, and if [the prognostications] come out right, let them remember this poor Ibn Isa with benevolence; if not, let them remember as they wish.[90]

Sarūḫānī (or perhaps one of his disciples) also composed a whole treatise explaining the principles of lettrist method, *Ḳavā'id-i tesḫīrāt*, where he specifies the classification of letters according to the elements, following Ibn 'Arabī's rather than al-Būnī's account.[91] Simple as it could be, Sarūḫānī's lettrism could also be quite complex as we shall see below (Chapters 3 and 4). As the whole cosmos was

[88] Akhisari seems to have been a major figure in the history of the Bayrami order, yet one who is usually ignored in literature. Murad III's interest in him and his books is indicative of his fame throughout the sixteenth century: Felek (ed.), *Kitābü'l-menāmāt*, 251–252 (no. 1204). One wonders if his father, Mecdüddīn Īsā, is also the author of *Cāmi' ül-meknūnāt*, a historical work in verse with strong eschatological overtones composed by a certain Mevlana Īsā from Hamid-ili *c.*1530 (Flemming, 'The *Cāmi' ül-meknūnāt*'; Flemming, '*Ṣāḥib-qırān* and Mahdī', 212–224).

[89] Saruhânî İlyas, ed. Özgül, '"Rumûzü'l-künûz" adlı eserin transkripsiyonu', 56–57/12a–12b.

[90] Ibid., 72/37a.

[91] As noted by Engin Kaçar, who published this text: Saruhânî, ed. Kaçar, 'İbn-i İsa'nın *Ḳavā'id-i tesḫīrāt*', 36 (see also ibid., 37–43, on the authorship of the treatise); the relevant part of the text is to be found on p. 111 (ff. 62a–b). Such information can also be found in more concise form in various works; see e.g. an eighteenth-century Erzurum mufti's treatise: Ağbal, 'Kadızâde Mehmed Efendi'nin üç risâlesi', 377–378.

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intertwined with Arabic letters, not only the four elements, but also other constituents of the universe, and especially the celestial bodies, would be part of these homologies. But if we wish to look for a more elaborate theory of the role of letters and numbers in the cosmos, we should of course seek it in more scholarly works, such as Taşköprüzāde's encyclopedia. Here is what he has to say on magic squares (*ʿilm aʿdād al-wafq*):

> There are many beneficial properties (*khawāṣṣ fāʾiḍa*) of this equilibrium of numbers, coming from the spiritual quality (*rūḥaniyya*) of these numbers or letters. And from them derive wondrous effects and strange effluences, provided that the appropriate moments and noble hours are chosen.[92]

And indeed, letters and numbers are interchangeable again in the same context of 'spiritual qualities', as we see in his chapter on the science of these spiritual properties (*ʿilm al-khawāṣṣ al-rūḥāniyya*), when he talks of magic squares with numbers or letters (*al-awfāq al-ʿadadiyya wa-l-ḥarfiyya*):

> It is a science that seeks to examine the quality (*kayfiyya*) of the mixture of the numbers and letters, according to a proportional and even (harmonious) relationship (*ʿalā al-tanāsub wa-l-taʿādul*); in so far as active spirits (*arwāḥ mutaṣarrifa*), connected to this equilibrium (*taʿdīl*), influence the opposites (*qawābil*), according to what is desired and aimed at, from the arrangement (*tartīb*) of numbers and letters, and their qualities (*kayfiyyātihā*)…
>
> This science can be considered a branch of arithmetic, in view of the arrangement of numbers, and a branch of geometry, from the point of view of the harmonious arrangement (*taʿdīl*) of these numbers or letters in the magic squares. But because of the fact that it can also be considered from among the [science of the] special properties of letters, considering that the agreement can be made in terms of letters, too, we have mentioned it [here] as part of the science of letters, which are from the special/secret properties of the Qurʾān.[93]

Taşköprüzāde enumerates some branches of the sciences of letters, all under the section of *tafsir*: the science of the secret properties of letters (*ʿilm khawāṣṣ al-ḥurūf*), actually about the mysterious letters mentioned at the beginning of some Qurʾanic chapters, which 'have great special/secret properties (*khawāṣṣ jalīla*) and abundant advantages (*manāfiʿ jazīla*)'; the science of working with the letters and names [of God] (*ʿilm al-taṣarruf bi-l-ḥurūf wa-l-asmāʾ*); that of the letters of

[92] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-saʿāda*, 1: 395–396; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 359–360.

[93] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-saʿāda*, 2: 592; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 1030.

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light and darkness (*ʿilm al-ḥurūf al-nūraniyya wa-l-ẓulmāniyya*), with which one may do good and evil deeds respectively; that of the declination of the greatest name (*ʿilm al-taṣrīf bi-l-ism al-aʿẓam*), which has 'rarely been reached by any human being, save prophets or perfect saints'; as well as more technical methods such as 'breaking' and 'unfolding' (*ʿilm al-kasr wa-l-basṭ*) or using the *zāʾirja* diagram.[94] Taşköprüzāde, we should note, also composed a treatise on plague, *Risālat al-shifāʾ li-adwāʾ al-wabāʾ*, where he gives detailed instructions for invocations and letter magic against the disease.[95]

His continuator, Kâtib Çelebi, quotes the famous physician Dāʾūd al-Anṭākī (d. 1599) to the effect that the science of letters and words (*ʿilm al-ḥurūf wa-l-asmāʾ*)

> examines the secret properties of letters (*khawāṣṣ al-ḥurūf*), individually and when composed together [into words]. Its object are the letters of the alphabet. Its material [is] the magic squares (*awfāq*) and arrangements (*tarākīb*, 'structures'); its form (*ṣūra*) their division, like 'what' and 'how'; the composition of oaths and spells (*al-aqsām wa-l-ʿazāʾim*), and what is produced by them…The rank (*martaba*) at which it [i.e. the science of lettrism] is situated is after the spiritual matters (*rūḥāniyyāt*), the [science of the] celestial spheres and astrology…[96]

It is to be noted that Dāʾūd al-Anṭākī is the author of a monumental treatise on medical substances, *Tadhkira ūlī l-albāb*, which contains a voluminous supplement (*khatima*) on occult medicine, including talismanic and letter science. The supplement, which has been included in all published versions, was probably composed by one of al-Anṭākī's disciples in the first half of the seventeenth century and is not to be found in the manuscripts (although all introductions mention a supplement).[97]

Thus, there are active spirits (*arwāḥ mutaṣarrifa*) who work though the spiritual quality (*rūḥaniyya*) of the letters and numbers, and this quality ultimately stems from the special properties of the Qur'an. Neither Taşköprüzāde nor Kâtib Çelebi give further clarifications on the nature of these 'active spirits'; but we may understand an Akbarian meaning of angels, acting through the letters that correspond to them. We find a deeper explanation of the entanglement and interaction of letters with the manifestations of God's will in İsmāʿīl Ḥaḳḳı Bursevī, who here seems to combine Ibn 'Arabī's cosmology with an Illuminationist theory of emanations:

[94] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāḥ al-saʿāda*, 2: 592–593; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 1030–1031. On these techniques see below, Chapters 3 and 4.

[95] Melvin-Koushki, 'Taşköprīzāde on the (Occult) Science'.

[96] Kâtip Çelebi, eds Yaltkaya and Bilge, *Keşf-el-zunun*, 1: 650; cf. *Keşfü'z-zunûn*, tr. Balcı, 2: 543.

[97] Coulon, *La Magie en terre d'islam*, 264–267 (see p. 266 for the excerpt quoted by Kâtib Çelebi); Coulon, 'The *Kitāb Sharāsīm al-Hindiyya*', 344. Coulon finds a *terminus post quem* in a reference to the jurist al-Qalyūbī (d. 1659), but the composition of Kâtib Çelebi's encyclopedia (1652) also defines an earlier *terminus ante quem*, indicating different versions. The Ottoman translation of part of the work, completed *c.*1642, contains no reference to the supplement either (Arslan, 'Kitâb-ı tercüme'). I wish to thank Kathi Ivanyi for her help in the study of al-Anṭākī's Arabic manuscripts.

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> In their turn, universal soul, universal nature, dust (*habā'*), universal form, universal body, the Throne, the upper sphere, the sphere of Atlas [the empyrean sphere], the sphere of the mansions, the heaven of Saturn, the heaven of Jupiter, the heaven of Mars, the heaven of Sun, the heaven of Venus, the heaven of Venus, the heaven of Mercury, the heaven of the Moon, fire, air, water, earth, minerals, plants, animals, angels, jinn, man and rank (*martaba*) all follow. These twenty-eight entities are called the external letters of the Divine Soul (*ḥurūf ẓāhir al-nafs al-raḥmānī*). They correspond to the internal letters of the Divine Soul (*ḥurūf bāṭin al-nafs al-raḥmānī*)… These twenty-eight names correspond to the absolute letters of the Divine Soul (*ḥurūf muṭlaḳ al-nafs al-raḥmānī*)… These are spiritual letters (*ḥurūf majāzīyya*); because, just as the corresponding [divine] names are spiritual, so are the letters.[98]

Bursevī then quotes Avicenna extensively, describing the universal soul as a series of emanations, where one intellect (*'aḳl*) creates another with its corresponding soul (*nafs*) and firmament (*falak*). For instance, from the third intellect emanate a fourth intellect, a soul, and a firmament, those of Saturn ('this firmament is the firmament of Saturn; and the soul, the soul of Saturn'); from this intellect emanates a fifth one, with its own soul and firmament (that of Jupiter), and so forth.[99]

> The letters of the alphabet (*ḥurūf al-tahajjī*) have the degree of existence (*bi-martaba al-wujūdī*) in the sphere of the Unseen (*fī l-shā'n al-ġaybī*); the composite letters (*al-ḥurūf al-murakkaba*) up to the *ebced* have the degree of existence of knowledge [?] (*al-wujūd al-'ilmī*); *ebced* has the degree of existence in the world of spirits (*fī l-'ālam al-arwāḥ*), whereas the rest composite words (*al-murakkabāt*) have the degree of existence in the world of bodies.[100]

These mystic properties of the Arabic letters extend in an even more enhanced way to words, and especially the names of God, composed by letters but being also His attributes. Divine names manifest hidden essence and latent truths, whereas cosmic names (*al-asmā' al-kawnīyya*) are manifestations of spirits and bodies.[101] Some of the names have more merit than others, since some are pointing to the essence of God and are superior to those pointing to His attributes and to His acts. Accordingly, theophoric names have their own hierarchy ('Abdullāh is superior to 'Abdurraḥmān and so forth).[102]

[98] İsmâil Hakkı Bursevî, eds Muslu and Namlı, *Tamâmü'l-feyz*, 120–121.
[99] Ibid., 122–123. [100] Ibid., 461. [101] Ibid., 209–210.
[102] Ibid., 465. On the names of God, cf. Fahd, *La Divination arabe*, 234–241. For Christian (Byzantine) parallels, see Foskolou, 'The Magic of the Written', 334–336.

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Taşköprüzāde, who describes the properties of the names of God and of Qur'anic excerpts in his chapter on the 'science of properties' (*ʿilm al-khawāṣṣ*), gives another explanation for the power of words. Instead of giving emphasis to their being cosmic manifestations and agents themselves, he stresses the effect of the reader keeping his soul busy with God's holiness. For him, it is the soul rather than the names and words themselves that produces the desired influence:

> Know that the soul, because it busies itself with the names of God and the invocations that appear in His revealed books, turns to His Holiness and empties itself of all other matters that preoccupy it. So, by way of this turning towards [God] and emptying itself [of other preoccupations], it is inundated by effects (*āthār*, lit. 'traces') and lights (*anwār*) which match its readiness, which is produced due to its occupation with these matters.[103]

In his own encyclopedia, however, Kâtib Çelebi proposes that these properties are similar to the ones of the sublunar world and that their causes constitute a mystery for the human intellect. After copying Taşköprüzāde's discussion, he adds that

> The secret properties of things are fixed and their occasions (*asbāb*, lit. 'causes') are hidden, because we know [for instance] that magnetite attracts iron, but we do not know how and why. Likewise with all the secret properties, except that the causes (*ʿilal*, 'occasions') of some of them can be grasped by the intellect, while the meaning of the causes of others cannot.[104]

In addition to other such amendments of Kâtib Çelebi's to Taşköprüzāde's definitions, as we will see in more detail later, one might say that he seeks to re-naturalize the secrets of the cosmos, as he always insists that there are causes other than a general 'supernatural' effect, regardless of the fact that the human mind is not capable of grasping them.

Man, Angels, and Jinn

With their supernatural and even divine substance, Arabic letters also belonged to the supralunary world and completed the set of influences that produced various effects upon the things terrestrial. Still, the sublunary world was also entitled to its own supernatural aura. For one thing, man's central position in the divine

[103] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-saʿāda*, 1: 365–366; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 332–333.

[104] Kâtip Çelebi, eds Yaltkaya and Bilge, *Keşf-el-zunun*, 1: 726; cf. *Keşfü'z-zunûn*, tr. Balcı, 2: 602.

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plans would mean that the real axis of the cosmos is the human body and spirit, rather than the celestial movements. Especially in Sufi thought, it was a common topos that the macrocosm reflects the microcosm, not vice versa. In the words of a sixteenth-century Bayrāmī sheikh, the world is man's copy (*nusḫa*); man is 'the great world' (*ʿālem-i kübrā*) and this world is 'the small world' (*ʿālem-i ṣuġrā*), because man is the most perfect creature. Paradise and Hell correspond to mental faculties.[105] For this reason, it was usual for cosmographies to end their enumeration of the earth's geographical elements (which invariably began with the supralunary world, the Throne, the Pen and the Tablet, the seven heavens, and so on) with a description of the human body and its virtues.[106] The ultimate perfection of man would be the prophets, following a long tradition that culminated with Ibn ʿArabī; and it has been argued recently that Ottoman piety was particularly structured around a veneration of the Prophet Muhammad.[107] The apex of such beliefs was the *ḳutb* doctrine, according to which there always existed a particular saint who is the Pole of the universe. Originating in medieval Sufism and elaborated by Ibn ʿArabī, this doctrine was quite popular in Ottoman Sufism, with various dervish orders claiming the status of *ḳutb* for several of their sheikhs.[108]

In addition, the medieval science of astrology and medicine was influenced by a neo-Platonic vision of an animated universe, where each physical body, such as a star, possessed psychic powers (manifestations of the celestial soul) and even had a kind of soul (which could also influence the terrestrial world from a distance), the *rūḥāniyyat* of the 'Brethren of Purity'; as we have seen, they began to belong to the supernatural (the *ghayb*) rather than to the natural world from the thirteenth century onwards, through the work of al-Būnī and his continuators.[109] As we will see in the next chapter, stories about saintly spirits could be justified in terms compatible with Muslim theology, particularly with its neo-Platonic connotations. What was more ambiguous, however, was the case of 'evil spirits' or what could be called 'neutral spirits': popular and scholarly traditions alike evoked supernatural 'souls' intervening in the visible world. Of course, many such stories may just refer to jinn; the term 'souls' (*ervāḥ*) is often a synonym for jinn,[110]

[105] Saruhânî İlyas, eds Küçük and Muslu, *Akhisarlı Şeyh Îsâ menâkıbnâmesi*, 171–172.

[106] Âşık Mehmed, ed. Ak, *Menâzırü'l-avâlim*, 1698–1855 (followed by a discussion of human-like monsters, e.g. dog-headed people, cannibals, and half-men, culminating in the Gog and Magog: ibid., 1855–1860).

[107] Hagen, 'Pietas Ottomanica'. On Ibn 'Arabī's prophetic theory, see Chodkiewicz, *Le Sceau des saints*.

[108] See the survey by Ocak, *Zındıklar ve mülhidler*, 255–327. For a short exposition of the theory, see İsmâil Hakkı Bursevî, eds Muslu and Namlı, *Tamâmü'l-feyz*, 124.

[109] Coulon, *La Magie en terre d'islam*, 257ff.; Saif, 'Between Medicine and Magic'. Even in the seventeenth century we find manuscripts giving names to these *rūḥāniyyat* of the planets (Saif, 'Between Medicine and Magic', 320–321).

[110] Firdevsī, ed. Büyükkarcı, *Firdevsī-i Ṭavīl and His Daʿvet-nāme*, 114 and *passim*; Cinānī, *Bedâyiü'l-âsâr*, ed. Ünlü, 2: 71–72 and *passim*.

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and evil spirits, as we will also see in Chapter 2, can often belong to this category of being, totally acceptably from a theological point of view. Yet, there is an ambiguity that leaves the possibility of human souls having a second life as spirits. Certainly, Avicenna had mentioned the doctrine that certain 'less developed' souls could become demons, whether benevolent or malevolent, after death, thanks to their extraordinary powers of imagination.[111] However, this belief, which Avicenna himself does not support, is not clearly maintained by Ottoman authors.

Living souls, however, were often considered capable of exerting supernatural influence on nature. This idea, too, can be traced back to Avicenna's philosophy: there we find the idea that the soul could influence material objects without physical contact, thanks to the position that this scholar assigns to humans in his hierarchy of emanations (an idea that was passed on to medieval and Renaissance European thought).[112] Based on this theory of the Chain of Being, from minerals to plants, animals, celestial beings, angels, and finally God, no less a thinker than Ibn Khaldūn believed that certain human souls were to varying degrees endowed with unique powers, such as prophetic abilities or magical powers, due to their strong will. He classified human beings into three categories: those whose souls cannot surpass the boundaries of bodily perception and human intelligence; the saints and the learned, who are capable of spiritual intelligence; and finally, the prophets, who are able to momentarily change their human position to that of angels (the next stage upwards in the Chain of Being). Now, somewhere in this model the soothsayers (*kāhin*) have souls 'inclined to move towards supernatural perception, but incapable of it', whose very developed imagination can receive demonic inspiration; the same applies to the 'mysts' (*'arrāf*), who are of slightly lower position, since they need various different means and techniques (e.g. geomancy or omen knowledge) to be able to 'lift the veil of the senses'. Similarly, the highest level of magicians can influence the elemental world without any external means through mere mental effort (*himma*), whereas lower levels have to resort to the powers and properties of celestial bodies or numbers.[113]

Although Ibn Khaldūn's influence in the Ottoman literature was relatively slow to appear,[114] traces of this theory can be found. In an early-seventeenth-century translation of Qazwīnī's cosmography, we read that extraordinary marvels (*gharā'ib*) can be produced by the influence of 'either strong souls or celestial and elemental bodies' (*yā te'ṯīrāt-ı nüfūs-ı ḳaviyyeden yā te'ṯīrāt-ı ecrām-ı felekiyye ve ecrām-ı 'unsūriyyedendür*).[115] The reference to 'strong souls' here has to be taken

[111] Rahman, 'Dream, Imagination', 168.

[112] Hankins, 'Ficino, Avicenna and the Occult Powers'; Başaran, 'Avicenna on the Soul's Power'; Weill-Parot, 'Pouvoirs lointains'. On the influence of this idea in the magical texts attributed to Albert the Great, probably composed in the late thirteenth century, see Boudet, *Entre science et nigromance*, 411.

[113] See the highly informative article by Asatryan, 'Ibn Khaldun on Magic and the Occult'.

[114] See now Sariyannis, 'Ottoman Ibn Khaldūnism Revisited'.

[115] Mehmed Şâkir, ed. Koçoğlu, Acâ'ibü'l-mahlûkât *tercümesi*, 73.

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as meaning the prophets, since the text then cites their miracles as examples, but this is completely within Ibn Khaldūn's framework. The influence is clearer in Taşköprüzāde's encyclopedia. He defines magic (*siḥr*) as the science that brings about events 'by the influence of the soul' (*al-ta'thīr al-nafsānī*), whereas other branches of magic concern invocation of stars, spirits, and so forth. Taşköprüzāde maintains that 'strong souls (*al-nufūs al-qawiyya*) have an effect (*atharat*) upon a thing, when they become incorporeal (*tajarradat*, "strip themselves", "free themselves") and turn towards it'. For this, he gives the example of incantations (*'azā'im*), as well as of the evil eye.[116]

Still, it seems that this explanation of magic and divination did not take serious roots in Ottoman mentality. Ottoman authors, scholarly and vernacular, preferred to look up to angels or jinn, rather than their own human souls, to justify the possibility of communicating with the *ghayb*—unless, of course, it had to do with the miraculous powers of prophets or Sufi sheikhs. It is worth noting the confusion of Murad III (r. 1574–1595) in this respect: he asks his sheikh how the existence of evil souls (of which he had heard from other dervishes) is possible, since the soul (*rūḥ*) is the manifestation of God.[117]

Angelology

One must absolutely take into account the belief in the existence of spirits or jinn in order to understand the way Ottomans viewed the world and the extraordinary phenomena they observed or heard about. Forming a remnant of Marshall Sahlins' 'state of immanence', in which 'human society is a fractional part of a much larger, cosmic society populated by a multiplicity of different kinds of persons, many organized in their own societies',[118] angels and jinn form an indispensable part of the Islamic world view in the Ottoman as well as in the pre-Ottoman period. One might wonder whether these entities belong to the supernatural (as we tend to think) or the preternatural world, to which, according to Aziz Al-Azmeh, all *ghayb* belonged in the pre-modern era:

> [T]he natural world and the preternatural realm constituted a continuum and were distinguished only in the sense that the one was visible and the other largely invisible, although even the latter could become visible in rare flashes of appearance.[119]

[116] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-sa'āda*, 1: 364, 366–367; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 331, 335–336. On the evil eye in Ibn Khaldūn's thought, see Asatryan, 'Ibn Khaldun on Magic and the Occult', 100–101.

[117] Felek, *Kitābü'l-menāmāt*, 256 (no. 1227).

[118] Sahlins, *The New Science*, 124.

[119] Al-Azmeh, 'Paleo-Muslim Angels', 135.

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Angels, for one thing, inhabited the seven heavens in all Ottoman cosmologies.[120] Whereas traditional Muslim angelology gave specific tasks to the angels, such as praising God, communicating God's message to prophets, recording human deeds, and guiding human souls after death, it seems that, through the reception of al-Suhrawardī's (d. 1191) Illuminationist philosophy, angels were increasingly present in the Ottoman perception of the world. In Marlene Kurz's words, in this process the cosmos was populated with a host of holy and perfect entities who 'competed with the prophets with regard to their supreme role as intermediaries between God and man'.[121] In earlier texts, especially of a less scholarly character, angels appear in extraordinary moments: Sarūḫānī narrates a story where angels appeared to some people as women (the sheikh says: 'they took the angels for women because they are clad in white'), and claims that they could be seen only with a spiritual (*ma'nevī*) eye and with a sheikh's assistance.[122] But in other sources, Sufi or not, they are much more present in everyday life. The 'rational proof' (*delīl-i 'aḳlī*) Uzun Firdevsī gives for the existence of angels is compelling in its image of a host of supernatural beings filling the cosmos: God has left no place uninhabited; even the highest mountains and the deepest seas have creatures inhabiting them. Thus, the firmaments (the heavenly spheres) in their turn cannot be empty of creatures.

> The Prophet has said that there is not a particle of the world to which an angel is not appointed. There is no drop but those which an angel makes fall. And there is no place in the sky where an angel is not occupied in praying.[123]

And İbrahim Haḳḳı Erzurumī's description is equally compelling:

> Heaven and earth replete with angels. Everyone has a duty, for instance making the rain fall; every rain drop is brought forth by an angel, and until the End of Times he will not repeat this task.[124]

It is quite common for Ottoman cosmographies to describe the major angels in their first chapters.[125] There are angels (*ervāḥ-i revḥānī*) that live in the North Pole and angels that live in the South; animals and people may take advantage of this by praying towards one pole or another in case of sickness, difficult births, and so forth (the anonymous author relating this rather heretical advice cites two

[120] For the Islamic perceptions of angels, see Lory, *La Dignité de l'homme*, 159–220; Yazaki, 'Classes of Beings', 69–71; Kuehn, Leder, and Pökel, *The Intermediate Worlds*.
[121] Kurz, *Ways to Heaven*, 67–70.
[122] Saruhânî İlyas, eds Küçük and Muslu, *Akhisarlı Şeyh Îsâ menâkıbnâmesi*, 213.
[123] Firdevsī, ed. Büyükkarcı, *Firdevsī-i Ṭavīl and His Da'vet-nāme*, 141.
[124] Erzurumī İbrahim Hakkı, *Mā'rifetnāme*, University of Michigan, 34; ed. Meyan, *Mârifetnâme*, 20.
[125] Yazıcıoğlu [Anonymous], *Dürr-i meknūn*, ed. Kaptein, 79–84=357–363; ed. Demirtaş, 94–98; ed. Sakaoğlu, 24–27; ed. Mattei, 31–35; Âşık Mehmed, ed. Ak, *Menâzırü'l-avâlim*, 50–70.

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books called *Bābil* and *Ṣuverü'l-Felekī*, which I have been unable to identify).[126] Indeed, we often read that there are different ways of praying (prostrating oneself, etc.), and there are angels practising one or another. Uzun Firdevsī, the author of the 1487 grimoire *Da'vet-nāme*, describes in great detail their classes and characteristics. There are the major angels quoted in the Qur'an and the tradition, Israfil, Cebra'il, or Mika'il; their assistants (*a'vān*) are responsible for various psychological powers. Thus, Israfil's assistants give the breath of life and empower all beings, those of Cebra'il provide the power of wrath (*ḳuvvet-i ġażabiyye*) and the zeal for invention (*ġayret-i iḥdāṯ*), those of Mika'il give the power of existence (*ḳuvvet-i ḳıyām*) to the elements, and so forth.[127] Furthermore, there are innumerable nameless angels in a complex and elaborate hierarchy. There are angels present nearly every single human being (recording one's good and bad deeds), as well as the 'Travellers' (*Seyyāḥūn*) who 'are always present in the gatherings of [Sufi] recitation and of learning' (*dā'imā mecālis-i ẕikru'llāhı ve mecālis-i 'ilmi arayıp anda ḥāżır olur*). There are even those who assist men in all stages of eating and digestion![128] Angels, we read in a sixteenth-century Sufi text, had been standing by a girl's head every night while she was alive, and they continue to stand by her in the grave until the End of Days.[129]

On the macrocosmic level, when the sun moves upon a sign of the zodiac, there is an angel (*ferişte*) supervising it (*nāẓır olur*); tens of thousands of lesser angels (*melekūt*) are under his command, and under each of them serve tens of thousands of jinn. The same happens with the movement of the moon.[130] Now, being God's most perfect creation and thus actually superior to the angels, man can use these powers for quite mundane objectives. To this aim, Firdevsī gives these angels names, descriptions, praises to God (*tesbīḥ*), symbols (*levḥ*), and magic seals (*ḫātem*). Each angel and his subordinates assist the practitioner in different ways (e.g. finding water, claiming power, protecting one's child, and so forth):[131]

> When the Sun arrives at the sign of Sagittarius, with God's order an angel comes down from the highest stratum of the seventh heaven and becomes appointed to the Sun. Under his orders, there are 800,000 [times] 80,000 angels; under each one's orders, 200 times 22,000 angels; and under each one's orders, 125,000 jinn, which come to earth and influence it. And the name of this greatest angel is Kefhatayil. His form resembles to a human; he has one head and two hands; he holds a javelin in one hand and a mirror in the other.[132]

[126] Sarıkaya (ed.), *Tercüme-i Acâibü'l-mahlūkat*, 126–127.
[127] Firdevsī, ed. Büyükkarcı, *Firdevsī-i Ṭavīl and His Da'vet-nāme*, 144–145.
[128] Ibid., 141–147.
[129] Saruhânî İlyas, eds Küçük and Muslu, *Akhisarlı Şeyh Îsâ menâkıbnâmesi*, 165.
[130] Firdevsī, ed. Büyükkarcı, *Firdevsī-i Ṭavīl and His Da'vet-nāme*, 162ff.
[131] Ibid., 152, etc.
[132] Ibid., 160.

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It is interesting that this kind of learned angelology found its way into folk legends, such as the ones collected under *Saltuknāme* around 1480: in one of his adventures, Sarı Saltuk meets someone who lived among the infidels for more than 700 years and who claims that he is Safhāyīl, 'the head of all celestial spirits (*re'īs-i rūhāniyā*)'. Sarı Saltuk wonders whether this person is the devil (*şeytān*), a jinni, or a witch (*cādū*), and Safhāyīl has to show him his wings to persuade him.[133]

The Jinn

Furthermore, the Islamic world is normally inhabited by jinn, who constitute the third class of intelligent beings created by God, the other two being mankind and the angels; while the latter were created of clay and light, respectively, the jinn are composed of vapour and smokeless flame:[134]

> God created the angels, the jinn and the perī; He created them so fine that they cannot be seen by the eye. So that the air all around the world is full of them, but still nobody can see them unless God gives them a form of sorts that can be seen…God wished to show His servants the likes of these jinn, so that they can deduce the present from the hidden (*tā ki ḥāżırlarından ġāyiblerine istidlāl ėdeler*). [And thus] He created birds.[135]

Full-scale cosmographies, like the one written by Aşık Mehmed at the end of the sixteenth century, usually included a detailed chapter on the jinn just after the one on angels.[136] In general, jinn are imperceptible to the human senses, but they may appear in different forms. As an intelligent class, they are also capable of salvation: the Prophet was sent to them as well and they are to enter Paradise or Hell. There are Muslim and heathen jinn, and the latter are more wicked,[137] while Aşık Mehmed quotes some authorities stating that jinn may be Muslim, infidel, or even Shiites.[138] This happens, as we read in a late-sixteenth-century commentary of an alchemical poem, because both the jinn and humans possess a spirit, a soul, and a body (the latter being fiery in the case of the jinn, watery in human

[133] Aydoğan, '*Gāzī*s and *Cādū*s at the Margins', 41.

[134] See Lory, *La Dignité de l'homme*, 221–230; Yazaki, 'Classes of Beings', 74–76; Olomi, 'Jinn in the Qur'an'; Pantić, *Sufism in Ottoman Damascus*, 82–94. On the transformation of pre-Islamic beliefs on the jinn in the Qur'an, see O'Meara, 'From Space to Place'. For an anthropological approach (focusing on contemporary Morocco), see Maarouf, *Jinn Eviction*. El-Zein, *Islam, Arabs* is a mine of information on stories on the jinn from the medieval Arabic tradition.

[135] Sarıkaya (ed.), *Tercüme-i Acâibü'l-mahlūkat*, 387.

[136] Âşık Mehmed, ed. Ak, *Menâzırü'l-avâlim*, 82ff.

[137] *EI*^{2}, s.v. 'Djinn. In Turkish folklore' (P. N. Boratav).

[138] Âşık Mehmed, ed. Ak, *Menâzırü'l-avâlim*, 83.

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beings)—whereas animals, who lack 'true soul', or angels, lacking spirit, are not bound by the commands of the shari'a.[139] In a comparison between man ('the great world', *ʿālem-i kübrā*) and the world ('the small world', *ʿālem-i ṣuġrā*), the jinn correspond to the imaginative power (*ḳuvvā-yı ḫayāliyye*).[140] A large part of Uzun Firdevsī's treatise on incantation concerns conjuring jinn (*ervāḥ daʿvet ėtmesinüñ ṭarīḳi*), and he gives interesting information about their characteristics. We read that God created the jinn of various sorts:

> For instance, some souls [jinn] are Muslim, some are Jews, some are Christian, some are fire-worshippers…; they have their kingdoms and these kingdoms have their viziers, their judges, their professors, their superintendents, their preachers, their spies and their interpreters. And their places are also various: some live in the air, some live underground, some in high mountains, others in ruined mills, others in bathhouses, others in the sea, others in the clouds, others in the cemeteries, others in the aqueducts, others in the fireplaces and the ovens and in old scorched places.

Moreover, they can take the form of various animals; and they also live in strange places like Mount Ḳāf, as well as in mosques and blessed places like Mecca or Jerusalem. There are angels appointed upon the jinn of every place, and one can summon the jinn through the angels. The angels supervising the sun's movement over the zodiac also have tens of thousands of lesser angels under their command, each one of them having tens of thousands of jinn under their command; in some cases, there also intermediate grades, such as 'incarnations' (*tekvīn*); the same happens with the phases of the moon. From among them, the angel appointed to the moon when in its thirteenth mansion is commanding the rebellious jinn (*ʿāsī cinnīler*); if he were not to supervise them, they would destroy the world.[141]

As we have seen, there were numerous traditions about the existence of jinn before man was created (drawing from the pre-Islamic tradition). For instance, according to the tradition mentioned by Şükrullah Efendi of a series of worlds created and destroyed before Adam, the last two worlds were inhabited exclusively by jinn and angels, respectively. Jinn had dominated the world for 70,000 years before they started killing each other.[142] In other traditions, we read that they were living in caves, and the caves that have remained are their work. The first jinn were a couple God made from fire in Mount Ḳaf: Māric and Mārice.

[139] Pseudo-Eşrefoğlu Rumî, ed. Artun, 'Commentary on *The Secret of Ta-Ha*', 379.
[140] Saruhânî İlyas, eds Küçük and Muslu, *Akhisarlı Şeyh Îsâ menâkıbnâmesi*, 171.
[141] Firdevsī, ed. Büyükkarcı, *Firdevsī-i Ṭavīl and His Daʿvet-nāme*, 113–114, 150, 152ff., 162ff., 171.
[142] Şükrullah, ed. Almaz, *Behcetü't-tevârīh*, 75.

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Although Iblis came from among them, most were devout.[143] After the creation of man, the jinn were expelled to islands, but

> now from time to time they remember their old abodes and return, settling in the roots of trees or near waters and springs. These places are called *ayazma* [sacred fountain, Gk. *αγίασμα*]…most unbelievers believe in these, saying that this or that source or tree is exalted (*ulu*).[144]

In still other traditions, they have occupied all places previously inhabited by tribes destroyed by God.[145]

To the same category belong other creatures as well, which abound in folklore but also in *'ajā'ib*-like world descriptions (see Fig. 1.4). These 'spiritual creatures' (as named by e.g. 'Azīz Efendi: *maḫlūḳāt-i rūḥāniyye*)[146] included the infamous *ifrīt*, giants (*dev*), fairies (*perī*), and other entities, originating in folklore (Arabic or Persian, but sometimes also Turkish), rather than the learned tradition.[147] Whereas all these creatures obviously belong to the same kind of being, they have different properties: for instance, while the jinn and the *dev* cannot be killed (since they have a soul, but not a body or blood like humans) unless exterminated by angels with a flame, *perī*s can be killed because they are familiar to men (*ademe mūnis*). On the other hand, jinn, *dev*, and *perī* can be bewitched (*müsaḫḫar*) through the use of God's names; this is how the Prophet Suleyman and the sages around Alexander could subdue them.[148] One sort of jinn, the *hātif*, cannot be seen by men; their voices bring news from the hereafter. Another similar sort (the *şaḳ*) show only half of themselves. Some are pretty, some hideous; those who live in the south are black and those living in the north are white, and every group has its own territory.[149] The most common sort are perhaps the ghouls (*gūl*):

[143] Yazıcıoğlu [Anonymous], *Dürr-i meknūn*, ed. Kaptein, 119=396; ed. Demirtaş, 117–118; ed. Sakaoğlu, 44–45; ed. Mattei, 62. Not all manuscripts contain most of this information. Similarly in *Ma'rifetnāme*: Erzurumī İbrahim Hakkı, *Mā'rifetnāme*, University of Michigan, 48; ed. Meyan, *Mârifetnâme*, 39.

[144] Yazıcıoğlu [Anonymous], *Dürr-i meknūn*, ed. Kaptein, 125=403; ed. Demirtaş, 122; ed. Sakaoğlu, 47; ed. Mattei, 67.

[145] Sarıkaya (ed.), *Tercüme-i Acâibü'l-mahlūkat*, 386.

[146] 'Azīz Efendi, *Muhayyelât*, ed. Alacatlı, 38; ed. Duymaz, 182.

[147] Cf. Sarpkaya and Yaltırık, *Türk kültüründe vampirler* on Turkish folklore. A tradition of an *ifrit* imprisoned under the mountain in the island of Samothrace is recorded as late as at the end of the eighteenth century by Mehmed Hâşim, eds Emecen and Şahin, *Îmâ-yı törehât-ı büldânân*, 39.

[148] Yazıcıoğlu [Anonymous], *Dürr-i meknūn*, ed. Kaptein, 135=412; ed. Demirtaş, 128; ed. Sakaoğlu, 51; ed. Mattei, 74.

[149] Sarıkaya (ed.), *Tercüme-i Acâibü'l-mahlūkat*, 377.

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Fig. 1.4 A demon falling upon sleeping men, and his talismanic seal. Meḥmed es-Suʿūdī, *Meṭāliʿu'l-saʿādet*, Bibliothèque nationale de France, suppl. turc 242, f. 86a (1582).

> Some say, they are also [another] creature. And some say, they are jinn. When this tribe of jinn wants to climb up to the sky, the angels that reside between earth and sky hit the jinn with the fire they have in their hands; as soon as they see the jinn, they throw the fire and hit them. The jinn fall [on the earth], they are forgiven and become ghouls, they say. At night they appear in front of travellers in the mountains, taking a human form; the travellers think they are men and ask the way, and thus they get lost; even if they find their way, they do so with great pains.
>
> Some have seen [ghouls] in the form of a hairy dervish (*saçlı derviş*) who rides stags and wanders in the mountains. When he is seen outside of the road, he disappears.…

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> Now it is evident that the jinn and the demons (*şeytān*) are enemies of mankind. They make people lose their way with a thousand ruses and tricks. The ignorant search for a reason to believe in vain things. Most of these [jinn and ghouls] are to be found in the Balkans (*Rūm īlī*), they do not live in other places…
>
> These jinn and demons (*şeyātīn*) are [a sort of] creatures. But the *perī*s are a different kind of creature. Some say that *perī*s also are of this kind; [but] the *perī* is friendly to man and close to humans. It can be killed, whereas the jinn and the demons cannot. The Sultan of the *perī*s is Kâzeb. And they are also called Nīlūter. The *perī*s are abundant in the mountain of Akır, in Isfahan and in Mazenderan; they can also be found in Russia and Europe (*Frengistan*).[150]

In this vein, Evliya Çelebi records his meeting with a ghoul (*ġūl-i beyābān*) in the Jewish cemetery of Hasköy, in the outskirts of Istanbul; he records the event 'so that it will not happen to anyone else'.[151] And a very Ottoman sort is the infamous *ḳaraḳoncolos*, a form of the Greek *kallikantzaros* (wicked demons coming up to earth for the twelve days after Christmas). Evliya gives some quite eloquent descriptions of this terror: from a cavern under an old monastery in Zeyrekbaşı, Istanbul, in the cold winter nights 'many witches named *ḳaraḳoncoloz* (*ḳara ḳoncoloz nām cādūlar*) used to come out and stroll in carriages; when dawn was near, all these *ḳoncoloz* entered again into this cavern and became invisible'.[152] *Ḳaraḳoncoloz*, as well as the 'lady of Wednesday' (*cehārşenbih ḳarısı*), a common Turkish folk tradition, appear in a 1720 text as tales to frighten naughty children—the author adds that due to such stories he grew up avoiding all matters pertaining to death, cemeteries, and the like.[153]

Evliya Çelebi's long excursus on jinn is interesting in its own right, as he seems to mix scholarly traditions, local legends and folklore, and perhaps inventions of his own. He makes this excursus while describing Nusaybin, and one wonders whether he is confusing it with Harran, the Syrian city where the Sabians practised their cult of stars.[154] Nusaybin used to be called 'town of the two races—that is, men and jinn (*şaḳalān*)—by the sages and soothsayers of old (*ḥükemā-yı ḳudemā kehhānları*)' and the jinn used to fight for it, as they used to settle in Iraq.

[150] Yazıcıoğlu [Anonymous], *Dürr-i meknūn*, ed. Kaptein, 281–285=534–537; ed. Demirtaş, 201–203; ed. Sakaoğlu, 110–111; ed. Mattei, 144–145. The various manuscripts vary enormously on this passage. Here I mainly follow Demirtaş's edition.

[151] Evliya Çelebi, eds Dankoff, Kahraman, and Dağlı, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, I. Kitap*, 204 (ff. 124a–124b).

[152] Ibid., 28 (f. 17a). Also, his Bulgarian witch (usually transforming into a hen) turns habitually into *ḳara ḳoncoloz*: Evliya Çelebi, eds Kahraman and Dağlı, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, III. Kitap*, 210 (f. 130b); translated as 'turn[s] into a witch' in Evliya Çelebi, *An Ottoman Traveller*, 104.

[153] Yazar, '*Ve mine'l-müdhişâti'l-acîbe*', 35; Balıkesirli Râsih, ed. Önler, '*Bülgatü'l-ahbâb*', 102 (f. 65a).

[154] Cf. van Bladel, *The Arabic Hermes*, 64–114.

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> In the blessed night the Prophet was born and put his foot on this earth, the vaults of all monasteries in the world collapsed, the Nimrudian fires went out, and in this town of Nusaybin or the city of the *ṣaḳalān* all the buildings with their talismans fell to ground; thus it became a nice place for the tribe of the jinn to settle, because they enjoy ruins.

King of the jinn at the time was King Sırfeyā'īl, one of the good spirits (*ervāḥ-ı ṭayyibeden*).[155] Cebrail instructed Muhammad to convert him; indeed, an army of jinn, with their limbs bleeding, appeared in front of the Prophet and Sırfeyā'īl became the first Muslim jinn. Then he complained to the Prophet that, whereas Nusaybin had belonged to their kin since the creation of this world, they had recently been expelled by the evil spirits (*ervāḥ-ı ḫabīṣe*) and their king, Tahlīc. Indeed, this king (actually, Satan/Iblis: *meğer ol gözü kör ḳanatlı şeyṭān-ı ʿaleyhi'l-laʿne idi*) was summoned: he argued that the city belonged to his tribe and that, when they were suppressed by the Prophet Solomon, the good spirits under Sırfeyā'īl usurped Nusaybin. Muhammad made both tribes take an oath that they would leave the city, which thus was left for humans. From that moment on, epilepsy does not occur in Nusaybin, and epileptics who come there get cured.[156]

Evliya goes on to explain that wolves, sheep, camels, oxen, and dogs are enemies of the jinn (his own father had related a story about a shepherd, whose sheep ate some jinn).[157] After a long enumeration of beings classified into 'tribes' (*ḳavim*), he proceeds to describe the tribe of jinn as follows:

> First the tribe of *ṣeḳal*: that is, the tribe of jinn. Now the eleven tribes of jinn described above [*sic*: refers to the *ḳavm-i Tam* and company plus the horses (two sorts of them), lions, roosters and foxes] are all tribes of spirits (*ḳavm-i cān*), but the sorts of the tribe of jinn that I will describe now are either good spirits (*ervāḥ-ı ṭayyibe*), who have accepted the faith of the prophets before Adam [*sic*] and the human prophets after Adam and particularly the Prophet [Muhammad], and among whom seventy tribes are the army of plague (*ṭāʿūn ʿaskeri*) (but those hit by them get cured)—or evil spirits (*ervāḥ-ı ḫabīṣe*), another seventy tribes of them, who have not accepted the faith of the prophets before or after Adam. Those hit by them, if they are Muslim, become martyrs. They are a tribe of jinn that look like humans with black faces and black clothes…

[155] Cf. the name Şemhā'il for a Muslim jinni (of the Shafi'i school) in 'Azīz Efendi, *Muhayyelât*, ed. Alacatlı, 26; ed. Duymaz, 174. Later he is accepted by all jinn as their king by signing a common contract, in a very eighteenth-century move: 'Azīz Efendi, *Muhayyelât*, ed. Alacatlı, 27–28; ed. Duymaz, 175.

[156] Evliya Çelebi, eds Dağlı and Kahraman, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, IV. Kitap*, 334–336 (ff. 392b–394a).

[157] Ibid., 340 (ff. 395b–396a).

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> After God created the tribe of birds between earth and sky, He created the various sorts of the tribe of *ṣeḳal* or jinn, which, as described above, are seventy tribes of Muslim good spirits and seventy tribes of infidel evil spirits. After them [there is] the tribe of Cābülḳā; God knows their number. They were brought to the faith in the night of the Ascension of the Prophet. They were also created before the prophet Adam. Then the tribe of Cābülsā, God knows their number, they are ancient creatures. Then the tribe of ghouls (*ġūl-ı beyābān*), an ancient pest; most of them live in the Tih valley [at the foot of Mount Sinai], in the central Asian deserts, in Mount Elburz, in Ḳamerü'l-ḳum … Then there are the tribe of Ye'cūc … and the tribe of Me'cūc … then the tribe of spirits (*cān*) … from which came the Satan [known then as] Hāris.[158]

The Ḳamerü'l-ḳum mentioned is a place near Akkerman, where the jinn had settled until, in Anushirvan's era, sages confined them there with a talisman prohibiting their intermingling with people. It is still dangerous for men to enter the place, and Evliya himself had a dangerous excursion there.[159] The 'evil spirits' bring to mind Ebū's-su'ūd's *fetva*s on vampirism (see below, Chapter 2), but also Evliya's story about Armağanī Meḥmed Efendi, a friend of his father's who had met this army over Üsküdar in 1623, ready to attack Istanbul on the eve of an epidemic. Those hit by the 'good spirits' would survive, whereas those hit by the 'evil spirits' would die. The chieftains of the two armies dictated the victims' names to Armağanī Meḥmed, who brought the list to Murad IV. Indeed, soon afterwards a plague devastated the city for forty days until all the names in the list had died.[160] This vision of the plague has similarities with the 'spiritual causality' attributed by Arab fourteenth-century authors such as al-Jawziyya, and Taşköprüzāde narrates a similar story.[161] Madness and epilepsy were also connected to these creatures. Possession by jinn was a common trope in folklore, as can be seen in various collections of stories from Cinānī (d. 1595) to Balıkesirli Rāsiḫ (d. 1731),[162] and we can find exorcisms conjuring jinn that have possessed someone's body, whether

[158] Ibid., 340–343 (ff. 396a–397a). On Cābülḳā and Cābülsā, the two cities at the edges of the inhabited world, see Aylar, 'Antikite'den Osmanlı'ya'; Sariyannis, 'A Tale of Two Cities'; and also Chapter 5 below.

[159] Evliya Çelebi, eds Dağlı, Kahraman, and Sezgin, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, V. Kitap*, 63–64 (ff. 36b–37a).

[160] Evliya Çelebi, eds Dağlı and Kahraman, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, IV. Kitap*, 341–342 (f. 396b). Mehmed Hâşim describes a gigantic jinni that roamed the island of Chios in 1788/9, causing many to die of terror before it was discovered that there was nothing supernatural in it. The jinni was named *panukla*, which is Greek for 'plague': Mehmed Hâşim, eds Emecen and Şahin, *Îmâ-yı törehât-ı büldânân*, 52–53.

[161] Saif, 'Between Medicine and Magic', 330; Bulmuş, *Plague, Carantines and Geopolitics*, 71.

[162] Cinānī, ed. Ünlü, *Bedâyiü'l-âsâr*, 2: 76–78, 336–337, etc.; Ḥulvī, ed. Süer, 'Cemâleddin Hulvî'nin *Lemezât-ı hulviyye*', 557–558, 580–581; Yazar, '*Ve mine'l-müdhişâti'l-acîbe*', 36–37; Balıkesirli Râsih, ed. Önler, '*Bülgatü'l-ahbâb*', 105–107 (ff. 66a–67b). Cf. also Ünlü, 'Bir memorat örneği olarak'. In some (rare) cases, possession and exorcism were features of hagiographies: Clayer, 'Les Miracles des cheikhs', 442.

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they belong to 'this world', 'the trees', or 'the water springs', etc.[163] Epilepsy, in particular, was often considered a sort of possession by jinn, and this belief even found its way into early Ottoman medical treatises.[164]

Often, these creatures are connected with historical tribes or monuments. References to palaces built by the jinn, usually for the Prophet Solomon, abound in Ottoman literature, from fifteenth-century Firdevsī to early-eighteenth-century Nābulusī, who visits the impressive ruins of Baalbek and considers them the work of jinn.[165] Demons other than jinn were also related: Evliya narrates that the *uskoks* of Herzegovina descend from demons (*dīv ü ifrīt*), banished there by Solomon: they were starving and ate earth, which contained arsenic and thus made their beards and moustaches grow less, so Solomon traded a sort of cereal to get the arsenic from the demons and use it as a hair dilapidator.[166] Demons (*dīv*) built some porphyry columns in the Kipchak desert: Evliya says that he wondered for years if these were artificial or not (*ʿamelī midir yoḫsa maʿādin midir*), and made sure after comparing them with similar structures in Bethlehem.[167] Conversely, in his 1799 geographical compendium, Mehmed Hāşim describes a cave in Crete with details that come from the legend of the labyrinth: one gets lost inside, there is an inscription in ancient Greek (*Elinika yazusu ile*) warning passers-by, there is a trace of a foot one cubit long, and when they leave some sheep inside, they disappear.[168]

It is only natural, given their presence in the 'official' understanding of the world, that the jinn play a major part in folklore as well. In Anatolian traditions, they lived collectively under a chief or a sultan (*padişah*). They were supposed to have been forced under the earth by an army of angels: they had access to the surface through trees and springs, at some point repossessing certain places, especially deserts, cemeteries, public baths, ruins, and so forth. Local traditions in Istanbul report a number of specific places where jinn made their abode; the king of the sea-jinn himself purportedly lived in Leander's Tower (Kız Kulesi). They usually appeared at night, often riding animals, although there were places such as water closets, the foot of trees, lumber rooms, etc., where precautions should be taken even in daytime. In folk tales, the behaviour of jinn towards humans could vary, from indifferent or teasing to hostile and harmful, usually inflicting different forms of paralysis or epilepsy. In these cases, there are

[163] From a nice example in Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, MS. B. or. 125, ff. 5b–7a. https://www.qalamos.net/receive/DE15Book_manuscript_00014147. Cf. Grehan, *Twilight of the Saints*, 147; Pantić, *Sufism in Ottoman Damascus*, 89–94.

[164] Felek, 'Epilepsy as a "Contagious" Disease', esp. 161–165; Grehan, *Twilight of the Saints*, 148.

[165] Grenier, 'Solomon, His Temple'; Shafir, 'Nābulusī Explores the Ruins'; Grehan, *Twilight of the Saints*, 143.

[166] Evliya Çelebi, eds Kahraman and Dağlı, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, VI. Kitap*, 284 (f. 163a).

[167] Evliya Çelebi, eds Dağlı, Kahraman, and Dankoff, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, IX. Kitap*, 250–251 (f. Y226a).

[168] Mehmed Hâşim, eds Emecen and Şahin, *Îmâ-yı törehât-ı büldânân*, 36–37.

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specialists who can perform a kind of exorcism and negotiate with the jinn. These specialists may be either religious men such as *hoca* and sheikhs, or simple people who have come to terms with the spirits. They are called *cindar*, *cinci* (both terms meaning 'captors of jinn, or specialists thereof'), or *huddamlı* ('masters—or patrons—of servants').[169] A late-fourteenth-century cosmography (possibly influenced by Greek legends about *kallikantzaroi*, the Ottoman *karakoncolos*) mentions that jinn hide in water every 29 December (*ḳānūn-ı evvel*), and whoever drinks water risks becoming an imbecile.[170] Together with other demonic creatures, jinn also abound in plays of the shadow theatre (Karagöz).[171]

However, one should note that despite the explicit and relatively unambiguous mention of jinn in the Qur'an, some scholars perceived a certain inconsistency between their existence and theories of the world. To quote the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*:

> Few even of the Mu'tazila ventured to doubt the existence of *d̲jinn*, and [they] only constructed different theories of their nature and their influence on the material world. The earlier philosophers, even al-Fārābī, tried to avoid the question by ambiguous definitions. But Ibn Sīnā, in defining the word, asserted flatly that there was no reality behind it. The later believing philosophers used subterfuges, partly exegetical and partly metaphysical. Ibn Khaldūn, for example, reckoned all references to the *d̲jinn* among the so-called *mutas̲hābih* passages of the Qur'an, the knowledge of which Allah has reserved to himself.[172]

In the Ottoman period, Şeyh Bedreddin (d. 1420), the famous mystic associated with an early-fifteenth-century rural rebellion, claimed that jinn are in fact fictitious beings, imagined by humans according to their own situation.[173]

Still, it seems that subsequent Ottoman theologians and philosophers did not question the existence of jinn. For instance, the science of commanding jinn and demons (*azā'im*) was accepted by paragons of Ottoman science such as Taşköprüzâde and Kâtib Çelebi; the latter makes a distinction between 'permissible' (*mubāḥ*) spells, which are made through the names of God and Qur'anic recitations, and forbidden ones, made with charms, sorcery, and talismans. This distinction has its origins in another major bio-bibliographical work, Ibn an-Nadim's *Fihrist*, composed at the end of the tenth century.[174] Kâtib Çelebi

[169] *EI*[2], s.v. 'Djinn. In Turkish folklore' (P. N. Boratav); Dols, *The Madman in Medieval Islamic Society*, 215; Zarcone, 'Shamanism in Turkey', 177–180; Grehan, *Twilight of the Saints*, 142–149.

[170] Ali b. Abdurrahman, ed. Al, 'Acâ'ibü'l-mahlūkât (35.–70. varak)', 11 (f. 37a).

[171] Kurt and Gümüş, 'Tekinsiz perde'.

[172] *EI*[2], s.v. 'Djinn'.II (D. B. MacDonald [and H. Massé]).

[173] Ocak, *Zındıklar ve mülhidler*, 194.

[174] Dols, *The Madman in Medieval Islamic Society*, 264–267. After citing numerous books on exorcism, magic, incantations, talismans, juggling, and tricks, Ibn an-Nadim notes that while both exorcists (*mu'azzimûn*) and magicians (*sahara*) claim that they can command devils, jinn, and spirits

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specifies that both kinds of magic cannot be performed without God's help, since it was He who ordained that the jinn can be subdued to man.[175] Quoting various sources, he explains how conjuration of jinn works:

> Scholars differ regarding the way it is possible to communicate with the jinn. Some say: It is done in a way that is not possible for anyone, to the exclusion of God. Others say: By way of a spell, like a prayer, which is answered. Others say: By way of [spells] and pleasing behaviours. Others say: By spies (*jawāsīs*), who are obedient, forbid what is wrong, and stand ready to fight. Others say: By hermitage (*muḥtabasa*) and with the help of the stars (*wa-l-sayyāra*). Others say: By righteousness (*al-ʿammār*)…
>
> Fakhr al-A'imma [al-Rāzī] said: In my opinion, when the [necessary] conditions are met and the spells proceed correctly, God makes spells against the jinn in a great burning fire for them, constricting the regions of the world against them, so that no place remains for them to seek refuge in, and only 'presence' and obedience to what he commands them to do is sufficient. Higher than that, if one is skilful and acts in a way pleasing [to God], and if his behaviour is praiseworthy and satisfying, then God sends very strong and harsh angels against the jinn, in order to restrain them and lead them to be obedient to him and serve him [i.e. the person who practises the spells].
>
> The theologians and other scholars confirmed these principles, saying: 'It is not forbidden that a human memorizes and says words from the names of God and other than these, in books and spells and talismans, so that God subdues a *jinnī* and forces him to obey the person [who had memorized these words] and he chooses him for that which he seeks [to obtain or do] of the affairs that are'…They say: the obedience of these [jinn] to humans is not impossible rationally, nor in terms of revelation, completely.[176]

The jinn, therefore, were ideal candidates to justify and explain folkloric supernatural appearances: accepted by official theology, capable of practising all sorts of sorcery (and of teaching it to humans), even having an often ambiguous relationship with the world of the dead and also with the devil and his demons (the devil, Iblis, is often considered a jinni, although there are also authors who associate him with angels). For one thing, they are often pointed to as responsible for

(*shayātîn, jinn, arwāḥ*), the former assert they only can do this because of God's help: it is God they invoke, and it is He who makes the spirits obey their commands. The latter, in contrast, 'assert that they enslave the devils by offerings and prohibited acts[, since]…the devils are pleased by the committing of acts which are forbidden and which Allah…has prohibited'. Ibn an-Nadim proceeds further to describe a third group of magicians, those who are versed in astrology and other occult sciences in order to make talismans and amulets; in this category, he also includes the art of illusion.

[175] *TDVİA*, s.v. 'Azā'im' (S. Uludağ); Kâtib Çelebi, eds Yaltkaya and Bilge, *Keşf-el-zunun*, II: 1137–1138; Dols, *The Madman in Medieval Islamic Society*, 272–273.

[176] Ibid., 2: 1137–1138; cf. *Keşfü'z-zunûn*, tr. Balcı, 3: 909.

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the pre-Islamic soothsayers' (*kehene*) prophecies: they were informed about news from the *ghayb* by angels and passed this information to the soothsayers, in their turn,[177] although they seem to be in an intermediary position (they cannot see the angels, just as we cannot see the jinn).[178] But even in Islamic times, divination (*ʿilm al-kihāna*) is said to be practised through an 'agreement of human spirits with incorporeal spirits, jinn and demons'; this is written by such an authority as Taşköprüzāde.[179]

Since the jinn had direct access to the supernatural, they could cooperate with a virtuous human being in this aspect. There is a famous story about the influential *şeyhülislam* Kemālpaşazāde to this effect: when he came to study in Edirne, he was told that the only room available for his accommodation was one possessed by the jinn (*ecinne żabṭ ėdüp*), and that whoever slept there was found dead next morning. He insisted on taking it; while the caretakers of the medrese prepared the utensils for his funeral, the wall of the room was split in two and an old man with a boy appeared in front of him. He greeted Kemālpaşazāde and asked him to educate the boy, and indeed the student taught him the Qur'an till morning. The old man explained that he was a king of the jinn, Asfā'īl; he had been entrusting his son to every student residing in that room, but they invariably oppressed the boy and so he had killed them. Asfā'īl promised the young scholar:

> [N]ow you go; all occult sciences will be revealed to you (*sańa cemīʿ ʿulūm-ı ġarībe ü ʿacīb keşf olup*) and you will become the mufti of both men and jinn (*müfti'ş-ṣaḳaleyn*). The son of the present [sultan] Bayezid, a generous prince named Selim, will conquer Egypt; you will go with him to Egypt, where my brother is king [of the jinn], and you will give fetvas to the jinn with your left hand and to the sons of Adam with your right hand; be the *şeyhülislam* of both men and jinn and do not covet the filth of this world!

Indeed, so it happened.[180] We may perhaps see here a connection with Kemālpaşazāde's lettrist treatise prophesying Selim's conquest of Egypt, which seems to have become a legend in its own right.[181] Kemālpaşazāde's connection with the jinn was famous, as he was said to have issued *fetva*s for both human beings and jinn; for this reason, people were praying for mediation on his grave. Evliya relates that every Friday morning hundreds of epileptic people came to his

[177] Mehmed Şâkir, ed. Koçoğlu, Acâ'ibü'l-mahlûkât *tercümesi*, 73.
[178] Sarıkaya (ed.), *Tercüme-i Acâibü'l-mahlūkat*, 377.
[179] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-saʿāda*, 1: 364; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 331. The same thought is found in Sinan Pasha's compendium: Sinan Pasha, ed. Tulum, *Maârif-nâme*, 490.
[180] Evliya Çelebi, eds Kahraman and Dağlı, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, III. Kitap*, 250–251 (ff. 157a–b).
[181] See Melvin-Koushki, 'Toward a Neopythagorean Historiography'. For a transcription of the text, see Ibn Kemal, ed. Kılıç, 'İbn-i Kemal'in Mısır fethine dair'.

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tomb and were freed from their disease (obviously related to the jinn) after three weeks of visits.[182] A similar story is related about Necmüddîn Ḥasan Efendi (d. 1610) by Cemaleddin Ḥulvī: he is visited by some jinn notables (*meşāhir-i cinniyān*) who consult him on matters of jurisprudence.[183]

The interaction between humanity and the jinn in the field of magic is also evident regarding talismans. Here, for example, is a description of the talismans of Constantinople written in 1497 and circulating for a long time thereafter, described by Stéphane Yérasimos as 'curiously evolutionist and anthropocentric':

> To the question: what is the origin of these talismans, what is their purpose and who created them? the answer is that their true authors are the spirits. Before Adam, when God Almighty created His beloved people, His most beloved people of all, they had occupied this world for 70,000 years and all these talismans and spells remained from them. God Almighty had not revealed His power and wisdom to this race, and He had not even given them perfection, intelligence, and reason, as He did for men. Until His Holiness the Prophet arrived, the spirits, not knowing the essence [of God], did not reach perfection. It is said that at the time of the Prophet Solomon, peace be upon him, the spirits were clearly visible… The command of God was that, by the blessing of the prayer of Muhammad Muṣṭafā, the prophet of the last times of the world, the spirits no longer appear to men. If God had not revealed to man the divine names, the spirits would appear to men all the time.[184]

More usually, however, talismans were used to subdue the jinn, rather than being their own remnants. A large proportion of magic objects and talismans aimed to protect their owner against the jinn, as in a story by Cinānī, when someone tries to protect himself from a jinn by drawing a magic circle and reciting the Qur'an (*ben daḫı döşegimüñ eṭrāfına bir dā'ire çizdüm ve āyeteʾl-kürsī oḳımaġa meşġūl oldum*), before taking an amulet (*ḥamā'il*; later on described as a prayer, *du'ā*) by the imam.[185] In a similar story, narrated by Cemaleddin Ḥulvī (d. 1653), somebody is tormented by the jinn and tries 'all kinds of medicine, remedy, incantations, spells and prayers' before a sheikh teaches him a special name, which he recites and blows upon the name, written on a piece of paper (it is the same sheikh who receives a visit by some 'famous jinn', coming to ask some questions about jurisprudence).[186] The conjuration and subjugation of the jinn was one of

[182] Anonymous, *Risâle-i garībe*, 43; Lâtifī, *Eloge d'Istanbul*, 176; Evliya Çelebi, eds Dankoff, Kahraman, and Dağlı, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, I. Kitap*, 175–176 (f. 107a). On the relationship of the jinn with epilepsy, see Felek, 'Epilepsy as a "Contagious" Disease'.

[183] Ḥulvī, ed. Süer, 'Cemâleddin Hulvî'nin *Lemezât-ı hulviyye*', 580–581.

[184] Yérasimos, *La Fondation de Constantinople*, 92–93.

[185] Cinānī, ed. Ünlü, *Bedâyiü'l-âsâr*, 2: 76–78.

[186] Ḥulvī, ed. Süer, 'Cemâleddin Hulvî'nin *Lemezât-ı hulviyye*', 580–581; cf. ibid., 557–558.

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the most common magical practices in Ottoman times. The greatest part of Firdevsī's *Da'vetnāme*, one of the few detailed Ottoman manuals of magic we know, is dedicated to subduing the jinn through the knowledge of their names, seals, and special phrases. And an early-seventeenth-century Ḫalvetī sheikh warns his followers about the jinn and their connection both to Sufis and to magic, trying to establish the exclusive claim of his own branch to this power:

> All [of the successors of Ṣa'bān, a Kastamonu sheikh and founder of the Ṣa'bāniyya branch] are able to control and subjugate the jinn with the power of the names of God, acts of grace, and sainthood, and not by doing fortune-telling, soothsaying, and other things like this. They used to block the mischief and bad deeds of the jinn that occurred to the race of men.[187]

Thus, the theologically impeccable existence of jinn could be used in any discourse pertaining to magic and supernatural or preternatural events. Still, the association of jinn, demons, and Satan was always a potential obstacle for such endeavours. Although Satan/Iblīs was often considered a fallen angel (the Qur'an is ambiguous, and there are alternative traditions suggesting he was either an angel or a jinn),[188] the boundaries between all these supernatural entities were blurred: everybody says that 'jinn and Satan are of the same tribe', says Evliya,[189] and at a more scholarly level the Bosnian scholar Hasan Kāfī al-Aḳḥiṣārī (d. 1615) asserts that 'Iblis was not one of the Angels, but he was from the Jinni who was associated with the Angels'.[190] Indeed, the jinn were often confused or identified with demons; Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) talks about possession by devils or jinn and 'satanic' or 'diabolic states' (*ḥāl shayṭānī*, *ḥāl Iblīs*), induced by demons who make people believe in miraculous deeds by depraved sheikhs (inaugurating a tradition that sees all jinn as evil).[191] Again, Kāfī al-Aḳḥiṣārī relates a peculiar tradition concerning the jinn and their relation with demons:

> The Prophet stated that Satan runs in human beings as their blood runs in their veins. Allah allows them to take any form they want. Then they whisper to human beings. By Allah's grace, human beings are not capable of seeing them in their original form which is the ugliest and most repulsive. The authentic tradition described their reproduction: they lay eggs. When human beings committed sins, these eggs hatched new Satans. Jinni is a creature like Satan which

[187] Curry, *The Transformation*, 139–140.
[188] See e.g. L. Gardet, s.v. 'Iblīs', *EI*^{2}; Chittick, 'Iblīs and the Jinn'; Yazaki, 'Classes of Beings', 71–74.
[189] Evliya Çelebi, eds Dağlı and Kahraman, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, IV. Kitap*, 336, 339 (ff. 394a, 395b).
[190] Kāfī al-Aḳḥiṣārī, tr. Zein, *Rawdat al-jannat*, 12.
[191] Michot, 'Between Entertainment and Religion', 12–13; cf. Pantić, *Sufism in Ottoman Damascus*, 48.

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> cannot be seen, and like a human being he has a freedom of choice. Thus, he is accountable like a human being.[192]

In his vehement attacks on all sorts of occult sciences, the moralist poet Sünbülzāde Vehbī (d. 1809) warns against conjuring of jinn and demons (*narenciyāt*) with the argument that these creatures are 'enemies of mankind' and associated with Satan:

> How many helpless paupers became crooked because they wished to rule over the jinn! Isn't it dangerous to meddle with monsters and fairies (*dīv ü perī*), the enemies of mankind? Don't invite Satan to your side; don't think that he may become your spiritual servant.[193]

*

In this chapter, I have tried to give a general view of the way Ottomans perceived the world—not so much the visible and tangible part as the invisible and spiritual one. I have traced recurrent ideas about the connection of the supralunary with the sublunary world and the transition from an Aristotelian model of deterministic influence of the celestial movements to a more supernatural model where more spiritual entities, first and foremost Arabic letters, played a cosmic role with significant mystic overtones. The view of the universe as consisting of seven heavens below God's Throne, Stool, Tablet, and Pen did not change, but arguably the way these elements influenced terrestrial and human realities became less tangible and more supernatural. Whereas this is a general trend in the Islamicate world of the late Middle Ages, in the Ottoman world it continued to coexist with the more rational and 'scientific' (i.e. explicable) cosmological model of Aristotle and Ptolemy, as well as with a more 'theological' cosmology where astral influences were minimized in favour of God's will (but also human free will). However, it seems that a lettrist world view became predominant in both scholarly and Sufi circles. Either in the Akbarian or Illuminationist approach, emphasizing emanations, or in a more rationalistic integration of the Arabic letters into the system of homologies and hierarchies of the universe, the belief in the cosmic power of letters was ubiquitous at least until the mid-seventeenth century. Furthermore, this universe was densely inhabited by angels and jinn, who exerted their supernatural powers upon humanity (together with some extraordinary human souls that, according to certain views, had this capability as well). On the other hand, a large proportion of magic techniques aimed precisely at manipulating, one way or another, these supernatural forces in order to achieve human goals.

I have to stress that in this chapter, perhaps more than in any other, I have presented a static image. This is because these different views, conflicting as they

[192] Kāfī al-Aḳḥiṣārī, tr. Zein, *Rawdat al-jannat*, 12. Chinese stories about demons are translated through reference to jinn by Ḫeṭā'ī, ed. Afšār, *Ḫeṭāy-nāma*, 134.

[193] Sünbülzâde Vehbī, *Lutfiyye-i Vehbī*, 66–67 (vv. 144–148).

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may be, coexisted at least throughout the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries; in the course of this book, it will become evident that they could coexist even in the same person (Kâtib Çelebi being the most impressive example)—which raises the question of whether they were really an object of engagement or part of the *adab* tradition: that is, etiquette and knowledge fit for a learned conversation. Furthermore, I have presented a view predominantly belonging to scholars, mystics, and other learned members of an intellectual elite: it is much more difficult to trace the views of the uneducated common folk (the reader may notice an exception in the beliefs about the jinn). We may assume, perhaps, that most of them were following the mystic views of Sufi sheikhs. It is important, however, to note that (as Carlo Ginzburg showed very well, and as we will see further in Chapter 6) throughout history these crowds were far from being ignorant people, indifferent to the world and incapable of building up their own world views, cosmic or social. Ottoman society should be considered no exception to this.

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2
Breaking the Order of Things

In the previous chapter, I surveyed the supernatural context that an Ottoman believed to exist. All the entities and influences in this context were a regular presence, be it felt or invisible for man. However, man lives within nature: in this context, within the regularity of things that repeat themselves in a predictable way. Celestial movements influence human fates, according to established rules; angels guard people, or keep records of their deeds, without being seen; a mystic structure of the universe is the object of various forms of revelation that give to the initiate a glimpse of God's plan. However, it is the rupture of these regularities that marks the appearance of the supernatural: it is through this rupture, through the extraordinary, the miraculous, and the wondrous that one suddenly and instantly feels that there is an invisible sphere outside or above (or within) the tangible reality. So, this chapter will deal with these ruptures: miracles, prophetic dreams, appearances of the dead—whatever breaks the order of nature and shows the presence of the supernatural to humanity, individually or collectively.

Saints, Prophets, and Sheikhs: Miracles and Their Limitations

If we wish to find an analogue to Aquinas' conceptualization of the supernatural, we will see a strikingly similar notion in his contemporary, al-Ghazālī. The division of universal reality into nature, which is explicable and understandable, and the supernatural, inexplicable and inaccessible to human minds, is a notion that, in the Western world, dates from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (although we may see it in the context of the much longer transition from immanence to transcendence), when scholars such as Peter Lombard and Thomas Aquinas juxtaposed what happened naturally or 'in the order of natural causes' with what happened beyond nature, the cause of which was 'the most unknown cause', God's will. It was the need to recognize miracles (through the canonization process) that led to the rise of the term 'supernatural' as the field of causes producing the miraculous.[1] In the Islamic world of the same period, what Aquinas defined as 'nature' would be termed the 'ordinary course of things' or 'custom' (*ʿāda*), with *khāriqu l-ʿāda* or 'what tears the custom' (of God) denoting miraculous acts. Such

[1] Bartlett, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, 3–17.

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cases contradicted the usual course of things or, in al-Ghazālī's philosophy, the 'divine habit' (*ʿāda ilahiyya*, *ʿādet-i ilahiye*), the consistency of God's actions creating a habitual, but not necessary, relationship between cause and effect.[2] Moreover, just as Aquinas clarified that the distinction between nature and the miraculous loses its meaning at God's level, since to Him everything is natural,[3] so too did al-Ghazālī clarify that miracles do not tear God's custom, but that of His creatures.[4] As for miracles, God sometimes bestows upon certain individuals the grace of presenting them with phenomena that are in contradiction with the usual course of events; either on prophets in order to demonstrate their sincerity and the truth of their prophetic mission, or on saints as a personal distinction, a proof of His favour. The miracles of the first category are called *muʿjiza* (*muʿcize* in Ottoman Turkish), while those of the second category are known as *karāma*—what Ottoman or modern Turkish refers to as *kerāmet*.[5]

How have these notions evolved in time throughout the development of Ottoman culture? Certainly, the 'classical' meanings survived and the term *ḫāriḳ-i ʿāde*, what breaks God's custom, continued to be used for supernatural events: that is, miracles.[6] However, as early as the late sixteenth century, the historian and poet Mustafa ʿĀlī (d. 1600) repeatedly uses *ḫāriḳ-i ʿāde* to denote extraordinary, but humanly possible deeds (e.g. of acrobats climbing on the Atmeydanı obelisk).[7] In the late seventeenth century, Evliya Çelebi talks of the natural (*ʿadet Allāh*; also 'predestinated', *takdīr olunmuşdur*) course of the Nile, as opposed to its artificial cutting by the Prophet Idris; although the latter is termed a miracle (*muʿcize*), obviously the overtones are distinctly 'de-supernaturalized'.[8] A few decades later, we see the same ambiguity in İsmāʿīl Ḥaḳḳı Bursevī's (d. 1725) work, when he compares the *ḫāriḳ al-ʿāde* way Jesus and a pre-Islamic sorcerer were born (both births have a rational explanation, although that of Jesus involves the supernatural through the Holy Spirit, *rūḥ al-ḳūds*).[9] An early-eighteenth-century collection of saints' lives occasionally uses the word *kerāmet* for a pious deed, such as building a dervish lodge,[10] and the term *kerāmet-muʿtād*, 'accustomed to miracles', is used with a completely 'secular' meaning for a young magician in Giritli ʿAzīz Efendi's (d. 1798) novel *Muḫayyelāt* (1796).[11] It seems that by the beginning of the nineteenth century, the term had come to signify simply the marvellous or

[2] See Griffel, *Al-Ghazālī's Philosophical Theology*, 147ff. and esp. 154–156; 194ff.; cf. McGinnis, 'Occasionalism, Natural Causation'.

[3] Bartlett, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, 27.

[4] Griffel, *Al-Ghazālī's Philosophical Theology*, 198, 201ff.

[5] See e.g. Gril, 'Les Fondements scripturaires'.

[6] See e.g. İsmâil Hakkı Bursevî, eds Muslu and Namlı, *Tamâmü'l-feyz*, 96.

[7] ʿÂlī, ed. Öztekin, *Câmi'u'l-buhūr*, 200–201 (vv. 1560, 1566, 1580).

[8] [Evliya Çelebi], eds Dankoff, Tezcan, and Sheridan, *Ottoman Explorations of the Nile*, 110–111, 135; Evliya Çelebi, eds Kahraman, Dağlı, and Dankoff, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, X. Kitap*, 335.

[9] İsmâil Hakkı Bursevî, eds Muslu and Namlı, *Tamâmü'l-feyz*, 118.

[10] Enfî Hasan Hulûs Halvetî, eds Tatcı and Yıldız, *Tezkiretü'l-müteahhirîn*, 140.

[11] ʿAzīz Efendi, *Muhayyelât*, ed. Alacatlı, 114; ed. Duymaz, 233.

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extraordinary: thus, Şānīzāde Mehmed Atā'ullah Efendi (d. 1826), historian and physician, uses it to refer to the achievements and buildings of the ancient Egyptians—that is, in the sense of *'ajā'ib* as used by Qazwīnī (see below, Chapter 5), without any supernatural or metaphysical implications.[12]

Furthermore, it is not only by God's act that such a 'tearing of the custom' could occur. Scepticism vis-à-vis miracles appeared early in Islam; false prophets or sorcerers might produce acts resembling miracles, thanks either to tricks or (more seriously) to their knowledge of natural processes. Al-Ghazālī accepts that these acts could be comparable to the original miracles, and he endeavours to argue that prophetic miracles are nothing but wonders: that is, strange events that, once all the factors are considered, could be explained as the effects of natural causes.[13] The latter might be magic, as proposed by Prince Ḳorḳūd (d. 1513), son of Bayezid II,[14] the secret correspondences of the elements and the stars, the power of letters and numbers, as seen above, or the extraordinary power of some souls, as put forward by Ibn Khaldūn.[15] All the acts that tear the custom of things have their causes in the invisible world, the *ghayb* (see above, Chapter 1). Kâtib Çelebi specifies that astrology may offer knowledge 'of what will be, in terms of what God brings about from [His] custom (*mā ajrā al-ḥaqq min al-'āda*)'; according to the Ḫalvetī sheikh 'Ömer Fu'ādī (d. 1636), both acts of grace (i.e. miracles) and magic can break the divine custom and be *ḫāriḳ-i 'āde*; and almost a century later the Damascene Sufi Abdelghanī al-Nābulusī (d. 1731) enumerates the four types of science upon which prophecies are based: divine revelation and mystical illumination, both restricted to prophets and saints, and astronomy and astrology, accessible to all.[16] In the same vein, al-Maqdisī al-Ḫanbalī, an Egyptian (probably) author of two treatises on comets in the last decade of the seventeenth century, stresses that only God has the power to break customs, trying to justify the fact that certain celestial phenomena may predict future events (as signs from God).[17]

These 'faithful dissidents', on the one hand, desired to eliminate the possibility that anyone other than a prophet could perform miracles—in other words, that there were *karāma* miracles—and, on the other hand, feared that an abundance of miracles would compromise the very notion of the miraculous, making it appear almost ordinary. Debates about *karāma* and saintliness, or rather the existence of 'friends of God' (*walāya*, *wālī*), were held as early as the ninth and tenth centuries: those who argued in favour of these miracles saw them as evidence of God's favour bestowed upon his 'friends' and maintained that the possibility of

[12] Şanizâde Mehmed, ed. Yılmazer, *Şânî-zâde târîhi*, 18.
[13] Griffel, *Al-Ghazālī's Philosophical Theology*, 157, 195–196; Brown, 'Faithful Dissenters'.
[14] Al-Tikriti, 'Şehzade Korkud (ca 1468–1513)', 230–231.
[15] *EI*[2], s.v. 'Sīmiyâ' (D. B. MacDonald [T. Fahd]); Asatryan, 'Ibn Khaldun on Magic and the Occult'.
[16] Kâtip Çelebi, eds Yaltkaya and Bilge, *Keşf-el-zunun*, 1: 22; cf. *Keşfü'z-zunûn*, tr. Balcı, 1: 70; Curry, *The Transformation*, 211; Akkach, *'Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulusi*, 58.
[17] Saliba, 'Cometary Theory and Prognostications', 130.

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breaking customary norms affirmed God's omnipotence. In contrast, their opponents referred to God in terms of justice and reason, and relied on a kind of scriptural piety. It was during the Ayyubid, Mamluk, and Ottoman periods that belief in the miracles of saints became commonplace, a topos in the biographical literature of saints, Sufis, and sometimes scholars. Even though initially accounts of such miracles were accompanied by chains of witnesses and had to meet specific criteria, by the end of the Middle Ages, descriptions of miracles began to be accepted prima facie, as Sufi orders multiplied and gained a dominant position in society. Undoubtedly, the expansion of Sufism was extensively based on the performance of miraculous acts.[18]

Even though Sufi theory always stressed that the saint should be cautious in performing miracles because he could well be the victim of an illusion,[19] post-medieval Sufism was increasingly founded on the miracles performed not only by the leader of each *ṭarīqa*, but also by his successors. Biographies of Ottoman sheikhs abound in miracles, such as knowledge of the future, communication with the dead, and control of nature, from early-fourteenth-century specimens to the urban collections of the early eighteenth century[20]—some of them (mostly of pre-Ottoman saints) coming, it seems, from the Christian tradition (walking on water, multiplying loaves of bread, and so on), others stemming from central Asia (levitation, instant teleportation or materialization in different places at once).[21] From the impressive transformations and other miraculous deeds of early Bektaşī dervishes to the Ḫalvetī sheikh who, upon Bayezid II's request for help, entered the unseen world to fight against his Karamanid peers,[22] Ottoman saints were practising and advertising in all possible ways their communication with the unseen world and their ability to perform miracles that 'tore the custom': a late-seventeenth-century sheikh of mediocre stature could claim 'a lot of strange things, spiritual revelations, [miracles] that broke the custom, apparent revelations' (*'acāyibāt, keşf-i ma'nevīyye, ḫavāriḳ-i 'ādāt, keşf-i ṣūrīyye*);[23] an early-seventeenth-century Ḫalvetī sheikh mentions a predecessor's capacity for divination due to his 'knowing the Preserved Tablet' (*levhe 'ālim*).[24] We shall further see the

[18] On the notion of sainthood in Ottoman Sufism, see Allen, 'Self, Space, Society'. For a comparative typology of Islamic miracles, see Netton, *Islam, Christianity and the Realms*.

[19] *EI*^{2}, s.v. 'Karâma' (L. Gardet).

[20] The examples are abundant, as practically every Sufi biography contains some miracles. See e.g. İnalcık, 'Dervish and Sultan'; Asa, 'Bir 16. yüzyıl portresi'; Şahin, 'Seyyid Ali Sultan Velâyetnamesi'ndeki'; Ḫulvī, ed. Süer, 'Cemâleddin Hulvî'nin *Lemezât-ı hulviyye*'; Clayer, 'Les Miracles des cheikhs'; Niyazioğlu, *Dreams and Lives*; Allen, 'Self, Space, Society'; Pantić, *Sufism in Ottoman Damascus*. Ocak, *Kültür tarihi kaynağı*, gives a detailed inventory of miraculous *leitmotif*s in these biographies. For a highly interesting specimen of early-eighteenth-century urban biographies, see Enfî Hasan Hulûs Halvetî, '*Tezkiretü'l-Müteahhirîn*'.

[21] Balivet, 'Miracles christiques'; Zarcone, 'Le Brame du saint'.

[22] Curry, *The Transformation*, 69–70.

[23] Enfî Hasan Hulûs Halvetî, eds Tatcı and Yıldız, *Tezkiretü'l-müteahhirîn*, 66.

[24] Curry, *The Transformation*, 96.

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abundance of stories of 'spiritual journeys' and appearances of the dead throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The presence of miracle-working saints, who were not necessarily Sufi sheikhs, was even more pronounced in rural environments until as late as the end of the nineteenth century.[25] In Derin Terzioğlu's words, 'the everyday life of mystics' was made 'more enchanted than ever', as they contended with the ulema (and Ḳāḍızādeli preachers) for social power through privileged access to the supernatural.[26]

However, voices of scepticism like the famous Ibn Ḥajar al-Asqalanī (d. 1449) of Cairo, for example, continued to exist: he feared that the daily occurrence of miracles in his time would create confusion, with the disruptions of the ordinary course of events becoming the new ordinary course of events.[27] The roughly contemporaneous author of the famous cosmography *Dürr-i meknūn* is equally sceptical towards folk traditions of saints' miraculous deeds, such as those frequently reported in the early Ottoman *menāḳıbnāme*s. When he refers to ghouls, as we saw in Chapter 1, he goes on asserting that:

> Some have seen [ghouls] in the form of a hairy dervish (*saçlı derviş*) who rides stags and wanders in the mountains. When he is seen outside of the road, he disappears. The stupid, the ignorant, the light-headed see him and make up stories that a saint rides a stag in the mountain. Most of them are irreligious (*bī-namāz*) dervishes (*ışık*) or wanderers (*ġurbetler*) who go with a stag from door to door asking for alms, saying that the stag is the saint's horse… Hey stupid, ignorant ones! What kind of story is this, saints who ride a stag and wander in the mountains! This is the job of jinn and ghouls. Or [what about] those who arrive at *ayazma* sources, hoping to get some cure? Wherever there is a source or a well, some jinn will come and settle. People come and… ask for their wishes [to be fulfilled]. What kind of miracle (*kerāmet*) can be in water? They say there are saints here: the jinn are the saints of the ignorant…[28]

This scepticism might even lead to a diluted use of the terms concerning miracles. İdris-i Bitlisī's account of Şeyh Bedreddīn's revolt, in the early sixteenth century, begins with a long introduction on how 'excessive knowledge and wisdom can be satanic, and the miracles or extraordinary deeds resulting from it are a trick and deceit of Satan' (*andan ẓuhūr ėden kerāmet ve ḫavārıḳ-ı 'ādet bütün iblīs-i merdūduñ mekr ü istidrācıdır*) to show that Bedreddīn might well have been an

[25] See Grehan, *Twilight of the Saints*, 62–84.

[26] Terzioğlu, 'Man in the Image of God', 165; cf. Sariyannis, 'The Limits of Going Global'.

[27] Brown, 'Faithful Dissenters', 149ff; cf. Fierro, 'The Polemic about the *karāmāt al-awliyā*"'; Geoffroy, 'Attitudes contrastées'.

[28] Yazıcıoğlu [Anonymous], *Dürr-i meknūn*, ed. Kaptein, 281–285=534–537; ed. Demirtaş, 201–203; ed. Sakaoğlu, 110–111; ed. Mattei, 144–145. The various manuscripts vary enormously in this passage (*ġurbetler*, for one, is *kurbet çingeneler* in Sakaoğlu's ms.). Here I mainly follow Demirtaş's edition.

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erudite scholar, but this does not mean that he should be considered innocent.[29] A similar process of 'desacralization' may be observed in the terminology denoting miracles, which as we saw was widened to include extraordinary deeds and, especially, occult arts. Thus, alchemy 'was a miracle (*mu'jiza*) of Moses, which he taught to Qārūn', and similarly geomancy was a miracle of Idrīs, according to Ahmed Taşköprüzāde's (d. 1561) encyclopedia;[30] and as early as the early sixteenth century, a magician could use his talismanic knowledge to 'be granted a miracle' (*bir kerāmete vāṣıl oldum*): namely, a magical way to find treasures.[31]

Thus, we can assume that the line between miracle-working and occult arts was blurred both in the theory and in the practice of several Sufi sheikhs (as, one may argue, it can be blurred from an anthropological—*etic*—point of view).[32] This is why an early-seventeenth-century Ḫalvetī source takes care to distinguish between real miracles and geomancy or astrology:

> But those among the other sheikhs, who do not act with the power of esoteric knowledge and the specific points of the names of God, or with the specific points of the Qur'an, if they engage in fortune-telling and soothsaying, or draw lots, or gather the jinn [through a seance] (*cin derüp*), or look into water, or make jinn speak, or place a *vefḳ*-charm [a magic square] without perfecting [it], or are not among the people [who know] *vefḳ*, or [if they] act through astrology or sand oracles, they are corrupt, rotten, and trouble-making liars! Let their statements never be believed and their actions never followed.[33]

The main point of the Sufis was that the only criterion that could be used to distinguish real miraculous deeds from magic or occult arts was the quality of the practitioner—that is, the *baraka* or grace:[34]

> [b]ecause an action that is extraordinary appears and manifests [itself] also from a sorcerer, or the people of *istidrāc*, or someone other than a saint. It is on account of this that there is no difference in the apparent sense between an act of grace and magic. The two of them are both actions contrary to customary [occurrence]. But when [the difference] is perceived, it is perceived from the sign and the state of the person who manifests [it]. Meaning, if an action or state contrary to customary [occurrence] were to appear from the prophets, it would be a miracle. If the essence of the descriptions which were mentioned appears

[29] Gölpınarlı and Sungurbey, *Simavna Kadısıoğlu Şeyh Bedreddin*, p. XIX.
[30] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-sa'āda*, 1: 341, 360; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 310, 327.
[31] Firdevsī, ed. Büyükkarcı, *Firdevsī-i Ṭavīl and His Da'vet-nāme*, 175.
[32] Cf. Pantić, *Sufism in Ottoman Damascus*, 46–51, 186–188.
[33] Curry, *The Transformation*, 140.
[34] Cf. Pantić, *Sufism in Ottoman Damascus*, 51–53.

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> from a saint in whom are found these three signs,[35] then it is [the power of] sainthood and an act of grace. But if the essence of the descriptions were to appear from people in whom are not found the three signs, or who are people of carnal passions and innovation, or who are not among the Sunni sect, it is not sainthood or an act of grace. Rather, it is magic, or it appears through the power of cleverness, shrewdness, or a desire to make a living (*ʿaḳl-ı maʿāş*) … May God most High protect the community of Muhammad from rabble-rousers, tricksters, frauds and the evil of the evildoers![36]

This confusion posed problems not only for Sufi sheikhs, but also for religious scholars. What might be said of traditions connecting some occult arts with miracles, such as the hadith attributing knowledge of geomancy (*raml*) to the Prophet Idrīs? The answer given by Taşköprüzāde was that the prophet may have learnt the art from an angel, but it was strictly for him to practise, making it an extraordinary deed that 'tore the custom', not an art through which every person could see into the future:

> This science [i.e. geomancy] was Idrīs' miracle (*muʿjiza*). The external meaning of the *ḥadīth* is that it is possible to examine sand when it comes to some matters. But that is not the case. If the miracle had made it possible for humans, then there would not be a difference between the miracle and the art [of geomancy]. And then the prophet would not be different from anyone else. Yet, it is possible for a saint to bring about (*ẓuhūr*, to make appear) extraordinary things (*ḫawāriq li-l-ʿādāt*).[37]

As we shall see, Taşköprüzāde was far from rejecting all forms of divination on principle. However, he is always careful to stress that only saintly persons had the power of performing deeds that could not be explained by natural processes. Speaking of the 'science of making disappear' (*ʿilm al-iḫfā'*), for instance, he is very doubtful of its possibility through 'invocations and spells' (*daʿwāt wa-ʿazā'im*), because this is impossible 'except by saints (*wilāya*), by way of tearing the custom of nature (*bi-ṭarīq ḫarq al-ʿāda*), not by applying oneself directly to the occasions along which that custom [of nature] is organized (*lā bi-mubāshara*^{t} *asbāb yatarattab ʿalayhā dhālika al-ʿāda*)'. Extraordinary feats that break this custom, he explains, are rare but cannot be denied, 'especially on the part of the saints of this *umma*'.[38]

[35] These signs are: that a true saint does everything for God alone; that he accepts any misfortune without complaint; and that he never mixes with worldly affairs.

[36] Curry, *The Transformation*, 211.

[37] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-saʿāda*, 1: 360; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 327.

[38] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-saʿāda*, 1: 368; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 337.

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Summarizing these views, Kâtib Çelebi admits that, as far as appearances are concerned, neither *muʿcize* nor *kerāme* can be distinguished from *siḥr*, sorcery. As for the differences between the two, they are to be found only in the person from whom a miracle emanates:

> Breaking the natural order is a *muʿcize* if coming from somebody shown to be a prophet, and a *kerāme* when coming from a faithful saint… But it is sorcery, or a sinner's gradual luring towards perdition (*istidrāc*), when such things do not come from God, when the aim involves worldly issues and there is no sincerity.

A miracle, he states, is an extraordinary act which is beyond the usual abilities of people, like knowledge of hidden things or omnipresence; moreover, there is also intuition (*ferāset*), through which a sage can discern unseen realities in an extraordinary manner, similar to that of miracles.[39] Kâtib Çelebi thus presents himself as much more receptive to what we may call 'natural magic' than Taşköprüzāde. It is interesting to see his own version of the science of disappearing. After repeating the account of his predecessor, who had denied its possibility outside the realm of miracle and had moreover added that 'we have not seen it happen, nor have we seen anyone do it', he adds:

> I say: It being a science, in terms of it being a branch of magic, not in terms of [it being] a grace from God, there is no reason for thinking that it is most likely impossible. For, by way of magic, it is possible! There is no doubt in it. Indeed, by way of invocation and [the use of] spells it is also possible, as the people who practise it maintain. And not seeing something does not mean that it does not occur.[40]

The confusion between miracle and magic was not Kâtib Çelebi's invention: the power of the prophets is akin (at least in its effects) to that of soothsayers in al-Suhrawardī's work,[41] and an unknown Arabic treatise on the two angels who taught magic to humanity, translated towards the mid-eighteenth century by a certain Ibrāhīm al-Ḳurrā, argues that 'the miracle (*muʿcize*) coming from the Prophet's hands breaks the custom (*ḫāriḳ-i ʿāde uṭlāḳ olunur*), and so magic coming from an infidel's hands also breaks the custom'.[42] In Ottoman times, the same *Dürr-i meknūn* that was so vehemently against the miracles of the rural saints has a story about Ibn Sina (a regular hero of folk stories, which present him as a

[39] Kâtip Çelebi, ed. Gökyay, *Kâtip Çelebi'den seçmeler*, 150–151.
[40] Kâtip Çelebi, eds Yaltkaya and Bilge, *Keşf-el-zunun*, 1: 716; cf. *Keşfü'z-zunûn*, tr. Balcı, 2: 594.
[41] van Lit, *The World of Image*, 65.
[42] Ibrāhīm al-Ḳurrā, ed. Koşik, 'Hârût ve Mârût hakkında', 150 (ff. 13b–14a). Cf. Winter, *Society and Religion*, 188 on al-Shaʿrānī (d. 1565) quoting a fourteenth-century Sufi on the difference between miracle and sorcery: 'the latter is performed by heretics and infidels'.

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master of magic and especially *simyā*) as possessing miraculous power or *kerāmet* (*Allāhu ta'ālā ḥażretleri şol kerāmet kim ādeme vėrmişdür, hiçbir kimseye vėrmedi*): he visits a poor woman's house and puts a grape in a hole at the wall (and recites a spell, *bir efsūn oḳudu*, in some versions); she can draw as much food as she likes, until she gets curious and uncovers the hole.[43] A master of talismanic magic speaks the same way in Uzun Firdevsī's *Da'vet-nāme*: 'And I was granted such a miracle (*ve bir kerāmete vāṣıl oldum ki*) that now I can find a treasure, wherever it is hidden.'[44] And indeed, magic would be the first tool of false prophets. We read in an early cosmography that Musaylima al-Kadhdhāb, the Prophet's opponent, 'read enchantments and knew tricks and the science of sorcery' (*efsūnlar oḳurdı ve ḥīle ve nārincāt 'ilmin ṭaleb ederdi*), whereas other false prophets, including Mani, are designated as soothsayers (*kāhin*).[45]

During the Ottoman era, the debate on the possibility of Sufi miracles saw a lively resurgence in the seventeenth century with the movement known as the Ḳāḍızādelis. The conflict between these preachers, followed by large crowds of artisans and merchants, and the Ḫalvetī dervishes has been extensively studied. Following the sermons of Ḳāḍızāde Mehmed Efendi (d. 1635), Üstüvanī Mehmed (d. 1661), and Vanī Mehmed (d. 1685), this movement attacked Sufi orders, particularly the Ḫalvetīs (and their practices of *ẕikr*, which involved rituals of invoking God through dance and music), and rejected all kinds of innovations. The influence of this often-called 'fundamentalist' movement on Ottoman social, political, and intellectual life was significant, although contemporary research, blooming from the late twentieth century onwards, has not yet reached a consensus on its ideological and political character. Its followers have been variously characterized as a right-wing mob, as dispossessed preachers, as learned Salafists, as merchant-driven, Protestant-like zealots, as agents of confessionalization or of a state-centric tendency towards uniformity. What is certain is that they dominated Ottoman intellectual and political life for at least a large part of the seventeenth century, and even beyond (as their influence seems to have outlasted the actual movement); they were able to mobilize large urban crowds, but they also met with tough resistance from equally populous niches of opposition, mainly around Ḫalvetī or Mevlevī sheikhs.[46] Even though the *senso strictu* Kadızadeli preachers were exerting their direct influence in the palace only for short intervals, there is plenty of evidence suggesting that their ideas dominated large

[43] Yazıcıoğlu [Anonymous], *Dürr-i meknūn*, ed. Kaptein, 151=427–428; ed. Demirtaş, 136–137; ed. Sakaoğlu, 58–59; ed. Mattei, 81–82. On Ibn Sina as a hero of such stories, see bibliography in ibid., ed. Kaptein, 151–152.

[44] Firdevsī, ed. Büyükkarcı, *Firdevsī-i Ṭavīl and His Da'vet-nāme*, 175.

[45] Sarıkaya (ed.), *Tercüme-i Acâibü'l-mahlūkat*, 340, 341–347.

[46] Çavuşoğlu, 'The Ḳāḍīzādeli Movement'; Zilfi, 'The Kadizadelis'; Sariyannis, 'The Kadızadeli Movement'; Evstatiev, 'The Qadizadeli (Kadizadeli) Movement'; Sheikh, *Ottoman Puritanism*. Cf. also on other contexts Allen, 'Self, Space, Society', 298–322; Gürbüzel, *Taming the Messiah*; Terzioğlu, 'Confessional Ambiguity', 597–600; Shafir, *Order and Disorder*, 152–175.

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segments of the Ottoman population, elite and non-elite (the term 'Kadizadeli' proper is attested in Sarajevo as late as in the late eighteenth century).[47]

For our purpose, it suffices to note that although the ideological differences between the two adversaries were not as pronounced as previously believed, one of the points that produced the most acute debates was precisely the question of holiness, specifically the legitimacy of visiting the tombs of saints and Sufi sheikhs.[48] According to the explanation given by Kâtib Çelebi, opposition to this practice began with its association with polytheism: everyone can approach God through their individual prayers without resorting to intermediaries such as deceased saints (note the similarity with the Lutheran reaction).[49] Here, it seems that we can trace the influence of Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328), the famous Egyptian jurist (although this influence may have been overestimated in relation to the fundamentalist tendencies of the Ḳāḍızādeli movement). Although such traditions were often associated with illustrious figures, from Aristotle to famous sheikhs, the Ḳāḍızādeli reaction in this topic seems to have targeted mainly common people who frequented these tombs. Together with the practice of visitation of tombs, the Ḳāḍızādelis also attacked the Sufi claims to miracle-working. In this, again, they may have been influenced by Ibn Taymiyya, who had attributed all sorts of miraculous, extraordinary deeds by 'innovators' (Sufis) to legerdemain, tricks, or use of natural properties of herbs, etc. In a sense, he denied the miraculous and magical in contemporary times, and populated the universe with demonic forces instead, somehow paving the way to a Christian-like association of magic with the Devil.[50] As Gottfried Hagen suggests, the Ḳāḍızādeli 'catechetic approach negates the mediator with the transcendent, and leaves the individual believer alone with God at the reckoning'.[51] Mehmed Birgivī (d. 1573), the forerunner and mentor of the Ḳāḍızādelis, imagines a sheikh claiming that Sufis can

> reach God by the resolve of [their] Sufi master, and the sciences will be unveiled…And if we were wrong, these exalted states would not overcome us, and sublime miracles [would not happen], like seeing [heavenly] lights and having visions of great prophets.

[47] Filan, 'Life in Sarajevo', 335–337. On their influence, see also Ekin Tuşalp Atiyas' chapter in Sariyannis, *A History of Ottoman Political Thought*, 233–278; also the remarks by Shafir, *Order and Disorder*, 16–18, 154–155.

[48] On the cult of saints, see e.g. Grehan, *Twilight of the Saints*, 86–89 and more generally 85–115 on the significance of their tombs.

[49] In contrast, one cannot help remembering the Catholicist conception of sainthood when al-Nābulusī claims that saints, together with the ulema (meaning Sufi-ulema), and other righteous ones (*ṣāliḥūn*), intercede along with Muhammad for all Muslims in life as well as during the crossing of the Sirat al-Mustaqim: Pantić, 'Probing Hidden Knowledge'.

[50] Cf. Michot, 'Between Entertainment and Religion', 8–10, 14. On the relationship of the movement to Ibn Taymiyya, see Sheikh, *Ottoman Puritanism*.

[51] Hagen, 'Pietas Ottomanica', 38.

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Birgivī's answer is adamantly negative, stating that such sheikhs have reached union with Satan rather than God.[52] Later followers of this trend, those who joined the Ḳāḍızādeli movement, rejected Sufis' access to the supernatural wholesale, at least unless they had reliable credentials of purity, orthodoxy, and orthopraxy. Ahmed Akhisarī (d. 1632), for instance, explains:

> [I]t is probable that there will occur to [a person] what seems to be the unveiling of some things or [that he witnesses] unnatural phenomena (*ḫāriq al-ʿāda*) by virtue of his spiritual exercise or the deception of Satan…Thus he may believe that it is [an indication of] sainthood and a miracle, when in fact it is a trap and self-deceit; it is anything but sainthood and a true miracle…[53]

This argument may well be targeting antinomian dervishes, and one may perhaps attribute to these ideas some individual cases where miracle-working Sufis were put to the test.[54] However, the Ḳāḍızādelis' main opponents were the fairly mainstream Ḫalvetī and Mevlevī sheikhs, who, moreover, seem to have gradually come to share some of their views on miracle-working, as will be shown below (see Fig. 2.1). As I have argued elsewhere, this polemic ultimately pushed (to a degree, and in urban more than in rural environments) the miraculous and the supernatural away from everyday life into a distant past or a very rare and extraordinary appearance.[55] This debate seems to have lasted until the end of the eighteenth century. Faẓlīzāde ʿAlī, a very conservative thinker, warned his readers in 1740 about the possibility of confusion between a Sufi miracle and an act of magic (*siḥr*) or satanic deception (*istidrāc*), while in a political advice book composed in 1791, the otherwise mysterious Abdullah Halim Efendi states that one should not view saints' miracles (*kerāmet-i evliyā*) as more miraculous than those of prophets (*muʿcizātdan ziyāde ḫārikülāde göstermemek*).[56]

On the other hand, it can be assumed that when the Ḫalvetī sheikhs, such as Kadızāde Mehmed Efendi's main opponent Abdülmecid Sivasī Efendi (d. 1639), defended these practices, they also wanted to defend their authority and dominant position in religious life. Impressive miracles defying the laws of nature continued to be recorded throughout the seventeenth century.[57] However, Ḫalvetī sheikhs had already begun stressing the need to conceal miraculous powers by

[52] Ivanyi, *Virtue, Piety and the Law*, 126, 129; still, Birgivī did not reject Sufi miracles in general (see ibid., 128).

[53] Quoted in Sheikh, *Ottoman Puritanism*, 73–76. It has been argued that a similar rejection of mysticism and its visions had also occurred in eighth- to tenth-century Byzantium: Krausmüller, 'Nobody Has Ever Seen God'.

[54] Pantić, *Sufism in Ottoman Damascus*, 127.

[55] Sariyannis, 'The Limits of Going Global'; Sariyannis, 'Ottoman Occultism', 40–43; cf. also Tezcan, 'A Populist Reformation'.

[56] Kurz, *Ways to Heaven*, 139; Abdullah Halim Efendi, ed. Şahin, '*Seyfü'l-izzet*', 187.

[57] See e.g. Gürbüzel, *Taming the Sultan*, 33; Grehan, *Twilight of the Saints*, 73–74.

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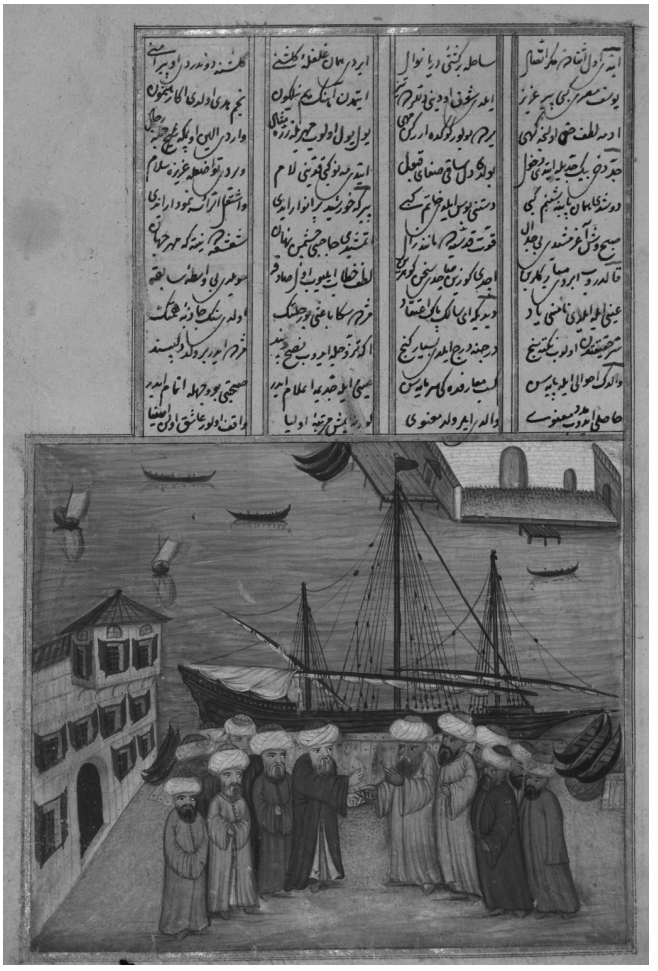


Fig. 2.1 Şeyh Gülşeni setting out with his disciples on a voyage. ʿAṭāʾī, *Ḫamse*, Walters Art Museum, W.666, f. 41a (1721).

the late sixteenth century.[58] As we shall see, a story has a dead weasel resurrected by a holy fool, to whom no less than Sivasī Efendi had referred the owner of the dead animal, explaining that the ulema would not accept a miracle by him but would allow it from a fool.[59]

Eventually, it seems that to a certain degree even Sufis abandoned the claim for miraculous deeds. First of all, perhaps, the Naḳşibendīs, the fraternity that was closest to the Ḳāḍızādelis: whereas they did not deny the possibility of communicating with the world of the *ghayb*, they stressed that a saint's true function was

[58] Curry, *The Transformation*, 138–139 and elsewhere.
[59] Enfî Hasan Hulûs Halvetî, eds Tatcı and Yıldız, *Tezkiretü'l-müteahhirîn*, 134.

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observing the law and attracting people to the right path, rather than working miracles.[60] By the late seventeenth century, it is very often possible to see even Ḫalvetīs declaring their preference for the 'real' miracles of visionary knowledge, rather than miraculous deeds that 'break the custom of things' and are useful only to impress the common people. So a late-seventeenth-century sheikh 'did not like miracles that break the custom' (*iẓhār-ı ḫarḳ-ı ʿāde kerāmeti sevmez idi*), and Melāmī-Bayrāmī sheikhs also had an unfavourable attitude towards miracles and the demonstration of extraordinary powers as early as the mid-seventeenth century.[61] A similar approach can be seen in the Celveti sheikh İsmāʿīl Ḥaḳḳı Bursevī's (d. 1725) biography of his master, Atpazarī Seyyīd ʿOṣmān Faẓlī (d. 1691), whose miracles are mostly unimpressive good deeds and insights:

> Those who seek miracles and extraordinary deeds (*ṭālibūn li-l-karāma wa māhuwa ḥāriḳ li-l-ʿāda*) do so because they are strongly tied to this world, i.e. the world of bodies (*ʿālam al-ajsām*). But above the world of bodies, there is the world of divinity (*ʿālam al-ilāh*)… Mystics and those who know God do not take notice of things of the rank of the manifestation of extraordinary states, which belong to the cosmic world (*aẓhār al-ḥawāriḳ al-mutaʿalliḳa bi-ʿālam al-kawn*); because the difference between [such] ranks comes only with the knowledge of God.[62]

Using a distinction that goes back to Ibn ʿArabī and other medieval mystics, Bursevī explains that miracles of knowledge (*al-karamāt al-ʿilmīyya*) are superior to miracles of this cosmic world (*al-karamāt al-kawnīyya*) because the former are related to the essence and names of God, whereas no good comes from the latter:[63]

> People of miracles of knowledge are more virtuous than those of cosmic miracles; for the former open the gates of all truths pertaining to God's acts, properties, and essence… As for cosmic miracles, they are just revelations pertaining to the truths of the creation, because a follower of this path (unless he receives assistance by the eternal favour to reach the degree of Unity) stays in any repetition (*ṭavr*) and thus becomes a man of *barzaḫ*: for instance, he reaches the world of elements (*ʿālam al-ʿanāṣir*) but cannot pass beyond nature (*māwarāʾ min al-ṭabīʿyyāt*); or cannot pass beyond this to the degree of spirits (*māwarāʾha min martaba al-arwāḥ*)…

[60] Le Gall, *A Culture of Sufism*, 120–123; Weismann, *The Naqshbandiyya*, 59–60. On their attitude against the supernatural, cf. Meier, *Zwei Abhandlungen*, 245–254.

[61] Enfî Hasan Hulûs Halvetî, eds Tatcı and Yıldız, *Tezkiretü'l-müteahhirîn*, 83; Erken, 'A Historical Analysis', 68–69. For an even earlier example, see Clayer, 'Les Miracles des cheikhs', 453n44.

[62] İsmâil Hakkı Bursevî, eds Muslu and Namlı, *Tamâmü'l-feyz*, 96.

[63] Ibid., 213–214. On the medieval distinction, see Geoffroy, 'Attitudes contrastées', 311–313.

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> Those who are dominated by such states, such as walking upon water, flying in the air, shortening space or lengthening time, should not be addicted to showing cosmic miracles, i.e. extraordinary deeds (*ḫawāriḳ al-ādāt*). There are some who exhibit cosmic miracles, if they are strongly impelled and have spiritual permission to do so; but this is rarely seen. As for the people of *barzaḫ*, they are addicted to the cosmic miracles that happen to them. Most of the cosmic miracles come from these people of *barzaḫ*, and not from others. If you ask 'Why are saints exhibiting cosmic miracles so few compared to those with miracles of knowledge?', I say: These are like sultans, whereas people of cosmic miracles are like viziers. External power has been given to viziers. They carry upon their shoulders the affairs of people, with which the sultans cannot deal. That is why they are always strolling around in fear and hope, constantly supplicating: 'Our lord, do not make our hearts fall into error after having reached the right path.' As a matter of fact, this is a state of righteous people; not of those near [God's] throne; the latter have the rank of sultans, for they have no fear, nor will they feel grief.[64]

Bursevī's mentor, Atpazarī 'Oṣmān, often repeats this belief ('let those who look for extraordinary things and experiences ask them from someone else')[65]—and, indeed, there is hardly any real 'cosmic' miracle among his.[66] It appears that 'miracles of knowledge' and especially those involving clairvoyance or omniscience had become the rule by the late eighteenth century, and that sheikhs reprimanded those among their disciples trying to perform miraculous healing or other spectacular deeds.[67] Selīm Baba (d. 1756), a Ḳādirī sheikh, maintains that the greatest miracle is to subdue one's soul; miracle-working is the goal of commoners, not for Sufis, for whom nothing is more important than the contemplation of God's beauty. Miracles, he explains, are but a veil separating God from His servants, and Sufis who craved for miraculous deeds did not transcend this veil.[68]

In parallel to the influence of the Ḳāḍızādelis, one cannot exclude a rationalist trend as a factor that led to a certain devaluation of miracles (after all, the Ḳāḍızādelis may have been a product of this trend—I will return to this in Chapter 6). At least this is what we can presume for some elite (or, at any rate, educated) authors; it is difficult to fathom their influence on the lower social strata. An interesting example is Kâtib Çelebi's take on the life of Ḫıżır: we do not know the works through which this became a topic of dispute during the Ḳāḍızādeli conflict, but from the context it seems that it had to do with the claim of some Sufi sheikhs to

[64] İsmâil Hakkı Bursevî, eds Muslu and Namlı, *Tamâmü'l-feyz*, 231–232. [65] Ibid., 507.
[66] Ibid., 231ff. Bursevī records such 'visits' (*vāridāt*) from the Hereafter that happened to himself (Atanasova, 'The Sufi as the Axis', 133–136). See some similar thoughts in Kurz, *Ways to Heaven*, 156–157.
[67] Mayeur-Jaouen, 'The Small World of Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī', 125–127.
[68] Kurz, *Ways to Heaven*, 156–157.

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have seen this Qur'anic figure.[69] It appears that the Ḳāḍızādeli side argued that this would have been impossible, since in this case Ḫızır would have been alive ever since Moses' time and, thus, would inevitably be immortal (at any rate, his immortality was a widespread popular belief, upheld by several Sufi authors and generally refuted by scholars);[70] and even in *Teẕkiretü'l-müteaḫḫirīn*, the collection of biographies of saints authored by Ḫalvetī Enfī Ḥasan Ḫulūṣ Efendi in 1723, we read that a certain 'holy fool' of Istanbul was apparently 220 years old, although 'such a longevity is not conceivable' (*bir ṭarīk ile ol rütbede müsinn olduğuna yaḳīn gelmez*).[71] In his turn, Kâtib Çelebi tries to refute this belief, and he does so in a very rationalistic way, combining medical analysis with the strict logic of disputation. He explains the constituents of life and the way a living creature passes through the stages of growth, stasis, and decline (a pattern that he also used in his Ibn Khaldūnist view of societies), and how internal moisture is annihilated by innate heat, leading to inevitable death:

> So it is proved that death is by nature inevitable for the living thing, and is of the class of unavoidables.
>
> The categories of genus and species are common to all individuals and comprehend them all; they do not differ in anyone, unless a miracle is claimed, outside the order of nature… Such a claim needs the proof of a decisive scriptural text. It is incontestable, according to the rules of disputation, that no matter of certainty can be validly contradicted on the basis of one single story plus supposition.

Kâtib Çelebi is not willing to dismiss wholesale the claims of the Sufis, so he admits that 'the honoured Sheykhs of the mystic Orders have much traffic and commerce with the unseen world and many dealings with the realm of the spiritual' and that they are capable of seeing with the eyes of the spirit, but then he remarks:

> [L]ater narrators, through ignorance or wilful deceit, present spiritual visions as objective fact. The common folk do not know the real story, and think this to be true. Such is the erroneous origin of the tales in question. Some lying pretenders claim that these spiritual encounters and dealings are objective, and thereby they frequently attain corrupt ends.[72]

This rationalistic approach is evident in other texts as well (e.g. in Abdullah Halim Efendi's 1791 *Seyfü'l-izzet*), as we will see in more detail below. This is how İsmā'īl Ḥaḳḳı Bursevī explains the miraculous birth of Jesus: he was born in a

[69] On Ḫızır, see Kocaer, 'An Enigmatic Figure'; Franke, *Begegnung mit Khidr*, esp. 323–361 on the debates on his longevity.

[70] Cf. Çavuşoğlu, 'The Ḳāḍīzādeli Movement', 285–299.

[71] Enfî Hasan Hulûs Halvetî, eds Tatcı and Yıldız, *Tezkiretü'l-müteahhirîn*, 98–100.

[72] Kâtib Çelebi, tr. Lewis, *The Balance of Truth*, 33–36; cf. Franke, *Begegnung mit Khidr*, 358–361.

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ḫāriḳ al-ʿāde way (without a father), he says, just like the famous magician Saṭīḥ [b. Rabīʿa] al-kāhin, who was born of two women. In the case of Jesus, this was an abnormal phenomenon yet had apparent causes (*bi-wāsiṭa sabab min al-asbāb al-ṣūriyya*), since the breath of the Holy Spirit (*rūḥ al-ḳūds*), being a living being, acted as the seminal fluid. In the case of Saṭīḥ, one of the women acted in a similar way.[73] To give a final example, ʿAzīz Efendi's (d. 1798) famous late-eighteenth-century novel *Muḫayyelāt* contains a description of magic (but in a context that is more closely associated with miraculous access to the Hereafter and the Unseen), which gives a strikingly psychological interpretation to a common topos of Sufi miracle-working, the folding of time and space (*ṭayy-i zamān ü mekân*):

> Let it be known that people of truth and enlightenment have verified that they possess the power of imagination (*ḳuvve-i vehmiyye*) in twenty-seven subjects (*madde*); for instance, a person of pure intent who knows the grace of God can formulate in full someone's face and body in his memory, and then compress it and keep it in a place like a [mental] cupboard. It is obvious that then this existence will be afflicted with inner narrowness and uneasiness of the heart at the place where it is imagined (*ol vücūd, müteḫayyil olduğu maḥalde żayḳ-i derūn ve ṣıḳlet-i ḳalbiyyeye dūçār*). Such a folding of time and place (*ṭayy-i zamān ü mekân*) is a wonder, subject to the disposal of knowledge.[74]

Travels of the Soul: Death, Dreams, and Visions

The miracles granted to holy men by God did not pose fundamental problems for Islamic theology and world view, and even the strictest Ḳāḍızādeli opponents of Sufi miracle-working never denied the possibility of such deeds; it was their multiplication that could become problematic. This changes when it comes to acts attributed to spirits, whether they be demons or (much worse) souls of the deceased. In order to investigate this aspect of the relations with the supernatural, we first have to explore the theoretical underpinnings of Ottoman learned conceptions of the human soul.

Realms and Levels of Existence

Being the spiritual part of man, the soul is in direct contact with the supernatural. More than ethical philosophy, it was Sufism that mainly provided for this connection, although philosophers were quick to endorse its theories. The most

[73] İsmâil Hakkı Bursevî, eds Muslu and Namlı, *Tamâmü'l-feyz*, 118.

[74] ʿAzīz Efendi, *Muhayyelât*, ed. Alacatlı, 91–92; ed. Duymaz, 218 (some readings corrected via Istanbul 1868 edn, 87). There is a rich Muslim literature on the folding or bending of time, as this theory is applied to instances of the life of the Prophet (Mayeur-Jaouen, '"There Is Matter for Thought"', 127).

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popular approach in Ottoman scholarship was that of Ibn ʿArabī, especially in the form adopted by the Illuminationists (*ishrāqī*), followers of the philosophical system invented by Shihab al-Din al-Suhrawardī (d. 1192) and elaborated by Shams al-Din al-Shahrazurī (d. after 1288).[75] Al-Suhrawardī claimed that reality, from immaterial entities to material bodies, is produced by the emanation of light in various intensities, and that conversely, knowledge of the world manifests through light, as it is perceived by varying degrees of human vision. This world vision was supplemented by a theory of disparate worlds or spheres of existence, which postulated that beside the corporeal world of physical entities (*ʿālem-i mulk*), described along the lines of Islamic cosmology as we saw in Chapter 1, there is a spiritual world (*ʿālem-i ceberūt*), a world of images (*ʿālem-i miṣāl*), where one finds oneself while dreaming, and an incorporeal world (*ʿālem-i melekūt*), the world of God and of angels, where one goes after death.

This chain of worlds, or rather spheres of existence, had Qur'anic roots and was developed by the medieval *falāsifa*, but also by al-Ghazālī and Ibn ʿArabī, under neo-Platonic, Gnostic, and mystical influences. The details of its interdependencies and hierarchies were not unanimously established. Early Sufis postulated that there was above the visible world or *mulk* the world of divine command, *ʿālam-i malakūt* or *ghayb*, where spirits and spiritual entities resided; this world was in turned governed by *jabarūt*, the world of Divine Names and Attributes; and above it was only the pure Divine Essence or *lāhūt*. However, in al-Ghazālī's philosophy, the *jabarūt* was an intermediate world or barrier (*barzaḫ*), between the two worlds of exoteric and esoteric meaning, *mulk* and *malakūt* respectively, from which it borrowed elements. A similar model is found in Ibn ʿArabī: *jabarūt* or *barzaḫ* is the world of imagination, between the world of visible forms (*mulk* or *shahada*) and that of meanings and of *ghayb* (*malakūt*).[76]

Early Sufism	al- Ghazālī	Ibn ʿArabī
lāhūt (Divine Essence)		
jabarūt (Divine Names and Attributes)	*malakūt* (the hidden, esoteric world, accessible only to spirits and intellects)	*malakūt* (the world of meanings and of the Unseen/*ghayb*)
malakūt or *ghayb* (spirits and spiritual entities)	*jabarūt* or *barzaḫ* (source of emotions and imagination)	*jabarūt* or *barzaḫ* (world of imagination)
mulk (the visi ble world of bodily entities)	*mulk* (the apparent and perceptible world)	*mulk* (the visible world of bodily entities)

[75] See e.g. Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism*, 192–207; Griffel, *The Formation of Post-classical Philosophy*, 244–263.

[76] Terrier, 'Sufi Hierarchies of the Worlds'; Gardiner, 'Cosmo-eschatology', 33–39.

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The 'world of images', added to the canon by al-Shahrazurī and established throughout the medieval reception of Illuminationism, was a sphere of existence containing archetypes of all things and from which both miracles and mystic visions come; the world of archetypes of the neo-Platonists, the *mundus imaginalis* according to Henri Corbin's formulation. In the works of al-Suhrawardī and Ibn ʿArabī, the world of images is even the origin of miracles, as pure souls can create figures there that, in turn, manifest in the physical world. This is how Sufis could appear in different places simultaneously. Otherwise, Illuminationist cosmology follows the earlier order of the worlds, with *malakūt*, the world of pure souls (either angels, who govern the material species, or 'soul-lights', who animate material bodies: the souls of the celestial spheres, the human souls), being below *jabarūt* or the world of pure intellects and above *mulk* in the hierarchy of emanations of the Light of Lights: that is, God.[77]

Emanations of light	*nūr al-anwār*, Light of Lights (God)	
↓		
↓	*jabarūt* (pure intellects)	*ʿālem-i miṣāl* (world of images)
↓	*malakūt* (pure souls)	
	mulk	

Ottoman versions of this theory were often simpler or altered. Authors who were not influenced by Ibn ʿArabī or Illuminationism often ignored the 'world of images'. Thus, according to Şükrullah Efendi, the author of the mid-fifteenth-century *Behcetü'l-tevārīḫ*, the world is constituted by three spheres: the world of *ceberūt*, the world of *melekūt*, and the world of angels. The first world is the divine sphere, the essence of the Creator of Existence (*vācibü'l-vücūd*), inaccessible to human knowledge; only with great effort can the intellect and the soul have a glimpse of the properties of God. The world of *melekūt* has been called 'world of truth', 'world of reality', and 'world of meaning', but also 'world of the occult' (*ġayb*). The essence of this world is the emanation (*feyz*) of the world of *ceberūt*. Finally, the world of angels is in fact the visible and created world: its essence is the world of the bodies and of the senses. Now, man's nature combines the two latter worlds: the soul, the intellect, and the spirit belong to the world of meaning (the *melekūt*), whereas the body belongs to the world of forms (the angel world). However, the human spirit (i.e. its component tending towards the good and the divine) may be informed of the world of *ceberūt*.[78] The same terminology can be found in various Sufi works, including those of Aḥmed Bīcān (d. after 1466, translating Ibn ʿArābī) or of İlyas b. Īsā Sarūḫānī (d. 1559), a Bayramī sheikh of

[77] *EI*², s.v. "alam' (L. Gardet); Rahman, 'Dream, Imagination'; Corbin, 'Le Songe visionnaire'; Marcotte, 'Suhrawardī's Realm'; van Lit, *The World of Image*.

[78] Şükrullah, ed. Almaz, *Behcetü't-tevârîh*, 87, 91.

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provincial background, who states that real dervishes 'reach the world of *ceberūt* from the world of human nature (*nāsut*) and the world of *melekūt*, and the world of divinity (*lāhūt*) from the world of *ceberūt*.'[79] The 'world of images' is also absent from the account of an early-seventeenth-century Sufi, Muṣṭafā Dede, about the journeys of the soul, and from the letters of Ibrāhīm al-Ḳirīmī's (d. 1593).[80] Let us note here that similar world views—that is, of different levels of existence, which a holy man can transgress, whereas common people are restricted to the lowest, material one—were a topos of Sufi thought and could be expressed in different vocabulary. Thus, we read in an early-eighteenth-century collection how a sheikh saves a disciple from death, when he almost falls from a cliff in a state of trance: he warns him that 'this world is the world of mankind (*beşeriyyet ʿālemi*); we are not in the world of liberation (*ʿālem-ı ıṭlāḳ*), so that I may always keep an eye on you.'[81]

It is after the mid-sixteenth century, it seems, that Illuminationism began to permeate Ottoman philosophy, gradually becoming part of its standard inventory. According to Cornelis van Lit, Ottoman Illuminationists were not very keen on integrating the 'world of image' into their world view;[82] however, a closer look may offer a more nuanced view. Traces of the Illuminationist tradition can already be found in Muṣannifak (d. 1470) and Mollā Luṭfī (d. 1495), and by the late sixteenth century it becomes one of the main philosophical approaches in Ottoman scholarship, deeply influencing scholars such as Taşköprüzāde, Kâtip Çelebi, Mehmed Emin Şirvanī (d. 1626), and Müneccimbaşı Ahmed Dede (d. 1702).[83] This development is also reflected in the growing acceptance of a 'world of images', from which dreams and visions originated. Kınalızāde ʿAlī (d. 1571), author of a famous ethical treatise, *Aḫlāk-i ʿAlāʾī*, speaks at length of the world of images and attributes to it not only dreams and visionary ecstasies (*ʿālem-i rüʾyā ve aḥvāl-ı vāḳıʿā*), but also apparitions, miracles, and superhuman faculties of the saints (*kerāmāt u ḫavārık u tasarrufāt-ı evliyā*), as well as 'marvels (*acāyib*) of this world', a formulation that seems to come straight from al-Shahrazūrī.[84]

One of the most elaborate descriptions of the spheres of existence belongs to the Celvetī author İsmāʿīl Ḥaḳḳı Bursevī (d. 1725):

[79] Yazıcıoğlu Ahmed Bīcan, ed. Beyazit, 'Ahmed Bîcan'ın *Müntehâ* isimli', 357–358; Saruhânî İlyas, eds Küçük and Muslu, *Akhisarlı Şeyh Îsâ menâkıbnâmesi*, 75; cf. Saruhânî İlyas, ed. Özgül, '"Rumûzü'l-künûz" adlı eserin transkripsiyonu', 89/65a–65b.

[80] Kurz, *Ways to Heaven*, 77; Ḳirīmī [Hüdâyî], ed. Güven, 'Çeşitli yönleriyle', annex p. 14 (f. 13a).

[81] Enfî Hasan Hulûs Halvetî, eds Tatcı and Yıldız, *Tezkiretü'l-müteahhirîn*, 66.

[82] van Lit, *The World of Image*, 113–114, 142–143, 163–165.

[83] Arıcı, 'Is It Possible to Speak of an Illuminationist Circle'; Kurz, *Ways to Heaven*, 237–243; Gürbüzel, *Taming the Messiah*, 169–171; Sariyannis, 'Ottoman Occultism', 49–55; Sariyannis, 'Sources and Traditions of Knowledge'.

[84] Kınalızâde Ali Çelebi, ed. Koç, *Ahlâk-ı Alâ'î*, 90–91 (cf. Yurtoğlu, 'Kınalızade'de meratibü'l-kainat', 160–164); on al-Shahrazūrī's formulation, see van Lit, *The World of Image*, 93. On the role of the 'world of images' in Ottoman alchemy, see Artun, 'Hearts of Gold and Silver', 95.

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> The world of incorporeal existence (*al-mujarradāt*) is called 'world of *jabarūt*'. The people of *jabarūt* are entities with spiritual forms (*ṣuwar rūḥānīyya*). Incorporeal souls are the same as incorporeal minds (*wa l-nufūs al-mujarrada wa l-ʿuḳūl al-mujarrada shayy wāḥid*). From the point of view of the external reality and of the visible world, they are called souls (*nufūs*); from the point of view of the internal reality and of the unseen world, they are called intellects (*ʿuḳūl*). For instance, the rank of spirits is called 'souls', being a manifestation of forms of knowledge (*maẓāhir al-ṣuwar al-ʿilmīyya*), and 'intellects', being latent realities (*aʿyān ṣābita*). Also we call 'substances' (*jawāhir*) the things that make the celestial bodies, such as planets and stars, move—that is, the things that secure their first voluntary circular movement (*al-mabādī ḥarakātihā bi l-ḥaraka al-irādīyya ʿila l-istidāra*); in their essence and soul, these substances are of the same matter planets are made of, and as for their movement, they are linked to the planets. The reason for this is that they constitute the principles for the movement of the planets. These incorporeal substances are also called 'speaking celestial souls' (*al-nufūs al-nāṭiḳa al-falakīyya*).[85]

Bursevī explains that people of internal knowledge are obeyed in the worlds of meaning (of *melekūt* and of *ġayb*), whereas external ones are obeyed in the world of forms, of *mülk* and *shahāda*.[86] It is interesting to note that in this view (as, indeed, in Ibn ʿArabī's philosophy), as we also saw in Chapter 1, metaphysics coexists with letter science because the series of entities is called the external letters of the Divine Soul (*ḥurūf ẓāhir al-nafs al-raḥmānī*); in their turn, these correspond to the internal letters of the Divine Soul (*ḥurūf bāṭin al-nafs al-raḥmānī*), actually the names of God, and these to the absolute letters of the Divine Soul (*ḥurūf muṭlaḳ al-nafs al-raḥmānī*)—that is, the letters of the Arabic alphabet.[87] Now, although Bursevī is highly critical of Illuminationism,[88] he does use the notion of the 'world of images' as well, showing the influence of this theory on Ottoman Sufism:

> It was revealed to me that this world in the *barzaḫ* (*ʿālam al-dunyā fī l-barzaḫ*) will be like the world of dreams in this world (*ka-ʿālam al-rūʾyā fī l-dunyā*). Because even if the world of images (*ʿālam al-miṣāl*) is the closest thing to the senses, people differ from one another on the subject of dreams according to the thinness and thickness of the veil [separating them from that world]. The

[85] İsmâil Hakkı Bursevî, eds Muslu and Namlı, *Tamâmü'l-feyz*, 120.
[86] Ibid., 103.
[87] Ibid., 120–121. Bursevī has a whole chapter on Ibn ʿArabī, *al-Shayḫ al-Akbar*: ibid., 133ff. The series of entities goes thus: universal soul, universal nature, dust, universal form, universal body, the Throne, the upper sphere, the empyrean sphere, the sphere of the mansions, the heaven of Saturn, the heaven of Jupiter, the heaven of Mars, the heaven of Sun, the heaven of Venus, the heaven of Mercury, the heaven of the Moon, fire, air, water, earth, minerals, plants, animals, angels, jinn, man, and rank.
[88] Kurz, *Ways to Heaven*, 212.

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> source is one, but the reception differs. When they go to the *barzaḫ*, they find there this same difference. For the cloudy souls, in this creation *barzaḫ* is the hidden and this world is the visible. In the same vein, for those being in the creation of *barzaḫ*, this world is hidden and *barzaḫ* is visible by attribution. For those who have lucid souls, it is the opposite: because, just as for them dreams are visible and sensible in this world, this world for them is like a dream in *barzaḫ*. The truth of this matter and especially the truth of death can be reached only by the people of *insilaḫ*, for they are free from all fetters. They can look at the world of images (*ʿālam al-miṯāl*) using *insilaḫ* and sleep…
>
> The world of dreams is called world of restrained images (*ʿālam al-miṯāl al-muḳayyad*), because things are assimilated in it (*al-tamaṯṯul al-ashyāʾ fihi*); the same name is given to the world of spirits (*ʿālam al-arwāḥ*). But just as the world of restrained images is subtle (*laṭīf*) in comparison to the world of bodies, the world of spirits is a subtle image in comparison to the world of restrained images.[89]

We will examine *insilaḫ* or 'spiritual journey' below; but what about *barzaḫ*, mentioned by Bursevī as something close to the 'world of images'? Meaning 'gap, separation', 'obstruction, obstacle' or 'barrier, isthmus', this term is used in Islamic eschatology to denote the boundary between the world of human beings (including the heavens, the earth, and the nether regions, i.e. the *ʿālem-i mulk*) and the world of pure spirits and God. The same meaning was passed on to the Sufi authors, but the term can also mean a kind of 'limbo': in Sufi literature, *barzaḫ* is the realm of imagination, an intermediate sphere between the physical and the spiritual realm, where the soul would assume a kind of spiritual body, appropriate to its state.[90] It is in this sense that, beginning it seems in the late sixteenth century (and with the gradual establishment of the Illuminationist theory on *ʿālem-i miṯāl*), it starts to be identified with the 'world of images'. Kınalızâde ʿAlī Çelebi states that the world of *berzaḫ* consists of the 'world of images', and the same identification is made by Sufis such as ʿAlī b. Ibrāhīm al-Ḥalabī (d. 1635) and Oğlan Şeyh Ibrāhīm (d. 1655).[91] We can understand the same conceptualization when, for instance, al-Nābulusī writes that it is in *barzaḫ* that one may join the Prophet in a dream.[92] At the end of the seventeenth century, the famous mystic Niyāzī-i Mıṣrī (d. 1694) declared that the *barzaḫ* is the realm of imagination, where holy souls reside until the End of Days, and it is exactly there that the soul

[89] İsmâil Hakkı Bursevî, eds Muslu and Namlı, *Tamâmü'l-feyz*, 319, 431.

[90] Bashier, *Ibn al-ʿArabī's barzakh*; Gardiner, 'Cosmo-eschatology', 29–33; Chittick, 'Death and the World of Imagination'. For al-Ghazālī, it is to be identified with the world of *jabarūt*: Terrier, 'Sufi Hierarchies of the Worlds', 285.

[91] Kınalızâde Ali Çelebi, ed. Koç, *Ahlâk-ı Alâ'î*, 91 (*berzah âleminde…âlem-i misâlden müstemeddir*); Mayeur-Jaouen, '"There Is Matter for Thought"', 130; Gaybī, ed. Deveci, 'Ṣoḥbetnāme', 155–157. On the affinity of *barzakh* with the 'world of images' in Ibn Arabi's world view, see Chittick, 'Death and the World of Imagination'; S. Bashier, 'Barzakh, Ṣūfī understanding', *EI*[3].

[92] Pagani, 'The Reality and Image of the Prophet', 506, 509.

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can also travel during sleep.[93] Indeed, as with *ʿālem-i miṣāl*, various sorts of manifestations and illuminations appearing to saints take place at this *barzaḫ*, again according to İsmāʿīl Ḥaḳḳı Bursevī:

> The truth of the matter is that the first thing prophets see is imaginal forms (*al-ṣuwar al-miṣālīyya*) seen in sleep. Then they are elevated to a state where they see the angel in a free or bound image (*fī l-miṣāl al-muṭlaḳ aw al-muḳayyad*), out of the state of sleep. But this happens in a state, called *insilaḫ*, where one is feeble in the senses and loses the ability to think and discern. When revelation came to them, they were lying flat on their back; because when they receive the divine revelation…their human spirit (*al-rūḥ al-insānī*) leaves the body, which remains behind. There is nothing to keep the body straight or sitting…

While sleeping, one is transferred from perusing the world of senses to seeing the world of images (*min muṭālaʿa al-ḥiss ilā muṭālaʿa al-miṣāl*), while one's form remains in the visible world.[94]

What is interesting for our purposes here is that, in various formulations, *barzaḫ* is also supposed to be the place where the souls of the dead reside.[95] We read in the 'Book of Knowledge' (*Maʿārif-nāme*) by Sinan Pasha, towards the end of the fifteenth century, that it is in *barzaḫ* that human souls reside from death until resurrection (when they will be reunited with their bodies); similarly in Kınalızāde ʿAlī Çelebi, almost a century later, and in Kāfī al-Aḳḥiṣārī's 1605 catechism.[96] Bursevī writes that upon death, the soul leaves the body permanently and moves to *barzaḫ*.[97] As a remedy for the fear of death, Erzurumī İbrahim Hakkı in his *Māʿrifetnāme* (1757) suggests that the human soul (*rūḥ-i insānī*), after breaking its bonds with the body, if it had behaved badly in life stays in the world of *barzaḫ* together with its deeds and morals until the day of Resurrection, and is tormented like in a bad dream; whereas, if the soul had behaved well in life, it does not stay in the world of *barzaḫ* and enters the world of *melekūt* or even of *şehādet*.[98] He adds a more elaborate version as well, noting that under God's throne (*ʿarz*) there is a void with two *barzaḫ*s; souls that come to settle into (unborn) people dwell in the first, and those returning back, in the second (*insāna gelicek ervāḥıñ ve gelüp gitmiş ervāḥıñ mekānı olup*); the second is a

[93] Terzioğlu, 'Sufi and Dissident', 377, 386; Kurz, *Ways to Heaven*, 117. On Niyāzī, see also Terzioğlu, 'Man in the Image of God'.

[94] İsmâil Hakkı Bursevî, eds Muslu and Namlı, *Tamâmü'l-feyz*, 332–333, 335; see also ibid., 206.

[95] Tesei, 'The *barzakh*'; Gardiner, 'Cosmo-eschatology', 29–31.

[96] Sinan Pasha, ed. Tulum, *Maârif-nâme*, 88–90; Kınalızâde Ali Çelebi, ed. Koç, *Ahlâk-ı Alâ'î*, 89–91; Kāfī al-Aḳḥiṣārī, tr. Zein, *Rawdat al-jannat*, 21–22.

[97] İsmâil Hakkı Bursevî, eds Muslu and Namlı, *Tamâmü'l-feyz*, 339.

[98] Erzurumī İbrahim Hakkı, *Mā'rifetnāme*, University of Michigan, 327, 332; ed. Meyan, *Mârifetnâme*, 473, 481.

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waiting place, where 'the birds of souls' (a usual metaphor for the souls of the dead) 'settle according to their ranks until the End of Days'.[99]

The Origin of Dreams

Before seeing how an Ottoman scholar could justify and interpret visits of the dead in the world of the living, we should examine the field where these visits would take place par excellence: namely, dreams.[100] The realm of dreams, in fact, is the domain of the supernatural most closely related to everyday Ottoman life. There are numerous in-depth studies of Ottoman dreams and their use in justifying choices about the career or actions of diverse individuals, such as a judge, a poet, a scribe, or a traveller. From Asiye Hatun, the noble lady of Skopje, to Sultan Murad III, from an anonymous scribe to a nineteenth-century astrologer, various Ottomans meticulously recorded their dreams, while others carefully brought them together in biographical collections. Dreams, whether real or imaginary, were used to favour choices or proposals at both the political and personal levels (increasingly so from the beginning of the seventeenth century).[101] In a somewhat extreme example, a conservative physician records not only dreams offering medical insight, but also a dream he had in 1674 (two Jewish physicians discussing how they mistreated Muslim patients) as an argument against seeking medical advice from Jews.[102]

Indeed, divination by dreams or, more correctly, dream interpretation was considered an integral part of prophetic charisma.[103] Dream interpretation, justified and even sanctified by the Prophet, is based on the link between dreams and God: according to a very famous hadith, a dream is one-forty-sixth of prophecy, and there are dreams sent by God just as there are dreams sent by the Devil.[104] As an early Ottoman cosmography explains,

[99] Erzurumī İbrahim Hakkı, *Mā'rifetnāme*, University of Michigan, 34; ed. Meyan, *Mârifetnâme*, 20. See a similar formulation in the synopsis of Sufi theory in the mid-seventeenth century, *Dabestān-e Mazāheb* (a discussion of religions and sects probably by an Indian author): Shea – Troyer (eds), *The Dabistán, Or School of Manners*, 3: 277–281.

[100] On sleep in Sufi understanding, see Chittick, '"Your Sight Today Is Piercing"', 130–134; Pielow, 'Sleepless in Paradise'.

[101] Kafadar, *Asiye Hatun*; Felek, '(Re)creating Image and Identity'; Ḳirīmī [Hüdâyî], ed. Güven, 'Çeşitli yönleriyle', 127–137; Tunalı, 'An Ottoman Astrologer'; Niyazioğlu, 'In the Dream Realm'; Niyazioğlu, *Dreams and Lives*, 74ff.

[102] Çalışır, 'Translations as Ego-Documents', 79–80.

[103] *EI*^{2}, s.v. 'Kihâna' (T. Fahd). On dreams, cf. *EI*^{2}, s.v. 'Ru'yâ' (T. Fahd and H. Daiber).

[104] On the role of dreams in Islamicate cultures, see Fahd, *La Divination arabe*, 247–367; Sviri, 'Dreaming Analyzed'; Lory, *Le Rêve et ses interprétations*; Green, 'The Religious and Cultural Roles'; Özgen and Knysh (eds), *Dreams and Visions*; Sirriyeh, *Dreams and Visions*. Cf. Angelidi and Calofonos, *Dreaming in Byzantium*, for the Byzantine case, and especially Mavroudi, 'Byzantine and Islamic Dream Interpretation'.

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> Prophecy was sealed after the Prophet [Muhammad] and nobody is aware of the unknown (*kimse ġayba muṭṭali' olmaz*), except from seeing a real dream.[105]

The section on 'dreams and states of souls' (*fī ẕikri'l-menāmi ve ḥāli'l-ervāḥ*) in the same cosmography instructs the reader that 'dreaming (*düş*) is a condition of the soul (*cān işidür*)' and that 'there are a lot of these pure souls in the world, and their news from the supernatural world ('*ālem-i ġaybīden*) is true'.[106] We should note here the fluidity of states of mind in the range between sleep and wakefulness. A lot of prophetic visions and dreams took place during various states of conscience which now would be described as half-asleep or half-awake, and there was a whole series of terms (*rüya*, *vakı'a*, *ilham*) to designate these states. Voices could be heard, glimpses could be seen, and presences could be sensed. Murad III often heard God's voice praising him, and most of Ibrāhīm al-Ḳirīmī's dreams were experienced while he was dozing off.[107]

However, opinions on where exactly dreams come from and especially how the dead could visit the dreams of the living differed significantly. For one thing, not all dreams had the same origin. As Aristotle explains to Alexander, in Ahmedī's *İskendernāme*, there are two sorts of dream, the true (*ṣādıḳ*) and the false (*kāẕib*). The latter are also of three sorts: those that come from the exterior senses (*ḥiss-i ẓāhir*), imprinted on the 'common sense' (*ḥiss-i müşterek*) and seen by the soul (*nefs*); those that come to the imagination from something the dreamer is constantly thinking about (e.g. dreaming of one's lover); and those that are produced when the spirit (*rūḥ*) is idle (*süst*) according to the dominant humour (e.g. when heat is dominant, one sees fire, blood, etc.). These are the false dreams called (in the Qur'an) *aḍġāṣu aḥlām*. As for the true dreams, they stem from the universal soul (*nefs-i küllī*), alias God's Tablet (*Levḥ-i Maḥfūẓ*), for which the universal mind ('*aḳl-ı küll*) is the Pen, and in them one sees the Unseen (*görinür ġayb*). During sleep, human reason (*nefs-i nāṭıḳa*) leaves the bonds of the body and grasps the Unseen, free from composite bodies, time, or space (*aña kim ola mücerred hem basīṭ / ne zamān u ne mekān olur muḥīṭ*).[108] Ahmedī's contemporary, Aḥmed Dā'ī, translating a Persian original, divides dreams into ten sorts, only one of which is of divine (actually: angelic) origin; the others come mainly from human thoughts or from disturbances in the equilibrium of humours. Among them, in the dreams coming from excessive black bile (*sevdā*) the dreamer sees nightmares, 'dark places, darkness, and the dead' (*düşde ḳarañulıḳlar ve ḳaralıḳ ve ölüler görür*), although the latter term might imply corpses, rather than images of the dead.[109]

[105] Sarıkaya (ed.), *Tercüme-i Acâibü'l-mahlūkat*, 372.
[106] Ibid., 371.
[107] Felek (ed.), *Kitābü'l-menāmāt*; Ḳirīmī [Hüdâyî], ed. Güven, 'Çeşitli yönleriyle', 131 and annex p. 14 (f. 13a), 28 (f. 25a). Cf. Sirriyeh, *Sufi Visionary*, 62.
[108] Ahmedî, eds Akdoğan and Kutsal, *İskendernâme*, 296–299.
[109] Ahmed-i Dâ'î, ed. Çebi, *Tercüme-i kitâbü't-ta'bîr*, 163. Cf. the detailed theory on the soul, sleep,

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Thus, one should be careful to distinguish 'true' dreams from fantasies or products of bodily functions. An early-sixteenth-century Bayrāmī sheikh, Isa Aḳḥisarī, explains that most of what commoners (*ʿavāmm*) see are fantasies (*ḫayāl*) and made of the colours of the elements (*elvān-i ʿanāṣir*). Visions (*vāḳıʿa*), for instance, are useless fantasies that cannot be interpreted, if the dreamer eats hashish. However, there is also revelation (*keşif*), which is neither pure fantasy nor pure ecstasy (*ḥāl*); both revelation and fantasy prevent the appearance of the essence and the annihilation of the attributes.[110] In a moving letter to his sheikh, Murad III relates that his deceased mother visited him in a vision 'between sleep and wakefulness' (*beyne'n-nevmi ve'l-yaḳaẓada*), and he asks whether 'this is [a product of] melancholy, or [if] it was her and she reached [him]'.[111] Sufi literature, indeed, produced a lot of subtle categorizations, not only of dreams in general but of 'true' dreams as well. This is how a late-seventeenth-century Celvetī sheikh argues for a correspondence of the object of a 'true' dream with the order of knowledge revealed:

> [T]he Prophet is the manifestation (*taʿayyun*) of the highest secret of God; the teacher of the internal [knowledge] is the degradation (*tanazzul*) of this prophetic manifestation, and the teacher of the external [knowledge] the degradation of this degradation. All these exist within the human body, which contains all truths. The power of reason (*al-ḳuwwa al-ʿaḳla*) is the manifestation of the teacher of the external [knowledge] (*muʿallim al-ẓāhir*), and the power of soul (*al-ḳuwwa al-rūḥānīyya*) the manifestation of who teaches internal [knowledge] (*muʿallim al-bāṭin*). And the spiritual power (*al-ḳuwwa al-ʿirfānīyya*) is the manifestation of the Prophet; as for the secret (*sirr*), this is the manifestation of God's secret. That's why a Sufi who dreams of his external teacher sees [actually] the form of the power of reason; a Sufi who sees his sheikh and guide sees the form of the power of soul. Likewise, one who dreams of the Prophet sees the form of the spiritual power, and one who dreams of God sees the form of the secret.[112]

In a more philosophical way, Taşköprüzāde delves at length into the science of dream interpretation (*ʿilm taʿbīr al-ruʾyā*):

> It is a science by which the relation (*munāsaba*) between the imaginations of the soul (*al-takhayyulāt al-nafsāniyya*) and the affairs of the unknown (*al-umūr*

and dreams in the late fifteenth century, Alāʾaddīn al-Kirmānī, ed. Özbakır, *El-aşeretü'l-kâmile/Levâmiʿu tenvîri'l-makâm*.

[110] Saruhânî İlyas, eds Küçük and Muslu, *Akhisarlı Şeyh Îsâ menâkıbnâmesi*, 75–77, 224–225 (on the hashish-using dreamers).

[111] Felek (ed.), *Kitābü'l-menāmāt*, 328 (no. 1737): *mālıḥulyā mıdur, oydı ulaşdı*.

[112] İsmâil Hakkı Bursevî, eds Muslu and Namlı, *Tamâmü'l-feyz*, 70.

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> *al-ghaybiyya*) is recognized, in order to be moved (*yantaqal*, 'to be transported') from the first to the second(!), in order to obtain information from it [i.e. from knowledge of the unseen] regarding the conditions of the soul in the material world.
>
> Know that the dream is an act of the rational faculty of the soul (*fi'l li-l-nafs al-nāṭiqa*). If there were no truth to it, there wouldn't be any point in bringing about these faculties in the human being. But God, the Wise, the High, is free from anything that is in vain.
>
> Dreams are of two kinds: The first kind, which is the prevalent one, are confused dreams (*aḍghāth aḥlam*) and sayings of the soul (*aḥādīth al-nafs*), from lowly thoughts (*min al-khawāṭir al-radiyya*), because the soul—in this state—is like water that is surging with waves, not admitting of any form [i.e. not allowing for the imprint of any clear image]. The second kind, which is the less common one, are true dreams. And those are of two kinds: (1) a kind which does not require interpretation; (2) a kind which does require interpretation. And therefore an interpreter is needed to be skilful [in understanding] the difference between confused dreams and [real] dreams, and other things, in order to distinguish between spiritual and material utterances (*al-kalimāt al-rūḥāniyya wa-l-jismāniyya*), and to differentiate between the different classes of men—because there are men whose dreams are not true, and there are men whose dreams are true; then there are those who confirm this for them.[113]

A few decades later, Nev'ī (d. 1599) in his concise encyclopedia uses a similar metaphor to explain that dream interpretation seeks to traverse from 'visions' (*muḫayyel-i ḥükmī*) or 'imagined pictures' (*ṣuver-i ḫayālī*) to 'true meanings' (*ma'nā-i ḥaḳīḳī*). He gives the same categorization of 'confused' versus 'real' dreams and claims that the latter

> are inspired by angels who, by God's command, enhance the meanings of what is written on the Safely Preserved Tablet in the guise of images, so that these images are analogous to the meanings and recall them.[114]

All these explanations converge to the point that dreams are movements of the imagination, and that they ultimately (when true) originate from God's Preserved Tablet: that is, the universal soul (*nefs-i küllī*). A slightly different explanation, but one that also has an angel guiding the spirit to divine vision, is the way the famous Sheikh Abdelghanī al-Nābulusī (d. 1731) explains dreaming in his book of dream interpretation, *Ta'ṭīr al-anām fī ta'bīr al-manām*, composed in 1685:

[113] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-sa'āda*, 1: 335–336; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 305–307.

[114] Nev'i Efendi, eds Procházka-Eisl and Çelik, *Texts on Popular Learning*, 125–126. Nev'i also talks of the 'world of images' (ibid., 127).

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> In fact, we know with certainty that some dreams arise from the dominance of bodily humours, as has been narrated, while others come from Satan, and yet another part proceeds from the imagination of the soul… Muslim interpreters of dreams consider that dreams are seen by the spirit and understood by the intellect. Note that the anchor point of the spirit is located in points of blood in the middle of the heart, and the anchor point of the heart is in the grooves of the brain, and the spirit is connected to the soul. When a human being falls asleep, his spirit spreads out like the light of a torch or the light of the sun. He then sees, through the light of God Most High and His illumination, what the dream angel shows him.

Nābulusī adds that 'the words of a deceased person in a dream are true, for the dead are in a realm where only truth prevails.'[115]

All these authors adopt what might be termed a 'classical' attitude, originating in al-Ghazālī's thought, that sees in the dream the ability of the human spirit to have a taste of the universal soul or the world of divine knowledge, objectified in God's Tablet (*al-lawḥ al-maḥfūẓ*) and reflected in the dreamer's heart (its truth depending on the clarity of the soul of the dreamer).[116]

Yet there was another approach, one that necessitated an intermediary realm, where visionary images resided and which could be visited by the dreamer's spirit in their sleep. This approach was the one adopted by the Illuminationists, who postulated as we have seen that beside the corporeal world of physical entities (*ʿālem-i mulk*) there is a spiritual world (*ʿālem-i ceberūt*), a world of images (*ʿālem-i miṣāl*), and an incorporeal world (*ʿālem-i melekūt*), the world of God and of angels. In some cases, it was suggested that the soul visited the world of *melekūt* while sleeping, such as in Aḥmed Dāʿī's late-fourteenth-century manual.[117] It was Ibn ʿArabī who built upon al-Suhrawardī's 'world of images' and claimed that the dreamer has access to it and the archetypes stored there.[118] The fact that the dreamer is present in this 'world of images' is a pertinent feature of dream accounts by the biographer Nevʿīzāde ʿAṭāʾī (d. 1637), for instance;[119] and we saw instances of *berzaḫ* (often identified with the *ʿālem-i miṣāl*) as the realm of dreams. The doctrine of the world of images, it seems, developed in eastern Iran and India, where no authority had clarified how the dead could visit the dreams of the living. However, the Ottoman world view had incorporated the idea of a

[115] al-Nâboulsi, tr. Haridi, *Merveilles de l'interprétation*, 13, 15.

[116] Cf. Lory, 'Geomancy, Divination and Islam', 457.

[117] Ahmed-i Dâʿî, ed. Çebi, *Tercüme-i kitâbü't-taʿbîr*, 167–170. The late-fifteenth-century treatise on dreams by Alāʾaddīn al-Kirmānī (of Timurid background) mentions explicitly the Illuminationist doctrine, without either endorsing it or rejecting it outright: Alāʾaddīn al-Kirmānī, ed. Özbakır, *El-aşeretü'l-kâmile/Levâmiʿu tenvîri'l-makâm*, 224–226, 254–255, 258–263.

[118] Katz, 'Dreams and Their Interpretation', 187–188; Niyazioğlu, *Dreams and Lives*, 91. See, however, the remarks by van Lit, *The World of Image*, 173–175.

[119] Niyazioğlu, *Dreams and Lives*, 79, 80.

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specific realm where dreams resided even without direct reference to Illuminationist theory: so we read in ʿAzīz Efendi's 1796 *Muḫayyelāt* that

> the world is not just the world you see; while sleeping we enter the world of dreams (*ʿālem-i rüʾyā*), and similarly when we die, we necessarily enter another world, which is called the world of the Hereafter (*ʿālem-i āḫiret*).[120]

The use of this 'world of images' certainly made it easier for mystics to explain the meeting of the soul of a dead person with the dreamer's spirit, as they would both be visiting this realm. We have seen above more details of the Ottoman reception of this world view. But what would this 'soul' be, exactly? And where would it be situated after death?

Spirits and Souls

What we call 'spirit' or 'soul' corresponds to two different notions: the *nefs*, on the one hand, is the human soul, possibly material (here opinions vary), which dies with the body and is resurrected with it on the Day of Judgement, while the *rūḥ* is its divine part, remaining alive after the death of its bearer.[121] In most stories concerning apparitions or revenants, we are dealing with *rūḥ* (plural: *ervāḥ*). In the story told by Evliya Çelebi about Bayezid II, however, the part that comes out of his mouth in the form of a weasel is the *nefs*, and the Sultan continues to live even after the weasel is killed:

> Until seven years before his passing away, he had not eaten anything with soul and blood. One day his nature taunted his soul and wished for trotters soup (*teḳāżā-yı nefs ėdüp tabīʿatı paça istedi*). His soul insisted so much that he made a great struggle against it in order not to have the soup. At last he ordered a dish of the soup, with garlic and vinegar, to be brought in front of him and said to his soul: 'Come on, my soul, the soup arrived as you wished it, if you need come out and eat.' At this moment a blind creature, like a weasel, came out of his blessed mouth, sat beside the plate and started eating the soup like a dog. When it had satisfied its hunger, this creature jumped on Bayezid's jacket and tried to enter his mouth again. He hit it with his blessed hand and it fell down on the floor. 'Hit it!' he ordered; and the servants killed it under their feet. Then the *şeyhülislam* declared that 'The perfect

[120] ʿAzīz Efendi, *Muhayyelât*, ed. Alacatlı, 184–185; ed. Duymaz, 279–280.

[121] Sariyannis, 'The Dead, the Spirits, and the Living', 378–379. It seems medieval notions were different: Saif, 'Between Medicine and Magic', 323. In al-Nābulusī's words, *rūḥ* is the universal spirit that appears in each body (human, animal, plant) with its peculiar characteristics, which is then the *nafs*: Sirriyeh, *Sufi Visionary*, 26–27.

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> man is honoured with this soul; it is the pillar of the human body. It must be washed and buried properly'… Bayezid-i Bisṭāmī also had his soul come out and fed it a sweet pudding, but it then entered his holy mouth again. But the Sultan Bayezid-i Velī had it killed and thus he was not blessed with long life.[122]

Evliya's account is a lively rendition of a much older story concerning the Sufi Bayezid-i Bisṭāmī (d. 848?), which he mentions at the end. In the late-fifteenth-century *Dürr-i meknūn*, Bayezid-i Bisṭāmī's *nefs* wishes for a mouton head after seven years of fasting; the mystic lets it out (in the form of a dog) to eat, and initially does not open his mouth again for the soul to enter. God explains that the soul is part and parcel of Bayezid (*sen dahi benüm yanımda anuñla Bāyezīdsin*).[123] In a mid-eighteenth-century copy of the same text, Bayezid has become Bayezid II, showing that Evliya was following an established corruption of the tradition.[124]

Muslim theologians do not agree on the fate of these souls after death: as long as there is a determined procedure from death to the final resurrection, the place occupied by souls during this time is not certain.[125] An excerpt from the memoirs of a Polish doctor, who lived in Istanbul *c.*1760, may give some insight into the popular understanding of this procedure:

> When [somebody] is in the grave, he can see what is outside through a little window. If he is to go to purgatory or hell, he sees what suffering awaits him at his final destination. Hence, he starts living his hell already in the grave. And if he is supposed to go to paradise, he is already in paradise by witnessing the eternal happiness that awaits him there.[126]

Of course, Muslim theology does not provide for limbo or even Purgatory, although the Qur'an speaks of Ā'rāf, a sort of antechamber of Paradise where the spirits of the dead wait between Paradise and Hell. In many respects, Ā'rāf resembles a limbo of sorts, and many European authors made this confusion.[127] Even Evliya's description gives such an impression:

[122] Evliya Çelebi, eds Dankoff, Kahraman, and Dağlı, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, I. Kitap*, 163 (ff. 99a–99b); same story in Evliya Çelebi, eds Kahraman and Dağlı, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, III. Kitap*, 206 (f. 128a).

[123] Yazıcıoğlu [Anonymous], *Dürr-i meknūn*, ed. Kaptein, 95–96=375; ed. Demirtaş, 105; ed. Sakaoğlu, 33. For a similar story dated 1448, see Kaptein, 95n.

[124] Yazıcıoğlu [Anonymous], *Dürr-i meknūn*, ed. Mattei, 47.

[125] On Islamic beliefs concerning the fate of souls after death, see Seidensticker, 'Der Rūḥ der Toten'; Smith and Yazbeck Haddad, *The Islamic Understanding*; Branca, '"Ogni anima"'; Kinberg, 'Sufi Views'.

[126] Pilsztynowa, ed. Dominik, *The Istanbul Memories*, 66.

[127] Sariyannis, 'The Dead, the Spirits, and the Living', 375. On the concept of 'temporary hell' and the relevant discussions in early Islam, see Hamza, 'Temporary Hellfire'; Pagani, 'Vains espoirs'; on al-Nābulusī's take, see Sirriyeh, *Sufi Visionary*, 34.

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> *A'rāf* is neither Paradise nor Hell; it consists of seven valleys between Paradise and Hell, where thousands of tribes of benevolent infidels abide, such as the infidels' underage children, just infidel kings like Anushirvan, chaste Christian priests, patriarchs, monks and mystics, and so forth. With God's decree, the weather in this A'rāf is such that if the people residing there complain of the extreme cold, by God's will extreme heat comes; if they do not complain and praise God instead, God grants moderate weather to them. But as the place is between Paradise and Hell, the inhabitants of A'rāf see the happiness and joy of the people of the first zone of Paradise and long for it; whereas they see the torments of the inhabitants of Hell in flames and praise God.[128]

We have already seen the theological and Sufi implications of the term *barzaḫ*, which normally marks the boundary between the visible world and the world of pure spirits and God, but would also be conceptualized as an intermediate sphere between the physical and spiritual realms, where the soul (*rūḥ*) takes on a sort of spiritual body according to its situation, and where according to some authors dead souls reside—thus, something similar to limbo or even a sort of Purgatory (the use of the word also to indicate anguish[129] reinforces this suggestion). Since both the souls of the dead and the spirits of the dreamers would coexist in *barzaḫ*, visits of the dead in the dreams of the living could be perfectly justified from a theological-mystical point of view. Sleep, in other words, would be of the same kind as death: 'when sleeping, the soul sees through the dreams the world of *barzaḫ*, where it will also be after death', writes Erzurumī İbrahim Hakkı (d. 1780).[130]

Of course, Sufi circles accommodated this notion to justify and even rationalize their 'valorization of otherworldliness' starting from the end of the sixteenth century. Aslı Niyazıoğlu, to whom we owe this formulation, demonstrates that while posthumous apparitions of saints were already very common before this period, it was then that Sufi circles began to insist on saints' ability to travel through both the visible and spiritual worlds during their lifetime.[131] As early as 1565, Kınalızāde 'Alī wrote:

> It is said that there have been virtuous men who entered paradise while they were in the world of dreams (*cihān-ı vaḳı'a ve 'ālem-i menāmda*)…[But] paradise is of two types: the spiritual paradise of knowledge and the bodily paradise

[128] Evliya Çelebi, eds Dağlı and Kahraman, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, IV. Kitap*, 338 (f. 394b).

[129] Felek (ed.), *Kitābü'l-menāmāt*, 252 (no. 1209: *bu berzahdan bolay ki necât bulayduk*); Enfî Hasan Hulûs Halvetî, eds Tatcı and Yıldız, *Tezkiretü'l-müteahhirîn*, 63 (*iki cihānıñ berzāḫlarından ḫalās oldu*), 83; İsmâil Hakkı Bursevî, eds Muslu and Namlı, *Tamâmü'l-feyz*, 200; 'Azīz Efendi, *Muhayyelât*, ed. Alacatlı, 146; ed. Duymaz, 254 (*bu 'ālem-ı berzaḫta*).

[130] Erzurumī İbrahim Hakkı, *Mā'rifetnāme*, University of Michigan, 328; ed. Meyan, *Mârifetnâme*, 474–475 (*nevm ḥālinde rūḥ ol 'ālem-i berzaḫa rü'yā ile muṭṭali' olmuşdur, kezalik mevt ḥālinde rūḥ ol 'āleme varup seyr ü temāşā ḳılmışdır*).

[131] Niyazioğlu, 'Ottoman Sufi Sheikhs', 216–224.

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> of actions (*cennet-i maʿārif-i rūḥānī ve cennet-i aʿmāl-i cismānī*); the scholar can enter the paradise of knowledge in the present ecstasy, while in the paradise of actions one can only enter in the ecstasy of the other world.[132]

Stories of a 'spiritual journey' (*insilaḫ*) and voluntary abandonment of the body by the spirit, which could thus visit the Hereafter, were increasingly popular in the seventeenth century, particularly in connection with the practice of *ẕikr* (the continual invocation of divine names) in the Bektashi and Ḫalvetī circles.[133] Such beliefs would be rationalized through a complex theology of superimposed worlds, in a way similar to explanations of dreams. For instance, Muṣṭafā Dede, an otherwise unknown early-seventeenth-century Sufi who described his trip to the afterlife, claims that every devout believer could voluntarily perform this journey and experience death while in life, and he described the theory underlying *insilaḫ* in detail. Humans possess a body of darkness (*ẓulmānī cesed*) and one of light (*laṭīf nūrlı cism*): the latter pervades the former like water pervades a fresh flower. This is the soul (*rūḥ*) seized by the Angel of Death and the one that goes to Paradise; the *cism* belongs to the incorporeal world (*ʿālem-i melekūt*) and may travel in 'the world of spirits' (*ervāḥ ʿālemi*) during *insilaḫ*.[134] In even more detail, Bursevī (quoting Ṣadreddīn Ḳonevī) explains:

> The Greatest Sheikh [Ibn ʿArabī] could meet with the spirit of whoever from the prophets, the saints, or other dead people in three ways: if he wished, he would call the spiritual entity (*rūḥānīyyatuhu*) of the deceased to come into this world and take a form similar to the sensual features he had in his worldly life, without any deficiency, wrapped up in his body. If he wished, he would make him appear in his sleep. And if he wished, he would himself depart from his body (*insilaḫ min haykalihi*) and meet [with the desired person] in the celestial world (*al-ʿālam al-ʿulwī*) where the latter would appear in the rank of soul (*martaba nafsihi*)…
>
> Ascent to heaven (*miʿrāj*) happens either with the body and the spirit (*rūḥ*) together or [only] with the spirit and the knowledge (*ʿilm*). The first [sort] is reserved to the Prophet; because he ascended thirty-three times with his spirit, and one time with his body and spirit. The second [sort] happens to the saints as well. Those who are weak ascend in their sleep; those who are powerful ascend while awake in the state of *insilaḫ*.[135]

[132] Kınalızâde Ali Çelebi, ed. Koç, *Ahlâk-ı Alâ'î*, 89. For another discussion of the immortality of the soul and its fate after death, see Nev'i Efendi, eds Procházka-Eisl and Çelik, *Texts on Popular Learning*, 101–104.

[133] Niyazioğlu, 'Ottoman Sufi Sheikhs', 216–224; Kurz, *Ways to Heaven*, 76–77.

[134] Kurz, *Ways to Heaven*, 76–78.

[135] İsmâil Hakkı Bursevî, eds Muslu and Namlı, *Tamâmü'l-feyz*, 319, 519.

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Furthermore, he associates *insilaḫ* with the 'world of images', where dead souls reside:

> The truth of this matter and especially the truth of death can be reached only by the people of *insilaḫ*, for they are free from all fetters. They can look at the world of images (*ʿālam al-miṣāl*) using *insilaḫ* and sleep.[136]

The principles of a theory of metempsychosis had already been formulated by the Illuminationist Sheikh al-Suhrawardī (d. 1191), based on the doctrine that the souls of the dead were transported to this world of images.[137] Moreover, for al-Suhrawardī and his followers, jinn and demons are nothing but wretched human souls, taking on an imaginable body from that world as a stage in the progress of the soul upwards, towards absolute intellect.[138] This theory does not seem to have had any continuators in the Ottoman Empire, except perhaps for some dervishes of nomadic Anatolia, usually associated with the Bektaşī order, who believed in *tenāsuḫ* or metempsychosis.[139] However, we cannot exclude the possibility that there were adherents of this doctrine in late-seventeenth-century Istanbul. Albertus Bobovius or ʿAlī Ufkī (d. 1675), the famous Polish convert courtier and musician, narrated to the English consul Paul Ricaut a story about a druggist arguing that the souls of the deceased enter the bodies of animals, according to their moral characteristics. Allegedly, the druggist had a book 'treating all the distinctions of Nature, and the proper assignments for their habitation after death' and postulated that 'after the Circle of 3,365 years…his Soul [would have] travelled for several Ages through the World' and would at last 'return again to a humane body, more purified and refined than in its first Principles'. According to Rycaut, these are the *Munasihi*, 'a Sect purely Pythagorical, which believes the Metempsychosis or Transmigration of Souls'; they were very few in Istanbul, but many in Cairo.[140] We know that this obscure sect is not Ricaut's invention. Ḥüseyin Hezārfenn (d. 1692), a continuator of Kâtib Çelebi's encyclopedist tradition, seems to have believed in metempsychosis and to have declared to a French scholar that the total number of souls that would circulate in order to animate all mankind was determined by God from the beginning of humanity.[141] Furthermore, the famous mystic Niyāzī-i Mıṣrī (d. 1694) juxtaposes Sufi beliefs about the transformation of souls to the beliefs of the *tenāsuḫī*s, by specifying that the metamorphoses of souls take place in the *barzaḫ*, the intermediate world, and not in

[136] Ibid., 319.
[137] Schmidtke, 'The Doctrine of the Transmigration'; van Lit, *The World of Image*, 63, 107–110; Walbridge, *The Wisdom of the Mystic East*, 73–83. On other Muslim theories of reincarnation, see Alexandrin, 'Rāzī and His Medieval Opponents'; Khalil, 'Which Road to Paradise?'
[138] van Lit, *The World of Image*, 102–103, 107.
[139] Mélikoff, *Sur les traces du soufisme turc*.
[140] Ricaut, *The Present State*, 251–252; Binbaş, *Intellectual Networks*, 287–288.
[141] Yıldırım, 'Comparing Faiths', 216–217.

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this world.[142] These *tenāsuḫī*s may have been Sufis influenced by Suhrawardī, or followers of rural Bektaşī beliefs.

At any rate, belief in the ability of the souls of deceased saints to appear in the real world, and not only in dreams, was quite widespread in Ottoman culture. Undefined 'souls' (*ervāḥ*) coming from the Hereafter, from the invisible world, often appear to aid Muslim armies; examples can be found in the works of Sinan Pasha, Celalzāde Muṣṭafā, and Evliya Çelebi, to name three examples covering 300 years, from the late fifteenth to the late seventeenth centuries. Evliya specifies that he is talking about the souls of ancient martyrs, but the other sources do not identify these spirits with deceased humans.[143] Actually, these are the 'unseen ones' or the 'men from the Unseen' (*ricāl-i ġayb*), the saints (following an elaborate hierarchy that comes from Ibn 'Arabī) who secretly govern the world and appear miraculously for various reasons.[144] A common circular table, found from scholarly works to vernacular prayer-books, was used to show on which days of each month and from which direction these hidden saints would appear to rescue the believer.[145] The 'unseen ones' appear frequently in fiction[146] but also in Evliya Çelebi's mid-seventeenth-century travelogue: for instance, they present themselves with bleeding limbs, mounting lions, buffaloes, dragons, etc. in front of some Armenians in Erciş, who promptly become Muslim.[147] Similarly, Evliya's narration of the capture of Hemedan in 1586 contains an impressive appearance of these secret helpers:

> An army with green standards appears from the side of Nihavend and meddles with the Ottoman ranks. Someone says: 'My Sultan, what kind of soldiers are you, who do not utter a word and whose horses do not whine?' They answer: 'We are the spirits (*ervāḥ*) of the distinguished martyrs of the Holy War of Nihavend.'[148]

As late as the early eighteenth century, a Ḫalvetī text claims that God's fools (*meczūb*) are divided into four classes: the first is 'Azrail's doorkeepers' and the 'army of the plague' (*'asker-i ṭā'ūn ve vebā*) consists of them.[149] It is notable that the latter term, as we saw in Chapter 1, is usually associated with the jinn (as is

[142] Terzioğlu, 'Sufi and Dissident', 393.
[143] See Sariyannis, 'The Dead, the Souls, and the Living'.
[144] Chodkiewicz, *Le Sceau des saints*, 111–143.
[145] Şen, 'Manuscripts on the Battlefields', 103–105; 'Âlī, ed. Özezen, 'Gelibolulu Mustafa Ali'nin *Hilyetü'r-ricâl*'', 69–70 (a work mostly devoted to this hierarchy of saints).
[146] Ambros and Schmidt, 'A Cossack Adopted'.
[147] Evliya Çelebi, eds Dağlı and Kahraman, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, IV. Kitap*, 100 (f. 244b). A similar description—limbs bleeding and all—refers to the army of the jinn: ibid., 334 (f. 393a).
[148] Ibid., 212 (f. 311a). The 'Holy War of Nihavend' is none other than the famous battle of 642 which opened the way for the Muslim conquest of Persia.
[149] Enfî Hasan Hulûs Halvetî, eds Tatcı and Yıldız, *Tezkiretü'l-müteahhirîn*, 135.

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Evliya's reference to bleeding limbs); it seems that all these apparitions of the *ghayb* were somehow confusing the Ottoman spectator as far as their true nature was concerned.

The Dead and the Living

Traditions or stories concerning breaches in the order of life and death were always ambiguous, in the Ottoman Empire as well as in Christian Europe. An important moment was the establishment of Purgatory in Christian theology, towards the end of the fourteenth century, which allowed the tortured souls of the dead to appear in order to ask forgiveness, while another pivotal moment was the Reformation and the sharp debates that followed, leading Protestant authors to reject ghost stories as examples of Catholic irrationalism.[150] For their part, Ottoman theologians could not tolerate the miraculous resurrections that abounded in the biographies of dervishes from Anatolia in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries,[151] and this element seems to have almost disappeared by the sixteenth century (although one can find such miracles even as late as the eighteenth century).[152] For example, let us consider a collection of biographies of sheikhs and holy madmen of Istanbul compiled in 1723 by Ḫalvetī Enfī Ḥasan Ḫulūṣ Efendi, titled *Teẕkiretü'l-müteaḫḫirīn* or 'Biographies of the Contemporaries'. We will not find any miraculous resurrections there, only dervishes foreseeing their own death or the death of others: in other words, having a vision of the invisible world, the *ghayb*, without being able to intervene in it.[153] The only occasion of resurrection concerns an animal rather than a human being: a dervish's dead weasel is resurrected by a holy fool (who explains that 'it wasn't dead, it had only fainted').[154] The weasel, we must note, is an animal often coupled with the human soul: to give an example, the reader will remember Evliya Çelebi's story about Bayezid II's soul that got out of his mouth in the form of a weasel. What is interesting here is that the owner of the animal first takes it to the famous sheikh Ḫalvetī Sivasī Efendi (the main adversary and potential target of Kadızāde Mehmed Efendi); however, Sivasī Efendi refers him to the holy fool in the market. When someone asks Sivasī: 'Since this was your job, why did you send your servant to be embarrassed by [the fool] Mehmed Çelebi?', he answers:

[150] See Black, 'Animated Corpses'; Caciola, 'Wraiths, Revenants'; Caciola, 'Revenants, Resurrection'; Owens, *The Ghost* (focusing on the British case); Klaniczay and Pócs, *Communicating with the Spirits*.

[151] Ocak, *Kültür tarihi kaynağı*, 75–80.

[152] As in the case of a Damascene scholar, Aḥmad al-Naḥlāwī (d. 1744), who brings a boy back to life (Pantić, *Sufism in Ottoman Damascus*, 1).

[153] Enfî Hasan Hulûs Halvetî, eds Tatcı and Yıldız, *Tezkiretü'l-müteahhirîn*, 106, 120, 123–124, 133–134.

[154] Ibid., 134.

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> Words and deeds by the fools (*mecāẕibden*) are excusable by the ulema; but the ulema will not accept our excuses for such words even for the slightest matters.

Nevertheless, we should note that as late as at least the end of the sixteenth century such feats were still tolerated in works of fiction, especially those drawing from folk tradition. Thus, a compilation of stories about Edirne, probably dating from the early sixteenth century and focusing on the fifteenth-century physician Beşir Çelebi, has him encountering a funeral and telling the mourners that the dead person was alive (*meyyit diridür*): he opened the coffin and 'with his wisdom drew some blood from the body; after a while this person opened his eyes and stood up'. Of course, and although the anonymous author cites the opinion of 'some people' that Beşir Çelebi 'had been summoned by God' (*da'vet-i Raḥmāniye vāṣıl olmuştur*), this was not a miracle: as he explained, he had understood that the man was not dead from the weight of the coffin, since 'the dead are heavy and the alive are light'.[155] To cite a more impressive example, in Dervīş Ḥasan Medḥī's 1592/3 account of the legends around Ebū 'Alī Sīnā, the hero instructs his disciple Cālīnos (Galen) how to resuscitate him. Indeed, as soon as Galen starts the procedure, the corpse begins gradually to come back to life: Galen, terrified, stops the procedure, fearing that nobody would remember him if Ebū 'Alī Sīnā became immortal.[156] It must be noted that this 'medical' approach to bringing back the dead can also be seen in hagiographical texts: a disciple of the famous (not least for his occultist feats) Akşemseddin (d. 1459), Abdurraḥīm Ḳaraḥisārī (d. between 1483 and 1494), had learnt 'esoteric medicine' (*baṭīnī ṭıbb*) from his master and rushed to his corpse when he died; had he arrived at once (it took him one hour), he would have brought Akşemseddin's soul back from the heavens.[157]

On the other hand, appearances of deceased saints, mainly in dreams, seem to have multiplied from the second half of the sixteenth century. On one of the last such occasions, in the mid-eighteenth century, thirty-five years after the 'Biographies' of Enfī Ḥasan Ḫulūṣ Efendi, we encounter a very corporeal appearance of a Ḫalvetī sheikh who was executed in Candia, Crete, in 1757. He appears to a Christian shopkeeper and pays off his debts with gold coins, which testify to the reality of the saint's appearance.[158]

Now, just as theologians of the Renaissance and the Reformation had difficulty accepting that the Witch of Endor (1 Samuel 28:3–25) could really have presented the ghost of Samuel to Saul,[159] Ottoman scholars and authors also found it

[155] Erdoğru, 'Hikâye-i Tabib Beşir Çelebi', 176–177.
[156] Medḥī, ed. Öztürk, 'Türk tarihinde İbn-i Sînâ destânları', 160.
[157] Orhan and Akyıldız, 'XV. yüzyıl Osmanlı düşünce hayatında', 35.
[158] Sariyannis, 'The Dead, the Spirits, and the Living', 382. This event is also recorded by Mehmed Hâşim, eds Emecen and Şahin, *Îmâ-yı törehât-ı büldânân*, 37–38. On some similar cases, cf. Pantić, *Sufism in Ottoman Damascus*, 154.
[159] Davis, 'The Witch of Endor'.

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difficult to accept such stories at face value. As noted earlier in this chapter, this is not unrelated to the attacks of the Ḳāḍızādelis against the Sufi and popular practices of visiting the tombs of illustrious men for assistance. In the biographies of Nev'īzāde ʿAṭā'ī (d. 1635), these appearances always retain an ambiguity: it is never certain whether they occurred in a dream (or sometimes in ecstasy) or in reality.[160] Kâtib Çelebi copies several such stories while discussing the longevity or immortality of Ḫıżır, citing Maḥmūd Üsküdārī (d. 1628/9):

> Some mystics, when in a state of purity, see the dead before their eyes…When one of their friends or loved ones has died, they may meet him some time later at the door of the hermitage, and give him greeting. On entering the cell of a certain saint, one said to him, in wonderment, 'I have seen the late Father So-and-so! He came out of your presence and went away!' The reply was, 'My son, you have mastered your soul by discipline and this is the result. I myself have occasionally gone to the market and on entering have beheld the dead more numerous than the living.'[161]

In Balıkesirli Rāsiḫ's (d. 1731) *Bülgatü'l-ahbâb*, a work on manners which provides a veritable mine of information on urban and provincial folklore, we read about a little girl in the author's birthplace village, who died and one day after was resurrected, not by some saint but by God's grace (*bi-emri'llāhı teʿālā rūḥ-yāb olup*). The girl related her journey to the Hereafter, with angels ('birds with green wings'; would this be a metaphor for souls?) showing her around Paradise and Hell and even some dead entrusting her with messages for the living. A similar thing had happened to Rāsiḫ's brother, who however did not recover from 'death': his words were confused and his eyes were like the dead.[162]

Apart from holy apparitions, however, sometimes (but not often) Ottoman sources talk about ghosts, revenants, or spirits; and this is truly a provocation towards Muslim theology. In fact, in the official Islam of the Ottoman era, there is little room for human spirits: that is, the souls of the dead returning among the living. Very few 'ghost stories' are to be found in Ottoman texts,[163] and of course jurists and scholars are adamant against this possibility. A *fetva* of the early eighteenth century, for instance, orders the punishment of someone who claimed to contact the dead in the cemeteries by way of magic:

[160] Niyazioğlu, *Dreams and Lives*, 91ff.; see also Pedani, 'L'idea della morte', 117–118.
[161] Kâtib Çelebi, tr. Lewis, *The Balance of Truth*, 35–36.
[162] Yazar, '*Ve mine'l-müdhişâti'l-acîbe*', 35; Balıkesirli Râsih, ed. Önler, '*Bülgatü'l-ahbâb*', 103–108 (f. 65a).
[163] Sariyannis, 'The Dead, the Spirits, and the Living'; cf. Grehan, *Twilight of the Saints*, 161–163. For an early-twentieth-century 'ghost story' (a skeleton in the grave rattling when thieves attempted to steal her gold teeth), see Haddow, Sadvari, et al., 'Out of Range?', 336–337.

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> If Zeyd goes to a grave and says to some people, 'Come and I will bring you news from the grave; prostrate yourselves humbly a hundred times toward the grave', and makes several men prostrate towards this grave, what should happen to him?
>
> Answer: He must be punished by as many strokes as the kadi judges (*ta'zir*) and prohibited from doing so.[164]

However, Sufi practice did admit this possibility. In a sixteenth-century biography of a Bayrāmī sheikh, there are various instances of a sheikh (or even of commoners) sitting by a grave and communicating with the dead, mostly to learn about their sins and how they are punished.[165] In one of them, the sheikh communicates in a state of trance (*ḥāl diliyle*); in another, he visits a cemetery and sees the dead going to and fro.[166] An early-seventeenth-century Ḫalvetī sheikh defends the practice of visiting tombs by enumerating a number of *hadith*s about the state of the dead, showing that they can hear and respond to the calls of the living, feel their visits, and so on—a belief that was common even among the most rigorous theologians.[167] Indeed, such stories and practices were quite old and established, and apparitions of the dead were not restricted to saints: we read in the late-fifteenth-century *Dürr-i meknūn* that a merchant who wishes to communicate with a deceased sheikh is advised to put his head in the source of Zemzem (in Mecca), on a Friday night, and call him; if the sheikh is from among 'the people of Paradise', he will answer. He does not, so the merchant has to go to Yemen and do the same in a well there; the sheikh, who eventually is in Hell, answers.[168]

Nowhere is this confusion more apparent than in the case of stories of revenants, or even vampires.[169] It is well known that such traditions had long been in circulation among Balkan peoples, and some atypical burials attest to the folk practice of trying to get rid of a revenant by neutralizing the corpse with spikes or burning.[170] One of the earliest textual sources is probably constituted by three *fetva*s by the *şeyhülislam* Ebū's-su'ūd Efendi (d. 1574), dating from the

[164] Tuşalp, 'Treating Outlaws', 72. This *fetva* belongs to Menteşizāde Abdurrahim Efendi, who was a *şeyhülislam* in 1715–1716.

[165] Saruhânî İlyas, eds Küçük and Muslu, *Akhisarlı Şeyh Îsâ menâkıbnâmesi*, 157–158, 162–165, 177, 251.

[166] Ibid., 163, 253.

[167] Curry, *The Transformation*, 231.

[168] Yazıcıoğlu [Anonymous], *Dürr-i meknūn*, ed. Kaptein, 161–162=440–441; ed. Demirtaş, 144–145; ed. Sakaoğlu, 65; ed. Mattei, 89. On the well in Yemen, see Kaptein, 163.

[169] On cases of vampirism in Ottoman literature, see Sariyannis, 'Of Ottoman Ghosts', 194–203; Aycibin, 'Osmanlı devleti'nde cadılar'; Doğan, 'Osmanlı devleti'nde', 229–233; Kırgi, *Osmanlı Vampirleri*; Pedani, 'L'idea della morte', 118–119; Sarpkaya and Yaltırık, *Türk kültüründe vampirler*; Kafadar, '"Vampire Trouble"'. On the case of Orthodox Christian Ottoman populations, see Hartnup, *'On the Beliefs of the Greeks'*; Risteski, 'Categories of the "Evil Dead"'; García Marín, 'Haunted Communities'; Garvie-Lok and Tsaliki, 'The "Vampires" of Lesbos', 297–301.

[170] Garvie-Lok and Tsaliki, 'The "Vampires" of Lesbos'.

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mid-sixteenth century. In the first, he is asked to explain how certain corpses become alive again in their tombs; Ebū's-su'ūd replies that it is not impossible for divine power that 'evil souls' (*nüfûs-ı şerîre*; note that the *şeyhülislam* uses the term *nefs*, the material soul) attach themselves to the corpses of those who resembled them during their lifetime and use them as instruments for evil actions:

> Question: Some people die and after they have been buried, they strip themselves of their shrouds, blood moves into their limbs, their bodies become reddish. Is there any reason for this phenomenon?
>
> Answer: If this is true, it is caused by God's sacred will. There is a saying that 'the wicked souls attach themselves to the corpses of those who, while still living, were connected to them in their morals and practice, using [these corpses] as instruments for evil actions'. This is not improbable for the divine power.

This *fetva* does not specify the religion of the dead, but it can reasonably be assumed that they were Muslims, as Ebū's-su'ūd instructs that the corpse must be covered since 'no harm comes if the corpse is of a Muslim'. But whereas he claims that it is legally prohibited to dig a body out of a grave and burn it, he seems to have changed his mind in the other two *fetva*s. These concern a similar case with the body of an infidel, and this time Ebū's-su'ūd declares that it is a problem too great for the human intellect, before ordering that local customs be followed, by decapitating the corpse etc.:

> Q: In a village near Salonica in Rumelia, an infidel from the class of Christians died. Some days after he was buried, he presented himself in the middle of the night to the door of some of his relatives and acquaintances. He said to them: 'Hey you, come and visit So-and-So with me.' Next day that infidel died in his turn, and after some days he also presented himself to another one, who died as well. In short, many infidels died in this way. If some of the Muslim inhabitants of the village, seeing the undoing of so many infidels, get scared and wish to flee the village, is this legally permissible?
>
> A: It is not. More particularly, after they have observed [the situation] in the town of the infidels, the Muslims should do nothing but refer to the authorities.
>
> Q: In the aforementioned case, please be kind enough to indicate its reason and cause, along with an efficient way of dealing with it.
>
> A: The language falls short and the mind is inadequate to express the reason and cause of such phenomena, and this is not the place to delve into what has been investigated concerning them. The way to stop them is as follows: The same day this happens, people shall go and first nail [the body] to the earth with a single stake through his navel; hopefully the phenomenon will be repelled thus. If not, and if there is still pinkish colour in the corpse, they shall cut off its head and throw it near the feet. [The following] is [also] mentioned in some

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> books: If they find the body looking the same way as they have put it in the grave, they shall cut its throat and leave him that way. If the body has altered its position [later], they shall cut off the head and put it at the end of the feet. In any case, if these measures bring no result, they shall disinter the corpse and burn it. In the times of the righteous ancestors [in the early Islamic era], [corpses] have been burnt time and again.[171]

One may wonder if these *fetva*s have something to do with a probably apocryphal story, related by Greek Orthodox sources, according to which Mehmed II wanted to test the Christians' claim that corpses of excommunicated persons remained intact after death. To this aim, he requested the patriarch Maximos III (in office 1476–1482) to revoke an excommunication imposed on a then long-dead woman, and he marvelled when the corpse did indeed begin to decompose.[172] On the other hand, the explanation of 'apparitions of the dead' as acts of jinn or demons goes back to Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328), whose work Ebū's-su'ūd must have known.[173] A few years later, a short *fetva* by Hoca Sa'deddin (1536/37–1599) allows burning of the corpse of a *cāzū*, if there are signs that evil spirits have entered it.[174]

A few decades later, we have stories of revenants told by the poet Mustafa b. Mehmed Cinānī (d. 1595). In 1590, Cinānī authored a collection of stories, titled *Bedāyi'ü'l-āṣār*, the last part of which is an enumeration of wonders or *mirabilia* (see also below, Chapter 5). From among these stories, the last four are stories of spirits or the dead. There are cases of ghosts, possessed individuals, and demons; in a horrifying story of the dead whose souls (*rūḥ*) enter the body of a dying man, Cinānī explains that 'often a soul or a jinni takes on a corporeal form and speaks'.

> 'In the castle of Dıraç (Durrës) in the province of Albania, if someone—be him infidel or Muslim—falls seriously ill and loses his mind, then, without his knowing and by God's order, the soul of someone who died previously enters his body and starts telling its own troubles [*ahvalini*]. For instance, [the soul] says in the voice of the moribund: "Hey tyrants, why don't you inspect my case? I am So-and-so, son of So-and-so; they torment me greatly in the Hereafter. I had committed this or that sin; my torment is off-limits, and you, you stay in my house and you wear my clothes and you spend my money: why don't you have any prayers read for my soul. Why don't you make any charity for my sake?" Those who know [him] understand… Now if [the ghost] is a Muslim, they bring a learned man, who reads some verses from the Qur'an and drives it away. If it is a

[171] Düzdağ, *Şeyhülislam Ebū's-su'ūd Efendi Fetvaları*, 197–198; Sariyannis, 'On Revenants and Ghosts', 189–190.

[172] Tzedopoulos, 'Orthodox Martyrdom and Confessionalization', 344.

[173] Michot, 'Between Entertainment and Religion', 13. On Ibn Taymiyya's influence on Ebū's-su'ūd, see Sariyannis, *A History of Ottoman Political Thought*, 104–105.

[174] Kırgi, *Osmanlı Vampirleri*, 65.

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> Christian, they bring a priest who reads from the Holy Gospel. Or else, [the ghost] does not cease until the morning.' Thus he related.
>
> Let this not be conceived as farfetched or marvellous, for it has often happened that the soul of a body or a spirit enters [a corporeal form] and speaks, with God's permission. There are many trustworthy narrations about this phenomenon.

The fact that these souls are expelled through the recitation of the Qur'an, if the ghost is a Muslim, or the Gospel, if it is a Christian, is impressive and may point to an actual Albanian tradition, rather than being a result of Cinānī's imagination. Another story that seems like an original folk tradition concerns a maid-servant in the Peloponnese, whose dead master comes and has sexual intercourse with her. The narrator watches over the girl and does indeed see the ghost; he attacks it with an iron skewer, but it disappears, and the girl dies ten years later. Ebū's-su'ūd's *fetva*s are explicitly mentioned in a story of possession by jinn, in which Cinānī repeats the *şeyhülislam*'s explanations about evil souls/spirits that attach themselves to corpses and make them move by bewitching them (*cāzū olmak*):

> There are many stories of this kind, and there is no need to tell them since they are so famous. Many have related, and it cannot be denied, that wicked spirits cling to dead bodies, so that these become enchanted and make strange movements. It is even lawful to nail to the ground by the navel bodies enchanted like this, or to cut their heads, or—if those measures bring no result—to burn them. There are illustrious *fetva*s on this issue by the Grand Mufti Ebū's-su'ūd Efendi.[175]

A few decades later, the preacher Cerrāḥ Şeyḥi (d. 1633) relates a moralistic parable against smoking, in which a community in the Balkans (Rumili) blames the famine on witches/vampires (*cāzū*). Indeed, people start opening the graves and the find the body of a very pious person, who nonetheless had a single vice—namely, smoking—with his hair and nails grown and his eyes 'as big as an apple':

> A witch (*cāzū*) was sitting inside the grave, his head and [lower body] leaning over, sucking [the deceased's] penis like a clay pipe, smoking out of the fire burnt on the belly [of the deceased].[176]

[175] Cinānī, ed. Ünlü, *Bedâyiü'l-âsâr*, 2: 334–337; Sariyannis, 'On Revenants and Ghosts', 190–193. On possession by jinn in Syria and Palestine, cf. Grehan, *Twilight of the Saints*, 147–149; Pantić, *Sufism in Ottoman Damascus*, 87–89; see also above, Chapter 1.

[176] Gürbüzel, *Taming the Messiah*, 195.

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Cases of vampirism continued to appear and it seems that the judicial authorities continued having recourse to the Ebū's-su'ūd's *fetva*s. A work of catechism composed by a Crimean scholar, Ebü'l-Bekā el-Kefevī (d. 1684), contains a section on ritual methods for destroying a vampire, actually copying or adapting Ebū's-su'ūd's *fetva*s. Kefevī's case shows both that these *fetva*s were circulating as a whole and that cases of vampirism might have been reported in the Crimea, prompting him to speak of these methods.[177] In 1701 the judge of Edirne reports some 'signs of evil spirits' upon the grave of a Muslim in a nearby village, and mentions the measures (decapitation, disinterment, and all) as reported in 'the *fetva* of the late Ebū's-su'ūd Efendi concerning such a case among unbelievers'. The anonymous historian who records the judge's report also adds a similar report on signs of vampirism upon the grave of a Muslim woman in Edirne. Two important details should be noted. First, the judge did not take the *fetva* of his illustrious predecessor lightly; after citing it, he hastens to add that he was not able to find such instructions 'in Arabic books'. Secondly, the responses of the authorities (the governor in the first case and the *subaşı* in the second) explicitly state that in both cases there are unfounded fantasies and fears; even if applying local customs (e.g. decapitating the body) may be considered necessary, it is only a measure intended to reassure terrified inhabitants, especially infidels[178] (let us note here, *en passant*, that Habsburg authorities used the same measures to deal with local traditions).[179] Some more cases are related in Balıkesirli Rāsiḫ's *Bülgatü'l-ahbâb* (1720): Rāsiḫ describes the measures to be taken, quoting not Ebū's-su'ūd but Pîr Mehmed Üskübî's (d. 1611) *fetva*s, and claims that such phenomena take place especially in the Balkans and particularly in Skopje and Serres. However, he also cites some cases among Armenians of his birthplace, Balıkesir. Finally, Rāsiḫ proceeds to his own explanation of such phenomena (very near to Ebū's-su'ūd's), attributing them to demons (*şeyāṭīn*) who are able to possess human bodies.[180] Finally, at the end of the eighteenth century, Mehmed Hāşim's travelogue is replete with revenant stories: he mentions a rich merchant who oppressed the poor in Tekirdağ and who, after his death, appeared to several people. His corpse was burnt, presumably with a judicial decree. Even more detailed is his account of vampires in the Bulgarian town of Yeni Pazar/Novi Pazar. Mehmed Hāşim describes the tradition matter-of-factly, without recourse to jinn: 'when they die, they became *cadu* and their evil souls (*ervāḥ-i ḫabīsi*) visit the houses at night'. These vampires drink children's blood until they burst

[177] Kırgi, *Osmanlı Vampirleri*, 80–89.

[178] Köhbach, 'Ein Fall von Vampirismus'; Sariyannis, 'On Revenants and Ghosts', 193–194. On a couple of early-nineteenth-century cases, see also Ursinus, 'Osmanische Lokalbehörden'; Sariyannis, 'Of Ottoman Ghosts', 196–203; Kırgi, *Osmanlı Vampirleri*, 104–106.

[179] Mézes, 'Georg Tallar and the 1753 Vampire Hunt'.

[180] Yazar, '*Ve mine'l-müdhişâti'l-acîbe*', 35–36; Balıkesirli Râsih, ed. Önler, '*Bülgatü'l-ahbâb*', 103–104 (ff. 65a–66a).

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from it. They can only be repelled by the expert *cadıcı*s, who pass on their art from father to son: they use a combination of magic to discover the vampires and then slay them by piercing them with a stick. A vampire was even working as a butcher in nearby Pravadi/Provadia, one year after his death. It is noteworthy that Mehmed Hâşim uses both the terms *cadu* and *vampir*, as he had lived for a long time in this area.[181] These legends must have left a deep impression upon the Ottoman imagination, as metaphors like 'evil spirits rising from the grave' can be seen even in descriptions of enemy officers by a late-seventeenth-century Ottoman diplomat.[182]

On the other hand, Evliya Çelebi's description of nocturnal battles between Circassian vampires (*obur*) leaves no doubt about his belief in the possibility of revenants. Evliya's story concerns a sort of 'witches' Sabbath' in the Obur mountains, between Circassia and Abkhazia in the Caucasus.[183] He claims being an eyewitness to a fight between the *obur*s of the Circassian and the Abkhazian tribes, which took place in 1666 (in fact, Evliya gives the exact date: 20 Şevval 1076, which corresponds to 24 or 25 April). *Obur*s, he explains, are the wizards and sorcerers of these tribes (*oburları, ya'ni seḥḥār ve seḥereleri…obur dėmek seḥḥār cāzūlara dėrlermiş*); the Abkhazian ones started the attack, flying upon every kind of house utensil, while their Circassian counterparts were flying on dead horses and ship masts, armed with snakes and the heads of various animals (humans included). The fierce battle lasted for six hours, until the cocks crowed. The next day, Evliya and his companions visited the battlefield and found it full of every conceivable utensil, corpses of various animals, corpses of dead people out of their graves, and so on. This, reminiscent of European descriptions as it may be, might be little more than an entertaining story; or else, it could reflect actual shamanistic beliefs. What follows, on the other hand, is very similar to the Balkan vampire tales:

> There is no plague in these lands. Whenever a man gets a little sick, or even if he doesn't, in the *ḳara ḳonco[lo]z* nights the *obur*s drink the blood of the desired sick or healthy person…killing him; thus, *obur*s may become normal (*obur oburluğundan ḫalāṣ olur*), although the signs of their *obur*ship (*obur 'alāmeti*) stay in their eyes.
>
> In this region there are Circassian wise old men who can discern an *obur*, i.e. who can tell a wizard (*obur tanıtıcı ya'ni cādī siḥirbāz bilici*). The relatives of the dead give them money, and they go to the graves of recently deceased *obur*s to

[181] Mehmed Hâşim, eds Emecen and Şahin, *Îmâ-yı törehât-ı büldânân*, 152, 190–191.
[182] Güllüoğlu, 'Dämonen, böse Geister', 298–302.
[183] Evliya Çelebi, eds Dağlı, Kahraman, and Dankoff, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, VII. Kitap*, 279–280 (ff. 151b–152a). Cf. Bacqué-Grammont, 'Evliyâ Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi'nde büyü', 90; Sariyannis, 'Of Ottoman Ghosts', 197–199; Yaşar, 'Evliya Çelebi in the Circassian Lands'; Kafadar, '"Vampire Trouble"'. *Obur* might be a Turkic root, from which the Slavic *vampir* originated: see the recent studies by Ragagnin, 'Is "Vampire" a Turkic Word?'; Stachowski and Stachowski, 'Possibly Oriental Elements'.

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> check the ground for signs that these latter ones went out of their tombs. And indeed, when the people gather and dig the grave, they see that [the *obur*'s] eyes are like cups full of blood, and that their face has become all red from the human blood they have drunk. Then they take the filthy corpse of the cursed *obur* out of the grave and they nail a wooden stake into his navel; with God's help, the magic is thus destroyed. And the man whose blood the *obur* had been drinking is saved from death… But some people, even after having found the *obur* in his grave and nailed thus his corpse… take the filthy carcass, with the stake still in his navel, and burn it, lest another living *obur* enter the body.

Evliya goes on explaining that whenever someone suspects an *obur* of drinking his blood, these wise *obur*-tellers check the suspect's eyes. If they are full of blood, the *obur* is bound in chains until he starts to confess: 'Yes, it was me that drank So-and-So's blood… When I was buried next to my *obur* grandfathers and my *obur* fathers, my body did not rot; and sometimes I flew to the skies to fight; and I did all this in order to live more (*çoḳ yaşamaḳ içün ėtdim*).' Evliya adds that these *obur*s form a separate lineage (*soy*), refusing to enter into marital relations with the rest of the Circassians, and that most of these *obur*s live in the Moscovian, Cossack, Polish, and Czech lands; but 'it is certain that they are the *ḳara ḳoncolos* of the Ottoman territories (*Rūm'da*)'. Some fifty years later, Balıkesirli Rāsiḥ also refers to *uyur*, obviously misreading a source (Sadık Yazar suggests this could be nothing other than Evliya's text): he claims that they are famous in the 'enemy lands' and in Russia, and that they are yet another sort of 'evil souls' (*ervāḥ-ı ḫabīse*). They are not dead; they are like the living, resembling sorcerers but being of another kind (*meyyitden değül belki ḥayātda gezer ādemlerden olup gūyā seḥḥār nev'inden bir nev'dür fe-emmā seḥḥār daḫı degül*), and they walk around as if they were asleep.[184]

It is difficult to know to what extent Evliya shares these beliefs or if he follows the conventions of a literary genre, combining supposedly true stories with recreational interventions. Yet, it seems that stories with revenants were, after all, rather common in Ottoman literature. Cemal Kafadar recently suggested that the rise of the vampire as a blood-sucking creature of its own kind from the mid-seventeenth century onwards (Evliya's *obur* is of this sort, in contrast to the earlier revenants) may be associated with a concern of liminality and purity or contamination that was especially relevant for the Balkans during this period.[185]

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[184] Yazar, '*Ve mine'l-müdhişâti'l-acîbe*', 37; Balıkesirli Râsih, ed. Önler, '*Bülgatü'l-ahbâb*', 107 (ff. 67b–68a).

[185] Kafadar, '"Vampire Trouble"'. The emergence of blood-sucking vampires as a novelty is also noted in Christian Europe: Vermeir, 'Vampirisme, corps mastiquants', 1–2; cf. the remarks by Klaniczay, 'Decline of Witches and Rise of Vampires'. Aycibin, 'Osmanlı devleti'nde cadılar', proposes a connection of the vampirism cases with the problem of internal migration (i.e. that these stories were used as a pretext for the villagers to flee, hence the direct reaction of the state).

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Thus, whereas Islamic thought had produced a theory of miracles as events that break the usual order of things (at the same time as the similar scholastic theory of medieval Europe), the history of Ottoman sainthood contained two parallel lines: on the one hand, Sufi sheikhs who claimed more and more miraculous deeds and appearances in their everyday life throughout the fourteenth to early seventeenth centuries; on the other, a strong movement rallied around (but not exclusive to) the Ḳāḍızādeli preachers, which advocated a pietistic, catechetic approach that directly aimed against a large proportion of these sheikhs and favoured a disenchanted view of reality, where miracle had little place. In the course of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, it seems, this approach eventually won the day, since even Sufis belonging to the Ḫalvetī or the Mevlevī order, the Ḳāḍızādelis' main opponents, gradually quit miracle-working and preferred to claim more esoteric miracles: visions, dreams, or examples of a strong guide–disciple relationship.

Dreams, on the other hand, often involved the appearance of the dead: and from a theological or philosophical point of view this might present serious problems, as the fate of the soul after death was meticulously described in the Sunni tradition. The meeting of the dreamer's soul with souls of the dead was made possible either by recourse to the different levels of existence, with the human soul being able to reach (during sleep or *insilaḫ*) an intermediary level where the dead also resided, by invoking God's Tablet, where all knowledge was written and of which the human spirit could have a taste, or, finally, by resort to the Illuminationist theory of *ʿālem-i miṡāl*, the 'world of images'. More serious challenges to the theological premisses, such as traditions of revenants (vampires) or ghosts, were mostly dealt with thanks to the belief in jinn and various spirits; still, some possibilities for the spirits of the dead to visit this world remained open in some philosophical or mystic approaches. Our analysis has highlighted the ways in which scholars tried to find loopholes and justifications in order to interpret these phenomena, which more often than not they did not doubt, and to make traditions and customs valid from a legal and theological point of view.

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PART II

ESTABLISHING HUMAN CONTROL

3
Occult Sciences in Ottoman Knowledge

So far, we have studied things perceived as supernatural. It is crucial for our subject to examine also the field of magic or rather of occult sciences: that is, the ways and practices of connecting with the supernatural, conceptualizing and explaining, or even controlling it. The subject of this part of the book will therefore be the belief in the possibility of manipulating natural forces and states (including visions of the future) by the use of (usually, but not always, secret) knowledge and supernatural powers—through magic, miracle-working, appealing to supernatural entities, etc. In this chapter, I will study what can be described as the theory of occult knowledge: the place of occult sciences in theories of knowledge and nature, the various ways these sciences were meant to work, as well as the polemics against them.

Occult Sciences and Their Epistemology

Occult practices of divination such as astrology, bibliomancy, and the interpretation of dreams were widely used, and encyclopedists such as Taşköprüzâde (d. 1561) and Kâtib Çelebi (d. 1657) described magic and divination as branches of science, following, in a way, older taxonomies. Ottoman interpretations were based, on the one hand, on conjuring and commanding of (or protection from) jinn and demons, and on the other, on knowing the secret hierarchies and relationships dominating the whole of the cosmos, from human beings to the metals, plants, and stars. Here, the so-called 'supernatural' again seems to melt into what is deemed natural; what distinguishes this notion from the natural is its 'strangeness' or 'marvellousness': that is, the inability of the ordinary human mind to perceive a hidden reality. Occult sciences transcended the modern dichotomy between 'scientific' and 'irrational' explanation: they were developed in continuous dialogue with the 'rational' sciences, and occultism was a stage rather than a permanent feature in this process. This is why we shall begin with the relevant vocabulary, and then proceed to an analysis of the position occult sciences held in Ottoman taxonomies of knowledge: that is, encyclopedias.

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Terminology

There is a general Arabic term that refers to all occult arts, divinations of all kinds, astrology, physiognomy, and magic, but also prestidigitation:[1] it is *ʿilm al-ghayb*, or the science of unseen things, knowledge of the invisible (we also find *al-ʿulūm al-ḫafiyya*, 'the hidden sciences', here with the more hermetic meaning of occult knowledge). Another similar term, *al-ʿulūm al-gharība*, refers to 'strange' or extraordinary sciences.[2] We have seen the origins of these two terms in the previous chapters: *ghayb* means the supernatural domain in the broadest sense, while *gharīb* is rather the wonderful, perhaps the preternatural. What unites all these sciences under the same term is that they are conceived (as Maxime Rodinson says) as methods of 'producing phenomena that are strange, contrary, or inaccessible to normal experience'.[3] Travis Zadeh highlights the importance, relevance, and endurance of the term *al-ʿulūm al-gharība*, or 'strange sciences', that came to encompass all or most of this sort of knowledge by the late medieval period. By connecting this term to the cosmographic literature on 'wonders', Zadeh showcases the fact that these sciences were thus considered as based on measurable and explorable relations in the cosmos, rather than an ontological difference between magic and natural course.[4] We will see more of these categorizations later on.

The usual Arabic term for 'magic' is *siḥir/siḥr*, and the magician is *sāḥir*. The term appears in the Qur'an always in a negative sense, usually in passages seeking to juxtapose it with Muhammad's prophecy, miracles, healing, or foretelling, as well as in the famous story of the Pharaoh's magicians and their competition with the prophet Moses. In the same vein, Muhammad is juxtaposed to the various soothsayers or *kāhin*. Whereas in many cases *siḥir* may just refer to trickery and sleight of hand, and the *kāhin* may be communicating with jinn who may (unreliably) know the future, there are also some clues that *siḥir* has a supernatural element: it is taught to humanity by two (fallen) angels, Hārūt and Mārūt (although the science 'revealed to the two angels' is not named in the Qur'an; it is specified in later texts), and some prayers protecting believers from evil seem to imply malevolent magic. Prophetic tradition also refers to *ruqya*, or enchantment: the term implies prophetic healing in some cases, exorcism against jinn in others.[5] The

[1] On the Islamicate terminology of magic, see Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften*, 359–364; Günther and Pielow, 'Magie im Islam', 39–43; Otto, 'Magie im Islam'; Saif and Leoni, 'Introduction', 2–7.

[2] Thus, Kâtib Çelebi, in a marginal note on a translation from Latin, writes that 'magia (*mācyā*) is the "hidden sciences", such as magic, letter magic or science of properties' (Kâtib Çelebi, *Târih-i Frengi*, 18). Cf. Mahmud Efendi, ed. Tunalı, *Atina tarihi*, 360, where the *ʿulūm-ı ġarībe* include astrology, talismanics, and the knowledge of properties.

[3] Rodinson, 'La Place du merveilleux', 176.

[4] Zadeh, 'Postscript'.

[5] See the short survey by Knight, *Magic in Islam*, 33–46; more details in Coulon, *La Magie*, 29–48. On the *kāhin*, see also Fahd, *La Divination arabe*, 91–104. For a re-evaluation of *siḥr* in a positive light by the *Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ*, see Saif, 'A Study'.

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canonical prohibition of magic, under pain of death, was a point on which all four schools of Islamic law agreed. However, here one must be careful not to approach the subject in modern terms: the term *siḥr*, witchcraft, does not encompass everything we designate as magic.[6] For the tenth-century 'Brethren of Purity', or *Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'*, magic or *siḥr* is 'clarifying and revealing the reality of a thing and causing it to manifest', but also 'speed and precision in action', meaning that it includes 'telling what will happen before its occurrence' (i.e. divination) and 'altering essences and violating norms' (including prestidigitation and trickery);[7] for Maslama al-Qurṭubī, author of the famous *Ghāyat al-ḥakīm* (known in the West as *Picatrix*), it is 'all that which bewitches the intelligences and [all] the words and operations that souls obey in the sense of wonder, submission, obedience and approval', ultimately 'that whose cause is hidden from the intelligence of the greatest number'.[8]

In medieval occultist bibliography, this terminology was blended with other more or less obscure terms of Persian origin: *jāẕū* (Ott. Turkish *cāẕū*), 'sorcerer'; *efsūn*, 'incantations'; *nārenjāt* or *nīranjāt* (Ott. Turkish *nārencāt*), a term later associated with magic using the properties (*ḫawāṣṣ*) of the natural realm;[9] and perhaps above all *simyā*, usually associated with the manipulation of letters and talismanic practices to create illusions and magic results.[10] Finally, there were also some more specific terms for particular practices: these include *raml* (Ott. Turkish *reml*), 'geomancy'; *wafḳ* (Ott. Turkish *vefḳ*), 'magic squares'; *jafr* (Ott. Turkish *cifr*), an obscure science of letters and numbers; and so on.

We will see more details about these practices later; for the moment, let us take a short survey of the use of this terminology in Ottoman literature.[11] Inevitably, the references to Pharaoh's sorcerers (*Fir'avn'ıñ seḥereleri*) or Hārūt's *siḥr* point to a reproachable practice.[12] The tradition is enriched with new findings, such as that Noah's son Ham learnt magic (*siḥr*) from one of Cain's daughters and taught it to his children, who were thus associated with Satan: this is the story narrated in a mid-eighteenth-century treatise against Black Africans.[13] More generally, terms as *siḥr*, *kāhin*, and *cāẕū* are usually associated with evil practices of the pre-Islamic past, or of wild regions far away: inhabitants of an unidentified city in the

[6] See the interesting remarks by Knight, *Magic in Islam*; Otto, 'Magie im Islam'; Zadeh, 'Postscript'.
[7] Saif, 'A Study', 171. [8] Coulon, 'The *Kitāb Sharāsīm al-Hindiyya*', 339.
[9] See Coulon, *La Magie*, 148–149.
[10] On the development of the term, see Coulon, 'The *Kitāb Sharāsīm al-Hindiyya*', 336–345.
[11] I do not delve into the uses of the terminology of magic in poetry, which constitutes a promising field in its own right: Levend, *Divan edebiyatı*, 189–237; Karaman, 'Klasik Türk edebiyatında sihir'.
[12] E.g. [Evliya Çelebi], eds Dankoff, Tezcan, and Sheridan, *Ottoman Explorations of the Nile*, 221; Evliya Çelebi, eds Kahraman, Dağlı, and Dankoff, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, X. Kitap*, 423; İsmâil Hakkı Bursevî, eds Muslu and Namlı, *Tamâmü'l-feyz*, 44; Yazıcıoğlu [Anonymous], *Dürr-i meknūn*, ed. Kaptein, 270=526; ed. Demirtaş, 196; ed. Sakaoğlu, 107; ed. Mattei, 140 (where the Pharaoh's magicians are *cādūs*).
[13] Dervīş 'Abdullāh, ed. Sayan, 'Osmanlı saray hayatı hakkında', 22–23; Tezcan, '*Dispelling the Darkness* of the *Halberdier's Treatise*', 52.

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Sahara 'know of magic' (*siḥir bilürler*) and can 'enchant' wild animals (*cāẕūluk ḳılurlar*), in a late-fourteenth-century cosmography, and similar witchcraft and foretelling is practised in Yemen by *kāhin*s;[14] in Ahmedī's (d. 1413) *İskendernāme*, Alexander arrives at a region full of *cāẕū*s, who try to stop him from finding the water of life with *siḥr*;[15] *cādū*s make the principal opponent of Sarı Saltuk in the late fifteenth-century epic *Saltuknāme*;[16] *cādū*s of Nimrud's Babylon and Ankur, the wizard-king of the Maghrib (*Maġrib pādişāhı Anḳur Cādī*) are described in a fifteenth-century cosmography;[17] Evliya Çelebi talks of an ancient city in Egypt, 'originally the city of the crone Azraq Jadu (Blue Witch)' (*'acūz Azraḳ Cāzū*), because of which 'the women make asses out of the men using their rebellious magic (*siḥr*)'.[18] Evliya also speaks of two Egyptian foretellers (*kehene*), named Ḳalimūn and Mıṣrāyim, on board of Noah's ark,[19] and as late as *c.*1740 a *müfti* adapting a Greek history of ancient Athens mentions the oracle at Delphi ('in a monastery in a town called Salona near Livadeia in Rumili') and its *kāhin*s.[20]

The term *cāẕū* deserves more particular attention; whereas it denotes a generic term for wizards or sorcerers (from a Persian word for witchcraft), always associated with evil powers, it sometimes seems to have more specific connotations. First, despite the gender-blind nature of Ottoman Turkish, it often denotes female witches, as early as in sixteenth-century fiction,[21] a meaning that is recorded in the 1835 Ottoman–French dictionary by Jean Daniel Kieffer and Thomas-Xavier Bianchi. Secondly, by the late seventeenth or, at the latest, by the beginning of the eighteenth century it seems to have acquired the meaning of 'vampire', as we saw in Chapter 2.[22]

Yet, not all magical arts were considered evil. We will see later some aspects of the licitness of magic, or debates upon it. From the point of view of vocabulary, even *siḥir* can be a concept that is neutral at worst, positive at best. Evliya mentions a cave of birds, where migrating birds sacrifice some among them in homage to a mummified birds' cemetery, with these words: 'a wondrous act of

[14] Ali b. Abdurrahman, ed. Yıldıran, "Acâ'ibü'l-mahlūkât (106.–140. varak)', 66 (f. 116b), 71 (f. 121a), 72–73 (ff. 121b–122a).

[15] Ahmedî, eds Akdoğan and Kutsal, *İskendernâme*, 937–938.

[16] Aydoğan, '*Gāzī*s and *Cādū*s at the Margins'.

[17] Yazıcıoğlu [Anonymous], *Dürr-i meknūn*, ed. Kaptein, 189=459 (Babylon), 199=468 (Maghrib); ed. Demirtaş, 156, 161; ed. Sakaoğlu, 74, 79; ed. Mattei, 101, 106.

[18] [Evliya Çelebi], eds Dankoff, Tezcan, and Sheridan, *Ottoman Explorations of the Nile*, 61=374, 241; Evliya Çelebi, eds Kahraman, Dağlı, and Dankoff, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, X. Kitap*, 436.

[19] Evliya Çelebi, eds Kahraman, Dağlı, and Dankoff, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, VIII. Kitap*, 335 (f. 374a).

[20] Mahmud Efendi, ed. Tunalı, *Atina tarihi*, 98, 139, 197, 319–320; also for other ancient oracles: ibid., 153. See also Mehmed Hâşim, eds Emecen and Şahin, *Îmâ-yı törehât-ı büldânân*, 36, on an ancient sorcerer taking possession of Crete using *siḥir* and *efsūn*.

[21] Medḥī, eds Çakır and Koncu, *XVI. yüzyıldan bir aşk hikâyesi*, 25–27.

[22] Ursinus, 'Osmanische Lokalbehörden'; Doğan, 'Osmanlı devleti'nde', 221–222; Sariyannis, 'Of Ottoman Ghosts', 196–203 and, more particularly for the history of the term, 203–204 and fn35. The term is used for female witches, with no vampire connotations, in plays of the shadow theatre: Kurt and Gümüş, 'Tekinsiz perde', 276–278.

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divination, an ancient talisman that remains effective in the present day—truly white magic!' (*ʿacīb ü ġarīb kâr-i kehene-i ḳadīm muṭalsam mü'essere-i ʿaẕīmdir…siḥr-i iʿcāzdır*).[23] In ʿAzīz Efendi's late-eighteenth-century novel, a tower is built in a miraculous way that couples *siḥir* and *simyā*,[24] and indeed these two terms are often examined as a pair, either juxtaposing evil to good or, more simply, two different kinds of magic. Thus, in Medḥī's stories about Ebū ʿAlī Sīnā, *simyā* is similar to *siḥr* (*simyā daḫi siḥir mertebesindedir*), but the former is pure (*pāklık ile*) whereas the latter is impure and practised by witches (*cāḏū*); as the hero says, 'I am not a magician, knowledge is my work' (*ben sāḥir değilim, benim işim maʿrīfetimdir*)—and, of course, *simyā* prevails over *siḥr*.[25] In Taşköprüzāde's encyclopedia, *siḥr* exploits the hidden correspondences of nature whereas *sīmyā'* uses those of the 'world of images'; however, a magician (*sāḥir*) may practise *sīmyā'*. The examples that he gives of the latter have to do with transformations or rather transmogrifications (frogs appearing as pigs and so forth).[26] On the other hand, there are instances (especially in Evliya's work) when *simyā*, together with *siḥr* but also *kimyā* (alchemy), has evil connotations: in one story, a magician in Bitlis uses a spell (*efsūn*) to turn a log into an emaciated but wonderfully fast horse. The khan of Bitlis 'is worried that [the] Pasha will get wind of the fact that this horse was produced through sorcery, and will think that the Khan has people who practise sorcery and alchemy and magic' (*siziñ paşa bu atıñ simyā ile ḥāṣıl olduğun istimāʿ ėderse ḫānıñ simyācıları ve kimyācıları ve siḥirbāzları var imiş dėr*);[27] later, Evliya himself calls the same person *simyāyī* and compares him to Ebū ʿAlī Sīnā in the science of *simyā*, but eventually the Khan brutally executes him as *siḥirbāz*.[28] Again, it is *simyā* that transforms a goat into an Arab slave boy.[29]

Other terms, usually meant in a neutral sense (*efsūn*, *nārincāt*), can also be used with a negative, specifically non-Islamic or rather un-Islamic meaning, such

[23] [Evliya Çelebi], eds Dankoff, Tezcan, and Sheridan, *Ottoman Explorations of the Nile*, 210; Evliya Çelebi, eds Kahraman, Dağlı, and Dankoff, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, X. Kitap*, 414.

[24] ʿAzīz Efendi, *Muhayyelât*, ed. Alacatlı, 56; ed. Duymaz, 194 (*bu maḳūle efʿāl fiʿl-i beşerden olmayıp siḥir ve simyādan eşer idüği nümāyāndır*).

[25] Medḥī, ed. Öztürk, 'Türk tarihinde İbn-i Sînâ destânları', 99, 122, 128. The science of *simyā* prevails over magic (*siḥr*) in ʿAzīz Efendi's work as well, two centuries later (ʿAzīz Efendi, *Muhayyelât*, ed. Alacatlı, 90; ed. Duymaz, 217). However, the same author combines all kinds of magic to juxtapose them to real miracles: *bu aḥvāl, siḥir ve simyā ve efsūn ve hulyā değildir* (ed. Alacatlı, 107; ed. Duymaz, 229).

[26] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-saʿāda*, 1: 340–341; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuatʿül-ulûm*, 309. The two branches are also cited together by Kâtib Çelebi under the group of 'hidden sciences' (Kâtib Çelebi, *Târih-i Frengi*, 18).

[27] Evliya Çelebi, eds Dağlı and Kahraman, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, IV. Kitap*, 61 (f. 221b); Evliya Çelebi, *An Ottoman Traveller*, 119–121, 126–130.

[28] Evliya Çelebi, eds Dağlı, Kahraman, and Sezgin, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, V. Kitap*, 17–19 (ff. 11a–12a).

[29] Evliya Çelebi, eds Kahraman, Dağlı, and Dankoff, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, VIII. Kitap*, 274–275 (ff. 339b–340a).

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as in the context of the story about the false prophet Musaylima al-Kadhdhāb.[30] But, more usually it seems, terms pointing to specific branches of occult knowledge would be preferred by their practitioners or propagators. Thus, İlyas b. Īsā Sarūḫānī (d. 1559) relates that his father, Īsā Akhisarī, was given three books of magic by an Iranian dervish, Muhammed Bedaḫşānī: one on *ʿilm-i tesḫīr* (literally 'subjugation', meaning control of either jinn and spirits or of astral and natural forces), one on *ʿilm-i vefḳ* (magic squares), and one on *ʿilm-i meşāyiḫ ve meʿārif ve taʿbīrāt* (mystical knowledge and, more particularly, interpretation of dreams and other signs).[31] Uzun Firdevsī, author of *Daʿvetnāme*, a late-fifteenth-century manual of magic, describes his recipes as 'incantations, natural magic, and talismans' (*ʿazīmet ve nār-ı necāt* [recte: *nārencāt*] *ve ṭılısmāt budur*);[32] here I translate *nārencāt* as 'natural magic', although the term can carry various meanings, as when in an anonymous compilation it describes the calculation of one's astral and other features according to the letters of one's name, in order to use them for enchantment.[33] In the same vein, *simyā*, which normally indicated a degree of manipulation of appearances through the knowledge of letters and talismans, can be coupled with the 'science of concealment' (*ʿilm-i iḫfā*) but also with *ʿilm-i tesḫīr* (both examples from Medḥī's sixteenth-century account of the Ibn Sina legend).[34] After all, Sarūḫānī's *Ḳavāʿid-i tesḫīrāt* (the rules of subjugation) is actually a compendium of lettrist theory and method.[35]

At any rate, except in specialized treatises, the names of various branches of what we would (in an 'etic' approach) consider magic could be interchangeable. To describe a magician or rather an entertainer (*pehlivān*) who performs tricks of hypnotism and prestidigitation, Evliya uses the words *efsūn*, *siḥr-i füsūn*, *siḥr-i ʿcāz*, *siḥr-i ġarīb*, and also *simyā*.[36] Significantly, these are not *ʿilm* or 'sciences', but rather 'arts and crafts', *maʿrifet* or *ṣanʿat*, except for one reference to *ʿilm-i simyā*. A late-eighteenth-century author who seems to take magic quite seriously, 'Azīz Efendi, on the other hand, consistently uses the term *fenn*, rather than *ʿilm* (or 'science', rather than 'knowledge'), in an enumeration of 'enchantment, talismanics, letter science, and invocations' (*fenn-i tesḫīr ve ṭılsımāt ve simyā ve gazāyimāt*).[37]

[30] Sarıkaya (ed.), *Tercüme-i Acâibü'l-mahlūkat*, 340: *efsūnlar oḳurdı ve ḥīle ve nārincāt ʿilmin ṭaleb ederdi*.

[31] Saruhânî İlyas, eds Küçük and Muslu, *Akhisarlı Şeyh Îsâ menâkıbnâmesi*, 230–231.

[32] Firdevsī, ed. Büyükkarcı, *Firdevsī-i Ṭavīl and His Daʿvet-nāme*, 169.

[33] Esen, 'An Ottoman Miscellany', 267–268 (f. 75a). The text edited by Bekar and Güngör, '16. yüzyıla ait bir tılsım kitabı', 915–917, contains a long prayer supposed to bring angels to assist the applicant; the prayer is termed *duʿā'ü'n-necāt mine'n-nār*, in an interesting inversion of the original term.

[34] Medḥī, ed. Öztürk, 'Türk tarihinde İbn-i Sînâ destânları', 71–72, 80 and *passim*.

[35] Saruhânî, ed. Kaçar, 'İbn-i İsa'nın *Ḳavāʿid-i tesḫīrāt*'.

[36] Evliya Çelebi, eds Kahraman and Dağlı, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, III. Kitap*, 69–70 (ff. 42a–b); also *maʿrifet* in Evliya Çelebi, eds Dağlı, Kahraman, and Sezgin, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, V. Kitap*, 18 (f. 11b). A fifteenth-century manuscript dealing with the arts of prestidigitation uses the term *hiyel*, i.e. 'tricks': And, *Magic in Istanbul*, 11.

[37] 'Azīz Efendi, *Muhayyelât*, ed. Alacatlı, 82; ed. Duymaz, 212. On these terms, cf. Shefer-Mossensohn, *Science Among the Ottomans*, 28–30.

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We may put an end to this enumeration of ambiguities and linguistic flexibilities with two last points. First, all these magical arts might equally be the object of state persecution, and in such cases the authorities had no problem listing malevolent or at any rate non-Islamic magic (*siḥr*, the *kāhin*s) alongside what were usually considered branches of natural sciences (but could be practised by charlatans), such as astrology or geomancy.[38] Secondly, the categorizations listed above seem increasingly irrelevant during the eighteenth century, as when we read of 'wise men, enchanters, and sorcerers' (*ḥükemā ve efsūngerān ve sāḥirler*) in 'Azīz Efendi's *Muḥayyelāt*.[39] In the famous official gazette of the Tanzimat period, *Takvīm-i veḳāyi'*, in 1831, the French expression 'la clé de cette énigme' is translated as *ṭılsımıñ miftāḥı*, 'the key of the talisman' (in a completely non-magical context), although in the same issue there are references to Mahmud II's miraculous powers (*kerāmet*).[40]

Encyclopedias

Ottoman encyclopedism boomed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, more often than not following previous traditions of Islamicate cultures, among them primarily the one established by the 'Brethren of Purity', or *Ikhwān al-ṣafā'*, of the late tenth century and the neo-Aristotelian tradition formulated by Avicenna (Ibn Sīna, d. 1037) and his followers.[41] In general, these traditions followed the division of the world into a supralunary and a sublunary part, which we saw in Chapter 1 above. Accordingly, in Avicenna's model, physics or natural sciences belonged to the sublunary world (termed *al-'ulūm al-adnā*, the 'lower sciences'), while mathematics, music, and astronomy were of the superlunary one (termed *al-'ulūm al-awsāṭ*, the 'middle sciences').[42] Metaphysics and theology seem to have belonged to a third level, God's domain. This meant that sciences grouped together with mathematics seem to have had a higher status than those grouped with natural sciences; this is especially valid for astrology, as a result of

[38] E.g. *remmal ve veffāḳ ve kehene tā'ifesinden olup…remmalcılıḳ ve falcılık* (1695, Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, MD 107, entries 9–10); *ciffār ve veffāḳ ve müneccim geçinüb* (1699, Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, MD 111, entry 371); *nücūm ve teshīr töhmetiyle* (1712, Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, MD 117, entry 904); *siḥr ve 'ilm-i nücūm ve deke meşğul* (1712, Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, MD 116, entries 158, 1043)

[39] 'Azīz Efendi, *Muhayyelât*, ed. Alacatlı, 6; ed. Duymaz, 161.

[40] Türesay, 'The Political Language of Takvîm-i vekayi', 9. We find the adjective *ṭılsımī* referring to a kind of spring-driven clock in Taḳīyüddīn Raṣīd's (d. 1585) treatise on mechanical clocks: Takiyüddin, ed. Tekeli, *16.nci asırda Osmanlılarda saat*, 192.

[41] On Ottoman encyclopedism, see Sariyannis, *The Horizons, Limits, and Taxonomies*, 69–88; Shefer-Mossensohn, *Science Among the Ottomans*, 34–37; on pre-Ottoman encyclopedias, Vesel, 'Les Encyclopédies persanes'; Endress and Filali-Ansary, *Organizing Knowledge*; Bellino, 'Arabic Encyclopaedias and Encyclopaedism', 125–131; Melvin-Koushki, 'Powers of One', 143–179; Ducène, 'Les Encyclopédies et les sciences naturelles'. For an attempt to trace the social origins and motives of early classifications, see Heck, 'The Hierarchy of Knowledge'.

[42] Fazlıoğlu, cited in Melvin-Koushki, 'Powers of One', 139; cf. Saliba, 'Astronomy and Astrology'.

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the gradual incorporation of the planetary movements to the celestial influences upon the terrestrial world in post-Aristotelian philosophy.[43] For instance, it is no coincidence that one of the first authors to group astrology under mathematical sciences was Maslama al-Qurṭubī, author of the famous late-tenth-century magical treatise *Ghāyat al-ḥakīm*.[44] According to Matthew Melvin-Koushki, in the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries the Aristotelian model (followed, for example, by al-Farabī in the tenth century and Avicenna in the eleventh century), where occult sciences are classified among the natural ones, was gradually replaced by a neo-Pythagorean model which reclassifies some of them among the mathematical sciences. Thus, given the ontological division of the spheres described above, the 'mathematicization' of certain occult sciences during the late Middle Ages meant an emphasis on their celestial rather than terrestrial aspects. Astrology is a good example: many followers of Avicenna distinguished between astronomy (*'ilm al-hay'at*), under the mathematical sciences, and astrology (*'ilm al-nujūm*), belonging to the natural sciences since it studies the influences of the supralunar world on the earthly world; however, starting from al-Razī, some encyclopedists transferred astrology to a position closer to the mathematical sciences, clearly distinguishing it from other occult sciences.[45] A variation of this classification distinguishes between natural science (which studies things possessing substance as well as matter), theological science (studying things outside of substance and matter), and finally mathematical sciences (which study things that exist in matter but do not have matter in themselves); this is the division proposed in the late tenth century by al-Khwarizmī and reiterated by Kâtib Celebi.[46]

A more mystical tradition adhered to the 'Brethren of Purity' model, which classified sciences into the 'propaedeutical' or educational (*riyāziyya* or *ilm al-ādāb*: writing and reading, dictionaries, poetry, divination, magic, alchemy, arts and crafts, and history), the religious (*al-shar'iyya al-wad'iyya*: sacred history, jurisprudence, and Sufism), and the philosophical (*al-falsafa al-haqīqīyya*). This last category of sciences, in turn, had four branches: mathematics (including astronomy and music), logic (including politics), and natural and theological sciences.[47] 'Educational' sciences aim for improvement of life in this world, hence the inclusion of alchemy or magic, in contrast to the religious and philosophical sciences, which aim to improve the human soul's situation in this world and in the Hereafter. Authors influenced by this tradition were usually more concerned with justifying the elevated position of an occultist representation and

[43] On this process, see Freudenthal, 'The Astrologization of the Aristotelian Cosmos'.
[44] de Callataÿ, 'Encyclopaedism on the Fringe', 868–869.
[45] Melvin-Koushki, 'Powers of One'; Şen, 'Astrology in the Service', 63ff.
[46] Kâtib Çelebi, tr. Lewis, *The Balance of Truth*, 30n2.
[47] Kaya, 'Abdurrahman Bistâmî'nin bilimler tasnifi', 200; de Callataÿ, 'Following the Steps of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' II'.

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interpretation of the world, tending to group some occult knowledge (especially astrology) under mathematical sciences.[48]

Another fundamental division is that between theoretical or contemplative sciences (*al-ʿulūm al-naẓariyya*), which deal with subjects worth knowing for their own sake, and practical or active sciences (*al-ʿulūm al-ʿamaliyya*), which concern human conduct; the former include the sciences of grammar and lexicography, logic, and mathematics, while in the latter, we find the natural and political sciences.[49] Finally, a distinction is made between traditional sciences (or rather, transmitted sciences: *al-ʿulūm al-naqliyya*) and rational sciences (*al-ʿulūm al-ʿaqliyya*), with the former being limited to the elaboration of a given tradition, such as grammar, theology, or Islamic law. Finally, al-Ghazālī distinguishes between religious sciences (*al-ʿulūm al-sharʿiyya*) and others (*al-ʿulūm ghayr al-sharʿiyya*), the latter concerning things at which the intellect can arrive independently.

Ottoman encyclopedias followed various systems for classifying sciences;[50] in short, one might postulate that some of the major early works, such as Mehmed Şah Fenārī's (d. 1436) *Anmuzaj al-ʿulūm* ('Learning of the Sciences') and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Bisṭāmī's *al-Fawāyīh al-miskiyya* (1441), followed more or less the model of the 'Brethren of Purity'. However, from the mid-sixteenth century, Avicennian taxonomies won the day, especially through the vast influence of the monumental *Miftāḥ al-saʿāda* ('Key to Happiness'), composed by Ahmed Taşköprüzāde (d. 1561) in 1557.[51]

Here we will seek to explore which natural knowledges, as we understand the concept today, form part of what Ottoman encyclopedists conceived as 'natural sciences'. For some authors, there is no further distinction after 'knowledge of the world'; thus, Davud-ı Kayserī (d. 1350), who ignores all occult sciences and sees 'natural science' only in its philosophical dimension,[52] Molla Lütfī (d. 1495), who does not deal with rational sciences,[53] but also, much later, Mehmet Emin Şirvanī (d. 1626) (from whose work magic or the properties of letters are completely absent)[54]

[48] Even without having read the Epistles, an Ottoman author would be influenced by the Brethren of Purity through their impact on Ibn ʿArabī: Ebstein, 'Classifications of Knowledge'.

[49] Qureshi, 'Disciplinarity and Islamic Education'.

[50] I have engaged with this topic in some detail in Sariyannis, *The Horizons, Limits, and Taxonomies*, 69–88.

[51] When in 1741 the French ambassador asked for a compendium of Ottoman science, the anonymous compiler produced a shortened version of *Miftāḥ al-saʿāda*, substituting (significantly) the labels of the various parts and chapters to give an Illuminationist flavour, as he replaced the vegetal imagery with stars, their revolutions, and their ascensions: Karaarslan (ed.), *Kevâkib-i seb'a risâlesi*; Sariyannis, *The Horizons, Limits, and Taxonomies*, 87; Karaağaçlıoğlu, 'Whose Science?'

[52] Molla, 'Mehmed Şah Fenâri'nin *Enmûzecu'l-ulûm*', 256–257; Fazlıoğlu, 'What Happened in Iznik?'

[53] Still, it is interesting to note that in Molla Lütfi's work prophetic medicine (*tibb nabawi*) is included in the religious sciences, as well as a comment on using the numeric values of Qur'anic suras to predict the future: Arslan, 'Molla Lutfî'nin ilimlerin tertibine dâir', 100–102.

[54] Sadreddinzâde, ed. Cihan, *El-Fevâidü'l-hâkâniyye*.

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Religious, rational, 'Arabic' sciences	Davud-ı Kayṣerī (d. 1350), *Ithāfu's-Süleymānī fī ahdi Orhānī*; Molla Lütfī (d. 1495), *Mawzu'āt al-'ulūm*; Saçaklızâde Mehmed Efendi (d. 1732), *Tertīb al-'ulūm*
Brethren of Purity: propaedeutic, religious, philosophical	Mehmed Şah Fenārī (d. 1436), *Anmuzaj al-'ulūm*; Abdürrahman al-Bisṭāmī (d. 1455), *al-Fawāyīh al-miskiyya*; Hayreddin Ḫızır el-'Atufī (d. 1541)
Avicennian taxonomy: religious, literary, philosophical	Ahmed Taşköprüzāde (d. 1561), *Miftāḥ al-sa'āda*; Mehmet Emin Şirvanī (d. 1626), *al-Fevā'īdü'l-ḥaḳāniyya*; Kâtib Çelebi (d. 1657), *Kashf al-ẓunūn*; Nev'ī (d. 1599), *Netā'īcü'l-fünūn*

and Saçaklızâde Mehmed Efendi (d. 1732)[55] seem to include all knowledge of the world in the 'rational' sciences, without any further categorization. Authors who follow the path of the 'Brethren of Purity' bring nature into theoretical philosophy: Mehmed Şah Fenārī (d. 1436) includes dreams and magic in the natural sciences, and groups them as theoretical philosophy together with knowledge of God's and angels' essence as well as mathematical sciences, which in their turn include astronomy, geography, astrology, and lettrist sciences. Astronomy, the realm of dreams (through their interpretation), and magic belong to nature; astrology—that is, the influences of astral movements, and alphanumeric theory and practice—belongs to mathematics, and so is of a higher sphere.[56] Bisṭāmī uses a similar system, with the difference that occult techniques (divination, magic, alchemy) are classified in the propaedeutic sciences, together with grammar, writing (calligraphy, etc.), and history: as noted by Fatma Sinem Eryılmaz and Godefroid de Callataÿ, with these sciences 'humans were to relate themselves to the world, using their creative powers'.[57]

The differentiation of occult knowledge seems to be a common feature of fifteenth-century works, but also of some appearing in the next century: we see it already in Mahmud b. Kadı-ı Manyās or Manyāsoğlu's work (oldest manuscript dated 1438), who puts all occult knowledge together with the properties of things into his section on 'wondrous sorts of knowledge'. Manyāsoğlu, author of a translation of Sa'di's *Golestān* but also, perhaps, of a now probably lost work on magic and talismanics (*al-garā'ib ve'l-acā'ib*),[58] organized his material into three parts and eight chapters. The first part deals with the religious sciences (two chapters, one on *fiqh* and another on *fara'iz*); the second with mathematics (another two chapters). The third part speaks of 'knowledge of wonders' (*'acā'ib-i*

[55] Saçaklızâde, *Tertîbü'l-'ulûm*; Sariyannis, *The Horizons, Limits, and Taxonomies*, 75–77.

[56] Molla, 'Mehmed Şah Fenâri'nin *Enmûzecu'l-ulûm*'; Şen, 'Astrology in the Service', 73–74.

[57] Eryılmaz and de Callataÿ, 'Following the Steps'; de Callataÿ, 'Following the Steps of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' II'. See the list of 145 sciences described by Bisṭāmī in Kaya, 'Abdurrahman Bistâmî'nin bilimler tasnifi', 205fn44; cf. Akyıldız, 'Erken dönem Osmanlı tarihi'nde ilim', esp. 105–106. The work was translated into Ottoman Turkish in 1570: Bisṭāmī, ed. Yağmur, '*Terceme-i kitāb*'.

[58] Sucu, 'The Marvelous Sciences in *'Acebü'l-'uccāb*', 26–27, argues convincingly that this work is probably none other than *'Acebü'l-'uccāb*.

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envā'i'l-'ulûm):[59] the fifth chapter concerns the 'properties and uses of things' (minerals, herbs, and animals: *fi-ḫavāṣṣi'l-eşyā'*; the order is strictly alphabetical, with no distinction between the three realms, and, interestingly, it begins with man), the sixth concerns their secrets (recipes produced by herbs and animal products),[60] and the seventh (on 'real issues', *mesā'il-i şe'nî*) explains, for example, how to calculate the beginning and end of each month and how to estimate under which sign the sun or moon is, but also how to foretell one's future with the help of the science of letters and magical squares. The eighth chapter, 'on properties' (*ḫavāṣṣ*), deals with occult sciences: it consists of four sections, respectively on the properties of the Qur'anic suras, of prayers, of the names of God, and of letters.[61]

Hayreddin Ḫızır al-'Atufī (d. 1541), the librarian of Bayezid II who compiled the inventory of the Topkapı palace library between 1502 and 1504, considers the properties of the Qur'an and magic squares as adjacent to religious sciences; then (after having also dealt with geography, animals, and history, that is with divine and human agency, one might say) he lumps together all occult knowledge (dreams, alchemy, stones, magic, and divination), with the exception of astrology, which is included in another section, together with mathematics (and astronomy).[62] Similarly, in *Netā'ïcü'l-fünūn*, a widely read vernacular encyclopedia composed by the poet Nev'ī (d. 1599), it seems as if the occult constitutes a different category among the branches of 'natural' knowledge. Divination, both astronomy and astrology, dreams, and charms are different from 'natural science' (defined as what cannot be separated from matter); medicine is also considered as dependent on charms and enchantment.[63] The extent to which Nev'ī gives importance to the occult is impressive: magic, divination, and astrology represent 17 per cent of the total work (if we exclude the introduction and conclusion), 22 per cent if we add dreams (and these figures are misleading if we take into account the disproportionate length of the chapter on history, which accounts for

[59] See ff. 26a–45a (fifth chapter), 45a–58a (sixth chapter), 58a–64a (seventh chapter), 64a–93b (eighth chapter; sections 64a–71b, 71b–80a, 80a–86a, and 86a–93b on the Qur'an, prayers, names of God, and letters, respectively) in the Princeton ms.; Manyasoğlu, ed. Buçukcu, 'Mahmud bin Kadı-ı Manyas'ın *'Acebü'l-üccab*', 58–77 (fifth chapter), 77–90 (sixth chapter), 90–97 (seventh chapter), 97–134 (eighth chapter; sections 97–105, 105–117, 117–124, and 124–134 on the Qur'an, prayers, names of God, and letters, respectively).

[60] The author notes that he would relate even more secrets to astonish his audience, were it not for the fear of rumours and oppression (*halkun töhmetinden ve ekâbir mihnetinden korkmadı*): Manyasoğlu, ed. Buçukcu, 'Mahmud bin Kadı-ı Manyas'ın *'Acebü'l-üccab*', 90 (f. 58a). On such 'secrets' and their importance for the history of science, cf. Eamon, *Secrets of Nature*.

[61] Citing explicitly al-Buni's *Shams al-ma'arif*: Buçukcu, 'Mahmud bin Kadı-ı Manyas'ın *'Acebü'l-üccab*', 132 (f. 92b).

[62] ['Atufî], eds Necipoğlu, Kafadar, and Fleischer, *Treasures of Knowledge*; Şen and Fleischer, 'Books on Astrology', 777.

[63] The position and order of the last six chapters (dream interpretation, incantations and magic, medicine, agriculture, astrology, and divination) come from one of Nev'i's models, a Persian encyclopedia from the twelfth century attributed to al-Ghazālī. Moreover, Nev'i extensively used the work of Taşköprüzāde. Nev'i Efendi, eds Procházka-Eisl and Çelik, *Texts on Popular Learning*, 13–20; cf. also Schmidt, 'The Occult Sciences', 221–227.

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28 per cent of the total).We have to note, however, that neither ʿAtufī's nor Nevʿī's taxonomy is systematic.

Taşköprüzāde follows roughly the same categorization (as per his model, the Mamluk Avicennist al-Akfanī), as he tries to classify nearly 400 branches of knowledge according to the stages of God's manifestation (universal spirit, intellect, nature, and man), which correspond to different stages of knowledge: respectively, essences (*al-aʿyān*), minds (*al-aḏhān*), (oral) expression (*al-ʿibāra*), and writing (*al-kitāba*).[64] These stages create four 'trees' (*dawha*), each one with its 'branches' (*shubʿa*); to these, Taşköprüzāde adds (as the fifth 'tree') practical philosophy (*al-ḥikma al-ʿamaliyya*) (i.e. ethics, economics, politics, and etiquette), a sixth 'tree' of religious sciences (including prophetic medicine but also properties of letters and *jifr*), and finally the seventh and last division, esoteric knowledge (*ʿulūm al-baṭīn*) (i.e. Sufi philosophy): actually, these are sub-branches of philosophy or the study of essences. In this framework, he describes theoretical philosophy as the segment of knowledge studying 'essences'—that is, things that exist (which also include practical philosophy, jurisprudence, etc.)—however, he explicitly denies astrology a place among mathematics, grouping it under natural sciences:

> Know that the decrees (*aḥkām*, 'rules', 'principles') of the stars are not the same as the science (*ʿilm*) of the stars, because the latter is known by arithmetic (*ḥisāb*), which is a branch of mathematics (*min furūʿ al-riyāḍī*); while the former is known by the evidence (*dalāla*, 'sign', 'indication') of nature (*ṭabīʿa*), according to the 'traces' (*āthār*), i.e. it is a branch of the natural sciences (*furūʿ al-ṭabīʿī*).[65]

Moreover, his religious sciences include those properties of words and letters that can influence the natural world. More particularly, his fourth 'tree', the one related to essences (*al-aʿyān*), has two chapters on the branches of 'natural science' (*ʿilm al-ṭabiʿī*, the science itself being Aristotle's natural science of bodies, movements, and elements): one contains sections on medicine, the sciences of the flora, fauna, and minerals, astronomy, meteorology, physiognomy, dream interpretation, astrology, magic (*siḥr*), talismanics, *sīmyā'* (defined as 'types of magic that are not true', i.e. with natural processes), and alchemy;[66] and the other, on the sub-branches (or bunches, *ʿanāqīd*) of these sciences. Thus, sub-branches of physiognomy include fortune-telling (*ʿilm al-ʿirāfa*); those of astrology, the science of choices (*ʿilm al-ikhtiyārāt*), geomancy, omens (*ʿilm al-fāl*), casting lots, and bad

[64] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-saʿād*; simplified form of his son's Turkish translation in Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, tr. Çevik. A detailed translation of the contents can be found in Bellino, 'The Classification of Sciences'. On his views on occultism, see also Günther and Pielow, 'Magie im Islam', 74–77; Coulon, *La Magie en Islam*, 286–289.

[65] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-saʿāda*, 1: 359; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 326.

[66] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-saʿāda*, 1: 335–347; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 305–315.

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omens; and those of magic, divination (*ʿilm al-kihāna*), *nīranjāt*, properties, spells, summoning spirits and invoking stars, magic characters, concealing oneself, various sorts of prestidigitation and its uncovering ('Sassanian tricks', i.e. ruses, *ʿilm kashf al-dakk wa-īḍāḥ al-shakk*, *ʿilm al-shaʿbadha wa-l-takhayyulāt*), and pretending to practise magic by using tricks or natural properties (*ʿilm taʿalluq al-qalb*, *ʿilm al-istiʿāna bi-khawāṣṣ al-adwiya wa-l-mufradāt*—as he explains, this 'has nothing to do with magic, but it resembles it').[67] Taşköprüzāde explains these branches in some detail, at the beginning of his famous section 'on the branches of magic', which we will see below. In short, he attributes every kind of magic to a different method: magic (*siḥr*) to the influence of the soul, talismanics to the mixture of heavenly and earthly powers, use of natural properties to reciting spells, *nīranjāt* to writing them, and so on.[68]

Furthermore, magic squares are enumerated among the branches of the science of numbers (*ʿilm al-ʿadād*).[69] In the sixth 'tree', the one concerning religious sciences (*ʿulūm al-sharʿiyya*), there is a branch on Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsīr*), and its sub-branches include various properties of letters and the techniques to make use of them, *zāʾirja* and *jifr*.[70] Thus, both numbers and letters, including their 'magical' properties, are placed outside the scope of natural science. Taşköprüzāde writes explicitly regarding magic squares:

> [T]his science belongs to the branches of the science of numbers (*ʿilm al-ʿadad*), in terms of arithmetic (*ḥisāb al-aʿdād*, 'the counting of numbers'), and to the branches of the science of special properties (*ʿilm al-khawāṣṣ*), in terms of its effects and benefits.[71]

Taşköprüzāde's model is clarified in the table of the following pages, where emphasis is given to occult knowledge.[72]

Kâtib Çelebi's equally monumental *Kashf al-ẓunūn* may not offer any new insights into the classification of knowledge, as sciences are listed alphabetically together with book titles (in his introduction he shows his preference for Taşköprüzāde's model),[73] but it may be of some significance to study what he

[67] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-saʿāda*, 1: 357 (fortune-telling), 359–380; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuatʾül-ulûm*, 326–338.

[68] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-saʿāda*, 1: 364; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuatʾül-ulûm*, 331.

[69] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-saʿāda*, 1: 395–397; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuatʾül-ulûm*, 359–361.

[70] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-saʿāda*, 2: 591–594; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuatʾül-ulûm*, 1030–1032.

[71] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-saʿāda*, 1: 395; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuatʾül-ulûm*, 359.

[72] See also Fahd, *La Divination arabe*, 39–41; cf. the almost identical taxonomy by the Moroccan scholar al-Yūsī (d. 1691), who also follows al-Akfanī: Stearns, *Revealed Sciences*, 85–89.

[73] Cf. Bellino, 'Arabic Encyclopaedias and Encyclopaedism', 133–140.

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Trees (*dawha*)	Branches (*shubʿa*)	Sub-branches (*furūʿ*)	Bunches (*ʿanāqīd*)
First tree: writing sciences	Two branches, writing and spelling	Various sub-branches	
Second tree: oral sciences	Grammar (simple words), syntax and poetry (compound words), Arabic literature	Various sub-branches	
Third tree: sciences of the mind (*al-aḏhān*)	Logic, dispute	Various sub-branches	
Fourth tree: sciences of the essences (*al-aʿyān*)	Theology (*ʿilm-i ilahi*)	Various sub-branches	
	Natural sciences (*ʿilm al-ṭabiʿī*): on bodies, movement, elements	Various sub-branches (medicine, astronomy, etc.), including:	
		Physiognomy	Fortune-telling (*ʿilm al-ʿirāfa*), etc.
		Dream interpretation	
		Astrology	Science of choices (*ʿilm al-ikhtiyārāt*)
			Geomancy
			Omens (*ʿilm al-fāl*)
			Casting lots (*ʿilm al-qurʿa*)
			Bad omens (*ṭīra* and *zajr*)
		Magic (*siḥr*)	Divination (*ʿilm al-kihāna*)
			nīranjāt
			Properties (*ʿilm al-khawāṣṣ*)
			Spells (*ruqā* and *ʿazāʾim*)
			Summoning spirits (*ʿilm al-istiḥḍār*) and invoking stars (*ʿilm daʿwa al-kawākib*)
			Magic characters (*ʿilm al-falaqṭīrāt*)
			Concealing oneself (*ʿilm al-ikhfāʾ*)
			Various sorts of prestidigitation or of pretending to practise magic

		Talismanics (*'ilm al-ṭilasmāt*)
		Simya
		Alchemy
	Mathematics and music	Magic squares, etc.
	1. Engineering and optics 2. Astronomy and geography 3. Practical mathematics (including magic squares) and military tactics,	
	music	
Fifth tree: practical wisdom	Ethics, economics, politics, etiquette for rulers and campaigns	
Sixth tree: religious sciences	Various branches, including:	Various sub-branches, including prophetic medicine (*tıbb al-Nebi*)
	Hadith science	
	Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsīr*)	Various sub-branches, including properties of letters, *zairja*, *jifr*
Seventh tree: esoteric sciences (*'ulūm al-baṭīn*)		

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copies verbatim from his predecessor and what he chooses to omit. Whereas he does not add any new 'science', at least within the field of occult knowledge, he does truncate some of Taşköprüzāde's 'sub-branches', actually citing their names but not their descriptions. These are some sciences that may seem rather suspicious from a theological point of view, especially because of references to the *rūḥāniyyat* (the summoning of the stars, *daʿwa al-kawākib*; spells, *al-ruqā*;[74] *nīranjāt*), but also the science of magic squares and that of prestidigitation or legerdemain (*ʿilm al-shaʿbadha*). In some cases, he departs from copying his predecessor; in particular, the description of the science of incantations or *ʿazāʾim* is completely different, giving emphasis to the different views on its legitimacy (an emphasis very common in Kâtib Çelebi's work).[75] In the same vein, he has quite different texts for the science of letters and words (*ʿilm al-ḥurūf wa-l-asmāʾ*; however, he omits Taşköprüzāde's entries on some of its sub-branches, such as the light and dark letters) and of *zāʾirja*, a complex alphanumeric divinatory technique which he describes in a quite detailed way, quoting Dāʾūd al-Anṭākī and Ibn Khaldūn.[76] Finally, there are some items where he adds more or less extensive parts of his own: namely, the science of the decrees of the stars (*ʿilm al-aḥkām*) and of astrology (*ʿilm al-nujūm*),[77] the section on *cifr*,[78] the science of concealing oneself (*ʿilm al-ikhfāʾ*, where he adds a note on its possibility 'by way of magic'—Taşköprüzāde was much more sceptical),[79] the science of the secret properties (*ʿilm al-khawāṣṣ*, with a note on their natural quiddity, despite their unknown causes),[80] and magic (*siḥr*, with a similar note).[81]

The modern reader may be surprised to see, for instance, prestidigitation considered an occult science, since it is only a matter of tricks and agility; and one may wonder why physiognomy is such a science, since it is supposed to extract well-established correspondences between man's internal and external features, and is thus closer to medicine than to divination. The first question might have to do with the fact that tricks, sleight-of-hand, and prestidigitation *pretend* to be magic; moreover, they have to do with deceiving the senses, and this can be done either by trickery or by magic. Altering the essences and appearances of things

[74] Still, he inserts a reference to spells (*ruqya*) while describing the science of properties (*ʿilm al-khawāṣṣ*): Kâtip Çelebi, eds Yaltkaya and Bilge, *Keşf-el-zunun*, 1: 725–726; cf. *Keşfü'z-zunûn*, tr. Balcı, 601–602.

[75] A similar note is added concerning the science of omens (*ʿilm al-fāl*): Kâtip Çelebi, eds Yaltkaya and Bilge, *Keşf-el-zunun*, 2: 1137–1138 (incantations), 1216–1217 (omens); cf. *Keşfü'z-zunûn*, tr. Balcı, 909, 972.

[76] Kâtip Çelebi, eds Yaltkaya and Bilge, *Keşf-el-zunun*, 1: 650–651, 2: 948–949; cf. *Keşfü'z-zunûn*, tr. Balcı, 543, 764.

[77] Kâtip Çelebi, eds Yaltkaya and Bilge, *Keşf-el-zunun*, 1: 22–23, 2: 1930–1931; cf. *Keşfü'z-zunûn*, tr. Balcı, 70, 1545.

[78] Kâtip Çelebi, eds Yaltkaya and Bilge, *Keşf-el-zunun*, 1: 591–592; cf. *Keşfü'z-zunûn*, tr. Balcı, 498.

[79] Kâtip Çelebi, eds Yaltkaya and Bilge, *Keşf-el-zunun*, 1: 716; cf. *Keşfü'z-zunûn*, tr. Balcı, 594.

[80] Kâtip Çelebi, eds Yaltkaya and Bilge, *Keşf-el-zunun*, 1: 725–726; cf. *Keşfü'z-zunûn*, tr. Balcı, 601–602.

[81] Kâtip Çelebi, eds Yaltkaya and Bilge, *Keşf-el-zunun*, 1: 980–981; cf. *Keşfü'z-zunûn*, tr. Balcı, 788.

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was traditionally considered a part of magic, and so changing the appearance of something with a trick would fall into this category.[82] Thus, a fifteenth-century treatise, *Fī l-ḥiyel al-bābiliyye fī l-ḥizana al-kāmiliyye* by Hasan b. Muhammad el-İskenderī el-Kuşī, enumerates fumes and other aerial products, lamps, tricks using fire, bottles, eggs, and wax effigies, but also talismans and their use in deceiving the senses, as well as (magical) means of detecting theft and finding hidden things.[83] As a matter of fact, Taşköprüzāde's (and later Kâtib Çelebi's) definition of *sīmyā'*, with its references to 'fantastic images' (*aḥdāth mithālāt khayāliyya*), implies that this science is not magic (in an 'etic' sense) but trickery, which produces optical or other hallucinations:

> This is a name applied to types of magic that are not true (*yuṭlaq ʿalā ghayr al-ḥaqīqī min al-siḥr*), as is well known. The main substance of it is occurrences of fantastic images (*mithālāt khayāliyya*) in the air (*fi-l-jaw*), which do not have an existence in sense-perception (*fi-l-ḥiss*). And it is applied to the bringing into existence (*ījād*) of these images in their forms (*ṣuwar*, 'images', 'shapes') in sense-perception; and they are [or become] forms in the substance [or element] of air (*fī jawhar al-hawā'*). Because of this, their passing is quick, according to the speed of the transformation (*taghayyur*) of the substance of air…It is quick to receive and quick to pass, because of its humidity.
>
> As for the quality (*kayfiyya*, the 'how-ness') of the occurrences of these forms (*ṣuwar*) and their causes (*ʿilaluhā*), it is a hidden matter—only the 'people of *sīmyā'*' examine these things.
>
> Our aim here is not to explain the confusion of these images (*amthāl*) nor to summarize the ways in which the magician (*al-sāḥir*) might pursue something—from special properties (*khawāṣṣ*) or oils (*adhān*) or special liquids (*māʾiʿāt khāṣṣa*) or special words (*kalimāt khāṣṣa*), which bring about special visions (*mukhayyalāt*) and a perception of the senses, by eating and drinking [some substances prepared in a special way] or something along these lines. And there is no truth to it (*wa-lā ḥaqīqa lahu*).[84]

This description seems to imply that *sīmyā'* is a prestidigitation of sorts, and that the images produced have no essence whatsoever, having only the aims of creating illusions and impressing people. Indeed, the 'fantastic images' (*mithālāt khayāliyya*) sound like imaginary illusions; yet, the very wording brings to mind

[82] Cf. the definition of magic by the *Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'*: Saif, 'A Study', 171.

[83] It also includes chapters on the taming of animals, as well as items similar to the European 'book of secrets' literature (dyes and colours, special inks, and so forth): And, *Magic in Istanbul*, 11–12. The manuscript is Bursa, Haraççıoğlu Hüseyin Ağa 1221. And, *Magic in Istanbul*, 12–31, gives an enumeration of such trades and crafts in Ottoman Istanbul.

[84] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-saʿāda*, 1: 340–341; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 309; Kâtip Çelebi, eds Yaltkaya and Bilge, *Keşf-el-zunun*, 2: 1020; cf. *Keşfü'z-zunûn*, tr. Balcı, 818.

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the Illuminationist 'world of images' (*'ālem-i mithāl*; see above, Chapter 2) and, furthermore, both authors comment that, regarding this topic, 'there are many stories on the authority of Ibn Sīnā and Suhrawardī al-Maqtūl'. Indeed, Illuminationist philosophy offered an 'enchanted' yet distant source for magic effects: namely, the same 'eighth clime' or the 'world of images', where, as we saw, wonders, dreams, and miracles reside. Magicians are capable of manipulating these images and making them manifest.[85] However, it seems more probable that this understanding of *sīmiyā'* has to do with illusionism, rather than magic, and that the similarities are incidental. Even 'Aziz Efendi, glorifying magic throughout his novel, describes a miracle that happened in reality: 'this is not an illusion like falsehood or magic (*bu kiẕb ve simyā maḳūlesi ḫayāl değildir*)'.[86] We can see a similar understanding in Evliya's account of Monla Muhammed, the magician of the Khan of Bitlis:

> 'My dear Khan,' said the Pasha, 'what did this devil do with all these worthless things? He has wine and raki and vinegar.' 'I swear by God, my lord,' replied the Khan, 'he has been with us for three years, and he has not once taken wine or tobacco or coffee. He prays at night and fasts by day…He learned this science of magic (*'ilm-i simyā*) in the Maghrib, in the city of Marrakesh, and has demonstrated before my lord a small portion of his skill, at my behest. All the rest is merely a hypnotic trance (*yoḳsa bu bir ḫayāl-i ḫābdır*), of no harm to anyone…All the magical feats that he performs have their basis in the things of nature created by the hand of God (*cemī'i kâr-ı simyānıñ aṣlı yine Cenāb-ı Bārī'niñ yed-i ḳudretiyle ḫalk olan eşyā'-yı mevcūdātdır*), or the items which you see here. He expends his skill upon them as required. For example, he rubbed the oil from one canister on his body, uttered a charm, and appeared to be lacking a penis. He rubbed on oil of hoarfrost and dew, and appeared to fly in the air…He took one of these snakes from the bag, uttered a charm, and it appeared in the shape of a dragon…Whatever animal skins he has in this sack, he can make appear to be alive—which of course only God could do actually—so he keeps one piece of each kind in his sack like his own head and soul.'[87]

As for physiognomy (*firāsa*/*firāset*), it worked on the principles of analogy, using an interconnection of outward facial features with the temperament of the soul, based in its turn on the interdependence of bodily fluids, qualities, elements, and so forth; thus, one's physical characteristics might correspond to one's lack or profusion of one of the bodily humours, or to the general features of people living

[85] van Lit, *The World of Images*, 103.
[86] 'Azīz Efendi, *Muhayyelât*, ed. Alacatlı, 225; ed. Duymaz, 307.
[87] Evliya Çelebi, eds Dağlı and Kahraman, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, IV. Kitap*, 79–80 (f. 232b); Evliya Çelebi, *An Ottoman Traveller*, 129–130.

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in a particular clime. In this respect, it may be said that physiognomy constitutes the least occult of all occult sciences, if indeed it can be described as such in an 'emic' sense.[88] Its ambiguous place is due to the fact that it indicates things that are not apparent: it consists of 'inferring the inner character (*aḫlāḳ-ı bāṭıne*) from the exterior state (*aḥvāl-ı ẓāhire*)', as we read in a treatise composed in 1576.[89] The 'occult' character of physiognomy may also stem from the fact, as we read in a short treatise by Idrīs-i Bidlīsī (d. 1520), that knowledge of physiognomy may come to humanity either by revelation to prophets, or by inspiration to saints, or, finally, by discernment and conjecture.[90] Moreover, as shown by Liana Saif, because of the complexity of human nature, its results are largely based on intuition, perceived as a similar phenomenon to action at a distance. Furthermore, the rise of revelatory Sufism in the late Middle Ages gave an esoteric aspect to physiognomy as well as to other occult sciences.[91] Finally, some types of physiognomy claimed to foretell one's future from one's involuntary movements, thus touching divination directly.[92]

To conclude this section, we must note that more 'vernacular' texts, or at any rate approaches with a less encyclopedic scope, adopted other, less rigid classifications. Evliya's impressive enumeration of sciences studied in Egypt is more a made-up series of rhyming or alliterating inventions, but it has an internal logic as well: beginning with medicine and various Qur'anic sciences, it continues with linguistic sciences, and then with astrology, *jifr*, alchemy (*ʿilm-i kāf*), *simyā* and *kimyā*, divination, geomancy, magic squares and magical names, incantations (*ʿilm-i teshīr ve ʿilm-i daʿvet*), and finally, various forms of letter magic and dream interpretation.[93] A more careful enumeration of occult and other sciences belongs to the moralist Sünbülzāde Vehbī (d. 1809), to whom we will refer later: astrology (*nücum*); geomancy (*reml*); science of letters (*cifr*); oneiromancy (*taʿbīr*); magic squares (*vefḳ*); incantations (*siḥr*, *nüsḫakârī*, *ruḳyā*); conjuring of jinn and demons (*narenciyāt*); alchemy (*kimyā*); magic (*simyā*); the art of finding treasures (*taʿvīr*); paper divination or cartomancy (*ḳırṭāsiye*); talismans and prophylactics (*ṭılsımāt u himyā*); and the art of concealment (*ʿilm-i iḫfā*). Sufism (*taṣavvuf*) and music follow, with physiognomy (*ferāset*) inserted before literature

[88] Khalidi and Khalidi, 'Is Physiognomy a Science?'; cf. Hoyland, 'Physiognomy in Islam'; on the position of physiognomy in Islamicate encyclopedic divisions of knowledge, see also Ghersetti, 'A Science for Kings', 83–85. On Ottoman physiognomy, see Çakır, '*Kıyâfet-nâme*'ler hakkında'; Lelić, 'Ottoman Physiognomy'; Haral, 'Osmanlı sanatında resimli'.

[89] Lelić, '"The Greatest of Tribulations"', 268.

[90] Idrīs-i Bidlīsī, ed. Genç, 'An Unknown Epistle', 398. Towards the end of the same century, however, another manual cites only reason, experience, and analogy as sources of this knowledge: Gürbüz, 'Ta'likîzâde Mehmed Subhî'nin *Firâset-nâme*'si', 172.

[91] Saif, 'Physiognomy'.

[92] Özyaşamış Şakar, 'Bir tür fal kitabı'; Daşdemir, 'İngiltere kütüphanelerinde'.

[93] Evliya Çelebi, eds Kahraman, Dağlı, and Dankoff, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, X. Kitap*, 86 (f. Y69a). On *ʿilm-i Ḳāf* being alchemy, see Evliya Çelebi, eds Dağlı, Kahraman, and Dankoff, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, VII. Kitap*, 259 (f. 141b)

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and history.[94] The mysterious cartomancy (*ḳırṭāsiye*), not to be found in any dictionary (possibly some card reading of Western origin), is also present in a more or less contemporaneous poem of moral advice, written by Ẓarīfī (d. 1795).[95]

If we may extract some conclusions from these complex classifications, which mostly originate from pre-Ottoman traditions, they might be that occult sciences (an 'etic' term here, since encyclopedias hardly use collective terms such as *ʿilm al-ghayb*, *al-ʿulūm al-ḫafıyya*, and *al-ʿulūm al-gharība*) are mostly considered part of the natural sciences: that is, they pertain to the world of matter, of the bodies and the elements (including astrology, save for some early classifications).[96] Mathematics, a science that pertains to a higher sphere of existence, includes astrology in early encyclopedias (influenced by the thirteenth-century 'occultist turn') and magic squares (as they are based in numbers) in classic works such as Taşköprüzāde's. It is remarkable that lettrist knowledge (properties of letters, variations of *cifr*) is mostly included in Qur'anic sciences. In short, letters and numbers (and occult crafts based thereon) are considered as belonging to a higher level (i.e. one closer to divinity), and this shows the influence, perhaps not so much of al-Būnī and the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century lettrists, as of Akbarian philosophy. As a corollary, a late-seventeenth-century Damascene scholar, al-Muḥibbī (d. 1699), goes as far as explicitly to consider mathematics a branch of occult sciences.[97] On the other hand, this would lead us to suppose that scholarly interpretations of magical action would focus on natural rather than demonic/angelic magic, with a peculiar emphasis on lettrism. This is what I will try to explore in the next section.

Rationale of Occultism

There were a number of quite different ways to claim access to the supernatural and its manipulation. European magic, as we have seen, has been classified as either ritual/demonic (Solomonic) or astral/natural (Hermetic): in other words, based either on the conjuration of demons, or on the manipulation of cosmic correspondences and hierarchies. The Islamicate world offered to this world view

[94] Sünbülzâde Vehbī, *Lutfiyye-i Vehbī*, 62–77, 90–91 (vv. 129–196, 269–274). The transcription and translation of the text have certain grave mistakes, due to ignorance of occultist vocabulary and bibliography.

[95] Ẓarīfī, *Pendnâme*, 32–34 (vv. 306–324). Agâh Sırrı Levend explains *ḳırṭāsiye* as 'the art of making gold out of paper' (Levend, *Divan edebiyatı*, 227).

[96] On this, they did not differ from e.g. a seventeenth-century Moroccan author: Stearns, 'The Place of Sorcery', 170. A notably late case of occult sciences of all sorts grouped together with mathematics is the inventory of Aḥmad Pasha al-Jazzār's (d. 1804) library, with the subheading 'Books on the celestial science (*al-falak*), astronomy (*al-hayʾa*), the [science of] letter[s], the spiritual [science], geomancy, geometry, arithmetic, and alchemy': Saif, 'The Occult Sciences'.

[97] Brentjes, 'The Study of Geometry', 329–330, 339 ('knowledge of the occult sciences such as mathematics and astrology and *sīmiyā* and all the others').

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yet another element, already present in Jābir Ibn Ḥayyān's alchemical corpus: namely, words and letters as a constituent element of the universe. Thus, in Islamic occultism, ways of obtaining access and control of natural and supernatural phenomena could be distinguished into, roughly, three large categories: (a) methods based on a direct contact with the *ghayb*, through visions or epiphanies and mostly through contact with jinn or angels; (b) methods based on occult sciences connecting the Written Word, the Qur'an, with the world, namely the science of letters; and (c) methods based on a more materialistic (yet occult) perception of universal hierarchies, namely the astrological conception of the world. To use a terminology coined by Edgar W. Francis, the two first ways need a spiritual vision of the world and the third a mechanical (or, to be more exact, a deterministic) one; as for their methods, the first uses spiritual and the other two mechanical means.[98] A fourth way, which goes back to Avicenna and Ibn Khaldūn, would have the psychic forces of some extraordinarily powerful souls influencing the chain of emanations of the divine spirit in a somewhat neo-Platonic universe. This way, which as we saw in Chapter 1 does not seem to have taken strong roots in Ottoman culture, can be described as using spiritual methods in a deterministic world vision. The table at the bottom of the page tries to showcase this typology.

Often we see these traditions combined: for example, in an Iranian work written in 1409, geomancy (partly pertinent to astral magic) and the science of magic squares (mostly pertinent to lettrism) are complementary sciences—the former predicts the future, but if one is not satisfied with it, one can always change it through the magic of letters.[99] Other pairs of occult sciences can be coupled in the same way: for example, judicial astrology (*'ilm al-nujūm*) and astral magic. Moreover, astrology could be conceived as a mathematical relationship between celestial elements and the earthly world, or as mystical knowledge based on correspondences between planets and signs, but also angels, prophets, and the 'unseen saints'; however, one should not perceive 'learned astrology' and 'mystical astrology' as mutually exclusive areas.[100] Lettrism, at any rate, was linked to the deterministic world view, as specific letters corresponded to the elements, their properties, the planets, and so on. Of course, all these classifications are

World vision	**Methods**	
	Spiritual	**Mechanical**
Spiritual	Visions, invocations of supernatural entities	Lettrism
Deterministic	Powerful souls	Astral/natural magic

[98] Francis, 'Magic and Divination', 624 (citing Fahd, *La Divination arabe*, 524–526, who does not use these terms).

[99] Melvin-Koushki, 'In Defence of Geomancy', 362.

[100] Şen, 'Astrology in the Service', 44–46.

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distinctively 'etic' ones and have only heuristic value; one can propose various other systems, such as the remarkable idea emphasized by Charles Burnett (following Maslama al-Qurṭubī's *Ghāyat al-ḥakīm*) that Islamicate magic may be divided into *nīranjāt*, talismanics, and alchemy, based on the various possibilities of combining the spirit and the body: spirit operating upon spirit, spirit operating upon body, and body operating upon body, respectively.[101]

This syncretism or eclecticism is evident in Ottoman encyclopedic accounts of magic, which often do not give precedence to any method, although they seem to adopt a deterministic view of the cosmos. Taşköprüzāde defines magic (*siḥr*) as the science that brings about events 'by the influence of the soul' (*al-taʾthīr al-nafsānī*), whereas other branches of magic concern invocation of stars, properties, spirits, and jinn. His description of magic, 'the power to accomplish things by psychic force alone', clearly shows this combination of psychic forces and invocation of spirits, but also control over the 'properties' of nature:

> Know that, seeking to bring about events—when it is only by the influence of the soul (*al-taʾthīr al-nafsānī*, lit. by effects produced by the soul)—is [called] magic (*al-siḥr*). If it is [carried out] by way of seeking the help of (*istiʿāna*, 'resorting to') the celestial spheres, it is 'calling upon the stars' (*daʿwa al-kawākib*, 'the invocation of the stars'); if it is by way of mixing heavenly and earthly powers, it is [the science of] talismans; if it is by way of seeking help from special natural properties (*istiʿāna bi-l-khawāṣṣ al-ṭabīʿiyya*), either by recitation—then it is the science of special properties (*ʿilm al-khawāṣṣ*); or by writing—then it is *nīranjāt*; or by actions other than the two [i.e. other than recitation or writing]—then these are spells (*al-ruqā*, 'incantations', 'charms', 'magic'); if it is by way of seeking help from innocent spirits (*al-arwāḥ al-sādhija*, 'plain spirits'), it is [called] incantation (*al-ʿazāʾim*); if it is by making these spirits appear in the forms (*qawālib*) of ghosts (*ashbāḥ*), it is [called] the science of summoning (*istiḥḍār*); it is [also] called 'the subjugation of the jinn' (*taskhīr al-jinn*). As for reports about events which have not come about, either in the past, or the present, or the future, that is the science of soothsaying (*ʿilm al-kihāna*).
>
> Furthermore, human beings—just as they are able to make incorporeal things (*mujarradāt*) appear (*istiḥḍār*), they can also make that which is present disappear from sense-perception (*taghyīb al-ḥāḍir ʿan al-ḥiss*). This is called the science of concealing (*ikhfāʾ*, lit. 'hiding', 'making disappear'). And likewise, the act of making matters disappear that are present (*ikhfāʾ al-umūr al-ḥāḍira*), from [before the eyes of] those who are present (*ʿan al-ḥāḍirīn*); this is called tricks (*ḥiyal*). There are many examples of it.[102]

[101] Burnett, 'The Three Divisions of Arabic Magic'; cf. Coulon, 'The *Kitāb Sharāsīm al-Hindiyya*', 339.

[102] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-saʿāda*, 1: 364; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 331.

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This taxonomy is strikingly similar to that given in a treatise on talismans by Riyāzī Ali Çelebi (d. 1537/8), which had long been attributed to the *şeyhülislam* Kemalpaşazāde or Ibn Kemal (d. 1534).[103] A similarly eclectic account is given two centuries later in ʿAzīz Efendi's *Muḥayyelāt*:

> One of the strange sciences (*ʿulūm-i ġarībe*) is magic (*siḥr*), which, God forbid, does wrong to the divine will (*ḫilāf-ı rızā-yı Rabbāniyye'ye irtikâb edip*) through the lowness of dispositions (*süfliyyet-i mizāç ile*); it depends on the uttering of hideous words that are seeking to disgrace the divine glory (*naḳīṣa-i şān-ı Ṣamedīye dā'ir elfāẓ-i ḳabīḥa tekellümüne menūṭ*) and is a devilish temptation (*istidrāc*) bound to abominable acts. But another [of these sciences] is what is called *simyā*, i.e. the marvellous things (*ʿacā'ibāt*) that appear with some names of spiritual entities (*esāmī-i rūḥānīyān*), properties of things and incantations[104]; and another one is called talismanics and enchantment (*ṭılsım ve nārencāt*), and it is related to the course of the stars (*kevākib iṣrine dā'ir*). Another one is called knowledge of properties (*ʿilm-i ḫavāṣṣ*), and it exerts its influence through seclusion, forty days' penitence, abstinence, asceticism, and also some Qur'anic verses and divine names and magic squares (*evfāḳ*). And [finally] there is divine science and knowledge of God (*ʿilm-i ilāhīyye ve maʿrīfet-i Rabbānīyye*)… [This] divine knowledge (*maʿrīfet-i ilāhīyye*) is superior to all other sciences.[105]

Demonic Magic

A common way of practising magic and foretelling the future was by invoking spiritual entities of various kinds. A fine example is Uzun Firdevsī's *Daʿvetnāme*: composed in 1478, this very detailed, illustrated manual of demonic magic contains instructions for summoning angels and jinn. In previous chapters we have seen various aspects of Firdevsī's world view, a system of angels and jinn classified in complex hierarchies: they govern planets and their movements, and each one of them has specific names and 'seals': that is, magical writings that offer some degree of power over them (see Fig. 3.1). The magician has to use these names and seals, as well as detailed prayers, always in the name of God and after specific rituals and fasting, taking account of the hours and the planetary phases. Thus, an echo of astral magic is also present; significantly, however, in Firdevsī's work there is not one trace of lettrist magic, such as talismans or magic squares. Firdevsī traces this art back to Apollonius (Belinās Ḥakīm), a master of the conjuration of jinn, for which he gives eight prerequisites, as we will see in more detail below (such as to have abstained from eating meat, to sit in a high place or

[103] Riyāzī [Ibn Kemal], ed. Dalkıran, 'İbn-i Kemal'in tılsımat risâlesi', 197; Şen, 'Practicing Astral Magic', 74–75.

[104] Reading *ʿazāyimāt* for *ġazāyimāt*, 'spoils of war'.

[105] ʿAzīz Efendi, *Muhayyelât*, ed. Alacatlı, 91–92; ed. Duymaz, 218 (some readings corrected via Istanbul 1868 edition, 87).



Fig. 3.1 Angels and jinn governing planets, with their talismanic tablets and seals. Firdevsī-i Ṭavīl, *Da'vet-nāme*, İstanbul Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi Türk Yazmaları 208, ff. 56b–57a, 85b–86a.

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Fig. 3.1 Continued

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near running water, and so forth).[106] The use of jinn or 'bad spirits' in divination and conjuring is also attested in Sinan Pasha's contemporaneous compendium of knowledge.[107]

Although preferring more deterministic world views, encyclopedists are familiar with demonic magic and ready to accept it. Taşköprüzāde, who as we will see clearly stands in favour of natural magic, defines divination (*al-kihāna*) as

> the coming together (*munāsaba*, lit. 'convenience', 'relation', 'agreement') of human spirits with incorporeal spirits—from *jinn* and demons (*shayāṭīn*)—and seeking to learn from them about the particular states (*al-aḥwāl al-juz'iyya*, 'the states that are characterized by particularities') occurring in the world of generation and corruption. But they pertain especially to future affairs…[108]

In the same vein, incantations (*'azā'im*) subjugate spirits, angels and jinn:

> It is a science on the way to subjugate spirits (*kayfiyya taskhīr al-arwāḥ*) and to use them for one's own purposes, like the subjugation of angels and *jinn*. To this belongs what the masters of [delusive] imaginations (*aṣḥāb al-awhām*) do, and strong souls (*al-nufūs al-qawiyya*), which have an effect (*atharat*) upon a thing, when they strip themselves [from the body] and turn towards it. The closest witness to this, in the *sharī'a*, is the affliction by the evil eye (*iṣābat bi-l-'ayn*). For the Prophet confirmed it, saying: 'It is true.'

Strangely, Taşköprüzāde makes no reference to the Qur'anic stories about Solomon and the jinn, perhaps because he wants to imply that not only prophets could have such powers. The same applies to the 'science of summoning' (*'ilm al-istiḥḍār*), which is defined as 'the attempt to make the spirits descend, in the forms of men' (*istinzāl al-arwāḥ fī qawālib al-ashbā'*). Taşköprüzāde explains:

> [T]he subjugation (*taskhīr*) of jinn or angels is something other than making them corporeal (*tajassudihā*) or making them appear in front of you. It is called 'the science of spells' (*'ilm al-'azā'im*), provided that you attain your goals by way of these two things. As for the appearance of jinn before you and their materialization (*tajassuduhā*) in your sense-perception, it is called the science of summoning (*istiḥḍār*). It is not dependent on whether you achieve your goals by way of it or not.

[106] Firdevsī, ed. Büyükkarcı, *Firdevsī-i Ṭavīl and His Da'vet-nāme*, 148–152; cf. Grenier, 'Solomon, His Temple', 33–34.

[107] Sinan Pasha, ed. Tulum, *Maârif-nâme*, 490.

[108] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-sa'āda*, 1: 364–365; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 331–332.

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> As for the summoning (*istiḥḍār*) of angels, if the angel is a heavenly one, his assumption of corporeal form (*tajassuduhu*) can only be achieved by prophets. If it is an earthly angel, it depends.[109]

The same ideas are repeated by Kâtib Çelebi, who specifies, as we saw in Chapter 1 above, how conjuration of the jinn works, citing al-Rāzī and other respected scholars.[110] Even more 'spiritual', Nev'ī writes that incantations (*ruḳā vü efsūn*) work either with the names of God, or as a result of good thoughts, the power of the imagination, and sincerity of intention and effort, or the special qualities of letters, words or numbers:

> Enchantments are of two types. The first type includes God's name, whether in Persian, Arabic, or some other language. The second type is without God's name and is further divided into two types, the comprehensible (*mefhūm*) and the incomprehensible.…Of enchantments without God's name it is said that when they are successful it is because of good opinion, the power of the imagination, and sincerity of effort and intention (*ḥüsn-i ẓann ve quvvet-i vehm ve ṣıdq-i himmet ve iḫlāṣ-i niyyet*).

While admitting that a successful enchantment can be attributed to 'the essence of the words and the special qualities of writing letters (*ḫavāṣṣ-i te'līf-i ḥurūfdan*), like the qualities of magic squares', Nev'ī comments that Indians had learnt spells 'in a state of unconsciousness from demonical spirits' (*ġaybet-i ḥavāss ḥaletinde ervāḥ-i cinniyāndan aḫẕ ėtmişlerdür*), and that spells containing words of blasphemy seek 'help from demons' (*isti'āneti şeyāṭīnden olur*).[111] Shortly after, he adds a discussion of the sympathetic properties of herbs, animals, and minerals ('as the magnet attracts iron or as someone wearing rubies is never struck by lightning'): these sympathetic properties (*hassiyet*), to which we will return in Chapter 5 below, are 'things whose cause is unknown.'[112]

Astral/Natural Magic

Yet, whereas he accepts all these sorts of methods and implicit world views, Taşköprüzāde clearly favours a quite mechanical explanation of the world. His general introduction to magic (*'ilm al-siḥr*) copies directly Maslama al-Qurṭubī's *Ghāyat al-ḥakīm*:

[109] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-sa'āda*, 1: 366–367; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 335–336.

[110] Kâtip Çelebi, eds Yaltkaya and Bilge, *Keşf-el-zunun*, 2: 1137–1138; cf. *Keşfü'z-zunûn*, tr. Balcı, 3:909.

[111] Nev'i Efendi, eds Procházka-Eisl and Çelik, *Texts on Popular Learning*, 130–132, 287.

[112] Nev'i Efendi, eds Procházka-Eisl and Çelik, *Texts on Popular Learning*, 150. On the pre-Ottoman 'science of properties', see Raggetti, 'The "Science of Properties"'.

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> Know that magic is that of which the cause is hidden to the majority of minds and which is difficult to discover. The truth of it is everything, all the sayings and deeds, which enchant the minds and which guide the souls towards them, by wonder (*taʿajjub*) and appreciation and attentiveness. It is a science which explores the knowledge of the celestial states and the conditions of the stars and their connection with earthly matters (*irtibāṭihā maʿa al-umūr al-arḍiyya*) and in particular the three kingdoms of nature, so that from this mixture strange deeds appear and wondrous secrets, the reasons and causes of which are hidden.[113]

In contrast, the science of talismans (*ʿilm al-ṭilasmāt*) is 'easier to handle than the science of magic, because its principles and causes are known':

> It is a science that seeks to explore the quality (*kayfiyya*, lit. 'the how-ness') of the mixture of the heavenly, active faculties (*al-qiwā al-samāwiyya al-fāʿʿāliyya*) with the earthly, passive faculties (*bi-l-qiwā al-arḍiyya al-munfaʿila*), at appropriate times, in terms of the desired acts and effects, together with appropriate, invigorating incense (*bakhūrāt*), which draws towards the spirituality of that talisman (*jāliba li-rūḥāniyyat dhālika al-ṭilasm*), so that from these matters strange acts might come about in the world of generation and corruption.

The very word *ṭilasm* means a knot that cannot be untied (*ʿaqd lā yunḥall*), but Taşköprüzāde notes that it is said that the word needs to be read backwards (i.e. *musalliṭ*) 'because it is of the essential substances of subjugation and ruling over (*min jawāhir al-qahr wa-l-tasalluṭ*)': that is, the essence of a talisman is that it has the power to subjugate and rule over that against which it is used or for the purpose of which it is used.[114] Again, then, this account shows a deterministic understanding of the world, full of correspondences and hierarchies. Perhaps more clearly, this logic of correspondences can be seen in Taşköprüzāde's description of the science of fortune-telling (*ʿilm al-ʿīrāfa*), a branch of physiognomy (among other sciences, such as knowing where to find metals and predicting rain) which actually (as seen by the many examples he cites) comprises all sorts of divination:

> It is the knowledge of inference (*istidlāl*) from some current occurrences to some future occurrences, by correlation (*munāsaba*) or by the hidden resemblance (*mushābaha*), or the connection, which exists between the two; either

[113] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-saʿāda*, 1: 338; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 308. For Maslama al-Qurṭubī's text, see Coulon, *La Magie en terre d'islam*, 287; Coulon, 'The *Kitāb Sharāsīm al-Hindiyya*', 339.

[114] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-saʿāda*, 1: 339–340; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 308–309. On talismanic theories of medieval Islamic philosophy, based on natural correspondences, see Noble, *Philosophizing the Occult*, 102–137.

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> because of their nature as known [aspects] of *one* matter or because of the nature of that which is in the present an indication of that which is in the future (*mā fi-l-ḥāl ʿilla li-mā fi-l-mustaqbal*). This is on the condition that the connection between the two of them is hidden; that it can only be seen by (very unique) individuals—either through experience, which they witnessed in the likes of them, or through a very gentle condition in their souls (*bi-ḥāla mūdiʿa fī anfusihim*) and in their natural condition (*fiṭra*), inasmuch as a share of the unseen overpowers the one who looks at them, whom the Prophet called 'speaker' (*muḥaddith*, 'narrator'), and he is the one 'afflicted' in supposition and physiognomy (*muṣīb fi-l-ẓann wa-l-firāsa*)—as we have explained in the [section on the] science of physiognomy.[115]

This account tries to establish a kind of monist interpretation of the world, where current and future occurrences are related because of their being different aspects of one matter (*amr*). This somewhat obscure formulation is reinforced by the reference to special souls, who are capable of perceiving such connections; however, the reference to the possibility of perception 'through experience' again gives a very rational overtone. Besides, in his own additions to Taşköprüzāde's entry on magic (*ʿilm al-siḥr*), Kâtib Çelebi insists even more on the natural, rather than supernatural, quality of these techniques:

> The magician (*al-sāḥir*) gathers together and arranges, at appropriate moments of [given] celestial conditions and planetary situations, the three realms of nature with each other, and then makes appear wondrous conditions and strange deeds, the effect of which is great, and the cause of which remains hidden, so that the minds are perplexed and the thoughts of [even] brilliant people are unable to solve the secrets [of these phenomena]…[116]

The knowledge of secret properties is also an integral part of this world view. What is more, even spells (*ruqā*), often used in the case of illnesses, are 'specific actions (*afʿāl makhṣūṣa*), which are arranged (*tatarattab*, 'put into a specific order') according to special attributes of specific actions (*bi l-khāṣṣiyya athār makhṣūṣa*)'.[117] Kâtib Çelebi insists on their natural quality, explaining (as a corrigendum to Taşköprüzāde's rather supernaturalist interpretation):

[115] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-saʿāda*, 1: 357; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 323.

[116] Kâtip Çelebi, eds Yaltkaya and Bilge, *Keşf-el-zunun*, 2: 980; cf. *Keşfü'z-zunûn*, tr. Balcı, 2: 788.

[117] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-saʿāda*, 1: 366; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 333. Cf. a very similar formulation in a contemporaneous political treatise, stressing the importance of occult sciences: Alā'ī, ed. Dokuzlu, 'Alâî b. Muhibbî eş-Şirâzî'nin *Düstûru'l-vüzerâ*', 152.

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> The secret properties of things are fixed and their occasions (*asbāb*, lit. 'causes') are hidden, because we know [for instance] that magnetite attracts iron, but we do not know how and why. Likewise with all the secret properties, except that the causes (*'ilal*, 'occasions') of some of them can be grasped by the intellect, while the meaning of the causes of others cannot.[118]

The notion of 'properties' is also central in Taşköprüzāde's and Kâtib Çelebi's account of alchemy, and it has very rationalistic and experimental connotations: alchemy is 'a science the aim of which is to take (*salb*) from mineral gems their special properties (*khawāṣṣ*) and to put them to use for special purposes, which they didn't have'.[119] Its goal can be reached by careful and rationalist imitation of nature:

> Then, [also] know that a group of philosophers, like the wise Hermes, Ostanes (*Usṭānīs*), and Pythagoras, when they wanted to bring forth (*istikhrāj*) this divine art, they put themselves in the place of nature, and they knew, by way of the logical faculty and the experiential sciences, what happened to each of these bodies, in terms of heat and cold, humidity and dryness, and also what parts of other bodies they were mixed (up) with. They did the trick (*al-ḥīla*) of decreasing that which was in excess, and adding [to] what was lacking, in terms of active and passive qualities, because of the deficiency (*'illa*) of these bodies, according to what they needed, in terms of different elixirs of the earth, of animals and of plants, depending on time and place.[120]

As Tuna Artun has shown, the Ottoman alchemical corpus attributed to 'Alī Çelebi (second half of the sixteenth century) gave a new emphasis to the macrocosm, and more particularly to the role of the celestial structure in the creation and formation of minerals (see also below, Chapter 4).[121] On the other hand, similar explanations can be found in treatises from the beginning of the sixteenth century, such as the treatise on talismans by Riyāzī Ali Çelebi (d. 1537/8).[122] The treatise is worth more detailed study: after citing a definition of the various sorts of magic drawing from the same source as Taşköprüzāde, Riyāzī concludes that the science of talismans is one that mixes earthly and heavenly powers: that is, the movements of the stars and the properties of plants, minerals, and animals.[123] Then he examines the influence

[118] Kâtip Çelebi, eds Yaltkaya and Bilge, *Keşf-el-zunun*, 1: 726; cf. *Keşfü'z-zunûn*, tr. Balcı, 2:602.

[119] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-sa'āda*, 1: 341; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 310.

[120] Kâtip Çelebi, eds Yaltkaya and Bilge, *Keşf-el-zunun*, 2: 1531; cf. *Keşfü'z-zunûn*, tr. Balcı, 3:1220. On Pythagoras as a master of alchemy, see Izdebska, 'The Attitudes of Medieval Arabic', 36–37.

[121] Artun, 'Hearts of Gold and Silver', 64–101.

[122] Riyāzī [Ibn Kemal], ed. Dalkıran, 'İbn-i Kemal'in tılsımat risâlesi'; cf. Şen, 'Practicing Astral Magic'; Schmidt, 'The Occult Sciences', 248–249; Bulmuş, *Plague, Carantines and Geopolitics*, 85–86; Velioğlu, 'Müneccim Riyâzî', 113–124.

[123] See above and Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-sa'āda*, 1: 364; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 331.

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of earthly powers (e.g. magnetic phenomena) and of celestial movements (giving several examples of the influence of certain stars upon man, cattle, earthquakes, and so on). He explains the affinities of the science of talismans to that of medicine (claiming that a talisman is a medicine for the world) and to that of astrology, and then proceeds with laying down the principles of nativities, stressing that they are the consequence of God's will. After insisting on the need for precision and the use of special instruments in order to determine the celestial configuration needed for success, Riyāzī shows that talismans should use images (*ṣūret*) made by the metals governed by the planets related to their object (e.g. plague); stamps (*ḳalıb*) may also be used to produce multiple talismans quickly. One may add inscriptions (*levha*) or names of spirits (*esmā-i ervāḥ*). Next, the author delves into the importance of the position of a talisman in a city, especially of one against plague, and argues that plague and earthquakes are mutually exclusive. The treatise ends with a short 'scientific autobiography' and a call for the sultan to fund new astronomical tables, so that they reach the precision needed. Taşköprüzāde, in contrast, had also penned a treatise on plague, which is much more lettrist in its methods compared to Riyāzī's essay: less analytical in its theoretical basis, it cites a host of magical methods, including invocations, magic squares, and lettrist techniques, drawing explicitly from sources such as al-Būnī and al-Bisṭāmī.[124]

Finally, astrological divination and astral magic usually belong to this world view of nature as a system of (non-supernatural, understandable) hierarchies (as we saw in Chapter 1). We will examine these techniques in more detail in the next chapter. For the moment, let us note that such beliefs did not necessarily entail a 'de-supernaturalized' understanding of the cosmos—although the general tendency in the late medieval Islamicate world was a transition from natural philosophy to Sufism and spiritual agents as explanations for magic.[125] Remnants of this 'occultist turn' would also survive, for example, in Taşköprüzāde, who considers 'calling upon stars' (*'ilm da'wa al-kawākib*) a possibility: he notes that this was the magic of the Sabians, the mysterious groups from Harran associated with astral magic,[126] and argues that 'it is possible to subjugate the spirituality (*rūḥāniyya*) of the stars, especially the one of the seven moving ones [i.e. the seven planets]'.[127] More generally, various forms of divination show that a world view of homologous natural hierarchies could coexist with a belief in supernatural interference. What may be called 'sympathetic' magic was based on a neo-Platonic view of the cosmos, similar to that of Renaissance European occultists such as Ficino and della Mirandola, in which a series of subsequent emanations of a highest essence dominated over one another.[128]

[124] Melvin-Koushki, 'Taşköprīzāde on the (Occult) Science'. Actually, the origins of these instructions go further back to Avicenna and al-Rāzī: Noble, *Philosophizing the Occult*, 124–137.

[125] Saif, 'From *Ġāyat al-ḥakīm*'. [126] See e.g. van Bladel, *The Arabic Hermes*, 64–118.

[127] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-sa'āda*, 1: 367; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 336–337.

[128] Daiber, 'Magie und Kausalität im Islam'.

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Geomancy, for one thing, combined an arbitrary point of beginning with a mathematical method matched only by astrology: the seeker would draw sixteen random series of lines in the sand (or, later, on paper as well), from which the geomancer would produce a design (the geomantic tableau) of sixteen positions, each one occupied by a geomantic figure (i.e. a set of four dots and slashes, or even and odd numbers). The combination of figure (each one having a specific significance, e.g. union or help) and position in the tableau would result in the interpretation, in a way similar to that of planet and house in astrology.[129] The rationale behind geomancy would fall under the same neo-Platonic view of the cosmos as a set of interdependent hierarchies under the laws of sympathy and analogy.[130] However, in order to get a glimpse of these homologies between the celestial and the terrestrial realms, one should let oneself be guided by chance (i.e. by God's will), while drawing a number of dots in the sand. In another approach, one could argue that the seeker may be guided by spirits, be they terrestrial (angels or jinn) or higher, celestial ones.[131] The role of chance may be the reason why geomancy is implied to be lower than *simyā* in Medḥī's magical stories;[132] for the same reason, Taşköprüzāde is rather reluctant regarding the value of geomancy ('clear estimation', 'relative, not certain') and casting lots (*'ilm al-qur'a*) ('weaker than geomancy').[133]

Bibliomancy is also a nice example. One could consult a random page of the Qur'an, and here one would suppose God's will to intervene directly through the sacred word. This is clear, for instance, in a record of ominous bibliomancy through the Qur'an in 1736 by no less a figure than Mahmud I:

> Consequently, Mahmûd I anticipated a sign or a message from the invisible world and the unquestionable book (*levḥ-i ġayb ve kitāb-ı lā-reybden işāret ve beşāret recāsıyla*) about whether or not this agreement and covenant were destined to come true to the extent God wished. Accordingly, our almighty, bountiful, flamboyant lord opened the almighty and honourable Qur'an with their corroborated hands. As a result of this bibliomancy, in the sūrat Yūsuf, a verse at the top of the page that begins with 'The King said, "Bring him to me"' ad finem became a target for his divine light-bestowing glance. It was deduced that this verse is a sign and a

[129] Savage-Smith and Smith, *Islamic Geomancy*; Savage-Smith and Smith, 'Islamic Geomancy'; van Binsbergen, 'The Astrological Origin'; Melvin-Koushki, 'Persianate Geomancy', 156–160.

[130] Melvin-Koushki, 'Persianate Geomancy', 186–189. Maria Mavroudi makes the plausible suggestion that the geomantic tradition might have Greek origins: Mavroudi, 'Byzantine Translations', 222–227. Cf. van Binsbergen, 'The Astrological Origin'.

[131] Lory, 'Geomancy, Divination and Islam', 458–459.

[132] Medḥī, ed. Öztürk, 'Türk tarihinde İbn-i Sînâ destânları', 120, 133.

[133] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-sa'āda*, 1: 360, 362; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 327, 329. For an example of divination by casting lots, see Direk, '18. yüzyılda harflere'.

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> harbinger of the completion of this agreement with perfect steadiness, safety, and peace. The result of the bibliomancy is here jotted down by order.[134]

Numerous manuals of Qur'anic bibliomancy circulated widely, many of them in verse.[135] Yet, bibliomancy through other texts, such as the poems of Ḥāfıẓ or Rumi, was quite common as well. Kefeli Hüseyin's (d. 1603) *Rāznāme*, a collection of stories showing the successful application of bibliomancy, showcases results through both the Qur'an and 'secular' sources, especially Ḥāfıẓ—actually, the second category vastly outnumbers the first[136]—and it is recorded that in the early sixteenth century the same role was reserved for the poems of Şeyḫī, an early fifteenth-century Ottoman poet of evidently lower status than his Persian peers.[137] This kind of bibliomancy does not seem to have had any theological basis at all (although the *Mesnevi* was considered by many a revealed book).[138] Instead, their function was loosely based on the cosmological concepts of microcosm and macrocosm: this is implied by the instructions for using *fālnāme*s or divination manuals, where one can see a correspondence between letters, planets or astrological mansions, animals, plants, and religious figures. Often the seeker is instructed to randomly choose an object or a letter, and then refer to a series of words (related to planets, prophets, plants, etc.), through an alphanumeric correspondence influenced by lettrist practices, that would finally provide the answer sought.[139] Another interpretation underscored the pictures used for augury into the past rather than the future, implying that prognostication was based on historical analogies. We can see this view in the preface to a *Fālnāme* composed by Vaṣṣāl Kalender Pasha, probably in 1614:

> The world resembles, in its meaning, a book in which the conditions of all nations are written line by line. Both fears and desires may be found in this book, on whose leaves are depicted the morning and the night. Hence, if an augury is taken [using the book], the image of the beginning and the end can be seen…[Since] ancient times, men of spiritual knowledge and companions of taste and conscience, upon stepping into the world, contemplated the situation

[134] İpek, 'Interpreting with Bibliomancy'.

[135] E.g. Ali Uşşâkî, ed. Avcı, 'Ali Uşşâkî'nin manzum Kur'an falı'; Şenödeyici and Koşik, 'En muteber kaynaktan'; Şenödeyici, 'Okült ilimlere kaynaklık'; Koşik, 'Müellifi bilinmeyen'; Schmidt, 'The Occult Sciences', 237–240. Cf. Gruber, 'The "Restored" Shīī *muṣḥaf*, on Safavid practices.

[136] Kefeli Hüseyin, ed. Aksoyak, *Rāznāme*; cf. Schmidt, 'The Occult Sciences', 230–231; Schmidt, 'Hāfiz and Other Persian Authors'.

[137] Şen, 'Practicing Astral Magic', 68. See also Keskin, '24 divân şairi adına', for an interesting example of a sort of casting lots with names of Ottoman poets.

[138] Gürbüzel, *Taming the Messiah*. See an example in Ḥulvī, ed. Süer, 'Cemâleddin Hulvî'nin *Lemezât-ı hulviyye*', 703.

[139] Bağcı and Farhad, 'The Art of Bibliomancy'. Some examples in Avcı, 'Türk edebiyatında manzum nebat falları'; Gür, 'Osmanlı fal geleneği'. For an exemplary analysis of some highly elaborate specimens, see D'hulster, 'Will I Be Happy?'

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> of the world with the eye of learning by analogy (*ʿibret gözüyle*), and have confirmed that previous events constitute guiding models for people and that it is possible to draw lessons from the past on every important decision. It is especially necessary for the greatest sultans and kings of exalted rank…to observe the deeds of past rulers and the stories of the prophets and saints and to consider their beginnings and ends, in order to compare them with and understand the consequences of their own affair. For this reason, they ordered that the indications and allusions to events that took place during the reigns of past sultans (while they were seated on the throne of felicity) be written and drawn on pages, so that whichever of those pages is opened through the method of taking an omen (*tefeʾül ṭarīḳiyle*), the omen seeker should adapt his/her condition (*kendü ḥalin ana taṭbīḳ idüp*) to the circumstances of the prophets and sultans, which have been written or depicted on those pages, and by comparing those with the affairs that s/he desires, should act accordingly…
>
> Whenever [the sultan] has a royal wish, or whenever he wants to take an omen, he can seek his augury after reciting the Fatiha once, the Ikhlas three times, and invoking noble blessings [on the Prophet] three times. [The author hopes that] when he opens [the volume] in accordance with the above-mentioned manner, the images of the prophets and saints written on the auspicious right-hand-side page of whichever illustrated and ruled bi-folio his invaluable exalted gaze comes to rest on will produce abundant inspirations and blessings to his noble nature, and that his augury will be agreeable to his royal wish, decision, and consultation.[140]

A particular sub-genre of *fālnāme*s, based on the various prophets, may have some affinity with this sort of thinking, as the explanations follow their deeds.[141]

More generally, the point that underlies all these methods is (in Maria Mavroudi's words) 'to allow divine providence, in the form of chance, to intervene in order to help humans predict the future or reach a decision'.[142] We must emphasize again that chance in this context means total abandonment to God's will. Thus, manuals for casting lots (presumably with letters, resulting in combinations of three letters) emphasized the need for the seeker to be ritually prepared, with ablutions, purity, and so forth, so as to be humbled in front of God.[143] Even in this respect, however, the main problem caused by all divinatory practices in Islam—and, for that matter, in all monotheistic religions—is that by foreseeing the future they challenge man's moral freedom, be it for sin or for salvation.[144]

[140] Bağcı, 'Presenting *Vaṣṣāl* Kalender's Works', 271–273. On this *falname*, cf. Bağcı, Çağman, Renda, and Tanındı, *Ottoman Painting*, 194–195. Still, as late as 1736 Mahmud I 'anticipated a sign or a message from the invisible world' and got it by opening the Qur'an: İpek, 'Interpreting with Bibliomancy'.

[141] Şenödeyici, 'Tradition of Fortune Telling'. [142] Mavroudi, 'Islamic Divination', 225.

[143] Direk, '18. yüzyılda harflere'. [144] Mavroudi, 'Islamic Divination', 229.

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Still, on a less 'official' level, all sorts of magic were probably appreciated almost as much as theological guidelines: copies of one of the most popular Ottoman Muslim catechisms, originally written back in the fourteenth century, were quite often full of notes on talismans or divination instructions.[145]

Lettrism

Together with the deterministic understanding of the cosmos as a system of interconnected hierarchies, we may find the lettrist universe, although it seldom reaches the levels of predominance that it had in Iran, central Asia and the Middle East between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries (see above, Chapter 1). Thus, Taşköprüzāde's description of *nīranjāt* (to which he ascribes *Ghāyat al-ḥakīm* and Ibn Waḥshiyya's *Asrār al-shams wa-l-qamar*) implies handling the relationship between microcosm and macrocosm, this time by making use of writing:

> This is the Arabicized form of '*nīrang*', which means falsifying (*al-tamwīh*) and making belief (*al-takhyīl*). It is to produce (*iẓhār*) strange harmonies (*gharā'ib al-imtizājāt*) between active and passive faculties, composed, altogether, from the macrocosm and the microcosm (*al-qiwā al-fā'ila wa-l-munfa'ila wa bi-l-jumla mu'allifa bayna al-'ālam al-akbar wa-l-aṣghar*), in order to produce desired effects of love and hate, of attraction and aversion. Examples of it can be found in special writings (*kitābāt makhṣūṣa*), composed by spiritual forces (*rūḥāniyyāt*), unfolded (*mabthūtha*) in the world. Though the written signs [used in this science] have unknown significations (*kitābāt majhūla al-dalālāt*), it is as if they were the numbers and letters of primordial [forces?] (*li-l-awā'il*), and though it is unknown why the specific properties [of these signs] cause the effects they cause, the effects [themselves] are known (*khawāṣṣuhā majhūla al-limmiyya*, *ma'rūfa al-anniyya*).[146]

The power of letters, thus, implies spiritual forces (*rūḥāniyyāt*) and connects spirits and men. Taşköprüzāde's note that the cause of this power cannot be explained shows that he considers it to be at best of a preternatural nature. Although the exact mechanism is unknown, however, it is certain that it works with analogies and correspondences connecting this world with the supernatural qualities of Arabic letters. We can see the same emphasis on analogy and interconnection in the description of the 'science of spiritual properties (*'ilm al-khawāṣṣ al-rūḥāniyya*)', studying

[145] Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, 36–37.

[146] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-sa'āda*, 1: 365; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 332.

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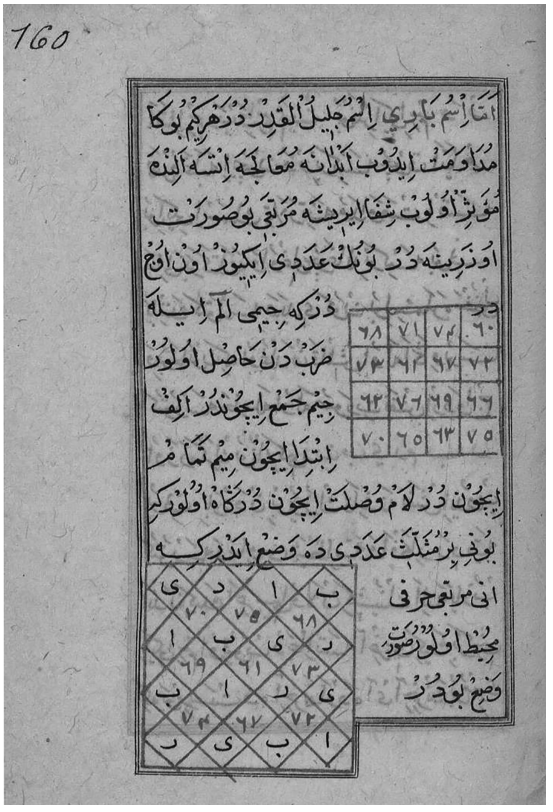


Fig. 3.2 Lettrist magic squares from the Ottoman translation of al-Buni's *Shams al-ma'arif*. Bibliothèque nationale de France, suppl. turc 244, f. 160a (1572).

> the mixture of the numbers and letters, according to a proportional and even (harmonious) relationship (*ʿalā al-tanāsub wa-l-taʿādul*); insofar as active spirits (*arwāḥ mutaṣarrifa*), connected to this equilibrium (*taʿdīl*), influence the opposites (*qawābil*), according to what is desired and aimed for, from the arrangement (*tartīb*) of numbers and letters, and their qualities (*kayfiyyātihā*).[147]

Taşköprüzāde proceeds to describe particular methods of using these properties, such as the science of 'breaking' and 'unfolding' (*ʿilm al-kasr wa-l-basṭ*), in which

> the letters of one of the names of God are cut up, mixed together with the letters of the thing you desire, and laid out on a line; the letters are then manipulated in certain ways known to the experts, so that the order of the letters on the first line

[147] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-saʿāda*, 2: 592; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 1030.

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> is changed in the second line. Then [this is done] again and again, until the 'essence' (*'ayn*) of the first line is organized and—at that point—one obtains the names of angels and prayers, with which to busy oneself until one obtains what one wishes.[148]

The technique of 'breaking and unfolding' is a traditional alphanumeric method of lettrist science, transforming letters to numbers and then back to letters.[149] Furthermore, in his treatise on plague Taşköprüzāde claims that even simple invocations of God's names or Qur'anic verses have to follow the rules of these names' letters: they have to be repeated according to the number of their words, letters, or gematrical transformations of their letters.[150] As for the reference to angels and prayers, it shows very clearly how these magic systems are ultimately based on a world view where letters and numbers have specific functions as elements of the supernatural structure of the cosmos. Lettrism, thus, is closer to a supernatural than to a natural magic; or rather, since it uses the known hierarchies of planets, hours, plants, and minerals, a system connecting astral/natural magic to the Hereafter (see Fig. 3.2). In fact, we may see a connection with natural magic in a text contemporaneous with Taşköprüzāde's encyclopedia, Sarūḫānī's *Ḳavā'id-i tesḫīrāt*, which in some part explains the preponderance of some letters associated with certain elements with procedures showing the elements working in nature: fire is beaten by water because it is produced by it (the froth of water becomes stone, and fire is produced by hitting stones against each other), this is why letters of water dominate those of fire.[151] Sarūḫānī's discussion of planets, moreover, has no reference to angels or jinn.[152]

A collateral topic concerns magic alphabets: such scripts, in their usual form distorting known letters and adding small circles and lines (the well-known *caractères à lunettes*), had been a constant feature of grimoires and magic manuals since the Hellenistic period.[153] Taşköprüzāde mentions magic writing in its own

[148] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-sa'āda*, 2: 593; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 1031.

[149] In a classic example, the name of the letter *alif* is deconstructed to its own letters, i.e. to *alif*, *lam*, *fe*; this process is called *tafsīl* ('detail'). Then, in a second stage called *taksīr* ('breaking'), *tafsīl* is again applied upon the first *tafsīl*: thus, *alif* is analysed to *alif*, *lam*, and *fe*, *lam* to *lam*, *elif*, and *mim*, and so on, and these letters are converted to numbers according to the *ebjed* system (*alif* to 1, *lam* to 30, *f* to 80 and so on). Lastly, the words of these numbers are analysed to their own letters, thus applying another *tafsīl* to the *taksīr*: this is *bast* ('unfolding' or 'stretching'). 1 is *aḥad* and thus gives *alif*, *ḥa*, and *dal*; 30 is *thalāthūn* and gives *tha*, *lam*, *alif*, *tha*, *waw*, and *nun*; and so forth (Coulon, *La Magie*, 304–305). See a late-sixteenth-century Safavid example in Mahmud Dihdar Shirazi, ed. Melvin-Koushki, 'The Occult Sciences in Safavid Iran', 363 (and 365fn14–16); for an Ottoman example, see Saruhânî, ed. Kaçar, 'İbn-i İsa'nın *Ḳavā'id-i tesḫīrāt*', 171–178 (ff. 105b–110b).

[150] Melvin-Koushki, 'Taşköprīzâde on the (Occult) Science', 155, 158.

[151] Saruhânî, ed. Kaçar, 'İbn-i İsa'nın *Ḳavā'id-i tesḫīrāt*', 112 (f. 63a).

[152] Ibid., 124–140 (ff. 72b–84a).

[153] See Gordon, '*Charaktêres* between Antiquity'; Grevin and Véronèse, 'Les "Caractères" magiques'.

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right as the science of 'spectacled scripts' (*'ilm al-falaqṭīrāt*, Gk. χαρακτῆρες),[154] although he has little to say about it:

> These are long lines, which are joined by letters and shapes, i.e. rings and circles. They claim that they have effects by sympathetic quality (*lahā ta'thīrāt bi-l-khāṣṣiyya*).[155] Some of them are read (*maqrū'*). We have seen many of them on diverse papers, but we have not seen a single work written about them. Nor have we considered the way in which they are made. We have not tested if they have an effect or not. They remain obscure to us.[156]

These letters or scripts were usually associated with jinn or angels, as when used in Uzun Firdevsī's spells and 'seals'. They thus functioned in the same way as Arabic letters: namely, connecting astral and natural magic with the supernatural world. However, al-Bisṭāmī hints that alphabets regulated by the stars (and, potentially, regulating the stars and their forces) might also be other than Arabic: not only the Syriac script (that of Adam according to several sources), but also ciphers invented by sages, such as Hermes and Dioscorides. As Noah Gardiner notes, the idea that such creations are regulated by the stars 'could also be taken to imply that lettrism is a discipline not limited to the Arabic language and/or script but rather one that applies to all languages'.[157] Al-Bisṭāmī wrote extensively on alphabets, following pseudo-Ibn Wahshiyya's famous treatise, and argued that a script (or a line) is a spiritual organ (*hai'a rūḥānīya*) manifesting itself through a bodily instrument; in this vein, he reaches a 'natural alphabet' (*al-qalam al-ṭabī'ī*), from which all alphabets have stemmed, 'composed of the natural traits of the upper and lower worlds'.[158] Cipher alphabets continued to be used in various formulas and spells in Ottoman magic manuals. A Sufi of the late sixteenth century, Evliyā Ḥasan Dede, is even credited with 'composing a book with a sort of letters, made by altering the letters of the Torah and the Gospels' (*muġayyer ḥurūf ile Tevrāt ve İncīl ḥarfleri beyninde bir cins ḥurūf ile bir kitāb te'līf ėtmiş idi*).[159] However, scholarly references to them did not follow al-Bisṭāmī's occultist approach. Instead, as I argued recently, they adopted a rather antiquarian approach. They were studied as remnants of ancient wisdom, and authors such as Muṣṭafā 'Ālī emphasized their use in concealing wisdom, rather than their magic or supernatural qualities:

[154] See Ullmann, *Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften*, 362, as well as Günther and Pielow (eds), *Die Geheimnisse der unteren und oberen Welt* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), index: 'Brillenbuchstaben'.

[155] For *khāṣṣiyya* as 'sympathic quality', see Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften*, 395.

[156] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-sa'āda*, 1: 368; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 337.

[157] Gardiner, 'Lettrism and History', 237–238. Cf. Burak, 'Alphabets and "Calligraphy"'; Bisṭāmī, ed. Yağmur, '*Terceme-i kitāb*', 104–107.

[158] Burak, 'Alphabets and "Calligraphy"', 35–38.

[159] Ḥulvī, ed. Süer, 'Cemâleddin Hulvî'nin *Lemezât-ı hulviyye*', 718.

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> [S]ages of mysticism (*ʿilm-i rūḥānī ʿālimleri*), the chosen men among the learned of the West, enchanters and penmen of various nations who are engaged in astrology, [the composing of] talismans, and in similar esoteric sciences (*fünūn-i ḫafiyye*), adopted certain other scripts that they preferred [to use]. And with those scripts, they safeguarded the noble symbols of those sciences from unworthy persons. So much so that there were some who, by writing a talisman in three or four [different] scripts in order to make it seem confusing and contradictory, hid its secret meaning like a secret treasure protected by a spell.[160]

In a rare effort to encompass as much as possible of the given explanations (he usually shortens Taşköprüzāde's entries), Kâtib Çelebi quotes at length Ibn Khaldūn and al-Būnī on the science of letters and words (*ʿilm al-ḥurūf wa-l-asmāʾ*).[161] He cites Ibn Khaldūn's account of how certain 'exaggerators (*ghulāh*) among the Sufis' claimed that 'the places of manifestation of the perfection of the divine names are the spirits of the spheres and the stars' and that 'the natures of the letters and their secrets pervade the divine names and thus pervade the created things (*al-akwān*) in a like manner'. Still following Ibn Khaldūn, he explains that al-Būnī and Ibn 'Arabī argued that 'the effective disposition of divinely compelling forces (*taṣarruf al-nufūs al-rabbāniyya*) in the natural world (*fī ʿālam al-ṭabīʿa*)' can be achieved 'by means of the beautiful names and theurgical invocations (*al-kalimāt al-ilāhiyya*) compounded from the letters that contain the secrets pervading the created things'. They differed regarding the nature of the secret lying in the 'occult efficacy' (*sirr al-taṣarruf*) of the letters. Then, Kâtib Çelebi summarizes the different approaches given by Ibn Khaldūn (omitting some examples or explanations, most notably a long excursus explaining that talismans are based in the astral-spiritual forces or *rūḥānīyah*):

> Some among them believed it [the secret of the occult efficacy] to lie in the combination (*mizāj*) that is in it, and divided the letters into four groups through a division of the natures, as with the elements. The letters are classified according to an alchemical principle (*qanūn ṣināʿī*) they call 'decomposition' (*al-taksīr*).
>
> Also among them are those who believed that the secret…is due to a numerical proportionality (*li-l-nisba al-ʿadadiyya*). For the alphabetical letters indicate numbers associated with them by convention and inherent disposition. Deriving

[160] 'Ālī, ed. Akın-Kıvanç, *Muṣṭafā ʿĀlī's Epic Deeds of Artists*, 170=298. On Ottoman views of secret and magic alphabets, see Sariyannis, 'Languages of Ottoman Esotericism', 67–74; on a pre-Ottoman classic on such alphabets, that seems to have met with considerable popularity in Ottoman times, see Toral-Niehoff and Sundermeyer, 'Going Egyptian'.

[161] Kâtip Çelebi, eds Yaltkaya and Bilge, *Keşf-el-zunun*, 1: 650–651; cf. *Keşfü'z-zunûn*, tr. Balcı, 2: 543–544. For a translation and detailed analysis of Ibn Khaldūn's chapter, see Gardiner, *Ibn Khaldūn versus the Occultists*, 27–57. I use Gardiner's translation for these parts.

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> from the names are matrices (or correspondences: *awfāq*) such as belong to the numbers, each grouping of the letters pertaining to a grouping of matrices that is proportional to it with regard to the number of the shape [meaning the order of a matrix or magic square] or the number of letters. The occult efficacy (*taṣarruf*) mixes the lettristic secret and the numerical secret owing to the proportionality (*tanāsub*) between them. As for the secret of the relationship between the letters and the compositions of the natural qualities, or between the letters and the numbers, it is a matter difficult to understand, for it is not like [other] sciences or deductions, but rather, according to them, is supported by tasting and unveiling. Says al-Būnī, 'Do not suppose that the secret of the letters is among that which is arrived at by means of deduction, rather it is by way of witnessing and divine granting of success.'
>
> As for occult efficacy in the natural world by means of the letters and the names composed of them, and the influencing of the created things thereby, it is a matter that cannot be denied, its factuality being established on the continuous authority of many of them [the lettrists]. Perhaps it is supposed that the occult efficacy of these people [the lettrists] and occult efficacy of the masters of talismans are one, but that is not so. Then he [Ibn Khaldūn] explained the difference between the two—extensively. We have mentioned a part of the detailed explanation [of this] in our book entitled *Rūḥ al-ḥurūf* ('The Spirit of the Letters').

Unfortunately, there is no trace of this treatise (*Rūḥ al-ḥurūf*), and we cannot be sure if it was actually composed by Kâtib Çelebi or belonged to his future plans. Kâtib Çelebi does not seem to endorse Ibn Khaldūn's strongly anti-occultist (and especially anti-lettrist) stance, as interpreted by Melvin-Koushki or Gardiner: instead, he uses his account in order to give a short survey of the possible rational explanations of lettrist influence, from the relationship of letters to the four elements and qualities to their relationship and proportion to the numbers. Again, like Taşköprüzāde, he has to admit (always following Ibn Khaldūn) that the real nature of these relationships cannot be grasped by the intellect. Ultimately, thus, he is led to accept that lettrism pertains to the supernatural and cannot be fundamentally understood. The major Ottoman encyclopedists seem sceptical about the power of letters and prone to accept a rational vision of a cosmos governed, if not by laws, by analogies and correspondences without strong supernatural overtones.

Polemics against Occult Sciences

Throughout the history of the Islamicate world, there was a lively, nuanced, and multilayered discussion of the lawfulness of magic and divination. Magic would often (but certainly not as often as in Christianity) be associated with demonic

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power, and divination challenged the concept of free will (and also, but to a lesser extent, of God's supremacy over things to be). Man should not adore jinn or demons, and should not seek to penetrate the mystery of God's decree. At the same time, predestination was at the very core of the belief in astrology or geomancy.[162] Thus, whereas magic (*siḥr*) was in general reproachable, being juxtaposed in the Qur'an to Muhammad's prophetic miracles, it was conceived as something given in the universe, a tool that could have good or evil uses; moreover, various crafts that fall under our 'etic' label of magic were totally legitimate ways of dealing with the natural and supernatural powers.[163] We therefore see Murad III being afraid of rumours that he is the object of vicious magic: he asks his sheikh what to do, noting that the Prophet himself had practised magic (*siḥr itmişlerdür*).[164] Finally, we should note, once again, that 'magic' as juxtaposed to either 'religion' or 'science' is arguably a distinctively modern and European notion that cannot be fruitfully applied to Islamicate pre-modern cultures.[165]

The debate on the legitimacy of occultism intensified in the late Middle Ages. Ibn Khaldūn's anti-occult struggle, eventually lost, barely influenced Ottoman thought.[166] More influential, one may say, was the earlier polemic by the Mamluk scholar Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328):

> The masters of magic, white magic (*nīranjiyyāt*), alchemical operations, and their like among people who get involved in vain, occult, and subtle matters need, in order to do so, great operations and deep thoughts… What they nevertheless do, eventually, is to doubt about the Merciful and to worship the devil (*al-ṭāghūt*) and Satan, to make adulterated gold and to spread corruption on earth. Few are those among them who attain some of what they intended, which does nothing but increase their remoteness from God.[167]

As for Ottoman attitudes regarding the legitimacy of occult sciences, it is essential to clarify that, just as in other areas, there is not just one Ottoman culture or mentality, but multiple ones. Being a knowledge of things that existed, occult sciences belonged to the understanding of the world and thus their prohibition was always a dubious suggestion. As we read in an early cosmography (concerning alchemy), 'no science should be despised: it is a favour of God given to whomever

[162] Lory, 'Geomancy, Divination and Islam', 455–456, 460–463.

[163] On the problems related to 'etic' approaches to magic and *siḥr*, see Otto, 'Magie im Islam'; Zadeh, 'Postscript'. On the Islamic arguments, medieval and modern, against the existence of magic see Mol, 'The Denial of Supernatural Sorcery'.

[164] Felek (ed.), *Kitābü'l-menāmāt*, 344 (no. 1857).

[165] Cf. Melvin-Koushki, 'Magic in Islam'.

[166] Asatryan, 'Ibn Khaldūn on Magic'; Melvin-Koushki, 'In Defence of Geomancy'; Gardiner, *Ibn Khaldūn versus the Occultists*.

[167] Michot, 'Between Entertainment and Religion', 14–15. More on his objections to alchemy in Roberts, 'Thinking about Chemistry', 615–618.

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asks for it'.[168] Moreover, most occult sciences were sanctified by their being revealed to prophets and ancient sages. For instance, the art of conjuration (*da'vet*) was sanctified with words attributed to the imam Ca'fer-i Ṣādıḳ (d. 765), who describes it as

> [the art of] making a soul [jinni] present, of making the jinni obedient to one's will like Sulayman did in order to obtain one's aims, to open and find treasures, to undo talismans, to order the monsters (*div*), to make oneself lord of the people of the world…

Another master of the art is Apollonius (Belinās Ḥakīm), the vizier of Alexander, who describes it as 'a high science and a way of the prophets'.[169] More than a century later, here is what a high-ranking bureaucrat, Bosnavī Şa'banzāde Mehmed Efendi (d. 1709), wrote in 1683 in a debate between the sword and the pen, where the pen boasts of its role in occult sciences:

> I am aware of the theoretical sciences (*'ulūm-ı naẓariyye*); I know the works of the astral sciences (*fünūn-ı nücūmiyye*). I am an astrologer who restores purification and calendars. I constantly count the minutes of days and nights on a marble surface. I am competent in the science of geomancy, the expert on establishing the points and letters (*nuḳat u ḥurūf ṭarḥında*)…I am showing the knowledge of *zāyirçe* and of letter magic (*'ilm-i simyā*), I am making the science of magic (*fenn-i nirencāt*) and the art of alchemy (*ṣan'at-ı kimyā*) manifest.[170]

The occult sciences constituted such a central element of daily practices that one finds abundant notes on talismans or divination instructions written on copies of a very popular catechism, originally written in the fourteenth century;[171] a simple glance at the catalogues of any library containing Ottoman manuscripts will show the extent and number of works on magic, divination, and alchemy.[172] It is important to note that, some scattered persecutions notwithstanding, the circulation of magical manuscripts was never a clandestine activity, nor did Ottoman practitioners of occult sciences ever have to perform in secrecy as some of their European peers did.[173] It seems, indeed, that the emphasis on secrecy concerning

[168] Sarıkaya (ed.), *Tercüme-i Acâibü'l-mahlūkat*, 353.

[169] Firdevsī, ed. Büyükkarcı, *Firdevsī-i Ṭavīl and His Da'vet-nāme*, 148–149. Plato predicts Alexander's successes through the science of *simyā* in Mahmud Efendi, ed. Tunalı, *Atina tarihi*, 326, and the examples may be easily multiplied.

[170] Tuşalp Atiyas, 'Eloquence in Context', 124.

[171] Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, 36–37.

[172] See Schmidt, 'The Occult Sciences', only for Dutch libraries.

[173] Cf. Jütte, *The Age of Secrecy*; Bellingrad and Otto, *Magical Manuscripts*; on the early modern conceptualizations of secrecy, see Vermeir, 'Openness versus Secrecy'. On the Ottoman notion of 'secret' in a (late) mystical context, see Zarcone, *Secret et sociétés secrètes en Islam*, 41–80; on early modern Ottoman censorship, see Shafir, *Order and Disorder*, 78–88.

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esoteric-occultist works, prominent in the Islamicate world during the late Middle Ages, had lost its importance by the fourteenth century.[174]

Magic, however, for the reasons described above, always aroused suspicion, and the line between licit forms (e.g. *simyā* and *nirencāt*) and the usually evil *siḥr* was a blurred one. We often see accusations of *siḥr* made against political or other opponents: according to a violently racist treatise, written by Dervīş ʿAbdullāh, a former halberdier of the palace, in 1741, Ham had learnt magic (*siḥr*) from one of Cain's daughters; his African descendants became so competent in this craft that they could converse with Satan.[175] The same author accuses the chief eunuch Beşir Agha of being a 'sorcerer' (*sāḥir*).[176] Almost contemporaneously, an Arab chronicler from Damascus, Muhammad Ibn Kannan (d. 1740), relates some rumours about the notorious *şeyhülislam* Feyzullah:

> A rumour that he was a heretic circulated…They said that he was of Persian origin but was raised up in Erzurum. They even said that he was practising magic and alchemy and that his faith was not pure. They even said—but only God knows—that a copy of the Qur'an had been found under his carpet and that there were pages with talismans written with blood…As for what was said about the pages and the talismans, they were probably put there by some ignorant servant by inadvertence.[177]

Obviously, there must have been debates on the licitness of magic arts as late as in the second half of the eighteenth century: otherwise, why would a certain Ibrāhīm al-Ḳurrā have translated a short treatise on Hārūt and Mārūt, the two angels who taught magic to humanity, and offered it to Cihanzāde Ibrahim Aga, a magnate of Aydın?[178] The treatise seeks to prove that they did so under God's order because magic is useful to distinguish prophets from false prophets, an old argument that is often met in the relevant literature. Thus, Taşköprüzāde, in an excerpt also copied by Kâtib Çelebi, declares the knowledge of magic permissible only because one should know how to distinguish false prophets, who could use it in order to claim miraculous power (while, on the other hand, both talismanics and *sīmyā'* have 'obvious benefits'):

> And the benefit of magic lies in learning to guard oneself against it, because engaging in it is forbidden in the Law—God forbid, in order to defend against a

[174] See Gardiner, 'Esotericist Reading Communities', 440–441.

[175] Dervīş ʿAbdullāh, ed. Sayan, 'Osmanlı saray hayatı hakkında', 22–23; Tezcan, '*Dispelling the Darkness* of the *Halberdier's Treatise*', 52. Tezcan reads the name of the sorceress as ʿİnāḳ, and associates her with ʿAnāq, a sister of Cain (ibid., fn31).

[176] Dervīş ʿAbdullāh, ed. Sayan, 'Osmanlı saray hayatı hakkında', 112.

[177] Marino, 'La Rébellion de 1703 à Istanbul', 368, 370.

[178] Ibrāhīm al-Ḳurrā, ed. Koşik, 'Hârût ve Mârût hakkında'.

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> magician who alleges to be a prophet. As for the science of it (i.e. as for the knowledge of magic), most declared it to be permissible. Some of them [even] declared it to be a collective duty (*farḍ kifāya*), because of the possibility that a magician might appear who claims to be a prophet, to show extraordinary things (*khawāriq*) by magic. So it is necessary for there to be someone who can defend the community against him.[179]

Similarly (and somehow ambiguously), Hasan Kāfī al-Aḳḥiṣārī (d. 1615) in his catechism uses the same argument in favour of Hārūt and Mārūt and claims that 'obviously, teaching magic in itself is not an act of disbelief, but rather the belief in it and performing it is completely forbidden'.[180] As for Mehmed Birgivī, the well-known opponent of Ebū's-su'ūd (and precursor of the Ḳāḍızādeli movement), he included magic among the seven deadly sins, along with murder and usury[181] (although we should note that this concerned *siḥr*; he was benevolent towards *ruqya*, i.e. incantations, provided that the practitioner believed that 'medical intervention is in the hand of God').[182] Their contemporary Kınalızāde 'Alī Çelebi, for his part, included magic (*saḥḥarlık*) among infamous arts, in the group of professions of profiteers, informants, and pimps.[183] Roughly a century later, Nūḥ b. Muṣṭafā (d. 1660), translator of al-Shahrastānī's (d. 1153) famous heresiographic treatise, would even add a section warning against asking 'sorcerers and soothsayers and astrologers' (*kāhine ve arrāfa ve müneccime varup nesne sormak cāiz değildür*);[184] as for Vānī Efendi (d. 1685), the leader of the 'third wave' of the Ḳāḍızādelis, he had already issued *fetva*s condemning magic (not only *siḥr*, but also knowledge of the Unseen or *'ilm-i muġayyebāt*, e.g. occultists finding lost things) before moving to the capital.[185] Similarly, in 1678, the author of a treatise on commercial transactions (probably of Ḳāḍızādeli tendencies) urges against making a profit by divination (*fāl*, *nüsḫacılıḳ*) and magic, accusing whomever believes a fortune-teller of infidelity.[186] The evil character of sorcery is evident in fiction, such as Cinānī's stories and the famous fifteenth-century collection *Ferec ba'de'ş-şidde*, full of magic lore, where we read that 'magic exists, and it cannot be denied' (*cādūlıḳ vardur, inkār ėtmek yoḳ*).[187] Sometimes *siḥr* may be more

[179] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-sa'āda*, 1: 338–341; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 307–309.

[180] Kāfī al-Aḳḥiṣārī, tr. Zein, *Rawdat al-jannat*, 12.

[181] Ivanyi, *Virtue, Piety and the Law*, 153; Kurz, *Ways to Heaven*, 180.

[182] In this he was followed by al-Nabulusī: Wright, 'Secrets on the Muhammadan Way', 87–88.

[183] Kınalızâde Ali Çelebi, ed. Koç, *Ahlâk-ı Alâ'î*, 336; following his model, Dawwani.

[184] Kaplan, 'Nûh b. Muṣṭafa'nın Şehrestânî'nin *el-Milel ve'n-nihal*', 294.

[185] Köse, 'The Fatwa Collection', 77–79. On finding treasures as associated to alchemy, see Winter, *Society and Religion*, 175.

[186] Schmidt, 'The Occult Sciences', 221. On the possible relationship of the text with the Kadızadelis, see Sariyannis, 'The Kadızadeli Movement', 285–286.

[187] Hazai and Tietze (eds), *Ferec ba'de'ş-şidde*, 484. For an abstract of the story, see Marzolph, *Relief after Hardship*, 93–94.

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ambiguous, mostly in early texts: we read that geomancers (*remmāl*) in Turkestan seem to have power over the creation and behaviour of clouds. Although clouds are, in fact, governed by God alone, certain men can understand (by magic, *siḥr ile*) the moments of change and exploit them;[188] Riyāzī Ali Çelebi (d. 1537/8) attributes the same power of 'Tatars' to the properties of a special stone that is found in their lands.[189] According to Ḫeṭā'ī, writing in 1516, the prayers of the Chinese courtesans for rain are accepted 'because their laments come from fear and longing, [and thus] the divine presence disregards their ignorance and accepts them'.[190] The most impressive examples of such an ambiguous attitude belong to Evliya, but of course they can be attributed to his well-known tendency for humorous tall tales: a Kalmyk weather magician freezes the river for the Pasha and his retinue to pass; some bigots (*muta'aṣṣıb*) first decline to pass through 'this ice made by magic' (*siḥr ile peydā olan buz*), then pass while reciting Qur'anic suras and God's names; as a result, the ice melts and they drown.[191]

Furthermore, as we also saw in detail above, whereas the influence of the celestial movements on earthly affairs was a well-entrenched belief in the Ptolemaic tradition of astronomy and geography, the possibility of predicting these influences was heavily debated in Ottoman times as it had been before them. A pietistic, anti-occultist trend emerged from the beginning of the Ottoman period: for example, the anonymous fourteenth-century translator of the moral treatise of Qay Qawus removes or annotates unfavourably the allusions of the original text to practices such as horoscope consultation, which he designates as 'non-Sunnite'.[192] Another moralistic work composed in 1401 by Şeyhoğlu Muṣṭafā, after dividing sciences into those that are profitable and those that are not, declares (following al-Ghazālī) that the second category consists of two types, religious sciences, on the one hand, and 'astrology, divination (*fal*), all kinds of philosophy', on the other. The latter sciences, which constitute external knowledge, are all to be rejected.[193] At the end of the same century, Sinan Pasha, the vizier expelled by Mehmed II, attacked astrologers (as well as doctors) who 'see only a portion of things, ignoring the rest', without denying the influence of the stars on the earthly world.[194] One might suggest that he was thus attacking his patron, whose Greek scriptorium had produced five out of sixteen manuscripts containing texts of prophecies or occult sciences.[195] Ebū's-su'ūd, the famous *şeyhülislam* of Suleyman the Magnificent, con-

[188] Sarıkaya (ed.), *Tercüme-i Acâibü'l-mahlūkat*, 159–160.
[189] Riyāzī [Ibn Kemal], ed. Dalkıran, 'İbn-i Kemal'in tılsımat risâlesi', 198.
[190] Ḫeṭā'ī, ed. Afšār, *Ḫeṭāy-nāma*, 126–134.
[191] Evliya Çelebi, eds Kahraman, Dağlı, and Dankoff, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, VIII. Kitap*, 10 (f. 193b).
[192] Birnbaum (ed.), *The Book of Advice*, 33.
[193] Şeyhoğlu Muṣṭafā, ed. Yavuz, *Kenzü'l-kübera*, 132.
[194] Sinan Pasha, ed. Tulum, *Maârif-nâme*, 480–492; Şen, 'Astrology in the Service', 92–98.
[195] Mavroudi, 'Islamic Divination', 228–229; Fleischer, 'Ancient Wisdom', 238; Budak, 'Teaching Greek'.

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demned several types of divination (even bibliomancy using the Qur'an), particularly when practised by scholars, but he appeared more indulgent towards geomancy (the particular practice of Suleyman's consultant, Remmal Haydar); in another *fetva* on the evil eye (*naẓar*), he does not seem to deny its reality, but the only thing he suggests is prayer.[196] As late as the early eighteenth century, a text of advice to craftsmen warns practitioners of geomancy, *cifr*, and magic squares to be honest and diligent; astrologers should confine themselves to time-keeping and calendars, but refrain from foretelling the future, as 'the words of any astrologer who [claims to] understand the unseen are but lies and fabrication' (*ġıyāba hükmederse bir müneccim / kelāmı cümle kızb ü iftirādur*).[197] Fundamentalist ulema, as is to be expected, were adamant against divination and specifically astrology: thus, astrologers are associated with philosophers (*ḥukamāʾ*) in the strongly critical gaze of Aḥmad al-Khafājī (d. 1658), an Egyptian scholar who visited Instanbul in 1642, whereas the peculiarly conservative eighteenth-century author Fażlīzāde rejects vehemently all occult sciences.[198]

Sufis, moreover, were in general hostile towards astrologers. There are some positive mentions, especially in earlier texts: in the *Vilāyetnāme* of Hacı Bektaş, Necmeddīn-i Kübrā (the early-thirteenth-century Sufi—actually, this is a version of a fictional story about Nasir al-Dīn Ṭūsī) finds the ruler who would dethrone the Abbasid caliph by looking at the horoscopes of Jenghiz Han's sons.[199] Yet, İbrahim-i Gülşenî's (d. 1534) hostility is emphasized in his biography written at the end of the sixteenth century (although the author seems friendly towards *cefr*, as he admits a practitioner having predicted Damad Ibrahim Pasha's sultanic aspirations),[200] whereas Sarūḫānī Ilyās states that the perfect man must not follow the words of astrologers or geomancers because these are phantasies; miraculous deeds do not evolve from them.[201] This bitterness of Sufis towards astrologers shows an antagonism towards dominance in the realm of the supernatural. Occult scholars, on the one hand, tried to demonstrate that their sciences were based on secret but established realities, while Sufis, for their part, claimed absolute exclusivity to access to the supernatural. Neither of them denied the possibility of prognostications. Yet, the difference in methods (mathematical/astrological versus visionary) defined precedence in claiming knowledge of the future. We can interpret in this light the hostility Muṣṭafā 'Ālī expresses against the sheikh Şücā' and

[196] Düzdağ, *Şeyhülislam Ebū's-su'ūd Efendi Fetvaları*, 199, 197. On Islamicate beliefs about the evil eye, see Chelhod, *Les Structures du sacré*; Nomanbhoy, 'May the Envier's Eye'.

[197] Çalka, 'Safî Mustafa Efendi'nin Osmanlı esnaf', 90.

[198] El-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History*, 20; Kurz, *Ways to Heaven*, 234. Cf. Erzurumlu İbrahim Hakkı, ed. Fazlıoğlu, 'Ta'lîm ile İrşâd arasında', 128 (vv. 102–103).

[199] Gölpınarlı (ed.), *Vilâyet-nâme*, 38–39; on the original story (preserved in a late-nineteenth-century Iranian collection of biographies, Muḥammad Tunukābunī's *Ḳiṣaṣ al-ʿulamā*), which has geomancy instead of astrology, see Gölpınarlı's note in ibid., 115–116.

[200] Şen, 'Astrology in the Service', 98–103; Muhyî-i Gülşenî, eds Koç and Tanrıverdi, *Menâkıb-ı İbrâhim-i Gülşenî*, 121 (on the episode with the astrologers), 326 (on *cifr*).

[201] Saruhânî İlyas, ed. Özgül, '"Rumûzü'l-künûz" adlı eserin transkripsiyonu', 60/18a.

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his interpretations of Murad III's dreams (whereas, as we shall see below, he uses his knowledge of the science of letters to make similar prognostications).[202] Some decades earlier, Taşköprüzāde had accused 'the common run of Sufis (*ʿāmmat al-mutaṣawwifa*) and those Muslims who imitate them' as enemies of (occult) science.[203] Furthermore, it seems that for similar reasons, astrology and perhaps also geomancy (two mathematized sciences often linked to each other) were often in conflict with other occult sciences, such as bibliomancy.

Persecutions

These debates notwithstanding, no systematic persecutions of witchcraft were observed in Ottoman times. This absence may be attributed to several factors: the Ottomans did not experience major breaches of their religious order after the Safavid-Kızılbaş schism in the early sixteenth century, nor did the rural communities have to succumb to a strong statist intervention disrupting their moral systems; the ambiguity of witchcraft and the absence of the Devil as an active agent of evil and especially as an assistant and teacher of sorcery in Islamic theology was another major factor.[204]

This does not mean that there were no persecutions; these existed, but they were individually based, and they were not based on accusations of heresy. Rather, they involved people described as charlatans, pretending to be masters of occult sciences in order to extract people's money, or cases that were conceived as threats to public order.[205] The few references we find in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries mostly have to do with the first type: in 1560, a North African named Remmāl Meḥmed was exiled because he extracted money by promising to teach alchemy to some people so that they could find treasures (*ʿilm-i kimyā öğredeyin ve defīne bulıvıresin*),[206] and in the same year a dervish self-styled as an alchemist (*kimyāger nāmiyle ışıḳ ṣūretinde*) is accused of extracting money from the inhabitants of Viranşehir.[207] Alchemists, in particular, were associated with the forging of coins: thus, 'Russian 'Alī' from Gelibolu is an alchemist (*kimyāger*) who works with gold clandestinely and forges coins in 1697,[208] and two persons (one a sheikh, another a dervish: Filibeli Zülâlî Şeyh Muṣṭafā, Edirneli Derviş

[202] 'Âlī, ed. Çerçi, *Gelibolulu Muṣṭafā Âlî ve* Künhü'l-ahbâr, 2: 245–249.
[203] Melvin-Koushki, 'Taşköprīzāde on the (Occult) Science', 140.
[204] See my discussion in Sariyannis, 'Of Ottoman Ghosts', 203–210. On persecutions of sorcery, cf. Grehan, *Twilight of the Saints*, 151–152.
[205] See Mauder, 'Nur hinter verschlossenen Türen?' on pre-Ottoman prohibitions of charlatan magic.
[206] Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, MD 3, entry 1301.
[207] Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, MD 3, entry 1463.
[208] Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, MD 109, entry 8.

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Ahmed) are accused in 1748 of 'following the way of alchemy' (*kimyāgerlik tarīḳine insilâk eyledikleri*).[209]

It seems that practitioners of occult sciences were persecuted with somewhat increasing frequency from the late seventeenth century onwards. Evliya's story about a magician of the Bitlis Khan who is executed brutally as a *siḥirbāz* (because he had promised to bring a military victory using talismans and failed)[210] may be dubious, but such a tendency is also documented by administrative archives. Thus, in 1695 the judge of Edirne was ordered to arrest a certain Sheikh Davud because 'it is forbidden by the sharia for geomancers, practitioners of magic squares, and divines to gather people around them and give them magic squares and talismans in order to collect money' (*remmal ve veffāḳ ve kehene tā'ifesinden olup mutlaḳa cerr-i māl içün ba'zı kimesnelere vefḳ ve ṭılsımāt verüp ol vechile yanına nāşi cem' ėden kimesneler şer'an men' ve def'i lâzımdır*). The sheikh is released after two months on the condition that he is 'not to practise geomancy and divination again' (*bir daḫı remmalcılıḳ ve falcılıḳ ėtmemek*).[211] We see various cases of people persecuted just because they are astrologers and give rise to rumours among the people: in 1699 the *muvaḳḳıt* or time-keeper of Fetih mosque, Müneccim Osman, together with a certain Ceffār Mevlevī Dervīş Aḥmed, are exiled to Lemnos; the latter (now designed as caretaker, *ḳayyum*, of a Bektashi lodge) is also accused of practising various sorts of divination (*ciffār ve veffāḳ ve müneccim geçinüb*).[212] In the same year, a certain Monla Mehmed who resides at the Darü'l-hadis medrese in the Süleymaniye complex is exiled to Molivos of Lesvos,[213] whereas in 1700, as well as in 1706–1709, several astrologers are exiled to Limnos, Cyprus, and Rodos for the same reason.[214] It is difficult to state what their fault was, but it probably had to do with making political predictions: in 1706, the astrologer Loplop Abdülkerim of Bursa is banished, and four years later, 'the astrologer Abdullah, who was previously accused of various shameful acts, [and] had left Istanbul and come to Bursa, known as Loplop's apprentice (Loplop Şāgirdi)' is banished from Bursa together with a group of others for inciting a crowd.[215] In some cases, even being an

[209] *İstanbul Kadı Sicilleri 72 Eyüp Mahkemesi 182 Numaralı Sicil*, 309–310 (no. 477). When they were ordered to be arrested, they hid themselves; the document is an order to the Bostancıbaşı to seek and arrest them.

[210] Evliya Çelebi, eds Dağlı, Kahraman, and Sezgin, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, V. Kitap*, 19 (f. 11b).

[211] Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, MD 107, entries 9–10.

[212] Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, MD 111, entries 369, 371. Müneccim Osman is pardoned one year later: Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, MD 111, entry 1151.

[213] Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, MD 111, entry 372.

[214] Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, MD 111, entry 1354; MD 115, entries 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 169, 1827, 1885, 2435; MD 116, entry 265. In one of these cases, the exiled is diagnosed as mad (*cünūn 'alāmeti olduġı*) and brought to the Süleymaniye hospital (MD 115, entry 23).

[215] Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, MD 115, entry 27 (Loplop Abdülkerim); MD 117, entries 219 and 220 (Loplop Şāgirdi).

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astrologer (*müneccimlik töhmeti*) is enough for one's exile, without reference to arousing the crowds with rumours.[216]

It is remarkable that in these years we also see a change in the style of accusations, as if magic (meaning mainly enchantments and spells) had suddenly become a crime in itself: a certain Abdullah Efendi is exiled to Lesvos in 1707 because 'he produced disturbances among Muslim families with his mischief including magic, in order to enchant some and to divide others' (a *hadith* trope often used in legalistic literature).[217] In 1709, a certain Mısırlı Seyyid Şeyh Ahmed practises magic, astrology, and trickery (*siḥr ve 'ilm-i nücūm ve deke meşgūl*) in Skopje and leads families to the path of magic (*tarik-i siḥre süluk*); his neighbours have him exiled to Athens, only to be pardoned half a year later with the intervention of his wife and under guarantors.[218] A few years later, in 1712, Remlī Mehmed is set free after being exiled for astrology and enchantment (*nücūm ve tesḫīr töhmetiyle*).[219] Remarkably, one of the very few known *fetva*s condemning magic (*siḥr*) in general dates from the same period. It was issued by Abdurrahim Efendi, who served as *şeyhülislam* for a short but influential term in 1715–1716:[220]

> If it is evident according to the Sharia that Zeyd is a magician and a habitual offender (*sahir olub sa'i bi'l-fesâd olduğu*), is it legitimate to execute Zeyd?
>
> Answer: It is legitimate.

Another *fetva* of the same period approves the execution of a magician (notably by *siyaset*, or administrative rather than religious authority), but only because in order to perform his magic he had committed blasphemy upon the Holy Book (putting papers with Qur'anic verses under a millstone and grinding them). The same *şeyhülislam* denies a woman's request to abstain from sexual intercourse with her husband because the latter had admitted that he believed in magic (*sahrın vuku'u vardır inanırım dise*).[221] Magic had to be accepted as a reality, and a somehow evil one: we might associate this wave of persecutions with the rediscovery of Ebū's-su'ūd's *fetva*s on vampirism in 1701.[222] Rather than religious fervour or fear of maleficent magic, one may see the results of confessionalization

[216] Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, MD 115, entry 2552 (1708). Cf. also MD 117, entry 904 (1712): *nücūm ve tesḫīr töhmetiyle*.

[217] Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, MD 115, entry 1928 (*ba'zı kimesneleri tesḫīr ve ba'zıları tefrīḳ içün siḥri müştemel fitneler ile müslimīniñ ehl ü 'iyāli beyninde iḫtilāle bā'iṣ olmağla*).

[218] Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, MD 116, entries 158, 1043.

[219] Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, MD 117, entry 904.

[220] Tuşalp, 'Treating Outlaws', 43.

[221] Ibid., 71–72; Sariyannis, 'Of Ottoman Ghosts', 207. Both *fetva*s belong to *Behçetü'l-fetava*, a collection of *fetva*s by Yenişehirli Abdullah Efendi, who served as *şeyhülislam* from 1718 to 1730. Some earlier known *fetva*s were issued by Vani Efendi, while still a mufti in Erzurum, i.e. between 1657 and 1661: Köse, 'The Fatwa Collection', 76–79.

[222] Köhbach, 'Ein Fall von Vampirismus'; Sariyannis, 'On Revenants and Ghosts', 193–194; and Chapter 2, above.

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and of the expulsion of the supernatural from everyday life: occult and unauthorized ways of communicating with the supernatural were no longer tolerated.

*

This chapter, the first of our twofold tour through Ottoman magic, has dealt with the theories underlying Ottoman learned (mainly) occult methods and techniques. Gathered together under various terms, of which *siḥr* (literally, magic) was not the most common (being associated with its condemned forms), these methods were considered part of the function of the cosmos, rather than reproachable collaboration with devilish forces. In Ottoman encyclopedias, following earlier models, the various occult sciences were usually classified under the rubric of natural science, with some notable exceptions: namely, the science of letters (i.e. lettrist magic), which, according to Taşköprüzāde, belonged to the religious sciences (being a sub-branch of Qur'anic exegesis), and magic squares, which belonged to mathematics. The inclusion of astrology in mathematical science, a major sign of the famous 'occultist turn' of the thirteenth century, was not replicated in Ottoman works after the fifteenth century. All these techniques were based in different approaches, combining in different ways a spiritual or deterministic world view with spiritual or mechanical methods. Thus, there was demonic or ritual magic, based on the invocation and manipulation of angels or jinn; there was astral or natural magic, based on the correspondences and hierarchical homologies of the celestial and terrestrial worlds; and there was lettrist magic, actually imbuing both ritual and natural magic as well, in which the power of letters was the major force that had to be used in order to exert influence either upon angels and jinn, or upon the elements of nature.

This picture would not be complete without mentioning the theological and legal debates about the legitimacy and the reality of magic arts. Whereas these methods always met with some suspicion and were occasionally persecuted, their reality was much less questioned. Divination was more often the object of philosophical criticism, due to the challenge it posed to free will, and the Ottomans continued the debates on astrology that had begun centuries earlier, in both the Eastern and the Western world. Not only theologians, but also Sufi sheikhs played a major role in these debates, as they were competing with occultists for the claim to access the supernatural.

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4
Occult Technologies in Practice

In the previous chapter, we saw the theory of magic and divination, mostly expressed by the scholarly elites. But what about practice? Were magical and divinatory techniques indeed practised in Ottoman society, and in which forms? What were the most common methods, and what do we know about them? These questions will guide us through this chapter, which moreover will seek to give answers as to the social content of practical occultism (especially since the previous chapter necessarily focused on the scholarly aspect)—in other words, to questions such as: who were practising these methods; were they scholars or commoners; what was the role of folk practices; and what do we know about the role of gender, ethnicity, and religion?

Magic

Condemned or not by the religious authorities, magical practices were quite common in Ottoman history. The sources, from fictional stories to grimoires and from encyclopedias to historiography, mention a host of different practices, either to predict the future or to produce a certain result (e.g. love or wealth). A full inventory of such practices is found in Giritli ʿAzīz Efendi's late-eighteenth-century novel, where magic squares, spells and amulets, geomancy, and letter magic parade in turns, as the magician Cevād teaches the prince İklīl:

> 'My prince, it is in your hands to order me to teach you the secrets of this knowledge. But you have to persuade me that you will not practise ever again the deeds I am going to disclose and teach you now', said [Cevād]. After İklīl took several oaths to this effect, [Cevād] brought some paper, a pen and a pen-case, gave them to İklīl and instructed him how to plan a magic square of five dimensions without a central square [?] (*bir ḫālīyü'l-vasaṭ vefḳ-i muḫammes ṭarḥını taʿlīm eyledi*). Thus: in an empty grid, he had him begin from the first [cell] with the number eighteen and add four in every subsequent cell, and subtract fifty-one from the total; he then wrote the appointed spiritual name (*ism-i müʾekkel-i rūḥānī*) that became apparent in the middle cell. He cut off the redundant paper and left the magic square on the ground, and then instructed İklīl to recite the spiritual name again for as many times as the first side [of the triangle? *ḍılʿ-i vāḥid ʿadedince*]. As soon as the number of the recitations of the appointed

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spiritual name reached the first side [?], the paper was raised from the ground and, moving like a bird, began to float in the air up to a man's height. Cevād and İklīl followed it; they had not walked for more than forty or fifty paces before the magic square fell down to the earth. When they reached it, the paper was set on fire and became ashes. İklīl was amazed.

Then Cevād again brought paper, pen, and pen-case and gave them to İklīl. He instructed him to draw, from left to right, a ladder, three eggs, four perpendicular staffs, four horizontal staffs, and a small sacred seal (*bir resm-i süllem ve üç beyża ve dört ʿaṣā-yı ḳā'ime ve dört ʿaṣā-yi müsteviyye ve bir mühr-i şerīf-i ṣaġīr*). When this was finished, they put it on the burnt magic square and came to the umbrella [they had set before]. [Cevād] wrote the aforementioned forms on another piece of paper and instructed İklīl to turn the umbrella around, reciting the said spiritual name. When the recitations reached the [appointed] number, at the place where the magic square had been the earth blew up with an awful noise, as if a mine had exploded, creating something like an abyss. They went there and saw that a gate had been opened! They entered it and found a big room full of treasures…

[Then Cevād teaches İklīl how to look for hidden treasures:] He produced some paper, a pen, and a pen-case and gave them to İklīl: 'My lord, with a sincere purpose ask yourself (*niyet-i ḫāliṣ ėdüp*) whether there is something esteemed that is concealed and that you seek, and where this might be; read the Qur'anic verse "*wa ʿindehu mefātiḥ al-ġayb*" ("and He has the keys for the hidden"), puff upon the pen and write four series of dots in a row (*ḳaleme nefḫ ėdüp dört bend noḳṭa sebk eyle*)', he said. After having drawn the rows of dots according to Cevād's instructions, he showed him the way to lay them out [*ṭarḥ*; i.e. to make the geomantic figures]. After laying them out and endowing them, they saw that the first figure (*şekl*) was the *ʿatebe-i dāḫil*, the second the *liḥyān*, the third the *enkīs* and the fourth the *cemāʿat*. When Cevād saw these, he exclaimed: 'My prince, good tidings: the *dāḫil* in the first house (*beyt*) shows that what you are looking for exists.' After producing the rest of the figures according to the rules, he instructed [his disciple]: 'Multiply the second house with the tenth and the third with the fourteenth; and multiply the two figures that result with one another to extract one figure!' After performing these operations, the figure *ḥumre* appeared; they saw that *ḥumre* was at the fifth house. Cevād interpreted this as follows: 'The first clime is Africa, the second America, the third Europe, the fourth Persia and central Asia, the fifth China. What you seek must be in this [fifth] clime. But in which city?' And by showing İklīl the rules for laying out the cardinal points, he showed him that the wanted city was Ḫānbālıḳ.

Passing on to another science then, Cevād taught İklīl the science (*fenn*) of *zā'irca* and described it thus: 'My lord İklīl, the easiest part of the science (*fenn*) of *cifr* is the excellent science of *zā'irca*. And *zā'irca* has two ways: one is the

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> causal (*sebebiyye*) and the other the Chinese (*Ḫaṭā'iyye*). The Chinese is easier than the causal; let us proceed with easiness. First ask your slave: we established that the girl we are looking for is in Ḫānbālıḳ. But ask in any words you wish, at which quarter and whose [daughter] is she and what is her name.' İklīl did thus. 'Now break off the letters of this phrase [you said]; lay out those repeated and, starting from the last, separate the corrected ones (?) (*muḳatta' ėdüp mükerrerātını ṭarḥ ile āḫırından bidā' ėdüp münaḳḳaḥını ifrāz eyle*)', he said. When [İklīl] did thus, eighteen letters remained. 'My lord İklīl, in the terminology of *cifr* practitioners the word is interpreted [with] the secret of *cifr* that is alluded from it.' [Then Cevād, from a meaningless distich deduces a verse in Arabic showing the requested information.][1]

This entertaining enumeration effectively showcases the variety and style of Ottoman magic practices, and albeit a fictional account, it conveys faithfully the basic methods used.[2]

If we are looking for a more scholarly description, Taşköprüzāde's famous introduction to magic (*siḥr*) specifies that it can be performed by employing celestial entities, by making talismans using various combinations of celestial and earthly powers, by taking advantage of natural properties, either reciting spells or having them written down (*nīranjāt*), or by conjuring spirits and jinn (see above, Chapter 3).[3] These different techniques originate in different traditions, which Taşköprüzāde also enumerates: these are (a) the Indian way, based on the purification of the soul; (b) the way of the Nabateans, using incantations (*'aẓā'im*) at appropriate (*munāsiba*) times; (c) the way of the Greeks, making the celestial spheres and the stars subservient spiritually (*taskhīr rūḥānī al-aflāk wa-l-kawākib*); and (d) the way of the Hebrews, the Copts, and the Arabs,

> invoking names, the meaning of which are unknown (*dhikr asmā' majhūla al-ma'ānī*), as if they were oaths (*aqsām*) and spells (*'azā'im*), as if they [the Hebrews, Copts, and Arabs] were determined to make powerful angels (*malā'ika qāhira*) subservient to the jinn by way of these spells.[4]

This classification reproduces older traditions and can be found in several versions.[5] In practice, however, Ottoman magic usually combines two or more of these methods. There is always—or almost always—an astral background,

[1] 'Azīz Efendi, *Muhayyelât*, ed. Alacatlı, 173–176; ed. Duymaz, 272–274 (1868 edn, 162–165).

[2] For an impressive modern-day inventory of magical methods, see Anadol, *Büyü (sihir—tılsım)*.

[3] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-sa'āda*, 1: 364; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 331.

[4] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-sa'āda*, 1: 338–339; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 308.

[5] I examine some of these in the last part of Sariyannis, 'Sources and Traditions'.

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defining the days and times a certain practice must be applied; incantations and spells are used, in either reciting or writing, together with fumigations and the use of various talismans. While all these elements are almost universally common to all specimens of Ottoman magic, others are not: letters and magic squares appear quite often, arithmomancy is a standard piece of vernacular magic, and only sometimes is the aim of the ritual to conjure angels or jinn.

Unfortunately, we do not have many specimens of manuals of magic—or rather, we are not aware of many. The most systematic manual of Ottoman magic is perhaps Uzun Firdevsī's *Da'vetnāme*, composed in 1478. Its backbone is jinn-conjuring, but in its arsenal we may find almost every magical technique, from magic alphabets and 'seals' to fumigations, all against a background of astral influences that sets the scene for the successful application of these techniques.[6] Thus, it contains an informed and detailed description of the stars, mentioning the existence of 1,022 of them and containing an account of the movement of the celestial spheres as set by Ptolemy.[7] Angels and jinn are included in a complex hierarchy, structured along the planets, the sun, and the moon, and they can be summoned at times ordained by the zodiac signs and the moon phases.[8] The conjurer has to be ritually purified and prepared, according to eight prerequisites set by Apollonius of Tyana:

> Apollonius (Belinās Ḥakīm) says that there are eight conditions for the science of conjuration. The first condition is that [the practitioner] must eat nothing of meat and must make his passions (*nefs*) obedient to himself. And to punish his passions, he must keep his spiritual self (*nefs-i ruhānī*) in power by all means. When his spiritual self is prevalent, then this person is close to the jinn (*ervāḥ*). He must eat vegetables every day, and two pieces of bread, of a hundred dirhem each. And he must always walk in cleanliness and never stop praying… The second condition is that the conjurer needs to have seven bottles; and in every one of them there shall be [notes with?] the name, the figure, the seal, the incantation (*'azīmet*), the spy, the interpreter, the question, and the answer of the angel appointed to each day of the week; because a conjurer must know all these… The third condition is that, after learning the hours and the incense [of these angels], a conjurer must have seven chairs and seven incense burners and seven halters (*carīr*) and garments of seven kinds, each one in the colour of the seven planets; and he must know the seven sermons (*ḫuṭbe*) and the seven handkerchiefs and praises of seven kinds and the names of the seven angels and of the seven highest of the jinn (*cinnī ululaı*)… The fourth condition is that the

[6] For some Safavid parallels, see the excerpts translated in Mahmud Dihdar Shirazi, ed. Melvin-Koushki, 'The Occult Sciences in Safavid Iran'.

[7] Firdevsī, ed. Büyükkarcı, *Firdevsī-i Ṭavīl and His Da'vet-nāme*, 122–141.

[8] Ibid., 152ff., and compare the facsimile on 237ff.

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> conjurer should stand on a high place, or on a high hill, or in a high kiosk; or near running water, or near an old fountain, or near a well. And when he makes the conjuration, he must write on a paper or on the surface of the wall the forms of the twenty-four prophets, or at least their holy names… The fifth condition is that the conjurer shall not keep at home dogs, mules, roosters, monkeys, snakes, and other similar animals, for the jinn get offended by them and do not answer the conjuring; the voice of a dog must not be heard from a neighbour either. And corrupt, irreligious (*bī-namāz*), or women must not be accepted in the house where the conjuring takes place. And he must not keep at home bows, swords, guns, and other weapons; the jinn are afraid of these. The sixth condition is that when the conjurer travels, he must carry various handkerchiefs, and know incantations of seven sorts. And in every town he enters in order to make a conjuration, he must recite the *Ahd-nāme* of Suleyman and burn incense, so that the appointed [jinn] of this town, which are to be conjured, become obedient to him and like him. Similarly, he must recite the *Ahd-nāme* of Suleyman and burn incense at the beginning of every month. If you ask what this incense is: aloe wood, sugar, labdanum, mastic, white hemp, and gentian; incense is made from these six elements and burnt, while [the conjurer] recites the *Ahd-nāme* of Suleyman nine times. The seventh condition is the following: every month—that is, every thirty days—the sun passes from one sign of the zodiac… The conjurer must conjure the seven angels [appointed to each sign]… The eighth condition is that a conjurer must necessarily know the *Ahd-nāme* of Suleyman b. Davud. Without the *Ahd-nāme* it is impossible to make any deed…[9]

For this summoning, various materials and methods are used: praises to God (*tesbīḥ*) in Arabic; tablets (*levḥ*)—that is, phrases in Arabic (e.g. the Basmala) with their letters detached, or a series of magical symbols; magic seals (*ḥātem*), often in magical symbols (*caractères à lunettes*); and talismans (*ṭılsım*)—that is, a series of detached Arabic letters (sometimes in combination with magical symbols), to be combined with prayers and sometimes with drawings of heads, etc.[10] The above phrases or talismans should usually be written on pieces of paper (or bronze, or lion's skin, etc.) and be burnt, buried, hung around one's neck, and so forth. Occasionally, one has to add other substances such as the blood of a black cat.[11] The summoned jinni comes into existence in a special form (*tekvīn*), such as a two-headed ox. Here is an example:[12]

> When the sun arrives at the sign of Sagittarius, with God's order an angel comes down from the highest stratum of the seventh heaven and becomes appointed to the sun…

[9] Ibid., 149–151.
[10] Ibid., 160, 165, 168, etc., and facs. on 247, 255, 262, etc.
[11] Ibid., 160.
[12] Ibid., 160–161; illustrations on 248–249.

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> And this angel has his seal (*ḫātem*) too. If someone has no familiarity with his woman [the woman he loves], he writes this seal upon a piece of paper with musk and saffron, and buries it inside this house [of hers]; and thus they love each other greatly. The seal is this: [illustration]
>
> And also this angel has his praise to God (*tesbīḥ*), and with the power of this praise he becomes appointed to the sun and reads [it; *āfitāba müvekkel olup oḳur*]. And whoever wishes to obtain authority and asceticism [? *zühd ü salāḥiyyet üzere ola*] may repeat this praise at the first hour of Thursday. God the Highest will grant him success in all his deeds. And if you wish everybody in the world to talk about your kindness, write this talisman on a piece of paper and carry it inside your cap. The talisman is thus: [illustration]
>
> And again for love you can write this tablet (*levḥ*) on a piece of tinfoil in the hour of Jupiter, together with the name of your beloved, and leave it in the treasury of the bathhouse; this person will instantly love you. This is the tablet: [illustration]
>
> And his praise to God (*tesbīḥ*) is also the praise [told by] Jupiter. But in this place his praise was not written; we did not write it either. But his incarnation (*tekvīn*) has the features of Jupiter; he sits on a prayer rug and says the praise. This is his picture: [illustration]

Remarkably, the manual contains no references at all to letters and numbers[13] (which is all the more striking, considering Firdevsī's involvement with the Bektaşī order, known for having absorbed many Ḥurūfī elements);[14] all this brings into mind the ritual (demonic) magic of the Western Christian world.

We can find such methods in various sources. For instance, in ʿAzīz Efendi's late-eighteenth-century novel, a (female) witch (*sāḥire*) has someone's wife naked and facing the sun, reads some spells (*efsūn*), and uses mud and wheat, as well as fumigations, to make two magic rings that will make the couple similar to whomever they wish.[15] Even the famous mystic Sheikh Üftāde (d. 1580) made a man invoke the king of the jinn (by drawing a circle and sitting inside it), in order to cure his wife's epilepsy (caused by one of the king's subjects).[16] Miscellanies (*mecmūʿa*) often contain similar techniques:

> …Great subjugation (*tesḫīr-i ʿaẓīm*): Take a hair from the beloved's (*maṭlūbun*) hair, read upon it this Qur'anic verse twenty-one times and throw it to fire; he will get conquered (*musaḫḫar*); this is tested (*ġayet mücerrebdir*): [Qur'an 44/10–11]

[13] In contrast, a similar thirteenth-century Seljuk work, focusing on calling on angels and stars, also has a section on names and letters: Peacock, 'A Seljuq Occult Manuscript', 171; cf. also Peacock, 'Metaphysics and Rulership', 112–116.

[14] Terzioğlu, 'Confessional Ambiguity', 587–588.

[15] 'Azīz Efendi, *Muhayyelât*, ed. Alacatlı, 160; ed. Duymaz, 263.

[16] Felek, 'Epilepsy as a "Contagious" Disease', 153.

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> Subjugation of the heart (*tesḫīr-i ḳalb*): To conquer a heart, recite after the evening prayer the holy prayers seventy times, the Fatiha a hundred and twenty-one times, the Duha [Q. 93] forty-one times, the holy prayers again another seventy times, the Ihlas [Q. 112] seven times, the verse of Kursi [Q2/2256] three times, and then pray. Recite and pray thus for eleven full days. If it does not work, then count another eleven nights. If it does not work again, count another eleven nights for a third time; he will be conquered for sure. If he is not, then it is not possible and he will die (*mümkin değildir helāk ola*). With God's permission, this is tested.[17]

Indeed, prayers and supplications constituted a very common resort to divine assistance for the Ottomans, and libraries abound in collections of prayers for every occasion. Not only did important figures of Ottoman scholarly life, such as our well-known Şükrullah Efendi and the *şeyhülislam* Ebū's-su'ūd Efendi, pen prayer manuals, they also wrote commentaries on them.[18] Furthermore, even a cursory reading of any major manuscript library will locate many manuscripts, be they treatises or collections (*mecmū'a*), that contain the properties of God's names, talismans, prayers, magical recipes, or notes on divination.[19] One can find instructions on prayers and talismanic amulets for military victory, such as 'Solomon's seal', even in treatises of political advice, such as the mid-sixteenth-century *Düstûru'l-vüzerâ* by Alā'ī.[20] İlyas b. Īsā Sarūḫānī, author of very popular works on lettrist divination, based (as we will see in more detail below) on arithmology and lettrist calculations, refers to the making of magic squares with the letters of God's names: 'make a square with the name Muṣavvir ("the Former of all") and one with the name Cāmī (?); the number of both is 450'; the keeper of the talisman has to repeat these names and his form changes.[21] Magic squares with other names (Cāmī and Ḳādir) have to be repeated 419 times at the 'hour of Saturn'.[22] Sarūḫānī's compendium of astral and lettrist magic, *Ḳavā'id-i tesḫīrāt*,

[17] Esen, 'An Ottoman Miscellany', 270–271 (f. 76a).

[18] Gruber, 'A Pious Cure-All'; Burak, 'The Section on Prayers'; Burak, 'Prayers, Commentaries'; Akyol and Ivanyi, 'A Protection Against the Plague'. On God's names, see the treatise by Niyāzī-i Mıṣrī: Kars, 'Niyazi-yi Mısri on the Divine Names'. On the use of prayers and invocations, cf. Ali, 'The Power of the Spoken Word'; Khalil, 'Is God Obliged'; Saleh, 'Word'.

[19] See e.g. Bibliothèque nationale de France, turc 5, turc 7, turc 166, turc 175, turc 192, suppl. turc 542, suppl. turc 1332–1335; Istanbul Nuruosmaniye 2841; Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, MS. B. or. 80, https://www.qalamos.net/receive/DE15Book_manuscript_00001136 or MS. B. or. 195, https://www.qalamos.net/receive/DE15Book_manuscript_00001418; Procházka-Eisl and Çelik (eds), *Hidden Treasures*, e.g. 237, 240, 242–243; Bekar and Güngör (eds), '16. yüzyıla ait bir tılsım kitabı'; Şen, 'Manuscripts on the Battlefields'; Buturović, 'The Melting Occult Pot'; cf. Grehan, *Twilight of the Saints*, 150–156; Pantić, *Sufism in Ottoman Damascus*, 22. Most of these manuscripts bear a strong resemblance to the pre-Ottoman Hermetic corpus, e.g. Bonmariage and Moureau, *Le Cercle des lettres de l'alphabet*.

[20] Alā'ī, ed. Dokuzlu, 'Alâî b. Muhibbî eş-Şirâzî'nin *Düstûru'l-vüzerâ*', 136–149. On 'Solomon's seal', cf. Johnston, 'The Testament of Solomon'.

[21] Saruhânî İlyas, eds Küçük and Muslu, *Akhisarlı Şeyh Îsâ menâkıbnâmesi*, 232.

[22] Ibid., 238, 239 with the name 'Ya Muḳtedir' ('oh Mighty').

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contains a long section on the names of God and the magic squares made from them.[23] Whereas creating magic squares may perhaps have been a pastime similar to creating riddles or chronograms,[24] their role was usually protective or talismanic, and specialists were designing them as a profession. Apart from being drawn on paper, talismans were commonly designed as portable amulets, special shirts, and even stone plates (such as an impressive specimen dated 1579 and preserved in Rhodes, designed to protect sailors).[25] The use of Qur'anic excerpts and God's 'beautiful names' on amulets and talismanic scrolls and shirts was quite widespread in the Ottoman world, and it is actually one of the most explored parts of Ottoman magic. Scholars who have studied these scrolls have emphasized their 'religious' rather than 'magical' foundations, although this distinction is always a blurred one and must be used with caution.[26]

On the other hand, arithmology and letter magic are also very common features of Ottoman magical works (Fig. 4.1). Translations of al-Būnī and al-Bisṭāmī also abound in Ottoman libraries, some of them lavishly produced and illustrated, and various adaptations continued to circulate even until the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[27] Indeed, al-Būnī's name and work was sufficiently well known for a fictional work by ʿAzīz Efendi to mention 'the amulets (*ḳılaḳṭīr*; for *fılaḳṭīr*) of Aḥmed Būnī', alongside 'the magic square of Hārūt and Mārūt'.[28] Sarūḫānī's detailed manual on lettrist magic (*Ḳavāʿid-i tesḫīrāt*), composed in 1559/60, is the counterpart of Firdevsī's *Daʿvetnāme*, a highly systematic description of principles and methods concerning this time an astral, rather than demonic, approach based on the power of letters. Its structure is interesting: beginning with the classification of the twenty-eight letters according to the four elements, it goes on to specify their numerical value and uses, and then embarks on an examination of the stars and the appropriate hours they define before continuing with the properties of God's names and of Qur'anic chapters. The work

[23] Saruhânî, ed. Kaçar, 'İbn-i İsa'nın *Ḳavāʿid-i tesḫīrāt*', 142–159 (ff. 85a–97b). Similar techniques are cited in detail by Taşköprüzāde: Melvin-Koushki, 'Taşköprīzāde on the (Occult) Science', 158–160.

[24] There is an interesting early-eighteenth-century wooden plate giving a chronogram in the form of a complex magic square, where verses (and their numerical value) intersect with numbers: Keskiner and Schick, 'Vefk şeklinde hazırlanmış'.

[25] Tütüncü, 'Rodos'ta Türk denizcilerinin'. A magic square drawn in order for a ship to sail with the wind is mentioned in Ḥulvī, ed. Süer, 'Cemâleddin Hulvî'nin *Lemezât-ı hulviyye*', 710.

[26] Nünlist, 'Entzauberte Amulettrollen', 277–287. Cf. Felek, 'Fears, Hopes, and Dreams'; Gruber, 'Go Wherever You Wish'; Gruber, 'From Prayer to Protection'; Ekhtiar and Parikh, 'Power and Piety'; Leoni, 'A Stamped Talisman'; Dévényi, 'Manuscripts of *Enʿām-ı şerīf*'; Al-Saleh, '"Licit Magic"' (on pre-Ottoman Islamic scrolls).

[27] Saif, 'The Occult Sciences'. On illustrated translations of al-Bisṭāmī's *Tercüme-i cifrü'l-câmi*, see Yaman, 'Osmanlı resim sanatında kıyamet'; for a famous nineteenth-century adaptation of al-Būnī's work, see Seyyid Süleyman el-Hüseynî, *Kenzü'l-Havâs*; Seyyid Süleyman el-Hüseynî, ed. Varlı, *Havasu'l-Kur'an*. On the techniques used in this work, see Uygun, 'Seyyid Süleyman el-Hüseynî'nin'.

[28] ʿAzīz Efendi, *Muhayyelât*, ed. Alacatlı, 83; ed. Duymaz, 212. The reading is mine, based on the 1868 Istanbul edition.

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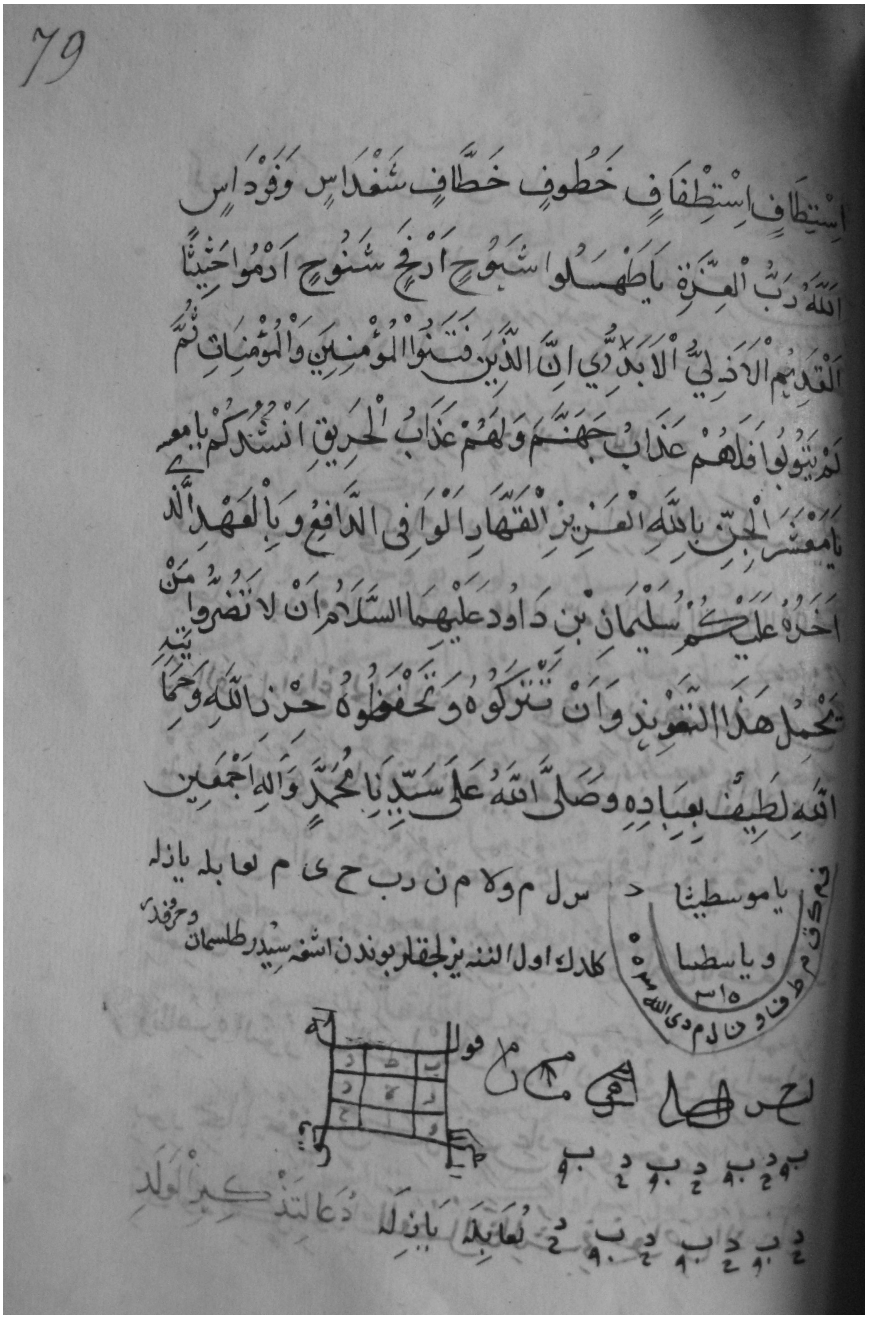


Fig. 4.1 Magic alphabets and squares in Manyasoğlu's encyclopedia. Manyasoğlu, *A'cabü'l-'uccāb*, Bibliothèque nationale de France, suppl. turc 203, f. 79a (early seventeenth century).

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ends with methods for using magic squares and other alphanumerical techniques. Sarūḫānī's survey comes complete with allusions to humoral theory, ethnic differences, and numerous examples.[29]

The correspondence of letters with the four elements might have been one of the two main ways in which an untrained person could practise divination through the alphabet: thus, Muṣṭafā ʿĀlī explains Murad III's refusal to join the imperial campaigns in person and more generally to travel, as his only journey was from Manisa to Istanbul for his inauguration:

> According to the present author's opinion, the Sultan's personal inclination towards tranquillity[30] was inevitable, and that is why there was no chance of his going to campaign: because I analysed the name 'Murad' and found that the letters *mim* and *elif* pertain to fire, while *ra* and *dal* relate to water. There is no letter of the air, so as to cause motion and movement. And such [a name] necessitates the desire for moving towards the earth element. Two fire and one water letter indicate sudden outbursts of anger, and two water letters indicate amazement and capricious change: just as water and fire dislike each other, likewise the late Sultan's behaviour was always changing.[31]

The interrelation of letters with the elements and the celestial entities is evident in treatises on talismans, but also in vernacular works, such as an eighteenth-century miscellany that contains the following advice, termed as *nārencāt*:

> If you want to enchant (*tesḥīr ėdesin*) somebody, first you calculate [the *ebced* number of] his/her name and the name of his/her mother. [Then] you subtract twelve. If the remainder is one, then Aries is his sign, Mars is his star, he is male, Tuesday is his day, Tuesday is his night, he is dependent upon fire (*oda müteʿallıḳdir*). If the remainder is two, Taurus is her sign, Venus is her star, she is female, Friday is her day, Tuesday is her night, she is dependent upon earth…[32]

This method of successive subtractions leads us to the second method of vernacular letter magic. Extremely popular, it involved having one's name (or two opponents', or two prospective friends' or lovers' names) converted into its numerical value; then another number was successively subtracted until the result was a simple number, which could be compared with or converted back into a letter:

[29] Saruhânî, ed. Kaçar, 'İbn-i İsa'nın *Ḳavāʿid-i tesḥīrāt*'.
[30] *sükûn*. The editor of the text prefers the reading *sükût*, 'silence, reticence'.
[31] Ali, ed. Çerçi, *II. Selim, III. Murad ve III. Mehmet devirleri*, II: 239–240.
[32] Esen, 'An Ottoman Miscellany', 267–268 (f. 75a).

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> When the author of this book had just begun writing it, he went to Istanbul; the agha of the janissaries denied this truth… His name was Ferhad; now 'Ferhad' has five letters and, according to the words of sheikh Muhammed Endülüsî, the letters *fa*, *alif*, *ha* are letters of fire, whereas *dal* and *ra* are letters of earth. The number of the letters of fire is eighty-six; if we subtract nine successively, the remainder is five, which is letter *ha*…[33]

Such alphanumeric methods, associating words with one another based on their initial letters or their *ebced* sums, were quite common.[34] In the early eighteenth century, the poet Nābī includes some lettrist elements in his praise of the Prophet, linking the *mim* and *dal* of his name with words starting with the same letters, whereas he associates knowledge (*'ilm*) with effort (*say'*) based on the fact that their letters sum to the same number.[35] İsmā'īl Ḥaḳḳı Bursevī also uses lettrist comparisons of words to deduce Sufi wisdom and interprets his sheikh's words with anagrams and *ebced* calculations.[36]

Sorcerers and Scholars

Unfortunately, our knowledge regarding the social level of people practising magical or divinatory practices is rather sparse at present (less so in the case of more scholarly occult practices, such as astrology and alchemy). Were they ulema, scribes, dervishes, merchants, artisans? We cannot answer with certainty. There are no trial proceedings or inquisitions, no information on their professional organization—if any. However, we are lucky to possess the highly documented case of an Ottoman magician, comparable to Carlo Ginzburg's Menocchio, since he is known through the detailed proceedings of the Roman Inquisition: Sālim (Sellem) b. al-Shaykh Manṣūr was a Cairene Muslim, captured by the Knights Hospitaller and living in the prisons of Malta for some years before he was arrested in 1605 for performing magic upon some local Christians. The rich documentation on his case was recently published and studied in a splendid collective volume.[37] Sālim admitted knowing and practising astrology and geomancy, but he denied the accusation that he had been conjuring demons (as anyone would do in the face of the Inquisition!).[38] The descriptions of his spells, which mostly consisted

[33] Saruhânî İlyas, ed. Özgül, '"Rumûzü'l-künûz" adlı eserin transkripsiyonu', 56–57/12b; cf. Saruhânî, ed. Kaçar, 'İbn-i İsa'nın *Ḳavā'id-i tesḫīrāt*', 113–116 (ff. 63b–65b).

[34] Sariyannis, 'Knowledge and Control', 65–66.

[35] Nâbî, *Hayriyye*, 25 (vv. 61–62), 55 (v. 280).

[36] İsmâil Hakkı Bursevî, eds Muslu and Namlı, *Tamâmü'l-feyz*, 72, 206–207.

[37] Mallett, Rider, and Agius (eds), *Magic in Malta*.

[38] Saif makes the plausible suggestion that he did so thinking that in Christendom, as in Islam, geomancy and astrology were respected and allowed, in contrast with other forms of magic and conjuration: Saif, 'Magic and Divination', 429–430.

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of the use of talismans, prayers, and fumigations, show striking parallels with those described in the *corpus Bunianum*; he also seems familiar with some letter magic (as he is accused of using 'unconnected' Arabic letters in his amulets).[39] On the other hand, Sālim's knowledge of geomancy (as shown in the notes of a Christian knight, who sought to learn the science from him) is sound and detailed, and it is evident that he had indeed been a master of this craft back in Cairo (he states that he learnt it in the family, as his father was also an astrologer).

Whereas astrologers and, perhaps, geomancers may have played a more visible role both in the court and on the streets, sorcerers seem to have worked in a more or less clandestine way, due to the ambiguous nature of magic. Sufi sheikhs ordinarily practised oenomancy or drew talismans. In the succession struggle after Mehmed II's death, the Ḫalvetī sheikh Cemāl was said to have struggled spiritually against Mehmed Pasha on behalf of Bayezid II; he observed that the former always wore a *vefḳ* drawn up by a prominent Zeyniye sheikh, Şeyh Vefā. Cemāl could do nothing against it, but he did predict that Mehmed Pasha would have to send it to Vefā for repair, during which time he would be vulnerable.[40] Another example is of course Sarūḫānī, master of lettrist divination and onomancy. While he is boasting of his mastery of the science of letters, he is at the same time careful in his advice to (Bayrāmī) dervishes, taking care to show that knowledge of Sufi occultism was reserved for the few:

> [The sheikhs of old], if someone asks permission (*icāzet*) to use the names (of God) or prayers against someone, said 'you are allowed [to do so]'; but they do not approve any killing or illegal deed. Even if the act is lawful, they did not give permission to [dervishes] practising the knowledge of properties.[41]

Firdevsī mentions a judge by the name of Halāsī who used to practise a love spell.[42] We may deduce, although the evidence is scarce, that scholarly magic was mostly practised by Sufis and ulema—occasionally, even statesmen were accused of magic.[43] A Polish doctor, Salomea Pilsztynova (d. after 1763), describes how she was convinced that she was under a bad spell and how 'a rich merchant from Egypt, who had knowledge of astronomy [and] lived in Istanbul' set her free with the use of spells, incense and 'a clay bowl with Turkish [i.e. Arabic] letters scribbled inside'.[44]

[39] Ibid., 434–440.
[40] Curry, *The Transformation*, 69; Karataş, 'The Ottomanization of the Halveti Sufi Order', 84–87.
[41] Saruhânî İlyas, eds Küçük and Muslu, *Akhisarlı Şeyh Îsâ menâkıbnâmesi*, 95.
[42] Firdevsī, ed. Büyükkarcı, *Firdevsī-i Ṭavīl and His Da'vet-nāme*, 170.
[43] See Sariyannis, 'Of Ottoman Ghosts', 206fn46; and above, Chapter 3.
[44] Pilsztynowa, ed. Dominik, *The Istanbul Memories*, 32–33.

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Indeed, among the magicians persecuted on various occasions (a topic we will discuss in more detail below), many had the title or sobriquet of astrologers:[45] so, for instance, in 1710 a certain Müneccim (astrologer) İsma'il is banished from Istanbul because, apart from his other misdemeanours (drinking wine, associating with knaves, threatening his neighbours), he is a geomancer and 'writes (on) the belly of women' (*nisā maḳūlesiniñ göbeğini yazub*), a folk practice that survives even today in some Anatolian villages.[46] Twice, the late-sixteenth-century poet Cinānī couples astrologers with exorcists (*muʿazzim*): someone by the name of Enveri, 'astrologer and exorcist' in Bursa, able to enchant the jinn, houses a jinn beauty at his house;[47] 'exorcists and astrologers' are summoned to predict the auspicious hour for the opening of a door leading to a subterranean cave in Salonica (the authorities expect a treasure, but the cave turns out to house a dragon).[48]

We may have some glimpses of street practitioners of all sorts of magic from various sources. A late-seventeenth- or early-eighteenth-century anonymous text curses (among many others) 'those who write letters and love talismans (*şīrinlik*) and exorcisms (*uḫrūç*) for women; those who write talismans for the colic (*kulunç nüsḫası*) and inscribe the picture of a lobster';[49] and a document dated 1695 warns the authorities against some 'geomancers, practitioners of magic squares and divines' (*remmal ve veffāḳ ve kehene*), who 'gather people around them, giving them magic squares and talismans, in order to collect money'.[50] At any rate, the rare documents concerning persecutions of various sorts of sorcerers and soothsayers help us (albeit only a little) to understand the social status of those practising occult sciences: they are often dervishes of some kind,[51] except for those accused of astrology or geomancy, who are characterized by their profession (*müneccim*, *remmāl*). Indeed, astrologers and geomancers are almost the only practising occultists said to have their own guild, at least according to Evliya: significantly, they parade in the same group as ulema and sheikhs (there are also carvers of talismans and magic squares in the group of jewellers, but it is not clear whether they compose the talismans or just carve them).[52] A text of advice written in 1708 for market craftsmen includes sections addressed to practitioners of

[45] Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, MD 116, entries 158, 1043, 1366; 117, entries 3, 904. All date from the early eighteenth century.

[46] Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, MD 116, entry 1366; same order copied also in MD 117, entry 3. In both entries the word *göbeğini* is strangely written with an *h* (g-b-h g-n-y).

[47] Cinānī, ed. Ünlü, *Bedâyiü'l-âsâr*, 2: 73–74.

[48] Ibid., 2: 60–63.

[49] Develi (ed.), *Risâle-i garībe*, 20; Lâtifī, *Eloge d'Istanbul*, 147.

[50] Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, MD 107, entries 9–10.

[51] Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, MD 3, entry 1463; MD 107, entries 9–10; MD 111, entries 369, 371; MD 116, entries 158, 1043; *İstanbul Kadı Sicilleri 72 Eyüp Mahkemesi 182 Numaralı Sicil*, 309–310 (no. 477).

[52] Evliya Çelebi, eds Dankoff, Kahraman, and Dağlı, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, I. Kitap*, 259 (f. 156b). On carvers of talismans, ibid., 312 (ff. 187b–188a).

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astrology, geomancy, magic squares, *cifr*, and alchemy.[53] However, manuscripts of geomancy show that (in Jan Schmidt's words) it 'seems to have been a somewhat less popular science/craft among the literate Ottomans than astrology or bibliomancy in its various forms'.[54]

Other obscure points concern the identity of those who identified themselves as having the legitimate right to practise occult sciences. From all that we know, Ottoman magic was primarily scholarly magic, based on an intimate knowledge of astral and terrestrial secrets, including the complex properties of Arabic letters and numbers. In the early eighteenth century, Balıkesirli Râsih describes some ulema who 'are adorned by fame as if they have reached the degree of perfection through geomancy, magic squares, incantations and charms', as well as some who think of themselves as 'Farābī and Ebū 'Alī Sīnā in the science of *simyā*'.[55] Folk tradition respected this scholarly side and held its practitioners in respect and awe. In particular, transformation, in folk or folk-like tales, was usually explained as an aspect of *simyā*, thus an elaborate enterprise with strong affinities to letter magic. Evliya relates a story about an Arab slave boy of his, who died and was buried; the body, still in the shroud, was found out of his grave, transformed into a black goat. The locals suggested that the boy was actually a goat transformed into human form by *'ilm-i simyā*; and Evliya notes that, indeed, the slave boy was sold to him by a Maghribi who knew of this science (*'ilm-i simyā ma'rīfetleri idi*).[56] However, the existence of more popular, even illiterate, witchcraft is also well attested by various sources. For one thing, arithmomancy seems to have been quite popular. For instance, a miscellany containing mainly poems, compiled by different authors over the years but mainly belonging to the eighteenth century, has a page neatly filled with a series of words and their corresponding *ebced* numbers, classified in pairs bearing the same number and presumably some occultist correspondence: *vücūd* with *vāhid*, *vaṭan* with *Mekke*, *evlād-ı 'Alī* with *gül-i Muhammedī* (showing Alevi sympathies? *Şāh* is also coupled with *Ḳahhār*), *'ālem* with *fānī*, *nizā'* with *ṣulḥ*, and so on.[57] It also contains a detailed set of instructions for calculating one's astral influences as well as for winning someone's heart, either by magic (burning one's hair) or with prayers (if the beloved person does not succumb, then magic is not possible and he or she will die).[58] Such miscellanies, of course, are quite common, and they were read by all sorts of people, from soldiers to judges and Sufis.[59]

[53] Çalka, 'Safî Mustafa Efendi'nin Osmanlı esnaf', 89–93.

[54] Schmidt, 'The Occult Sciences', 240–244. For specimens of such texts, see Procházka-Eisl and Çelik (eds), *Hidden Treasures*, 207–230; Melvin-Koushki, 'Divining Past'.

[55] Balıkesirli Râsih, ed. Önler, '*Bülgatü'l-ahbâb*', 76 (f. 46b).

[56] Evliya Çelebi, eds Kahraman, Dağlı, and Dankoff, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, VIII. Kitap*, 274–275 (ff. 339b–340a).

[57] Esen, 'An Ottoman Miscellany', 259 (f. 69a).

[58] Ibid., 267–268 (f. 75a), 270–271 (f. 76a).

[59] See e.g. some remarks by Terzioğlu, 'Autobiography in Fragments', 90–91. For an exemplary study of some such miscellanies, accompanied by a transcription and translation of selected parts, see Procházka-Eisl and Çelik (eds), *Hidden Treasures*.

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Cases of vernacular magic recorded in archival documents or in historical chronicles show more affinity with various forms of ritual magic and of conjuring. In this respect, the presence of north Africans as well as sub-Saharan Africans is especially emphasized by Ottoman sources.[60] A variety of occultist professionals are described in an early-eighteenth-century libel, cursing

> the exorcists (*cinci*) from Maghrib who claim to be masters of enchantments (*teshīr*)…those who claim 'I am communicating with the jinn, I am master of the convocation of spirits (*ben sahib-da'vetim*), I know the language of the stars (*nücūmdan ḫaberdāram*)'; those desolate ones who pass for geomancers saying, 'I know a treasure, I can find and dig it out of earth'; those who take divination (*fāl*) by Gypsy women…[61]

A curse was not the worst that could befall these low-level magicians. A *fetva* issued by Vānī Efendi around 1660 in Erzurum condemns those who claim to bring news from the unknown (*muġayyebāt*) by writing amulets with 'illicit blood' (*ḥaram olan dem ile ba'ż-ı nüsaḫāt taḥrīr edüp*);[62] even worse, another *fetva* by Yenişehirli Abdullah Efendi, who served as *şeyhülislam* from 1718 to 1730, approves the execution of a magician who allegedly used Qur'anic verses in a blasphemous way, grinding them under a millstone:

> Zeyd the magician (*sahir*), maliciously (*ihaneten*) puts the papers where the Qur'anic verses are written under the millstone and if it is certain by recourse to the Sharia that he is accustomed to grinding the grand verses under the millstone saying that 'I wrenched one's head to this direction and I turned another's heart to that direction' and if he is apprehended before repentance, is it legitimate to execute Zeyd by *siyaset*?
>
> Answer: It is legitimate.[63]

Almost a century later, in 1810, a swindler claims to find hidden treasures (*mal çıkarırız deyü*); this is how he pretended to call the jinn in front of his victims:

> Hasan Efendi [the name of the swindler] said to his partner 'there is wealth in this house, but let's see what sort of wealth'; he read something (*biraz okuyup*), then took a candlestick out of his breast and lit a candle, extinguishing all other candles [in the room]. Meanwhile, two children had hidden near the house…Hasan Efendi's partner, under the pretext that he had to urinate, went out and took the children secretly inside, concealing them in the room…Hasan

[60] On sub-Saharan sorcerers summoning 'spirits' (*peri*) and demons (or what was perceived as such by Ottoman authors), see Spyropoulos, '*Beys*, Sheikhs, *Kolbaşıs*', 194–203.
[61] Develi (ed.), *Risâle-i garîbe*, 36; Lâtifî, *Eloge d'Istanbul*, 166–167.
[62] Köse, 'The Fatwa Collection', 79. [63] Tuşalp, 'Treating Outlaws', 71–72.

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> Efendi, still reading [his spells], suddenly threw the candlestick in the air so that the candle went out. As everything went dark, the children went to the door of the room and with their childish voice said, 'Please, master hodja, have mercy and spare us, here is your wealth. We brought you a sample of it, have mercy!' As everybody heard their voice and stayed silent, the aforementioned hodja Hasan Efendi said, 'I may spare you, but how will I obtain (*feth*) of this wealth?' To which the children answered, 'The way is this present spell (*bu māliñ fetḥi şimdiki ʿazīmetdir*). But its incense (*buḫūr*) is expensive'—and they informed and advised about very expensive fumigations such as aloe, amber, and other things. The hodja said, 'Well, let's see the sample of this wealth' and started again to read [spells] in the dark; when he began speaking quite audibly, the children, to whom some gold pieces had already been given, cried, 'Mercy, master, have mercy, we are burnt! Here, take the sample!' throwing handfuls of gold pieces in the dark from the door into the room before they went out to the street.[64]

This sort of conjuring seems to have produced quite a sensation, and we can say the same concerning an 1812 order to search for practitioners of magic (*siḥr ü bāl şöhretleri olmağla*) among newcomers from the Balkan provinces in Istanbul. A swindler was arrested, and among the belongings of one of his wives the authorities discovered a manuscript, with entries such as 'if so-and-so is written for So-and-so, their eye becomes bound (*fülān içün fülān taḥrīr olunsa, gözü bağlanur*), as well as some (magic?) writing (*baʿżı ṭavırla ḫaṭṭ taḥrīr*) and dust wrapped in a cloth, said to be from a corpse (*bu ölü ṭoprağı imiş, öyle söyledi deyü*)'.[65] The Balkan dimension of this account has to be put in the context of other accounts of Balkan folklore, since it seems to have impressed Istanbul Ottoman Muslims, who did not fail to record such practices and beliefs.[66] Balıkesirli Râsih (d. 1731) records twice a saying that 'all Belgrade people are sorcerers' (*küllü belġrādī siḥr-bāz*), showing that Balkan peoples had a reputation for using magic.[67] One will also remember Ebū's-suʿūd's *fetva*s on vampires, as well as Cinānī's ghost stories. Cinānī also records an impressive witch story situated in a Balkan village: a judge is summoned to cure the *kethüda*, sick to death by magic from the village witches, as is their custom (*Rūm illerinüñ ʿādeti budur ki bunda baʿżı cāzūlar olur ki siḥirle istedügi adamı ḫasta ider, murād ėdünürse helāk ider*). The judge has the seven women described by the villagers and arrested; as expected, they are old and ugly. Six of them attest that they can bring a man and a woman together or break them

[64] Câbî Ömer Efendi, ed. Beyhan, *Câbî Târihi*, 606–608. [65] Ibid., 827–828.

[66] On Balkan traditions of magic and witchcraft, see Angusheva, 'Late Medieval Witch Mythologies'; Todorova-Pirgova, 'Witches and Priests' (based on modern-day informants).

[67] Balıkesirli Râsih, ed. Önler, '*Bülgatü'l-ahbâb*', 122 (f. 78b), 261 (f. 162b). On the other hand, Muslim magic manuals from Bosnia do not present differences when compared with those from Istanbul or the Arabic lands: see e.g. Buturović, 'The Melting Occult Pot'.

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apart (the *hadith* trope mentioned above), or make someone sleep, but only their chief can kill someone. They then have to pass the ordeal of water:

> There is also another way to find them. As follows: they take them and leave them in deep water. If they don't sink into the water they are certain to be witches (*cāẕūluġı muḳarrerdür*), if they do sink, they are not.

After their sorcery is attested, their neck is branded with iron 'as was the old custom in these lands', so that they cannot perform magic for seven years.[68] In another story, a student in Rumeli is bewitched by an infidel woman, who turns him into a dog; after lots of suffering, the spell is dissolved by her daughter, who instructs the student how to turn the witch into a mule, in his turn.[69] Towards the end of the eighteenth century, in 1796, Mehmed Hāşim records a female witch in Eğriboz/Chalkis, who spread terror with her magic as she made people believe the town was going to be destroyed.[70] Similar tales are found in Medḥī's stories of Ebū 'Alī Sīnā and in 'Azīz Efendi's novel, but the Balkan strand is much more evident in Evliya's famous description of a witch in a Bulgarian village. An old woman enters the house with her seven children, and during the night she

> took a handful of ashes from the fireplace, and rubbed them onto her vagina. Then she recited a spell (*efsūn*) over the ashes left in her hand and scattered them over the seven little boys and girls…At once all seven turned into plump chickens and started to go 'cheep cheep'. She scattered the rest of the ashes over her own head and in an instant was transformed into a big broody hen going 'gurk gurk'. She marched out of the door with the seven chicks right behind…One infidel took out his penis and showered the chickens with a rain of piss. At once all eight of them turned back into their human form. The one who had urinated over them gave the old hag and the children a good beating and took them away. We followed them into a house, which turned out to be their church. He gave the woman over to a priest, and the priest anathematized her (*'avreti oḳıyarak afaroz-ı mandolos eyledi*)…When the infidel was brought and I questioned him, he laughed and said: 'My lord, that woman is a different breed. She used to turn into a witch (*ḳara ḳoncoloz*) once a year on a winter's night, but this year she turned into a hen. She doesn't harm anyone.'[71]

One could note the similarity of the expression 'a different breed' (*ol ḳarı başḳa soydur*) to the Circassian *obur*s, mentioned as such by Evliya (see Chapter 2

[68] Cinānī, ed. Ünlü, *Bedâyiü'l-âsâr*, 2: 105–107. [69] Ibid., 2: 265–266.
[70] Mehmed Hâşim, eds Emecen and Şahin, *Îmâ-yı törehât-ı büldânân*, 181.
[71] Evliya Çelebi, eds Kahraman and Dağlı, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, III. Kitap*, 210–211 (ff. 130a–b); Evliya Çelebi, *An Ottoman Traveller*, 103–104. Seventh sons were prone to be effective in protective magic, according to the beliefs of rural Syria (Grehan, *Twilight of the Saints*, 152).

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above). This 'dehumanization' of witches seems to be peculiar to Evliya and must be a folklore element; Islamicate magic in general is a craft that can be practised by everybody, including pious and decent persons.

At the same time, there is no specific association of magic with women, as in Christian Europe—this is to a degree natural, given the segregation of women from public urban life. With the exception of the Balkan stories mentioned above, as well as fictional works that may draw their models from the pre-Ottoman tradition,[72] very few references to women practising witchcraft can be found. Translating a Persian original, Aḥmed Dā'ī (d. after 1421) refers to women bewitching men into dreaming of them.[73] A century later, Sarūḫānī mentions that he showed the power of some divine names to a woman, but after her '[he] never taught anything from the science of properties [*sic*] to any woman. And let those coming after us do the same';[74] and Balthasar de Monconys (d. 1665), who met several practitioners of occult arts on his travels, mentions a couple of women practising divination in Egypt.[75] An astrological treatise, composed by the chief astrologer Mehmed Çelebi (d. 1630/1), warns about the danger of a wife turning out to be a witch performing magic, including the (licit) use of properties (*siḥir ve nīr-i necāt ve ḫavāṣ-ı eşyā*).[76] Finally, in 1747 the lynching of an old lonely woman accused of witchcraft was stopped only by intervention of the judge of Damascus.[77]

In conclusion, due to the relative lack of specific studies, it is hard to decide whether we can see any development in the history of Ottoman magic. If we can document a turn to natural magic in Taşköprüzāde's and Kâtib Çelebi's work, leaving behind the lettrist obsession of the sixteenth century, neither of these authors (and, actually, no author we know of) seems to have composed any treatise laying down rules or a coherent theory of magic. One might postulate that belief in magic (other than astral influence) may have waned from the seventeenth century onwards, at least at a scholarly level (which, again, is debatable, given the high number of lettrist/*cifr* works in some eighteenth-century private libraries).[78] At the same time, vernacular magic continued to thrive, giving emphasis to lettrist methods of onomancy and arithmology, as well as bibliomancy.[79] We will turn our attention to these questions again in the Epilogue.

[72] See e.g. Medḥī, eds Çakır and Koncu, *XVI. yüzyıldan bir aşk hikâyesi*, 25–27; 'Azīz Efendi, *Muhayyelât*, ed. Alacatlı, 159, 251, 258; ed. Duymaz, 150, 263, 324, 329.
[73] Ahmed-i Dâ'î, ed. Çebi, *Tercüme-i kitâbü't-ta'bîr*, 164; cf. ibid., 264.
[74] Saruhânî İlyas, eds Küçük and Muslu, *Akhisarlı Şeyh Îsâ menâkıbnâmesi*, 96f.
[75] Brentjes, 'On the Relation', 127; cf. Kurz, *Ways to Heaven*, 235.
[76] Müneccimbaşı Mehmed Çelebi, ed. Önler, '*Uṣūl-i aḥkām-ı sāl-i 'ālem*', 50 (f. 28b).
[77] Grehan, *Twilight of the Saints*, 152.
[78] Usluer, 'Cârullah Efendi'nin cifir'; Saif, 'The Occult Sciences'.
[79] Schmidt, 'The Occult Sciences', esp. 247–252; Akçagüner, 'Looking for Love and Loss'.

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Astrology and Other Forms of Divination

Astrology

Ottoman magic is not as visible as we would like it to be, perhaps due to the lack of systematic persecution; in contrast, divination and especially its more elaborate and scholarly forms—namely, astrology and geomancy—are omnipresent in all kinds of sources throughout Ottoman history. As we saw in Chapter 1, the influence of the celestial movements upon the terrestrial world was commonly accepted throughout the Christian and Muslim worlds in the medieval and early modern periods, and thus what could be at stake was only the human ability to peek into these mysteries. Regardless of its dubious place in theological debates, astrology was often sanctified by association with holy persons and especially the prophets, first and foremost Idris/Hermes. The soundness of astrological calculations, especially ancient ones, was often considered self-evident: Lâtifî mentions that the walls of Istanbul were founded when the sun was in the zenith,[80] and in the same vein Kâtib Çelebi brings the example of the foundation of Baghdad ('with the sun in Leo, Mercury in Virgo, and the moon in Sagittarius', so that 'no king would die' in the city), but also the fact that 'when you know the birth-date of a person, it is easy to determine everything that will happen to him, in terms of illness and recovery, acquisition [of wealth], etc.' as a proof for the reliability of the 'science of the decrees' (*'ilm al-aḥkām*), citing Dā'ūd al-Anṭākī.[81] An example of these beliefs in practice is Riyāzī Ali Çelebi's (d. 1537/8) treatise on defining the right day and hour to begin the construction of the Süleymaniye mosque.[82] The possibility of astrological predictions was so indisputable that even non-believers could practise them, such as the monks of a Greek monastery in Serres who had predicted the advancement of the House of Osman, according to Yazıcızāde 'Alī (fifteenth century) and Müneccimbaşı (end of the seventeenth century).[83]

I referred in Chapters 1 and 3 above to the debate on the licitness of astrology. A long tradition of anti-astrological controversy argued that astrologers' predictions were nothing more than coincidences; some of the arguments used were mentioned above. Indeed, the importance of names like Ibn Sina, Ibn Taymiyya, and Ibn Khaldūn, all opponents of astrology and occult sciences in general, often gives the impression that astral determinism was universally condemned and that astrology was in fact distinctly separated from astronomy. However, as recently

[80] Lâtifî, *Evsâf-ı İstanbul*, 12; Lâtifî, *Eloge d'Istanbul*, 55. Similar descriptions circulated as late as the early eighteenth century: Mahmud Efendi, ed. Tunalı, *Atina tarihi*, 358.

[81] Kâtip Çelebi, eds Yaltkaya and Bilge, *Keşf-el-zunun*, 1: 22–23; cf. *Keşfü'z-zunûn*, tr. Balcı, 1: 70.

[82] Velioğlu, 'Müneccim Riyâzî', 102–113.

[83] Balivet, *Autour des Ottomans*, 28–29. Note the cautious expression of Mehmed Âşık in the second half of the sixteenth century when he quotes a tradition about the positive opinion of Ibn Abbas on astrology, specifying that he is talking about mathematical astrology and not judicial astrology (*bundan murâdı nefs-i nücûmun ma'rifetidür, ahkâm-ı nücûm ma'rifetine işâret değüldür*): Âşık Mehmed, ed. Ak, *Menâzırü'l-avâlim*, 39.

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demonstrated by Ahmet Tunç Şen, this was not the case for Ottoman scholars, who rather followed the trend of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries to 'occultize' the world. A common argument (in fact, the most common argument from an epistemological perspective) against astrology was the impossibility for the human intellect to grasp fully the totality of interdependencies and planetary and astral forces. It should be noted here that the same argument, which did not deny the influence of the supralunar world on terrestrial affairs, was often used by astrologers themselves to justify possible errors in their calculations, which could have been corrected based on their experience.[84]

At any rate, astrology continued to thrive as an integral and indispensable part of Ottoman science, also playing an important role in politics from at least the reign of Bayezid II (r. 1481–1512), who showed a keen interest in astrology, patronizing a host of astrologers in his court;[85] the office of chief astrologer (*müneccimbaşı*) was maintained in the palace up to the very end of the Ottoman Empire.[86] Kâtib Çelebi himself, as well as other historians (most notably Na'īma), used astrological knowledge regularly in order to interpret historical events and especially revolts and sultanic depositions or deaths.[87] Apart from *ex post facto* explanations, political actors also regularly took astrological data into account before making their move. Not only might the *müneccimbaşı* advise the sultan about his moves, but rebels could use such premonitions as well. Thus, Benjamin Lellouch makes the hypothesis that a conjunction of 1524 must have played its part in the timing of Ḫā'in Aḥmed Pasha's revolt, although there is no reference to it in Ottoman sources (whereas European sources are, in contrast, quite abundant);[88] similarly, it seems that a Greek Christian early-seventeenth-century rebel, Dionysios Skylosophos, had used similar prognostications.[89] Detailed compendiums of astrology, specifying the influences of the planets and their conjunctions upon different classes of people, countries, professions, and so on were composed and read widely, and almanacs contained astrological predictions together with astronomical information as late as the eve of the mid-nineteenth-century Tanzimat reforms.[90] In sum, the belief in even a vague way that the future could be predicted through celestial observations persisted and was a commonplace well into the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Claudia Römer

[84] Şen, 'Astrology in the Service', 60–63, 85–86.

[85] Ibid., 198–213; Şen, 'Reading the Stars'. On the marked presence of astrological and astronomical literature in Bayezid's library, see Şen and Fleischer, 'Books on Astrology'.

[86] Aydüz, 'Osmanlı Devleti'nde müneccimbaşılık'; Şen, 'The Science and Politics', 51–55. Cf. Kırkoğlu, *Sultan ve müneccim*, for an analysis of the library and career of one such court astrologer, Fethiyeli Halil Efendi (d. 1773). For a less illustrious but highly productive and scholarly astrologer, see Velioğlu, 'Müneccim Riyâzî'.

[87] Sariyannis, 'Knowledge and Control', 79; Şen, 'Das Ereignis von Edirne'.

[88] Lellouch, 'Hain Ahmed Paşa (m. 1524)', 66–67, 94–96.

[89] Gara, 'Prophecy, Rebellion, Suppression', 343–350.

[90] See e.g. Müneccimbaşı Mehmed Çelebi, ed. Önler, '*Uṣūl-i aḥkām-ı sāl-i ʿālem*'; Kundakçı, '*Ahkâmü'l-külliyye*'; Kurz, *Ein osmanischer Almanach*. Cf. also Şen, 'Astrology in the Service', 237–304, for a very detailed and analytical survey.

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published a *fetva* by the *şeyhülislam* Minḳārīzāde Yaḥyā Efendi (in post 1662–1673), in which he answers a query from the sultan about the appearance of a comet (probably that of 1664 or of 1665) and warns that they are bad omens:

> My padishah, they call this star 'adorned star' (*kevkeb-i zeyn*, for *kevkeb-i zenb*). When it first appeared, Cain killed Abel. When it appeared for the second time, there was the Second Flood. When it appeared for the third time, His highness Abraham was thrown into the fire…When it appeared for the thirteenth time, Şāh İsmaʿīl killed all his brothers. Then he, too, died. There was no one to become shah in his place. Confusion resulted [from this]. My felicitous and mighty padishah, it is a great evil fortune. It is not a good sign (*naḥş-i ekberdür ėyü ʿalāmet degüldür*). May you be just and strive to guard the subjects from oppression…[91]

A provincial yet scholarly mufti, İspirī Kaḍızāde Meḥmed ʿĀrif Efendi (d. 1759/60) of Erzurum, could write treatises on astrology in the mid-eighteenth century, and meteors and other celestial signs were seen as omens for the victory or defeat of the Ottoman armies as late as 1838.[92]

At a more vernacular, less elaborate and scholarly level, astrometeorological manuals guiding readers through the prediction of natural disasters and meteorological phenomena from heavenly signs, the so-called *melhame*s, circulated widely. Their authors rarely offered any interpretation, save for, sometimes, an association of days and months with planets and stars, often with some alphanumerical overtones.[93]

On a practical level, astrologers were regularly professing their craft in the streets as well. Latifī counts astrologers together with sellers of amulets (*nusḥa-furūş*) and other 'game players' (*lūbet-bāzān*) of the Tahtakale neighbourhood. They carry astrolabes and claim to know the secrets of stars and the future; but, he hastens to add,

> If the astrologer and the geomancer (*müneccim-i remmāl*) knew a thing / they would have dug every treasure out of the earth.[94]

Such practitioners were not necessarily all considered charlatans; in numerous cases from Murad III's times, we see that 'private' astrologers of Ottoman towns, from Istanbul to Manisa and Diyarbakir, could be esteemed and sought for by the

[91] Römer, 'Comets as Bringers of Evil'. For an even later example, see Saliba, 'Cometary Theory and Prognostications', 127–131.

[92] Ağbal, 'Kadızâde Mehmed Efendi'nin üç risâlesi'; Radushev and Sabev, 'Did the Ottomans See UFOs?'

[93] Schmidt, 'The Occult Sciences', 233–234; Boyraz, 'Türk halkbiliminin yazılı kaynakları'; Boyraz, *Fal kitabı*; Turan, 'Halk Osmanlıcası I'; Demir, 'Melhameler ve bir onyedinci yüzyıl'; Akçagüner, 'Looking for Love and Loss'; Gür, 'Osmanlı fal geleneği'. For a more scholarly specimen of the genre, see Dervīş Ahmed Dede [?], ed. Şuşar, '1093/1682 tarihli müneccimbaşı defteri'. On the pre-Ottoman tradition of such texts, see Fahd, *La Divination arabe*, 483–495; Chalyan-Daffner, 'Predictions of "Natural" Disasters'.

[94] Lâtifī, *Evsâf-ı İstanbul*, 53; Lâtifī, *Eloge d'Istanbul*, 108–109.

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sultan, who gave them stipends to obtain their predictions. Thus, in 1574 it seems that a certain Balī, an astrologer of Istanbul, is granted a raise in salary from 10 to 15 aspers daily, after a request from the chief physician (*ḥekīmbaşı*), as other astrologers received 40 and 50 aspers a day;[95] in the same year, another astrologer from Diyarbakir named Teberrük and considered 'unequalled in the science of stars and competent in medicine' (*'ilm-i kevākibde bī-naẓīr ve fenn-i ṭıbbda māhir*) receives by sultanic order 20 aspers a day from the local treasury in order to send annual almanacs (*takvīm*) to Istanbul.[96] In 1584 a certain Fetḥī, an 'astrologer's scribe' (*müneccim kâtibi*) from Manisa, is summoned to Istanbul to stay there for life, or at least (if he maintains family connections with Manisa) for three months.[97] In the same year, a geomancer named Hindī 'Arab who delivers divinations to passers-by (*gelüb gidenlere remil-i cüzvī ba'żı nā-şāyeste kelimāti olduġı*) is to be arrested, but very carefully so that nobody gets upset (he is going to be promised a fief).[98] Furthermore, Murad III seems to have embarked on a systematic effort of creating a major library of astrological words: he commissioned the poet Ṣu'ūdī (d. 1591) to translate a book of astrology and divination, two copies of which were prepared for his daughters.[99] He also regularly collected libraries of deceased astrologers: in 1578 the astrology books (*müneccim kitabları … nücūma ve 'ilm-i hey'ete ve hendeseye müte'alliḳ*) of the deceased Lütfullah (probably a court astrologer, d. before 1550) are ordered to be delivered to the observatory (*rasad*), more specifically to Mevlânâ Muhyiddîn,[100] while in 1584 the books of a deceased astrologer, Müneccim Kurd, in Manisa are to be collected, sealed, and urgently sent to Istanbul, regardless of the wishes of his heirs.[101]

Whereas, as we saw in Chapter 3 above, state persecutions often targeted astrologers (either as charlatans or as instigators of disorder), by Evliya's time in the mid-seventeenth-century astrologers and other practitioners of occult sciences were participating regularly in city life, having their own guilds and protectors. In Evliya's description of the procession of the Istanbul guilds, the astrologers (70 persons) and the geomancers (300 persons with 15 shops) parade in the group of ulema and sheikhs. The *pīr* (patron saint) of both guilds is 'Alī; for the latter, Evliya notes that "Alī's geomancy' is famous, but in the olden times the *pīr* of geomancers was Daniel, having learnt this craft from Cebra'il and thus shown his prophetical power (*reml ile mu'cīzesin beyān ėderdi*) (Fig. 4.2). Moreover, the group of jewellers includes the carvers of silver seals and talismans

[95] Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, MD 25, entry 1318.
[96] Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, MD 25, entry 2984.
[97] Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, MD 49, entry 197.
[98] Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, MD 52, entry 502.
[99] Bağcı, Çağman, Renda, and Tanındı, *Ottoman Painting*, 191–193. Cf. Kalpaklı, 'III. Murad'ın ilm-i nücûm merakı' on the sultan's interest in astrology and astronomy.
[100] Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, MD 34, entry 272; cf. Miroğlu, 'İstanbul rasathanesine ait belgeler', 80; Şen, 'The Sultan's Syllabus Revisited', 220.
[101] Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, MD 49, entry 154.

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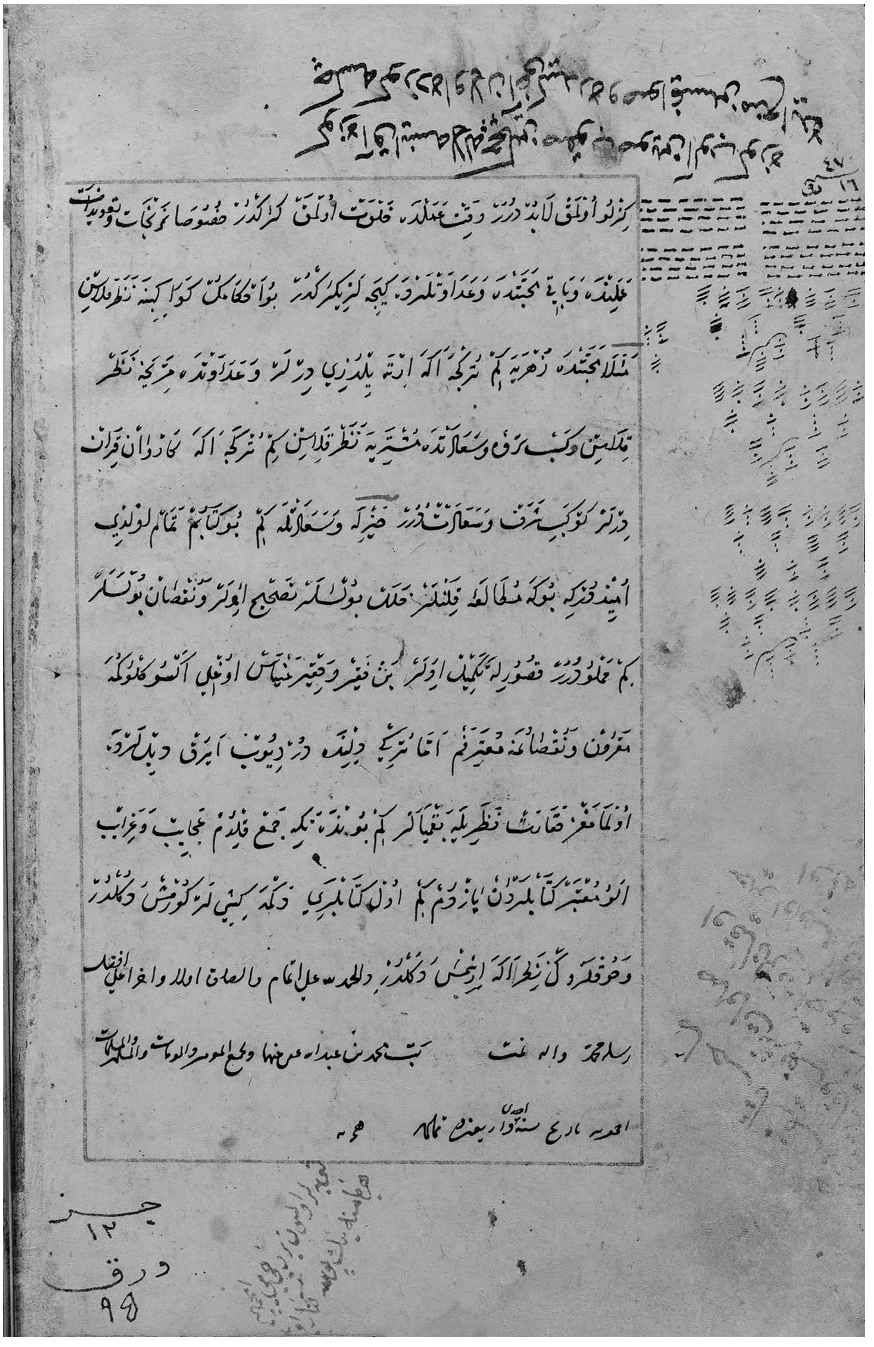


Fig. 4.2 Geomantic signs and calculations in the margins of the last page of a copy of Manyasoğlu's encyclopedia. Manyasoğlu, *A'cabü'l-'uccāb*, Princeton University Library, Islamic MSS, New Series 1010, f. 93b (copied 1437/8).

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(40 persons with 15 stores), who inscribe 'magic squares, prayers, and charms' (*vefḳler ve ḥırz-ı Yemānīler ve ta'vīẕ-i muṭalsamlar*), and in the group of painters we find one fortune-telling painter (*fālcıyān-ı muṣavver*).[102]

Dream Interpretation

We spoke in Chapter 2 above about dream interpretation, perhaps the most popular occult technique and also the one that everybody could feel entitled to practise, although Sufi sheikhs were generally considered the most capable of accessing its secrets. Among the techniques connecting mankind with the supernatural, dream interpretation was perhaps the most 'democratic' of all, since (the existence of elaborate handbooks notwithstanding) everybody could interpret a dream without claiming either any specialized erudition or supernatural (prophetic) powers, although every scholar or Sufi would emphasize that only rigorous training would enable a valid interpretation. For instance, Evliya Çelebi constantly interprets dreams, seen by himself, his patrons, or companions.[103] According to a late-fourteenth-century cosmography, whoever prays and then sleeps in a certain miraculous cave near Aleppo would be cured by a saint visiting in their dream (*uyḳusında bir kişi gelür*).[104] This practice, *istiḫāre* or incubation, was quite common and there are plenty of tombs or other places renowned for it.[105] Practically every Ottoman would be prone to noting his or her dreams and seeking to interpret them, either through a manual of dream interpretation or through mere intuition: from a sultan to a woman with Sufi interests and from an anxious scribe to a pasha, not forgetting Evliya, for whom dream interpretation seems to have been a charisma he was particularly proud of.[106] Following a rich tradition, which went back to Artemidorus' Hellenistic manual, Ottoman treatises on dream interpretation or *ta'bīr* circulated widely. Some of the common techniques mentioned in these treatises included the use of linguistic puns and correlations between images and words, as well as other associations with cultural traits.[107] Occasionally, more complex systems of transformation were used:

[102] Evliya Çelebi, eds Dankoff, Kahraman, and Dağlı, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, I. Kitap*, 259, 312, 331 (ff. 156b, 187b–188a, 199b).

[103] Dankoff, *An Ottoman Mentality*, 205–213.

[104] Ali b. Abdurrahman, ed. İnan, "Acâ'ibü'l-mahlūkât (71.–105. varak)', 32 (f. 75b).

[105] For an anthropological study of (modern-day) *istiḫāre*, see Edgar and Henig, '*Istikhara*'.

[106] Felek, *Kitābü'l-menāmāt*; Kafadar, *Asiye Hatun*; Fleischer, 'Secretaries' Dreams'; Çörekçi, 'The Dream Diary of an Ottoman Governor'; Okudan, 'Osmanlı'da rüya'; Dankoff, *An Ottoman Mentality*, 205–213.

[107] See Sariyannis, 'Languages of Ottoman Esotericism', 52–53. Some specimens: Turan, 'Eski bir Türkçe tabirnâmede'; Ahmed-i Dâ'î, ed. Çebi, *Tercüme-i kitâbü't-ta'bîr*; Alā'addīn al-Kirmānī, ed. Özbakır, *El-aşeretü'l-kâmile/Levâmi'u tenvîri'l-makâm*; Yılmaz Önder and Büyükşekerci, 'Şeyh Ali'nin ta'bîrnâme'sinde'; al-Nâboulsi, tr. Haridi, *Merveilles de l'interprétation des rêves*; cf. Schmidt, 'The Occult Sciences', 244–247. On al-Nābulusī's treatise, see Sirriyeh, *Sufi Visionary*, 67–83. See also

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for instance, translating the name of a person seen in a dream into a numerical value, which then (often after a series of successive subtractions) would correspond to a certain clue to the future.[108] The emphasis on language meant that the message from the Hereafter would pass through the lens of the dreamer's sociocultural status, in order to be better understood. Thus Nev'ī's late-sixteenth-century encyclopedia, repeating a pre-Ottoman topos, notes that dream interpretation can vary according to language, since the image one may see is associated with different words in different languages.

> [Dream interpretation] varies in six factors: difference in language, difference in confession, difference in occupation, difference in time, difference in place, and difference in circumstance. As for the language difference: if, for example, someone dreams in Persian and sees a quince, his matters will go well (*bih*) because quince means '*bih*' in Persian. And if someone dreams [of a quince] in Arabic, then he will go on a long journey (*sefer*) because quince is called in Arabic *sefercel*, which means 'long journey' (*sefer-i cell*).[109]

Similarly, Abdelghanī al-Nābulusī (d. 1731) explains the difference in the interpretation of dreams according to 'the land of each country':

> Also know that the land of each country differs from that of another, because of differences in water, air, and place. That is why there are differences in interpretation in infidel and Islamic countries, because of the variations of nature and the countries. Thus, seeing snow, frost, or hail in a hot country means the high cost of living and dryness. The same vision in a cold country will be a sign of fertility and abundance…[110]

Another very common technique was the well-known association of dreamt images with opposite outcomes: 'the interpretation of a dream is not based on what one sees, but rather on its opposite' (*rü'yānıñ ta'bīri aynı görülen gibi olmayıp aksi ile ta'bīr olunur*), as we read in 'Azīz Efendi's *Muḫayyelāt*.[111] This might imply an understanding of the dream as a mirror, showing the world in an inverse way; and it may not be irrelevant that mostly it is (either saints and prophets or) dead people, or people that would soon die, who appear in the dreams of the living. If one dreamt of a living person, this person in most accounts would die soon; and the opposite happens in a strange story related by 'Alī b.

the list of manuscripts in Balaban, 'Türkçe yazma tabirnameler'. These techniques are also to be found in Byzantine manuals: Mavroudi, 'Byzantine and Islamic Dream Interpretation'.

[108] Schmidt, 'The Occult Sciences', 246; Turan, 'Eski bir Türkçe tabirnâmede'.

[109] Nev'i Efendi, eds Procházka-Eisl and Çelik, *Texts on Popular Learning*, 128–129.

[110] al-Nâboulsi, tr. Haridi, *Merveilles de l'interprétation*, 13.

[111] 'Azīz Efendi, *Muhayyelât*, ed. Alacatlı, 182–183; ed. Duymaz, 278.

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Abdurrahman, author of the first Ottoman cosmography in the late fourteenth century: he prayed to God and then met (it is not entirely clear if this was in a dream) his newborn son, then forty years old. ʿAlī had to prove he was his father by pointing to a treasure he had hidden. Eight days later, the child died.[112]

As one might expect, Sufi sheikhs claimed greater authority in dream interpretation. Especially in Ḫalvetī practice, dreams constituted a very important part of one's spiritual process, as God would indicate one's maturity to proceed to a higher spiritual status through dreams (this is to what we owe the magnificent dream collection of Asiye Hatun, a woman from seventeenth-century Skopje with mystic interests).[113] In the early eighteenth century, the famous moralist Nābī accuses some sheikhs of having their disciples narrate fake dreams, which they then interpret according to their needs (*göre ısmarlamaca rü'yalar/göstere maḳṣadına īmālar*).[114]

Yet, not all Sufis agreed about this emphasis on dream interpretation: for instance, the prominent Bayrāmī-Melāmī sheikh Oğlan Şeyh Ibrāhīm (d. 1655) specifically states that Bayrāmīs did not prefer dream interpretation, regularly practised by the Ḫalvetīs (who, on the other hand, seem not to have been very keen on practising lettrist methods, dear to the Bayrāmīs):[115]

> [Our] group does not interpret dreams or visions (*rü'yā ve vāḳıʿā ve düş*); moreover, because the divine things pertaining to anyone are contemplated within this world (*her ṭālıbüñ melekūtiyyātı ol ʿālemde müşāhede oldıġı-çün*), [those who interpret them] actually interpret [this] contemplation… Explaining away people's dreams belongs to the Ḫalvetīs; there is no explaining and interpretation in the Bayrāmī way, it is [considered] superficial (*āfāḳī*)… Every night the souls enter the *barzaḫ*, that is to say the world of images and imagination (*ʿālem-i miṣāl ü ḫayāl*), and see with circumspection the figures of their deeds (*ṣuver-i aʿmāl*), good or bad, before entering again the castle of their bodies…
>
> Even in the case of a seeker free of all his memories (*ḫavāṭir*), if he does not exert his imaginative faculty at all (*ḳuvve-i müteḫayyilesin aṣlā aʿmāl eylemese*), he will have no dream. Now, whatever the seer imagines is kept in the treasury of his imagination by the faculty of memory (*rāʾī her ne taḫayyül eylerse ḳuvve-i ḥāfıẓa anı ḫazīne-i ḫayālde ḥıfẓ ider*). Sometimes he connects what he has

[112] Ali b. Abdurrahman, ed. Göl, "Acâibü'l-mahlūkât (1.–35. varak)', 48–49 (ff. 2a–b).

[113] Kafadar, *Asiye Hatun*. Thus, an early-seventeenth-century Ḫalvetī sheikh states that the dream world is an intermediary where the spiritual and corporeal worlds meet: Curry, *The Transformation*, 252.

[114] Nâbī, *Hayriyye*, 138 (v. 883).

[115] On the suspicious or at least ambiguous attitude of the Ḫalvetīs towards lettrism, see Emre, 'Crafting Piety for Success', 51–58 (although the use of Hurufism also to denote *ʿilm-i ḥurūf* creates some confusion). However, it is noteworthy that Ḫalvetīs are explicitly associated with the 'science of letters' according to a highly critical Egyptian scholar, al-Shaʿrānī (d. 1565): Winter, *Society and Religion*, 110.

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> imagined to the figure [seen] in his dream (*rü'yāda ṣūret baġlar*); sometimes he forgets what he has imagined, but, because the faculty of memory has kept it, he sees the figures of these imaginations and fancies (*taḫayyülāt u mevhūmāt*) in the world of dream.[116]

A few decades later, the Celveti Atpazarī Osman 'seldom interpreted dreams' and used to say that, whatever the dream's role in matters of the soul and spirit, it 'is not a state of [divine] manifestation but a state of the *barzaḫ* (*ḥāl al-barzaḫ lā-ḥāl al-ta'ayyun*)' (on *barzah*, see Chapter 2 above).[117]

Arithmology and *cefr*

If astrology and dream interpretation have recently drawn the interest of Ottomanists, other ways of foretelling the future have not. As letters (and, secondarily, numbers) governed much of the Ottoman's universe, especially if the Ottoman adhered to the Akbarian school, alphanumerical methods were very often used to predict the future. Some cases were simple or more elaborate interpretations of Qur'anic verses, pertaining to one major event: the best-known example is the date of the fall of Constantinople, as predicted by Mehmed II's mentor Sheikh Akşemseddin (d. 1459) on the basis of alphanumerical calculations of Qur'anic verses.[118] A more complex method was followed by Kemālpaşazāde (or Ibn Kemāl, d. 1534), known best for his historical and legal-theological works (among which is a famous *fetva* defending Ibn 'Arabī, although it was probably not authored by him), to predict Selim I's conquest of Egypt.[119] A tradition of apocalyptical texts foretelling the future of the dynasty and of the Muslim community is centred on *Shajara al-Nu'māniyya fī l-dawla al-'uthmāniyya*, an Arabic text of unknown date and origin attributed to Ibn 'Arabī, but probably belonging to the sixteenth century.[120] Some of its imitators, such as

[116] Gaybī, ed. Deveci, 'Şoḥbetnāme', 155–157; cf. Yavuz, 'Orality in the *Tekke*', 66fn60.

[117] İsmâil Hakkı Bursevî, eds Muslu and Namlı, *Tamâmü'l-feyz*, 228; cf. ibid., 385.

[118] Şahin, 'Constantinople and the End of Time', 326–328; cf. for a second prediction, where the sheikh only asserts that he practised bibliomancy with the Qur'an showing the imminent conquest, İnalcık, *Fatih devri üzerinde*, 127–128 and 217–219 for the whole text. Cf. Yérasimos, *La Fondation de Constantinople*, 187–199; Orhan and Akyıldız, 'XV. yüzyıl Osmanlı düşünce hayatında', 34.

[119] Ibn Kemal, ed. Kılıç, 'İbn-i Kemal'in Mısır fethine dair'; Melvin-Koushki, 'Toward a Neopythagorean Historiography'. On his pro-Ibn 'Arabī *fetva*, see Zildzic, 'Friend *and* Foe', 133–146; Taj, 'Ibn Kamāl's Fatwa on Ibn 'Arabī'. Ibn Kemal's interpretation of the same Qur'anic verse is attributed to an anonymous practitioner of *cifr* in Damascus (significantly, at Ibn 'Arabī's tomb) by the historian Solakzāde (d. 1658, citing Ālī's *Künhu'l-aḫbār*): Şenödeyici, 'Ehl-i Beyt'in gizemli mirası', 224; Solakzāde, ed. Çabuk, 2: 105–106.

[120] Gril, 'L'Énigme de la *Šağara al-nu'māniyya*'; Zildzic, 'Friend *and* Foe', 83–118; Chahanovich, 'Ottoman Eschatological Esotericism'. The text continued to be cited at least as late as the late eighteenth century (see e.g. Ḥarīrī, eds Öztürk and Kalaycı, 'Bir 11./17. Yüzyıl Aliminin', 401; Saif, 'The Occult Sciences', 450).

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al-Bisṭāmī and Sarūḫānī, used quite elaborate methods. The latter provides a detailed interpretation of a complex way of foretelling the future, explaining the calculations made *c.*1522 by his father, Īsā Aḳḥisarī, on the future of Ottoman dynasty: the names of the sultans up to the year 1200 (1785/6) are to be found from the letters of the verse *ihdinā ṣ-ṣirāṭa l-mustaḳīm* ('Guide us to the straight path') of the surah 'al-Fatiḥa'; the next ones will be 'Alī, Velī, and then a host of unnamed sultans for 250 years; then a nephew ('one of the sons of his daughters') and then again some from the House of Osman.[121] A similar but more detailed calculation is to be found in a conversation of the sheikh with the teacher of no less than Suleyman, then a prince residing in Manisa:

> The reason for al-Fatiha to be at the beginning of the book is that in the letters of *Bi-smi l-lāhi* is to be found the caliphate from Adam up to Muhammad. Muhammad Muṣṭafā began with the letters of *al-ḥamdu li-l-lāhi*; in the letters of *al-ḥamdu li-l-lāhi*, there is Muḥammad and Aḥmad. The letters of *rabbi l-'ālamīn* are the letters of the four friends [the first four caliphs] [a marginal note remarks that Hasan and Husayn are found in the two *ḥa* of *ar-raḥmāni r-raḥīm*]. From then on up to Osman, [the caliphate] was in the letters of *ar-raḥmāni r-raḥīm*, *Māliki yawmi d-dīn*. The caliphate of Sultan Alāu'd-dīn began with the letters of *yawmi d-dīn*; and the House of Osman with *'iyyāka na'budu*. Now it is in the letters of *ihdinā ṣ-ṣirāṭa l-mustaqīm*. When Fatiha reaches its end, when its letters finish, the House of Osman will not stop…We are now in the year 922; now up to the year 1450 the caliphate will be in the House of Osman. Reaching the letters of *'an'amta*, the son of one of the daughters of the House of Osman will rise to the sultanate, but he will go promptly, and kingship will again be in the House of Osman. When the letters reach *al-ḥamdu* again, then Ahmed will appear. He will not have to belong to this line, but he may belong as well. From their line, 'Alī and Veli will come.[122]

From this description (which is similar to some specimens by al-Bisṭāmī),[123] it seems that Aḳḥisarī sees al-Fatiha as a kind of palindrome: when the chapter reaches its end, it is to be read again from the beginning; the first Ahmed being the Prophet, the second is a successor of the Ottoman dynasty. There is also more on letter science in the story about how Muhammed Bedaḫşānī, the teacher of Īsā Aḳḥisarī in magic and divination, sent him with the magic square of the name

[121] Saruhânî İlyas, eds Küçük and Muslu, *Akhisarlı Şeyh Îsâ menâkıbnâmesi*, 192.

[122] Ibid., 197; another version in Şenödeyici, 'Ehl-i Beyt'in gizemli mirası', 230–231. The full text of al-Fatiha: [1] *Bi-smi l-lāhi r-raḥmāni r-raḥīm* [2] *al-ḥamdu li-l-lāhi rabbi l-'ālamīn* [3] *ar-raḥmāni r-raḥīm* [4] *Māliki yawmi d-dīn* [5] *'iyyāka na'budu wa-'iyyāka nasta'īn* [6] *ihdinā ṣ-ṣirāṭa l-mustaqīm* [7] *Ṣirāṭa l-laḍīna 'an'amta 'alayhim, ġayri l-maġḍūbi 'alayhim wa-lā ḍ-ḍāllīn*.

[123] See e.g. Bisṭāmī, ed. Yağmur, '*Terceme-i kitāb*', 15–18; Şenödeyici, 'Ehl-i Beyt'in gizemli mirası', 226.

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Settār ('the Veiler [of sins]') to Baghdad, in order to find a certain Baba Ḥamdī, who was to teach him the *cifr*, the comprehensive lettrist prognosticon. A marginal note in the manuscript, relating something said by Aḳḥisarī's son and biographer, Ibn Īsā Sarūḫānī, is of special interest since it is a rare (albeit deficiently) detailed explanation of a lettrist analysis:

> If one asks why he [Baba Ḥamdī?] has the form of the name 'Settār', he must know and understand the nature of the letters (*ṭabāyi'-i ḥurūf*). For instance: 'Settār' has four letters. Firstly, the letter *sin* belongs to the letters of water; its number is six [by adding the digits of its *ebced* value, 6 + 0]. Secondly, *te* belongs to the letters of air; its number is four [in the same way: 4 + 0 + 0]. Thirdly, *elif* belongs to the letters of fire; its number is one [*ebced* value 1]. Fourthly, *ra* belongs to the letters of earth; its number is eight [for this, see below]. Now this rule comes with taking one tenth of the numbers of the letters. *Sin* is sixty [in the *ebced* system]; its tenth is six, so its number remains six. Six is the number corresponding to *vav* [in *ebced*], so *sin* becomes *vav*. Thus, we took *vav* out of *sin*; *dal* out of *te* [actually, by taking its hundredth rather than its tenth: *te* is 400, *dal* is 4]; *elif* out of *elif*; *ḥa* out of *ra* [for this, see the explanation below; the value of *ra* is 200]. Thus, we have four letters, *vav*, *dal*, *elif*, *ḥa*: this corresponds to *vāḥid* ('one'). Consequently, there are two forms of effects, both similar to each other. It is because *vāḥid* is the esoteric form (*ḥurūf-i bāṭınīsi*) of *settār*:
>
> *ḥa* 8 *ra*—earth, *elif* 1 *elif*—fire, *dal* 4 *te*—air, *vav* 6 *sin*—water. Air prevails; because four prevails over six, eight and one.
>
> Question: If they say, 'from the name *settār* comes *devāb* ("beasts"); because the one tenth [actually, one hundredth] of *ra* is two, which bears the letter *ba*'?
>
> Answer: The last letter of each name corresponds to its sign (*buruc i'tibārı üzerinedir*). That is why we do not take the tenth of *ra*, but subtract two from ten; the difference is eight, and this is the reason the letter *ḥa* [8 in the *ebced* system] is produced. In every name, the first letter shows its element (*'unṣurī*), the second its nature, i.e. its star (*ṭabi'īdir ya'ni kevkebdir*), the third its heavens (*felekī*), and the fourth its zodiac sign (*burūcī*). The rule of *cifr* is this: they subtract [successively] by four from the first letter of every name; by seven from the second letter; by nine from the third; and by twelve from the fourth [*ra* has the value 200; by subtracting sixteen times the number twelve we get 8, the value of *ḥa*. Ibn Isa does not explain why this procedure is applied only to the last letter of the world].[124]

Sarūḫānī himself used the same method to predict in a very detailed way the future of the Ottomans, laying down all their sultans, viziers, judges, Sufi sheikhs,

[124] Saruhânî İlyas, eds Küçük and Muslu, *Akhisarlı Şeyh Îsâ menâkıbnâmesi*, 235–236.

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and so forth up to the Hijri year 3000, in his *Rumūz-ı künūz*. The text was so popular that thirty-six or so manuscripts (the first dated copy comes from 1630) contain 'predictions' that had already been fulfilled, in order to demonstrate the prophetic power of the author.[125]

Simpler practices also helped amateurs to glimpse their own futures. We already saw above the alphanumeric method of making successive subtractions from one's name, converted into number according to the *ebced*. This method was allegedly invented by Sarūḫānī (such attributions are made as late as the early nineteenth century!), but it was actually older since we meet it in *Aʿcabü'l-ʿuccāb*, an early-fifteenth-century encyclopedia by Mahmud b. Kadı-ı Manyās or Manyasoğlu.[126]

These techniques were known by perhaps every educated Ottoman, and this is why we find notes of this kind in many miscellanies containing personal notes. Thus, a mid-sixteenth-century low-ranking ulema would calculate the *ebced* sum of the names of himself and of his potential benefactor, and then make successive subtractions until the remainder was one (which meant that the supplicant would not succeed in his request), two (which meant success), or three (meaning success after some uncertainty); a contemporaneous anonymous author would note a method of predicting the victorious party in a battle, typically attributed to Aristotle.[127]

The most complex form of alphanumeric divination was, of course, *jafr* or (in Ottoman Turkish) *cefr/cifr*. *Jafr*, as we saw in Chapter 1, was supposedly based on a series of tables attributed to ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, foretelling the future by numbers and letters. Introduced to the Ottoman world by al-Bisṭāmī (d. 1454), *cifr* soon became the paragon of lettrist claims to obtain knowledge of the future. The mysterious *Shajara al-Nuʿmāniyya*, mentioned above, is a fine specimen of *cifr* prognostication;[128] there are some passages that strongly reflect al-Bisṭāmī's thought and thus may imply an author from among his entourage or followers, as suggested by Denis Gril: for instance, it is said that the events prophesied 'are the result of the effect of celestial conjunction and the movement of the planets', and

[125] Saruhânî İlyas, ed. Özgül, '"Rumûzü'l-künûz" adlı eserin transkripsiyonu'; Tamdoğan-Abel, 'Le Futur dans le *Rumuz-i kunuz*'; Sariyannis, 'Knowledge and Control', 67–70. One can also find imitators, offering lettrist predictions for the future sultans: e.g. Dervīş Ḥasan, [Predictions of Dervīş Ḥasan], Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig MS. B. or. 80, ff. 75b–77a.

[126] Manyasoğlu, ed. Buçukcu, 'Mahmud bin Kadı-ı Manyas'ın *'Acebü'l-üccab*', 52 (f. 20b); Kalafat, 'Anadolu (Osmanlı) sahasında yazılmış', 268. For the attribution to Sarūḫānī, see Schmidt, 'The Occult Sciences', 236. Sarūḫānī wrote extensively on these methods: see e.g. Saruhânî, ed. Kaçar, 'İbn-i İsa'nın *Ḳavāʿid-i tesḫīrāt*', 113 (ff. 63b–64a), 121–124 (ff. 70a–72b), 165–167 (ff. 101b–103a), 167–170 (ff. 103b–105a; involving magic squares), 171–178 (ff. 105b–110b).

[127] Şen, 'The Emotional Universe', 321; Şen, 'A Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Reader', 92, 102–103. Cf. similar systems of divination (*fāl*): Schmidt, 'The Occult Sciences', 240; Procházka-Eisl and Çelik (eds), *Hidden Treasures*.

[128] Gril, 'L'Énigme de la *Šağara al-nuʿmāniyya*', 133–137; Chahanovich, 'Ottoman Eschatological Esotericism', 89–95.

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that each nation is linked to a specific planet.[129] The author of *Dürr-i meknūn* devotes the sixteenth chapter of the work to 'the secrets of *cifr*, the cosmic events and the ciphers of *cifr*' (*esrār-ı cefriyye ve ḥavādiṯ-i kevniyye ve rumūz-ı cefriyye*); he proceeds to translate or adapt some passages from al-Bisṭāmī's work, making some obscure predictions for the future. The author notes that if the reader wants to know more, he must resort to a book named *Cefr-i Cāmi*. This book, he explains, was written on a camel's skin by 'Alī; it is composed of 28 diagrams (*ṣūret*), each one showing the names of 70 rulers: 7 diagrams correspond to the 7 planets (*kevkeb*) and show the names of the 14 first caliphs; another 12 diagrams, corresponding to the signs of the zodiac, indicate the 12 Abbasid caliphs; and the rest of the diagrams have the names of all rulers to come until the End of Days, the names of 21,610 cities of the world, the 1,000 rulers of the seven climes, and the signs of the Apocalypse:[130]

> But let us explain some intricacies of the science of *cifr*. It has reached us for the sake of the illuminated and spiritual Brethren of Purity and faithful friends (*ol meẕkūr-i nūrānī ve mesṭūr-ı rūhānī iḫvān-ı ṣafā ve hullān-ı bā-vefā içün vārid olmışdur*); it gives news [of the Hereafter] by [the will of] God, with truth and rightness. No one can grasp this secret unless one has some taste of the prophecy. For those who know [of prophecy], it is evident. As the hadith goes: 'I am the city of knowledge, and 'Alī is its gate.' This knowledge has to be concealed from those incapable [of receiving it]. For those who are capable, it should be shown with ciphers (*rumūz*), and certainly it must by no means be interpreted (*tasrīḥ hiçbir vech-ile cāyiz olmaya*).[131]

We can see how a *jafr* or prognosticon was composed in the work of the Safavid scholar Mahmud Dihdar Shirazī (fl. 1576): he gives detailed instructions on filling pages or rather matrices with letters, leading to the expression of 'all the divine names in every language…by means of complete *taksir*'.[132] However, it must be noted that treatises promising to deliver the secrets of *cifr* in their title were often simple accounts of the alphanumeric methods of prognostication or even a mixture of astrological knowledge and simple arithmetic operations.[133]

Taşköprüzāde, of course, has an entry on the science of *cifr* (*'ilm al-jafr wa-l-jāmi'a*). He makes a connection with the universal intellect and soul; the reader

[129] Quoted in Chahanovich, 'Ottoman Eschatological Esotericism', 88 (cf. Gardiner, 'Lettrism and History'). For Gril's suggestion, see his 'L'Énigme de la *Šağara al-nu'māniyya*', 144–145.

[130] Yazıcıoğlu [Anonymous], *Dürr-i meknūn*, ed. Kaptein, 296–298=548–550; ed. Demirtaş, 210–211; ed. Sakaoğlu, 117; ed. Mattei, 150–151. Cf. Şahin, 'Constantinople and the End of Time'.

[131] Yazıcıoğlu [Anonymous], *Dürr-i meknūn*, ed. Kaptein, 298–299=550; ed. Demirtaş, 210–211; ed. Sakaoğlu, 117–118; ed. Mattei, 150–152. Cf. Şahin, 'Constantinople and the End of Time'.

[132] Mahmud Dihdar Shirazi, ed. Melvin-Koushki, 'The Occult Sciences in Safavid Iran', 351–353.

[133] See e.g. Şenödeyici, 'Ehl-i Beyt'in gizemli mirası', 231–233.

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might remember from Chapter 1 that these were associated with God's Pen and Tablet, respectively. Divine predestination is on the basis of this knowledge:

> It is an expression that refers to the comprehensive knowledge on the tablet of predestination (*ʿibāra ʿan al-ʿilm al-ijmālī bi-lawḥ al-qaḍāʾ wa-l-qadar*), which contains everything that was and everything that will be—comprehensively (*kulliyyan*) and in all particulars (*juzʿiyyan*). *Jafr* is the expression used for the tablet of the divine decree (*qaḍāʾ*), which is the universal intellect (*ʿaql al-kull*); and *al-jāmiʿa* [refers to] the tablet of fate (*qadar*), which is the universal soul (*nafs al-kull*).

Then he clearly associates *cifr* with the science of letters and its traditional techniques of alphanumerical transformation, such as *basṭ*, before explaining its transmitted and Hermetic character.

> One group has claimed that the Imam ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, may God be pleased with him, laid down (*waḍaʿa*) the twenty-eight letters, by way of the 'great extension' (*ʿalā ṭarīq al-basṭ al-aʿẓam*, 'according to the great spreading' or 'unfolding') in a leather-volume of *jafr* (*fī jild al-jafr*, 'in a hide of *jafr*'), to extract from them, by specific ways and particular conditions, specific words; and to extract from these words that which is on the tablet of predestination.
>
> This science is from the legacy of the House of the Prophet, and those who trace their descent from them (possess it as an inheritance); the perfect *shaykh*s learnt it from them; and they would hide it from others, completely. It is said: nobody really studies this book except the Mahdī, who is expected to appear at the end of time. This can be found in the books of the ancient prophets, as transmitted on the authority of Jesus, may the blessings of God be upon him: 'We are a band of prophets and have come to you with the revelation. As for the interpretation, the Paraclete (*al-fārqlīṭ*), who will come to you after me, will bring it.'[134]

In his *Kashf al-ẓunūn*, Kâtip Çelebi seems to have developed a particular interest in *cifr*. After copying Taşköprüzāde's description, he adds some details on its methods. Relating the story of ʿAlī and the camel's skin, he gives some further information on the lettrist methods used in the interpretation of this *Ur*-text:

> People differ regarding the question of how it was written down and 'transposed' (*fī waḍʿihi wa-taksīrihi*). There are some who transposed it in the 'small fashion' (*bi-l-taksīr al-ṣaghīr*); namely, Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, who put the following in the hidden part of 'the great opening' (*waḍaʿahu fī khāfiyat al-bāb al-kabīr*): a – b – t

[134] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-saʿāda*, 2: 594; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 1031–1032.

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> – th – etc. In the 'lesser opening' (*al-bāb al-ṣaghīr*) [he put] the *abjad* until *qarshat*.[135] Some scholars have called the 'great opening' (*al-bāb al-kabīr*) 'the great divination' (*al-jafr al-kabīr*) and the lesser one 'the lesser divination' (*al-jafr al-ṣaghīr*). A thousand sources (*maṣdar*) emerge from the greater one; and from the lesser one seven hundred. There are others who write it by the 'middle transposition' (*bi-l-taksīr al-mutawassiṭ*). This is the most appropriate and best [way of writing *jafr*]. The secret orbit of the moon and the sun circle on the axis of [this way of writing] (*'alayhi madār al-khāfiya al-qamariyya wa-l-shamsiyya*). This is the way the lettrist magic squares have been written down. There are others who write it according to the 'great transposition' (*bi-l-taksīr al-kabīr*). This is the way from which all the words (or languages; *lughāt*) and names (or nouns; *asmā'*) emerge. There are others who write it according to the order of the letters (*al-tarkīb al-ḥarfī*). This is the way of Plato (*madhhab aflāṭūn*). There are others who write it according to a numerical arrangement (*al-tarkīb al-'adadī*). This is the way of the rest of the people of India.[136]

Moreover, a long passage in the introduction of *Kashf al-ẕunūn* refers to the history of this kind of knowledge, describing the book sent down to Adam, which had a similar function.[137]

Various works associated with *cifr* were widely circulated and read in the Ottoman Empire.[138] Copies of *Tercüme-i miftāḥ-ı cifru l-cāmī'*, the amended translation of al-Bisṭāmī's work by Şerif b. Seyyid Meḥmed b. Seyyid Burhān, were possibly prepared for Mehmed III and Ahmed I, while less luxurious copies continued to be produced well into the mid-eighteenth century:[139] the extraordinary library of a major eighteenth-century scholar, Veliyüddin Carullah Efendi (d. 1738), contains a rich collection of *cifr* literature, and a copy of al-Bisṭāmī's *Kitāb jifru l-jāmī'a* was donated to the library of the bombardier garrison (*ḫumbaraḫāne*) at the beginning of the nineteenth century.[140] Whereas Aḥmad b. Ḥaydar al-Ḥarīrī (d. 1668) uses *cifr* to talk about the End of Days, Bursevī reports that his mentor, Atpazarī Osman Dede, had declared *cefr* useless because 'there is no good in learning what will happen in forty years'; such sciences bear no relation to divine knowledge.[141] This may be attributed to his general aversion to

[135] A different way of ordering the letters of the Arabic alphabet.

[136] Kâtip Çelebi, eds Yaltkaya and Bilge, *Keşf-el-zunun*, 1: 591–592; cf. *Keşfü'z-zunûn*, tr. Balcı, 2: 498.

[137] Kâtip Çelebi, eds Yaltkaya and Bilge, *Keşf-el-zunun*, 1: 25–26; cf. *Keşfü'z-zunûn*, tr. Balcı, 1: 31.

[138] See some specimens in Şenödeyici, 'Ehl-i Beyt'in gizemli mirası'.

[139] Bağcı, Çağman, Renda, and Tanındı, *Ottoman Painting*, 198–201 and fn33; Yaman, 'Osmanlı resim sanatında kıyamet'.

[140] Usluer, 'Cârullah Efendi'nin cifir'; Aydüz, 'Topkapı Sarayı Sultan III. Ahmed Kütüphanesi'ndeki', 218. Cf. Saif, 'The Occult Sciences' for the occult contents of the library of the governor of Palestine, Aḥmad Pasha al-Jazzār (d. 1804).

[141] Ḥarīrī, eds Öztürk and Kalaycı, 'Bir 11./17. Yüzyıl Aliminin', 401–402; İsmâil Hakkı Bursevî, eds Muslu and Namlı, *Tamâmü'l-feyz*, 491.

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'cosmic' miracles—that is, supernatural disturbances of the order of things—which we saw in more detail above.

The apex of complexity and elaboration of *cifr* divination is the famous device called *zā'irja*, a sort of multiple matrix containing indications of letters, numbers, and astrological signs, which would give answers to questions according to the astrological moment of their posing, using a cryptographic poem that served as a mnemonic device.[142] *Zā'irja*, an extremely complex technique, does not seem to have been remembered in Ottoman times, at least in the core regions of Anatolia and the Balkans (while it was widely used in Egypt);[143] the term had come to mean a horoscope by the early sixteenth century.[144] Yet, both Taşköprüzāde and Kâtib Çelebi describe it in some detail. Taşköprüzāde gives emphasis to its lettrist methods (*al-kasr wa-l-basṭ*):

> It is a part of [the science of] 'breaking' and 'unfolding' (*huwa qism al-kasr wa-l-basṭ*), with special methods and particular conditions, so that/until letters appear (*ḥattā takhruj hurūf*), [and] [so that] words appear from them, which indicate the how-ness of what you desire in the future—that is, either what you *want* to happen or what you *don't* want to happen; so that the name of the person who will carry out your wish appears, as well as the name of the person who is preventing it from happening. I have seen some methods in which the words of the desired thing appear as verses of poetry, strung together in Arabic, in one single meter, and with one and the same rhyme. And this science is strange (*'ajīb*); [it is] put in tables. I have rarely met anyone who knows it. I have rarely seen anyone who practises it and would gladly share. And God is the one whose help is and should be sought in every matter.[145]

It is interesting that Kâtib Çelebi's description is longer and completely different. Its source remains to be clarified; he did not copy Ibn Khaldūn's very analytical account, although he mentions it. Yet, he seems determined to understand this difficult craft and he explains the plan (but not the function) of the device with precision:

> It belongs to the laws of the art [of the occult sciences] (*al-qawānīn al-ṣinā'iyya*), [used] for the purpose of extracting the unknown things, which are related to the world of the known (*al-ghuyūb al-mansūba ilā al-'ālam al-ma'rūf*)… [These laws have] many secret properties, which they [the practitioners of this science]

[142] Link, 'Scrambling T-R-U-T-H'.

[143] Pantić, *Sufism in Ottoman Damascus*, 192. According to the biography of a Ḫalvetī sheikh in mid-sixteenth-century Egypt, he was trained in *zā'irja* among other occult arts: Winter, *Society and Religion*, 110.

[144] See e.g. Velioğlu, 'Müneccim Riyâzî', 102.

[145] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-sa'āda*, 2: 593; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 1031.

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> give evidence of, in making use of the unknown through them, by the knowledge of them, and their form, which they work with: a great circle, on the inside of which are concentric circles for the celestial spheres, the elements, the material entities (of this world), the spiritual entities and other categories of beings and sciences. Each circle of these is divided by its celestial sphere into the signs of the zodiac, the elements, etc. The lines of each lead to the centre; they are called 'strings' (*awtār*), and on each string are letters, laid down in sequence… On the inside of the *zā'irja*, between the circles, are the names of the sciences and the positions of [the various, different] beings (*mawāḍi' al-akwān*, 'the ranks of existences'); and at the backs (*ẓuhūr*, 'rear parts') of the circles is a chart (*jadwal*), with intersecting (?) squares (*buyūt al-mutaqāṭi'a*) increasing in length and width, comprising 55 squares in width and 131 in length. The sides of the chart contain squares [too], some filled with numbers, others with letters; others are empty. The proportion (*nisba*) of these numbers in their positions is not known, nor the division which is assigned to the squares. On the two sides of the *zā'irja* are verses, written in *ṭawīl* (meter), and with the rhyming letter *lām*, in the accusative. These [verses] comprise that which is sought from the *zā'irja*, what is sought to be brought forth. However, they [these verses] are in the form of nonsense (*laghw*, 'gibberish'), characterized by a lack of clarity.

What is interesting is how Kâtib Çelebi prefers to stress the mathematical aspect of this technique, rather than the lettrist, speaking of the 'proportional relation between things' and implying a simile with the unknown variable of algebraic equations: the unknown is to be extracted from the known, as happens in mathematics, he explains, only this happens in the soul:

> The answers to the questions asked can be extracted by it, according to the rules [of this art]. This is because there is a correlation (*muṭābaqa*) between the answer and the question, because the unknown can in no way be grasped by a matter of the art (*bi-amr ṣinā'ī*), of course! The correlation between the question and the answer is only in terms of understanding (*ifhām*) and this comes about, in this art, by the 'transposition' (*taksīr*) of the letters of which the question is composed… Some of the sharp-witted ones have examined the proportional relation (*tanāsub*), reaching an understanding of the unknown (*al-majhūl*) by way of the proportional relation between things. This is the secret of arriving at the unknown from the known (*al-ḥuḍūr ʿalā al-majhūl min al-maʿlūm*), which happens to the soul by way of coming about (*al-ḥāṣil li-l-nafs bi-ṭarīq ḥuṣūlihi*), as in mathematics. It benefits the mind a lot. Therefore, [the science of] *zā'irja* has mostly been attributed to mathematicians.[146]

[146] Kâtip Çelebi, eds Yaltkaya and Bilge, *Keşf-el-zunun*, 2: 948–949; cf. *Keşfü'z-zunûn*, tr. Balcı, 2: 764–765.

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Alchemy

Divination and magic—that is, knowledge of the future and manipulation of natural and supernatural forces—are at the core of the so-called occult sciences. Alchemy is usually considered another such science, although it was supposed to deal with very specific natural processes; if in Christian Europe it developed a highly hermetic and cryptic vocabulary and acquired extremely mystic overtones, in the Islamicate world this did not happen, at least not to the same degree.[147] Abu Bakr al-Rāzī's (d. 932) alchemical *Kitāb al-asrār* presents an exceptionally material view, with almost no mystical connotations,[148] and a great deal of Arabic alchemy consists of very concrete instructions for mixing chemical substances, following the tone of its Greek predecessors. Islamic alchemy had a sound philosophical basis on the generation and corruption, as well as the composition and decomposition, of natural bodies, which presupposed a Chain of Being with perhaps more pre-Socratic than neo-Platonic connotations.[149] On the other hand, Muslim alchemists used a vocabulary and imagery very similar to those of Sufism, and the ultimate goal of an alchemist would be to acquire divine knowledge and perceive the real functioning of the cosmos, rather than to produce gold and silver.[150] Moreover, it is the case that lettrism actually appeared for the first time in the Jabirian corpus: that is, the 144 (44 still extant) works attributed to Jābir ibn Ḥayyān, allegedly a disciple of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (the sixth imam). The corpus, which is the foundation of Islamicate alchemy, culminates in the 'science of balance': the universal soul emanates four spheres in the substance—namely, humidity, coldness, dryness, and hotness. Every element/metal has a certain proportion of these spheres/qualities (its esoteric/*bāṭin* aspect), and this proportion is reflected in its Arabic name (its exoteric/*ẓāhir* aspect).[151] The neo-Platonic *Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'* included alchemy in their epistles, presenting a similar but different system of calculating the proportions of these four natures or qualities.[152]

Unfortunately, alchemy is one of the least studied occult sciences in Ottoman history—except for Tuna Artun's doctoral thesis focusing on the sixteenth and

[147] This view was expressed with some exaggeration, it seems, by Georges Anawati, 'Arabic Alchemy'. On European alchemy, cf. the remarks by Forshaw, 'Isn't Alchemy a Spiritual Tradition?' See also the discussion of definitions of alchemy and their application to the sources in Roberts, 'Thinking about Chemistry'. On Islamicate alchemy in general, see Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften*, 145–270; Lory, *Alchimie et mystique* (citing all previous literature).

[148] Coulon, *La Magie en terre d'islam*, 73–76.

[149] Carusi, 'Génération, corruption et transmutation'.

[150] Forster, 'Reaching the Goal of Alchemy'. On transmutation as a miracle, cf. Pantić, *Sufism in Ottoman Damascus*, 1: an eighteenth-century Damascene scholar turns a stone into gold by just gazing at it, and changes it back into stone by gazing at it once again.

[151] Lory, *Alchimie et mystique*, esp. 47–165; Coulon, *La Magie en terre d'islam*, 113–119; Artun, 'Hearts of Gold and Silver', 84–89. A similar quest for the proportion of properties was observed in *material medica*: for an Ottoman example, see Morrison, 'Mūsā Cālīnūs' *Treatise*'.

[152] Marquet, 'La Place de l'alchimie'.

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seventeenth centuries and some articles by Feza Günergun on later periods. Artun pinpoints what he calls 'a more concerted effort to "vernacularize" the entire spectrum of alchemical traditions that were present in the Islamic world' during the second half of the sixteenth century;[153] before that period, it seems that Ottoman efforts to translate Arabic alchemical works were rather scarce. An early-fifteenth-century adaptation of a Persian cosmography laments the decline of alchemy, which has been forgotten (together with every other science, to be sure), but which is still a difficult and lofty science that cannot be denied.[154] However, there were some works summarizing or commenting on alchemy. Bayezid II's library contains some alchemic works, mostly in Arabic, and the librarian 'Atufī lists them, together with books on stones, between works on physiognomy and others on geomancy and omens, thus explicitly classifying alchemy as an occult science.[155] Bayezid was to emerge later in the Ottoman imaginary as a patron of alchemy, together with his image as a saint (*veli*).[156] At the same time, alchemical vocabulary was used to indicate the transformation of the soul in the Zeynī sheikh Safiyüddin Efendi's (d. 1513) poem on the spiritual path.[157]

By the mid-sixteenth century, however, Taşköprüzāde's entry on alchemy shows his knowledge of the principles of the Jabirian corpus on the origin of metals:

> If you know this, then know that the origin (*aṣl*) of this art is that the non-precious metals, which are the essences (*al-jawāhir*), are not burnt by fire, but melt instead—and, once fire leaves them, they return to their initial state. They are these seven objects (? *munṭariqāt*): gold, silver, copper, iron, tin, lead, and zinc. They are the same in their essences (*fī dhawātihā*). The difference between them is not in their quiddities (*mā-hiyyāt*), but in their accidents (*a'rāḍ*, 'contingent, non-essential characteristics')…The fabrication (*ṣan'a*, lit. 'work', 'manufacture', 'art') [of gold and silver] does not stand in the place of the act of nature (*fi'l al-ṭabī a*), despite the fact that in nature there are also many conditions, so that the chance of them coming about is rare. It is because of this that gold and silver are [in fact] rare among the minerals…That is to say, mercury, which is the origin of gold and silver, must be of utmost purity in the mineral, and its maturity completed; then pure sulphur is mixed with it, so that the atoms (*ajzā'*) of the two of them become according to the original proportion (*'alā al-nisba al-aṣliyya*). And the heat of the mineral must be in equilibrium, no accident of

[153] Artun, 'Hearts of Gold and Silver', 9–10.
[154] Sarıkaya (ed.), *Tercüme-i Acâibü'l-mahlūkat*, 351.
[155] ['Atufī], eds Necipoğlu, Kafadar, and Fleischer, *Treasures of Knowledge*, 2: 201–202; cf. Artun, 'Hearts of Gold', 19–23; Gardiner, 'Books on Occult Sciences', 740–741, 756–757.
[156] See Artun, 'Bâyezîd-i kîmyâ'î'.
[157] Günergun, 'Convergences in and around Bursa', 253–254.

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> coldness or dryness should be exposed to them, nor any of the things that are salty (*mulūḥāt*, 'saltinesses') and bitter (*marārāt*, 'bitternesses') and sour (*ḥumūḍāt*, 'acidities', 'sournesses'). Then, from that, over the course of [a long] time—with the permission of God, the Creator, the Wise, the Powerful and Knowing—pure gold will be produced. And, in the same way the other precious stones—God, the Ultimate Effective Cause, bless whatever He wishes![158]

Both Taşköprüzāde and Kâtib Çelebi seem to defend alchemy against detractors. Before citing mythical and historical examples of successful deeds, Taşköprüzāde remarks:

> People disagree greatly with regard to it. Many hold the opinion that it is impossible, except that they do not provide evidence for the fact that it is impossible…As for those who say that it is possible: among them is Imām Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī. He argued for the possibility of it in his two books, *al-Mabāḥith al-mashriqiyya* and *al-Mulakhkhaṣ*. The upshot of his argument is that the non-precious metals (*filizzāt*) are all combined in the specificity (*mushtaraka fi-l-naw'iyya*, lit. 'sharing in the characteristics relative to the type') and their external character traits (*al-akhlāq al-ẓāhira*) are only earthly matters (*umūr arḍiyya*), the transformation of which is permissible. Because trying to change [things] in nature (*al-istiḥāla fī al-ṭabī'a*) is not forbidden. And among those who claim that it is impossible are Ibn Taymiyya and al-Jawharī and Ibn al-Ṣā'igh, except that they did not provide anything that would bolster their idea that it is impossible, let alone [anything that would provide] certainty. And in this vein, Ya'qūb al-Kindī wrote a treatise on the impossibility of it. But if only he had actually provided an argument that would support this supposition![159]

Similarly, Kâtib Çelebi delves into the possibility of alchemy, quoting various authorities:

> Those who deny [the validity of alchemy] say that: if gold produced artificially were equal to natural gold, then that which is [made] by art would be equal to (or: like) that which is [made] by nature. And if that were conceivable, then it would also be conceivable that what is [made] by nature is like that which is artificial, and we would find swords and beds and seal-rings in nature, which is absurd…Then, by the estimation that that which does not exist artificially, does

[158] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-sa'āda*, 1: 344–345; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 312–313.

[159] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-sa'āda*, 1: 341; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 310.

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> not exist in nature (*bi-taqdīr anna lā yūjad bi-l-ṭabī'a mā lā yūjad bi-l-ṣinā'a*), apodictic judgement (*al-jazm*) does not impose on us the need to deny this, nor does the possibility that the natural thing might have come about artificially impose on us [the necessity to admit] the possibility of the opposite. Rather, the matter depends on the proof (*al-amr mawqūf 'alā al-dalīl*)…[160]

It was in Taşköprüzāde's time that Ottoman alchemy was beginning to create its own original corpus, which would be immensely influential in its field for the next century. This is the corpus of treatises attributed to a *mü'ellif-i cedīd*, 'new (or modern) author', who enjoyed an immense reputation as the continuator and renewer of Islamic alchemy in the Ottoman world, by the name of 'Alī Çelebi. Tuna Artun showed that this was probably the scholar Iznīḳī 'Alī Bey (d. 1609 or 1610), an identification first made by Kâtib Çelebi (on sources unknown), although by the mid-seventeenth century he began to be identified with Eşrefzāde 'Alī, probably due to the prestige of the Sufi brotherhood to which he belonged, the Eşrefīs (a branch of the Ḳādiriyye). At any rate, the 'Alī Çelebi corpus, taking the lead from the Mamluk alchemist Jaldakī, was formulated mostly in the early second half of the sixteenth century, and other Ottoman alchemists produced a host of treatises in the next few decades. The corpus is not a simple translation or adaptation of previous work. Instead, it goes further than its predecessors, Jābir and Jaldakī, in incorporating the macrocosmos and more particularly planetary influences into the explanations of alchemical work, with each planet influencing the formation of the seven constituents of metals (the Moon creates wateriness, the Sun fuminess, Mars saltiness, and so forth) and with the nine levels of elixirs mirroring the nine celestial spheres.[161] In this aspect, we may perhaps draw a parallel to European early modern developments.[162] Furthermore, lettrism is introduced in a much more mystical way than in Jabirian balance theory: letters indicate properties and associate them with metals.[163] One can see this tendency in other contemporaneous Ottoman works as well, perhaps most notably in the famous *Sırr-ı Ta-Ha* and its commentaries, all composed probably in the second half of the sixteenth century:

[160] Kâtip Çelebi, eds Yaltkaya and Bilge, *Keşf-el-zunun*, 2: 1528–1529; cf. *Keşfü'z-zunûn*, tr. Balcı, 3: 1218.

[161] Artun, 'Hearts of Gold and Silver', 73–77, 94–96; Günergun, 'Convergences in and around Bursa', 235–239. Cf. one of the works belonging to the corpus: 'Alī Iznīḳī, ed. Gür, 'Ali el-İznikî'nin *Cevahir el-esrar*'. On the other hand, the corpus seems also to contain texts that are probably much earlier: see Carusi, 'Il *Miftāḥ al-ḥikma* attribuito a Iznīqī'. Ottoman alchemic works not belonging to the corpus also show these characteristics: see e.g. Günergun, 'Convergences in and around Bursa', 234–235.

[162] Forshaw, '"Chemistry, That Starry Science"'.

[163] 'Alī Iznīḳī, ed. Gür, 'Ali el-İznikî'nin *Cevahir el-esrar*', 51–53 (Arabic text), 90–91 (Turkish translation).

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> Earth and water are [the operation of] removal in the concealed operation. Mars is the eastern mercury and Venus is the western mercury… Jupiter and Mars are themselves [i.e. tin and iron]. Aries is the equilibrium. Cancer alludes to the nine waterings, Libra to the end of the waiting period, Capricorn to [the process of] crumbling and Sagittarius to the duration thereof.

Moreover, the same texts have a heavy lettrist strand:

> Let it be declared that the point is the origin of letters… *alif* and *ha* do not accept points, but *ta* does. [When *ta* takes on a point,] it becomes *za*… It is the letter of the planet Mercury and reigns over the Mercurial sphere… It alludes to the number of balances.

After describing the difference between the inner or real elixir (*iksir-i cuvvani*), transforming base metals into gold, and the outer (*iksir-i berrani*), which only gives the appearance of gold and silver, the commentator proceeds to a differentiation according to religion:

> If it is asked: why then do sages describe outer operations in their books, the answer is that sages are of two groups. The first group was not Muslim—they had no knowledge of the shari'a, had no faith in the judgement day, and believed the universe to be eternal. Thus, what they said [concerning the exoteric operation] was not unusual. The other group of sages is Muslim… When these sages talk about the outer elixir, they are in fact referring to the inner elixir.[164]

Indeed, these religious and mystic connotations were manifest in the 'Alī Çelebi corpus, which had a heavily allegoric and esoteric strand. 'Alī Çelebi seems to have resented 'jewellers' in contrast to alchemist-philosophers,[165] and most authors and copyists of alchemical works identified themselves as Sufis, using Sufi imagery and vocabulary (and vice versa).[166] As late as the late seventeenth century, strong religious overtones seem to have dominated an alchemical treatise produced by a military officer from Upper Egypt, Hasan Agha Sirdar.[167] In the same period, the prominent Celvetī sheikh Atpazarī Seyyid 'Oṣmān Faẓlī (d. 1691) was very interested in alchemy, and his disciple and biographer İsmā'īl Ḥaḳḳı Bursevī comments in detail on this craft. He relates how Atpazarī was

[164] Pseudo-Eşrefoğlu Rumî, ed. Artun, 'Commentary on *The Secret of Ta-Ha*', 373–374, 376–377.
[165] Artun, 'Hearts of Gold and Silver', 32.
[166] Ibid., 178–179; Günergun, 'Convergences in and around Bursa', 242–243. The newly spreading Ḫalvetīs in recently conquered Egypt were accused of being false saints who spent their hours in caves forging money ('by pretending they are turning *mawaad* to gold'): Winter, *Society and Religion*, 109, 172–175. Alchemic vocabulary ('red sulphur', 'great remedy') is also found in Alevi-Bektashi texts of Shi'i allegiance: Yıldırım, 'Red Sulphur', 273.
[167] Forster, 'Reaching the Goal of Alchemy', 43.

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inspired by al-Jaldakī's work on 'the science of elixir' (*ʿilm al-iksīr*) and started to write a book of his own, named *Ġāyat al-muntaḫab* and containing selections from al-Jaldakī, but he abandoned it:

> 'God tied and locked me at the second body (*al-jasad al-ṣānī* [the seven primitive metals]), which is the most sublime topic of this book, because I was thinking that the sultan or a vizier could make me produce some elixirs for their needs against my will. But God did not allow me to do this.' And the sheikh said: 'The science of elixir resembles from the beginning till the end the science of following a dervish path (*sulūk*): without completing the path one can learn nothing from this science, and it can be learned only by those possessing it.'
>
> I [Bursevī] say that the sheikh showed me his work named *Ġāyat al-muntaḫab*, and told me: 'In general, the purpose of mercury, lead, iron, and the like is not what everybody knows. Every one of these has a technical meaning known by those who possess this science; if you don't know this terminology, you cannot learn the science of elixir. Those who try to learn this science from outside, try in vain and have no result except failure and poverty…' God knows that I [Bursevī] asked the sheikh nothing about the ways, the elements, and the keys to the science of elixir; for I knew well that his purpose in showing me this book was to see if I would covet the worldly affairs or not—he was testing me. Until his death, the sheikh never practised anything from this science; he had completely cut his links with this world and its temptations.

Bursevī then digresses on alchemy, always in this esoteric style:

> Know that the science of elixir is one of the great sciences (*min al-ʿulūm al-jalīla*), and that it is shared between the philosopher sages and the divine sages (*al-mushtaraka bayn al-ḥukamāʾ al-falāsifa wa bayn al-ḥukamāʾ al-ilāhīyya*)… The philosophers reached this science with studying and learning (*bi-ṭarīḳ al-taʿallum wa l-kasb*), and with no other way. But for the divine sages, there is also a second way, by revelation and bestowing (*al-kashf wa l-wahb*). Those who follow this way are the ones who have reached the end of the path. This is done as follows: the treatment of the elixir is from the beginning till the end like the arrangements; because one has to practise blackening, soiling, greying, whitening, and gilding (*al-taswīd wa l-taġbīr wa l-tashhīb wa l-tabyīż wa l-taẕhīb*), just like the spiritual degrees (*marātib al-nafs*). For undoubtedly these correspond to the spiritual degrees of unchastened, blamed, inspired, tranquil, resigned, contented, and pure [spirit] (*ammāra wa lawwāma wa mulhama wa muṭmaʾinna rāżīyya marżīyya wa ṣāfīyya*). This is why philosophers call this task 'the philosophical man' (*insān al-filāsafa*), whereas the divine sages have given the name 'child of the heart' (*walad al-ḳalb*) to the thing that is born from them [in the process] after they have passed through all the stages; it is the child of the caliph

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> of God in the land of existence. Man is the last condescension of existence after passing through nature, the elements, and the three natural kingdoms [metals, flora, and fauna] (*al-insān āḫir min tanazzul ilā ḥaṣīṣ al-wujūd baʿd ʿubūrihi min al-ṭabīʿiyyāt wa l-ʿunṣūriyyāt wa l-mawālīd al-ṣalaṣa*). In the dervish path all things, high and low, are called horizons and souls [macrocosm and microcosm; *āfāḳ wa anfus*];[168] in the [science of] elixir, they are called this way and it is said that 'man is like minerals'. As a matter of fact, the elixir can be reached only by distancing the bodies from their carnal defects (*al-ʿawāriż al-nafsānīyya*) and by cleansing them from their corrupt qualities. By the same token, man can only be 'man' after having passed through these stages. Whoever reaches the end of this path contains all these degrees. This is why only such a person is entitled of letting know the secret of the elixir.
>
> There is a difference between elixir and alchemy (*kimyā*). The term 'elixir' is used for some stages before the completion of the process, as well as for some stages after its completion; but 'alchemy' is used only for the stage after the completion and preparation of the whole process… Elixir has phases: congealment (*ʿaḳd*), mixture (*tarkīb*), liquefaction (*ḥall*), and melting (*iẕāba*) of various sorts. If you look carefully at the four seasons, the creation of the omniscient and sage God in the seasons of spring, summer, autumn, and winter is the same as the process of the elixir. Don't you know that the farmer ploughs the earth in autumn, and after the earth is dissolved (*ḥall*) he sows the seed. In winter, this seed gets mixed (*tarkīb*) with the earth and then freezes and congeals (*ʿaḳd*) with the cold. When spring comes, God warms up the earth slowly with the hotness of the sun; the influence of this hotness reaches the soil, first as a lamp, then as a furnace, and it grows continuously until the season of the harvest. With the harvest, the process is complete. Thus, the seed first congeals, then sprouts and becomes crop.

Finally, he urges the reader not to occupy himself with alchemy, unless he is a philosopher: it was sent by God to Adam and Hermes. He quotes Sheikh Ġamrī[169] to the effect that although Moses did use this science in times of need, the Prophet Muhammad never practised it.[170]

We lack systematic studies of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Ottoman alchemy, but one has the impression that a more 'technical', down-to-earth approach starts to emerge. This was not new, as such works, manuals rather than treatises, existed long before the ʿAlī Çelebi corpus: a treatise on alchemy attributed to ʿĀṣıḳ Paşa (d. 1332), for instance, contains a series of instructions to

[168] On this terminology, see Tasbihi, 'Visionary Perceptions', 63–64.

[169] Muhammed al-Gamrī al-Mısrī (d. 1639), author of a treatise (*el-İksîrü'l-muʿaẓẓam ve'l-ḥacerü'l-mükerrem*) copied by Bursevī: *TDVİA*, s.v. 'İsmâil Hakkı Bursevî' (Ali Namlı).

[170] İsmâil Hakkı Bursevî, eds Muslu and Namlı, *Tamâmü'l-feyz*, 282–287. On Atpazari's alchemical interests, see Artun, 'Hearts of Gold and Silver', 112fn240.

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make solutions, to mix minerals, and so on, with no esoteric element at all save the use of symbolic names such as *ḳamer*, 'moon', for silver and *şems*, 'sun', for gold;[171] and similar original treatises by Bostān Efendi (d. 1569) also do not contain any claims to divine inspiration.[172] By the early seventeenth century, it appears that Arabic alchemical knowledge was diffused in various technical or mystical works: in contrast to the 'Alī Çelebi corpus, many of them had a vernacular and popularizing character.[173] In 1639, Muḥammad al-Maḳdisī offered to Murad IV *Durrat al-fāḫira fī ʿilm al-iksīr*, a 'practical' manual with technical details,[174] and it seems that Murad had developed a particular interest in alchemy for purely utilitarian reasons: namely, to deal with the shortage of silver.[175] Evliya's description of the use of Egyptian natron is quite telling:

> [Natron] is exported to Europe, where the alchemists boil it in mercury and turn it into gold of Korah. During my journey to Denmark, in the land of the infidels, I asked some alchemical masters about this. They confirmed that they can get gold by boiling natron in mercury, but said that the expense of the process was greater than the profit gained from it. The goldsmiths of Egypt, however, use natron instead of borax and make a good profit.[176]

Of course, Evliya in his usual style also describes an expert of alchemy in Crimea, Naib Ibrāhīm Efendi, who 'used to make tablets out of…gold pieces [he made]' and 'would swallow one in the morning and three in the evening, and eat nothing else that entire day'.

> Yet for someone to reach this level, this dervish status, he must be an upright mystic, one who busies himself with austerities and contemplation, preserves the mysteries, and withdraws from the world. In short, this work is the lot of he who belongs to the class of great saints.[177]

However, the turn to a more 'naturalist' science had become evident by the late seventeenth century. Under the influence of Paracelsus' iatrochemistry, salt was

[171] Yılmaz, '*Risāle-i tuḥfetü'l-iḫvān*'. [172] Artun, 'Hearts of Gold', 28. [173] Ibid., 28–31.

[174] Ibid., 46–48, 189. See also the section on minerals in Rodosīzāde, ed. Çelik, 'Rodosî-zâde'nin *Acâibü'l-mahlûkât*', 95–113 (ff. 37b–52a); cf. Zadeh, *Wonders and Rarities*, 166–196, for his model.

[175] Artun, 'Hearts of Gold and Silver', 40–46; Günergun, 'Convergences in and around Bursa', 255; Gürbüzel, *Taming the Sultan*, 104.

[176] Evliya Çelebi, eds Dankoff, Karhaman, and Dağlı, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, I. Kitap*, 313 (f. 188b), as translated in [Evliya Çelebi], eds Dankoff, Tezcan, and Sheridan, *Ottoman Explorations of the Nile*, 119fn46.

[177] Evliya Çelebi, eds Dağlı, Kahraman, and Dankoff, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, VII. Kitap*, 259 (f. 141b), as translated in Evliya Çelebi, eds Dankoff and Kim, *An Ottoman Traveller*, 244. A similar story has a sheikh's corpse preserved intact because the saint possessed the knowledge of alchemy: he did not eat or drink anything but ten grains of alchemic gold (*kimyā altunu*) a day: Evliya Çelebi, eds Dağlı, Kahraman, and Sezgin, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, V. Kitap*, 233–234 (f. 133b).

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added to the Jabirian sulphur-mercury paradigm on the origin of metals; although it was mainly physicians who introduced and used Paracelsian theories, some late alchemical works also adopted the new paradigm.[178] Alchemical philosophy and methodology was more and more blended to medicine throughout the eighteenth century, and its practitioners included scholarly as well as practical physicians.[179] Authors of medical treatises noted explicitly that human health was one of the aspects of alchemy (the other being the perfection of base metals), and by the early 1780s, some libraries had no separate section for alchemy (as others had), but mixed it in with medicine instead, according to the remarks of Giambattista Toderini (d. 1799).[180]

What differentiates Ottoman alchemical research from previous Islamicate societies is perhaps the fact that there was no patronage and support by great households to be found, with the exception, as we have seen, of Bayezid II and Murad IV's reigns. The transformation of alchemy to iatrochemistry that took place in the eighteenth century was also a matter of the marketplace.[181] In general, it was considered a science that demanded heavy sacrifices and produced hardly any gains. This is how a character in Aziz Efendi's novel complains about the state of his craft:

> For instance, take a free and easy lad (*ḳalender*) who knows alchemy (*kimyā*); if he is hungry, he needs only three or five *para* to repel hunger; then he will procure himself a furnace, a pair of bellows, a crucible, and coal. It would be a thousand times easier to repel his hunger by blowing into a flute and begging as a dervish, rather than to be concerned with the preparations of quicksilver, calcination, sal-ammoniac, sulphur, tin, and arsenic (*ʿabd ve teklīs ve ʿuḳāb ve ʿaḳreb ve erzīz ve semmü'l-fār*). And if this pauper who knows the hidden secrets named as *simyā*, influencing forms (*te'ṣīr*), contraction and expansion (of letters: *ḳabż ü basṭ*), properties (*ḫavāṣṣ*), and knowledge of the divinity (*maʿrifetüllāh*), happens to be married and have family, he will not stand the worldly concerns of his children and relatives; he will fall into defilement and filth and he is bound to lose his submissive soul in the valley of rogues. It is because of these requirements that the itinerant dervishes who have chosen poverty and wander about the world avoid marriage and family. I, your humble slave, have stayed a celibate because I am seeking possession of the occult sciences (*maʿārif-i ġarībe*).[182]

[178] Artun, 'Hearts of Gold and Silver', 71.
[179] See e.g. Günergun, 'Convergences in and around Bursa', 245–253; Yerlioğlu, '"May Those Who Understand"'.
[180] Yerlioğlu, '"May Those Who Understand"', 43–44.
[181] Günergun, 'Convergences in and around Bursa', 255.
[182] 'Azīz Efendi, *Muhayyelât*, ed. Alacatlı, 146–147; ed. Duymaz, 254; see also the Istanbul 1868 edn, 138.

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It is interesting that both Nābī and Vehbī devote a large number of verses to alchemy, indicating that this science was quite widespread among the elite. Nābī, who has little to say on other occult sciences, writes that it is not to be attained through art, only through miracles (*kimyā sanma ki ṣanʿatle olur/muʿcizeyle yā kerāmetle olur*); he emphasizes that the alchemists waste their wealth in vain trying to produce gold, and that changes in the appearance of metals do not mean changes in their essence, as gold and silver are dominated by different stars (*başḳa kevkebleri var sīm ü zerüñ*). Nābī also stresses the difficult conditions of the alchemist's work and the large expenditures needed; he complains that there is nobody to teach alchemy, so the aspirant alchemist can only use his experience (*ehli yok k'öğrede ḥāl u ḳālin/sarf ėde tecrübeye emvālin*). He ends his diatribe with a long story about an alchemist who deceived a king into believing in his success.[183] In his own book of advice, Nābī's almost contemporaneous Safī Efendi also warns about the financial dangers, stressing also the threats to the alchemist's health, as he has to work in dark and moist rooms underground.[184] Vehbī considers alchemy a prerogative of the Prophet Moses, pointing out that even Jabir's work is vain and pointless; he ridicules the use of allegorical names and relates a funny story about an alchemist and his concubine (in his story, significantly, it is the alchemist who is ridiculed, in contrast to Nābī's work).[185]

*

Moving from theory to practice, in this chapter we have also moved from the scholarly to the vernacular. Ottoman magic, astrology, and divination used a highly diversified set of methods and techniques, following the different approaches that were outlined in the previous chapter. Grimoires of ritual magic coexisted with the (immensely more popular, it seems) lettrist and alphanumerical methods, whereas an extremely wide range of prayers, names of God, and magic seals was circulating in manuscripts of various levels of literacy. Astrology, on the other hand, was conducted at various levels, from the palace to the streets and with a high level of sophistication, whereas dream interpretation was mostly the prerogative of Sufi sheikhs. Alchemy, finally, was increasingly connected with jewellers and artisans, leading to the rise of an urban iatrochemistry during the eighteenth century.

It seems that, while theorists of occultism belonged to the learned elite and the more scholarly stratum of Sufi sheikhs, practitioners of occult science were to a greater degree members of the lower artisanal and scribal classes. Sources on magical practice are not exactly abundant, but it seems we can document the existence of a semi-professional group of sorcerers who used learned or less

[183] Nâbī, *Hayriyye*, 205–217 (vv. 1391–1483).
[184] Çalka, 'Safî Mustafa Efendi'nin Osmanlı esnaf', 92–93.
[185] Sünbülzâde Vehbī, *Lutfiyye-i Vehbī*, 66–73 (vv. 149–176).

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learned techniques (and were occasionally persecuted for them, or for being charlatans). There are, moreover, numerous sources mentioning methods of folk magic, originating from either the Balkans or the Anatolian and Arab countryside. At any rate, vernacular magic, eclectic and less systematic as it might be, continued to thrive even when scholarly occultism had started to wane, from the late seventeenth century onwards.

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PART III

THE PRETERNATURAL FIELD AND ITS DEMISE

5
Understanding the Marvellous

It was not only the supernatural that was beyond human understanding. There were things whose course is usual and within the grasp of the senses, but yet which could not be understood by the intellect. This is what the Christian West called 'marvels' or *mirabilia*, phenomena that were inexplicable yet natural. In this chapter, I will analyse the Ottoman literature concerning such marvels of the world—strange and extraordinary (but also ordinary, yet inexplicable) phenomena that puzzled the mind and somehow offered a glimpse into the sublime unseen world. Furthermore, I will explore Ottoman theories about the possibility of knowing this unseen world: the very presence of occult sciences meant that there was some knowledge to be grasped, so these arcane realities were not completely unreachable after all. I will study the ways of obtaining and the limits of such knowledge, and Ottoman views on whether it belonged to a few initiates or to any benevolent Muslim.

Marvels of the Sublunary World

Christian theology names these marvels as 'preternatural', indicating something that belongs to the normal course of things but cannot be grasped by the human mind.[1] In the Islamic tradition, a very similar definition was given by Zaqariyyā' al-Qazwīnī (d. 1283), author of a monumental and classic cosmography titled *'Ajā'ib al-maḫlūqāt wa-gharā'ib al-mawjūdāt* or 'Marvelous Creatures and Wondrous Beings' that inaugurated a genre of its own, which can be called *'ajā'ib* literature: descriptions of the world focusing on *mirabilia*—marvels and wonders of the earth. Qazwīnī carefully defines his subject material: there are 'marvels' or *'ajā'ib*—that is, those phenomena that 'lead men to perplexity and bafflement, because their causes are difficult to be recognized and understood…with the mind that is implanted to them by nature'—and there are also 'wonders' (*gharā'ib*),

[1] On the Christian concepts of preternatural, see Le Goff, 'Le Merveilleux scientifique au Moyen Age'; Daston and Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature*; Bartlett, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, 18–27. For what follows, see Fahd, 'Le Merveilleux'; Rodinson, 'La Place du merveilleux'; von Hees, 'The Astonishing'; Ducène, 'Les Encyclopédies', 204–206; Sariyannis, '*Ajā'ib ve gharā'ib*', 445–447; Coşkun, 'Working paper: *'Ajā'ib wa Gharā'ib*'; Zadeh, 'The Wiles of Creation'; Zadeh, 'Postscript', 615–624; Zadeh, *Wonders and Rarities*; Mehri, 'The Marvellous and Uncanny'. For a comparative typology of such marvels in the Islamic and Christian worlds, see Karnes, *Marvels and Fictions*.

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which are extraordinary phenomena that conflict with man's familiar experience, since they are incited either by 'strong souls' and spirits or by (at any rate) God's omnipotence. In the first category, Qazwīnī cites natural wonders such as the production of honey by bees and impressive meteorological phenomena; the second includes the miracles of prophets and saints, as well as the divination of soothsayers, the evil eye, extraordinary celestial or meteorological phenomena (e.g. comets and snowfall during summer), and the appearance of strange creatures (e.g. Siamese twins). Qazwīnī notes that, according to philosophers, these weird phenomena fall into three separate categories: those emanating from the soul without the mediation of physical force, either by the force of faith (concerning prophets and saints) or by magic (concerning evil spirits); those emanating from both heavenly forces and earthly elements with the use of magical incantations; and those resulting from physical forces, such as the properties of the magnet. Thus, one may speak of 'ordinary marvels' (*'ajā'ib*) and 'extraordinary' ones (*gharā'ib*). The first are phenomena that happen regularly, while the latter are for the most part unrepeatable and singular events.[2] Qazwīnī may have been inspired by a famous annotator and exegete of the Qur'an, al-Raghib al-Isfahanī (d. 1108/1109), who described *'ajab* (the situation created by *'ajā'ib* phenomena) as what occurs when the cause (*sabab*) of something is unknown, while *gharib* is the strange, unique, and exceptional. According to al-Raghib, the Persian encyclopedist 'Alī b. Muhammad al-Jurjānī (d. 1413/4) defined *'ajab* as 'the change of the mind due to something, the cause of which is unknown and extraordinary'.[3] Qazwīnī's subtle distinction, however, does not seem to have been followed by his almost equally influential predecessor, Muḥammad ibn Maḥmūd al-Ṭūsī (mid- or late twelfth century), or by the later *'ajā'ib*-style cosmographers.[4] On the other hand, as shown by Persis Berlekamp, if we judge from the illustrations of Qazwīnī's book (but also of later specimens, e.g. a late-fourteenth-century manuscript of Ṭūsī's cosmography), we may deduce that the emphasis on 'ordinary' marvels in manuscripts of his time (a disorderly period following the thirteenth-century Mongol invasions) gave way to stranger and more weird-looking wonders of faraway lands in later examples, including illustrated sections on talismans and magic that were lacking in the original.[5]

This classification appears to be very useful for our topic (or, at least, our urge to classify would make us believe so). Unfortunately, however, we cannot be absolutely certain that it corresponds to any real conceptual differences. In other

[2] Fahd, 'Le Merveilleux dans la faune, la flore et les minéraux', 118; Rodinson, 'La Place du merveilleux et de l'étrange', 186; Yamanaka, 'Authenticating the Incredible', 312–317. On Qazwīnī's book, see now Zadeh, *Wonders and Rarities*.

[3] Mottahedeh, '*Aja'ib*', 30–31. On bewilderment as an emotion, cf. Ben-Ami, 'Wonder in Early Modern Ottoman Society'.

[4] Sariyannis, '*Ajā'ib ve gharā'ib*', 446–447. On Ṭūsī, see Zadeh, 'The Wiles of Creation'; Zadeh, *Wonders and Rarities*, 229–230.

[5] Berlekamp, *Wonder, Image and Cosmos*.

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words, do these distinct and precise terms reflect common mental classifications in the medieval Muslim world, or do they belong solely to the thought of Qazwīnī and other encyclopedists and exegetes? To speak more accurately, although these authors attempted to distinguish between phenomena the causes of which, obscure as they might be, existed in the tangible, observable world, on the one hand, and phenomena whose causes are miraculous, demonic, or magical, on the other, we cannot determine if this distinction was common. A cursory reading of similar fourteenth-century cosmographies demonstrates that 'ordinary' and 'extraordinary' marvels, *'ajā'ib* and *gharā'ib*, were put together somewhat haphazardly. For example, it can be observed that cosmographers imitating Qazwīnī, far from repeating his subtle definitions and categorizations, seem to use the terms *'ajā'ib* and *gharā'ib* interchangeably to refer to strange phenomena, without distinguishing between ordinary and extraordinary, or between difficult to explain and supernatural. Shams al-Dīn al-Dimashqī (d. 1327) gathers under the heading *'ajā'ib* ordinary phenomena such as volcanoes and poisonous plants, as well as birds with divinatory powers and a country where everyone becomes black; his contemporary Hamdullah al-Mustawfī (d. after 1339/40) also narrates a series of strange phenomena, both ordinary and extraordinary, without distinguishing between them, saying that he will speak of things that the intellect cannot comprehend but which must be accepted as possible due to the omnipotence of God.[6]

The literature of *'ajā'ib*, which was cultivated by numerous authors drawing from a rich substratum of Hellenistic traditions (the Greek genre of παραδοξογραφία, or the various versions of Pseudo-Callisthenes' life of Alexander), had a significant influence on Ottoman geography in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (Fig. 5.1). Translations of Arabic and Persian works circulated widely, often with substantial additions and alterations. Unfortunately, as these translations were not considered original works (and as this type of cosmography was seen as a hindrance to 'real' geography by modern scholars), they have not been the subject of systematic research by modern scholarship.[7] In the first half of the fifteenth century, for example, *Tarjama-i 'ajā'ib al-maḫlūqāt*, composed by a certain Rükneddin or, according to Günay Kut, by an anonymous author, is dedicated to the wonders (*'acāyib*) of the heavens and the earth, cities, trees, birds, and monsters. In the preface, the author notes that knowledge of such wonders teaches the majesty and power of God; a section on 'marvellous men' (*'acāyibi'l-ādemiyyīn*) discusses Qur'anic and legendary figures such as Ḫızır (Khidr) and Keykavus, the mythical king of Persia.[8] Indeed, we do not see any distinction between different categories of wonder, although Ottoman translations of Qazwīnī's work also

[6] Sariyannis, '*Ajā'ib ve gharā'ib*', 446–447.

[7] On this literature, see Kut, 'Türk edebiyatında *Acâibü'l-mahlukat*'; İhsanoğlu, *Osmanlı coğrafya literatürü*, XXXVI; Hagen, 'Some Considerations'; Coşkun, 'Working paper: *'Ajā'ib wa Gharā'ib*'; Coşkun, 'Osmanlı coğrafya literatürü'.

[8] Sarıkaya (ed.), *Tercüme-i Acâ'ibü'l-mahlûkât*.

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contain his definitions of *ʿajā'ib* and *gharā'ib*. Ruznameci Şâkir Mehmed, who translated Qazwīnī's work in the early seventeenth century, included a very careful translation of Qazwīnī's introductory part on the definitions of the two terms, *ʿajā'ib* and *gharā'ib*. He explains that the first category includes whatever produces astonishment (*ḥayret…ki aña ʿaceb dirler*), which happens when man sees something for the first time: for instance, the way bees lie in settlements and produce honey. Everything in the world is of this nature, but because man gets used to it, astonishment diminishes except for things that are very rare or unique. Still, everything from celestial phenomena to the fauna of the earth should produce this sort of astonishment. As for the second category, this includes 'astonishing events that are contrary to the usual course of things (*emr-i ʿacībdür ki vuḳūʿı ʿādāta muḫālif ola*)', having their causes in the influence of 'either strong souls or celestial and elemental bodies' (*yā teʾşīrāt-ı nüfūs-ı ḳaviyyeden yā teʾşīrāt-ı ecrām-ı felekiyye ve ecrām-ı ʿunsüriyyedendür*), such as miracles, or divination by pre-Islamic soothsayers (*kāhinler*). Thus, he concludes:

> [T]he things that exist are of two kinds: those whose essence we do not know, which reason and the intellect do not understand or comprehend…And those that can be understood by our knowledge and intellect. In their turn, these last are also of two sorts: those that cannot be grasped by the intellect and are known through the teaching of the Holy Law and dogma (*taʿlīm-i şāriʿ ve naṣṣ ile*), such as the angels, the Throne, the Footstool, the demons and the jinn…And those that are comprehended by the mind: heaven and earth, the stars of the sky, the sun and the moon, the planets, the mountains and the deserts of the earth.[9]

Similarly, the unknown author who adapted Ṭūsī's cosmography in the early fifteenth century copies his method, which also provides some insights on what constituted a marvel:

> From among what can be found in this book, some things do not need any proof, since they are evident (*ẓāhir*), such as the skies, the moon, or the sun: because these belong to the wonders (*ʿacāyıb*), but they do not need any proof. [The author] has indicated these things with the letter *ẓā*, to show that they are evident. There are other things that are in need of proof, because one has to strive in order for them to result (*aña dürişmek gerek tā ki ol ḥāṣıl ola*), such as the talismans of the Rum or those of al-Andalus. For such cases of talismans, the sign is the letter *ʿayn*, to show that their occurrence is improbable (*baʿīd*). And there are some that are mentioned in or belonging to the Qur'an or the *hadith*s; these are indicated with the letter *ṣad*, to show their truth (*ṣıdḳ*). Some are

[9] Mehmed Şâkir, ed. Koçoğlu, Acâ'ibü'l-mahlûkât *tercümesi*, 70–76.

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> anecdotes (*laṭīfe*), famously mentioned in books…And there are some wonders (*'acāyıb*) which we have heard from travellers of the world, which have no apparent proof and which cannot be considered lies…[10]

He adds that, after creating Paradise, Hell, night, and day, God 'created the wonders (*'acāyiblar*), some of them useful and some harmful…some alive, and some lifeless…some with feet and some with no feet'.[11]

In his monumental historical work, *Künhü'l-aḫbār* or 'Essence of Histories', written in the last decade of the sixteenth century, Gelibolulu Muṣṭafā 'Ālī (d. 1600) describes meteorological wonders as well as mythical metamorphoses under the heading of 'wonders of visible celestial creatures and strangeness of earthly, lower, and invisible phenomena' (*'acā'ib al-masnū'āt…ve garā'ib al-maḥṣūṣāt*); once again, we see *'ajā'ib* and *gharā'ib* without any distinction.[12] Note that the same author consistently uses these two terms (as do many of his contemporaries) to refer to extraordinary events in history without any reference to inexplicable or supernatural powers. Could this signify a semantic shift of these terms, a conceptual change towards a diminishing of the supernatural element in the Ottoman world view? It is not easy to answer affirmatively in Muṣṭafā 'Ālī's case, although similar observations can be made regarding the usage of these terms in subsequent centuries.

Furthermore, the terms *'ajā'ib* and *gharā'ib* might also denote supernatural (rather than preternatural) phenomena or miracles: thus, Evliya describes 'a strange and wondrous tree, a true marvel without parallel that [contradicts] the natural order' (*şecere-i ġarībe ve 'acībe…kim ḫāriḳ-i 'āde 'ādetullāh[a] muḫālif*)[13] and a dervish saint of the late seventeenth century produces 'marvels' that 'break [God's] custom' (*çok 'acāyibāt, keşf-i ma'nevīyye, ḫavāriḳ-i 'ādāt, keşf-i ṣūrīyye naḳl buyurdular idi*).[14] On the other hand, the same terms (which, as we saw, are used in a quite inconsistent manner anyway) are used for magic arts as well as for quite 'human' arts, such as music, in 'Azīz Efendi's work.[15] Further systematic research might show that, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, these two terms shifted towards a somewhat more naturalistic meaning, referring to the 'curious' rather than the 'marvellous'. Thus, the research of Bekir Harun Küçük

[10] Sarıkaya (ed.), *Tercüme-i Acâibü'l-mahlūkat*, 116–117. On Ṭūsī's passage, see Zadeh, 'The Wiles of Creation', 26–27; Yamanaka, 'Authenticating the Incredible', 308–312.

[11] Sarıkaya (ed.), *Tercüme-i Acâibü'l-mahlūkat*, 453–454.

[12] Cf. Schmidt, *Pure Water*, 130–132, 289ff.

[13] [Evliya Çelebi], eds Dankoff, Tezcan, and Sheridan, *Ottoman Explorations of the Nile*, 199; Evliya Çelebi, eds Kahraman, Dağlı, and Dankoff, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, X. Kitap*, 406.

[14] Enfî Hasan Hulûs Halvetî, eds Tatcı and Yıldız, *Tezkiretü'l-müteahhirîn*, 66. Similarly ibid., 61 (*çok acāyibāt ve garāyibāt naklederdi*), 109, 110.

[15] Magic (*efsūn*) as *fenn-i ġarībe*: 'Azīz Efendi, *Muhayyelât*, ed. Alacatlı, 9; ed. Duymaz, 164; similarly, *simyā* as *ṣanāyī'-i ġarībe*: ibid., ed. Alacatlı, 84; ed. Duymaz, 213; the magician Ebu Ali Sina as *feylesof-i ġarībe-īcād*: ibid., ed. Alacatlı, 79; ed. Duymaz, 210; music as *ṣanāyī'-i 'acībe ve mahāret-i ġarībe*: ibid., ed. Alacatlı, 81; ed. Duymaz, 211.

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shows that during this period, the natural sciences, from astronomy to medicine and from mechanics to architecture, were categorized as *al-ʿulūm al-ġarība*, 'curious' or 'strange' sciences:[16] an early example might be Evliya Çelebi, who, while referring to the occult arts of the ancient Greeks as *ʿulūm-ı ʿacībe ve ġarībe*,[17] uses the same expression to denote their ways of measuring the earth.[18] In the same vein, various eighteenth-century literary sources (a very early example dates from 1614: a treatise on architecture speaking of 'marvellous forms [*eşkāl-i acībe*] and curious attributes [*aḥvāl-ı garibe*]') use the terms for strange or extraordinary phenomena, buildings, or animals, without implying any inexplicable dimension.[19] They were also used to denote European buildings, arts, and customs, and this use, it seems, gradually lost any pejorative connotations it may have had in the beginning.[20]

Regardless of the terminology they used, Ottoman geographers—but also historians and Sufi mystics—continued to fill their texts with accounts of wonders of the world during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[21] Not only strange buildings and inexplicable phenomena, but also different sorts of human and quasi-human beings were generally accepted as living in the outer regions of the known world (not to mention deformed people, who were also termed 'wonders').[22] People in the countries far from the equator are closer to the animals, says Şükrullah, and having described the northern peoples, he jumps in the same chapter to describing people of non-human forms or qualities: an Arab tribe in Yemen, whose bodies are half, and who have no intellect; and a society in the Maghrib deserts which is constituted only by women, who become pregnant by swimming in a river (in the same country, according to the author, the river of sand is to be found, flowing every day except Saturdays—which is how Alexander managed to cross it).[23] Tribes of half-men and dog-headed people are often

[16] Research in progress.

[17] Evliya Çelebi, eds Kahraman, Dağlı, and Dankoff, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, VIII. Kitap*, 119 (f. 254a).

[18] Evliya Çelebi, eds Kahraman, Dağlı, and Dankoff, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, X. Kitap*, 284 (f. Y251b). See also [Evliya Çelebi], eds Dankoff, Tezcan, and Sheridan, *Ottoman Explorations of the Nile*, 91; Evliya Çelebi, eds Kahraman, Dağlı, and Dankoff, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, X. Kitap*, 11, where he describes how Idris 'grew skilled in the sciences of geometry and astrology such that all of the wondrous and marvellous branches of knowledge (*cemīʿi ʿulūm-ı ġarībe vü ʿacībe*) came to be known after him'.

[19] Kale, 'From a Book on Architecture', 114–117; Mahmud Efendi, ed. Tunalı, *Atina tarihi*, 219 (buildings in classical Athens: *ʿacīb ve ġarīb binālar*); 'Azīz Efendi, *Muhayyelât*, ed. Alacatlı, 6; ed. Duymaz, 162 (*acā'ibāt ve menāḳıbāt*, strange things around the world); ibid., ed. Alacatlı, 46; ed. Duymaz, 187 (*ʿacīb ü ġarīb muvaḥḥiş canāvarān*); Mehmed Hâşim, eds Emecen and Şahin, *Îmâ-yı törehât-ı büldânân*, 82 (a religious custom in Syria as *ġarībe-i ʿacībe*).

[20] Sabev, 'European "Seraglios" and "Strange Arts"'.

[21] See the survey by Coşkun, 'Osmanlı coğrafya literatürü', citing all relevant literature.

[22] Sheridan, '"A Form Wondrous and Strange"'.

[23] Şükrullah, ed. Almaz, *Behcetü't-tevârīh*, 116–117. This is the well-known Sabbation or Sambatyon of the Jewish tradition.

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Fig. 5.1 A two-winged fox. Ottoman translation of Qazwīnī's *ʿAjāʾib al-makhlūqāt*, Walters Art Museum, W.659, f. 146b (1717).

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located in the Far East by Sufis or cosmographers.[24] In some cases, rational explanations are given: for instance, that the form or the colour of people's skin of the people is determined by the quality of the earth.[25] But this is not always the case: Evliya Çelebi narrates several tales of strange lands, oracles, monsters, and talismans, all from beyond the Kalmyk lands, adding that he had heard 'these wondrous and strange stories with the ear of [his] soul and saw that not one of them was agreeing to the Holy Law (*şer'-i şerîfe muṭābıḳ*)'; still, he claims that he had to believe them because these tribes never tell lies.[26]

Two examples can be noted, both from the second half of the sixteenth century, which contain some of the few known specimens of original Ottoman marvels or *'ajā'ib*. The first, dated 1562/3, is essentially a translation of a cosmography that was very popular among the Ottomans, the *Kharidāt al-'ajā'ib* by pseudo-al-Wardī, enriched with elements from other similar works. The translator, Maḥmūd al-Ḫaṭīb, uses the terms *'acā'ib* and *ġarā'ib* without consistent distinction, for entities that are either real or imaginary, natural or artificial.[27] It is indeed interesting to note that Maḥmūd al-Ḫaṭīb describes wondrous phenomena located within the Ottoman Empire, either claiming to have witnessed them himself or providing names of witnesses. Now, not only does al-Ḫaṭīb not hesitate to copy from al-Dimashqī's cosmography the description of an island in Istanbul that appears once a year, without questioning its reality, even though his readers could easily check the reality of this claim; he also adds Ottoman wonders, occurring within the heart of the empire's territories. We come across descriptions of a hairy black monster living in a well in Herzegovina (possibly originating in the legend of the bear-like *bauk*, still present today in these lands), a spring in Bosnia that only flows at the time of the five obligatory prayers of Muslims, and the appearance of two dragons (*ejderha*) in the sky over Drama (now in northern Greece) in 1533/4.[28] As noted by Feray Coşkun, who has studied this work in detail, such descriptions show that strange or wondrous apparitions were a living tradition at the time, and that the Ottomans tended to believe in them as something that they could experience themselves, rather than being unexpected or inconceivable, except in a legendary past.

The same impression is gathered from the second example, the *Bedāyi'ü'l-āṣār* by the poet Mustafa b. Mehmed Cinānī (d. 1595), a collection of stories composed in 1590. The ninety-nine stories by Cinānī belong to various genres, ranging from

[24] Saruhânî İlyas, ed. Özgül, '"Rumûzü'l-künûz" adlı eserin transkripsiyonu', 75–76/42a–43a, 82/53b; Âşık Mehmed, ed. Ak, *Menâzırü'l-avâlim*, 1855–1856; Haral, 'Osmanlı sanatında resimli', 270–273; Sariyannis, '*Ajā'ib ve gharā'ib*', 457–458.

[25] Sarıkaya (ed.), *Tercüme-i Acâibü'l-mahlūkat*, 157–158.

[26] Evliya Çelebi, eds Dağlı, Kahraman, and Dankoff, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, VII. Kitap*, 325–328 (ff. 177a–178b).

[27] Coşkun, 'A Medieval Islamic Cosmography', 124–135; Coşkun, 'An Ottoman Preacher's'. The work was edited in Ḫaṭīb Maḥmūd, ed. Yaniç, 'Hâce Hatîb Mahmud'.

[28] Ḫaṭīb Maḥmūd, ed. Yaniç, 'Hâce Hatîb Mahmud', 219, 294.

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funny stories to adventure tales. Although they are always preceded by a chain of witnesses who serve to lend credibility to the narratives, these stories are clearly works of fiction. Nevertheless, the last part of the collection, with the title 'On some strange acts' (*ba'ż ġarā'ibāt-ı 'umūr*), contains twenty mirabilia, all with their testimonies of good faith and clearly conceived as real events (the last four being the ghost stories presented in Chapter 2, above). This further underscores the living tradition of narrating and believing in strange or wondrous events as part of the Ottoman world view, even within fictional or imaginative contexts.[29] In his prologue, Cinānī presents his stories as tales to enrich the repertoire of Ottoman storytellers, but the anecdotes in this last part are often too short for such use, while all their characteristics indicate their relation to the literature of *'ajā'ib* (besides their chains of witnesses, one of them is even dated). These marvels are mostly located in Ottoman territories and include natural monsters, strange phenomena, wonders of nature, and even stories of ghosts and possessed individuals (the ones we discussed earlier). Let us look at some examples:

> In front of the tekke of Sinanpaşa, near Başçeşme in Gallipoli, there is a poplar tree that, after falling to the ground and remaining there for some time, was found standing in its place one night; that is what they say…
>
> In the kaza of Lofça, in Rumelia, there is a water spring in the middle of a rock, no larger than the mouth of an oven. It is said that every year, at the beginning of the days of the month of Rebi' al-evvel, the water stops flowing for ninety days; during these days, one can hear the sounds of drums, flutes, and other musical instruments, as if a group of men were playing music. Whoever comes and listens, hears them for sure. But after ninety days, the water starts flowing again and one can listen to it…
>
> Mevlana Bistan-i Tirevī narrates that a few years ago, sweet and white water appeared near Tire. Water so sweet that it cannot be described. By chance, one day someone washed their handkerchief in it: it turned black. After that, everyone came to know about it and started blackening their clothes with this water. It is said to be such a beautiful dye that it has no equal…
>
> Some friends tell this story, that in Egypt there is a wolf called the sorcerer wolf (*ẕi'b-i sāḥir*). When it encounters a man, it stands upright in front of him to the right and left, in a well-known manner. The man gets up and immediately, by God's order, falls under the spell of this wolf; he loses his will and follows it to its lair. He becomes lost and bewildered. Then the wolf kills and eats him.

Obviously Cinānī must have used actual folk beliefs of these regions. However, we have to note that at least some of them are not as original as they seem (as is

[29] Cinānī, ed. Ünlü, *Bedâyiü'l-âsâr*, 2: 329–337.

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also the case for other stories in this collection, although the author claims to have offered original tales).[30] For instance, the river that paints clothes black is taken from Ṭūsī's description of a river in Armenia, while in Ahmedī's *İskendernāme* there is a well, on an island in the Indian Ocean, whose water paints a stone black, if sprinkled at night, and white, if at day;[31] as for the 'sorcerer wolf', it may reflect Arabic legends about hyenas.[32] Still, it is interesting that they are transferred to familiar places, where Cinānī's readers could easily question their veracity. At any rate, we do know that there were such local traditions, and that some authors included them in their lists of marvels: for instance, a marvellous well near Sofia is described both in Evliya's travelogue and in a nineteenth-century miscellany, thus pointing to a local legend rather than a literary topos.[33]

All the examples we have seen belong to the sixteenth century, and unfortunately we do not currently possess any editions of cosmographies of the *'ajā'ib* genre from the following centuries. Of the few available examples, there are some that show that 'domestic marvels' did not cease to be confirmed or added to the corpus of earth's wonders: thus, an anonymous copyist of *Dürr-i meknūn*, in 1623, has added several stories to the original, all of a legendary nature;[34] and to a remark of the original text about a miraculous site in Ayasofya, where an angel grants wishes, the copyist has added precise instructions on its place, showing that the tradition was still alive—in fact, even more than before.[35] An Egyptian chronicler, probably a member of the ulema, writing a history of Egypt in 1623, includes marvels and wonders of natural (a grain of rice inscribed with a Qur'anic sura) or supernatural content (a pearl that recited the Qur'an), claiming that he saw them with his own eyes.[36] A copyist of Firdevsī's *Da'vetnāme* inserted a note about a 'fire' (comet?) appearing in 1656, which could not be explained by the astrologers; one year later, merchants from Europe mentioned the appearance of a Centaur-like animal, of 300 cubits' length, which fell from the skies in Sicily (*Mesne adasında*) and killed many people and animals before it was killed in its turn.[37] The more or less contemporaneous Evliya Çelebi is not at all reluctant to describe marvels and oracles in places both distant and accessible: he describes an oracle in Sudan (a cave in the mountain of Prophet Idris) that answered questions in every language and foretold future events—'except that it would say

[30] Ibid., 1: 108–116; see e.g. Çora, '"The Story Has It"', 217–221, 225–230, on his use of a well-known plot originating from the first century AD, *The Widow of Ephesus*.

[31] Sarıkaya (ed.), *Tercüme-i Acâibü'l-mahlūkat*, 174; Ahmedî, eds Akdoğan and Kutsal, *İskendernâme*, 528.

[32] Pantić, *Sufism in Ottoman Damascus*, 85–86.

[33] Hüner Çora, 'Fictitious Waters', 374–375.

[34] Yazıcıoğlu [Anonymous], *Dürr-i meknūn*, ed. Mattei, 39, 105, 117, 123, 135–136, 143, etc. On the date of adaptation/copying, see ed. Mattei, 109.

[35] Ibid., 107. Cf. ed. Kaptein, 201=469; ed. Demirtaş, 161; ed. Sakaoğlu, 79.

[36] Hathaway, 'Ottoman History Viewed', 315, 317.

[37] Firdevsī, ed. Büyükkarcı, *Firdevsī-i Ṭavīl and His Da'vet-nāme*, 133. The copyist notes that this is one of God's marvels (*Allāhu ta'alānun bu da bir 'acâyibindendür*).

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nothing about the Five Hidden Things' (*muġayyebāt-ı ḫamse*),[38] and a well in Eyyüp: if somebody has lost something, comes to the well, and after taking ablutions and making prayers cries to the Prophet Joseph, a voice answers. The well could also answer to all but the 'Five Hidden Things', and Evliya (as is his custom) relates that he tested it himself with success.[39] As late as 1720, a highly interesting work, Balıkesirli Rāsiḫ's (d. 1731) *Bülgatü'l-aḥbāb*, setting out to describe good manners and subjects of conversation, contains a series of frightening and strange stories, including cases of vampirism and jinn possession, as we saw in Chapter 2; at the beginning, the author links these stories to the frightening tales told during childhood, but he then proceeds with narrating them, making specific references to places and witnesses (including himself).[40]

Apart from this tendency to accept home-based marvels, we might see an Ottoman peculiarity in the particular emphasis on talismans or, more precisely, on monuments of the ancient world seen as talismanic structures, built by ancient sages such as Hermes, Apollonius from Tyana, and Plato.[41] Certainly, many of these descriptions are also copied from earlier geographers: such are the talismans contained in the descriptions of Maghrib, Egypt, and Italy in a late-fourteenth-century cosmography, or in an early-sixteenth-century treatise on talismans.[42] *Ferec ba'de'ş-şidde*, the famous fifteenth-century collection of tales, contains a story about *Bārbāh*, the magic obelisk (*'amūd*) erected by Apollonius/Balīnās in Egypt on the orders of Alexander. If an enemy appeared, the hieroglyphs started to move in order to indicate his direction; and if the enemy invaded, fire would destroy them. It could only be destroyed if sprayed with a mixture of vaginal fluid, menstrual blood, and amniotic fluid.[43] A sixteenth-century history of Antioch, purportedly translating a report on the founding of the city (originating from Prophet Sulayman's treasury and found in the city by the wise Ptolemy/Baṭlamūs), is full of descriptions of such talismans protecting the city from snakes, floods,

[38] [Evliya Çelebi], eds Dankoff, Tezcan, and Sheridan, *Ottoman Explorations of the Nile*, 294; Evliya Çelebi, eds Kahraman, Dağlı, and Dankoff, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, X. Kitap*, 471–473. The 'Five Hidden Things' are the hour of the Last Judgement, when it will rain, the gender and number of unborn children in the womb, what a person will have for sustenance the following day, and when a person will die.

[39] Evliya Çelebi, eds Dankoff, Kahraman, and Dağlı, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, I. Kitap*, 196 (f. 120a). On Evliya's narrative technique in relation to marvels, see also Hüner Çora, 'Fictitious Waters'.

[40] Yazar, '*Ve mine'l-müdhişâti'l-acîbe*'; Balıkesirli Râsih, ed. Önler, '*Bülgatü'l-ahbâb*', 102–108 (ff. 65a–69a).

[41] On Apollonius and the Arabic transmission of his work on talismanics, see Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften*, 378–381; Raggetti, 'Apollonius of Tyana's'.

[42] Ali b. Abdurrahman, ed. Al, '"Acâ'ibü'l-mahlūkât (35.–70. varak)', 26 (f. 47a), 45, 48, 50 (ff. 61b, 64a, 65b); Ali b. Abdurrahman, ed. Yıldıran, '"Acâ'ibü'l-mahlūkât (106.–140. varak)', 87–88 (ff. 134a–b) (on Italy); Riyāzī [Ibn Kemal], ed. Dalkıran, 'İbn-i Kemal'in tılsımat risâlesi', 200–201.

[43] Hazai and Tietze (eds), *Ferec ba'de'ş-şidde*, 631; Marzolph, *Relief after Hardship*, 114–115. The story notes that 'nowadays, i.e. in the time of Turks, this obelisk is called *müslet-i fir'avn*'—'Pharaoh's *müslet*', which brings to mind Taşköprüzāde's made-up *musalliṭ*, an anagram for *ṭilasm* implying the root signifying subjugation, as we saw in Chapter 3 (Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-sa'āda*, 1: 339–340).

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leprosy, and so forth.[44] One has to note here that belief in apotropaic and talismanic forces was not related only to ancient statues: as late as the early thirteenth century, talismanic sculptures were installed *with this purpose* in walls and gates of cities from Baghdad to Konya.[45]

Ottoman literature, however, seems to have multiplied these ancient marvels. For one thing, this was all too natural since the lands conquered by the Ottomans were full of such monuments (Fig. 5.2). Moreover, structures such as the Egyptian obelisks of Constantinople were already the object of such stories in Byzantine literature: the hieroglyphics upon them ignited the imagination and were very often considered scriptures foretelling the future. Texts of the Byzantine tradition of *Patria*—that is, narratives on the creation and the future of Constantinople—were translated, adapted, and amended after the Ottoman conquest.[46] Moreover, there was a tradition (in part stemming, it seems, from the anti-imperial opposition to Mehmed II) that invented a past for the city almost from scratch, in order to show that Constantinople was doomed (and, therefore, should not be made the imperial capital). This invented past included references to Prophet Solomon (a highlight of the Ottoman legendarium, particularly fit for the needs of the empire), Mount Ḳāf, real personalities such as 'Constantine, son of Helen' and Heraclius, and imaginary ones such as Yanḳo b. Madyān (his name coming from a corrupted reading of Nikomedeia/İznikmid/İzmit). Later versions of the tradition, throughout the sixteenth century, were stripped of the anti-imperial strand but remained highly legendary.[47] Finally, one may detect a certain antiquarianism in Ottoman culture after the late sixteenth century: that is, an outlook that developed an interest in ancient objects as remnants of a distant past, without much care for their occultist importance. From ancient scripts and alphabets (with the famous pseudo-Ibn Wahshiyya's *Shawq al-mustahām* enjoying a renewed popularity in Ottoman times) to the monuments of Athens, all sorts of antique remnants gained a new visibility.[48] In his cosmography, composed *c.*1598, Mehmed 'Āṣıḳ consistently tried to locate the talismanic monuments of Istanbul, mentioned in his sources, in order to update their descriptions; other early Ottoman authors and translators also sought to check such descriptions, in order to verify the information given in old cosmographies (*ṭevārīḫde yazduklarınuñ sıḥḥatına delālet ider*).[49]

[44] Nazmī, ed. Köksal, 'Tevārīḫ-i Anṭākiye'.
[45] Berlekamp, 'Symmetry, Sympathy, and Sensation'.
[46] Kafesçioğlu, 'Byzantium in Early Modern Istanbul', 345–348.
[47] Yérasimos, *La Fondation de Constantinople*. On Solomon in the Ottoman imaginary, see Grenier, 'Solomon, His Temple'.
[48] Sariyannis, 'Languages of Ottoman Esotericism', 68–75; Toral-Niehoff and Sundermeyer, 'Going Egyptian'; Shafir, 'Nābulusī Explores the Ruins'. For an earlier example, see Casale, 'An Ottoman Humanist'. Mehmed Hâşim, eds Emecen and Şahin, *Îmâ-yı törehât-ı büldânân*, 185, describes such a talismanic marble statue of a horse in Athens, while noting the numerous excavations by locals and Europeans.
[49] Niyazioğlu, 'Into the Deep Past of the Ottoman Istanbul', 25.

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Fig. 5.2 Talismans of Constantinople. Ottoman Turkish translation of Bisṭāmī, *Terceme-i cifr-i cāmi'*, İstanbul Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi Türk Yazmaları 6624, f. 92b (early seventeenth century).

Thus, for *Dürr-i meknūn* the hieroglyphs in the obelisk of Constantinople reveal 'those prophets and chieftains who have come and who will come to this world, revealed through *cifr*; they [the wise of Constantinople] have inscribed their dates in Syriac'.[50] In her fascinating study of another monument, the bronze

[50] Yazıcıoğlu [Anonymous], *Dürr-i meknūn*, ed. Kaptein, 183–184=456; ed. Demirtaş, 154; ed. Sakaoğlu, 72–73; ed. Mattei, 98–99.

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horseman of Constantine, and its Ottoman perception, Aslı Niyazioğlu shows that descriptions shifted from a view of a potentially threatening talisman against Islamic invasions to moralistic tales, where the hieroglyphic inscriptions provided moral instruction.[51] Interestingly, Ottoman authors seem reluctant to attribute such monuments to prophets or eponymous sages (which they consistently do concerning Egypt, for instance).[52] Muṣṭafā ʿĀlī claims that 'this rock [the Atmeydanı obelisk] had probably been a talisman, built by Frankish engineers' (*ġāliba bir ṭılısm imiş ol senk / dikmiş anı mühendisān-ı Firenk*);[53] and Evliya's list of Istanbul talismans has them built by the best architects, engineers, soothsayers (*kehene*), experts in astrology and 'the science of *ḳāf*' (alchemy), as well as witches (*sāḥire ʿavretleri*); some of them, he notes, are still working (*ḥālā o ṭılısmıñ ʿameli teʾṯīr ėtmededir…ileʾl-ān baʿżısınıñ ḥükmü cārīdir*).[54] Evliya's case is telling, as he also gives examples from the periphery attributed to infidels without any prophetic power (this, of course, is something we find in earlier similar works, such as Ḫeṭā'ī's 1516 account of China)[55]: he mentions, for instance, some bronze statues in Varat (Várad or Oradea), which the priests explain are talismans that have been protecting the city for some time from the 'Turks', but which have now lost their efficacy.[56] As for some talismans in Nihavend, Evliya notes that 'the night that his excellency the Prophet was born from the mother's womb, the effects of the talismans became null and void, [although] some of them are still effective (*ṭılsımlarıñ ʿamelleri bāṭıl olup ḥālā kimi cārīdir*)'.[57] Thus, supernatural qualities of ancient marvels could be attributed not only to non-Muslim (or pre-Muslim), and hence theologically void, powers, but to evil ones as well. In the same vein, the chronicle on the Hungarian campaign of 1593–1594 by Taʿlīkīzāde (d. 1599) describes how Koca Sinan Pasha burnt in public the miraculous St Sava's relics in Belgrade, as they were used by the monks to convey false rumours. The relics are described, among other things, as 'soothsayers' skeletons' (*ḳadīd-i kehene*), but their supernatural powers are not contested: by the Devil's power, they allegedly prognosticate the future, although falsely (they claim that they cannot be abducted by the Ottomans).[58]

[51] Niyazioğlu, 'Into the Deep Past of the Ottoman Istanbul'.

[52] See e.g. Casale, 'An Ottoman Humanist'.

[53] ʿĀlī, ed. Öztekin, *Câmiʿu'l-buhūr*, 200 (v. 1563).

[54] Evliya Çelebi, eds Dankoff, Kahraman, and Dağlı, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, I. Kitap*, 27–30 (ff. 16a–18a). For the identification of *ʿilm-i kāf* with alchemy, see Evliya Çelebi, eds Dağlı, Kahraman, and Dankoff, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, VII. Kitap*, 259 (f. 141b).

[55] See e.g. the talisman used by the Chinese emperor to collect birds: Ḫeṭā'ī, ed. Afšār, *Ḫeṭāy-nāma*, 90. Buddhist monks can fly through the effect of intense asceticism: ibid., 154–156.

[56] Evliya Çelebi, eds Dağlı, Kahraman, and Sezgin, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, V. Kitap*, 219–220 (ff. 126a–127a).

[57] Evliya Çelebi, eds Dağlı and Kahraman, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, IV. Kitap*, 206 (f. 308a).

[58] Filipović, 'Grand Vizier Koca Sinan Pasha', 631, 642; Taʿlīḳī-zāde, ed. Woodhead, *Taʿlīḳī-zāde's* Şehnāme-i hümāyūn, 185–196. However, it is not quite clear in the text whether the relics did actually speak, or such was just the monks' claim.

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Yet these 'infidel marvels' often had to be discredited somehow. Evliya describes an Armenian monastery where an iron bar is suspended in mid-air under a vault; a miracle according to the monks and even for some ignorant Muslims. This purported 'miracle', he explains, is in fact a trick invented by 'the ancient wise masters and architects', who had put a big lodestone in the apex of the vault and another under the ground, 'according to [their] calculations (*hendese göre*)', so that the iron bar would remain suspended between the two magnets. He claims to have arrived at this discovery himself: 'this humble one, full of faults, with my errant intellect, observed it to be so (*'aḳl-ı ḳaṣīrumla böyle mülāḥaẓa ėtdim*); God willing, there is no error in my observation'.[59] This account, we should note, is not Evliya's invention. It originates in a classic example of 'false magic' which is to be found, for instance, in Taşköprüzāde's encyclopedia:

> As was related, in a church in the lands of the *Rūm*, six stones from magnetite, equal in power, were put on its four walls, its roof, and its ground; and an iron cross was put into the air, to the extent that the attraction of these six stones was equal, so that no one stone was stronger than the others in attraction. The cross persisted suspended in the air—always—apparently without any tool that was holding it. So a group of Christians was enthralled.[60]

True, Evliya's attitude is often ambiguous. When describing Saladin's Well (Joseph's Well) in Cairo, he presents himself as unsure whether this is a human-made structure or not:

> In sum, the world traveller who has not seen this Joseph's Well has no idea of what craftsmanship (*san'at*) there is in the world and what a noble creature man is and what miraculous things he is capable of (*mu'cize mertebesinde ne işe ḳādir idiğin*). But when men of true wisdom see it, they say [that]… such works are at the level of saintly miracles (*kerāmet mertebesidir*) [and that] surely they are not the work of men.[61]

[59] Evliya Çelebi, eds Kurşun, Kahraman, and Dağlı, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, II. Kitap*, 170–171 (ff. 325a–b); cf. Dankoff, *An Ottoman Mentality*, 197 (whence the translation of the last phrase); slightly abridged in Evliya Çelebi, *An Ottoman Traveller*, 68.

[60] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftāh al-sa'āda*, 1: 366 (repeated on 1: 370); cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 333, 338. See also the same story related by Kâtib Çelebi about a monastery in Cyprus: Kâtib Çelebi, eds Hagen and Dankoff, *An Ottoman Cosmography*, 471. A description of a house in India made entirely of magnets, with an iron object standing suspended in the air, can be found in Muhammed ibn Mahmud Shirvanī's mid-fifteenth-century treatise on metals: see Küçük, *Science without Leisure*, 281n7. Finally, the Polish doctor Salomea Pilsztynowa relates such a tradition on the Prophet Muhammad's grave, although she could not confirm it from her Ottoman informants: Pilsztynowa, ed. Dominik, *The Istanbul Memories*, 68.

[61] [Evliya Çelebi], eds Dankoff, Tezcan, and Sheridan, *Ottoman Explorations of the Nile*, 101–102 (slightly correcting the translation of the last sentence); Evliya Çelebi, eds Kahraman, Dağlı, and Dankoff, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, X. Kitap*, 104.

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On the other hand, the figures provided by Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu and Ramazan Şeşen show that works of this genre declined from 75 per cent of the total number of geographical works in the fifteenth century to 14 per cent in the sixteenth century, and then to 8 and 4 per cent in the two following centuries[62] (although it should be noted that elements referred to as 'marvellous' can also be found in 'scientific' geographical works, and that these numbers correspond to originals and not copied works).[63] Besides, a cursory reading of Ottoman travelogues or portolans that do not relate to the genre of geographical literature *stricto sensu* might show that most of the things described as *'ajā'ib* are strange customs or animals, rather than preternatural phenomena.[64] As we will see in the next chapter, the waning of 'marvellous' geography is closely connected to contact with European knowledge; furthermore, one may wonder whether the consolidation of imperial administration played some role in the change of outlook. A comparison with other Eurasian empires of a similar nature may be fruitful: Peter Perdue and Laura Hostetler, for instance, showed that the Qing empire of China (1636–1911) sought to produce accurate, scaled maps of the imperial territories (developing a border-consciousness that also has parallels with the Ottoman state), beyond the dichotomy between 'sacred geographies' and 'scientific mapping', and that, moreover, this tendency had its own internal dynamics, rather than being a superfluous application of European methods.[65] Literature on Ottoman map-making is thriving; a difference may be that in the Ottoman case (especially after the mid-sixteenth century), detailed, scaled maps were usually the product of elite but amateur authors, rather than of coordinated state effort—with the exception of military and architectural plans. Still, the emphasis on governance, noted by Hostetler, is evident in the use of road maps (itinerary-based charts of trajectories) by Kâtib Çelebi; and the ethnographic approach of Evliya Çelebi (or later of Mehmed Hāşim) might also reflect such needs (among others).[66] As Rifa'at A. Abou-El-Haj noted, 'the adoption of cultural patterns, whether from Europe or elsewhere, was not simply the result of a foreign

[62] İhsanoğlu, *Osmanlı coğrafya literatürü*, LXXV (table 5d). In fact, these figures correspond to the centuries of the Hijri calendar, which during this period differ by approximately ten years from those of the Christian calendar.

[63] Note e.g. that a miscellany starting with a travelogue dated 1840 also contains Aḥmed Bīcān's *Acā'ibü'l-maḫlūqāt*, the marvellous tales of *Tārīḫ-i Qosṭanṭiniyye* and *Ṭārīḫ-i Ayasofya*, as well as other marvels and wonders (Çora, '"The Story Has It"', 28–29).

[64] See the examples cited in Yazar, 'XVI. yüzyıl Türkçe seyahatnamelerinde'.

[65] Perdue, 'Boundaries, Maps, and Movement'; Perdue, *China Marches West*, 442–457; Hostetler, *Qing Colonial Enterprise*. On 'border-consciousness' as a feature of the 'early modern state', see Abou-El-Haj, *Formation of the Modern State*, 54; Ottomans adhered to this understanding of borders as linear demarcations at the negotiations for the Karlowitz agreement in 1699 (Abou-El-Haj, 'The Formal Closure').

[66] On Ottoman map-making, see Karamustafa, 'Military, Administrative, and Scholarly Maps'; Pinto, 'The Maps Are the Message'; Emiralioğlu, *Geographical Knowledge*. On Kâtib Çelebi's manuscript maps showing itineraries, see Hagen, 'Kâtip Çelebi's Maps'.

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presence, nor was it just an emulation of an attractive outside model: it was determined by the needs of the Ottoman ruling elite.'[67]

Thus, throughout the seventeenth century the expansion of positive geographical knowledge into hitherto unknown regions of the east and west relocated wonders back to the borders of the known world.[68] At the same time, the Ottoman lands became more and more 'disenchanted', at least for geographic literature. The example of Kâtib Çelebi explaining the possibility of the *Wāqwāq* tree (bearing fruit in the form of human heads) illustrates this moment of transition perfectly: he claims that 'such an island has not been yet discovered', all the same admitting that one may observe plants in a human shape, that nature produces animals from vegetables, and that one cannot exclude the possibility of the existence of mixed objects combining the three realms of nature.[69] After all, whereas Kâtib Çelebi dismisses books of *'ajā'ib*-style geographies, his entry on al-Qazwīnī's *'Ajā'ib al-makhlūqāt* in his bibliographical encyclopaedia admits that nothing is really impossible:

> He [al-Qazwīnī] said that he included in it things that are rejected by the natures of the stupid and neglectful, but that the soul of the intelligent and discerning [person] cannot deny. Even if the [things he reports] are far from the customs [of God], witnessed [by humans, normally], nothing can be regarded as being as great as the power of the Creator and all that is in it [i.e. in creation]. As for the wonders the Creator has produced—it is something that can either be understood by reason, or perceived by the senses—there is no doubt about it…

To enhance this remark, he then embarks on an excursus on 'strange properties' (*khawāṣṣ gharība*) of things, stressing (as we will also see below) that one cannot dismiss them before careful and repeated testing (*li-tajribatihā*).[70]

A telling example of the gradual de-occultization of the *'ajā'ib* material is the story of the two cities situated at the western and eastern edges of the world, Jābarṣā (Jābarṣ, Jābalṣā, Jāburṣā) and Jābalqā (Jābalq, Jābarqā). This legend, originating mainly in Syriac traditions of the Alexander Romance, found its way into Qur'anic exegesis, universal histories, and geographical literature, and became crystallized by the tenth century, including a possible connection with the Lost

[67] Abou-El-Haj, *Formation of the Modern State*, 68.

[68] See Hagen, 'Some Considerations', 190; Tezcan, 'The Many Lives', 3–10. On the gradual incorporation of the Americas into the Ottoman world view, see Casale, 'Did Alexander the Great'. On the location of monstrous entities in Christian cosmography, see van Duzer, '*Hic sunt dracones*'. See also the remarks of Subrahmanyam, 'Monsters, Miracles and the World of *'ajā'ib-o-gharā'ib*', 305–306, on the location of 'wonders' in the Indo-Persian and early modern Iberian imagination.

[69] Kâtib Çelebi, eds Hagen and Dankoff, *An Ottoman Cosmography*, 151; cf. Hagen, *Ein osmanischer Geograph bei der Arbeit*, 385–86.

[70] Kâtip Çelebi, eds Yaltkaya and Bilge, *Keşf-el-zunun*, 2: 1127–1128; cf. *Keşfü'z-zunûn*, tr. Balcı, 3: 901.

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Tribes of Israel.[71] In the Ottoman tradition, fifteenth- and sixteenth-century geographical texts include the two cities and all their lore (mainly drawing from al-Qazwīnī). Thus, for instance, ʿĀṣıḳ Meḥmed relates a hadith, according to which Cābirsa, situated in the Far East, is inhabited by Jews, whom Muhammad visited in his *mirʾaj* and taught the real faith.[72] However, the cities begin to disappear by the second half of the seventeenth century, surviving only as fictional or symbolic places.[73] Even a highly mystical late-sixteenth-century commentary on an alchemical text has no mention of the cities, while it describes in detail the climes of the world in order to explain an esoteric reference to 'the western bride' and 'the prince of Khitay'.[74] They do not appear in any of the geographies written after the first decades of the seventeenth century, and in Evliya's and 'Aziz Efendi's texts they are places inhabited by jinn or fairies (*peri*):

> [Among the tribes of jinn there is] the tribe of Cābülḳā; God knows their number. They were brought to the faith in the night of the Ascension of the Prophet. They were also created before the Prophet Adam. Then the tribe of Cābülsā, God knows their number, they are ancient creatures.[75]

On the other hand, this banishment of the two cities from the space of reality may have been helped by their place in Illuminationist philosophy: al-Suhrawardī had written about 'suspended images' (*muthul muʿallaqa*), a kind of Platonic archetype whence dreams, imagination, but also jinn, demons, and miracles originate (which later was developed by al-Shahrazūrī into the 'world of images' or *ʿālam mithāl*, seen in Chapter 2 above), located in 'the eighth clime in which are Jabalq, Jabars, and Hurqalya'.[76] We see this theory already in Ḳınalızāde 'Alī Çelebi's (d. 1572) moralistic treatise, *Aḫlāḳ-i ʿAlāʾī*; Ḳınalızāde explains in detail the existence of the 'world of images', containing dreams and inspirations, but also the two cities of Cābülsā and Cābülḳā, whose population and marvels are beyond comprehension (*bu şehrlerin ḫalāyıḳının şümārından aʿdād u erḳām maʿzūl ve ʿacāyīb ü*

[71] I tried to present a detailed history of the legend in Sariyannis, 'A Tale of Two Cities'; see also Aylar, 'Antikite'den Osmanlı'ya iki "acâib" motifi'.

[72] Âşık Mehmed, ed. Ak, *Menâzırü'l-avâlim*, 3: 458–460. On this tradition, see Rubin, *Between Bible and Qur'an*, 26–30, 46–48; Wheeler, *Moses in the Quran and Islamic Exegesis*, 107–108.

[73] In Ali b. Abdurrahman's cosmography, Cabilḳa (Cāblaḳā) is already identified with Nahvan in the Fergana Valley or (*bir rivāyetde*) with a city in China, with no supernatural element at all: Ali b. Abdurrahman, ed. İnan, "Acâ'ibü'l-mahlūkât (71.–105. varak)', 63–64 (ff. 101a, 102a).

[74] Pseudo-Eşrefoğlu Rumî, ed. Artun, 'Commentary on *The Secret of Ta-Ha*', 377–379.

[75] Evliya Çelebi, eds Dağlı and Kahraman, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, IV. Kitap*, 343 (f. 397a). Cf. 'Azīz Efendi, *Muhayyelât*, ed. Alacatlı, 28, 208; ed. Duymaz, 176, 296.

[76] van Lit, *The World of Image*, 58 and *passim*; on the 'eighth clime', cf. Corbin, *Spiritual Body*, 73–84; Corbin, 'Mundus imaginalis'. See e.g. a description of the two cities in the mid-seventeenth century Indian *Dabestān-e Mazāheb* in Shea and Troyer (eds), *The Dabistán, Or School of Manners*, 3: 279–280.

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ġarāyībi ḫāric-i aṭvār u efhām ve bīrūn-ı idrāk-i evhām u ʿuḳūldür);[77] most probably, his source is al-Shahrazūrī.[78]

Just as the twin cities were removed from the real to a symbolic or supernatural world, so it seems to have happened with other elements of medieval geography, as when Kâtib Çelebi admits that Mount Ḳāf may have a symbolic signification.[79] This change from an 'enchanted' world, full of inexplicable marvels and wonders, to a 'disenchanted' one, by locating all 'enchanted' and supernatural elements outside everyday life and in a parallel level of existence (such as the 'eighth clime' of the Illuminationist topography) has certain similarities with the way 'miracles of knowledge' replaced 'cosmic miracles' in Sufi literature, as we saw in Chapter 2 above. By the same token, an outlet for the need of the supernatural element in a 'disenchanted' world might be a sacred geography of symbols and spiritual landmarks: thus, for a Sufi such as İsmāʿīl Ḥaḳḳı Bursevī, the Balkans (*arż al-Rūm*) are a symbol of beauty (*ishāra ilā l-jamāl*) since the sultan of the Islam lives there, whereas Anatolia is a symbol of glory (*jalāl*) because of its outstanding luxury (the wish of its inhabitants for luxury make them hostile to Sufis, remarks Bursevī); as for the Arab lands, they are a symbol of perfection (*kamāl*) because they contain beauty and glory more than any other place. In the same vein, Edirne, Bursa, and Istanbul are each a symbol of the degree of spirit and of spiritual knowledge (*ishāra ilā l-martaba al-rūḥ wa maḳām al-jamʿ al-rūḥī*) because these three cities have been the seats of Ottoman sultans, whereas the other cities symbolize the heart (*ishāra ilā l-martaba al-ḳalb wa maḳām al-farḳ al-ḳalbī*). The analysis continues with villages, and how all these aggregations of people form a hierarchy of access to and willingness for spiritual truth.[80] Whereas 'sacred geography' was a notion recurrent in late medieval Sufi thought (e.g. the idea of a spiritual East and West, evident in Illuminationist tradition, or various spatial representations of the spiritual and material worlds),[81] this more concrete and hierarchical description may be an Ottoman peculiarity. A similar, but more elaborate world view was put forth by the Ḫalvetī scholar Ibrāhīm al-Ḳirīmī (d. 1593), who divides the world into twelve regions (e.g. the Black Sea and Crimea, Istanbul, Antakya, and so forth, until Buhara) corresponding to the twelve circles (*ṭavr*) of spiritual perfection (*her kāmile ne diyārda yine seyr u sülūk aḫvāli ona münāsib olur*): in this way, global history, understood as the way

[77] Kınalızâde Ali Çelebi, ed. Koç, *Ahlâk-ı Alâ'î*, 85.

[78] See his text in van Lit, *The World of Image*, 92–97.

[79] Sariyannis, '*Ajā'ib ve gharā'ib*', 455–456. One may see a similar story in the various localizations of the Gog and Magog: Cook, 'Gog and Magog'; Hemmat, 'Children of Cain', 447; and, for two quite late examples, Morack, '"The Climate Will Change Again"'.

[80] İsmâil Hakkı Bursevî, eds Muslu and Namlı, *Tamâmü'l-feyz*, 167–168, 178–179.

[81] For such diagrams, see Karamustafa, 'Cosmological Diagrams'; Karjoo-Ravary, 'Mapping the Unseen'; Gruber, 'The Prophet Muḥammad's *'Ayn* Seal'; Martini, *Visualizing Sufism*. Side Emre's ongoing research focuses on such diagrams of the Ottoman period. Cf. also King, 'Some Ottoman Schemes' for another sort of sacred geography, where al-Ḳaʿba is in the centre of the world, which is divided into circular sectors around it.

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to truth, moves (in the form of Islamic victories) from one circle and region to another.[82] The contrast to earlier, pre-Ottoman or early Ottoman attempts to populate imperial geography with concrete sacred places (e.g. the finding of Eyyub's grave by Akşemseddin) is striking—although the veneration of landmarks such as caves, trees, and springs continued in the rural landscape until the very late Ottoman period.[83] On the other hand, we should note a growing tendency to accept that the geographical formation of the earth had a history of its own: Evliya cites some proofs of the different arrangement of earth and sea before the Flood, including fossils of fish in Ukraine,[84] whereas Kâtib Çelebi (copied by Erzurumī İbrahim Ḥaḳḳı) describes the various ways in which sea and land may change over the centuries (quoting medieval geographers and philosophers).[85]

Properties of Natural Things

The sublunary world was full not only of 'extraordinary' marvels (the ones al-Qazwīnī would call *gharā'ib*) but also of 'ordinary' ones, mysterious qualities of everyday objects that could not be understood by the intellect, although they could be known and used. From a philosophical point of view, these were the 'specific' qualities (*ḫawāṣṣ*), those that could only be deduced through experience and could not be derived from the Aristotelian primary qualities of a substance (*kayfiyyāt*, i.e. hotness, coldness, dryness, moisture, and the combinations thereof).[86] These properties (*ḫawāṣṣ*) differed from other qualities or uses (*manāfi'*) of things in so far as the latter had a known and clear relation between cause and effect, whereas the former are unknown causes of a known effect; as a result, the former had to be tested and experienced in order to be recorded, since they were not manifest with common sense like the *manāfi'*.[87] All the three realms of the sublunary world (the fauna, the flora, and the minerals) thus had their

[82] Yakubovich, 'A Neglected Ottoman Sufi Treatise', 153–154; Ḳirīmī [Hüdâyî], ed. Güven, 'Çeşitli yönleriyle', annex p. 81 (f. 76b), cf. ibid., 18 (f. 16b–17a). For the identification of authorship of the letters edited by Güven and usually attributed to the prominent sheikh Maḥmūd Ḥudā'ī (d. 1628), see Terzioğlu, 'Power, Patronage, and Confessionalism', 154–164.

[83] Şahin, 'Constantinople and the End of Time', 327; Grehan, *Twilight of the Saints*, 116–140; Mehmed Hâşim, eds Emecen and Şahin, *Îmâ-yı törehât-ı büldânân*, 92–93; cf. Pancaroğlu, 'Caves, Borderlands and Configurations', on pre-Ottoman sacred topographies of Anatolia.

[84] Evliya Çelebi, eds Dankoff, Kahraman, and Dağlı, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, I. Kitap*, 15 (f. 9a).

[85] Kâtib Çelebi, eds Hagen and Dankoff, *An Ottoman Cosmography*, 96–97; Erzurumī İbrahim Hakkı, *Mā'rifetnāme*, University of Michigan, 161–163; ed. Meyan, *Mârifetnâme*, 221–223. Cf. Hagen, 'Some Considerations', 185–186. On medieval views of these changes, see now de Callataÿ, 'The Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' on the Ṣūrat al-Arḍ'.

[86] See Gannagé, 'Between Medicine and Natural Philosophy' on the Avicennian origin and discussion of this notion.

[87] Raggetti, 'The "Science of Properties"', 163–165; on the role of properties in *aja'ib* literature, see Mehri, 'The Marvellous and Uncanny', 426–432.

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secret properties, ordained by God, and the description of these properties was a common genre of Ottoman as well as pre-Ottoman literature.[88] This belief was common to the Christian counterparts of natural philosophy and magic. Occult qualities or properties of the natural world constituted a major topic of natural philosophy and sciences. In particular, phenomena that involved action at a distance (something al-Kindī seems to have attempted to explain with his theory of rays),[89] such as the magnet or the torpedo, like a marvellous fish that can stop a boat, belonged to a long tradition of *mirabilia* starting at least with Pliny. From being examples of (literally) occult powers, they became proofs of God's power in the Middle Ages; only in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries did mechanical explanations begin to appear, before scholars started questioning these marvels themselves using experience and experiment. First, these properties became the object and motive power of the sixteenth-century *magia naturalis*, seen as a result of the secret hierarchies and homologies of the universe. Then, the 'new philosophers' of the mid- and late seventeenth century began to consider manifest and occult qualities alike as knowable in respect of their causes and function—and therefore abolished the very concept of qualities or properties in the process.[90]

The rationale behind the views on the properties of things was mainly a unified vision of the cosmos, where the celestial movements correspond to movements of the soul and where everything interacts with everything else, following divinely ordained hierarchies. This is how the anonymous author of an adaptation of Ṭūsī's cosmography describes properties (*ḫavāṣṣ*), in a chapter that forms part of the section on medicine:

> Know that God has put properties in every existing thing. These properties are of various sorts. Some work by touching, for instance if someone keeps a spider hot for three days, he will be saved; some by seeing, for instance if someone sees a salamander, he dies; some come with coming across, for instance if the shadow of a butterfly falls upon a hyena, it will go out of its mind; some work with hearing, for instance if one hits bronze or silver utensils, animals will run away; some with smell, as when a donkey smells a lion and runs away; some work with consent (*muvāfaḳat*), for instance if a leopard raises its young, the snake gives birth together with it; and some work with writing: for instance if we

[88] Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften*, 393–416; Raggetti, 'The "Science of Properties"'. On minerals, see e.g. Demir and Kılıç, 'Cevâhirnâmeler'; Yazıcıoğlu Ahmed Bîcan, ed. Kutlar, 'Ahmed-i Bîcân'ın manzum'.

[89] If *De radiis*, of which no Arabic text is preserved, really belongs to him, which is doubtful (Matton, 'An Irradiation of Latin Grammarians'). The best-known example of the problems posed by action at a distance is the dispute between Newton and Leibniz over gravity; on the use of the concept of 'occult qualities' in this dispute, see Hutchison, 'What Happened to Occult Qualities', 250–253.

[90] Ibid.; Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature*, 194–233, 291–300; Copenhaver, *Magic in Western Culture*, 127–153.

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> scratch a circle [on the ground] with a branch of hazel tree and put a scorpion inside, it will not go out.
>
> These properties, however, come from their accordance with a specific moment in the movement of heavens (*felek ḥareketinde bir sāʿate muvāfıḳ geldüginden ola*), so that if these instances happen in another hour, the properties will not be present. The rotation of the soul (*göñül dönmekligi*) resembles the rotation of a mill: if one puts some clay on its wheel and tries to aim at it with another piece of clay with a bow, one will find the target once every hundred times. Now, this sky also turns all the time; if an hour is auspicious and a person acts in accordance with it, he will think that this time will come again [and that he will be always lucky], but there is a time which will not [be auspicious].[91]

Similarly, Alāʾī al-Şirazī, author of a mid-sixteenth-century political treatise, describes the occult arts that may help a ruler be victorious (God's names, letters, prayers, talismans, and so forth) as stemming from the properties of things:

> It is known that God the Highest has put some properties and benefits into things (*eşyāda ḫavāṣṣ ve menāfiʿ komuşdur*), so that one may use these things and act in order for these properties to be combined (*müterettib olur*) and be useful…for all these arts the combination of properties is necessary (*ḫaṣṣalarının tertibi lâzım*), and according to each one of them the mind resolves the conflict of the differences [of these properties] (*taḫallüfinin imtināʿı*).[92]

We saw above how Kâtib Çelebi modified Taşköprüzāde's description of the properties of God's names to consider them similar to the properties of things, and also to demystify both by insisting that 'the causes (*ʿilal*, "occasions") of some of them can be grasped by the intellect, while the meaning of the causes of others cannot'.[93] Further on, he makes a connection with numbers and celestial bodies, thus enhancing his impression of a unified cosmos where interdependent forces and hierarchies interact according to mathematical harmonies:

> Another group of secret properties are the secret properties of numbers, harmonious (mathematical) agreements, and fractions (?) (*khawāṣṣ al-ʿadad wa-l-wafq wa-l-taksīr*). From among these are the secret properties of the amicable and non-amicable numbers (*al-aʿdād al-mutaḥābba wa-l-mutabāghiḍa*), as explained in the *Tadhkira al-aḥbāb fī bayan al-taḥābb* [of Kamāl al-Dīn al-Fārisī]. And the secret properties of the signs of the zodiac and the stars; the secret properties of

[91] Sarıkaya (ed.), *Tercüme-i Acâibü'l-mahlūkat*, 360.
[92] Alāʾī, ed. Dokuzlu, 'Alâî b. Muhibbî eş-Şirâzî'nin *Düstûru'l-vüzerâ*', 152.
[93] Kâtip Çelebi, eds Yaltkaya and Bilge, *Keşf-el-zunun*, 1: 726; cf. *Keşfü'z-zunûn*, tr. Balcı, 2: 602.

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> the minerals; the secret properties of plants; the secret properties of animals. And from among them are the secret properties of the climes (*al-aqālīm*) and countries (*buldān*), the secret properties of land and sea (*al-barr wa-l-baḥr*), and other things.[94]

It is interesting that Kâtib Çelebi returns to the 'strange properties' in order to show that marvels, such as the ones described by al-Qazwīnī, can indeed exist. His discussion is noteworthy, moreover, because he may not give any explanation connected with the unity of the cosmos, but he delves (as we will see later) into the need to test such properties in a systematic way that brings to mind experimentalism and the use of dependent and independent variables (the knowledge of magnetite, garlic, and vinegar comes from Arabic, and ultimately Greek, texts):

> On the other hand, there are strange, secret properties (*khawāṣṣ gharība*) [which cannot be understood by reason or grasped by the senses]. It's enough to consider the state of magnetite and how it attracts iron. When the smell of garlic reaches it, this special quality [of magnetite] stops. If it is washed with vinegar, it [i.e. the special quality of attracting iron] comes back. So, when you see a magnet that does not attract [a piece of iron], you will not [therefore] deny the fact that magnets [in general] have this special property. But you will turn your attention to seeking to investigate the conditions [of that particular piece], until (or: so that) it becomes clear to you what's going on [in that particular case].[95]

Finally, we should note that the categories of 'marvels' and tangible objects with potentially strange properties intersect: this is the field of exotic treasures, things like feathers of paradisiac birds, ostrich eggs, and remains of monstrous animals—the material of the European Renaissance *Wunderkammer*s or cabinets of curiosities, where they were collected first as repositories of spiritual and earthly power, then as inventories of nature's wonders.[96] Things we know about such collections in an Ottoman context are quite scarce. Thanks to Hedda Reindl-Kiel's research, we now have some information on the contents of the Sultanic treasury. These included an impressive number of horns and tusks of exotic animals, such as elephants, rhinoceros, and walruses (the number presents important fluctuations from the late fifteenth to the second half of the sixteenth century, probably because of the use of such items as gifts). Besides being signs of power, it seems that reindeer

[94] Kâtip Çelebi, eds Yaltkaya and Bilge, *Keşf-el-zunun*, 1: 726; cf. *Keşfü'z-zunûn*, tr. Balcı, 2: 602.

[95] Kâtip Çelebi, eds Yaltkaya and Bilge, *Keşf-el-zunun*, 2: 1127–1128; cf. *Keşfü'z-zunûn*, tr. Balcı, 3: 901. See also the same claims in Kâtib Çelebi, eds Hagen and Dankoff, *An Ottoman Cosmography*, 82, but also in the much older treatise on talismans by Riyāzī (d. 1537/8) (ed. Dalkıran, 'İbn-i Kemal'in tılsımat risâlesi', 198). For the ancient and medieval history of these claims, see Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften*, 398–399.

[96] See Daston and Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature*, 67–108.

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antlers and rhinoceros' horns, in particular, but also tusks of narwhals, were regarded as alicorns (unicorn horns): whereas the unicorn did not have the religious or mystic connotations it held in the West, it was still a fabulous creature and its horn was esteemed as an antidote or remedy. Moreover, we find objects such as magnets that are still considered marvels, although certainly not exotic. These items were not on continuous public display, as in western Europe, but rather were used as diplomatic tools to impress embassies or to be given as gifts to foreign rulers. Some peculiar, more enigmatic objects (e.g. mouse teeth!) might have been used for medical purposes.[97] At any rate, there are few signs of a fascination for wonders, when these did not have magical or medical purposes. As Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park note, such objects were 'closely related to the textual tradition', which 'both shaped and reflected the taste of their readers, creating the background against which objects were coveted or appraised'.[98] The closest that we know to an Ottoman *Wunderkammer* is a 'virtual collection', which, moreover, belongs to the Greek Orthodox culture: Kaisarios Dapontes' (d. 1784) poetic catalogue 'of many extraordinary things in many cities and islands, of nations, and of animals' lists an impressive series of exquisite natural products (wine from Skopelos, vodka from Gdansk, and cucumbers from Istanbul), *naturalia* (i.e. extraordinary items of flora, fauna, and other natural curiosities, e.g. bezoars, corals, and pozzolana of Santorini), holy relics (from St Lucas' icon and the Holy Grail to Muhammad's tomb), exotic or marvellous animals (giraffe, unicorn), but also noteworthy traits of nations and historical individuals (the Turks' hospitality, Solomon's wisdom).[99]

We might argue that Ottoman (and, more generally, Islamicate) literature on *mirabilia* gave emphasis to buildings and landscape, whereas most of the occult properties described belonged to familiar flora and fauna (except, of course, for gems, which were certainly collected). The reservoir of power that was the Ottoman palace treasury contained mostly rare and expensive, but not marvellous objects (including *artificialia*, 'artificial marvels': mostly, collections of clocks); and spiritual power resided with relics (in the case of the Prophet's relics held at Topkapı, in a shrine built by Mehmed III) or talismanic shirts and inscriptions[100]—that is, everyday objects artificially bestowed with occult, magic qualities. As for the emphasis on marvellous buildings, it is illuminated in this

[97] Reindl-Kiel, 'Solomon's Unicorn'; Reindl-Kiel, 'Learning the Language of Things', 301–307. Live beasts, especially exotic ones (e.g. elephants and giraffes), were also used for display and gifts: Faroqhi, 'Exotic Animals'; Reindl-Kiel, 'Dogs, Elephants, Lions'.

[98] Daston and Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature*, 67.

[99] Unfortunately, this remarkable text has not attracted the attention it deserves: Dapontes, ed. Tsalicoglou, *Selected Writings*, 64ff. The parallel to the cabinets of curiosities has been drawn by Diamantopoulou, 'H Wunderkammer'. Dapontes has also described in detail, again in verse, the royal museum of Copenhagen: Dapontes, ed. Legrand, *Ephémérides Daces*, 3: LVIII–LXII. I wish to thank Kostas Sarris for bringing these citations to my attention.

[100] Hagen, 'Pietas Ottomanica', 25–33; Burak, 'The Section on Prayers'.

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respect by the use of spolia: pillars of white marble were removed from the Hippodrome but also from Baalbek for the construction of the Süleymaniye mosque, and Latifī claims that some of them originated in the palace built by the jinn for Solomon's wife (a common belief concerning the ruins of Baalbek; see above, Chapter 1). And, as late as the mid-eighteenth century, twelve pink granite columns were carried at great pains from a ruined church in Pergamon for the construction of the Nuruosmaniye mosque.[101]

Knowledge of the Occult

Knowledge of the world of dreams, the powers of letters or of celestial bodies, terrestrial marvels, and magic techniques was manifestly taken to exist, as we have seen; and yet all these phenomena and their causes were steadily located in the realm of the *ghayb*, of things concealed from the human intellect. So, how was knowledge of supernatural or preternatural realities acquired?[102]

An obvious answer is, through revelation. For mysticism, in particular, revelation was indeed a major (if not the only) source of knowledge; under Ibn ʿArabī's influence, mystic knowledge became virtually a synonym for direct access to the supernatural world through the ecstatic state of mind.[103] Not only Sufis of the Akbarian school, but also the less radical al-Ghazālī and his followers maintained that, whereas human reason can be and indeed is a major source of truth (always with God as the broker of knowledge), divine learning can only be attained through revelation or inspiration: the former puts forth the unseen state explicitly, while the latter does so 'in a veiled manner', through 'the universal soul's warning' to the human soul.[104] Inspiration was considered superior to reason as a rule, from the first Ottoman *müderris*, Davud al-Kaysarī (d. 1350), to al-Bisṭāmī, for whom

> [s]ome of the prophets acquire comprehension of the secrets of the letters through divine revelation and holy dictation, and some of the saints through luminescent witnessing in the spiritual being, and some of the pure friends in the purity of constitution and the guidance granted, and some of the sages through clairvoyance and episodes of inspiration, and some of the scholars through vision and dreams.[105]

[101] Necipoğlu, 'The Süleymaniye Complex', 102–105; Lâtifī, *Evsâf-ı İstanbul*, 82–84; Rüstem, '*Spolia* and the Invocation of History'.

[102] For more on this topic, see Sariyannis, 'Sources and Traditions of Knowledge', and cf. Kurz, *Ways to Heaven*, 176–248; Shefer-Mossensohn, *Science among the Ottomans*, 30–34.

[103] Arberry, *Revelation and Reason*; Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism*, 311–314; Felek and Knysh, *Dreams and Visions*; Griffel, 'Ibn Taymiyya and His Ashʿarite Opponents'; Ebstein, 'The Human Intellect'.

[104] Gel, 'Debating Sufi Knowledge', 124; Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism*, 313–314.

[105] Gel, 'Debating Sufi Knowledge', 123; Gardiner, 'Lettrism and History', 246–247.

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It goes without saying that revelation (*vaḥy*) and inspiration (*ilhām*) were glorified by Sufi sheikhs: the Mevlevīs considered Rumi's *Mesnevi* a product of revelation,[106] and Ḫalvetīs regularly sought guidance in dreams, coming as we saw either from the reflection of God's Tablet (*al-lawḥ al-maḥfūẓ*) upon the dreamer's heart (as per al-Ghazālī) or from the dreamer's musings in the 'world of images' (as per Ibn ʿArabī and the Illuminationists). İsmâil Ḥaḳḳı Bursevī (d. 1725) juxtaposes learning by authority ('studying and learning') with revelation and shows the latter superior even in a branch of knowledge that, occult as it may be, has nothing to do with divine knowledge, namely alchemy:

> The philosophers reached this science with studying and learning (*bi-ṭarīḳ al-taʿallum wa l-kasb*), and with no other way. But for the divine sages, there is also a second way, by revelation and bestowing (*al-kashf wa l-wahb*). Those who follow this way are the ones who have reached the end of the path.[107]

Taşköprüzāde seeks to prioritize revelation without dismissing deduction through reason. In a long discussion of knowledge, he asserts that there are two ways to acquire it: by reasoning (*istidlāl*) and by revelation (*mushāhada*) and purification of the heart. Both are valid, and one may begin with science and reach the Unseen in the end (as, for instance, the Prophet Abraham reasoned about God's existence on the basis of the light of the sun), or begin with an inspiration and then reach perception (as Muhammad did).[108] More particularly, religious sciences can be reached either by reason (*nazar*) or by purification of the heart (*tasfiye*). Although the second path is superior, there is a way reason can reach such a degree that it is very near or even adjacent to the way of the heart: this degree is attained by intuition and is called 'intuitive philosophy' (*al-ḥikma al-ẕawḳiyya*), a way shown by al-Suhrawardī.[109] Kâtib Çelebi, in his turn, puts forward a similar discussion, again presenting philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, and al-Suhrawardi as uniting intellectual inquiry and purification of the soul.[110]

Reason, on the other hand, was glorified as God's gift that enables man to know God and His will, or that guides a Muslim to the right path.[111] Its significance kept rising, especially after the Ḳāḍızādelis' attack upon some Sufi doctrines and

[106] Gürbüzel, *Taming the Messiah*, 142–144.

[107] İsmâil Hakkı Bursevî, eds Muslu and Namlı, *Tamâmü'l-feyz*, 282–287.

[108] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftâh as-Sa'âdah*, 66–68; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 1: 101–103.

[109] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftâh as-Sa'âdah*, 313; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 1:284.

[110] Kâtip Çelebi, eds Yaltkaya and Bilge, *Keşf-el-zunun*, 1: 159–161; cf. *Keşfü'z-zunûn*, tr. Balcı, 1:174. See also Kâtib Çelebi, tr. Lewis, *The Balance of Truth*, 77–78; Morkoç, 'In Between the Mind and the Heart'.

[111] Ebstein, 'The Human Intellect', 207–209; Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism*, 140–149; Kurz, *Ways to Heaven*, 184–186; Gel, 'Debating Sufi knowledge', 128; Ivanyi, *Virtue, Piety and the Law*, 126.

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practices: thus, Ahmed al-Rūmī Aḳḥisarī (d. 1632), an early exponent of Ḳāḍızādeli ideas, insists that revelation (*kashf*) passes through the mastering of the science of *kalam*, and that only once one's knowledge is solid enough to ensure a sound creed can one proceed to remembrance (*zikr*) and other devotional practices in order to reach revelation. Even then, it is probable that what would seem as revelation is nothing but 'a trap and self-deceit'.[112] We delved into this Ḳāḍızādeli insistence on rationalism in Chapter 2 above, and we will come back to it in the next chapter. Still, the rise of rationalism did not usually involve the *ghayb*: whereas the existence of God or the tenets of faith and Holy Law were to be tested and deduced through reason, occult knowledge concerning the realms of existence, the function of letters in the cosmos, and knowledge of the future continued in general to be a field that could only be reached through some form of divine inspiration.

Experience and Experiment

The role of experience in the acquisition of knowledge deserves a short discussion here. Whereas medieval scholasticism opposed *experimentum* and *experientia* to knowledge demonstrated by reason and argumentation, accepting experience as a witness to inexplicable and occult phenomena and associating it with popular and empirical knowledge,[113] experimental verification had already emerged as the way par excellence of understanding nature by the thirteenth century (beginning with the work of Roger Bacon). Experience played a similarly important role in the Islamicate theory of knowledge. For Bacon's contemporary Mamluk scholar al-Qarāfī (d. 1285), the notion of experience or experiment (*tajriba*, *mujarrab*) is already crucial (although mostly for legal reasoning): as he stresses, 'repetition is the locus of experiment (*al-dawarānāt 'ayn al-tajriba*). The more experiments recur, the greater the certainty.'[114] Matthew Melvin-Koushki has argued that this *mujarrab* nature (which he translates as 'reproducibility') of the occult sciences became an imperative in the early modern period, driving Islamicate science to an experimentalism very similar to Bacon's.[115]

[112] Sheikh, *Ottoman Puritanism and Its Discontents*, 73. Similar ideas were held by his contemporary, Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi Ahmad Sirhindi (ibid., 76). Cf. Griffel, 'Ibn Taymiyya and His Ash'arite Opponents'.

[113] Eamon, *Sciences and the Secrets of Nature*, 55–58. Some scholars have argued that *experimentum* or *experientia* should be translated as 'observation', rather than 'experience': see Bartlett, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, 121fn22.

[114] Dayeh, 'Islamic Casuistry and Galenic Medicine', 142. Yet, for the Damascene scholar al-Dhahabi (d. 1348), 'experiences (*al-tajārib*) and analogy are insufficient' for the development of medicine without divine inspiration: Savage-Smith, 'The Universality and Neutrality of Science', 169–170.

[115] Melvin-Koushki, 'Another Scientific Revolution', 335–336; Melvin-Koushki, 'Is (Islamic) Occult Science', 12–14. Cf. Şen, 'Practicing Astral Magic', 84–85.

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In the Ottoman case, one gets the impression that experience was a prerogative of occult sciences, as in scholastic Europe.[116] For one thing, all revelation and visionary knowledge was *experienced* by sheikhs and saints.[117] In mathematical or natural sciences, experience is juxtaposed with reason, as when Seydi ʿAlī Reis writes on navigation in 1566: 'There is but a short distance and an easy calculation between the claims of the ancients and the truth of the moderns. One is based on reason, the other, on experience.'[118] In al-Bisṭāmī's narrative on the ancient sages, the secrets of letters and numbers that they initially learnt by revelation were then elaborated through experience (*tajriba*), as they gradually discovered their occult and practical uses.[119] It is in the description of fortune-telling (*ʿarāfa*) that Taşköprüzāde (copied verbatim by Kâtib Çelebi) writes that only a few people can guess the concealed correspondences between cause and effect, 'either by experiments (*tajārib*) or by a state consigned to them by the Prophet'.[120] The words 'experience' and 'experiment' abound in magical grimoires and recipes[121] or descriptions of occult methods:

> We said again that the science of stars and zodiac signs is highly important. Nobody knows its secrets but God. And we said this much about the knowledge of properties, because it comes out of experience (*mücerrebdür*) that yellow amber attracts the straw.[122]

İlyas b. Īsā Sarūḫānī's *Ḳavāʿid-i tesḫīrāt*, otherwise full of 'experienced' spells and instructions, even specifies, for a particular use of a Qur'anic chapter, that 'this saying does not belong to those experimented by the sheikh Ibn Īsā [Sarūḫānī]' (*bu ḳavl…mücerrebātından degüldür*), whereas the last section is a list of the sheikh's verified experiments with prayers or lettrist takes.[123] Almanacs composed in the seventeenth century included lists of fortunate and unfortunate days 'drawn from generations of experience'.[124] As late as the early eighteenth century, the poet Nābī (d. 1712) stresses that there is nobody to teach alchemy, so the aspirant alchemist can only use his experience (*ehli yok k'öğrede ḥāl u ḳālin / sarf*

[116] See Binbaş, *Intellectual Networks*, 96–104; Balıkçıoğlu, *Verifying the Truth*, 5–6 and fn11. On the development of the theological term, see El-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History*, 173–203.

[117] For instances of experience in the revelatory tradition of Islamic philosophy, see Griffel, *The Formation of Post-classical Philosophy*, 254, 258–259.

[118] Küçük, *Science without Leisure*, 207, 281n6.

[119] Gardiner, 'Lettrism and History', 249.

[120] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftâh as-Sa'âdah*, 1: 357; Kâtip Çelebi, eds Yaltkaya and Bilge, *Keşf-el-zunun*, 1: 357 (cf. *Keşfü'z-zunûn*, tr. Balcı, 904).

[121] See e.g. Firdevsī, ed. Büyükkarcı, *Daʿvet-nāme*, 160, 170 (*ve levḥi daḫı anuñla yaza, mücerrebdür / ġayet mücerrebdür / kerrāt ile tecrübe olınmışdur*); Esen, 'An Ottoman Miscellany', 270–271 (*ġayet mücerrebdür*); Kundakçı, '*Ahkâmü'l-külliyye*', 181, 187 (f. 15b, 18b), etc.; Şenödeyici, 'Tradition of Fortune Telling', 92; Kurz, *Ways to Heaven*, 243.

[122] Sarıkaya (ed.), *Tercüme-i Acâ'ibü'l-mahlûkât*, 360.

[123] Saruhânî, ed. Kaçar, 'İbn-i İsa'nın *Ḳavāʿid-i tesḫīrāt*', 161 (f. 98b), 180–184 (ff. 112a–115a).

[124] Küçük, *Science without Leisure*, 127.

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ède tecrübeye emvālin).[125] And at the end of the same century, Abdullah Halim Efendi, author of a *sui generis* political treatise titled *Seyfü'l-izzet* ('Sword of Glory') composed in 1791, rejects astrology (as he does all kinds of occult science) on the grounds that astrologers do not have access to the invisible; they use their experience (*tecrübe*) instead, but experience does not produce knowledge, being only an indication of it:[126]

> Whoever says that 'astrologers know the Unseen (*gayb*)' is an infidel. They do not know the Unseen; they gather information from experience (*tecrübe*). For instance, a sailor who says that a south-east wind will rise on seeing a cloud towards the *qibla* is not an infidel; nor does what he says always come true. Because experience is not a source of knowledge (*tecrübe, esbâb-ı 'ilmden değildir*); it is not a sign (of the future), it is an indication (of possible outcomes) (*tecrübe 'alâmet dahi olmaz, olsa emâre olur*): the south-west wind is an indication of rain, but it often happens that upon the south-west wind we see windy weather instead of rain…

The same is valid for whoever says that has conjured the jinn: 'You say, "I saw him with my eyes". I do not believe your eyes or anything; I only believe the word of Sharia…'.[127] Thus, according to these late anti-occultists, experience is both attributed to occult knowledge and rejected as a trustful way to the truth. It is interesting that, while Halim Efendi writes his treatise in order to support Selim III's reforms, he proposes the Sharia (rather than logic argumentation) as a valid path to substitute experience. Similarly, an anonymous reader of Pīrīzāde's (d. 1749) translation of Ibn Khaldūn cares to note in the margin of the manuscript that 'most of the interesting issues mentioned…have been deduced from experience (*tecrübeden alınmışdır*)' and that, thus, 'they apply with certainty only to the [events already] experienced (*sadece mücerribe yaḳīn ifāde edüb*), whereas they are altered with the conflicts of [these] times'.[128] For this reader, experience is a reliable source of knowledge but does not offer itself to repetition and proof, as it is only valid for one historical moment; experience, in other words, is the opposite of experimentalism.

Thus, despite the eighteenth-century turn of Ottoman science to experimentalism, on which we shall say more below, the view of experience remained Baconian, without becoming Newtonian.[129] In other words, a scientific tradition or cluster

[125] Nâbī, *Hayriyye*, ed. Pala, 210 (v. 1427). On 'experience' in alchemical works, cf. Günergun, 'Convergences in and around Bursa', 237–238.

[126] Abdullah Halim Efendi, ed. Şahin, *Seyfü'l-izzet*, 188.

[127] Ibid., 226–227.

[128] Yıldırım, '*Mukaddime*'nin Türkçe tercümesi', 25; Pîrîzâde, eds Yıldırım et al., *İbn Haldun: Mukaddime*, 1: XXVIII.

[129] On this distinction, see Kuhn, 'Mathematical versus Experimental Traditions'; cf. the overview in Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature*, 6–8, 297–300.

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comprising such disciplines as chemistry, magnetism, and metallurgy (the 'Baconian sciences', according to Thomas Kuhn) involved extended use of experimentation, in order to certify their practices and produce 'recipes' based on a trial-and-error process. This use of experience was based on the art and experimentation of craftsmen, whereas scholastic disciplines (astronomy, optics, medicine, and so forth) continued to use logic and abstract reasoning until the advent of the Scientific Revolution, which brought a new understanding of experimentation and of science. In the Ottoman case, we still see experiment linked to either occult or 'Baconian' sciences, with books 'on properties' taking the place of western European 'books of secrets'. Kâtib Çelebi's entry on al-Qazwīnī's *ʿAjāʾib al-makhlūqāt* is very typical of this sort of experimentalism:

> There are strange, secret properties (*khawāṣṣ gharība*) [which cannot be understood by reason or grasped by the senses]. A lifetime of experience cannot do justice to that (*dhālika mimmā lā yafī al-ʿumr tajribatihā*). There is no reason to dismiss all of these things because of doubt in some of them. So, if you want to be sure about them, roll up your sleeves to test them (*li-tajribatihā*, to experience them, by trial). And beware not to abandon course if [the expected result] does not happen once or twice. That happens because of the loss of a condition (*li-faqd sharṭ*) or the occurrence of an obstacle (*ḥudūth māniʿ*).[130]

On the other hand, various works promoting natural science and especially medicine seem to have used experience increasingly as a source from the late seventeenth century onwards; hence the physician Ḥayātīzāde Muṣṭafā Feyżī (Moshe ben Raphael Abravanel, d. 1692) in 1674, who claims to have 'sieved the books… through [his] true experiences with the afflicted men', and Ḥekīm Dendanī (d. between 1681 and 1685), who had added to the recipes learnt by others some that he had tested by experience;[131] even a 1729 edict about the prerequisites of the medical professions talks of 'the knowledge [physicians] have gained through experience' rather than formal training.[132] Nusret Efendi (d. 1793/4), an amateur physician and head librarian of major libraries in Istanbul, went so far as to divide his treatise on medical remedies (including spiritual/magical recipes) into cures that he knew through his own experience, on the one hand, and cures other physicians had tried through the same method, on the other; for the former, he indicated whether he had tried a treatment many times, and for the latter whether

[130] Kâtip Çelebi, eds Yaltkaya and Bilge, *Keşf-el-zunun*, 2: 1127; cf. *Keşfü'z-zunûn*, tr. Balcı, 3:901.

[131] Küçük, *Science without Leisure*, 150, 153. Cf. the case of Muḥammad al-Rūdānī (d. 1683), a Moroccan scholar of hadith, logic, and astronomy who lived most of his life in the Ottoman Empire: in describing his astrolabe, he contrasts visible evidence (*shahada*) obtained through the instrument to the 'unseen' (*ghayb*) rational knowledge and proofs contained in Ptolemy's *Almagest*: El-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History*, 168–169.

[132] Küçük, *Science without Leisure*, 161.

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he had tested it himself and with what results. This method was applied to recipes both of previous Islamicate treatises and of Paracelsus:

> Paracelsus whitened sulphur by using salt of tartar, yet exaggerated its advantage in his writing. This humble one was also passionate about replicating it; however, I could never observe its benefit.[133]

Hermes, Idris, and Inherited Gnosis

The concept of secrets that cannot be grasped by the human intellect, but are ordinary and thus may be objects of a revealed wisdom that can be conveyed, brings us to the topic of Hermeticism and of esotericism. Hermeticism can be described as the idea that vast amounts of wisdom, especially related to the correspondences between the microcosm and the macrocosm ('as above, so below'), had been revealed to the Prophet Hermes (Trismegistus, *al-Muthallath* in the Arabic tradition, which often identifies or associates him with Idris and/or Enoch) and then transmitted in the form of occult knowledge to the elect.[134] This Hellenistic tradition, which as we know found new life in the Renaissance, was preserved and enriched throughout the medieval Arabic world.[135] Properly speaking, Hermeticism can be associated with three different aspects of this tradition: the *corpus Hermeticum* (i.e. texts such as the fabulous *tabula smaragdina* that passed to the medieval Islamic world through Syrian translations); the ideas contained in this corpus, even when they were not attributed to Hermes (mainly, that all things connect with each other, that ontological hierarchies of planets, stars, spirits and angels/demons, metals, herbs, animals, etc., are interconnected, and that the universe can be controlled through magical tools using these hierarchies); and the tradition of an ancient saintly or even prophetic figure called Hermes (often considered as three consecutive personalities), whose wisdom is preserved for the few. It is mainly this third aspect that interests us here.

The legendary figure of Hermes was collated with other prophetic personalities of Judaic/Syriac and early Islamic lore, especially Enoch and Idris. Although there are religious scholars who denied his special position among prophets,[136]

[133] Yerlioğlu, '"May Those Who Understand"', 40, 43.

[134] This section is an abridgment of Sariyannis, 'The Ottoman Hermes', where I delve into Ottoman Hermeticism in more detail.

[135] The fullest account of Islamic Hermeticism is to be found in van Bladel, *The Arabic Hermes*; for a more concise description, see e.g. Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften*, 368–378; Knight, *Magic in Islam*, 107–136. On Hermes and Hermeticism in ancient and Western contexts, see Merkel and Debus (eds), *Hermeticism and the Renaissance*; Hanegraaff, 'Hermes Trismegistus'; Acevedo, *Alphanumeric Cosmology*, 135–162.

[136] See e.g. Kāfī al-Aḵḥiṣārī, tr. Zein, *Rawdat al-jannat*, 16, who does not even mention Idris ('the greatest among the prophets are Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad… There is no conclusive evidence for the prophethood of both Zul-Qarnin and Luqman').

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Idris as a master of sciences, arts, and crafts obtained directly from God or an angel in the form of holy books (*ṣuḥuf*) was a well-established figure in Islamic lore,[137] and as such we find him in many Ottoman sources: from a series of fifteenth-century almanacs/world chronicles (*takvim*), which attribute knowledge about the beginnings of the world to the books by Idris, who had this knowledge from God,[138] to an early-fifteenth-century adaptation of Ṭūsī's cosmography, where we read that Idris's soul was taken by angel to the sun and his knowledge passed onto his 200,000 disciples.[139] In another version, quoted by the anonymous author of *Dürr-i meknûn*, Idris, having invented astrology, astronomy (*raṣad*), and weaving, ends up ascending into Paradise, where he chooses to stay. Furthermore, he is credited with building the indestructible structures of the pyramids, enhancing them with talismans to protect them from the Flood.[140] Idris was only one of a series of prophets to whom divine knowledge had been granted: thus, for Şükrullah Efendi the Prophet Ibrāhīm (Abraham) learned the secrets of God's names from a mysterious person, who then is revealed to be Davud (David), brother of Hıżır,[141] whereas for Uzun Firdevsī, in 1487, apart from the Qur'an, God transmitted through Cebra'il's tongue 104 books to men through Adam, Seth, Idris, and the other prophets[142] (Cebra'il, by the way, would also have taught geomancy to Daniel in some versions).[143] Idris is still considered a patron of science and wisdom in later works, such as Lâtifī's mid-sixteenth-century praise of Istanbul, whereas an early-eighteenth-century mufti of Athens credits him with the diffusion of the occult arts in the Maghrib;[144] Sufi authors such as the Bayrami/Melami Abdullah Bosnevī (d. 1644) and Isma'īl Hakki Bursevī, influenced by Ibn 'Arabī's writings, describe Idris' elevation to the sun and his obtaining of secret knowledge.[145]

From the early fifteenth century, Ottoman scholarly sources were already tending to identify Idris with Hermes. For Şükrullah Efendi, 'Prophet Idris's name is Ḫanūḫ; the Greeks call him Urmus, and the Arabs Hermes'; Hermes is the first of all the wise men, who

[137] *EI*[2], s.v. 'Idrīs' (G. Vajda); on his identification with Hermes, see van Bladel, *The Arabic Hermes*, 155, 164–167; on Idris/Hermes' identification with Enoch, see Atanasova, 'Enoch as Idrīs'. On Enoch in Islamicate tradition, see Reeves and Yoshiko Reed, *Enoch from the Antiquity to the Middle Ages*; Hessayon, Yoshiko Reed, and Boccaccini, *Rediscovering Enoch?*

[138] Atsız (ed.), *Osmanlı tarihine ait takvimler*, 68/69, 140–144/141–145, 152/153.

[139] Sarıkaya (ed.), *Tercüme-i Acâibü'l-mahlūkat*, 138–139.

[140] Yazıcıoğlu [Anonymous], *Dürr-i meknūn*, ed. Kaptein, 127=404–405; ed. Demirtaş, 123–124; ed. Sakaoğlu, 48; ed. Mattei, 68–69. On the pyramids (*Heram*), see ibid., ed. Kaptein, 188=458; ed. Demirtaş, 155–156; ed. Sakaoğlu, 74.

[141] Şükrullah, ed. Almaz, *Behcetü't-tevârīh*, 240.

[142] Firdevsī, ed. Büyükkarcı, *Firdevsī-i Ṭavīl and His Da'vet-nāme*, 144.

[143] Evliya Çelebi, eds Dankoff, Kahraman, and Dağlı, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, I. Kitap*, 259 (f. 156b).

[144] Lâtifī, *Evsâf-ı İstanbul*, 34; Lâtifī, *Eloge d'Istanbul*, 84; Mahmud Efendi, ed. Tunalı, *Atina tarihi*, 360; see also Kale, 'From a Book on Architecture', 111.

[145] Atanasova, 'Enoch as Idrīs', 404–411. Cf. also Idris in Ottoman painting: And, *Minyatürlerle Osmanlı-İslâm mitologyası*, 199–201.

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> had all three degrees: prophecy, wisdom, and kingship. He visited the orbit of Saturn, orbited with Saturn for thirty years and learned the situation of the spheres. He returned to earth and taught [what he had learnt] to the people of the earth.[146]

In ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Bisṭāmī's (d. 1454) version of universal history, Idris is also identified with Enoch and Hermes. He inaugurates the second millennium of humanity, which belongs to Jupiter; a descendant of Seth (explicitly identified with the Hellenistic Agathodaemon), he is a master of letter magic, the inventor of writing and of astrology. He is credited with the invention of temples and the division of human society into three classes (priests, kings, and flock).[147] A history of Egypt composed in 1547 by the scholar Celalzāde Salih Çelebi (d. 1565) also mentions 'the first Hermes', who 'according to some' is Idris; by observing the celestial movements he established astrology, as well as medicine and other sciences, and when he perceived the coming of the Flood he built the pyramids and recorded all science.[148] Muṣṭafā ʿĀlī relates in some detail the life of Idris: his original name was Enoch/Uḫnūḫ, but he was also called Ūriyā-i Ṣāliṣ, the 'Third Ūriyā',[149] because he was 'triple (*müṣelleṣ*) in prophecy, knowledge, and wisdom', and the Greeks called him 'the Hermes of Hermeses', because they compared him to the planet Mercury. ʿĀlī also quotes the *Ikhwan-i Safa*' to the effect that he ascended to Saturn and built the pyramids to preserve knowledge.[150] The full narrative on Hermes is to be found in Taşköprüzāde and Kâtib Çelebi's encyclopedias. Taşköprüzāde identifies Idris, Enoch, and Hermes, and narrates how God sent a book down upon him and taught him the sciences and all the languages; he was born in Egypt, and he was called 'Hermes of the Hermeses', in Greek 'Ermīs—that is to say, Mercury (*ʿuṭārid*)'. Taşköprüzāde adds that his teacher was the Egyptian Ghawthādhīmūn or Aghthādhīmūn, who is also said to be Seth, and that

> [Idrīs's] time on earth lasted for eighty-two years. Then God lifted him up to a high place. He is the first one who sewed clothes and judged by the stars, [the first one] to give warning against floods, the first one to build temples and praise

[146] Şükrullah, ed. Almaz, *Behcetü't-tevârīh*, 119, 267.

[147] Gardiner, 'Lettrism and History', 230–266 and esp. 240. Seth is also identified 'by the historians' with Zoroaster (ibid., 246). Cf. Bisṭāmī, ed. Yağmur, '*Terceme-i kitāb*', 41.

[148] Salih bin Celaleddin, ed. Manav, 'Salih bin Celaleddin'in *Tarih-i Mısır*'ı', 90 (ff. 11b–12a); on the identification of Hermes with Idris, see also ibid., 169 (f. 69a), 245 (f. 120a), 247 (f. 121a), 339 (f. 180a). At another point, this story is attributed to Idris, who ascended to the heavens (a detail not mentioned regarding Hermes): 102 (f. 19a). On Salih's work, see Casale, 'An Ottoman Humanist'.

[149] This must be a corruption of the obscure designation of Hermes as 'the third Ūrānī' by al-Mubashshir ibn Fātik (mid-eleventh c.), the other two being Seth and Agathodaemon: van Bladel, *The Arabic Hermes*, 184–188.

[150] Âlî, eds Donuk and Örs, *Künhü'l-ahbâr. 1. Rükün*, 1: 519–529. Elsewhere Ali speaks of two cities called in the Egyptian (*Ḳıbṭ*) language Hermes, 'i.e. the planet Mercury' (ibid., 611–612).

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> God in them, the first one who looked into medicine, and the first one who composed poems and verses of poetry. He is the one who built the pyramids of Egypt and illustrated in them (through paintings) all the sciences and arts and their tools, fearing that their records might be taken by the Flood.[151]

Kâtib Çelebi takes up the same narrative, noting that he was 'the first Hermes' (*hirmis al-awwal*) and that he foresaw the Flood:

> He built the pyramids in the uppermost part of Upper Egypt and made images of all the arts and tools in them and sketched the descriptions of the sciences and perfections, in the desire to preserve them for eternity. Then the Flood came and the people perished, and no science remained, nor any trace except for those on the arch…Then it gradually began to recommence (*isti'nāf*) and return (*i'āda*). So what had been wiped out of science returned to its former place of virtue and elevation…It continues as a support of the Muslim community until the Day of Resurrection and Judgement.[152]

We may find this story in various versions and authors: for 'Alī b. Abdurrahman's late fourteenth-century cosmography, 'the heavenly sciences…wonderful talismans, the books and knowledge of every soothsayer (*kāhin*) and every sort of magic (*siḥr*)', as well as 'the likes and the acts of every doctor and magician (*her hekīm ve kāhin*) who lived in the world', were depicted in the pyramids by their unidentified builders;[153] for Evliya, Idris is a disciple of Cebra'il who helps the Egyptian king to build the pyramids;[154] for Firdevsī, Idris and then Hermes (Hürmüz Ḥakīm) are members of a chain of transmission of the science of talismans and conjuring (*da'vet*);[155] for a late sixteenth-century translation of a Persian *melheme*, or book of prognostication, the genealogy of this science is traced back to the Prophet Daniel, followed by Hermes, Büzürcmihr (Anushirvan's vizier), Valis (Iskender's companion), and finally Ca'fer-i Sadıḳ.[156] A somewhat different tradition is related in Ömer Karakaşzâde's (d. 1637) narrative of the history of wisdom: here, Hermes is identified not with Idris, but rather with his disciple:

[151] Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 1: 285–286; Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftâh as-Sa'âdah*, 314–315.

[152] Kâtip Çelebi, tr. Balcı, *Keşfü'z-zunûn*, 1: 31; *Keşf-el-zunun*, eds Yaltkaya and Bilge, 1: 25–26.

[153] Ali b. Abdurrahman, ed. Al, 'Acâ'ibü'l-mahlūkât (35.–70. varak)', 53 (f. 68a).

[154] [Evliya Çelebi], eds Dankoff, Tezcan, and Sheridan, *Ottoman Explorations of the Nile*, 91; Evliya Çelebi, eds Kahraman, Dağlı, and Dankoff, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, X. Kitap*, 11.

[155] Firdevsī, ed. Büyükkarcı, *Firdevsī-i Ṭavīl and His Da'vet-nāme*, 113–114.

[156] Boyraz, 'Türk halkbiliminin yazılı kaynakları', 341. The Ottoman text has Hürmüz and Üveys where the Persian text quotes Hermes and Vâlis (ibid., 366). On the genealogy of the attribution of such kinds of prognostication to Daniel, see Raggetti, 'Thunders, Haloes, and Earthquakes'.

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> And they say that the Hermes of Hermeses, who is the compiler of the rules of the stars and talismans and medicine, learned from Idris—upon whom be peace! Idris ascended to the sphere of Saturn and rotated with Saturn's sphere for thirty years, and having understood the conditions of the spheres he descended and proclaimed the knowledge of the stars and the other issues of the spheres.

On Hermes, Karakaşzâde quotes Bisṭāmī to the effect that 'he began the revealing of the nature and quality of knowledge' on the instructions of a person who turns out to be his own 'perfect nature' (*ṭibā'-i tāmm*), whereas later on he also relates the story of his being illuminated by the angel Cebra'il.[157] The first story, as well as the references to Agathodaemon and others, seems to stem from al-Suhrawardi's work.[158]

Still, no Ottoman source seems to mention the 'three Hermeses': indeed, Arabic sources, trying to put various ancient traditions in a meaningful historic context, talked of the first Hermes, a sage who founded the sciences and preserved them in the pyramids before the Flood; the second, the teacher of Pythagoras in Babylon who renewed these sciences after the Flood; and the third, a physician and alchemist in Egypt, teacher of Asclepius.[159] Now, although authors such as al-Shahrazuri and al-Suyuti, both widely read in Ottoman times, referred to these stories, Ottoman authors ignore the two lesser Hermeses. All their stories refer to the first, antediluvian prophet, whom they identify with Enoch/Idris, who ascended to the celestial sphere, predicted the Flood, and concealed all sciences in the pyramids. Only a few scattered traces show that there was some knowledge of the 'three Hermeses' tradition: Celalzâde Salih Çelebi's mid-sixteenth century history of Egypt, where he mentions in a marginal note the story of the three Hermeses,[160] and Kâtib Çelebi's designation of 'the first Hermes'. Furthermore, there is no significant Hermetic literature in Ottoman Turkish: that is, no sayings, maxims, or treatises attributed to Hermes. Muṣṭafā 'Ālī and Bursevī mention some maxims known as belonging to this literature, but they both attribute them to Idris, rather than Hermes;[161] this shows that part of this literature was circulating but not in the form of a *corpus Hermeticum*.

[157] Kurz, *Ways to Heaven*, 217–228; at any rate, he notes that 'some people say that Idris is the Hermes of Hermeses' (ibid., 223). On Idris/Hermes' ascension to Saturn, see van Bladel, *The Arabic Hermes*, 164–184; on Bisṭāmī's references to Hermes' 'perfect inner nature', see Gardiner, 'Lettrism and History', 246.

[158] van Bladel, *The Arabic Hermes*, 225. On the concept of 'perfect nature', also connected with Apollonius from Tyana or Bālīnās, see Saif, 'Pseudo-Aristotelian Hermetica', 25–26, 38, 61–63.

[159] See van Bladel, *The Arabic Hermes*, 121–163, for a thorough survey of the origins of this tradition.

[160] Salih bin Celaleddin, ed. Manav, 'Salih bin Celaleddin'in *Tarih-i Mısır*'ı', 245 (f. 120a). In a strange twist, the same work relates that 'the second Hermes' is Idris(!): ibid., 248 (f. 121b).

[161] İsmâil Hakkı Bursevî, eds Muslu and Namlı, *Tamâmü'l-feyz*, 178 ('Idris had said that whoever lives in a place devoid of a victorious sultan, a just judge, a wise doctor, a lively market, and a running river has lost himself, his family, his wealth, and his children'); Âlî, eds Donuk and Örs,

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It seems that the Ottoman Hermetic tradition was mainly based on the Illuminationist version of the legend, which mostly placed emphasis on the celestial, undisputed source of the perennial wisdom attributed to Hermes. Al-Suhrawardī explicitly made Hermes his forerunner, the first in a chain of sages that ends in his revelations, perhaps in order to claim (in Kevin van Bladel's words) a 'more ancient, authoritative, and divine source than Aristotle.'[162] This tendency was so strong that the immensely influential Illuminationist al-Shahrazurī's account of the Three Hermeses faded away, it seems, in favour of the forceful image of Hermes receiving perennial wisdom.[163] Indeed, those authors speaking of Hermes have links with the Illuminationist tradition—namely, Şükrullah Efendi, Taşköprüzāde, and Kâtib Çelebi, as well as Karakaşzâde—whereas authors associated with other intellectual traditions (especially Akbarian Sufism) relate the Idris stories of elevation and inspiration identifying him with Enoch, but not with Hermes.[164]

Wisdom for the Few

One of the main doctrines of Hermeticism is that knowledge, or at least a great and important part of it, has been revealed or discovered by Hermes or some other figure in ancient (preferably antediluvian) times and has then been transmitted to an elect few, who are capable of grasping such truths that may be unfathomable for the common intellect.[165] The idea that philosophy is not for the masses was already common in authors like al-Ghazālī and al-Farābī, and as we saw earlier, the idea of Idris/Enoch (or Hermes) having been granted a revelation of perennial knowledge dates back to the ninth century.[166] In Ottoman culture, however, just as Hermeticism (i.e. the belief in perennial knowledge revealed to Hermes before the Flood) was associated with Illuminationist (*ishrāqī*) authors, so was the Hermetic theory of knowledge: that is, esotericism—the belief that

Künhü'l-ahbâr. 1. Rükün, 1: 528. For the motto, as conveyed by al-Shahrazuri, see van Bladel, *The Arabic Hermes*, 208.

[162] van Bladel, *The Arabic Hermes*, 223.

[163] On al-Shahrazuri's account, see van Bladel, *The Arabic Hermes*, 128.

[164] See Atanasova, 'Enoch as Idrīs', 404–411. As we have seen, Muṣṭafā Ali and İsmā'īl Ḥaḳḳı Bursevī, both indifferent to or dismissive of Illuminationism, attribute their Hermetic mottos to Idris (and not to Hermes). See also Casale, 'Mehmed the Conqueror', making a case for this emphasis on perennial knowledge as being a parallel to contemporaneous European *prisca theologia*.

[165] I delved into this topic in more detail in Sariyannis, 'Ottoman Occultism', 51–55; Sariyannis, 'Sources and Traditions of Knowledge'. On various aspects of esoteric writing, see Melzer, *Philosophy between the Lines*; on the genealogies of forbidden knowledge, see Ginzburg, 'High and Low'.

[166] Griffel, 'The Project of Enlightenment', 1–6; van Bladel, *The Arabic Hermes*; Yücesoy, 'Translation as Self-Consciousness', 538–545. Cf. Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature*, esp. 15–90. Noah Gardiner suggests that in post-medieval, post-Bunian magic literature, secrecy and Hermetic style are only used as the cultural capital of a past tradition, in which authors like al-Bisṭāmī invest: Gardiner, 'Lettrism and History', 233.

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knowledge should be kept for the elect few and not diffused to commoners. For one thing, Illuminationist wisdom or *ḥikma* was considered by al-Suhrawardī and his followers as perennial knowledge, going back not only to Hermes but also to the famous ancient Greek sages: thus, Plato had come by the early fifteenth century to be described as the dean of ancient Illuminationists, whereas Aristotle was the dean of ancient Peripatetics/philosophers.[167] At any rate, the belief in the (especially occultist) wisdom of the ancients had imbued all layers of Ottoman culture; Evliya did not have to be a devout Illuminationist to narrate that Plato had left a Latin inscription in Peć (Peçoy), where he allegedly had settled after leaving Athens, saying: 'I had lived here 3,000 years before Alexander built this castle. It will pass to the hands of the Christians and of the Muslims repeatedly, and in the end it will fall to the hands of the Italians.'[168] Pythagoras (Fisagors) is glorified as the first practitioner of *simyā*, in the time of Prophet David,[169] and of course Apollonius from Tyana (Belinās Ḥakīm) is in numerous sources the vizier of Alexander, a master of the art of conjuration and of talismanics.[170]

A story about how Aristotle decided to make wisdom so difficult to grasp that only those suitable will comprehend it, in order not to disclose its secrets, runs all the way from Taşköprüzāde's encyclopedia to Nevʿī's (d. 1599) vernacular counterpart, *Netā'icü'l-fünūn*. Taşköprüzāde juxtaposes Plato, who wishes to hide wisdom from the masses, to Aristotle, who chooses to reveal it, but in an unintelligible way, having 'put down in it, for safekeeping, chasms (*mahāwī*) which only the philosophers (*ahlihā*, lit. "its people") will look at (*yaṭlaʿ*)' (Fig. 5.3).[171] Nevʿī also gives his version of the story:

> Before [Aristotle] the art of philosophy had not been written down; there existed [only] some scattered treatises in the form of hints, allusions, signs, and riddles because the forefathers did not impart philosophical knowledge and other hidden sciences … to anyone who was not a philosopher. Knowledge was passed on by inheritance and not by study. When they put this matter to Plato, Plato

[167] Walbridge, *The Wisdom of the Mystic East*, 17–50; Walbridge, 'Suhrawardī's (d. 1191) *Intimations of the Tablet and the Throne*'; Kurz, *Ways to Heaven*, 206–207, 216–230; Sariyannis, 'Sources and Traditions of Knowledge'. See some non-Illuminationist examples in Evliya Çelebi, eds Kahraman, Dağlı, and Dankoff, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, VIII. Kitap*, 119 (f. 254a), and Mahmud Efendi, ed. Tunalı, *Atina tarihi*, 238, 241, 275, 286.

[168] Evliya Çelebi, eds Kahraman and Dağlı, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, VI. Kitap*, 115 (ff. 67a–67b).

[169] Medḥī, ed. Öztürk, 'Türk tarihinde İbn-i Sînâ destânları', 71–72.

[170] See e.g. Firdevsī, ed. Büyükkarcı, *Firdevsī-i Ṭavīl and His Daʿvet-nāme*, 149; Hallum, 'New Light', 110; Kurz, *Ways to Heaven*, 237–241 (on the genealogy of the 100 x 100 magic square by Lutfi al-Ṭoḳātī, or Molla Lutfi, back to Greek philosophers); Melvin-Koushki, 'Taşköprīzāde on the (Occult) Science', 160–161. Hermes, Ptolemy, Alexander, Aristotle, and Daniel coexist with Egyptian kings (Qibtim, Akhmumus, Misrayim, and others) in Evliya's enumeration of the bridges (actually, the sources) of the Nile: [Evliya Çelebi], eds Dankoff, Tezcan, and Sheridan, *Ottoman Explorations of the Nile*, 53=368.

[171] Tashkupri-zadah, eds Bakry and Abu'l-Nur, *Miftâh as-Sa'âdah*, 294; cf. Taşköprülüzâde, tr. Çevik, *Mevzuat'ül-ulûm*, 1: 268.

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Fig. 5.3 Plato in a cave with his disciples. ʿAṭāʾī, *Ḫamse*, Walters Art Museum, W.666, f. 73a (1721).

> asked…'Do you want to publicize secret matters of wisdom so that the uneducated (*cühelā*) get to know the secret knowledge of the wise?' Aristotle said: 'I will do it in such a way that the unexplained meaning will not be obvious to the uninitiated (*nā-maḥrem*).'[172]

[172] Nev'i Efendi, eds Procházka-Eisl and Çelik, *Texts on Popular Learning*, 79=229–230.

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The same story can be found in Ömer Karakaşzāde (d. 1637), who adds extensive allusions both to Illuminationism and to Hermes and Idris (adding that Hermes/Idris was granted this knowledge by the heavens or through Cebra'il), ending again with Aristotle's codifying of the principles of knowledge 'in a brief and succinct, even obscure and enigmatic, manner', to keep it hidden from those who were not initiated (*nâ-mahremler*).[173] In his entry on Aristotle in a little-known biographical dictionary, *Süllemü'l-vuṣūl ilâ tabaḳātü'l-fuṣūl*, Kâtib Çelebi also notes that 'Greek philosophers used to conceal philosophy from the commoners, and they taught it only to the sons of rulers and kings.'[174] And regarding the execution of the chief astrologer Hüseyin Efendi in 1650, Kâtib Çelebi warns:

> [I]t is inauspicious to bring to light and disclose this kind of divine secret (*bu maḳūle esrār-ı ilāhiyyeyi keşf ü ifşāda yümn olmayup*); [he didn't know that] one must conceal with circumspection those things that one learns through deduction and inference from the rules of the craft (*fenn ḳavā'īdinden*).[175]

Yet, not all authors advocated this esoteric approach to knowledge. Actually, even al-Bisṭāmī has been described as a 'post-esotericist' author, who tries to diffuse lettrist knowledge and make it clear for larger audiences: as he claims, he wrote 'so that one who did not understand their symbols will understand them, and one who did not grasp their terms of art will grasp them.'[176] One may say that Kâtib Çelebi himself, with his encyclopedic project of translations and compilations, was not really the Hermetic type of wise person whom he advocated in his perhaps commonplace Illuminationist takes. After all, his excerpt concerning the poor astrologer may be interpreted as saying that knowledge should be disclosed, save for one's personal safety. We know that al-Nābulusī was accused of having 'revealed [the] divine sciences among the public' and having 'allowed the reading to be publicly heard'; his biographer felt the same way and had trouble defending him.[177] We can see the same consideration in Ottoman alchemical works, which (in sharp contrast with their famously esoteric European counterparts) try to convey knowledge to the uninitiated: they urge their readers to keep it secret, only because the prospect of unlimited wealth is a dangerous thing.[178] As İsmā'īl Ḥaḳḳı Bursevī remarks, there is no point in hiding the twelve holy names of God,

[173] Kurz, *Ways to Heaven*, 216–228.
[174] Kâtib Çelebi, ed. Gökyay, *Kâtip Çelebi'den seçmeler*, 198–200; Koç, 'XVII. yüzyılın ortasında', 264–265.
[175] Kâtib Çelebi, ed. Aycibin, 'Kâtib Çelebi, *Fezleke*', 1072; also copied by Na'ima, ed. İpşirli, *Târih-i Na'imâ*, 3: 1272. Cf. a similar quotation by the late-seventeenth-century *muvakkıt* Kasımpaşalı Osman: Levend, *Divan edebiyatı*, 200.
[176] Gardiner, 'The Occultist Encyclopedism', 13.
[177] Akkach, *'Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulusi*, 123–128; cf. Allen, 'Self, Space, Society', 422–436.
[178] Artun, 'Hearts of Gold and Silver', 35–36 and fn81, 62.

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as there is no point hiding alchemical secrets: they are so difficult in themselves that encrypting them further would only make knowledge impossible.

> We have disclosed the twelve names applied among the Celvetis even to those who behave meanly in this matter; because hiding the word is meaningless when reaching the meaning requires covering great distances, as in the science of alchemy (*ʿilm al-iksīr*). Not only those who do not know it [the science of alchemy], but even those who know it find its application difficult. While they are hidden under veiled covers, like sultans concealed under old clothes and raw silk, what is the benefit of knowing their names?[179]

Similarly, the mufti of Athens who writes the history of the ancient city in the early eighteenth century (and who does not seem to have strong Illuminationist affiliations) has Peisistratus ordering:

> Let all the sciences and branches of knowledge be collected and registered! For with oblivion a lot of rules of knowledge get abandoned, and do not get corrected against reality by the wise (*zīrā nisyān ile ḳavāʿid-i ʿilmden nice ḳāʿideler terk olunur ve ḥükemādan ḥaḳīḳatde muṣliḥ bulunmayub*); oblivion leads to the corruption of knowledge.[180]

In the same work, all sciences including occult ones (*ʿulūm-i ʿaḳlī ve naḳlī ve ġarāib u ʿacāyib ve nārnecāt ve ṭalāsım ve envāʾ fütūn-i şitāda müʾellef olan ʿulūm*) are copied by Hadrian on bronze tablets and put in his library, so that 'in time of need, if a [manuscript] copy was not found outside, they would copy it from these bronze tablets'.[181]

Finally, one may also mention the retrospective invention of occult traditions in the context of these gnoseological debates. Invented tradition seems to have been a permanent feature of many occult sciences in medieval Islam, first and foremost of alchemy with the Jabirian corpus (but also of astrology with the emphasis on knowledge transmitted from the Sabians of Harran).[182] However, the Ottoman era seems to have witnessed a real boom in such inventions. The most famous example may be the spurious *Shajara al-Nuʿmāniyya*, attributed to Ibn ʿArabī, as well as the larger version of al-Būnī's *magnum opus*, *Shams al-maʿārif al-kubrā*, which was perhaps compiled in the seventeenth century drawing from both al-Būnī's and al-Bisṭāmī's works.[183] *Shawq al-mustahām*, the treatise on

[179] İsmâil Hakkı Bursevî, eds Muslu and Namlı, *Tamâmü'l-feyz*, 67.
[180] Mahmud Efendi, ed. Tunalı, *Atina tarihi*, 177. [181] Ibid., 355.
[182] van Bladel, *The Arabic Hermes*, 64–114; Chahanovich, 'Ottoman Eschatological Esotericism', 70–71.
[183] On *Shajara*, see Gril, 'L'Énigme de la *Šağara al-nuʿmāniyya*'; Chahanovich, 'Ottoman Eschatological

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ancient and esoteric alphabets attributed to Ibn Wahshiyya, also seems to have been rediscovered and perhaps reworked in the Ottoman period.[184] One may also recall the alchemical corpus of ʿAlī Çelebi and its attribution to Eşrefzāde ʿAlī,[185] the attribution of astrological wisdom to Sheyh Vefā (d. 1491),[186] the attribution of well-known lettrist techniques to Saruhānī (see above, Chapter 4), the addition of an occultist supplement to the medical compendium of Dāʾūd al-Anṭākī (see above, Chapter 1), and even the 'discovery' of a seventh book of Mevlānā's *Mesnevī* in 1603/4.[187] If, indeed, there is a growth of 'invented tradition' in the Ottoman sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, one may suggest a connection with the tendency to emphasize perennial wisdom in Ottoman Hermeticism, as analysed above. A turn towards ancient authority brings together gnoseological elitism, legitimacy of top-down knowledge, and antiquarianism, of which many examples have been cited and which may be seen as a by-product of the universalist claims of the sixteenth-century Ottoman Empire.

*

The real subject of this chapter, one might say, has been knowledge: knowledge of nature and its limits, as well as those entitled to this knowledge or to parts of it. The large literature on marvels and wonders, *ʿajāʾib* and *gharāʾib*, had its swansong in the Ottoman period up to the late sixteenth or the early seventeenth century, not only in geographical compendiums but also in other genres of literature. Often drawing from older traditions, Ottoman *mirabilia* may have been localized within the imperial territories to a greater degree than pre-Ottoman ones (which were mostly located in exotic, faraway lands), and Ottoman authors were particularly keen on recording or inventing traditions about talismans that sought to interpret the remnants of the Byzantine or ancient past of these territories. Throughout the seventeenth century, however, the expansion of geographical knowledge through the use of European sources led to the relocation of such wonders back to the unknown faraway part of the world and, eventually, to a parallel sphere of existence (either fictional and symbolic or supernatural). Everyday natural objects, on the other hand, had their own occult qualities or properties, not supernatural but based on subtleties of the cosmos that the intellect could not grasp.

Knowledge of the causes of such marvels, as well as of the cosmos at large, was a debatable topic. It could be approached through revelation, reason, or experience,

Esotericism'; on the *corpus Bunianum*, see Gardiner, 'Forbidden Knowledge'; Coulon, *La Magie en terre d'islam*, 225–232.

[184] Sariyannis, 'Languages of Ottoman Esotericism', 70–71.

[185] Artun, 'Hearts of Gold and Silver'.

[186] Schmidt, 'The Occult Sciences', 233–234.

[187] Gürbüzel, *Taming the Messiah*, 124–155.

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and each way had its own peculiarities (it is to be noted that experience remained restrained in range and validity, and never reached the level of experimentalism). Revealed knowledge, in particular, was to pass from the ancient prophets (Idris or Hermes) to select initiates, and this theory seems to have been connected with claims of top-down gnoseological elitism that may have been set by an intellectual elite against egalitarian approaches, perhaps connected (as I will try to show in the next chapter) with pietistic tendencies such as the Ḳāḍızādeli movement.

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6
Nature Enchanted and Disenchanted

Although I have sought to take account of fluctuations and developments over time, in general the previous chapters have tended to describe a static, motionless situation, as if Ottoman world views regarding nature and the supernatural were snapshots covering centuries. However, from the various differing and sometimes conflicting views cited above, the reader must have understood that there were serious changes in Ottoman culture concerning the role of the miraculous, the supernatural, and the inexplicable in everyday life and in the understanding of the world. In this chapter, I will attempt to recapitulate these changes and to see to what degree they may be connected with certain 'grand narratives', such as Enlightenment and the disenchantment of the world, with all their regressions and multiple paths.

Natural Sciences Expanding?

The world view described in previous chapters seems to change gradually from the mid-seventeenth century onwards. I do not adhere to a vision of occultism waning in favour of scientific exploration: the juxtaposition of esotericism, magic, and the occult arts to science has been rightly criticized in the past decade.[1] For one thing, as put forward in the Introduction, my perspective here is social and cultural history, rather than the history of science, and in this respect the correspondence of 'emic' knowledge to our modern conceptions of reality is irrelevant. Yet, I will try to lay down some reasons why a study of natural sciences may be pertinent to understanding the notions and conceptions of the supernatural.[2]

If we consider the cosmos as a continuum, we can imagine invisible borders separating the natural from the supernatural; what can be explained and/or predicted from what cannot; what can be controlled from what cannot; and so forth. These borders are shifting through time, as society or a given social or

[1] See e.g. Melvin-Koushki, 'Magic in Islam'; Melvin-Koushki, 'Another Scientific Revolution'; Stearns, *Revealed Sciences*, 1–11, 170–174; also Neusner, Frerichs, and McCracken, *Religion, Science, and Magic* for the Western world.

[2] On the debates relevant to the history of Ottoman science, see Shefer-Mossensohn, 'A Tale of Two Discourses'; Shefer-Mossensohn, *Science among the Ottomans*, 10–13; Aydın, 'Beyond Culturalism?'; Küçük, 'Early Modern Ottoman Science'; Küçük, *Science without Leisure* and the dialogue that ensued: Shafir, 'The Almighty Akçe' and Küçük's response in *Osmanlı Araştırmaları/ Journal of Ottoman Studies* 59 (2022), 261–272.

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cultural group includes more and more segments of reality in nature—that is, into explicable and understandable procedures—making the supernatural sphere smaller. Of course, we have to consider that no society (our own included) moves along a unilinear process of disenchantment: whereas some of its segments may 'secularize' or 'rationalize' more parts of reality, others may wish to bring back supernatural explanations for phenomena. I have already mentioned in Chapter 2 the influence of 'fundamentalist' currents—namely, the Ḳāḍızādelis—whose denial of Sufi miracles pushed the supernatural element to the margins of everyday reality, back to the times of the Prophet, in contrast to their Sufi adversaries who continued to see it everywhere (although in different forms). This influence coincided with, and possibly contributed to, a tendency to push this border further, expanding the field of reality that could be explained, understood, and eventually controlled. Ali Yaycıoğlu argued recently that Sharia-minded Islamist activists, the descendants, so to speak, of the Ḳāḍızādeli movement, allied with military engineers and technocrats in defending Selim III's westernizing reforms of the late eighteenth century.[3] This tendency can be seen in both erudite scholarship and vernacular practice, at least in urban environments, and we will study some of its characteristics.

Undoubtedly, Ottoman geography underwent a significant change with the appearance of Kâtib Çelebi's translations and original works. It is generally believed that this extraordinary author revolutionized geography and, more broadly, Ottoman science by leading a project of making translations from European languages, thereby providing a scientific basis to a discipline that had belonged, until his time, to the traditional (*naqliyya*) rather than rational (*'aqliyya*) sciences.[4] In this process, he was quite dismissive of his *'ajā'ib*-style predecessors; he may have taken al-Qazwīnī as an opportunity to argue that the existence of unexplained marvels is quite possible, as we have seen, but he spoke with remarkable sarcasm concerning pseudo-Ibn Wardī's similar geography:

> As usual among Arab scholars and authors who are ignorant of the rational sciences, there are many unfounded stories and [accounts of] non-existent things. Like other similar books, this one is popular among the narrow-minded. It begins by glorifying God the All-Powerful, who forgives sins and accepts repentance; perhaps the author wanted to show thus that his book (as well as similar ones) is to be counted as a sin.[5]

[3] Yaycıoğlu, 'Guarding Traditions and Laws'.

[4] Hagen, *Ein osmanischer Geograph bei der Arbeit*; Hagen, 'Afterword', 227–233; Hagen, 'Introduction to *Cihānnümā*', 10–12.

[5] Kâtip Çelebi, eds Yaltkaya and Bilge, *Keşf-el-zunun*, 1: 801; cf. Kâtib Çelebi, eds Hagen and Dankoff, *An Ottoman Cosmography*, 43, on the same work ('he followed the usual authorities and depicted the earth in Arab fashion, quite absurdly'). He criticizes harshly even Imam Mas'ūdī: Kâtib Çelebi, eds Hagen and Dankoff, *An Ottoman Cosmography*, 84.

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And this is how he dismisses the very existence of Mount Ḳāf, about which none of his predecessors, from *Dürr-i meknun* to Aşık Mehmed, had expressed any doubt:

> [Mount Ḳāf] does not exist in reality. Even if commentators of the Qur'an have stated that it is a mountain that surrounds the whole world, this is just an opinion [of theirs] and has been said in compliance to legends… Because the state of the earth has been known to geographers; there is no room left for them to tell such things [as the existence of Ḳāf], and this is known to everybody.[6]

However, as I have tried to show elsewhere,[7] Kâtib Çelebi is not exempt from a 'supernatural' vision of the world, especially when it comes to religious matters. It is true that earlier geographers considered their discipline more as a 'transmitted science' (*'ilm al-naqliyya*), resembling theological or legal studies; hence their care in presenting 'chains of transmission' or *isnād*, chains of verifiable witnesses, a care that is also found in contemporaneous works of fiction (e.g. the work of Cinānī and the novels of Nergisī in the first half of the seventeenth century).[8] Let us note here that these geographers did not refrain from forming their own opinion on disputed matters, as can be seen in Mehmed Aşık's observations on the Mongols and Sipāhīzāde Meḥmed's (d. 1589) discussion of the Mountains of the Moon, where the sources of the Nile lie.[9] Even earlier, the scholar Celalzāde Salih Çelebi (d. 1565) corrects the historian al-Maqrizī (d. 1442) and his description of Egypt concerning the characteristics of the balsam plant:

> The situation we saw should not be taken for granted because what we found in the books, we did not see. I am not saying that what was in the books was false. What they saw and heard, they wrote. However, as time passes (*tebeddül-i rūzigār-ıla*), things change.[10]

The innovation brought about by Kâtib Çelebi, however, was not so much in his attitude against geography as a 'rational science' (*'ilm al-'aqliyya*) or a new method (e.g. he did not care for perspective projection when copying Mercator's maps),[11] as in the widening of the sources he considered legitimate. One may draw a parallel here with the new quest for so-called 'epistemic witnessing' in

[6] Kâtib Çelebi, ed. Gökyay, *Kâtip Çelebi'den seçmeler*, 264. Cf. his dismissal of Alexander's Wall in Kâtib Çelebi, eds Hagen and Dankoff, *An Ottoman Cosmography*, 119. For a comparison of different Ottoman takes on Mount Ḳāf, see Sariyannis, '*Ajā'ib ve gharā'ib*', 454–456.

[7] Sariyannis, '*Ajā'ib ve gharā'ib*'.

[8] We can notice this concern in pre-Ottoman *aja'ib* literature as well: von Hees, 'The Astonishing', 108.

[9] Sariyannis, '*Ajā'ib ve gharā'ib*', 458; Sipāhīzāde Meḥmed, ed. Danış, *Evzahu'l-Mesâlik*, 261–262.

[10] Shopov, 'In the Balsam Orchard', 262–263; Salih bin Celaleddin, ed. Manav, 'Salih bin Celaleddin'in *Tarih-i Mısır*'ı', 346 (f. 184b); cf. Casale, 'An Ottoman Humanist', 5–6.

[11] Hagen, 'Kâtip Çelebi's maps'; Hagen, 'Introduction to *Cihānnümā*', 16–17.

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late-sixteenth-century European travel literature, where the independent assessment of a witness/traveller's credibility was needed to credit a travel account.[12] This was a serious step in comparison, for instance, to his predecessor Mehmed Aşık, who had not taken into account even contemporaneous Ottoman travelogues or portolans, although he occasionally added his own impressions from his travels in the Balkans.[13] Kâtib Çelebi, in contrast, added not only Ottoman sources but also European authorities, giving them primacy, and thus he presented a completely different image of Ottoman geography; however, he continued to apply to these authorities the same methods of textual criticism used by traditional transmitted sciences, without really introducing a new method of argumentation. What was truly different compared to previous geographers was that, while they used a quasi-'syncretic' or compiling method, presenting all existing opinions and often ending with the quote 'God knows best' (as in virtually all other scientific genres), Kâtib Çelebi tried to form his own opinion after examining the available information. His quest for coherence, we might say, was indeed a new element for Ottoman geography. However, for our subject, it is important to note that when he denied the existence of creatures or mythological places, such as the famous mountain of Ḳāf, Kâtib Çelebi followed the principle of the strongest authority (in his case, the authority of European sources); he did not reject the magical or supernatural element as such. This is evident from his opinions on magic or divination, which we saw above, but also from some of his geographical descriptions, such as those of the legendary island of *Wāqwāq* with its tree in a human form:

> The poor one (Kātib Çelebi) says: This island has still not been discovered and its location is not known. Judging by some of the above description, there is no basis in truth…To be sure, the emergence of such things from the actions of nature and the play of humors and circumstance is not impossible, because there are plants in human form and the genesis of animals from plants does occur. The three kingdoms of nature (animal, vegetable and mineral) can emerge from one another with some admixture…It is possible that the origin of this tree is something composed of the matter of humans and plants. Aside from this, it is within the realm of possibility that someone knowledgeable about the properties of nature and the subtleties of the foundation of wisdom might combine the original matter of both types and produce a different type of being composed of the two.[14]

[12] See Subrahmanyam, 'Monsters, Miracles and the World of *'ajā'ib-o-gharā'ib*', 276–277.
[13] Hagen, 'Introduction to *Cihānnümā*', 4, 7.
[14] Kâtib Çelebi, eds Hagen and Dankoff, *An Ottoman Cosmography*, 151; cf. Hagen, *Ein osmanischer Geograph*, 382–393.

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Even Ebū Bekr b. Behrām al-Dimaşḳī (d. 1691), whose maps and description of Anatolia were used for the 1732 Müteferriḳa edition of Kâtib Çelebi's *Cihānnümā*, includes *ʿajā'ib*-like enumerations of wonders: most of them are more like remarkable facts, with no preternatural overtones, yet, for instance, he mentions a well in a ruined church near Ankara, where mad people would look inside and 'either die while looking in the well or else be cured of [their] madness'; and in Uludağ a great circular plateau, where 'if you step on one corner, the surface moves and the other side rises', while 'if you take your foot away, it returns to the way it was'.[15]

Still, it is a fact that the supernatural element, the *ʿajā'ib* and *gara'ib*, visibly withdraws from scholarly works on geography or zoobotany from the mid-seventeenth century: these are precisely the domains where the authorities of medieval Islam are replaced by new sources, those of European geography. We can see this not only in descriptions of faraway lands, but also in those of Istanbul. Whereas older accounts stressed the divinatory and talismanic peculiarities of hieroglyphic inscriptions and Byzantine monuments, Kâtib Çelebi had Byzantine and Latin chronicles of the city translated, thus introducing a new perspective on the city's past without the legendary and eschatological overtones of his predecessors; and his continuator, Hezārfen Hüseyin Efendi (d. 1691), warned his readers explicitly that nothing is hidden under or atop the ancient columns of the city.[16]

In other words, what drove the supernatural out of the Ottoman geographical vision, what undermined the *ʿajā'ib*, was a shift in authority, rather than a radical rationalization of the natural sciences (and perhaps, as noted in Chapter 5, the repercussions of an imperial administration seeking to cope with the governance of vast territories). Thus, when Kâtib Çelebi dismisses the stories about the ox and the fish carrying the world on their shoulders, he does not hesitate to discredit even a Companion of the Prophet (and one of the most reliable ones to boot), although taking care to justify him:

> The tale of the ox and the fish, related by Ibn ʿAbbās—if any credence can be given to it—is accounted for by the constellations of Taurus and Pisces. Such statements by the Companions of the Prophet probably derive from the fact that at the time of the rise of Islam, when the faith was not yet firmly established and people thought along the lines of the philosophers, the Companions did not want them to be deprived of grasping and relating the rules of the religion of Islam, so they responded to questions that were unrelated to the faith by recourse to the philosophical principle, 'Speak to people according to their intellectual level.' Since the job of prophets and of the Companions of the

[15] Kâtib Çelebi, eds Hagen and Dankoff, *An Ottoman Cosmography*, 492, 504. See also ibid., 476 (snakes on Mount Erciş, 'thanks to a talisman they never leave the mountain').

[16] Kafesçioğlu, 'Byzantium in Early Modern Istanbul', 348.

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> Prophet is to teach the people matters of faith, not to explicate the reality of things, when they were asked about the phases of the moon, the verse (Koran 2:189), 'Say: They are times appointed for men and for the pilgrimage', was revealed, so the people would know the kinds of questions to ask them and would not ask questions about matters outside the faith.[17]

We may understand this rupture better if we compare Kâtib Çelebi's text with the account of the discovery of the Americas by Sipāhīzāde Meḥmed (d. 1589): after stating that the 'ancient scholars' (*'ulemā-i mütekaddimīn*) had divided the earth into four parts, one of which was inhabited (the well-known 'inhabited quarter', *rub'-ı meskūn*), Sipāhīzāde relates a story from the Alexander Romance, according to which Alexander had dispatched a ship to the Ocean to find whether there was any inhabited land beyond it. His people found no land, but encountered another ship sent by another king, from some lands beyond the ocean:

> They had said that this story has no truth and that it is fake. But now the cursed Portuguese found that, from the two northern quarters, one is inhabited all over as far as China. In the language of the people (*ḫalḳ dilinde*) they called it 'New World'. Thus, the northern half of the earth is settled, and it is called the inhabited half. So, there is no truth in the saying that there is no truth in Alexander's story; God knows best.[18]

In contrast, in his enumeration of the sources that he consulted for *Cihānnümā*, Kâtib Çelebi does not make a distinction between pre-Ottoman Arabic and Persian books, on the one hand, and European ones, on the other; but he invariably considers the latter reliable while he often criticizes harshly some of the former: he praises 'the attention and skill with which the Christians investigated and presented this science [of geography]', and deplores 'the foolishness and absurdity of the Muslims who ignored and neglected it', claiming that 'all the books written in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish about climes and regions . . . are erroneous and confused'.[19]

Yet, not everyone was as open to new developments as Kâtib Çelebi and his continuators. According to Antoine Galland, two astrologers of Istanbul stated in 1672 that they would risk their heads if they dared to make lunar maps such as those he showed them in Hevelius' *Selenographia* (1647).[20] One might postulate that the liberties a scholar could take in adopting infidel science relating to the

[17] Kâtib Çelebi, eds Hagen and Dankoff, *An Ottoman Cosmography*, 87.

[18] Sipāhīzāde Meḥmed, ed. Danış, *Evzahu'l-Mesâlik*, 227 (cf. Casale, 'Did Alexander the Great', 886). This story is also to be found in Aḥmedī's (d. 1412) *İskendernāme*: Toutant, 'Le Premier Roman d'Alexandre', 16.

[19] Kâtib Çelebi, eds Hagen and Dankoff, *An Ottoman Cosmography*, 40.

[20] Galland, *Voyage à Constantinople*, 1: 26.

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sublunary world (e.g. geography and history) would not be taken as easily concerning the sciences of the supralunary one, with its clear theological connotations. Still, the chief court astrologer Mehmed Çelebi (d. 1630/1) asserted that he used 'Arabic, Persian, and Frankish' sources for his astrological compendium,[21] and in 1683 an unidentified elderly scholar named 'Fenula (Fethullah?) Efendi' by Michelangelo Tilli (d. 1740) studied Persian, Arabic, and Ottoman books together with European works on astronomy, featuring Copernicus' system.[22] Copernican heliocentrism was introduced as early as the 1660s, with Tezkireci Köse Ibrāhīm Efendi's translation of Durret's *Nouvelle théorie des planètes*, although heliocentrism itself was not given much importance by the translator. In Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu's words, it was treated 'on the level of a secondary technical detail'; İhsanoğlu suggests that this was due to 'the absence of a religious dogma which would cause disputes…on the subject of the geocentric and the heliocentric systems'.[23] Significantly, perhaps, Durret's work was a treatise on astrology, rather than astronomy, full of hermetic and mystic overtones, as shown by Avner Ben-Zaken, and, furthermore, Harun Küçük expressed his doubts about whether the illustrations of the heliocentric (and other) systems existed from the beginning or were added by a later reader.[24] However, more than fifty years later, İbrahim Müteferriḳa (d. 1747), the Hungarian convert who founded the first Ottoman printing house, was quite prudent in presenting heliocentrism in more detail. In his supplements to Kâtib Çelebi's *Cihānnümā*, he speaks of Aristotle's and Ptolemy's astronomy as the old school, then the school of 'Pythagoras and Plato among the ancient philosophers, and the astronomer Copernicus among the moderns', and finally, Tycho Brahe's 'more recent' school, the new astronomy. He states that the first school is 'preferable and universally accepted while the second and third schools have been rejected', but admits that 'so many subtle mysteries and truths are observed that the fingers of explanation fall short in enumerating them', before explaining in detail the mathematical and astronomical principles of each school.[25] His introduction to the second school

[21] Müneccimbaşı Mehmed Çelebi, ed. Önler, '*Uṣūl-i aḥkām-ı sāl-i 'ālem*', 8 (f. 1b). Indeed, he gives the names of the zodiac signs in Arabic, Greek, and 'Frankish', i.e. Latin; in some cases also in Hebrew (ibid., 24/f. 12a, 26/f. 13b, etc.).

[22] Ageron, 'Note sur le dessin', 118–119.

[23] İhsanoğlu, 'The Introduction of Western Science', 10; Ben-Zaken, 'The Heavens of the Sky'. The diagrams accompanying the translations had been copied from another European treatise, the 1648 edition of Andrea Argoli's *Ephemerides*, as shown by Pierre Ageron, 'Note sur le dessin'. The Copernican system was also mentioned in Ebū Bekr b. Behrām al-Dimaṣḳī's introduction to his 1685 translation of *Atlas Major*: İhsanoğlu, 'The Introduction of Western Science', 10–15.

[24] Ben-Zaken, 'The Heavens of the Sky', 2, 6–10; Küçük, 'Early Modern Ottoman Science', 9–10; Küçük, *Science without Leisure*, 111. Ben-Zaken also makes a case for Ibrāhīm Efendi's mystical and occultist motives, but in my opinion the evidence is rather weak. Ageron shows that he was most probably a convert from Szigetvár (Ageron, 'Note sur le dessin', 117).

[25] Kâtib Çelebi, eds Hagen and Dankoff, *An Ottoman Cosmography*, 51–64; cf. İhsanoğlu, 'The Introduction of Western Science', 15–19.

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(that 'of Pythagoras and Plato among the ancient philosophers, and the astronomer Copernicus among the moderns') is interesting:

> [W]hile considering the views of this group to be erroneous and abhorrent, I have simply recorded them here in summary fashion and have attached the figures and forms that they have drawn in order to expound and illustrate their ideas concerning the nature of the celestial and earthly bodies. Thus, may the heroes of the endless field of virtue and learning and the experts in the vast plain of the sciences—the distinguished men of our age who are zealous in the pursuit of knowledge—provide the necessary rebuttals of their ideas after examining them and demolish their baseless views with clear proofs and strong evidence. In order to facilitate this desire, I have left ample margins outside the lines of these pages where they may write notes that will enhance the reputation and strength of the first school and will embellish this excellent book.
>
> The Muslim philosophers have also ceaselessly rebutted this unworthy school, clearly setting forth their refutations in the books of astronomy. But no matter how baseless and false these views were, being the school of the ancient philosophers, they found supporters in every age and many books and treatises were written with the notion of defending them.[26]

The reference to Pythagoras is not coincidental: it gave an ancient aura to an innovative theory (bringing to mind the role of Hermeticism, as we suggested in the previous chapter), and it had been used in exactly the same way by the Phanariot Greek scholar Chrysanthos Notaras (a friend and correspondent of Ottoman scholars such as Yanyalı Es'ad Efendi), who had introduced heliocentrism almost simultaneously in 1716 (he eventually dismisses the theory as contrary to both the Scripture and the senses, but he claims that Copernicus and Galileo were continuing the views of the Pythagoreans).[27] Moreover, Müteferriḳa is at pains to show that 'believing in such matters is not based on religious principle and doctrinal requirement' and that many things in holy scriptures are symbolic, with 'no connection to religious and ethical matters' whatsoever (as Kâtib Çelebi had done for the ox and fish story).[28] The same arguments are repeated often verbatim by Erzurumī İbrahim Ḥaḳḳı, in his 1757 *Ma'rifetnāme* (adding that 'in the last days of his life, Plato had said that the earth is moving'); yet, by this time Erzurumī could be confident enough to give clear preference to Copernicus' model, noting all the same that this 'new astronomy' has nothing to do with the foundations of religion (Fig. 6.1); at the same time, in 1751, Osmān b. 'Abdülmennān

[26] Kâtib Çelebi, eds Hagen and Dankoff, *An Ottoman Cosmography*, 58.

[27] Notaras, *Εισαγωγή εις τα Γεωγραφικά και Σφαιρικά*, 83–86; Livieratos et al., 'The Very First Printed Map', 207–208. Cf. Izdebska, 'The Attitudes of Medieval Arabic'.

[28] Kâtib Çelebi, eds Hagen and Dankoff, *An Ottoman Cosmography*, 63.

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Fig. 6.1 The solar system according to the 'new astronomy'. The diagram on top shows the planets revolving around the sun. Below, the earth revolving around the sun. Erzurumī İbrahim Hakkı, *Mā'rifetnāme*, University of Michigan, Special Collections Research Center, Isl. Ms. 826, f. 93a (1806).

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(d. after 1779) shows explicitly his preference for heliocentrism in his translation of Varenius' geography.[29]

The development of Ottoman natural sciences has recently been reinterpreted on new grounds. Rather than examining a gradual intrusion of 'European science', rational and experimental—in other words, modern—into the pre-modern and notably Islamic patterns of Ottoman science, several studies have shown that this process was more complex and closely linked to the social history of the period. Kâtib Çelebi in 1640, and after him Yirmisekiz Mehmed Çelebi around 1710, both noted that most Islamic natural sciences had not made significant contributions to the knowledge inherited from Aristotle.[30] The gradual disappearance of 'rational sciences' in the curriculum of Ottoman madrasas, deplored by Kâtib Çelebi (and attributed by Baki Tezcan, in an interesting approach, to the growing power of the ulema and the waning of sultanic absolutism),[31] has been shown to be far from the intellectual stagnation that we are accustomed to associate with the seventeenth century: Khaled El-Rouayheb demonstrated that, on the contrary, some rational sciences and especially logic flourished unprecedentedly in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[32] But it was at the beginning of the eighteenth century, in the period commonly known as the 'Tulip Era', that the study of natural philosophy experienced a new impetus, emphasizing innovation (*bidʿat*) as a positive element.[33] One might say that the patronage of the court of Ahmed III and the creation of the first printing press began to institutionalize the circles of erudition (parallel, independent, and even rival to the madrasas), which were launched by Kâtib Çelebi and continued by his followers during the seventeenth century, such as Hezārfen Ḥüseyin Efendi. It even appears that Ahmed's grand vizier, Damad Ibrāhīm Pasha, conducted physics experiments in the palace.[34] On the other hand, the lack of serious financial backing and especially the

[29] Erzurumī İbrahim Hakkı, *Māʿrifetnāme*, University of Michigan, 199; ed. Meyan, *Mârifetnâme*, 270–271; İhsanoğlu, 'The Introduction of Western Science', 20–22. Osmān b. 'Abdülmennān uses the analogy of meat roasted on skewers: 'it is more logical to turn the skewered meat on the fire, instead of turning the fire around the meat' (Osman b. Abdülmennân, eds Kaya and Boz Kaya, *Tercüme-i kitâb-ı coğrafya*, 364). Actually, this is an argument going back to the fourteenth century and used in European scholastic and later scientific centres (e.g. by Kepler and Galileo) to support first a geocentric (the earth, in the centre, had to turn around itself), then a heliocentric world view (Stoffel, '"Comme la chair rôtie à la broche…"').

[30] Küçük, 'Natural Philosophy and Politics', 128–129.

[31] Tezcan, 'Some Thoughts on the Politics', links the scientific bloom of the sixteenth century, culminating in Taḳīyüddīn's observatory, with the imperial centralist ambitions of sultans such as Murad III. It even seems that Taḳīyüddīn's was not the only measurement of the latitude and longitude of Istanbul during Murad's reign: Brentjes, 'On the Relation', 124. Interestingly, Murad III asks his sheikh about Taḳīyüddīn's personality, and later asks his opinion about the observatory, which, he says, he wants to demolish (*şol raṣadı ḳaldurmaḳ isterüz*): Felek (ed.), *Kitābü'l-menāmāt*, 328 (no. 1734), 342 (no. 1837). On Murad III's interest in the stars, cf. Kalpaklı, 'III. Murad'ın ilm-i nücûm merakı'.

[32] See especially El-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History*.

[33] This change is not without political implications, of course, and intellectually it is linked to the introduction of Ibn Khaldun's thought by Kâtib Çelebi (the notion that different times require different measures, i.e. reforms): Sariyannis, 'Ottoman Ibn Khaldūnism', 280–282.

[34] Küçük, 'Early Enlightenment', 172ff.

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meagre salaries of state-funded scholars seem to have led to a significant absence of theory production (at least in natural sciences) by the late seventeenth century: badly remunerated scholars in the *medrese* system had to turn to practical applications of their sciences, instead of theorizing in astronomy or physics.[35] All in all, it appears that the extra-institutional character of these centres of learning (i.e. the cultivation of rational sciences in salons and private lessons, rather than in madrasas) might have been an important factor that eventually differentiated Ottoman scientific explorations from European-style Enlightenment.[36]

Only recently have Ottomanists begun to explore the role of Phanariot Greek scholars in acting as go-betweens in this process of cultural transfer. With their studies in France or Italy, especially Padova (the centre of a robust neo-Aristotelianism), scholars such as Nikolaos Mavrokordatos (d. 1730) and Chrysanthos Notaras (d. 1731) not only introduced European philosophical and scientific ideas to the Ottoman world; they also were closely connected with their Muslim counterparts, corresponding with both them and European scholars[37] (in earlier times, this correspondence had esoteric overtones: Panagiotis Nicousios, the famous interpreter of the Porte, had sent Arabic sources on *jafr* to Athanasius Kircher).[38] Harun Küçük has emphasized that the translational work of Yanyalı Esad Efendi, for example, using his contacts with Phanariot Greeks, introduced the idea that natural philosophy did not concern knowledge of the future or the essences of objects, but rather the motions of physical bodies; furthermore, the Aristotelianism of his sources was 'purified' of Avicenna's effort to combine Aristotle and Plato.[39] European converts also played a major role:[40] in the same period, Ibrāhīm Müteferriḳa translated scientific treatises, explicitly continuing Kâtib Çelebi's project. Far from sticking to history and geography, like his predecessors, he also translated and published, in 1732, a work on magnetism (originally a supplement to his edition of Kâtib Çelebi's *Cihānnümā*) that replaced the prevalent Ottoman theory of the phenomenon, as a classic example

[35] This argument is made by Ben-Zaken, 'Political Economy and Scientific Activity' and most notably by Küçük, *Science without Leisure* (cf. the criticism by Shafir, 'The Almighty Akçe'). See, however, a counter-example in Umut, 'Veliyüddin Cârullah Efendi'nin derkenar'.

[36] Sariyannis, 'The Limits of Going Global', 8; cf. Shafir, 'The Almighty Akçe', 276–278, and Hanna, 'Culture in Ottoman Egypt', 96–100, for the Egyptian case. See, however, Brentjes, 'On the Location of the Ancient', for a different approach.

[37] Küçük, 'Natural Philosophy and Politics'; Yıldız, 'A Strange Affliction from Abroad', 248–255; Pechlivanos, 'Bibliothoiconomy'. Mavrokordatos describes with details and optimism the love of his contemporaneous Ottoman scholars for study and knowledge: Bouchard, 'Nicolas Mavrocordatos', 125–127.

[38] Koutzakiotis, *Attendre la fin du monde*. On Kircher's knowledge of *jafr* and the science of letters, see Saif, 'Athanasius Kircher's'.

[39] Küçük, 'Natural Philosophy and Politics'; on Esad Efendi's way of working, see Genequand and Morel, 'Al-Yānyāwī's Account of Porphyry'. It should be noted that Esad Efendi's attention was no less turned towards the medieval Arabic tradition: see Di Vincenzo, 'Reading Avicenna's *Kitāb al-Šifā'*'.

[40] See some examples in Ageron, 'Le Rôle des "renégats" occidentaux', 36–45; cf. Boyar, 'Medicine in Practice'; Shefer-Mossensohn, *Science among the Ottomans*, 113–121.

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of 'things with unknown causes', with a natural theory positing two large magnets underground (this publication also seems to be the first specimen of Cartesian philosophy in the Ottoman language, although stripped of its philosophical elements).[41] The juxtaposition of the previous opinions on magnetism with Müteferriḳa's survey is quite telling. Kâtib Çelebi, as have already seen, had posited that the phenomenon belonged to the 'secret properties' (*khawāṣṣ gharība*) of things and had reproduced information that garlic or olive oil could take magnetism away from the stone, whereas goat's blood or vinegar would bring it back.[42] Various medical, protective, and magical properties of the magnet are enumerated as late as 1714 in a vernacular treatise.[43] Müteferriḳa, in contrast, draws explicitly from 'Latin books' to state:

> All the ancient and modern philosophers have exerted great effort to rightly comprehend the essence of one piece of this stone and to discover and explain its nature, but until now they have been unable to do so…When they [the people of the West] eventually learned about it, they were utterly amazed and imagined the following: the material substance of the lodestone must be a small sphere in the interior of the earth concealed by the soil, like the yolke inside an eggshell. That magnetic sphere, as they imagined it, must have poles that were congruent with or parallel to the poles of the sphere of the earth (or the globe), and must also have a meridian, an equinoctial line, and other circles by analogy to those on the earth…
>
> Some said it was the Polar Star that drew the magnet or the magnetised needle and directed it toward the North Pole. Others said it was a section of the heavens around the pole. Still others said the two poles of the earth consisted completely of lodestone. Some Sufis said this was a divine dispensation and that God's will brought it forth and intended it as a sign of His omnipotence and as a marvel for His worshippers to ponder and that He concealed its mystery in itself. Then some of the moderns, seeking a natural cause for such phenomena, said that it was an effect of the condition of the air. Others said that it was simply an emanation and influence of the earth and based on earthly causes, such as the hypothesized magnetic sphere that extended from south to north in the interior of the earth like veins and arteries. Most have adopted this view.[44]

[41] 'Cartesian astronomy' had also been mentioned in Müteferriḳa's discussion of Copernican heliocentrism: Kâtib Çelebi, eds Hagen and Dankoff, *An Ottoman Cosmography*, 59. On the reception of Cartesian cosmography, cf. the remarks of Küçük, *Science without Leisure*, 202–203, who speaks of a Cartesian 'philosophy without philosophy', as 'practical naturalism inflected the Ottoman reading of Descartes'. On Müteferriḳa's role, cf. Erginbaş, 'Enlightenment in the Ottoman Context'.

[42] Kâtip Çelebi, eds Yaltkaya and Bilge, *Keşf-el-zunun*, 2: 1127–1128; cf. *Keşfü'z-zunûn*, tr. Balcı, 3: 901; Kâtib Çelebi, eds Hagen and Dankoff, *An Ottoman Cosmography*, 82; Riyāzī [Ibn Kemal], ed. Dalkıran, 'İbn-i Kemal'in tılsımat risâlesi', 198.

[43] Daşdemir, '18. yüzyıla ait'.

[44] Kâtib Çelebi, eds Hagen and Dankoff, *An Ottoman Cosmography*, 82–84.

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Of course, this expansion of the field studied by natural sciences was not unequivocal (for one thing, neither European military nor technical practices dismissed their irrational or magic elements until quite late).[45] Apart from Müteferriḳa's own translations, the translation project inaugurated by Damad Ibrāhīm Pasha systematically translated works from Arabic and Persian, rather than European languages, and these were mostly treatises on history and sacred history; in the section on cosmography in a fifteenth-century world history, the new editors added European-style images of the constellations, rather than new information.[46] Occultist and supernaturalist beliefs continued to thrive in certain circles throughout the eighteenth century. Whereas Riyāzī's early sixteenth-century essay on talismans argues that earthquakes are a product of underground vapours and fumes (an Aristotelian theory) and proposes building wells, cellars and caverns as a countermeasure to provide an outlet for these vapours (a theory we find again in Rodosīzāde's late-seventeenth-century adaptation of *ʿAcāʾīb al-maḫlūḳāt*, but also in the work of an early-nineteenth-century Illuminationist scholar, Kasabbaşızāde Ibrāhim),[47] a treatise composed in 1720 by an Istanbul *müderris*, Aḥmed b. Receb el-Ḳosṭanṭınī (d. 1727), on the occasion of a great earthquake in the capital, shows that people still gave explanations based on the traditional cosmology (the bull upon which earth stands, and so forth). Before proceeding to his own explanation, he provides a full description of this cosmology based on hadith collections and Qur'anic exegesis—and then he explains earthquakes by the well-known tradition of Mount Ḳaf and the angel producing earthquakes by moving the roots of mountains. Ḳosṭanṭınī, as we shall see in more detail below, ends his treatise by accusing some philosophers (*ehl-i ḥikmet*), obviously with less traditional explanations, of denying the Resurrection, Heaven, and Hell.[48] Even later, the court astrologer Fetḥiyeli Halil Efendi's (d. 1773) library contained works on *cifr* and geomancy.[49] We know, furthermore, that philosophy,

[45] See e.g. Eichberg, 'Gespenster im Zeughaus'.

[46] İpşirli, 'Lale Devrinde teşkil edilen'; Kundak, 'The Influence of European Constellation Figures'.

[47] Riyāzī [Ibn Kemal], ed. Dalkıran, 'İbn-i Kemal'in tılsımat risâlesi', 206 (cf. Şen, 'Practicing Astral Magic', 79–80); Rodosīzāde, ed. Çelik, 'Rodosî-zâde'nin *Acâibü'l-mahlûkât*', 52–53 (f. 4b); Kasabbaşızāde Ibrāhim, *Risāle fī beyāni'l-mürekkebāt allatī lā mizāce lehā fī'l-cev*, Istanbul, Atatürk library, Muallim Cevdet, nr. K. 542. Riyāzī's account includes a story about previous (Byzantine) rulers who dug caverns beneath Istanbul, probably stemming from folk traditions, to explain the great underground cisterns of the city. On other occurrences of this theory, see Sariyannis, '*Ajāʾib ve gharāʾib*', 455. On Kasabbaşızāde, see *TDVİA*, 'Kasabbaşızâde İbrâhim' (İ. Erdoğan), https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/kasabbasizade-Ibrāhīm.

[48] Kostantinî, ed. Akın, 'İlk müstakil deprem kitabi'. On the tradition connecting earthquakes and Mount Ḳāf, see also Sariyannis, '*Ajāʾib ve gharāʾib*', 454–456. Cf. the accounts of this tradition in Yazıcıoğlu [Anonymous], *Dürr-i meknūn*, ed. Kaptein, 140=416; ed. Demirtaş, 130; ed. Sakaoğlu, 53; ed. Mattei, 76; but also in Erzurumī İbrahim Hakkı, *Māʿrifetnāme*, University of Michigan, 45; ed. Meyan, *Mârifetnâme*, 35. Erzurumī also mentions the Aristotelian theory attributing earthquakes to the vapours of the earth: *Māʿrifetnāme*, University of Michigan, 174; ed. Meyan, *Mârifetnâme*, 236.

[49] Kırkoğlu, *Sultan ve müneccim*, 72–73. Sultan Ahmet III's library contained 41 books of astrology and geomancy, and 107 of oneiromancy and divination—in a total of almost 3,500 books (Aydüz, 'Topkapı Sarayı Sultan III. Ahmed Kütüphanesi'ndeki', 208).

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along with magic and astrology, was considered harmful (*mużırr*) by a treatise on the curriculum of Ottoman madrasas written around 1742 (actually summarizing Taşköprüzāde), and occult sciences are completely absent from the books donated to a provincial madrasa library by Ḫalīl Ḥamīd Pasha (d. 1785; admittedly, natural sciences in general are also absent).[50] On the other hand, a poem by the *müderris* Nebī Efendi-zāde ʿAlī Uṣṣākī (d. 1785/86), giving brief advice on the list of sciences and books one must study, mentions philosophy (*ḥikmet*) but none of the occult sciences save magical squares, about which he seems uncertain: 'I am not really sure about the effects of magical squares' (*ben de vefḳ'ün gerçi te'sirātını bilmem velī*), he observes; as noted by Şükran Fazlıoğlu, who published his text, the author might have been interested in the mathematical part of this knowledge.[51]

At any rate, debates with naturalists were ongoing, focusing on the subject of chemical medicine, as we will see. Müteferriḳa himself describes a 'serious dispute' that took place in 1727 over the orientation of a mosque in Bebek, in which astronomical instruments were juxtaposed with magnetic compasses and in which the old-school, astronomical method had prevailed:

> The experts brought out several compasses and also a quadrant and astrolabe and other astronomical instruments. The orientation suggested by the compasses did not agree with those instruments, and a serious dispute arose. Eventually the compass readings were discarded and the prayer-niche was sited according to the elevation taken by those instruments. Some time later a few zealous individuals were stirred to action and began a thorough investigation. They made a *qibla* indicator with a large needle and when it was tested, the needle was observed to deviate 11½ degrees west of due north, which was contrary to received opinion. God knows best what is correct and recourse is to Him.[52]

In the same period, a very practical naturalism dominated the 'science market' of Istanbul, creating vernacular forms of knowledge and combining practices of divination with aspects of European engineering and technology.[53] Among these practical artisans, many were Sufis (mostly Mevlevīs), who produced mechanical

[50] Tezcan, 'Some Thoughts on the Politics', 149; Bouquet, 'Pour une histoire instrumentale', 528 (the list contains one treatise on medicine, one on astronomy, one on cosmography, and one on natural sciences, all largely outdated). Natural sciences (including occult ones) are also completely absent from the list of books that a scribe who converted to Christianity took with him when he defected to Venice in 1690, although he must have known that occult treatises were in high demand in Europe: Krstić, 'İbrahim Efendi (d. 1697)', 696–709.

[51] Ali Uṣṣâkî, ed. Fazlıoğlu, 'Nebī Efendi-zāde'nin *Ḳaṣīde*', 196, 216.

[52] Kâtib Çelebi, eds Hagen and Dankoff, *An Ottoman Cosmography*, 83–84; cf. Küçük, 'Early Modern Ottoman Science', 12–13.

[53] Küçük, 'Science and Technology'; Küçük, 'The Compass and the Astrolabe'; Küçük, *Science without Leisure*.

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clocks and other time-keeping instruments.[54] Feza Günergun suggests that 'they may have been captivated by the regular revolutions of the gears and correlated these with Sufi meditative rituals',[55] but one might argue that they were in general willing to be involved with all kinds of natural science: a typical case is Ömer Şifaī (d. 1742), the son of a Mevlevī sheikh, who had studied occult sciences (*'ulūm-i ġarībe*) under a Ḫalvetī sheikh in Egypt but ended up being a prominent iatrochemist in Bursa using extensively European alchemical and medical sources.[56]

Apart from geography and natural science, medicine occupies a central place in relation to our subject. Liana Saif showed that, during the long process of the development of traditionalism, on the one hand, and popularized and institutionalized Sufism, on the other, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the dominant explanation of diseases changed: while in the early Islamic centuries, Aristotelian causality and a neo-Platonic notion of an 'animated universe' explained the function of the human body with natural philosophy, the late Middle Ages favoured the attribution of diseases to malevolent spirits. Apart from in Galenist theories, what had previously been attributed to spiritual cosmic powers (often with very rational causality, based on the movements of celestial bodies whose heat influences the air) became considered the work of malevolent demons. With Avicenna's pronounced neo-Platonism, the *rūḥāniyyat*, or in other words the psychic powers of bodies (the astral and natural ontology according to Saif's terms), gave way to supernatural entities coming from dimensions inaccessible to the human intellect; in Weberian terms, we were faced with an 'enchantment of the world', since the domain of jinn and demons concerns theology, rather than medicine or natural philosophy. In medieval works, even recipes that seem magical are described as functioning through powers that are part of nature, while after the thirteenth century (always following Saif's terminology), the explanations given indicate an ontological separation between stars and spirits. This was also the opinion of theologians such as Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328), who does not accept the possibility of talismans and other similar practices functioning through natural forces. While medicine as such (the pathology of humours according to Galen) did not lose its place, the rise of such 'magical healing' also led to a debate concerning who can have lawful control over the supernatural world (*ghayb*): the occultists or the theologians and Sufis.[57] Thus, during the Ottoman period we see Riyāzī (d. 1537/8) arguing that 'there is no difference

[54] Günergun, 'Timekeepers and Sufi Mystics'. [55] Ibid., 363.

[56] Similar scholars of the same period also belonged to branches of the Ḫalvetī or, predominantly it seems, the Naḳşibendī-Mujaddidī order: Günergun, 'Convergences in and around Bursa'; Küçük, 'The Compass and the Astrolabe', 269–275.

[57] Saif, 'Between Medicine and Magic'; Coulon, *La Magie en terre d'Islam*, 257–267; Richter-Bernburg, 'Magie zwischen galenischer'; cf. Gürbüzel and Wallis, '"Angelical Conjunctions"' for parallels with Christianity.

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between the science of medicine and the science of talismans', since a talisman is 'a cure for the world' (*ṭılsım beden-i 'āleme 'ilāc etmekdir*), just as medicine is a cure for the body, and that 'the questions put in talismans are also put in medicine, and the same goes for answers' (*ṭılsımāta vārid olan şū'āl ṭıbba daḫi vārid olur, bunun cevābları ona daḫi cevāb olur*); and Nev'ī (d. 1599) explicitly saying that medicine is inseparable from incantations and magical healings: 'the science of medicine is appended to the [previous] one [i.e. the science of charms and enchantment, *ruqy vü efsūn*]'. He hardly mentions the humoral theory, whereas the chapter is full of traditions of prophetic healing.[58] Moreover, the medical prescriptions contained in personal collections seem to be mostly based on or accompanied by such incantations.

On the other hand, the theory and practice of Ottoman professional medicine seems to have reversed the process described by Saif.[59] Based on what Miri Shefer-Mossensohn calls 'mechanistic medicine' (in contrast to 'popular medicine' and 'prophetic medicine')—that is, Galenic humourism—they attributed diseases either to miasmas (harmful vapours circulating in the air) or to celestial causes. The chemical medicine of Paracelsus had already been introduced by Salih Ibn Sallūm (d. 1670), whose presentation of the plague is very interesting: despite the general idea of a fatalistic attitude towards it, Ibn Sallūm describes a theory of contagion as the origin of the disease, but adds possibilities such as jinn, sins, or astral causes.[60] Ibn Sallūm seems to have acted as a patron rather than an author, directing a host of translations from Latin (which he did not read) in his capacity as court physician, in a manner somewhat reminiscent of Kâtib Çelebi's encyclopedic project;[61] one of these translators may have been the Jewish convert (and Ibn Sallūm's successor) Ḥayātīzāde Muṣṭafā Feyżī (Moshe ben Raphael Abravanel, d. 1692), who was a major agent of this translational movement in his own right.[62] Interestingly, the renewed interest in (de-Avicennized) Aristotle at the beginning of the eighteenth century may have played a reactionary role,

[58] Riyāzī [Ibn Kemal], ed. Dalkıran, 'İbn-i Kemal'in tılsımat risâlesi', 201; Nev'i Efendi, eds Procházka-Eisl and Çelik, *Texts on Popular Learning*, 134, 290. Another example is early Ottoman medicine on epilepsy (related to the jinn) and its cures, including amulets and prayers: Felek, 'Epilepsy as a "Contagious" Disease', 162–165.

[59] On Ottoman medicine, see, among others: Shefer-Mossensohn, *Ottoman Medicine*; Günergun, 'Convergences in and around Bursa', 245–253; Yerlioğlu, '"May Those Who Understand"'; Boyar, 'Medicine in Practice'; Yıldırım, 'Back to the Future'.

[60] Shefer-Mossensohn, *Ottoman Medicine*, 177–178. European medical knowledge had already been introduced by the Jewish convert Mūsā Cālīnūs (d. after 1542): Morrison, 'Mūsā Cālīnūs' *Treatise*'. On medical translations before Ibn Sallūm, see Günergun, 'Ottoman Encounters', 206–210.

[61] Bachour, *Oswaldus Crollius und Daniel Sennert*. On Ottoman Paracelsism, cf. Kurz, *Ways to Heaven*, 246–247; Yıldırım, '*Bevanda asiatica*', 40–42. On the relative significance of the term 'new' in these debates, see Arıcı and Aksoy, 'Tıbb-ı Cedîd ne kadar yenidir?'; Yıldırım, 'Back to the Future'. Some parts of medical Paracelsism, such as the theory of signatures (i.e. that diseases could be cured with substances bearing similarities to the organ afflicted), were already practised anyway (Lev, 'The Doctrine of Signatures').

[62] Yıldız, 'A Strange Affliction from Abroad'.

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allowing Galenic doctors to take measures against chemical medicine.[63] This success, of course, did not go unanswered by the chemists, who even declared that natural philosophy was part of chemical medicine, since these physicians were the only ones with practical experience of nature.[64] We can only question the relationship of these developments to the history of Ottoman alchemy, of which we know so little despite Tuna Artun's recent and excellent work.[65] In any case, it was the chemical physicians who expressed the strongest form of Ottoman materialism: Abbās Vesīm (d. 1767), a physician who denied the theory of the four elements, established a parallel between the human body and mechanics, and even dared to refuse the existence of an incorporeal and spiritual soul:

> What they call spirit and soul (or: soul proper) is a material thing (*nefs-i rūḥ dėdikleri bir şeyy-i māddīdir*) that sends all life to the high limbs and on which their movements, and the speed or the intensity of their movements, depend.[66]

At the same time, it should be noted that Vesīm is also supposed to have authored a treatise on magical squares (*Risāle-i vefḳ*), which however has not been located.[67]After all, as late as 1798 a treatise on pregnancy and childhood by the eminent physician Gevrekzāde Hâfız Hasan Efendi (d. 1801) insists on the astrological influences upon the embryo and its development.[68] As another cautionary remark, one may note that most Ottoman physicians seem to have operated on the basis of empirical knowledge, and that medical books did not find their way into Ottoman libraries, private or public, as they seem to have been underrepresented, especially after the sixteenth century;[69] on the other hand, their emphasis on empirical knowledge and efficacity made them prone to adapt practices of the infidels, as far as they proved useful.[70] As a matter of fact, as is often remarked, the 'occult' is part and parcel of early modern science, rather than its antagonist.[71]

The question of European sciences making a legitimate contribution to the continuum of Ottoman knowledge is also relevant to our subject. Despite debates on the necessity of European military and administrative methods, which

[63] Köhbach, 'Europäische Ärzte'; Küçük, 'Natural Philosophy', 148.

[64] Küçük, 'Early Enlightenment', 29, 122ff.

[65] On the relation of the Paracelsian paradigm to the Ottoman alchemic tradition, see Artun, 'Hearts of Gold and Silver', 71–72; Günergun, 'Convergences in and around Bursa', 245–253; Yerlioğlu, '"May Those Who Understand"'.

[66] Abbās Vesīm, ed. Yahya, 'Düstūru'l-Vesīm', 194–195 (see also ibid., 191, for his denial of the role of the four elements in the human body); cf. Küçük, 'Early Enlightenment', 34, 202–203. On late Ottoman materialist perceptions of the soul, see Afacan, 'Idle Souls, Regulated Emotions'.

[67] Abbās Vesīm, ed. Yahya, 'Düstūru'l-Vesīm', 9–10.

[68] Dinçer Bahadır, '18. yüzyılda yazılmış'.

[69] Sabev, 'Medical Books'. On the ways in which medical manuscripts were read, annotated, and used, see Yerlioğlu, '"May Those Who Understand"'; on empirical medicine, see e.g. Lev, 'Healing with Animals'.

[70] Boyar, 'Medicine in Practice'.

[71] Yıldırım, 'Back to the Future', 12.

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dominated much of the eighteenth century,[72] scientific influence did not excite many minds. The great project of translating European scientific works, launched by Kâtib Çelebi in the 1640s, seems to have been pursued by many successors during the following hundred years, from Hezārfenn Ḥüseyin Efendi to Müneccimbaşı Ahmed Dede and İbrāhim Müteferriḳa, without encountering stubborn resistance. Certainly, we sometimes see authors having to defend European science in intense debates, as in the case of the use of tobacco. Opponents of tobacco seem to have used the argument that it was a 'Frankish' invention, and we even see a Phanariote Greek scholar, Nicolaos Mavrokordatos (d. 1730), whose arguments against smoking are extraordinarily similar to those in Ottoman Turkish treatises, accusing his opponent of using European sources to justify the use of tobacco, while he himself based his argumentation on reason alone.[73] Those who defended the legitimacy of the use of European sciences were not necessarily 'rationalist' scholars in the manner of Kâtib Çelebi; without entering (for the moment) into the important discussion on 'Islamic Enlightenment', we may note the case of the famous Damascene sheikh Abdelghanī al-Nābulusī (d. 1731), who (still defending tobacco) declared in 1682 that Europeans had considerable expertise in 'ancient sciences' such as medicine, astronomy and engineering, and that Muslims could not be prohibited from using this experience—provided that the subject did not touch on religious sciences (elsewhere, he specifically defends the rightfulness of 'innovation in custom' on the same grounds).[74] It should be noted here that Nābulusī was also an accomplished Sufi, having miraculous visions.[75] A similar attitude could also be used to justify influences and innovations regarding military methods, a subject that was even more passionately debated at the turn of the nineteenth century. This is the period when Dihkânizāde Küşmanī, a supporter of Selim III's reforms, declares that all infidels are 'oriented towards this world' and therefore eager to increase their knowledge, while Muslims consider this world as temporary and transient, neglecting worldly affairs and preferring religion and piety—and all this to justify the necessity of imitating Europe![76]

Less scholarly authors would be even less scrupulous anyway: thus, Evliya's descriptions of European chirurgical operations show a syncretic attitude that, sceptical as it may be, was ready to accept unfamiliar techniques and methods.[77] And the same author conveys a story, according to which thanks to 'the power of knowledge' (*'ilim ḳuvveti*) Christopher Columbus and some 'Padre' prophesy the

[72] See Sariyannis, *A History of Ottoman Political Thought*, 381–431.

[73] Kermeli, 'The Tobacco Controversy', 133. On the other hand, Mavrocordatos deplores the neglect of modern books of science, especially of natural sciences, chemistry, and philosophy, by the Ottomans: Bouchard, 'Nicolas Mavrocordatos', 124.

[74] Grehan, 'Smoking and "Early Modern"', 1371; Ivanyi, "Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulūsī's Commentary'.

[75] See e.g. Shafir, 'The Road from Damascus', 131–132.

[76] Dihkânizāde Küşmanî, ed. İşbilir, *Zebîre-i Kuşmânî*, 30.

[77] Berardi, 'Pratique médicale européenne'.

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future of the Ottoman dynasty to Bayezid II and also, incidentally, find the New World:

> We, monks and Christians and scholars of the Christian religion (*millet-i Mesīḥīyye'niñ rāhibleri ve ḥıristiyānları ve 'ālimleriyiz*), learnt through the power of knowledge that this fortress would fall…and with the power of knowledge we sailed 7,000 miles to the West and found a world by the name of New World.[78]

Materialist Tendencies

Did this extension of the explicable and controllable part of reality ever reach some sort of materialism, or rather, did it ever create the mental prerequisites (Lucien Febvre's *outillage mental*) for materialistic or even atheist trends to appear?

A deism of sorts was not unknown in Islamic history. Medieval deniers of God's existence are mentioned with various names in the sources but only indirectly by their opponents. As Sarah Stroumsa showed, the case is more probably referring to 'freethinkers', denying revealed religions including Islam. She studies a couple of notorious medieval 'atheists', Ibn al-Rāwandī (ninth century) and Abū Bakr al-Rāzī (tenth century), and finds that, rather than being atheists *senso strictu*, they seem to attribute cruelty and other base characteristics to God or to consider God a benevolent yet distant entity who has nothing to do with prophecy and religion, respectively.[79] In early Ottoman history, most thinkers characterized as 'atheists' were mostly professing either the pantheistic doctrine of the 'unity of existence' (*vaḥdet al-vucūd*), before it was canonized by the establishment of Akbarian philosophy, or syncretic beliefs giving special emphasis to Jesus' position in the hierarchy of prophets.[80] However, this seems to change from the beginnings of the seventeenth century. Ahmet Yaşar Ocak studied a series of ulema accused of 'atheism and heresy' (*zendeka ve ilhâd*), due either to professional jealousy or to real heterodox beliefs.[81] Although these beliefs are not always described in detail, some cases are quite revealing. In 1602, for instance, Nadajlı Abdürrahman, a *müderris* in Istanbul, was executed for having denied the existence of Heaven and Hell, as well as the Resurrection.[82] Half a century later, in

[78] Evliya Çelebi, eds Kahraman, Dağlı, and Dankoff, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, X. Kitap*, 284 (f. Y252a). Columbus is described as a 'Genoese astrologer' in Piri Reis' account (Casale, 'Did Alexander the Great', 874).

[79] Stroumsa, 'Ecritures alternatives?'; Stroumsa, 'The Religion of the Freethinkers'.

[80] Balivet, *Byzantins et Ottomans*, 231–254; Imber, 'A Note on "Christian" Preachers'; Ocak, *Zındıklar ve mülhidler*, 228–243.

[81] Ocak, *Zındıklar ve mülhidler*, 203–248; cf. Sariyannis, *Perceptions ottomanes*, 97–100.

[82] Ocak, *Zındıklar ve mülhidler*, 243–45.

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1665, a rich ulema and ex-imam, Lārī Mehmed Efendi, was also executed in Istanbul for having denied the Resurrection of the dead, all religious duties, prayer, and feasting. He was also accused of tolerating wine and of having led several Muslims astray. His properties, registered after his death, included 'various papers' and books, some of them written with 'infidel letters'.[83]

Lārī Mehmed Efendi's case was impressive enough to have left traces in non-Muslim sources as well. He is almost certainly to be identified with 'Mohamet Efendi', whom Dositheos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, accuses of 'teaching complete atheism' in Romans' (i.e. Greeks') homes in Istanbul. According to Dositheos, he was brought to court by an Armenian and executed for blaspheming against Jesus.[84] A dispute with Armenians (with commercial reasons) that led to Lārī's downfall is also mentioned by the traveller Thomas Smith, who however gives the date 1661:

> This *Mahomet Ephendi*…was born in *Larr* in *Armeuia major,* a man of great esteem in *Constantinople* among all who knew him, for his skill in the Law, and in the *Arabick* and *Persian* languages, of a temper mild and sociable, which made him covet the acquaintance and friendship of several *Western Christians,* from whom he could learn somewhat, and whom he acknowledged to understand the laws of discourse, and to reason much better than his Brother *Turks,* whom he lookt upon as very dull and heavy fellows. His inquisitive genius put him upon the search of several things, and his pride and conceitedness were so great, that he thought he had found the secret indeed, which all the Atheists have been seeking after to quiet and banish those fears which perpetually haunt their guilty minds. Ambitious of fame and applause, he sets up for a profest Atheist, being so far from suppressing these extravagant fancies, the effect of the greatest madness whatever, that he takes care to divulge them in all companies where he thought to meet with opposition, and disputes fiercely against the being of a *God*. Whenever he went to visit *Signor Warner,* whose extraordinary learning and worth derived a great lustre upon his publick character, the first salute upon the very sight of him was, *there is not,* meaning a *God;* to which the *Resident* would immediately reply, *there is;* after which they would often descend to a close dispute about that dictate of universal nature, and right reason; but he had so hardned his heart against all conviction, and blinded his mind and understanding with absurd and irrational prejudices, and foolish and vain imaginations, that though he could not well sustain the mighty shock of arguments which the learned *Resident* level'd at him, yet he flatter'd himself he could

[83] Ibid., 245–48. Lārī is described as a 'renegade' in another Italian source of 1674: Yıldırım, 'Comparing Faiths', 224.

[84] Dositheos, *Ιστορία περί των εν Ιεροσολύμοις*, 1172. I wish to thank Yorgos Tzedopoulos for bringing this important source to my attention.

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> fully satisfie them all, and that he had the better of him… [T]he *Turks,* who were present, acquainted the Judges of the temper of the man, and accused him of several impieties he was guilty of, as that he never came to the prayers of the *Mosch,* neglected the other rites instituted by their *Prophet,* drank Wine freely, and that in the time of *Ramazan;* and besides, that he openly maintained that there was no *God.* The contestation through the zeal of the *Turks* grew very hot, and matter of fact seemed to be fully made out by just proof. Whereupon the Governour demanded of him, what he could say for himself? whether the evidence against him were true or no? here several unanimously agree, that you deny the being of a *God.* He replied without any demur or feat, you would be of the same mind if you knew as much as I know. They advise him, if he valued his life, to retract his foolish and impious opinion, otherwise they would pass the sentence of death upon him. They give him time to consider of it, and expect that whatever his private sentiments were, fear of death would make him confess his belief of a Deity. But it seems he would be a Martyr for his Atheism, and chose rather to dye than confess he was in an error, and dissemble his inward thoughts; whereupon he is sentenced to dye; he continues as perverse and obstinate as ever, even in the last moments of his life. For being set upon a Mule with his face toward the tail, and carried to the place of punishment, and admonisht by the *Subashi* or Officer, who attended upon the execution, to recant his error; his only answer was, that the filth (for so I chuse modestly to express it) he was to eat he would eat presently; meaning by the rude Proverb, that he was willing to dye as soon as might be. Thus he perisht in his folly, being between fifty and sixty years of age, and leaving a considerable sum of money behind him, infatuated by the just judgment of *God,* which became most visible in his deserved ruine.[85]

Another detailed account about Lārī belongs to the British consul Paul Ricaut, who famously mentions some 'sects' of the 1660s Istanbul, with beliefs that reach atheism. Among them, the *Muserin* are said to adopt a truly atheist and materialist world view:

> These then give themselves the Title of *Muserin*, which signifies, The true secret is with us; which secret is no other than the absolute denial of a Deity, that nature or the intrinsecal principle in every individual thing directs the orderly course which we see and admire; and that the Heavens, Sun, Moon and Stars have thence their original and motion, and that man himself rises and fades like the grass or flower: It is strange to consider, what quantities there are of men that maintain this principle in *Constantinople*, most of which are *Kadies* and

[85] Smith, *Remarks upon the manners*, 116–120.

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> learned men in the *Arabian* Legends, and others are Renegadoes from the Christian Faith, who conscious of the sin of their Apostacy, and therefore desirous that all things may conclude with this World, are the more apt to entertain those opinions which come nearest to their wishes. One of this Sect called *Mahomet Effendi*, a rich man, Educated in the knowledge of the Eastern Learning, I remember, was in my time executed for impudently proclaiming his blasphemies against the being of a Deity; making it in his ordinary discourse, an argument against the being of a God, for that either there was none at all, or else not so wise as the Doctors preached he was, in suffering him to live who was the greatest enemy and scorner of a Divine Essence that ever came into the World. And it is observable, that this man might, notwithstanding his accusation, have saved his life, would he but have confessed his error, and promised for the future an assent to the principles of a better: but he persisted still in his blasphemies, saying, That though there were no reward, yet the love of truth obliged him to dye a Martyr. I must confess until now, I never could believe that there was a formal Atheism in the World, concluding that the principle (of the being of a God) was demonstrable by the Light of Nature; but it is evident now how far some men have extinguished this light and lamp in their Souls.

Of course, this *Mahomet Effendi* is none other than Lārī Mehmed; Ricaut adds that this doctrine had permeated the palace and 'found entertainment with the *Pashaes* and their whole court', and that they were 'very frank and liberal, and excessive in their readiness to do each other service' (including accommodating a guest 'with a handsome Bedfellow').[86] A few decades later, in 1717, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu describes similar views, which she prefers to call deist (rather than atheist).[87] Ricaut's reference to the *Muserin* belief that 'man rises and fades like the grass or flowers' was borrowed (or plagiarized) by later authors on Ottoman religious habits, such as Pietro Businello in *Historische Nachrichten von der Regirungsart, den Sitten und Gewohnheiten der osmanischen Monarchie* (1778), and Habesci's (probably a pseudonym of the adventurer Alexandre Ghika) 1784 treatise on the Ottoman Empire:

> But as no people on earth entertain such doubts of their religion as the Turks do of their's [*sic*], it is not in the least surprising, that they have proceeded one step farther, and embraced Atheism. This fundamental error has penetrated the most private recesses of the Seraglio, and infected all parts of the empire. The Bashaws of provinces, in particular, converse freely upon the system of nature: by the word *nature*, they mean that internal principle, which disposes and regulates the conduct of every existent being; from this principle, they say, the sun, moon,

[86] Ricaut, *The History of the Present State*, 245–246.
[87] Montagu, *The Turkish Embassy Letters*, 61–63.

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> and stars derive their origin and motion, and from the same principle man has the faculty to raise himself upright, to grow, or to bend like the flowers, grass, and trees.[88]

One may attribute this repetition to mere copying; yet, according to a *fetva* issued by Abdürrahim Efendi (*şeyhülislam* in 1715–1716), an anonymous low-rank preacher declared that 'there is no Heaven and Hell, man sprouts like a herb and shrinks like a herb' (*cennet ve cehennem yokdur beni adem ot gibi biter ot gibi yatar*).[89] Still, this is again a topos that can be found much earlier: in *Dürr-i meknûn* we read that there is a special place in Hell for those who profess to be Muslims, but actually are infidels, since they profess that 'this world is an arrangement that was created, and creatures grow and fade like grass' (*bu ʿālem bir düzendür, ḳurulmışdur, maḫlūḳāt ot gibi biter ve ot gibi yiter, dirler*).[90] Ricaut, on the other hand, describes other sects too, mostly with blatant mistakes. Members of one sect nearer to the *Muserin*, called Cabaiyye (*Jabaiah*), deny God's omniscience,

> affirming, That God governs the World by Chance and Accidents, not comprehending from Eternity or at the Creation of the World, a perfect certainty of the particular Affairs that were to be transacted in it, and that God improves in knowledge by time, as men do by constant practice and experience.[91]

This sounds more like a reference to the medieval 'freethinkers' than a description of an actual ideology in 1660s Istanbul.

So, are the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century references pointing to an actual heresy, or are they just a literary topos? The numerous individual cases recorded, the most prominent of which is Lārī Mehmed Efendi, show that such beliefs, in one form or another, did indeed circulate among some scholars; and cases of deism or materialism in non-Muslim scholars of the same period (i.e. the late seventeenth century) show that there was a common background of doubt.[92] For one thing, there are abundant cases of anticlericalism, or generally a nonchalant attitude towards religion, in literary stories and in *fetva*s, particularly from the

[88] Habesci, *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire*, 136–137. I have to thank Ethan L. Menchinger for this reference. See the comments in van Woensel, ed. Kaptein, *Remarks*, part III, 357–358. On the mysterious figure of Habesci, see Mörike, 'Elias Habesci'.

[89] Tuşalp, 'Treating Outlaws', 70.

[90] Yazıcıoğlu [Anonymous], *Dürr-i meknūn*, ed. Kaptein, 117=391; ed. Demirtaş, 114. This topos might reflect a passage from the book of Job 14:2, where it is stated that men are like flowers who come forth and wither away. I wish to thank Laban Kaptein for pointing out these references to me.

[91] Ricaut, *The History of the Present State*, 242–243.

[92] See the exemplary microhistorical (and psychohistorical) study of the Jewish physician Malki by Rozen and Witztum, 'The Dark Mirror of the Soul', esp. 11–12. On the idea of spontaneous generation of humanity in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, see Zambelli, '"The Earth Was Like a Sponge"'.

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eighteenth century.[93] Perhaps the *cause célèbre* of Patburunzāde Mehmed Halife, executed for blasphemy in 1681, may be associated with the same currents: Patburunzāde, a scribe in the imperial chancery (whom Greek Orthodox sources elevated to the status of a Neomartyr, attributing to him a conversion to Christianity), was accused by some of his colleagues of having declared that the Prophet was 'an Arab astrologer' who

> arrived to some rules [by studying the stars], not by God's revelation; and his words were respected for the sake of the order of the world (*Muhammad bir müneccim idi anınla ahkâm istihrâc itdi, vahy ile değildir, akvâline intizâm-i 'âlem içün i'tibâr olunmuşdur*).[94]

In 1720, Aḥmed b. Receb el-Ḳosṭanṭinī's (d. 1727) treatise on earthquakes ends with a dismissal of 'philosophers' who deny the tenets of faith. We cannot be sure that this is not a literary topos, used to frame an attack upon proponents of natural science (the treatise only mentions the theory on the roots of Mount Ḳāf):

> Let it be known that this treatise was shortened according to the words of the people of the Sharia on earthquakes; we did not fill it with references to the perverse words and dull speeches of the philosophers (*ehl-i ḥikmet*) on this matter. Because our aim is to express the work of God and the divine power. There is no need therefore to mention their exaggerations (*müzaḫrefāt*), since they, because of their belief in the precedence of [this] world (*ḳıdem-i 'āleme ẕehābları sebebiyle*), deny the Prophet's journey, the resurrection of the dead, the bridge to Paradise, Paradise and Hell, and the other matters of the Hereafter, and in this way they deny even the work of God and the divine power.[95]

One of the last such cases is dated 1747: a certain Derviş Eminî was declaring in Bitola (Manastir) that 'the Qur'an is an Ottoman *defter* without foundation', that there is no Heaven or Hell, and that there is no reason for feasting or for prohibiting wine.[96] Even if one takes these allegations *cum grano salis*, the fact that they had lethal consequences for those who were accused of them suggests that such beliefs were truly the opinion of some Ottomans, especially in the seventeenth and

[93] Özdemir, 'Osmanlı toplumunda'; Tuşalp, 'Treating Outlaws', 41, 59ff., 72, 74, 77; Kaya (ed.), *Fetâvâ-yı Feyziye*, 130–131. A case from the countryside of Filibe in 1583, where some locals, mostly Sufis and lower ulema, deny the Resurrection, Heaven, and Hell, together with all the restrictions of religion, is related to the followers of Sheikh Bedreddin: Özdemir, 'Osmanlı toplumunda', 131–132.

[94] Sariyannis, 'Aspects of "Neomartyrdom"'; Menekşe, *Osmanlı toplumunda zındıklık*, 111–141. The scribal circles of Istanbul seem to have nurtured a number of 'freethinkers', some of whom converted to Christianity and fled to Venice: see now Krstić, 'İbrahim Efendi (d. 1697)'. On the interreligious contacts of the same period, see also Yıldırım, 'Comparing Faiths'.

[95] Kostantinî, ed. Akın, 'İlk müstakil deprem kitabi', 28.

[96] Majer, '"The Koran: an Ottoman defter"'.

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eighteenth centuries. One may here suggest a comparison with Alec Ryrie's approach to early modern atheistic tendencies, or rather religious doubt: by ascribing it to emotions like anxiety (about salvation or heresy) or anger (against the religious establishment), he sees it as a bottom-up process that predates intellectuals' philosophical atheism. In Ryrie's narrative, a third factor would be early modern religious pluralism, which led numerous people to scepticism and relativism.[97] In the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Ottoman world, we can see all these elements, albeit to a quite limited degree.

Enlightenment and Disenchantment, the Ottoman Way?

As historiographical debates on a 'global Enlightenment' have intensified during recent decades, usually focusing on aspects of the intellectual history of the non-European world in the age of modernity,[98] a discussion of the development of Islamic culture in the Ottoman world also arose. The concept of an 'Islamic Enlightenment' (*islamische Aufklärung*) was proposed, discussed, and largely abandoned during the 1990s,[99] and now 'Enlightenment' sounds like an overused term that threatens to become devoid of any real meaning. We might give yet another definition of the term, or prefer to get rid of it completely. At any rate, literature on Ottoman science (including our own description above) continues to emphasize the developments demonstrating a transition from an 'occultist' to a 'scientific' mentality from the late seventeenth or the early eighteenth century onwards. Rather than insisting on the notion of cultural transfer, such studies have sought to illuminate the intrinsic, 'bottom-up' ways in which a new vision of the world gradually permeated at least some segments of Ottoman society.[100]

Perhaps even more than scientific developments, one can speak of changes at the street level, changes that had to do with the presence of the supernatural in everyday life, the degree to which one had control over one's life or destiny, the availability and accessibility of truth, and so forth. As we saw earlier, there are signs of an 'occultization' of knowledge in a wide array of fields during the fourteenth, the fifteenth, and at least part of the sixteenth centuries; and it has been remarked that for certain Sufi fraternities, the world had become an

[97] Ryrie, *Unbelievers*.

[98] Conrad, 'Enlightenment in Global History'; Erginbaş, 'Enlightenment in the Ottoman Context', 53–56; cf. Pocock, 'Historiography and Enlightenment'.

[99] Schulze, 'Das islamische achtzehnte Jahrhundert'; Schulze, 'Was ist die islamische Aufklärung?'; cf. Hagen and Seidensticker, 'Reinhard Schulzes Hypothese'; Radtke, *Autochthone islamische Aufklärung*.

[100] İhsanoğlu, *Transfer of Modern Science*; İhsanoğlu, *Science, Technology and Learning*; İhsanoğlu, *Studies on Ottoman Science*; Küçük, 'Early Enlightenment'; Küçük, 'Early Modern Ottoman Science'; Küçük, 'Science and Technology'; Küçük, 'The Compass and the Astrolabe'; Günergun, 'Convergences in and around Bursa'; Günergun, 'Timekeepers and Sufi Mystics'.

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increasingly enchanted place by the early seventeenth century. I sought to explore this issue recently, arguing that we can see a parallel to the 'spirit of Enlightenment' in the defence of individual thought *en masse* (i.e. not only of the thought of some authorities) as a legitimate way to the truth. I have suggested that the appearance of new legitimate sources of knowledge by the middle of the same century and an apparent emphasis on individual reasoning, as well as the rejection of alleged Sufi miracles by the Ḳāḍızādeli movement in favour of a strict, scriptural understanding of religion, were arguably steps towards what Max Weber would call a gradual (and partial) disenchantment of the Ottoman world (see also below). It has been suggested that Puritanism goes in parallel with experimental science (being sceptical toward metaphysics, favouring individual access to knowledge, and discouraging traditional natural philosophy), and the Ḳāḍızādeli spirit has certain similarities with Puritanism.[101] Thus, when al-Nābulusī (d. 1731) was writing that he had seen 'in this time of ours' a community of all groups, from the Arabs to the Indians, who by reading Sufi literature acquired 'the objects of their hopes', he was inferring that even at this stage 'if one stops at gaining knowledge, one remains among the knowers' (while if one proceeded to 'additional practice and devotional struggle', one could aspire to reach the degree of 'perfect men'). Moreover, he asserted:

> [He had] seen boys on the spiritual path among [his] brothers who, by reading these books, reached in a few days what men could not reach by personal devotion (i.e. without books) in forty or fifty years.[102]

Furthermore, if access to the knowledge of truth is something everyone can achieve through reason and argumentation (*taḥqīq*), then an egalitarian world view prevails, where the faithful feel equally entitled to respect and reasoning; what Baki Tezcan called 'epistemological egalitarianism in a disenchanted world'.[103] This does not mean that deference to authority as such was questioned; but it was past authorities that were respected, much more than any present preacher, teacher, or sheikh, and every individual had a moral and political responsibility.[104] The extraordinary role of pamphlets circulating in numerous copies throughout the Ottoman Empire and stimulating polemics about various topics of social, religious, and mystic life attest to the public character

[101] Sariyannis, 'The Limits of Going Global'. On the relationship of Puritan sentiments and experimental science, see Küçük, 'The Compass and the Astrolabe', 265–269; on Kadızadelis paralleled with Puritanism, see Sariyannis, 'The Kadızadeli Movement'; Tezcan, 'A Populist Reformation'.

[102] Akkach, *'Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulusi*, 34, 47.

[103] Tezcan, 'The Portrait of the Preacher', 238–241. On *taḥqīq*, which has been the object of recent discussions directly related to problems of scientific knowledge, see El-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History*, 13–231; Melvin-Koushki, '*Taḥqīq* vs. *Taqlīd*'; Mayeur-Jaouen, '"A la poursuite de la réforme"', 323; Balıkçıoğlu, 'In the Crucible of Ottoman *Taḥqīq*'.

[104] Cf. Shafir, 'Moral Revolutions'.

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of these debates.[105] In the light of this observation, we should reassess the role of the absence of printing houses in the level of public discourses and debates.

The exclusion of the supernatural from everyday life also carried with it various occult views of reality, at least in urban (and especially scholarly) culture. These certainly remained strong, especially at the vernacular level: we can see this when the anonymous author of the late-seventeenth- or early-eighteenth-century *Risāle-i ġarībe* curses both those who go to infidel doctors and those who bring their sickness to sheikhs, as well as those who use folk remedies such as melting lead (*ḳurşun döktürmek*).[106] In general, however, it seems that a more disenchanted (and more pietist) attitude gradually gained weight in various social strata. True, just as had happened with miracles, some forms of divination were met with distrust and rejected long before, since they involved an understanding of the future that contradicted the theological notion of free will (see above, Chapters 1, 3, and 4). In this respect, astrology was both the most common occult science (the position of official palace astrologer was established as early as the end of the fifteenth century) and the most provocative for the Islamic world view.

However, by the early eighteenth century attacks on astrology and other occult sciences had gained weight and, at a scholarly level, occult practices were mostly dismissed, although not always from a 'disenchanting' point of view. Thus, we see a Nakşibendī sheikh, Murad Buḫārī (d. 1720), talking against taking advice from lettrist divination (*ḥurūfa dā'ir vefḳ*), astrology, or geomancy.[107] His contemporary, the poet Nābī (d. 1712), urges against astrology and geomancy, on the grounds that everything happens according to fate (*takdīr iledür cümle umūr*) and that most astrologers and geomancers are scoundrels, although he admits that geomancy may be a sound science (with no living practitioner: *fenni var ise de üstādı adīm*): only God knows the unseen world, he concludes.[108] Even more adamant, his imitator Sünbülzāde Vehbī likens astrologers to demons with their claim of communicating with the Unseen and enumerates cases from history where rulers caring for astrology failed to be warned of their demise or murder; the proofs for this science, he claims, are entirely hypothetical (*anıñ cümle delīli ẓannī*), and as for telling the time or predicting eclipses, these are simple techniques everybody is capable of.[109] As for the other occult sciences, on which he expands considerably in relation to his predecessor, Vehbī is more than dismissive: geomancers are tricksters; the science of letters (*cifr*) belongs to those who can perform miracles (*cifr ise ehl-i kerāmet işidir*); magic squares are not for everyone and the meaning of the major works on them (al-Būnī's *Shams al-ma'ārif*) is hidden; incantations are to be avoided; conjuring of jinn and demons runs the risk of associating

[105] Shafir, 'The Road from Damascus', 87–165; Shafir, 'Vernacular Legalism'; Shafir, *Order and Disorder*.
[106] Develi (ed.), *Risâle-i garībe*, 28; Lâtifī, *Eloge d'Istanbul*, 157.
[107] Buḫārī, ed. Yıldız, 'Sohbetnâme', 51 (14b).
[108] Nâbī, *Hayriyye*, 106 (vv. 644–654).
[109] Sünbülzâde Vehbī, *Lutfiyye-i Vehbī*, 58–63 (vv. 110–128).

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with demons and Satan, who are natural enemies of humanity; alchemy has no truth and is a ridiculous occupation; magic (*simyā*) is the work of tricksters (*ḥoḳḳa-bāza yaḳışur*) and quite wrongly attributed to Ibn Sina; the art of finding treasures is a trick by northern Africans to gain money; paper divination or cartomancy (*ḳırṭāsiye*) only results in wasting one's money; talismans and prophylactics are useless, as only God and prudence can guard a man; and finally, the art of concealment is also useless and without any truth.[110] The only occult sciences considered sound by Vehbī are oneiromancy (praising the medieval authority of Ibn Shirin) and physiognomy.[111] Similarly, a *pendnāme* (book of advice) by the minor poet Ẓarīfī (d. 1795) contains a section urging the reader to avoid alchemy, magic, the art of finding treasures, and various forms of conjuration or divination (*kimyā ve simyā ve defīne ve ḫuddām ve ḳırṭāsiye*), denying the common man's access to such knowledge (rather than the truth of these sciences itself).[112] The roughly contemporaneous Abdullah Halim Efendi, who as we saw wrote a peculiar political treatise in 1791 in support of Selim III's reforms, dismisses all kinds of occult knowledge,[113] from astrology to divination and dream interpretation:

> Whoever says that 'astrologers know the Unseen (*gayb*)' is an infidel…Whoever says 'I conjured the jinn and they brought me information from the unseen [world]' is also an infidel…You say, 'I saw him with my eyes.' I do not believe your eyes or anything; I only believe in the word of sharia…There is no divine, nor geomancer, nor jinn…Suffice it to mention the illustrious *fetva* from the *fetva*s of Abdurrahim Efendi [in office 1715–1716]: Question—If Zeyd says 'I will conjure a jinni in a mirror' (*âyine içinde cin da'vet idirin deyü*) and drives astray the Muslims with such tricks, what should become of him? Answer—He should be punished severely and stay in prison until his improvement is manifest. Whoever claims knowledge from the things hidden (*muğayyibâta 'ilm iddi'â iderse*) must be subject to renewal of faith and marriage…
>
> Dreams can be true, but they depend on their understanding (*hattâ nazar-ı zabtdadır*). Even when one is awake and hears some words, one cannot always render it as it was heard; all the more difficult is it to render rightly what one has heard in one's sleep.[114]

Sultans of the late eighteenth century, such as Abdulhamid I (r. 1774–1789) and his successor Selim III (r. 1789–1807), only listened to their astrologers for the sake of tradition,[115] and by 1813, there is much talk in the coffeehouses (*kahvehâne ricâli güft ü gû*) about the prediction of heavy snow by the astrologers; although

[110] Ibid., 62–77 (vv. 129–196). [111] Ibid., 64–65, 90–91 (vv. 134–135, 269–274).
[112] Zarīfī, *Pendnâme*, 32–34 (vv. 306–324).
[113] He also warns poets not to exaggerate the extraordinary element in narrating miracles of the saints, and rejects tomb veneration: Abdullah Halim Efendi, ed. Şahin, '*Seyfü'l-izzet*', 187, 218.
[114] Ibid., 188 (on astrology and causality), 226–227 (on divination), 227ff. (on dreams).
[115] Aydüz, 'Osmanlı Devleti'nde müneccimbaşılık', 180.

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eventually the prediction came true, the reference to coffeehouses must mean that astrology was no longer considered infallible, even in the lower urban strata.[116] Indeed, in 1848 even a professional astrologer would be so disappointed by the lack of success of his predictions in his own life that he expressed doubts about the science he had been serving.[117]

Even in fiction, where occult practices still remained a strong narrative technique, we meet a new spirit. ʿAzīz Efendi presents us with an interesting intermingling of geomantic practice with geographical knowledge that mixes the Ptolemaic climes with America:

> After producing (*tevlīd*) the rest of the figures according to the rules, he instructed [his disciple]: 'Multiply (*żarb*) the second house with the tenth and the third with the fourteenth; and multiply the two figures that result with one another to extract one figure!' After performing these operations, the figure *ḥumre* appeared; they saw that *ḥumre* was at the fifth house. Cevād interpreted this as follows: 'The first clime is Africa, the second America, the third Europe, the fourth Persia and central Asia, the fifth China. What you seek must be in this [fifth] clime. But in which city?' And by showing İklīl the rules of laying out the cardinal points (*ṭarḥ-i cihāt*), he showed him that the wanted city was Ḫānbālıḳ.[118]

Even theological or Sufi thought seems to have been permeated by rationalism and the challenging of traditional authorities by the early seventeenth century. It seems that the reality (as opposed to symbolism) of the *mirʿaj*, the Prophet's night journey, constituted a subject of debate in the early seventeenth century.[119] Let us take as an example ʿAlī b. Ibrāhīm al-Ḥalabī's (d. 1635) *Sīra*, completed in 1633; as Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen remarks, it takes into account 'a firm demand for rationality and logic…and the recognition that supernatural and miraculous elements must be compatible with logic and reason': this can be seen, for instance, in his meticulous quest for consistency concerning the geography of heavenly rivers.[120] Similarly, al-Nābulusī (d. 1731) informs us of the existence of 'certain materialists' who reject the prophetic value of dreams; while he insists on the veracity of dream interpretation, he admits that naturalistic explanations are not entirely without value:

> Among those who do not attach any credit to dreams, some materialists affirm that the dreamer sees during sleep what corresponds to his dominant humour

[116] Câbî Ömer Efendi, ed. Beyhan, *Câbî Târihi*, 942. [117] Tunalı, 'An Ottoman Astrologer'.

[118] ʿAzīz Efendi, *Muhayyelât*, ed. Alacatlı, 175; ed. Duymaz, 273. ʿAzīz Efendi shows his minute knowledge of geography and the use of the astrolabe elsewhere as well: ʿAzīz Efendi, *Muhayyelât*, ed. Alacatlı, 193; ed. Duymaz, 285.

[119] Hagen, 'Scepticism and Forgiveness', 214–215; Mayeur-Jaouen, '"There Is Matter for Thought"', 123.

[120] Mayeur-Jaouen, '"There Is Matter for Thought"', 119, 128–129.

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> among the four humors. If his humour is black bile, they say, he will see accidents, darkness, terrifying upheavals, and terror; if it is bile, he will see fire, lanterns, blood, reddish tints; if it is phlegm, he will see whiteness, water, rivers, and waves; if he is of a sanguine humour, drink, servers, drums, and flutes will appear to him…What they advance there actually represents only one category of dreams and these cannot be limited to it. We know for a fact that some dreams emanate from the predominance of the humours, as has been related, that others come from Satan, while another part proceeds from the imagination of the soul…[121]

If al-Nābulusī was perhaps only copying older oneirocritic manuals, his contemporary Yanyalı Es'ad Efendi (al-Yānyāwī, d. 1730/1)—a correspondent of Greek Phanariot Padova-styled neo-Aristotelians and the teacher of Abbās Vesīm, the physician who wrote about the materiality of the soul—does not mention at all revelation, or even religion, in his description of knowledge as the path for man to reach 'the souls of the celestial spheres [and to unite] in secret with the intellects and angels'.[122] This introduction of doubt in the examination of the tradition had to be done very carefully, of course, and most authors used the argument of the symbolic literal interpretation of the scripture, in an interesting inversion of the exoteric/esoteric (*ẓāhir/bāṭın*) where the esoteric interpretation is the one adopting scientific developments. We saw above how Kâtib Çelebi explains the discrepancies between certain hadiths and established scientific knowledge: he argues that the Companions of the Prophet 'responded to questions that were unrelated to the faith by recourse to the philosophical principle, "Speak to people according to their intellectual level"'.[123]

In the same vein, authors introducing the new astronomical notions and especially heliocentrism argued consistently that these issues were irrelevant to religion. When Erzurumī İbrahim Ḥaḳḳı (d. 1780), who is said to have built an elaborate system so that the first rays of the equinoctial sun light the tomb of his Sufi master in the little town of Tillo,[124] finishes his section on (theological) cosmology in his 1757 *Ma'rifetnāme*, he notes:

> It is not to be forgotten that all those written so far, belonging to the matters of religion, must all be confirmed for certain and believed with confidence; for they belong to the matters of religion and the great essentials. It is not proper that we compare them to rational proofs (*berāhīn-i 'aḳla ḳıyās ėtmek*). The human intellect falls short of understanding them…However,…we found it

[121] al-Nâboulsi, tr. Haridi, *Merveilles de l'interprétation*, 10.
[122] Morel, 'Al-Yānyawī's Prologue', 343–344. On Es'ad Efendi, see Küçük, 'Natural Philosophy and Politics'.
[123] Kâtib Çelebi, eds Hagen and Dankoff, *An Ottoman Cosmography*, 87.
[124] Michot, 'Sufi Love and Light'.

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> useful also to write and explain something about the science of astronomy and that of anatomy of the human body, so that [the reader]…does not stay within the prison of ignorance and enter the circle of knowledge and wisdom…[so that he] knows the truth of things (*ḥaḳā'īḳ-i eşyā*), the subtleties of the meanings; that he understands the secrets of the world and sees the events of the world as they happen.[125]

In his supplementary comments to Kâtib Çelebi's *Cihānnümā*, Ibrāhīm Müteferriḳa introduced Copernican heliocentrism in a similar way:

> [B]elieving in such matters is not based on religious principle and doctrinal requirement. Whatever the configuration of the universe may be, whatever the composition of the celestial and sublunar bodies, and however the celestial sphere performs its revolution, it is impossible to deny the creation in time of the universe and all its parts, and that this wondrous structure could only have been made by the perfect Maker and sublime Lord; and this belief in creation *is* a religious requirement.

Müteferriḳa also translates a similar argument by a European astronomer: 'there are many things in scripture based merely on what we see and having no connection to religious and ethical matters'.[126] He deploys all 'three schools' of astronomy (Aristotle and Ptolemy's, Copernican, and Tycho Brahe's), stating that the first one is 'preferable and universally accepted'.[127]

Erzurumī İbrahim Hakkı copies many parts of Müteferriḳa's discussion, often verbatim, introducing Copernican astronomy in his turn.[128] When he introduces the roundness of earth, Erzurumī explains that astronomers (*ehl-i he'yet*) suggest that this is a prerequisite of their science. In order to reassure those who think that this 'philosophical opinion' contradicts religion (*bu re'y-i felsefī şer'-i şerīfe muḫālif ẓann olunursa*), he quotes al-Ghazālī to the effect that differences between these opinions can be either only in name (i.e. the same things can be named with different terms),[129] or things that do not pertain to religion, such as eclipses (in which case, arguing against a proven scientific truth would be damaging to faith), or things that pertain to the foundations of religion, such as whether the

[125] Erzurumī İbrahim Hakkı, *Mā'rifetnāme*, University of Michigan, 51; ed. Meyan, *Mârifetnâme*, 45–46.
[126] Kâtib Çelebi, eds Hagen and Dankoff, *An Ottoman Cosmography*, 63. [127] Ibid., 51–64.
[128] Erzurumī İbrahim Hakkı, *Mā'rifetnāme*, University of Michigan, 199; ed. Meyan, *Mârifetnâme*, 270–271.
[129] See e.g. Erzurumī İbrahim Hakkı, *Mā'rifetnāme*, University of Michigan, 171; ed. Meyan, *Mârifetnâme*, 233–234, where he insists that numbers such as '500 years' distance' for the magnitude of earth in some old books are simply symbolic. Again, this is taken from Kâtib Çelebi: Kâtib Çelebi, eds Hagen and Dankoff, *An Ottoman Cosmography*, 88.

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world was created or eternal (in which case, they have to be refuted).[130] Again, this discussion is taken from Kâtib Çelebi's *Cihānnümā*.[131]

At any rate, we should note that, whereas these accounts show clearly that heliocentrism was a topic of discussion among some scholars, there are very few (if any) traces of such discussions in the wider networks of Ottoman intellectuals, scientists, or religious scholars. Samer Akkach recently suggested that astronomy may not have been as central in Islamic cosmological thought as it was for its Christian counterpart.[132] Akkach's argument focuses on Sufism; as for scholars, one could point to Harun Küçük's suggestion that Ottoman seventeenth- and eighteenth-century science had no interest in theory, due to the dire economic situation of scholars that made them concentrate on 'practical naturalism': thus, casting horoscopes, curing patients, producing elixirs, and calculating taxes was the everyday job of scientists lacking the necessary leisure (in terms of time and money) to accumulate and produce theory.[133]

We can also get an idea of the developments regarding the place of the supernatural in the Ottoman world view from historical and political writings. Of course, to say that in previous times historical events were explained by supernatural causes would be a huge exaggeration, although there are sixteenth-century treatises of political advice containing large parts on protective prayers, amulets, and other occult arts.[134] Yet, historians in general seem to have a favourable view of the occult: meteorological or planetary events are often cited as omens of historical developments, from Muṣṭafā ʿĀlī to Kâtib Çelebi and, of course, the important historian Naʿīmā (d. 1716), who was himself an astrologer. Kâtib Çelebi distinguishes between permissible sorcery (*mubāḥ*), done with the help of divine names and Qur'anic recitations, and forbidden sorcery, done with magic or talismans; however, elsewhere he accepts the summoning and manipulation of jinn for human purposes. His main argument is that the dominion of men over the jinn is granted by God:

> Nothing can prevent God from using a jinn of His choice, sincere and obedient, when certain words (such as divine names and others found in books, incantations or talismans) are remembered or pronounced, in order to make a man know what he wants to know about existing things.[135]

[130] Erzurumī İbrahim Hakkı, *Mā'rifetnāme*, University of Michigan, 78–79; ed. Meyan, *Mârifetnâme*, 86–88.

[131] Kâtib Çelebi, eds Hagen and Dankoff, *An Ottoman Cosmography*, 46–47. Cf. Riexinger, 'Al-Ghazālī's "Demarcation of Science"', 286–293, for the use of this specific argument.

[132] Akkach, 'Islamic Science and Cosmology'.

[133] Küçük, *Science without Leisure*.

[134] See e.g. Alā'ī, ed. Dokuzlu, 'Alâî b. Muhibbî eş-Şirâzî'nin *Düstûru'l-vüzerâ*', 136–153; Alā'ī insists that occult arts may give victory and success, but only if God's will allows.

[135] Kâtib Çelebi, ed. Gökyay, *Kâtip Çelebi'den seçmeler*, 228; Dols, *The Madman in Medieval Islamic Society*, 272–273.

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In addition, Kâtib Çelebi uses astrological references several times and often pays tribute to renowned astrologers, while warning against making references to the occult (*esrār-ı ilāhiyye*) before an ignorant audience.[136] Kâtib Çelebi is more indulgent towards the occult than Ibn Khaldūn, although the latter was his model when it comes to the theory of history. This remark is all the more important if we turn to Na'īmā; Na'īmā had certainly read Ibn Khaldūn assiduously, since he was his most faithful and analytical carrier of ideas in Ottoman literature.[137] And yet, although the Tunisian historian vehemently rejects the very possibility that astrology could have credible results, Na'īma, well versed in occult sciences, ignores his model's anti-occultist excerpts and maintains that knowledge of astrology is a necessity for the historian:

> Historians, as long as they understand the science of planetary influences (*'ilm-i ahkâm*), should note the influences of conjunctions on affairs, changes of years, eclipses, and other scientifically important factors. If they are capable of discovering the visible effects exerted on past tribes by the great astral bodies, these bodies releasing angels charged with executing God's orders, and if they are able to discover the conditions manifested by these forces in the social order of the state and then insert concrete evidence of these events into their exposition, then they will have displayed their authority as experts in astrology.[138]

Both Kâtib Çelebi and Na'īmā, as well as other seventeenth- and eighteenth-century historians, regularly used astrological evidence in their work.[139] Even when Pirīzāde translated Ibn Khaldūn's *Prolegomena* in the 1730s, the third part containing his attacks on occult arts was excluded; it was not translated into Ottoman Turkish before the nineteenth century. However, partly thanks to the diffusion of the printed version of Na'īmā's work, Ibn Khaldūn's ideas about the laws of history had an enormous influence on Ottoman political thought during the eighteenth century.[140] And it is precisely this new idea of historical causality, of the laws governing human societies and states, that gave a more 'disenchanted' tone to the political works of the period. Ironically, perhaps nothing illustrates this change better than the criticism addressed to Na'īmā by his late-eighteenth-century colleague, Şem'danīzāde Süleyman Efendi (d. 1779). After describing a solar

[136] Kâtib Çelebi, ed. Aycibin, 'Fezleke', 673, 821, 1072; copied by Na'ima, ed. İpşirli, *Târih-i Na'imâ*, 4: 1272.

[137] On Na'īma's rendering of Ibn Khaldūn, see Sariyannis, 'Ottoman Ibn Khaldūnism Revisited', 265–272; on Ibn Khaldūn's anti-occultism, see Asatryan, 'Ibn Khaldūn on Magic'; Melvin-Koushki, 'In Defence of Geomancy'; Gardiner, *Ibn Khaldūn versus the Occultists*.

[138] Na'ima, ed. İpşirli, *Târih-i Na'imâ*, 1: 5; as translated in Thomas, *A Study of Na'ima*, 114.

[139] Sariyannis, 'Knowledge and Control', 79; cf. Şen, 'Das Ereignis von Edirne'; Hagen, 'Dreaming 'Oṣmāns'; Şen, 'The Science and Politics', 47–48.

[140] Sariyannis, 'Ottoman Ibn Khaldūnism Revisited', 272–279.

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eclipse and the ominous prognostications of astrologers, the historian relates a famous anti-astrological hadith, accuses all astrologers of being liars, and writes:

> As he was familiar with the science of astrology, Na'īmā applies *post facto* prognostications on some events and maintains that historians must be familiar with astrology. Although he was a real pioneer [as a historiographer], his belief in the sinister signs of astrology discredits him, and thus he did not attain such glory as the ones who followed. What is necessary for historians is to distinguish good from evil and narrate the past with a right eye (*fikr-i müstakim*), not [pretending to] know the invisible (*gaybı bilmek*).[141]

And, indeed, by the late eighteenth century historical events were exclusively explained by human agency or even by historical laws, including the balance of powers; when Ahmed Resmī Efendi (d. 1783) describes in 1772 some events as an 'error of nature' (*ġalat-ı ṭabi'at*) due to the conjecture of the stars, he only does so to reinforce their exceptional character in regard to the historical laws he had just laid down (those preventing states from engaging in perpetual wars):

> The fact that the state of Russia attacks the frontiers of the Ottoman state for four years now contradicts both reason and experience, and this is called an error of nature by the philosophers. We know from experience that this event is due to the effect of the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn (*ḳırān-ı naḥseyn*) at the sign of Cancer or to a combination of the Russian czarina's fortune and the support of her star with the appearance of lightning or a simple whirlwind that has upset fortunes, and we also know that when the conjunction has gone or the master of the star has disappeared, the event will also be terminated. This event cannot be compared to other events and past situations.[142]

Impressively, even a vernacular fictional tale from the last quarter of the eighteenth century gives a rather ironic image for astrologers (although their predictions come partly true):

[141] Şem'dânî-zâde Süleyman Efendi, ed. Aktepe, *Mür'i't-tevârih*, 40.

[142] [Resmī Efendi], ed. Parmaksızoğlu, 'Bir Türk diplomatının', 531–532; Sariyannis, *Ottoman Political Thought*, 404. The same author repeats this thought in his history of the Russian–Ottoman war: 'Such things are the greatest of prodigies, for they are outside the natural conditions of the world. They can occur only once in two or three hundred years, like the campaigns of Sultan Süleyman Khan (Who Resideth in Paradise) to the land of Yemen…In short, these types of freak occurrences appear rarely and subside, like floods or like the great tempests they call hurricanes. They cannot last forever. Consequently, the Russians could turn fortune in their favour because they made such provisions but once in forty years. They cannot always prevail or spoil the general welfare. Ultimately, though, the scoundrels, ignorant of this fine philosophical point, heed not the cosmic prodigies that have occurred in all regions of the world for a thousand years' (Resmī Efendi, ed. Menchinger, *Hülâsatü'l-i'tibâr*, 85).

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> Astrologers took their astrolabes and they spied the skies (*cāsūs-ı felek olup*) crying '*ābı āba bādı ḫāke ḫākî*' and judged that the prince's star was inauspicious and his life would be short.[143]

Moreover, this change was accompanied by a philosophical concern about the notion of causality, as indicated by Ethan Menchinger's research. The volume of works on divine and human will, starting from the seventeenth century, shows an increased interest among Ottoman scholars in subjects such as fate, divine intervention, free will, and the regularity of the universe. As Menchinger shows, Ottoman scholars had developed their own vocabulary of causality: while always using traditional notions such as 'God's custom' (*ʿādat Allah*) or its breach (*khāriq al-ʿāda*), theologians also introduced new terms to designate events controlled by God (the 'universal events' or *ʿumūr-i külliyye*), as opposed to those that could be manipulated by humans (the 'particular events' or *ʿumūr-i cüziyye*). God's will, then, posed theological limits to the natural order, but did not limit the operation of human will (*irāde-i cüziyye*).[144] Thus, these debates on the question of how far humans can understand, predict, and control the world show a 'disenchanted', if not 'secularized', vision of reality gradually taking over throughout the eighteenth century. Yet, it would be a gross exaggeration to see any radical transformation of Ottoman theological thought, similar to the one undergone by Christian theology in the early modern era.[145]

Towards a Disenchanted World?

As emphasized earlier, 'Enlightenment' is a term that may appear deceptive, being perhaps too 'eurocentric' or, at any rate, being identified in common language too closely with a specific trajectory (or, in scholarly discussion, being identified with too many trajectories). Perhaps Max Weber's disenchantment (*Entzauberung*)—that is, the rationalization process that leads to a certain devaluation of the religious experience—is more appropriate to explain some processes that were apparent in Ottoman society from the mid-seventeenth century onwards. According to Weber, magical beliefs waned in favour of scientific ones in a process of rationalization that led to the retreat of supernatural

[143] Gür, *Hikâyenin hikâyesi*, 123.

[144] Menchinger, 'Freewill, Predestination'; Menchinger, 'Revisiting "Turkish Fatalism"'. Cf. Kurz, *Gates of Heaven*, 160–173, 193–194; Özdinç, 'Osmanlı düşüncesinde irade hürriyeti'; Bruckmayr, 'The Particular Will'; Akkach, *ʿAbd al-Ghani al-Nabulusi*, 82–86; Stearns, '"All Beneficial Knowledge"', 62–72; Stearns, *Revealed Sciences*, 122–123. On earlier discussions, see Altun, 'Osmanlı müelliflerince yazılan'. For an early Ottoman example (mid-sixteenth century), see Alâ'ī, ed. Dokuzlu, 'Alâî b. Muhibbî eş-Şirâzî'nin *Düstûru'l-vüzerâ*', 149–151; cf. Kāfī al-Aḫiṣārī, tr. Zein, *Rawdat al-jannat*, 24–26.

[145] Cf. Funkenstein, *Theology and the Scientific Imagination*.

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elements, characterizing the secular modern world.[146] Weber's theory has been heavily debated; most critics emphasize the ways in which our world became 're-enchanted', with occasional rises of occult beliefs and new types of religiosity, while some have argued that the Western world was never disenchanted, pointing to the esoteric and occultist tendencies of the founders of modern science.[147] For a much more macroscopic approach, one could cite Marshall Sahlins' suggestion of a long-term transition from the enchanted universe of 'societies of immanence' to the 'societies of transcendence', where divinity moves to an 'other world… leaving the earth alone to humans'. Sahlins suggested that during a 'Second Axial Age' (following Karl Jaspers' seminal terminology), roughly covering the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries, Western civilization further produced 'a series of transcendent categories', including 'religion', 'politics', 'science', and 'economy'.[148] In the wake of these discussions, similar conceptualizations of the development of the religious/supernatural experience have been put forward; among them, Charles Taylor's 'secularization' may have been the most influential.[149] In the words of Sanjay Subrahmanyam:

> [T]he 'rationality' of modernity does not lead to a radical disenchantment, but defines a proper place for the miracle as the phenomenon that cannot be explained, and which continues to exist in an enchanted enclave as it were.[150]

In my view, disenchantment can become a quite functional interpretation of a historical process if fertilized with other analytical tools. Such is the distinction, of which we talked in the Introduction, that Brian Vickers made between 'occult mentality or discourse' and 'scientific mentality': in the former, 'nature is significant not in itself but as a system of signs pointing to another system of mental categories'. Literal and metaphorical language are not discriminated; words and things are equivalent, and thus manipulating the one means also manipulating the other: controlling the letters and numbers (as in Kabbalah or numerological theories, or Islamicate letter science) means controlling reality. In sum, the distinction can be translated as a difference between analogy and identity: 'scientific mentality' or discourse presupposes that mental constructs are analogous to

[146] For some works in line with Weber's thesis, see e.g. Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*; Cameron, *Enchanted Europe*. On the context and impact of Thomas' book, see Machielsen and Pfeffer, 'A Work Out of Time'.

[147] Scribner, 'The Reformation, Popular Magic'; Jenkins, 'Disenchantment, Enchantment'; Walsham, 'The Reformation and "The Disenchantment"'; Josephson-Storm, *The Myth of Disenchantment*; Pfeffer, 'The Contribution of the Early Modern'; Pfeffer, 'Reassessing the Marginalization'; Yelle and Trein, *Narratives of Disenchantment*.

[148] Sahlins, *The New Science*, 2, 5–6, and *passim*.

[149] Taylor, *A Secular Age*; cf. Zemmin, Jager, and Vanheeswijck, *Working with* A Secular Age. Taylor himself admits that his is a 'narrow, "corralled" concept of disenchantment' in his 'Afterword', ibid., 375.

[150] Subrahmanyam, 'Monsters, Miracles and the World of *'ajā'ib-o-gharā'ib*', 278.

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nature, whereas 'occult mentality' sees them as identical and directly related.[151] I explored some aspects of this conflict in the previous section. For instance, if (as Jason Ā. Josephson-Storm argued) Weber 'should be read as having posited a *disenchanting* world in which magic became demonized' and 'contained in its own sphere',[152] then we can see clear signs of this process by the late eighteenth century, as in the examples provided earlier in this chapter.

Another way to see 'disenchantment' is by contrasting the differences in the philosophical view of nature (and, secondarily, society): one aspect is the emergence of nature as something autonomous and independent from man—the latter is no longer the centre of the universe, the creature for whose service the world was created, but a part of nature, and nature is conceived as something exterior that cannot be influenced by human actions, save those based on knowledge. The Islamicate concept of 'nature' or *ṭabīʿa* followed closely the Aristotelian notions: thus, it mainly meant the nature of a thing or substance, its essential intrinsic qualities or set of innate properties, so to speak; Aristotle defined the nature of a substance as 'a principle of being moved and being at rest in that to which it belongs primarily, not accidentally but essentially' (Aristotle, *Physics*, 2.1, 192b21–3). A major issue with this definition is whether motion is to be understood as part of the nature of a substance: in other words, whether nature is an active source of moving or a passive factor being moved. This issue apart, it seems that in the Christian West nature took its modern meaning of 'the material universe' through the juxtaposition of the natural process of things (i.e. according to their innate disposition) with miracles (i.e. instances where this process was violated). Thus, terms such as 'natural causes' and things 'beyond/against nature' (against the nature of things) led to the unification of all visible, tangible, and understandable things under one sphere, clearly distinct from the divine realm.[153] Hence, medieval Islamicate philosophy (e.g. Avicenna) used *ṭabīʿa* (or, in some cases, *ḥaqīqa*, 'truth, reality') in this Aristotelian sense of the intrinsic nature of substances. Its further development is obscure; a short treatise by Avicenna postulates that *ṭabīʿa* is the fourth degree of being: in other words, the fourth sphere of existence generated by the divine Essence (*dhāt*), after the Intellect (*ʿaql*) and the Soul (*nafs*) but before the corporeal world (consisting of ether and the elements); *ṭabīʿa* would thus be the forces acting upon the sublunary world.[154]

[151] Vickers, 'Analogy versus Identity'; cf. the remarks by Hanegraaff, 'The Notion of "Occult Sciences"', who rightly points out that 'the notion of "occult sciences" should be an object *of* historical study, not a concept used *for* studying…currents in the field of Western esotericism'.

[152] Josephson-Storm, 'Max Weber', esp. 43–49.

[153] See the survey by Ducarme and Couvet, 'What Does "Nature" Mean?' (which, however, must be used with caution as one reads that 'Aristotle, who was not born Greek, obviously struggles with this word in his texts'); Bartlett, 'The Natural and the Supernatural'; Caiazzo, 'Nature et découverte'. On the Islamicate case, Lory, *La Dignité de l'homme*; McGinnis, 'Ibn Sina's Natural Philosophy'; McGinnis, 'Natural Knowledge'; Lammer, 'Defining Nature'; Murad, 'Sufi Views of Nature'. Cf. the monumental study of the topic in early modern England by Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*.

[154] Lory, *La Science des lettres*, 78–79.

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Similarly, al-Ghazālī (d. 1111) remarks as a cosmological argument that nature (*ṭabīʿa*) cannot generate animals and plants for itself, whereas he speaks of unbelievers who hold nature (*ṭabʿ*), rather than God, to be the cause of the world. On the contrary, he asserts, 'nature is forced to operate according to God Exalted; it does not operate of itself but is employed by its creator'.[155] As for Ibn ʿArabī (d. 1240), *ṭabīʿa* is twofold, as there is a 'Greater Nature' corresponding more or less to the universe and a material nature, like a daughter to the former, divided into the four properties and elements.[156] Sükrullah (d. after 1464) in his universal history, *Behcetü'l-tevārīḫ*, composed in Persian in the late 1450s, names 'nature' (*ṭabīʿat*) as the result of the movement of the spheres and stars, as long as it is immaterial (steam and incense); from the moment this result becomes visible and tangible, it is called body and element (e.g. the nature of the air is hot and humid).[157] This formulation seems close to the Aristotelian usage of the term; however, in sources of the seventeenth century we find a meaning much closer to the modern understanding. A verse by the Bayrāmī-Melāmī sheikh Oğlanlar Şeyhi İbrahim Efendi (d. 1655) reads:

> Mother and Father, in truth, are the elements, the nature (*anāsırdır, ṭabīʿattır*).
> One is the receiver and the other one is the active (*biri ḳābil, biri fail*), seen on the face of the oneness.[158]

The verse implies that the world of elements—that is, the sublunary world of change and corruption, or the realm of matter—constitutes nature (*ṭabīʿat*). Almost half a century later, Ḥüseyin Hezārfenn (d. 1692) states that students of medicine should know the 'principles of nature' (*umūr-ı ṭabīʿiyye*), implying again a distinct sphere encompassing the material world.[159] His near-contemporary, İsmāʿīl Ḥaḳḳı Bursevī (d. 1725), again in a heavily mystical context, also seems to use the term as an inclusive concept behind the whole material world:

> Eve is the universal nature from which the bodies [are born] (*wa Ḥawwā al-ṭabīʿa al-kullīyya allati fī al-ajsām*); because, for the people of truth, nature is the [world of] *malakūt* of the bodies (*yaʿni inna al-ṭabīʿa ʿind ahl al-ḥaḳḳ taṭliḳa ʿilā malakūt al-jism*).[160]

[155] Griffel, *Al-Ghazālī's Philosophical Theology*, 226, 246, 285.
[156] Karjoo-Ravary, 'Mapping the Unseen', 20–21.
[157] Şükrullah, ed. Almaz, *Behcetü't-tevârîh*, 81. Cf. the use of the 'natures and qualities' of essences in an undated alchemic treatise: Yılmaz, '*Risāle-i tuḥfetü'l-iḫvān*', *passim*, e.g. 80 (*her biriniñ ṭabīatları ve aḫvālleri birbirine muḫālifdür*); and Kâtib Çelebi's Arabic formulation on the 'nature' of the planets (*al-ṭabīʿa ilā al-kawākib*): Kâtip Çelebi, eds Yaltkaya and Bilge, *Keşf-el-zunun*, 2: 1931; cf. *Keşfü'z-zunûn*, tr. Balcı, 4: 1545.
[158] Quoted in Yavuz, 'Orality in the *Tekke*', 60fn36.
[159] Yıldırım, '*Bevanda asiatica*', 40.
[160] İsmâil Hakkı Bursevî, eds Muslu and Namlı, *Tamâmü'l-feyz*, 120.

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Here, *ṭabīʿa* is certainly much more than a quality, if only because there is a collective or universal one. However, we must stress that in Bursevī's understanding, *ṭabīʿa* seems to imply a spiritual universe, rather than a material one. As he states elsewhere, 'man is the last condescension of existence after passing through the natures, the elements, and the three natural kingdoms [metals, flora, and fauna]' (*al-insān āḫir min tanazzul ilā ḥaṣīṣ al-wujūd baʿd ʿubūrihi min al-ṭabīʿiyyāt wa l-ʿunṣūriyyāt wa l-mawālīd al-ṣalaṣa*)[161]—thus, a sort of spiritual essence in the heart of the (material) elements, but distinct from them. A concept similar to 'material nature' is the Sufi realm of the senses, the *ʿālam al-ṣūra wa l-mulk wa l-shahāda* or more simply *ʿālam al-mulk*.[162] We examined this sort of cosmology in Chapter 2 above; however, let us note that it does not correspond to nature as opposed to the supernatural or preternatural, since (in this sense) it refers not to processes but rather to dimensions or levels of existence. On the other hand, one might postulate that it is the 'divine habit' (*ʿāda ilahiyya*, *ʿādet-i ilahiye*), the normal course of events through a habitual causality (see Chapter 2), which has the meaning of 'nature', rather than *ṭabīʿat*. We may even find a sense of 'natural laws' in this concept, as for instance in Evliya Çelebi's exclamation that death 'is a law' (*ḳānūndur, cümlemiz ölürüz*).[163]

Thus, the term 'nature' (*ṭabīʿat*) seems to have begun to acquire autonomy by the seventeenth century at least, although the examples are much too limited to allow us reach a conclusion. An impressive (but so far, isolated) example is Hüseyin Hezārfenn's (d. 1692) claim that there are 'principles of nature' (*umūr-ı ṭabīʿiyye*) that have to be known by students of medicine as they govern this science. Actually, it is the idea rather than the terminological precision of 'natural laws' that we have to seek. Elsewhere I have discussed various forms of 'historical laws' and how Ottoman scholars began to consider the future as something that can be roughly predicted without recourse to supernatural forces.[164] Moreover, one could study the role of technologies developed in response to problems posed by fires or earthquakes, phenomena for which a supernatural interpretation was traditionally given. There are many instances of the association of earthquakes with astral movements, from Riyāzī's treatise on talismans to vernacular *melhame* literature; this may be counted as a naturalist approach, contrary to the explanation based on the roots of Mount Ḳaf, moving by the angel at God's will. However, this example only adds to the confusion: as we saw above, whereas Riyāzī proposes specific countermeasures (namely, building wells and caverns to allow underground vapours to escape), as late as the early eighteenth century the

[161] Ibid., 283. [162] Ibid., 103.

[163] [Evliya Çelebi], eds Dankoff, Tezcan, and Sheridan, *Ottoman Explorations of the Nile*, 288; Evliya Çelebi, eds Kahraman, Dağlı, and Dankoff, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, X. Kitap*, 463.

[164] Sariyannis, 'Knowledge and Control', 51–54 and 82–83; Sariyannis, *The Horizons, Limits, and Taxonomies*, 18–21.

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Ḳaf theory re-emerges, implying that only piety can be useful.[165] Obviously, a much more thorough study is required if there is to be an answer. The example of fires is clearer: one just has to compare the great fire of 1660 in Istanbul, which was linked by no less than an imperial document to the presence of Jews in the burnt neighbourhoods, with the eighteenth-century regulations ordering careful building of houses using stone and proper distances in order to avoid the danger of fire.[166] Yet, the political and social implications of the 'ethnic cleansing' of the above-mentioned neighbourhoods again make conclusions difficult to draw.[167]

Another aspect focuses on the 'mechanization of the world picture': Peter Burke wrote of 'recurrent metaphors' and especially 'those which seem to structure thought' as a very useful way of tracing differences between mentalities. He suggested that what he described as the shift from 'the world as an organism (a "body", an "animal")' to 'the world as machine' as the dominant mental metaphor during the seventeenth century could be coupled with 'the decline of natural symbols like the "body politic"'.[168] On the other hand, technology might be associated with magic (one will remember the classification of prestidigitation into occult sciences) and, similarly, the engineer may be seen as a magus, having power of supernatural appearance over the laws of nature, while magic (in its hermetic version) is a technology of sorts, taking advantage of these laws.[169] Islamicate occultism, with its complex magic squares and methods (e.g. the *zā'irja*) had a strong tendency towards 'mathematicization' (which may have had affinities with a turn towards the understanding of mathematics as inherent to reality, which seems to have occurred in Islamicate philosophy in the fifteenth century):[170] Matthew Melvin-Koushki recently emphasized this neo-Pythagorian strand, apparent both in the place of the occult sciences in late medieval encyclopedic taxonomies, as we saw above, and in the complex alphanumeric methods used in letter magic, geomancy, and talismanics.[171] In his turn, Pierre Lory argued that the numerical devices used by geomancy played a major role in the popularity of this occult science, as early as the Jabirian corpus and the Brethren of Purity,[172] and indeed geomancy lends itself to complex mechanical instruments

[165] Riyāzī [Ibn Kemal], ed. Dalkıran, 'İbn-i Kemal'in tılsımat risâlesi', 206; Kostantinî, ed. Akın, 'İlk müstakil deprem kitabi'.

[166] Baer, 'The Great Fire of 1660', 172; Çokuğraş and Gençer, 'Urban Regulations', 185–189.

[167] Moreover, the use of stone masonry to avoid fires had already been proposed in a mid-sixteenth-century political treatise: Sariyannis, *A History of Ottoman Political Thought*, 151.

[168] Burke, *Varieties of Cultural History*, 179.

[169] For this complex relationship, see Eamon, 'Technology as Magic'. As an example, one may take block-printed amulets, which predated book printing in the Islamic world (Muehlhaeusler, 'Math and Magic'; Schaefer, 'The Material Nature') and which perhaps were multiplied in the Ottoman eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (see e.g. Leoni, 'A Stamped Talisman').

[170] This thesis is suggested by Fazlıoğlu, 'Between Reality and Mentality'.

[171] Melvin-Koushki, 'Powers of One'; Melvin-Koushki, 'Toward a Neopythagorian Historiography'; Melvin-Koushki, '*How to Rule the World*'; cf. Izdebska, 'The Pythagorean Metaphysics' on actual Pythagorean influences in medieval Islamic philosophy.

[172] Melvin-Koushki, 'Powers of One'; Lory, 'Geomancy, Divination and Islam', 459–460; on magic squares, see Hallum, 'New Light'.

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that can even be considered precursors of a calculator.[173] Yet, these methods do not imply a mechanical vision of the universe, and moreover they belong to a period in which no 'disenchantment' may be properly conceived. Usually, this 'mechanization' is associated with the advent of mechanical clocks, which brought with it the possibility of the movements of the celestial spheres as something regulated by natural mechanisms. However, although the use of mechanical clocks was constantly expanding from the sixteenth century onwards, it is very difficult to find traces of any mechanization of the image of the universe even in late Ottoman texts.[174] The metaphor of the world as a workshop is a usual one, but this belongs to traditional, pre-Ottoman imagery of the rotating wheel of fate and has nothing to do with any understanding of the cosmos as a mechanism. When an eighteenth-century text has Alexander telling Darius that everybody ends up falling as a result of 'the wheel that rotates in this workshop of a world' (*bu kārḫāne-yi ʿāleme devvār olan çarḫıñ maẕrūfları encāmlarında*),[175] this may seem an impressive quasi-deterministic image. As a matter of fact, however, it is little different from the simile of 'the workshop known as the Ottoman state' with its 'great wheels of fortune' depending on the integrity and wisdom of state officials, as we see in Muṣṭafā ʿÂlī's work almost one and a half centuries earlier.[176] A playful mid-seventeenth-century description of the recipe for attaining one's wishes as a mixture of spiritual units, counted meticulously (one unit of spiritual discipline, one unit of the prophet, fifteen units of al-Suhrawardī, and so forth), may be seen as a sign of a detached, mechanic vision of salvation, but its humorous character does not easily lend it to interpretation.[177] One must look much later, to the late nineteenth century, in order to find a mechanical, materialist version of psychology.[178]

Occasionally, the symbolism of watches and clocks included the movement of celestial spheres. Avner Ben-Zaken stresses the case of the astronomer Taḳīyüddīn Raşīd (d. 1585); known mostly for his astronomical works (connected with the first—and short-lived—observatory in Istanbul), Taḳīyüddīn also wrote a treatise on mechanical clocks, *Al-kawākib al-durrīya fi bīnkāmāt al-dawrīya* ('The Brilliant Stars and the Revolving Clocks'), and Ben-Zaken maintains that he intended 'to build a machine and a clock that would reflect the spiritual structure of the heavens', as well as that his use of new subdivisions in geometrical measurements (namely, decimal rather than sexadecimal) 'shortened the road to "mechanical philosophy" and to perceptions of nature no longer completely based on

[173] See Savage-Smith and Smith, *Islamic Geomancy*; cf. the combination of geomancy with drawing lots in the manuscripts studied by D'hulster, 'Will I Be Happy?'

[174] Some short and preliminary reflections can be found in Sariyannis, '"Temporal Modernization"', 251–252.

[175] Mahmud Efendi, ed. Tunalı, *Atina tarihi*, 333.

[176] Sariyannis, *A History of Ottoman Political Thought*, 493–494.

[177] Gürbüzel and Tuşalp Atiyas, 'Blending Piety and Philology', 183.

[178] See the pioneering study by Afacan, 'Idle Souls, Regulated Emotions'.

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integrated metaphysical assumptions'.[179] Yet, Sonja Brentjes has shown that Ben-Zaken's conclusions are based on a faulty reading of the treatise and on unfounded assumptions.[180] The title of the treatise seems to couple stars and clockwork, but this is only a rhetorical device quite common in Islamicate book titles; the only allusion to the universe is to be found in the introductory invocations:

> O! the one who created motion and the rest, and made the sciences of full moons emerge from the hidden horizon. He set these circles and the spheres in motion as the essence of truth and the minutes of signs.

Interestingly, Taḳīyüddīn claims that the art of making mechanical clocks relies on mathematics and on natural philosophy: 'as for natural philosophy, it requires knowledge in the art of talismans, magic and alchemy (*nīranjāt*)'. This claim is not further substantiated: if alchemy has to do with the metals used, magic may be meant as the creation of illusions (e.g. mechanical animals?). As for talismans, the only reference comes in the description of spring-driven clocks: they do not need *siryaq* (a kind of chord), and they are called *ṭılsımī* (talismanic), yet their description has nothing to justify this adjective.[181]

Later on, another treatise by Taḳīyüddīn has an interesting aspect for our topic: his *Kitāb al-ṭuruq al-sanīyah fī al-ālāt al-rūḥānīyah* or 'Book of the Sublime Ways for Spiritual Instruments' (Ben-Zaken translates as 'Spiritual Mechanics') deals with automata, another way to proceed towards a mechanical view of the cosmos. Although this book has also affinities to an 'enchanted' world view, as it is full of magical incantations intended to protect the instruments, Taḳīyüddīn states that he means to 'build a machine and a clock that would reflect the spiritual structure of the heavens' before embarking on the description of a clockwork planetarium showing the movement of the celestial spheres.[182] This work actually continues a long Islamic tradition of treatises on automata, which moreover seems to have handed on a rather antiquarian approach in Ottoman times.

It seems, anyway, that Taḳīyüddīn's views did not find any continuators after his death in 1585. A reference to a mechanical clockwork theatre (in a rather exaggerated Greek account of the festivals for Prince Selim's birth in 1761), featuring a clock, the moon, the sun, and the planets, may indicate a sign of change, but it

[179] Ben-Zaken, 'The Revolving Planets', 138–139; Ben-Zaken, *Cross-Cultural Scientific Exchanges*, 17. Taḳīyüddīn obviously collaborated with craftsmen: Günergun, 'Timekeepers and Sufi Mystics', 360–362.

[180] Brentjes, 'Book review: Cross-Cultural Exchanges'.

[181] Takiyüddin, ed. Tekeli, *16.nci asırda Osmanlılarda saat*, 139, 142, 192.

[182] Ben-Zaken, 'The Revolving Planets', 139. A facsimile of the manuscript was published in Taqī al-Dīn, ed. al-Ḥasan, *Taqī al-Dīn wa-al-handasah al-mīkānīyah*.

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stands isolated so far. The account relates that 'in another [mechanical show] they had made a clock, and beside it the moon and the sun; And they displayed from afar how the rest of the planets moved'.[183] The mechanism might be the same as the one presented to Mahmud I (r. 1730–1754), probably fabricated abroad, and described in an anonymous treatise. The author begins with some general elements of geometry and cosmography, and continues with a description of the mechanism. At no point whatsoever do we see any interest in the interior workings of the clockwork mechanism; however, it is perhaps significant that the author makes no reference to any theological notion either—for instance, to God as the First Mover (only a short eulogy for the sultan, paralleled to all seven celestial bodies)—even the initial eulogy is unusually short and laconic.[184] Finally, the construction and use of paper or copper volvelles (wheel charts, i.e. movable discs for astronomical and calendar calculations) was widespread enough, but they do not seem to have inspired any mechanical view of the universe.[185]

Thus, evidence of a mechanization of the Ottoman world view is rather scarce and disappointing. More often than not, the symbolism of clocks and planets was centred on a ruler-centred hierarchy, rather than reflecting a new vision of the universe. Avner Wishnitzer analyses two poems, including a rather late one by Refi-i Kalayī (d. 1822), featuring astrological and time-keeping symbolism, as well as some other similar poetic works of the late eighteenth century: he shows that, whereas there is a tight intertwining of the celestial world with clockwork, the dominant symbolism focuses on the theme of concentric circles revolving around a centre (the earth, the ruler, or the beloved).[186] A 1820 chronogram celebrating a *muvaḳḳıtḫāne* (time-keeping lodge) states that 'the *muvaḳḳıtḫāne* became the duplicate of the spheres on earth',[187] but again this does not necessarily indicate a mechanical view of the spheres.

Emotions as a Marker of Disenchantment

Another way of approaching this subject is to examine and categorize the emotions expressed by Ottoman authors towards supernatural apparitions, such as ghosts and theophanies, in order to study the development of attitudes towards the world and the afterlife. Fear and aversion, wonder and astonishment, curiosity, joy, and hope are often described in detail when a supernatural entity appears

[183] Kallinikos, ed. Tselikas, *Τα κατά και μετά την εξορίαν*, 250 (*εις άλλο ωρολόγιον είχασι φθιασμένον / και την σελήνην κ' ήλιον πλησίον του βαλμένον. / Και τους πλανήτας τους λοιπούς και πώς περιπατούσαν / από μακρόθεν έδειχναν*).

[184] Demir, 'I. Mahmud'a hediye edilen'. For a more detailed description of a more complex instrument from the same period, see Günergun, 'The Ottoman Ambassador's Curiosity Coffer', 110–121; it seems that a lively interest in such mechanisms was entertained by members of the elite.

[185] Danışan, 'The Paper Instruments'.

[186] Wishnitzer, *Reading Clocks*, 17–30.

[187] Ibid., 26–27.

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in a narrative. Ottoman literature is abundant in supernatural apparitions: ghosts and jinn, but above all emissaries from the invisible world of the *ghayb*, are often present not only in fictional accounts but also in testimonies represented as faithful relations of real events. In a recent article, based on a sample of texts spanning a long period, I proposed a classification of the emotions narrated by Ottoman prose writers regarding the experience of the supernatural and made some hypotheses about their significance regarding Ottoman attitudes towards the world and the supernatural.[188] I made a distinction among three important categories of emotions that the heroes of Ottoman texts experience when confronted with the appearance of a supernatural element: serenity or ease, wonder or astonishment, and fear (of course, this list is not exhaustive: joy, submission, indifference, and disbelief, as well as various combinations of these feelings, can be also found). By 'serenity', I mean an almost nonchalant or indifferent attitude, a kind of quiet acceptance of the supernatural as natural—that is, an attitude in which the supernatural is an integral part of life. From this point of view, the absence of emotion in the face of supernatural apparitions can be seen as an indicator of a certain mentality that views the world as a completely enchanted domain. This is the attitude of fairy tales, but also of many *menāḳıbnāme*s (hagiographies), particularly those of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries: a person who refused to pay homage to Hacı Bektaş saw his testicles as roses, 'he bowed his head and realized that [he] was a true saint'; or a woman disappears, and the sheikh's disciples just report to him that they 'have not been able to get news of her'.[189] This attitude can often be attributed, of course, to the narrative techniques of these texts. It is a silence rather than an absence of emotion: the emotion provoked by the miracle (no more than that provoked by death, misfortune, or injustice) is not described, but this does not necessarily mean that the heroes remain indifferent and do not experience any emotion at all. On the other hand, the very natural way in which the characters described in these stories seem to welcome supernatural appearances shows, to a certain extent, how people lived in an enchanted, magical world at that time; for a faithful person, a miracle would only be further proof of well-known facts (the existence of God, the sanctity of a sheikh), while for unbelievers, the miracle would immediately be sufficient reason to convert.

When Ottoman literature begins to be more eloquent about emotions, in texts from the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth centuries, as well as in Sufi biographies from the seventeenth and even the eighteenth centuries, the dominant feeling is wonder or amazement (*ta'acc*ü*b*). People 'become stunned with admiration' (*ḥayrān oldılar*), or stay perplexed (*sergerdān olub*, *ḥayretde ḳaldı*…); in the fictional story of Ebū 'Alī Sīnā,

[188] Sariyannis, '"Nous étions tous stupéfaits et effrayés"', on which all that follows is based; see also Ben-Ami, 'Wonder in Early Modern Ottoman Society'.

[189] See the examples in Sariyannis, '"Nous étions tous stupéfaits et effrayés"', 284–286.

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> [t]hose who were struck by the swords and fell to the ground did not die, they got back on their feet; the people of the city were perplexed, for they had never seen anything like this.[190]

This attitude is arguably the most common one: we can see it throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, from fictional texts to Evliya and to İsmāʿīl Ḥaḳḳı Bursevī, often accompanied by the typical gesture of putting one's finger to their mouth.[191] The supernatural (or, in any case, the inexplicable) is therefore an element that, although not frequently present in everyday life, is accepted as predictable and expected: whether it be spirits and jinn, divine intervention, or human magic, it is well known that the supernatural exists and can present itself, and in this case, one simply has to accept it and make the most of it. Perplexity, in fact, is a way of integrating extraordinary or abnormal experiences into the known world, since it considers them as a specimen of divine majesty (of which man is also an integral part). Therefore, these descriptions leave us with the impression of a 'tamed' or 'tameable' supernatural, albeit not as much as in the rural Sufi *menāḳıbnāme* of the fifteenth century, but still a supernatural with which man is capable of coming to terms.

Finally, it seems that towards the second half of the sixteenth century, wonderment or perplexity began to give way to fear. Literature of the realist tradition, more particularly, seems to place a special emphasis on fear as the main feeling towards the supernatural. Cinānī's stories illustrate this very well: in this work, an early example of a realistic tradition (in terms of places and circumstances, as well as of dialogue), fear is the feeling that is most often experienced in the face of supernatural apparitions and events. Someone encounters a stranger and observes with fear (*ġāyet ḫavf ėdüp…ḫavfdan müteḥayyir oldum*) that his shadow is as long as a minaret (he is actually a jinni); others realize the presence of jinn and are terrified (*bize külli dehşet vėrüp*); another person sees a jinni, but 'his drunkenness preserves him from fear' (*mestānelik ḳuvvetiyle ḫavf ėtmeyüp*).[192] This development perhaps reaches its climax in 'Azīz Efendi's *Muḫayyelāt*, and here the peak is even more significant since it is a fantastic narrative despite its almost modern dialogues and structure.[193]

Of course, like all emotions, fear has not only its historical development, but also its nuances. There is, for instance, fear in the face of imminent danger that presents a real threat, such as a monster or a dragon; there is also reverential fear, the awe that makes us lose our composure in front of divinity, royal majesty, superior strength, or the unknown. From the examples studied, it seems that this

[190] Seyyid Ẓiyaeddīn Yaḥya, ed. Şenocak, 'İbn Sînâ Hikâyeleri', 476–477, 485, 493, and *passim*.
[191] Cf. Shalem, 'Amazement'; Ben-Ami, 'Bewitched and Bewildered'.
[192] Cinānī, ed. Ünlü, *Bedâyiü'l-âsâr*, 71–72, 97–102, 102–105.
[193] See some examples in Sariyannis, '"Nous étions tous stupéfaits et effrayés"', 295–296.

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second type of fear became the dominant emotion by the end of the seventeenth century: in earlier texts, fear is mainly experienced in front of supernatural but also terrifying creatures, while from the late seventeenth century onwards, more often than not fear is not caused by anything dangerous: it is the unknown, the inexplicable, or the marvellous that arouses fear.

One can experience such fear in front of something that does not belong to this world: Evliya's Bulgarian witch does not threaten him, and yet he does not hesitate to note his fear;[194] similarly, the warriors of an anonymous story feel fear in front of people whose sanctity seems beyond doubt, while certain that their mission is also holy.[195] Can we attribute this change to a banishment of the supernatural, previously domesticated or at least tamed, from everyday life? One does not have to be afraid of a miracle (provided that one is a good Muslim who has nothing to fear from God), but one would be afraid of an apparition or an inexplicable act that does not conform to the norms of nature. It can be said that fear is a very justified reaction if one has begun to consider the concept of a world governed by natural laws, rather than a world in which anything can be expected: in other words, if one has begun to see the world as a domain of natural forces rather than supernatural force.

*

Although the 'enchanted' view of the world exhibited a remarkable resilience until well into the nineteenth century, especially at the vernacular level, it is beyond doubt that the field of the natural sciences—that is, the domain of the world that was considered explicable and understandable—was constantly expanding throughout the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. The examples we have seen from Ottoman geography, astronomy, and medicine are telling for the enlargement of the sources of knowledge, mainly by including European science, and moreover as an authority superior to Islamicate tradition. This enlargement arguably led to a practical naturalism in the streets, rather than a fully fledged radicalization of theory and method—although the cases of materialistic thought multiplied and seem to belong to a real and influential current of thought among at least some intellectuals of Istanbul (mostly belonging to the scribal bureaucracy, it seems).

Trying to put these developments into a more global perspective (and, admittedly, to seek a grand narrative), in this chapter we have tried to see if any parallel to the European 'disenchantment' can be applied in the Ottoman case. A certain democratization of knowledge, meaning granting the right to seek truth to all men or at least to all Muslims, may have been connected with the Ḳāḍızādeli

[194] Evliya Çelebi, eds Kahraman and Dağlı, *Evliyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi, III. Kitap*, 210–211 (ff. 130a–b); Evliya Çelebi, *An Ottoman Traveller*, 103–104.

[195] Ambros and Schmidt, 'A Cossack Adopted'.

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movement, which 'de-supernaturalized' everyday life and the understanding of the world in a way similar to European Protestantism. On the other hand, it seems that Ottoman society moved towards this development from other trajectories as well, and we are justified in postulating that the Ḳāḍızādelis were as much a by-product or symptom of this process as the motivating factor behind it. Indeed, I will try in the Epilogue to propose a social and cultural impetus to explain some of the contradictions of this process, since the expansion of natural science coexisted with a waning of occultist approaches, at least at the scholarly level, and with a tendency to think of history as depending on human rather than divine agency. Whereas Ottoman culture of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries does not really pass the litmus test of a distinct conceptualization of nature or a mechanical world view, our short and preliminary study of emotions connected with what exceeds human understanding corroborates the conclusion that natural laws rather than supernatural forces came to dominate Ottoman world visions (or at least a large part of them) by the late seventeenth century.

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Epilogue

Social and Global Aspects of Ottoman Esotericism

The Global Dimension

In the short survey of Christian and Islamic magic in the Introduction, I emphasized the views concerning an 'occult turn' during the late medieval and Renaissance centuries, expressed in the lettrist philosophy of Ibn ʿArabī and al-Būnī in the East and the neo-Platonic and Hermetic philosophy of Marsilio Ficino or Pico della Mirandola in the West. How can we place Ottoman perceptions of nature and of the ways human agency can handle its hidden powers (be they natural properties or supernatural entities) in a global context: that is, against the backdrop of these developments? Undoubtedly, the Ottomans followed this global occult turn during the fifteenth and the early sixteenth centuries. From Akşemseddin (d. 1459) to the *şeyhülislam* Ibn Kemāl or Kemālpaşazāde (d. 1534), major figures of Ottoman intellectual life wrote lettrist treatises and prophesied universal dominion; palace circles were heavily influenced by occultists such as the geomancer Haydar, who apparently managed to convince young Suleyman I that he was destined to perform a Messianic mission in spreading Islam worldwide.[1] At the end of the sixteenth century, Murad III maintained a lively interest in astrological predictions and firmly believed that he was God's elect, constantly receiving messages from the Hereafter; it seems that other occult sciences also flourished during his reign.[2] Let us recall here Baki Tezcan's suggestion that the rational sciences (mathematics, philosophy, and the natural sciences) were linked to the generous patronage of rulers who were powerful enough to take legislative initiatives; during periods when the sultans tried to increase their power at the expense of the ulema, these sciences experienced remarkable growth, while they were excluded from the curriculum of Ottoman madrasas

[1] The bibliography on the political aspects of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century eschatology is growing: Flemming, '*Ṣāḥib-qırān* and Mahdī'; Fleischer, 'Seer to the Sultan'; Fleischer, 'Shadow of Shadows'; Fleischer, 'Ancient Wisdom'; Melvin-Koushki, 'Toward a Neopythagorean Historiography'; Casale, 'Mehmed the Conqueror'; cf. also Gardiner, 'Cosmo-eschatology'. One might draw a Russian parallel as well: see Collis, *The Petrine Instauration*, which, however, seems to overemphasize the importance of occultism—a trait common to some treatments of the Ottoman case as well.

[2] See e.g. Lelić, '"The Greatest of Tribulations"', 267–268.

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during periods when the power of the ulema was developing. One often gets the impression that the same remark could be made with regard to occult sciences.[3]

At the same time, intellectual elites followed a course that is also reminiscent of contemporary European developments—that is, the turn to natural magic—rather than demonic. If we take a look at fifteenth- and sixteenth-century occult treatises, they are of two sorts. Sometimes they focus on ritual magic, closer to the *Ghāyat al-ḥakīm* tradition, such as Uzun Firdevsī's *Da'vetnāme*. Similar methods of ritual magic can be found in several *mecmū'a* and in some hagiographical sources, such as the biography of the famous mystic Sheikh Üftāde (d. 1580). More often, however, these treatises follow al-Būnī's and al-Bisṭāmī's 'lettrist turn': collections of lettrist talismans and prayers abound, either as autonomous manuscripts or copied in *mecmū'a*. The counterpart of Firdevsī's *Da'vetnāme* is perhaps Sarūḫānī's *Ḳavā'id-i tesḫīrāt*: it contains detailed and systematic instructions on how to use the power of letters, whereas his near-contemporary Taşköprüzāde's treatise on plague describes a variety of magical techniques, from invocations and magic squares to lettrist methods.

Yet, even if we accept that in other Islamicate empires the lettrist turn maintained its momentum throughout the seventeenth century, Ibn Khaldūn seems to have had a belated revenge on his occultist opponents: starting with Kâtib Çelebi's (d. 1657) historical works, Khaldūnist historical sociology permeated the understanding of history of the Ottoman elite and drove away messianic considerations of occult power.[4] Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century scholarly perceptions of magic were more impressed by a naturalist approach, either imitating medieval Islamic models (rather than thirteenth-century mystical magic: in other words, *Ghāyat al-ḥakīm* rather than al-Būnī's *Shams al-ma'arif*) or following the Renaissance trend to unify magic and nature. We should observe here that lettrism (as noted in Chapter 3 above) is primarily a supernatural system, linking the macrocosm and microcosm to the Hereafter and the Arabic letters, along which the cosmos is allegedly structured. But under the heavy influence of al-Suhrawardī's Illuminationism, itself very akin to neo-Platonism, scholars such as Taşköprüzāde and Kâtib Çelebi developed a theory of natural magic that strongly resembles Renaissance authors such as Ficino and della Mirandola, as it is based on secret hierarchies and correspondences of the microcosm and the macrocosm.[5] Whereas Taşköprüzāde's work on plague contains lettrist techniques, especially

[3] Tezcan, 'Some Thoughts on the Politics' (but see also the remarks by Brentjes, 'Courtly Patronage', which however does not deal with the Ottoman Empire). On the relationship between the occult sciences and the princely courts, see, for the European case, Boudet, *Entre science et nigromance*, 157–203; for the Islamicate case, Coulon, *La Magie en terre d'islam*, 273–277; Şen, 'Astrology in the Service of the Empire', 198–213; Şen, 'Reading the Stars'.

[4] Sariyannis, 'Ottoman Ibn Khaldunism Revisited'.

[5] On the occult writings of al-Suhrawardī, see Piątak, 'Between Philosophy, Mysticism and Magic'. His system of God's Names was, it seems, similar to that elaborated by al-Būnī: Winter, *Society and Religion*, 123n73, 175–176.

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magic squares, his descriptions of occult science in his encyclopedia invoke much more natural magic; and some decades earlier, the treatise on talismans by Riyāzī Ali Çelebi had already put forward a coherent theory of the science of talismans as combining the knowledge of earthly and astral powers, explaining the principles of manufacturing amulets and seals using metals associated with planets.

On the other hand, in some respects not only the 'lettrist turn', but even the 'occult turn', was more of an 'occult moment' for the Ottomans. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are in part centuries of disenchantment, as we saw in Chapter 6. We find more and more scholarly texts from the late seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries speaking of occult sciences with contempt. From historical and political works putting forward the concept of historical laws to theological debates on human agency and its role in influencing history, and from moralist authors such as Nābī and Sünbülzāde Vehbī rejecting occultism to Sufi sheikhs preferring 'invisible' miracles (e.g. visions) to 'cosmic' ones (e.g. wondrous cures), as we saw in Chapter 2, a turn towards a disenchanted vision of the world is clearly visible. In this, one may say that the Ottomans also followed a global trend: this time, comparison can be made with European Puritanism and the debates of Protestant and Jesuit scholars concerning miracles and miracle-working.[6] Furthermore, confessionalization, by asking full devotion and piety of everyone and promoting a disciplinary society, may have contributed to a distance from God and a step towards secularism, as suggested for the European Reformation by Charles Taylor.[7] As I have argued in Chapter 6, there are also other similarities with the European experience: the defence of individual thought *en masse* (i.e. not only the thought of some authorities) as a legitimate way to the truth may be paralleled in some aspects of the Enlightenment, although it is perhaps better to avoid a term that by now tends to produce more confusion than clarity.

In general, Ottoman esotericism and occultism seem to have proceeded in tandem with the general developments in other Islamicate empires, as regards their content and methods. However, the Ottoman experience departs from these developments (or at least it seems so; the history of Iranian and Mughal occultism in the early modern period has barely been studied)[8] in so far as occultist preoccupations lose their grip on power games and imperial policy after the late sixteenth century, making the occult/lettrist turn more of a moment in this case. The turn to natural magic, we should note, may be more superficial than can be deduced from encyclopedic texts. Indeed, while the (few) Greek-speaking Ottoman specimens of occultist treatises show affinities with Renaissance neo-

[6] On this development, see e.g. Taylor, *A Secular Age*; Cameron, *Enchanted Europe*, 141–239; Walsham, 'The Reformation and "The Disenchantment"'.

[7] Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 90–145. On the way in which fundamentalism can be seen as a modernist, secularizing force, see Dalacoura, 'Islamism, Secularization, Secularity'.

[8] For the Moroccan case, see now Stearns, *Revealed Sciences*; for the Mughal case, Moin, *The Millenial Sovereign*.

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Platonic musings,[9] Riyāzī's early-sixteenth-century treatise on talismans contains only general theoretical principles, without specific instructions; in Ahmet Tunç Şen's words, it stands 'rather as a sort of research proposal…[than] a more elaborate version'.[10] Taşköprüzāde's treatise on plague, although highly detailed and analytical, seems to be mostly a reproduction of earlier talismanic recipes, such as those of al-Būnī, al-Biṣṭāmī, and Idrīs-i Bitlisī.[11] This trend, therefore, could perhaps more fruitfully be seen as an antiquarian interest in pre-lettrist Islamicate astral magic (in which case, one may draw a parallel with Safavid trends).

'Practical naturalism' and technology transfer to the artisanal stratum of the big cities throughout the eighteenth century, although one meets major difficulties trying to compare this development with the Enlightenment or the Scientific Revolution.[12] For one thing, if we accept that after the Scientific Revolution science (or 'natural philosophy') had as its aim to control the world, rather than understand it (or, better: to understand the world, in order to control it),[13] one cannot argue that Ottoman scholarship really sought to fulfil this aim after the 'occult' moment of the sixteenth century, either by occult or non-occult sciences. Nor, in my view, can any mathematization of nature (*pace* Melvin-Koushki) or valorization of experience (as seen in Chapter 5 above) in Ottoman culture be compared with these notions as used by Koyré.[14] What seems to bear some similarities with the European experience is the way Ottoman society (or, to be more precise, part of it) arguably underwent a disenchantment of sorts after the seventeenth century, which delivered a strong blow to the prestige of occult sciences as well, including highly respected ones such as astrology. After all, historians of the decline of magic and occultism in Europe have stressed the fact that this process is a result of sociocultural changes, rather than intellectual attacks; ideas against occult sciences function effectively only if they are disseminated through changes in education, the diffusion of knowledge, or intellectual networks and practices.[15] Still, it would be hasty to postulate that highly educated elites lost all interest in occultist approaches to reality. While these might have fallen out of fashion, they did not fall out of use. Ultimately, the 'enlightened' attitude that prevailed did not

[9] See e.g. Litinas, 'The Views of Gerasimos Vlachos'; Pippidi, 'Mysticisme et rationalisme', 193–194.

[10] Şen, 'Practicing Astral Magic', 73–74.

[11] Bulmuş, *Plague, Carantines and Geopolitics*, 69–75; Melvin-Koushki, 'Taşköprīzāde on the (Occult) Science'. In some respects, though, he seems to expand on his predecessors (ibid., 145n36).

[12] See Küçük, *Science without Leisure*; cf. the review by Shafir, 'The Almighty Akçe' and Küçük's response in *Osmanlı Araştırmaları/Journal of Ottoman Studies* 59 (2022), 261–272.

[13] I take this thesis from Dear, *Revolutionizing the Sciences*.

[14] Koyré, *From the Closed World*. To my knowledge, there are no signs of any Ottoman discussion of the problem of action at a distance, which was a crucial aspect of the process of the Scientific Revolution (see bibliography in Pfeffer, 'Reassessing the Marginalization', 1165).

[15] See Pfeffer, 'The Contribution of the Early Modern'; Pfeffer, 'Reassessing the Marginalization', 1170–1175.

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prevent parts of the elite from seeking techniques and ways to communicate with the Hereafter: new techniques of magic, imported from Europe, appeared in the palace itself, and spiritism took the place of pre-modern occultism among large segments of the Ottoman and Turkish bourgeoisie.[16]

The Supernatural and Social History

In the Introduction, I stated that my final goal is to locate changes in the conceptualization of nature and the supernatural up to the early nineteenth century and to associate them with social changes, and more specifically with the emergence of new social strata.[17] The main problem in such an approach, of course, is that our sources do not easily offer any information on the social background of their authors, being mostly books and epistles dealing with metaphysical questions and arcane tools for establishing contact with the supernatural. A possible path to overcome this difficulty is to give emphasis to the Sufi affiliations of our sources. The reason is twofold: first, identifying the Sufi attachments of the author of even an anonymous treatise is much easier, especially in texts of esoteric tendencies; and secondly, Ottoman society was deeply integrated through Sufi culture, and it has been said that practically every Ottoman Muslim belonged or was attached, one way or another, to a Sufi fraternity. This means that these affiliations also played a role of social statement: although we know very well that differentiation within a fraternity was extremely important, we can identify some major fraternities with specific, albeit fluid, social groups.

Thus, whereas until the end of the sixteenth century occult sciences were quite widespread from the palace (from Bayezid II's to Murad III's esoteric quests) to the most vernacular dervish brotherhoods, the intellectual landscape changed considerably in the seventeenth century, at least in Istanbul and arguably in other large cities. The Ḳāḍızādeli conflict tried effectively to ban the supernatural element from the present and from everyday life, leading even many Sufi sheikhs (mainly from the urban centres), as we saw in Chapter 2, to gradually give less importance to miracle-working, especially to those miracles that 'broke the divine custom'. Now, one can argue that the Ḳāḍızādelis relied on middle and upper mercantile strata, the 'people of the market' but also those designated as 'profiteering merchants'.[18] Nakşibendīs, who seem to have been the single Sufi

[16] Uluğ, *Osmanlı'da batıl itikatlar*, esp. 183–229; Uluğ, 'Magic at the Imperial Palace'; Toumarkine, *Le Spiritisme*; Türesay, 'Between Science and Religion'; Zarcone, 'Occultism in an Islamic Context'; Şendağ, 'Between *Tasavvuf* and Spiritism'. On the Iranian case, see the pioneering study by Doostdar, *Iranian Metaphysicals*.

[17] What follows is based on Sariyannis, 'Ottoman Occultism', where I have delved into this problem in more detail.

[18] See Sariyannis, 'The Kadızadeli Movement'.

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fraternity most friendly disposed towards the Ḳāḍızādelis, seem to have been mostly associated with similar strata as well. After all, their main precepts, *ḫalvet der encümen* (solitude within society) and *sefer der vaṭan* (journeying within the homeland, as opposed to seeking spiritual enlightenment in faraway lands), fit quite well with a mercantile ethos. On the other hand, the Ḫalvetīs of the same period seem to have been associated with the janissaries, then rising as a mixture of newcomers to the guild system. The lower merchant and artisan class seems to have been a repository for followers of various *tariqa*s (Sufi fraternities) that were often in conflict with each other, from the Ḫalvetīs to the Bayrāmī-Melāmīs, heirs to the rich occultist tradition of the sixteenth century. The Bayrāmīs are one of the few *tariqa*s for whose sheikhs and prominent members we have specific information about their craft and occupation, and these were more often than not artisanal.

In the light of these observations, one might suggest (in simplifying terms) a pattern as follows: on the one hand, there are different Ḫalvetī (and Ḫalvetī-affiliated branches), Bayrāmī, and Mevlevī fraternities contending over access to an esoteric understanding of the world, where sainthood and various occult methods (from *cifr* and letter magic to geomancy) are commonly accepted as facts. Furthermore, some evidence points towards the suggestion that Ḫalvetī and their branches developed their own revelatory path, using dreams and visions to access the supernatural, in an effort to compete with the Bayrāmīs' (and others') more mechanical ways of using alphanumerical methods and a lettrist view of the world (see above, Chapter 4). On the other hand, the Ḳāḍızādeli masses, allied with or expressed in a degree through the Nakşibendī order, had a more pietistic vision of the world, with little place for occult forces and miracles. In this conflict, it seems that the Ḫalvetī and Bayrāmī side relied mostly on large segments of the lower artisanal classes, organized traditionally in the guild system. Ḳāḍızādeli and Nakşibendī sympathies were more manifest in the ranks of a rising class of newcomers: merchants and 'profiteers' with a more 'bourgeois' spirit.[19] Of course, as I have already stressed, the Ḳāḍızādelis shared a lot of these ideas with several of their opponents—which shows that the new approach was a broader phenomenon, linked precisely with the rise of these social strata.

On the other hand, while the urban masses mobilized and rallied around either Ḳāḍızādeli preachers or Ḫalvetī sheikhs, scholarly circles seem to have eagerly endorsed al-Suhrawardī's Illuminationism (*ishrāqī*), as seen in Chapter 5, with its Hermetic and elitist theory of knowledge. By the seventeenth century, this had become the favourite philosophical tradition of the Ottoman ulema but also of intellectuals who developed outside of the madrasa tradition, like Kâtib Çelebi and Müneccimbaşı. From the Sufi world, Mevlevī sheikhs eagerly adopted

[19] For some evidence on these associations, see Sariyannis, 'The Ḳāḍızādeli Movement'; Sariyannis, 'Ottoman Occultism', 45–49; Tezcan, 'A Populist Reformation', 307–309.

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ishrāqī philosophy, whereas Ḫalvetī and Celvetī scholars were much more sceptical. The Illuminationist tendency towards elitism was in sharp contrast to the egalitarianism advocated by the Ḳāḍızādelis, for whom every individual Muslim should reason and develop their principles of faith, without the mediation of theologians and officials (see above, Chapter 6). But Ḫalvetī and other Sufis, as well, seem to have promoted a similar vision in many ways.[20] It may be argued that such an egalitarian vision also had a strong absolutist strand, or perhaps rather a unifying tendency: equality under either a strong ruler or a strict set of confessional rules and principles, followed by all. On the other hand, the high bureaucrats and ulema favourable to Illuminationist elitism were more inclined to accept a pluralistic society. And indeed, such pleas for tolerance and pluralism were expressed by authors associated with Illuminationism, from Kâtib Çelebi to prominent Mevlevī sheikhs.[21]

Throughout the eighteenth century, we see authors associated with the ulema and the state apparatus, one way or another, dismissing miraculous deeds and occult sciences. True, several scholars and bureaucrats seem to be sincerely involved with occult sciences well into the eighteenth century. However, a growing number of moralist authors had already begun to dismiss this branch of knowledge as vain and futile, including Yusuf Nābī (d. 1712) and Sünbülzāde Vehbī (d. 1809), both associated with the Nakşibendīs. In the same period, the 'practical naturalism' observed by Harun Küçük created vernacular forms of knowledge and combined practices of divination with aspects of European engineering and technology. Among these practical artisans, many were Sufis, mostly Mevlevīs, who were in general willing to be involved with all kinds of natural science, including alchemy and medicine; others belonged to branches of the Ḫalvetī or, predominantly it seems, the Nakşibendī-Mujaddidī order.[22]

And what about disenchantment? We showed in Chapter 6 that, whereas a certain waning of occultism and a rise of a more rational, 'scientific' world view can indeed be observed throughout the late seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, this 'disenchanting' course (associated, as we have seen, with merchants and practical artisans) never reaches the mechanized vision of the universe associated with the Scientific Revolution. This brings to mind a similar phenomenon concerning time-keeping: whereas the use of mechanical clocks and watches and the rise of precision in the marking of time is evident in the late seventeenth and

[20] Cf. Shafir, 'Moral Revolutions'.

[21] Gürbüzel, *Taming the Messiah*. Gürbüzel sees the Kadızadeli movement as a quasi-totalitarian strand trying to impose uniformity and control of private life, and its opponents (mostly the Mevlevīs) as advocating a modern, pluralist vision of diversification and communal privacy. The real issue here would be (as she notes herself; ibid., 226n110) whether the 'guiding tension' in early modern Ottoman society was uniformity versus diversity, or rather hierarchy versus egalitarianism. Furthermore, her analysis is based on the state/society dichotomy, somewhat neglecting further stratifications.

[22] Günergun, 'Convergences in and around Bursa'; Küçük, 'The Compass and the Astrolabe', 269–275.

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even more in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, especially in urban environments, Ottomans never used mechanical time-keeping in economic activities until quite late (the mid-nineteenth century at the earliest).[23] In other words, developments associated with the dissolution of feudal structures through extensive monetization did take place (from the rise of an autonomous, 'early modern' state to the appearance of modern sensibilities, and from the expansion of the 'political nation' to the forms of 'enlightenment' and 'disenchantment' that we have studied); but developments linked to the rise of a capitalist sector and the primitive accumulation of capital, such as work discipline and, arguably, a mechanized, deterministic, 'scientific' world view, did not appear before the mid-nineteenth century. Early modernity, in other words, did not become modernity until transformed by the integration of the Ottoman society and economy into the European capitalist system.

The Vernacular: An Entangled Tradition

The argument that disenchantment took a particular course does not suggest that esotericism and more particularly occult practices of accessing the unseen world fell into disuse. As in Christian Europe, what was earlier described as the 'decline' of magic (e.g. in Keith Thomas' monumental work of 1971, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*) has now been substituted by alternative models: fragmentation (or individualization) of occultism, migration of the holy, and marginalization or dislocation of occult sciences all refer to various forms of 'survival' of a magical vision of the world, located in different cultural loci or *Weltanschauungen*.[24] As we saw in Chapter 2, Sufi miracles continued to be recorded well into the nineteenth century. The torch of occultism was handed over to the vernacular culture, which by the early eighteenth century was blooming: bottom-up literacy ('artisan literacy', according to Nelly Hanna, or 'nouveau literacy', in Dana Sajdi's work),[25] closely connected to a simultaneous boom in new forms of sociability,[26] emerged throughout the second half of the seventeenth century and produced a large number of manuscripts, miscellanea, personal notes, or recollections throughout the eighteenth century. In this written production, lettrist or ritual magic seems to have continued to dominate vernacular practices. Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century magic, preserved mostly in vernacular manuscripts, consists mainly of

[23] I delved into this discussion in Sariyannis, '"Temporal Modernization"'; Sariyannis, 'Cultural and Political Synchronicity'.

[24] See the literature cited in Machielsen and Pfeffer, 'A Work Out of Time', fn144; Josephson-Storm, 'Max Weber'; Pfeffer, 'Reassessing the Marginalization'.

[25] Faroqhi, *Subjects of the Sultan*, 185–191; Hanna, 'Literacy and the "Great Divide"'; Hanna, 'Literacy among Artisans'; Sajdi, *The Barber of Damascus*.

[26] On this development, see Hamadeh, *The City's Pleasures*; Kafadar, 'How Dark Is the History of the Night', 244–246.

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alphanumeric calculations and lettrist talismans; and Sālim (Sellem) b. al-Shaykh Manṣūr, the Egyptian sorcerer who was tried in Malta in 1605, seems mostly to have used al-Būnī's techniques and magic squares, although he claimed to be practising more 'Renaissance-like' occult methods, such as astrology and geomancy.[27] If I may use a set of terms from cultural diffusion theories, one may say that Ottoman vernacular magic benefited from a form of 'trickle-down effect': it adopted and adapted techniques and methods that originated in quite a high-brow, scholarly culture, such as astral–natural correspondences, magic squares, and alphanumerical methods (especially the technique of converting a name into a number via the *ebced* system and then reducing it to a simple number after successive subtractions). Whereas theory and coherent systems of astrological hierarchies and of letter-to-element correspondence had no relevance at this level, practical methods and techniques were quite widespread for much longer than their scholarly counterparts. From the sample Jan Schmidt studied (coming only from Dutch libraries), most of the miscellanea containing notes on astrology, bibliomancy, geomancy, dream interpretation, and talismans date from the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries, reaching as far as the turn of the twentieth century.[28] The greater visibility of occult manuscripts in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries should perhaps be attributed to the growth of lower-class literacy, which led janissaries, small traders, low-rank local sheikhs, and ulema to leave more traces of their esoteric musings.

On the other hand, a study of documents concerning persecutions of various sorcerers, soothsayers, and general street practitioners of occult arts, in cities like Istanbul and Bursa, reveals a strong presence of astrologers and geomancers, who might have a more elaborate knowledge of the theory of their craft (see above, Chapter 4). We also meet folk practices, such as 'writing on the belly of women' and ritual magic and conjuring. Here we may observe a 'trickle-across effect', where practices from various provinces of the Ottoman Empire spread among the lower social strata, from peer to peer; but then again, respected arts of the high Islamicate occultism, from astrology to bibliomancy and from talismans based on magic squares to the widespread use of prayers and the names of God, always kept their prestige. The 'trickle-across effect' could perhaps also be applied to interreligious vernacular magic practice—creating what could be considered an entangled tradition.[29] Indeed, at this level we might speak of a Mediterranean hybrid or entangled tradition of magic: sorcerers from the Maghrib were famous in the Ottoman East (as they had been before), sub-Saharan African rituals were

[27] See Mallett, Rider, and Agius (eds), *Magic in Malta*, especially the chapter by Saif, 'Magic and Divination'.

[28] Schmidt, 'The Occult Sciences'.

[29] Cf. the special issue edited by Otto, 'Western Learned Magic'; see also Sedgwick and Piraino, *Esoteric Transfers*. On religious 'trickle-across' in rural environments, cf. Grehan, *Twilight of the Saints*, 190–196.

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practised by ex-slaves' communities, Bosnian Muslim practitioners used Christian elements and vice versa, while a Greek nineteenth-century magic text (known as the Vernardakis codex) incorporates elements from Latin, Byzantine, and Islamic magic, using even Islamic and Christian invocations haphazardly.[30] The case of Sālim (Sellem) b. al-Shaykh Manṣūr, the Cairene geomancer who was captured by the Maltese knights and communicated his skills to the Christian high society of Malta, is illuminating for the possibility of exchanges of practices and beliefs even in an interreligious context. As geomancy, astrology, and some practices of ritual magic had become common in the Muslim and Christian world during the Middle Ages, it appears that the Mediterranean had developed a sort of *lingua franca* not only of words, but also of practices and beliefs concerning the occult.[31] On the other hand, the 'trickle-up effect'—that is, specific trends starting from 'the streets' and working their way up to scholarly literature—does not seem to apply in this field, dominated by the strict gnoseological hierarchy expressed in the Hermetic idea of 'knowledge for the few elect'. In the same way, a tendency towards amalgamation and hybridization of occult knowledge at the scholarly level that can be seen, for instance, in the palace library and scriptorium of the late fifteenth century, seems to have fallen prey to the overwhelming influence of Persianate occult sciences after the first Ottoman–Safavid conflicts:[32] thus, after the first decades of the sixteenth century, only vernacular magic remained prone to this *lingua franca*.

More generally, one may wonder whether the beliefs in the power of magical, divinatory, and occult practices were as well founded and widespread as the dissemination of texts that deal with them might suggest. I am thinking here of what some students of modern occultism have called *croyance clignotante* ('flickering belief'):[33] a partial, selective belief, where practices can also be conceived at times as a pastime akin to games. Other scholars have written of 'doubts', rather than beliefs, or of a distinct category ('aliefs') based on a habitual, automatic belief-like attitude, often in conflict with one's explicit beliefs and closer to the history of

[30] Izmirlieva, 'The Peculiar Codex'; Spyropoulos, '*Beys*, Sheikhs, *Kolbaşıs*', 194–203; Buturović, 'The Melting Occult Pot'; Sariyannis, '*O* "*Βερναρδάκειος κώδικας*"'; Sariyannis, 'Transculturality in Magical Practices'; cf. Sofer, '"And You Should Also Adjure in Arabic"', on similar cases in Hebrew and Latin grimoires. On hybridity as a feature of (Christian) learned magic, see Otto, 'Historicising "Western Learned Magic"', 199–203; on the relationship of Muslim lettrism with the Kabbalah, see the remarks by Wolfson, 'Embodied Letter', and more generally on the relationship between Jewish and Muslim magic, Bohak, 'Jewish Magic'; Krinis, 'The Philosophical and Theosophical'. Wasserstrom, 'Sefer Yeṣira and Early Islam', suggested that the basic work of Kabbalah, Sefer Yeṣira, was composed in an Islamicate environment.

[31] Agius, 'The Cognitive Landscape'. On the *lingua franca* of ideas at a more scholarly level, cf. Ciappara, 'The Witch and the Judge'.

[32] On the presence of Byzantine occult works (mainly the *Chaldean Oracles*), see Raby, 'Mehmed the Conqueror's'; Mavroudi, 'Translators from Greek into Arabic'; Mavroudi, 'Pletho as Subversive'; Nicolet and Tardieu, 'Pletho Arabicus'. On these texts, see Burns, '*The Chaldean Oracles*'.

[33] Boudet, *Entre science et nigromance*, 533.

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emotions than to that of ideas.[34] We never may be sure whether a practitioner of lettrist magic, an astrologer, or a geomancer writing manuals or treatises on their craft were really believing in its reality; and some of these practitioners indeed left written traces of their doubts.[35] This call for caution applies not only to beliefs in the supernatural, but also to the 'materialist' tendencies we occasionally encounter. One will recall Lady Mary Montagu's famous discussion with the 'deist' *effendi* of Belgrade who drank wine and held that the Qur'anic prohibition concerns only simple and common people, an argument that had already been used by some of the Ḳāḍızādelis, but also by Kâtib Çelebi (here is another kind of Hermeticism!).[36] One understands, however, that these nuances are very difficult to distinguish in our sources. At the very least, one might try to reconstruct Lucien Febvre's *outillage mental*: the mental toolbox or equipment which frames the understanding of time, of nature, and of causality at a given moment of historical time and which allows or prohibits trespassing beyond the borders and restrictions of a system of established beliefs.[37] This endeavour, which amounts to a conceptual history or *Begriffsgeschichte* of the Ottoman philosophical, argumentational, and scientific vocabulary, might be the goal of future work, for which the present book hopes to have laid some foundations.

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[34] Pooley, 'Doubt and the Dislocation of Magic'; Gendler, 'Alief and Belief'; cf. Pfeffer, 'The Contribution of the Early Modern'. For Alec Ryrie, doubt concerning religion may also be classified into the history of emotions, rather than ideas, since it frequently originated from anger or anxiety: Ryrie, *Unbelievers*.

[35] See e.g. a late (mid-nineteenth-century) example in Tunalı, 'An Ottoman Astrologer'.

[36] Sariyannis, 'The Kadızadeli Movement', 287n118.

[37] Febvre, *The Problem of Unbelief*, 355–379.

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