DISCOURSES ON WRITING IN THE EARLY MODERN OTTOMAN

BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARIES OF CALLIGRAPHERS

DAMLA ÖZAKAY

BOĞAZİÇİ UNIVERSITY

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BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARIES OF CALLIGRAPHERS

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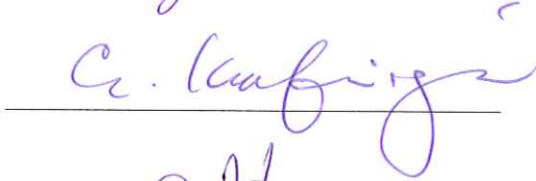Damla Özakay

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Discourses on Writing in the Early Modern Ottoman Biographical Dictionaries of

Calligraphers

The thesis of Damla Özakay
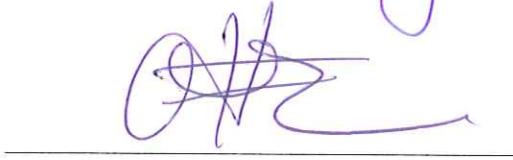
has been approved by:

Assist. Prof. Derin Terzioğlu
(Thesis Advisor)

_____

Assoc. Prof. Çiğdem Kafescioğlu

_____

Prof. Dr. Hatice Aynur

_____

September 2015

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Damla Özakay, certify that

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ABSTRACT

Discourses on Writing in the Early Modern Ottoman Biographical Dictionaries of

Calligraphers

This thesis examines three Ottoman biographical dictionaries of calligraphers written

between the end of the sixteenth and the first half of the eighteenth century: Mustafa

'Âli's *Menâkıb-ı Hünerverân* (d. 1600), Nefeszâde İbrahim's (d. 1650-51) *Gülzâr-ı*

Savâb and Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib's (d. 1758) *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*. By

considering the diversity of the representations of the act of writing and the figure of

calligrapher in the texts the problems and limitations that the conceptualization

"Islamic Calligraphy" carries are put forward and the practice of calligraphy in the

early modern Ottoman world is approached in a broader context. The changing roles

of calligraphy in social, cultural and political contexts are problematized by

examining the transformations in the representation of the act of writing and the

figure of calligrapher in the texts. *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*, the text in which the

transformations in the form and content of the genre are crystallized, is analyzed

within its historical context. In this analysis, the transformations realized in the

bureaucratic and *ulema* circles, the expansion of the written culture, the actors of

book culture and the changes in the field of calligraphy at the first half of the

eighteenth century constitute the focus points.

ÖZET

Erken Modern Osmanlı Hattat Tezkirelerinde Yazıya Dair Söylemler

Bu tez on altıncı yüzyıl sonu ve on sekizinci yüzyılın ilk yarısı arasındaki dönemde yazılmış üç Osmanlı hattat tezkiresini incelemektedir: Mustafa ʿÂli'nin *Menâkıb-ı Hünerverân* (d. 1600), Nefeszâde İbrahim'in (d. 1650-51) *Gülzâr-ı Savâb* ve Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib'in (d. 1758) *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* adlı eserleri. Metinlerdeki yazı yazma ve hattat figürü temsillerindeki çeşitlilik dikkate alınarak "İslami Hat" kavramının getirdiği sorunlar ve kısıtlamalar ortaya konulmakta ve erken modern Osmanlı dünyasındaki hat pratiği geniş bir bağlamda ele alınmaktadır. Metinlerdeki yazı yazma ve hattat figürü temsillerindeki dönüşümler incelenerek hattın toplumsal, kültürel ve politik alanlardaki değişen rolü sorunsallaştırılmaktadır. Türün içeriği ve yapısındaki dönüşümlerin billurlaştığı metin olan *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* tarihsel bağlamı içinde analiz edilmektedir. Bu analizde on sekizinci yüzyılın ilk yarısında bürokrasi ve ulema çevrelerinde gerçekleşen dönüşümler, yazılı kültürün yayılması, kitap kültürünün aktörleri ve hat alanındaki değişimler odak noktasını oluşturmaktadır.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this thesis is to examine a practice neglected in the studies on early modern Ottoman manuscript culture: the physical act of writing. I will focus my attention on the early modern biographical dictionaries of calligraphers and I will analyze the discourses on calligraphy, the representation of the physical act of writing and the figure of calligrapher in these sources. Put differently, I aim to examine the genre of biographical dictionary of calligraphers to shed light on the early modern Ottoman writing culture.

This chapter provides a general outline and conceptual background of this study. First, I will point out the general neglect of the physical act of writing in studies related to early modern Ottoman written culture, and I will try to highlight possible contributions of this study to the understanding of early modern Ottoman written culture. Then, a critical discussion on the conceptualization of "Islamic calligraphy" and the established notions of calligraphy will follow. I will delineate the reasons for my preference to use the term calligraphy in a wider sense so that it includes a variety of practices of writing. After I expose some of the problems of the historiography on Ottoman calligraphy I will touch upon some alternative perspectives, which have guided this study. After I problematize the ways biographical dictionaries of calligraphers have been used in Ottoman historiography, I will focus on the characteristics, antecedents and the history of the genre in general. Lastly, I will give some information on the content, form, structure and copies of the texts on which I will focus in this study.

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Although this thesis primarily focuses on an early eighteenth-century biographical dictionary of calligraphers, that is, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* (*The Tree of Scribes*) [1] written by Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib (d. 1758); it would be impossible to appreciate the changing discourses on and representations of calligraphy and the scribe/calligrapher without consulting and examining the earlier Ottoman biographical dictionaries of calligraphers. For this reason, in the second chapter I will briefly examine two earlier biographical dictionaries of calligraphers, namely *Menâkıb-ı Hünerverân* (*Epic Deeds of Artists*) (completed in 1587)[2] by Mustafa 'Âli (d. 1600) and *Gülzâr-ı Savâb* (*The Rose-garden of Proper Conduct)*[3] by Nefeszâde İbrahim (d. 1650-1651), and I will pay attention specifically to how these authors discussed the practice of calligraphy and calligraphy materials, the history and the necessity of writing and its socio-political uses. The chapter will examine the representation of the calligrapher in the three texts. I will show how this representation significantly changes in *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* through the author's tendency to portray the act of writing and the figure of calligrapher within a more diversified worldly and corporeal context.

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[1] For the edition of the text that I will use throughout my thesis, see Ayşe Peyman Yaman, "Hat Sanatı İçin Kaynak: *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*: İncelemeli Metin Çevirisi" (Unpublished M.A. thesis, Marmara Üniversitesi, 2003). Henceforth, I will cite this source under the name of Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib and the title of the original text in question. All translations from the *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* into English are mine.

[2] For the edition of the text that I will use throughout my thesis, see Esra Akın-Kıvanç (ed. and trans.), *Mustafa 'Âli's Epic Deeds of Artists: A Critical Edition of the Earliest Ottoman Text about the Calligraphers and Painters of the Islamic World* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2011).

[3] For the edition of the text that I will use throughout my thesis, see Fehime Demir, "Türk Hat Sanatı İçin Kaynak *Gülzâr-ı Savâb*: inceleme-metin çevirisi," (Unpublished M.A. thesis, Marmara Üniveritesi, 2004). Henceforth, I will cite this source under the name of Nefeszâde İbrahim Efendi and the title of the original text in question. All translations from *Gülzâr-ı Savâb* into English are mine.

In the third chapter, I will shift my focus to *Devhatü'l-Küttâb,* which differs significantly from the earlier texts in both its form and content. My main concern in this chapter will be to account for the changes in the form and content of the genre in relation to the broader social, political and cultural changes during the first half of the eighteenth century. I will try to understand the variety of individuals interested in calligraphy, the author's emphasis on the career lines and his tendency to present the skills in calligraphy as a tool to get social power within the context of the socio-political changes in the early eighteenth century. In other words, the third chapter will be an attempt to understand the *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* within its historical context.

The tables in the Appendix that give quantitative data on the three texts would make my arguments more comprehensible. Also, in some parts of my thesis I will refer to the calligraphy examples located in the Appendix. Since it is not the primary concern of my thesis I will not evaluate and examine the stylistic features of these calligraphy examples. These images provide exemplary works of some calligraphers which are mentioned throughout the text and show the way some specific texts look like such as official correspondences and calligraphic or alphabetic exercises.

1.1 Recent trends in studies on early modern Ottoman reading and writing practices

Recent scholarship on Ottoman history has shown a growing interest in the history of books and reading.[4] Texts from the Ottoman era are studied not only as texts and in relation to other texts, but also in relation to various social practices and within a broader socio-cultural context. Instead of consulting texts only for their content, scholars have also begun to examine how texts were read and received in the time period in which they were produced. This approach has put the focus on another actor alongside the written text and its author: the reader. In this regard, it might be said that studies on Ottoman book history have evolved into studies on the history of reading by expanding their range of questions and scope in a similar vein to early modern European historiography.[5] Thus, the field is no longer dominated by studies

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[4] For some of these studies see Tülün Değirmenci, "Bir Kitabı Kaç Kişi Okur? Osmanlı'da Okurlar ve Okuma Biçimleri Üzerine Bazı Gözlemler," *Tarih ve Toplum Yeni Yaklaşımlar* 13 (Güz, 2011): 7-43; Suraiya Faroqhi, *Subjects of the Sultan: Culture and Daily Life in the Ottoman Empire* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 185-204; Nelly Hanna, *In Praise of Books: A Cultural History of Cairo's Middle Class, Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century*, (Ithaca, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2004); Hanna, "Literacy Among Artisans and Tradesmen in Ottoman Cairo," in *The Ottoman World*, ed. Christine Woodhead (New York: Routledge, 2012), 319-331; Christoph K. Neumann, "Üç Tarz-ı Mütalaa: Yeniçağ Osmanlı Dünyası'nda Kitap Yazmak ve Okumak," *Tarih ve Toplum Yeni Yaklaşımlar* 1 (2005): 51-76; Khaled El-Rouayheb, "The Rise of 'Deep Reading' in Early Modern Ottoman Scholarly Culture," in *World Philology*, ed. Sheldon Pollock et al. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 201-224; Dana Sajdi, *The Barber of Damascus: Nouveau Literacy in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Levant* (Chicago: Stanford University Press, 2013); *Osmanlı Kitap Kültürü: Carullah Efendi Kütüphanesi ve Derkenar Notları*, ed. Berat Açıl (Ankara: Nobel Yayın, 2015).

[5] For a discussion on the transition from book history to the history of reading see Roger Chartier, "Frenchness in the History of the Book: From the History of Publishing to the History of Reading," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society 97* (Worcester, Mass: American Antiquarian Society, 1987), 299-329.

that examine the rates of book ownership and the socio-economic backgrounds of book owners through the quantitative analysis of sources like probate records or library catalogues. Instead, Ottomanists now try to answer questions about transformations in the practices of reading and writing and about the relationship between oral and written culture by examining a wider range of sources from miscellanies to auto/biographical narratives, and from illuminated manuscripts, to marginalia.[6]

The present study has also been inspired by the above-mentioned shifts within Ottoman historiography. Yet, instead of reading practices, it focuses on another widely ignored social practice: the physical act of handwriting, which remained the most prevalent form of reproducing texts in the early modern Ottoman Empire. It seems to me that our understanding of Ottoman manuscript culture will be deficient if we focus only on the authors and consumers of texts. A more comprehensive understanding of early modern Ottoman manuscript culture and reading and writing practices can be achieved only when the consumers and producers of texts are dealt with together. In the historical studies on reading and writing, for the most part, the reading practices and the circulation of manuscripts are considered. But the major medium and the provider of the formation of written culture, that is to say, handwriting itself and its transformations are left to the field of palaeography, where historical approaches are largely absent. However, writing is

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[6] For some examples see Serpil Bağcı, "From Translated Word to Translated Image: The Illustrated Şehname-i Türki Copies," *Muqarnas: An Annual on the Visual Culture of the Islamic World* XVII (2000):162-176; Tülün Değirmenci, "An Illustrated Mecmua: The Commoner's Voice and the Iconography of the Court in the Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Painting," *Ars Orientalis* 41 (2011):186-219; *Eski Türk Edebiyatı Çalışmaları VII: Mecmûa Osmanlı Edebiyatının Kırkambarı*, ed. Hatice Aynur et.al. (İstanbul: Turkuaz Yayınları, 2012); Emine Fetvaci, *Picturing History at the Ottoman Court* (Bloomington&Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2013).

neither static nor ahistorical. The cultural value of writing has changed throughout the centuries and in different localities; and so has the representation of individuals who have the ability to write and who have a "professional" relationship with written culture. For this reason, this thesis attempts to examine the culture of calligraphy, the social attitudes toward writing/calligraphy and the way writing/calligraphy and individuals having abilities in calligraphy are represented within texts. Of course, it goes far beyond the limits of an MA thesis to examine this topic comprehensively; hence, I will limit myself here to only one type of source, which has until now been neglected by Ottomanists interested in the history of reading and writing in the early modern period; the biographical dictionaries of calligraphers.

Although these texts cover the biographies of individuals who are interested in calligraphy, I will not focus on the aesthetics of calligraphy or deal with art historical questions. Since the genre consists of the biographies of individuals who had intense relations with written culture, I find them to be valuable sources that help us see the material conditions and the major actors of manuscript culture, the ways and agents of transmission of knowledge of writing/calligraphy and pre-print book culture. Above all, since the texts contain representations of the act of handwriting and the calligrapher through Qur'anic verses, hadiths, sayings, poems and anecdotes, they provide an opportunity for the researcher to examine the discourses on the practice of calligraphy and the transformations within it.

"[T]he historical significance of writing" and "the social values that [writing or literacy] carried" has changed according to time and place.[7] Yet, what we find in most of the studies concerning the history of writing is only the story of the emergence of the alphabet. As if writing is an ahistorical phenomenon, historical narratives concerning the evolution of writing in later periods are extremely rare. By the evolution of writing, I understand not only changes ın the form of writing and its standardization or formalization in time but also changing attitudes toward the craft of handwriting, as a historical phenomenon and a social practice, in various historical contexts. In this sense, my approach to the Ottoman biographical dictionaries of calligraphers is similar to the framework articulated by Brian Spooner and William L. Hanaway in the introduction to a recent collective volume on the history of writing and the social history of written Persian in the early modern Persianate world.[8] To regard writing as a historically evolving phenomenon also brings forth some other functions of writing than recording, communicating and aesthetics. Having skills in writing could also carry social power and enhance the individual's social status. In this regard, examining the representation of individuals who had the ability to write beautifully in the Ottoman biographical dictionaries of calligraphers can show the social values of writing and the discourses on writing in the early modern Ottoman world. Such an approach can help us answer questions about

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[7] *Literacy in the Persianate World: Writing and the Social Order*, ed. Brian Spooner and William L. Hanaway (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvenia Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 2012), xi.
[8] They draw their framework and approach in the introduction to the edited volume. See Brian Spooner and William L. Hanaway, "Introduction: Persian as Koine: Written Persian in World Historical Perspective," in *Literacy in the Persianate World: Writing and the Social Orde*r, ed. Brian Spooner and William L. Hanaway (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvenia Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 2012), 1-69.

whether skill in handwriting was merely seen as an artistic accomplishment or whether it also provided the individual with social and political power. An attempt to examine the representation of calligraphy and the calligrapher in the Ottoman biographical dictionaries of calligraphers can also give some clues about the notions of calligraphy and its relationship with the political authority, the role of calligraphy as a component of group identity and its association with members of such corporate groups as *ulema* and scribes of the Imperial Council.

1.2 The conceptualization of "Islamic Calligraphy": A critical discussion

1.2.1 The scopes of the terms calligraphy and calligrapher

The existing problems with the approaches prevailing in most of the studies on Ottoman calligraphy are very much due to the conceptualization of "Islamic calligraphy," which is envisioned as having a monolithic and linear history. It is necessary to touch upon the problems and restrictive scope of both the concept of "calligraphy" and the qualifying adjective, "Islamic."

There is an ambiguity in the definition of calligraphy. For example, although they pertained to different functions within the cultural and bureaucratic spheres, a *kıta* and a *ferman* are taken to be examples of calligraphy. Today, in major art galleries in Istanbul, *kıta*s, *ferman*s, panels (*levha*), *hilye-i şerif*s, *En'âm*s, *Evrâd*s and *Delâ'ilü'l-hayrât*s, talismanic objects like tunics and bowls and writing materials like pen cases, ink pots and sharpeners covered with writing are all exhibited under the

rubric of "Islamic calligraphy." Additionally, the catalogues of calligraphy do not seem to have any well-articulated criteria for the presentation and the classification of these works. Thus, although there exists a difference between the above-mentioned examples in terms of function, content, form and size, they are all easily identified as examples of calligraphy.

On the other hand, the same catalogues and exhibitions do not include many texts that are mentioned in the biographical dictionaries of calligraphers as having been written or copied by the individuals who were interested in or who professionalized in calligraphy. For instance, such texts as Kadı İyaz's *Şifa*, dictionaries, Mustafa ʿÂli's *Künhü'l-Ahbar*, and Katip Çelebi's *Atlas* and *Cihannüma,* documents written in the kadi courts like *hüccet* and documents written for bureaucratic purposes are mentioned in the Ottoman biographical dictionaries of calligraphers but are excluded from modern studies on calligraphy. I believe that this exclusion is very much related to the hesitation to call a non-religious text or a text that might be understood as a type of everyday writing as an example of "Islamic calligraphy." Hence, it might be said that the scope of the term calligraphy is ambiguous and more restrictive than is apparent.

For the purpose of comprehensibility, I will use the term calligraphy in my thesis, but also keep the above-mentioned problems in mind. Suffice it to say that I do not conceive of calligraphy as a restrictive practice as most of the scholarship does. Throughout my thesis I use the term calligraphy to mean quite simply the practice of beautiful writing and cover with it a wider range of writing acts from producing a *kıta*, to copying religious and non-religious texts and preparing

bureaucratic documents at the same time. It is important to notice that the type of writing that the written sources of calligraphy speak of is not an ordinary one, but one which is sophisticated and has an aesthetic purpose. Above all, since the biographical dictionaries of calligraphers themselves refer to writing and its process with variable and interchangeable words like *hüsn-i hatt*, *hüsn-i kitâbet*, *kitâbet*, *tahrîr*, *hatt*, *küttâb sanatı*, *fenn-i kitâbet*, *mektûbe*, *yazı*, *meşk* and *taklîd*, I consider it to be historically more appropriate for this thesis to have a more inclusive approach towards the concept of calligraphy. Additionally, I believe that the writers of biographical dictionaries of calligraphers do not refer only iconographic examples of calligraphy like panels with Qur'anic quotations or names like Ali or Muhammad, *hilye*s or inscriptions when they talk about *hatt* or *kitâbet*. In these instances, they imply a larger practice involving skills in governmental correspondence and copying religious and non-religious texts. Similarly, the description of the individuals whose biographies are covered in the biographical dictionaries of calligraphers testifies to the broad range in the practice of calligraphy in the minds of the Ottoman authors of biographical dictionaries of calligraphers. Rather than using only the term '*hattat*' which implies a professionalization of calligraphy, they use words like *küttâb (scribes), erbab-ı hatt ü kalem (people of writing and the pen)*, *hoş-nüvîsân (those write beautifully)*, *nessahân* (writers of the script of nesh) and *talik-nüvîsân (writers of the script of talik)*. Also, the texts do not cover the biographies of only the professional calligraphers but also people who had different occupations and took an interest in calligraphy for different reasons as I will discuss later on. For this reason, I will also use the term calligrapher in a broader sense to mean professional

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calligraphers, scribes and copyists at the same time. In some parts of the thesis, according to the context, I will use merely the terms scribe and copyist without mentioning the term "calligrapher." I will deal with these questions in detail in the next chapters in which I will try to historicize the different attitudes towards the practice of calligraphy in the biographical dictionaries of calligraphers.

1.2.2 On the conceptualization "Islamic Calligraphy"

The use of the adjective "Islamic" and the historiographical problems it raises are not peculiar to the field of calligraphy. Although, I will limit myself to the problems with the conceptualization of "Islamic calligraphy," many of these problems also apply to such conceptualizations as "Islamic Art" and "Islamic Architecture".[9] The use of the adjective "Islamic" to define a calligraphy work is vague and problematic, too. Other than denoting all forms of calligraphy produced by Muslims, it is not clear what the use of the adjective "Islamic" says about the works it qualifies. The adjective Islamic supposes an artistic unity in the calligraphy practices of various cultures. Thus, the concept of "Islamic calligraphy" prevents one from examining artistic diversity and from developing comparative perspectives on the calligraphy cultures of, for

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[9] For the problems with the conceptualization of "Islamic Art" in general, see Gülru Necipoğlu, "The Concept of Islamic Art: Inherited Discourses and new Approaches," in *Islamic Art and the Museum: Approaches to Art and Archaeology of the Muslim World in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Benoît Junod et al. (London: Saqi Books, 2012), 57-75 and Avinoam Shalem, "What do we mean when we say 'Islamic art'? A plea for a critical rewriting of the history of the arts of Islam," *Journal of Art Historiography* 6 (June, 2012): 1-18, accessed September 5, 2015, https://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/shalem.pdf

example, the Ottomans, Safavids and Mughals.[10] In contrast to the supposed stylistic unity the calligraphy examples from various geographies and historical periods display a multiplicity of form and style (see Appendix B, Figures 1-10). Additionally, it is not certain what kind of a relation exists between the Islamic faith and the calligraphy examples identified as Islamic. For example, it is not clear why a *ferman* communicating the written order of the political authority, and an example of *kıta*, a single sheet calligraphy, are taken as examples of Islamic calligraphy when they have nothing to do with Islamic faith or ritual.

It is seen that the practice of *hatt* finds its equivalent in English with the word calligraphy in many studies. Yet, at the same time, *hatt* is seen as a totally different phenomenon than the other cultures of calligraphy. However, there are few studies dealing with the differences between the practices of calligraphy and also between the values attributed to writing practices within the European, Chinese, Japanese and Islamic cultural spheres.[11] There is no study explaining explicitly the reasons to

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[10] For a comparative perspective on the epigraphy programs of the great mosques of the Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal Empires see Necipoğlu, "Religious Inscriptions on the Great Mosques of the Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal Empires," *Hadeeth Ad-Dar* vol. 25 (2008) (Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah, Kuwait National Museum): 34-40 and Necipoğlu, Qur'anic Inscriptions on Sinan's Imperial Mosques: A Comparison with Their Safavid and Mughal Counterparts," in *Word of God-Art of Man: The Qur'an and its Creative Expressions*, ed. Fahmida Suleman (Institute of Ismaili Studies Conference Proceedings, New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 69-104.

[11] Two exhibition catalogue make an exception by bringing works from different contexts under the category of calligraphy. But, unfortunately editors do not make any comment on the conjunction of the works. See *From Concept to Context: Approaches to Asian and Islamic Calligraphy*, ed. Shen Fu et al. (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1986) and *Fırça ve Kalemin İzinde Sınırları Aşmak: Doğu ve Batı Yazı Sanatından Seçmeler / Transcending Borders with Brush and Pen: Selected Works of Eastern and Western Calligraphy*, ed. Çağatay Anadol, trans. Ayşen Anadol and Carol La Motte (İstanbul: Sabancı Üniversitesi Sakıp Sabancı Müzesi, 2010). Victor H. Mair draws attention to some of the similarities between the Persian and Chinese cultures of calligraphy. See Victor H. Mair, "Persian scribes (munshi) and Chinese Literati (ru): The Power and Prestige of Fine Writing (adab/wenzhang)" in *Literacy in the Persianate World*, ed. Brian Spooner and William L. Hanaway, 388-414.

differentiate *hatt* from calligraphy in other cultures. Yet, there is a tendency to see *hatt* as a phenomenon peculiar to Islamic culture, which is presumed to give writing a sacred aura. Although recent historiography in Turkey has witnessed an interest in the practice of calligraphy, no study attempts to lay bare the conditions behind the attribution of "sacredness" to calligraphy.

Today when one says "*hattat*" (calligrapher), the figure that comes to mind is a pious man who is writing the word of God at peace as an act of ritual worship. Thus, an Islamic spiritual character is ascribed to calligraphy. It is thought to be a complementary aspect of Islamic piety. But this kind of perception must also have its history. The lack of historical perspective on the question creates a curtain that prevents us from evaluating calligraphy in a worldly context within the daily life. Thus it becomes almost impossible or unthinkable to attribute a practical function to calligraphy.

Starting out with similar questions, Spooner and Hanaway who focus on writing in the Persianate world talk about similar problems: "The academic discussion of Persian writing has been complicated by the distinctive cultural value of calligraphy."[12] As I said, the ascription of an Islamic characteristic to calligraphy makes it impossible to think of it within the more practical and worldly contexts in which it functions. This restrictive approach is deeply ingrained in the established historiography on the value of calligraphy in 'Islamic' culture, the emergence, standardization and expansion of the proportioned Arabic script, and the rise of writing as an art.

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[12] Brian Spooner and William L. Hanaway, "Introduction: Persian as Koine," in *Literacy in the Persianate World*, 21.

According to mainstream historiography, the religion of Islam gives a sacred place to calligraphy. For this reason, in order to show the significance of calligraphy since the emergence of Islam, in these studies we find many quotations from Quranic verses and hadiths which praise beautiful handwriting and one of the fundamental materials of writing, the pen. Thus, these studies imply that without any need for socio-political explanation, calligraphy is essentially significant in the religion of Islam. The established essentialist and ahistorical approach prevents us from analyzing the emergence of the phenomenon of calligraphy and of different scripts historically. The scholarship on calligraphy in Turkey consists essentially of a mere cataloguing of calligraphic works. Scholars of calligraphy either do not attempt to present a historical narrative or present a distorted and uncritical one. Yet, several scholars have criticized the existing scholarship. At this point, I find it important to touch upon the general tendencies of scholarship on Ottoman calligraphy and then, the alternative perspectives suggested by Oleg Grabar and Yasser Tabbaa, who both adopted a critical and historical approach that positions the practice of calligraphy within a broader social, cultural and political context.

1.3 An overview of the studies on Ottoman calligraphy

The mainstream studies on Ottoman calligraphy tend to adopt the concept of "Islamic calligraphy" without any scrutiny and narrate the history of Ottoman calligraphy rarely mentioning any interaction with other traditions of calligraphy in

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various geographies.[13] This causes the supposition of an isolated Ottoman calligraphy practice. These studies narrate a linear history of Ottoman calligraphy, which continuously develops towards perfection. Accordingly, the "perfection" of Ottoman calligraphy is realized in four steps. These four steps are identified with four master calligraphers, who are, respectively, Ibn Muqla (d. 940)[14], Ibn al-Bawwāb (d. 1024)[15], Yaqut al-Mustaʿsimi (d. 1299?) and Şeyh Hamdullah (d. 1520) who became prominent with the calligraphic styles that they found and renovated (see Appendix B, Figures 11-14). Accordingly, the studies generally begin by narrating the emergence and development of the proportioned script between the ninth and thirteenth centuries by giving references to the importance of calligraphy in the religion of Islam. In the introductions to these studies, we find a repetitive narrative which gives almost no place to the political and social transformations that

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[13] Some works which fix the general approach on the Ottoman calligraphy are Ali Alparslan, *Osmanlı Hat Sanatı Tarihi* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2004); M. Uğur Derman, *The Art of Calligraphy in the Islamic Heritage*, trans. Mohammed Zakairya (İstanbul: IRCICA, 1988); Muhittin Serin, *Hat Sanatı ve Meşhur Hattatlar* (İstanbul: Kubbealtı Neşriyatı, 2003); Ahmet Süheyl Ünver, *Türk Yazı Çeşitleri: Türk Hattatları Yazılarından Örneklerle Birlikte Ba'zı Faideli İzahat Verilmiştir*, (İstanbul: Yeni Labarotuvar Yayınları, 1953). For a review of the studies on the Ottoman calligraphy see İrvin Cemil Schick, "Türkçe Matbu Hüsn-i Hat Literatürüne Toplu Bir Bakış," *TALİD*, Cilt 7, Sayı 14 (2009): 249-273.

[14] Ibn Muqla was the vizier of the Abbasid State for several years during the reigns of caliph al-Muqtadir (r. 908-932), al-Qahir (r. 932-934) and al-Radi (r. 934-940). After he fell into disgrace he was imprisoned and then executed in 939-940. The invention of a proportioned script, *al-khaṭṭ al-mansūb,* is attributed to him. By relying on dots to measure each letter he systematized the "Six Styles" or "Six Pens." He determined the measure of each letter according to the letter *alif*. The "six styles" are *nesih*, *muhakkak*, *reyhani*, *sülüs*, *rika* and *tevki*. The Six Pens display in majuscule and miniscule forms. According to the established narrative Ibn Muqla's followers spread the six styles to various geographies. For further information on Ibn Muqla see Sourdel, D.. "Ibn Muḳla." *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*. Brill Online, 2015. Henceforth I will cite this source as *EI*2.

[15] Ibn al-Bawwāb was the librarian of Buwayhid Bahāʾ al-Dawla at Shīrāz. He partook in the Buwayhid governmental circles. According to the narrative he perfected the reforms of Ibn Muqla in writing. From his time onwards cursive script became a prestigious script and started be used in Qur'anic writing. For further information on Ibn al-Bawwāb see Sourdel-Thomine, J.. "Ibn al-Bawwāb." *EI*2. Brill Online, 2015.

might have influenced the emergence of the proportioned script. Ibn Muqla, Ibn al-Bawwāb and Yaqut al-Musta'simi always appear as a "trinity"[16] who made innovations that determined the major forms and styles of calligraphy throughout the centuries. It is said that after the death of Yaqut al-Musta'simi who was known for his skills in Six Pens and his reforms[17] in *nesih* script his students carried his style into various geographies such as Baghdad, Anatolia, Egypt, Syria, Iran and Transoxiana.[18] It should be noted that Yaqut al-Musta'simi's contributions to the *nesih* script are not known clearly because scholars have difficulties in attributing Qur'ans to him. David James mentions that the authenticity of even the rare Qurans attributed to Yaqut al-Musta'simi, is uncertain.[19] Although there exists such problems of authenticity, the studies on Ottoman calligraphy situate Yaqut al-Musta'simi as the mainstay of the Ottoman style but do not portray the exact impact of his style on the Ottoman calligraphy. Yet, they state that the history of Ottoman calligraphy begins only with his impact on Anatolia.

Generally a lacuna between the emergence of the proportioned script, the renovations done by Yaqut al-Musta'simi (d.1299?) and the emergence of the first

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[16] I borrowed the term from Yasser Tabbaa. See Yasser Tabbaa, *The Transformation of Islamic Art During the Sunni Revival* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2001), 175, note.6.

[17] The biographical dictionaries of calligraphers use various terms in order to refer to the innovations done by masters of calligraphy, including *teftîh*, *tehzîb*, *tebyîn*, *tashîh*, *ihtirâ'* and *ibdâ'*. In paralell to the frequent usage in the scholarship, I use the word "reform" as an umbrella term to refer to the various meaning of the above-mentioned terms.

[18] Uğur Derman, *Letters in Gold: Ottoman Calligraphy from the Sakıp Sabancı Collection, Istanbul*, trans. Mohamed Zakariya et al. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1998), 7.

[19] David James, *The Master Scribes: Qur'ans of the 10th to 14th centuries AD*, ed. Tim Stanley (New York : Nour Foundation in association with Azimuth Editions and Oxford University Press, 1992), 58. Sheila S. Blair investigates some copies of Qur'ans signed by the name of Yaqut al-Musta'simi. See Sheila B. Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 242-253.

Ottoman canon master Şeyh Hamdullah (d. 1520)[20] within the historical narrative is observed. Between the two masters almost one hundred and fifty years of an undefined break, from 1299 to 1450s, exists. Uğur Derman does not find anything to touch upon as a major change in the history of calligraphy in Anatolia during this period and identifies the period merely as "a continuation of the 'Abbasid school."[21] Yet, I do not find his argument sufficient in order to understand the backgrounds or possible influences for the development and canonization of Şeyh Hamdullah's style. Explaining one hundred and fifty years merely with the continuation of the Abbasid school means to ignore possible other sources of influence in the Anatolian geography such as the calligraphy styles that came with the incoming Ilkhanid and Akkoyunlu scribes.

Şeyh Hamdullah is generally represented as the master who created a distinctively Ottoman style by renovating Yaqut al-Musta'simi's style. In other words, he became the "initiator" of the history of Ottoman calligraphy. Yet, the characteristics and the process of the formation of an Ottoman style of calligraphy are not defined clearly. In other words, it is not certain in what ways the so-called Ottoman style differed from the other calligraphic styles and which socio-political contexts provided the formation of an Ottoman style in calligraphy.

One of the major problems of the historiography on Ottoman calligraphy is related to the issue of periodization. The scholars subscribe to a periodization which is determined merely with the names of calligraphers. In this regard, most of the

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[20] For the biography of Şeyh Hamdullah see Muhittin Serin, "Hamdullah Efendi, Şeyh" in *TDVİA* vol.15 (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1997), 449-452.

[21] Derman, *Letters in Gold*, 15.

studies construct a history of calligraphy whose engine is the master calligraphers such as Şeyh Hamdullah, Ahmed Karahisarî (1470?-1556) and Hafız Osman (1642-1698). The periods in the history of Ottoman calligraphy are defined by the impact of the styles that were developed by these masters.[22] Yet the historical conditions and qualities of their impacts on Ottoman calligraphy are not defined explicitly. The scholars tend to create artistic geniuses without scrutinizing the historical contexts of the expansion of the styles of certain individuals.[23] I do not deny that these calligraphers may have made significant attempts to renovate and change the dominant styles in calligraphy. But, many historiographical problems arise with the equivocal explanations of the scholarship. In order to show the expansion of the style of an individual the studies only count the names of the students of that individual and refer to his works with ambiguous aesthetic analyses. In fact, a more historical and comprehensible approach on the expansion and impact of certain calligraphy styles might be developed by taking the written sources of calligraphy into consideration.

Another major tendency of the scholarship is to divide the studies into chapters according to the script types like *divani*, *celi* and *sülüs*[24] (for different script

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[22] For example Süleyman Berk's periodization in his book on the history of Ottoman calligraphy is as follows: Şeyh Hamdullah and his école, Ahmed Karahisarî and his école, etc. See Dr. Süleyman Berk, *Devlet-i Aliyye'den Günümüze Hat Sanatı* (İstanbul: İnkılab Yayınları, 2013).

[23] Prof. Edhem Eldem drew my attention, in an oral communicantion in 2015, to the similarity between the modern portrayal of calligraphers as artistic geniuses equivalent and the position of Renaissance artists in European historiography. Even Oktay Aslanapa makes a connection between the renovations of Şeyh Hamdullah on calligraphy and the attempts of Renaissance artists to draw human figures according to the anatomical measurements. See Oktay Aslanapa, *Türk Sanatı* (İstanbul: Remzi kitabevi, 2003), 387.

[24] For example see Muhiddin Serin, *Hat San'atımız* (İstanbul: Kubbealtı Neşriyâtı, 1982), 31-46 and Alparslan, *Osmanlı Hat Sanatı Tarihi*, 103-199.

types see Appendix B, Figure 15). Yet they do not give any reason for taking the

script type as a category to narrate the history of Ottoman calligraphy. Also, the

historical reasons for the emergence of new scripts and the popularity of certain

script types in some historical periods are not clearly examined. Rather, some vague

definitions and aesthetical analyses are carried out. First, the origins and then, the

characteristics and a brief history of script types are introduced. It is necessary to

note that the script types are narrated as products of "Turkish national genius," which

is an explanation that centers on a highly modern concept and thus, makes the

narrative totally ahistorical. For example Ismayıl Hakkı Baltacıoğlu defines *divani*

and *rika* as "essentially Turkish scripts."[25] In a similar vein, in Muhittin Serin's study

while *talik* is defined as a "Persian script" (*Acem yazısı*), *divani*, *rika* and *siyakat* are

defined as "Turkish scripts."[26] In Alparslan's study, *divani*, *celi divani* and *rika*

scripts are investigated under the chapter titled "The Scripts that Were Invented by

Turks."[27] Moreover, these studies exhibit a hierarchical structure that puts the

"Turkish style" above all others without any analytical explanation.

 Even as the above-mentioned studies on Ottoman calligraphy have made

significant contributions to the field of Ottoman calligraphy, they have also exhibited

very similar approaches, and rather than producing historical explanation, they repeat

the clichés. They recount the biographies of some Ottoman calligraphers using the

information they gathered from the biographical dictionaries of calligraphers but

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[25] Ismayıl Hakkı Baltacıoğlu, *Türklerde Yazı Sanatı* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1993), 62-67.

[26] Serin, *Hat San'atımız*, 72 and 76.

[27] Alparslan, *Osmanlı Hat Sanatı Tarihi*, 189-203.

without any recourse to the historical context as well as without specifying any criteria underlying their selection. Thus, the field of Ottoman calligraphy relies on ahistorical and teleological approaches and constructs a historical narrative without scrutinizing concepts such as Islamic, Turkish and calligraphy. Rather than cultural complexity, the field emphasizes a supposed artistic unity by referring to an undefined process of the formation of an Ottoman style of calligraphy realized in isolation from other calligraphic traditions. Additionally, the field does not pay much attention to the political, social and cultural functions of calligraphy. By highlighting the sacred connotations of calligraphy, the field fails to notice the practical roles of calligraphy. It should be admitted that the existing scholarship on Ottoman calligraphy does not offer a helpful background to the researcher. For this reason, while dealing with the written materials on calligraphy, a critical stance towards the existing scholarship is required.

1.4 Alternative perspectives

In the chapter on writing in his book, *The Mediation of Ornament*, Oleg Grabar traces beauty and artistic quality in writing, how writing became an object of criticism as an artwork and as an object valued by connoisseurs and collectors and the characteristics of writing as an ornament in Islamic art and architecture.[28] After presenting various functions of writing he argues that "[t]o subsume all these

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[28] Oleg Grabar, *The Mediation of Ornament* (Princeton, N. J. : Princeton University Press, 1992), 47-118.

different actions of writing under the single term of calligraphy only confuses the meanings of writing."[29] Thus, rather than relying on an essentialist and simplistic understanding on the evolution of writing as an art, he attempts to follow historical questions regarding the different actions of writing, its evolution and transformation by way of examining the "concrete tradition of writing."[30] For this reason, he refers to the historical context to understand the reasons for the emergence and standardization of scripts.[31] While doing that he underlines his methodological approach: "[D]ifferent periods require different interpretations and … the assumption of a single 'Islamic' attitude to writing is a debatable and dangerous fiction."[32] To avoid this "dangerous fiction", he points out possible social, political and administrative factors and settings for the standardization of writing beginning with the Abbasid vizier Ibn Muqla (d. 940) and Ibn al-Bawwāb (d. 1022).

It should be noted that these two individuals with Yaqut al-Musta'simi are referred frequently both in the primary sources and in the secondary literature on calligraphy. Mostly, the primary sources venerated these individuals as the founders and promoters of the proportioned script. Their names appear alongside religious and saintly figures and the authors treat them in a similar manner. The vast bulk of the secondary literature has taken all the sayings and praises in the primary sources literally and does not attempt to understand the world around the texts and to

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[29] Ibid., 62.

[30] Ibid., 63.

[31] Ibid., 65.

[32] Ibid., 113.

examine the ways of representation of these individuals in the texts. For this reason,

mainstream scholarship does not provide political, historical and cultural

backgrounds for the creation of a proportioned script and its rapid expansion.[33]

Grabar, on the other hand, suggests possible explanations for this ignored

background. According to him, the expansion of Islamic states and the rapid

dissemination of the Arabic script to the newly conquered lands required "clarity and

efficiency in administrative communications."[34] Also with the spread and availability

of paper, which was a cheaper writing material than papyrus or parchment, writing

rather than the writing material became valuable.[35] Additionally, the increase in

literacy and materials or mediums caused the appearance of "distinctiveness in

writing […] [as] one of the criteria for social distinction."[36] Thus, it might be

concluded that from the early tenth century onwards beautiful and distinctive

handwriting became one of the components of elite identity in the early Islamic

states.[37] Thus, throughout the chapter, Grabar traces the broad setting of writing in

the early Islamic period. Rather than adopting a one-dimensional approach, focusing

exclusively on the sacred connotations of writing in the religion of Islam, he favors a

multi-dimensional approach, and takes into account the conditions of manuscript

culture, the cultural world of the elites, popular attitudes toward writing, and the

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[33] For similar observations see Yasser Tabbaa, "Canonicity and Control: The Socio-political Underpinnings of Ibn Muqla's Reforms," *Ars Orientalis*, Vol. 29 (1999), 93.

[34] Grabar, *The Mediation of Ornament,* 77.

[35] Ibid., 77.

[36] Ibid., 77.

[37] Ibid., 77.

effects of the transformations within the bureaucratic structure on the form and reception of writing.

Another scholar who stands at a critical distance from the essentialist scholarship is Yasser Tabbaa.[38] In a similar vein to Grabar, Tabbaa examines the social and political factors that led to the transformation of Arabic writing as seen through the changes in Quranic writing in the period between the tenth and eleventh century. His main problem is to understand and historicize the changes in scripts. He aims to find the reasons behind the abandonment of the angular Kufic script that had been used for a very long time for copying the Qur'an and the replacement of this script with the newly standardized cursive scripts of Ibn Muqla and Ibn al-Bawwāb. The curious point in this transformation is the preference for the standardized scripts, which were created in a secular and administrative sphere, also for copying the Quran.[39] Another curious point is the intervention of scribes working in the state bureaucracy in the reproduction of Quran manuscripts, which was previously dominated by early Quranic calligraphers who were probably from the *ulema* circles.[40] For an explanation of this shift, rather than internal problems within the craft, Tabbaa points to external factors.

Tabbaa talks about two general groups of Arabic script before the reforms of Ibn Muqla: a Qur'anic/Kufic script and a variety of secular scripts used by scribes

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[38] Yasser Tabbaa, *The Transformation of Islamic Art During the Sunni Revival*, 25-73. Also see Yasser Tabbaa, "The Transformation of Arabic Writing: Part I, Qur'anic Calligraphy," *Ars Orientalis*, Vol. 21 (1991), 119-148; Tabbaa, "The transformation of Arabic Writind: Part II, the Public Text," *Ars Orientalis*, Vol. 24 (1994), 119-147; Tabbaa, "Canonicity and Control."

[39] Tabbaa, "The Transformation of Arabic Writing: Part I, Qur'anic Calligraphy," 141.

[40] Tabbaa, "Canonicity and Control," 94.

and copyists. He observes that the early Kufic Qur'ans, written before the replacement of cursive scripts in the tenth century, were illegible because of "ambiguous and often undifferentiated letter forms and a scattered disposition on the page" and "were intended to restrict the reading of the Qur'an."[41] He also observes that contrary to the common belief; semi-angular and cursive scripts were already used in the chancery documents and in non-religious books before the tenth century when the reforms of Ibn Muqla and Ibn al-Bawwāb were realized. This means that Ibn Muqla inherited a variety of cursive scripts used in secular spheres and as Tabbaa states "the rules for his proportioned writing did not emerge from Qur'anic script but were ultimately based on book scripts."[42] Yet, he systematized the earlier trends[43] and the new proportioned script promoted by Ibn Muqla made an impact and led to the emergence of semi-Kufic Qur'ans, which have a legible script in contrast to their predecessors. After the reforms a striking resemblance between Qur'anic and non-Qur'anic writing was observed.[44]

Besides these discussions related to the form and standardization and the evolution of cursive script, Tabbaa puts forth a new dimension for the transformations in Qur'anic writing: The efforts of the Abbasid caliph al-Muqtadir (r. 908-932) to save the caliphate's "nominal position as the safeguard of the Islamic community and enforcer of the correct religion" in the face of the attacks of Shii

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[41] Tabbaa, *The Transformation of Islamic Art*, 28.

[42] Ibid., 34.

[43] Ibid., 40.

[44] Ibid., 40.

Qarmatians and Fatimids.[45] The efforts for promoting an Abbasid state version of the Quran were crystallized in the attempts of state functionaries to create an explicit and ostensive Quranic script. Thus, Tabbaa demonstrates that Ibn Muqla's reforms and their adoption for copying Qurans were very much related to a power conflict and to the caliphate's effort to establish a canonical reading of Quran. In the eyes of the Muslims, the new script would be the sign of their reading the correct and orthodox rescension.[46] By concretizing Grabar's suggestions on alternative readings of the history of calligraphy, Tabbaa presents the social and political framework for the reforms of Ibn Muqla. Although Tabbaa and Grabar do not touch upon the written materials on calligraphy, their alternative perspective encourages one to read these texts in a multi-dimensional way.[47]

Until now, I discussed some conceptual problems with the category of "Islamic calligraphy." I argued that the label "Islamic" is too ambiguous and veils the social and political grounds of the evolution of calligraphy, and I remarked that I prefer to use the term calligraphy to refer to a wider array of writing practices. Such an approach on calligraphy would be more fitting with the multi-dimensional character of the practice of calligraphy, which also comes out in the Ottoman

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[45] Ibid., 43.

[46] Ibid., 43.

[47] I do not take Tabbaa's explanations on the increasing visibility of cursive scripts for granted. For me, Tabbaa's study demonstrates the significance of considering the social, political and cultural contexts in order to introduce alternative perspectives on calligraphy. Yet, it should be noted that his arguments on the increasing usage of cursive script and its relation to the Sunni revival are criticized by Alain George. Contrary to Tabbaa, George finds the existence of a relationship between the scribal evolutions and the religio-plitical context of the period doubtful. For his arguments see Alain George, *The Rise of Islamic Calligraphy* (London: Saqi Books, 2010), 138-146. For a discussion on the use of calligraphy in the Fatimid architecture for propaganda see Irene A. Bierman, *Writing Signs: the Fatimid Public Text* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

biographical dictionaries of calligraphers. The revisionist approaches on the works of

calligraphy and historical positions of calligraphers do not find its equivalent in the

case of written materials on calligraphy. For the present concerns of this thesis, I

believe that it is important to touch upon the use of Ottoman biographical

dictionaries of calligraphers in Ottoman historiography. Since the use of

biographical dictionaries of poets and of calligraphers in historiography has many

common departure points, to touch upon biographical dictionaries of poets would be

helpful. In fact, the problems encountered in the use of biographical dictionary of

calligraphers are not very different from the use of other types of biographical

dictionaries in Ottoman historiography. For this reason, some introductory remarks

on the place of the biographical dictionary, and especially the biographies of poets in

Ottoman historiography would be helpful.

1.5 The use of biographical dictionaries of poets in Ottoman historiography

Biographical dictionaries have been one of the most consulted primary sources in the

studies on early modern Ottoman literature and history. As biographical compendia, they

narrate the life stories and career paths of Ottomans.[48] It would not be wrong to say that

in a field in which the relative scarcity of first-person narratives is widely lamented,

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[48] For a general introduction on the genre of biographical dictionary or *tezkire* see James Stewart-Robinson, "The Tezkere Genre in Islam", *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* Vol. 23, No. 1, (Jan., 1964): 57-65; Wadad al-Qadi, "Biographical Dictionaries: Inner Structure and Cultural Significance," in *The Book in the Islamic World: The Written Word and Communication in the Middle East*, ed. George N. Atiyeh (Albany: State University of New York Pres, 1995): 93-122; Wadad al-Qadi, "Biographical Dictionaries as the Scholars' Alternative History of the Muslim Community" in *Organizing Knowledge: Encylopaedic Activities in the Pre-Eighteenth Century Muslim World*, ed. Gerhard Endress (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 23-75.

biographical dictionaries have become a source of consolation. Ottomanists have resorted to biographical dictionaries to find information on a certain cross-section of Ottoman society. Thus, within the existing scholarship these compendia have been most commonly used as databank rather than as complex texts that demand analysis in their own right. There are relatively few studies that have taken these texts as their focus and which have tried to evaluate their content, language, rhetoric and style comprehensively by considering the historical contexts of their production and consumption.

A glimpse into the available literature shows that most researchers have failed to examine the biographical dictionaries in their historical context. For example, questions regarding the notions of poetry, the position of the poet within the biographical dictionary itself, the preferences in the characterization of the poet by the author of the biographical dictionary are rarely raised. But rather, we find numerous published editions of Ottoman biographical dictionaries of poets that were produced between sixteenth and nineteenth centuries without any historical approach and any attempt of contextualization.[49]

The other type of study that moves a step further from the transcription studies focuses on some biographical and artistic topoi that are found within the biographical dictionaries of poets. For example, they expose social and economic backgrounds, career paths, education, personalities, skills of the poets, patronage relationships and relationships among the poets as they reflected in the biographical

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[49] See, for instance, Kudret Altun, *Tezkire-i Mucîb: İnceleme-Tenkidli Metin-Dizin-Sözlük* (Ankara: Atatürk Yüksek Kurumu Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Başkanlığı, 1997); Adnan İnce, *Tezkiretü'ş-Şuarâ* (Ankara: Atatürk Yüksek Kurumu Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Başkanlığı, 2005); Süleyman Solmaz, *Ahdî ve Gülşen-i Şu'arâsı: İnceleme-Metin* (Ankara: Atatürk Yüksek Kurumu Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Başkanlığı, 2005).

dictionaries which were produced in different historical and social contexts.[50] In my opinion, it is misleading to juxtapose the various biographical dictionaries of poets and to analyze them under 'shared' categories without taking the historical/epochal differences into account. Because such an approach presupposes that all the biographical dictionaries of poets can be examined under the same historical categories. And the supposition that they were produced within a shared socio-cultural milieu might lead to misunderstandings such as ascribing undifferentiated notions of poetry, of the figure of the poet, of creativity and talent within different historical contexts.

As a result, it is not surprising to find a monolithic and linear historiography of Ottoman poetry. However, the fact that various biographical dictionaries of poets produced within a huge span of time should lead the scholars to examine diverse notions on the art itself, its practitioners and socio-cultural conditions. The recent studies on biographical dictionaries of poets call for alternative perspectives on these sources. Rather than limiting the use of these sources as in the above-mentioned approaches they expanded the scope of questions and argue for a detailed examination of the sources themselves rather than the biographies of specific individuals.[51]

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[50] For example see Harun Tolasa, Sehi, *Latifi ve Aşık Çelebi Tezkirelerine göre 16.y.y.'da Edebiyat Araştırma ve Eleştirisi I* (İzmir: Ege Üniversitesi Matbaası, 1983) and Filiz Kılıç, *XVII.Yüzyıl Tezkirelerinde Şair ve Eser Üzerine Değerlendirmeler* (Ankara: Akçağ Yayınları, 1998).

[51] See, for example, the articles in *Aşık Çelebi ve Şairler Tezkiresi ÜzerineYazılar*, ed. Hatice Aynur and Aslı Niyazioğlu (İstanbul: Koç Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2011) and Walter G. Andrews, "The Tezkere-i Şuara of Latifi as a Source for the Critical Evaluation of Ottoman Poetry" (Unpublished PhD. diss., University of Washington, 1970). For some studies which have a historical approach on the Ottoman biographical dictionaries of poets see Walter G. Andrews and Mehmet Kalpaklı, *The Age of Beloveds: Love and the Beloved in Early-Modern Ottoman and European Culture and Society*

Biographical dictionaries of calligraphers produced in the Ottoman lands have enjoyed a similar fate as regards scholarship. They have been mostly consulted for their rich content on the life stories of Ottoman calligraphers. There exist few studies that attempt to situate these texts in their historical context and to understand the socio-cultural milieu in which they were produced and consumed. In most of the scholarship, what we see is a disregard for the written materials such as album prefaces, treatises on calligraphy and biographical dictionaries of calligraphers. In his study on the Timurid and Safavid album prefaces David J. Roxburgh directed his criticism towards the approaches of art historians on these materials and he proposes that "without attending to the literary aspects of the texts or other factors that may have shaped them, historians of art mined them for biographical elements in the hope of producing a historical construction."[52] Thus, an approach emerges which tend to use the primary sources only for reconstructing the practitioners' landscape, deciphering the genealogy of the artists and identifying the main centers and schools of writing. Rather than presenting a detailed textual analysis of the written materials, specialists in Ottoman calligraphy use these sources in order to decipher the artistic and aesthetic development and the schools of calligraphy in the Ottoman Empire.[53]

(Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005); Selim S. Kuru, "A Sixteenth-Century Scholar: Deli Birader and his Dāfiʾüʾl-ġumūm ve Rāfiʾüʾl-humūm" (Unpublished PhD. diss., Harvard University, 2000); Sooyong Kim, "Minding the Shop: Zati and the Making of Ottoman Poetry in the First Half of the Sixteenth Century" (Unpublished PhD. diss., University of Chicago, 2005). Zeynep Altok of Boğaziçi University is currently working on the sixteenth-century Ottoman biographical dictionaries of poets as part of her PhD. dissertation entitled "Sixteenth-Century Biographical Dictionaries of Poets and Ottoman Elite Identity."

[52] David J.Roxburgh, *Prefacing the Image: The Writing of Art History in Sixteenth-Century Iran* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2001), 5.

[53] But it is needed to mention some studies which have obtained an alternative perspective on these sources: Christine Woodhead in her article on the career of a sixteenth-century Ottoman *katip* uses

1.6 Biographical dictionaries of calligraphers: The genre and its antecedents

To put it in a simple framework, we might consider the biographical dictionaries of
calligraphers to have affinity with several different literary genres: hagiographies
(*menakıbname*s), biographical memoirs/dictionaries, universal histories, *evail*s,
album prefaces and technical treatises.[54] In order to understand the characteristics of
the genre, it is important to touch upon the general trends of the other genres with
which it was affiliated or to which it was indebted and the ways in which they
influenced its structure. Also, such an inquiry might provide some clues about the
possible sources of the authors of biographical dictionaries of calligraphers.

The genre of *menakıbname* narrates the deeds, praiseworthy actions and
character of an individual who is thought to have distinguished himself with his
moral and pious actions.[55] One of the obvious characteristics of the genre is the
praise for miraculous deeds of saintly figures (*veli*s or *pir*s). One clear sign of the
effect of the hagiographical literature onto the genre of biographical dictionary of

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Müstakimzâde Süleyman Sâdeddin's (d. 1788) *Tuhfe-i Hattâtîn* as a primary source. Also David J.
Roxburgh points to the biographies of calligraphers produced in the Ottoman lands for their value as
written materials in terms of art historical studies. See Christine Woodhead, "From Scribe to
Litterateur: The Career of a Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Katib," *Bulletin (British Society for Middle
Eastern Studies)*, Vol.9, No.1 (1982): 55-74.; Roxburgh, *Prefacing the Image.*

[54] Altough Esra Akın-Kıvanç points this statement only for Mustafa ʿÂli's *Menâkıb-ı Hünerverân* I
think it is true for all the examples of the genre. She counts four predeccesor of the genre. I included
the universal histories and *evail*s which were remarked as one of the antecedents of the genre by
Roxburgh. See Akın-Kıvanç, *Epic Deeds of Artists*, 87. Also see Roxburgh, *Prefacing the Image*, 122-
133.

[55] For *menakıb* see Pellat, Ch. "*Manāḳib." EI2. Brill Online, 2015.* For a general overview on the
genre of *menakıbname* see *Tales of God's friends: Islamic hagiography in translation*, ed. John
Renard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009); John Renard, *Friends of God : Islamic
images of piety, commitment, and servanthood* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

calligraphers in terms of content can be seen in the title of Mustafa 'Âli's biographical dictionary of calligraphers. Rather than a *tezkire*, he defined his work as a *menakıb*. As Akın-Kıvanç remarks we might think the use of the word *menakıb* in the title as "symbolic rather than literary."[56] Yet, as I will discuss in the next chapter, throughout the text we see many narratives on the miraculous deeds of calligraphers as if they were saints. Not only the calligraphers, but also the act of writing itself, the written word, writing tools, in short, almost everything related to the written culture were represented as retaining a sacred aura. It is true that the same way of representation is also found in the written materials on calligraphy from the earlier periods. Yet it would be misleading to accept this particular representation as an unchanged and a general generic principle that we find in all the examples of the genre. Such an approach would lead us to subscribe to the monolithic discourse on calligraphy and to assume the existence of a one-dimensional representation of the practitioner of calligraphy within the textual world throughout the centuries. Rather than an all encompassing and timeless sacred framework surrounding the discourses and representations on writing and its practitioners, what we need is a historical analysis sensitive to social, cultural and political context. The other two Ottoman biographical dictionaries of calligraphers that will be covered in this thesis also have remarks on the sacredness of the practice of writing and the calligrapher. But they do not represent this sacredness in an unchanged way. For this reason, the next chapter will be devoted to the examination of discourses on writing, its practitioners and origins of writing in three different Ottoman biographical dictionaries of

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[56] Akın-Kıvanç, *Epic Deeds of Artists*, 87.

calligraphers. Also, the apparent transformations within the discourse will be touched upon where needed.

It is difficult and insufficient to focus merely on one biographical dictionary without considering the earlier or contemporary ones. These texts mostly do not allow easily for an analysis by their own since most of them were written as a response or continuation to the earlier dictionaries. In a sense, a single example of the genre might be understood only through examining its position within the tradition of the genre, so to speak, through acquiring an intertextual approach.

The antecedents of the genre come from other types of biographical dictionaries, which cover the life stories of poets or ruling elites and touch upon the talents of the individuals on calligraphy. For example in some of the biographical entries of Khwandamir's (d. 1535-36) *Dastur al-vuzara* (completed in 1509-10), which is a compendium covering the biographies of viziers from the Umayyad through the Timurid dynasties, we find remarks on the subjects' possession of good script.[57] Besides having the ability to read and write and talents in rhetoric, beautiful writing appears as a field that provides the individual with praises of the author.[58]

Two earlier biographical dictionaries of poets from the late Timurid period, Mir Ali Shir Navai's (d. 1501) *Majalis al-nafais* (begun 1490-91) and Dawlatshah Samarqandi's (d. 1494-95) *Tazkirat al-Shuara* (completed in 1487), state the other competencies of the poet in calligraphy, musical performance or drawing in order to

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[57] Roxburgh, *Prefacing the Image*, 123.

[58] Ibid., 123.

show the subject's area of expertise.[59] We find similar tendencies in the earlier examples of Ottoman biographical dictionaries of poets. We find references on the poets' talents on calligraphy in Sehi's (d. 1548) *Heşt Bihişt* (1538-1539)[60], Ahdi Ahmed Çelebi's (d. 1593-94) *Gülşen-i Şuara* (1563)[61] and Kınalızade Hasan Çelebi's (d. 1604) *Tezkiretü'ş-Şuara* (1586)[62].

Later years of the fifteenth century witnessed the appearance of comments on the calligraphers and artists in the Safavid and Timurid works of universal histories.[63] For example in Khvandamir's universal histories, *Khulasat al-akhbar fi bayan ahval al-akhyar* (1500) and *Habib al-siyar* (completed in 1524) we find passing remarks on artists and calligraphers.[64] According to Roxburgh the reference to the individual skills in writing underlines the significance of good writing for partaking in courtly culture and as an advantage for correspondence secretaries.[65]

Besides the appearance of references to skills in calligraphy in various types of sources around the fifteenth century, what is striking about the comments of authors like Dawlatshah and Khvandamir on calligraphy is their genealogical

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[59] Ibid., 124.

[60] *Heşt Behişt: Sehi Beg Tezkiresi, İnceleme, Tenkidli Metin, Dizin*, ed. Günay Kut, (Cambridge: Harvard University Printing Office, 1978).

[61] Ahdi, *Ahdi ve Gülşen-i şu'arâsı : inceleme-metin,* (Ankara : Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Başkanlığı, 2005).

[62] *Tezkiretü'ş-Şuara: Kınalızade Hasan Çelebi*, ed. İbrahim Kutluk, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1989).

[63] Roxburgh, *Prefacing the Image*, 124.

[64] Ibid., 125.

[65] Ibid., 125.

consciousness.[66] Roxburgh discusses the way these writers compare and contrast the style of a practitioner with that of earlier masters, the way they construct groupings according to the specialization in *talik* or *nestalik* hands and the way they distinguish between the canonical scripts, that is "Six Pens," and the newly emerging scripts of *talik* and *nestalik*.[67]

As a reason for the historical stance of these authors Roxburgh shows the influence of another genre, that is, *evail,* whose primary concern is to count "the origin of a technique or practice" and to specify an individual as the original practitioner.[68] From the earliest examples of the genre of *evail,* Thaalibi's (961-1039) *Lataif al-Maarif* (before 1038) has a section counting the firsts of the act of writing and writing materials.[69] Ibn al-Nadim (d.995?) also devoted the first chapter of his *Fihrist* (late tenth century) to "a description of the languages of the Arabs and foreign peoples, the characteristics of their ways of writing, their types of script and forms of calligraphy."[70] As a reflection of the previous tradition of the genre of *evail*, narratives on the emergence of writing and the first writers/scribes are found in the prefaces of Ottoman biographical dictionaries of calligraphers too. In this respect, I find an intertextual reading, which takes the *evail*s and prefaces of biographical

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[66] Ibid., 125.

[67] Ibid., 126.

[68] Ibid., 127. For details on the genre of evail see Rosenthal, F.. "Awāʾil." *EI*2. Brill Online, 2015.

[69] Roxburgh, *Prefacing the Image*, 128. For the English translation of the work see *The Book of Curious and Entertaining Information: The Lata'if al-ma'arif of Tha'alibi,* trans. C. E. Bosworth (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1968).

[70] Roxburgh, *Prefacing the Image*, 128. See Ibn al-Nadim, *The Fihrist: A 10th Century Survey of Islamic Culture*, ed and trans. Bayard Dodge (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1998), 7-40.

dictionaries of calligraphers into consideration significant in order to understand the written sources of the Ottoman biographical dictionaries and their construction of the history of writing.

Besides the above-mentioned genres one should also mention the technical treatises on writing and writing tools like Sultan Ali Mashadi's (d. 1520) *Sirat al-sutur* (Way of Lines of Writing, 1514), Mir Ali Haravi's (d. 1550?) *Midad al-khutut* (The Models of Scripts, 1519-20), Majnun Rafiqi's *Khatt va savad* (Script and ink, 1533-34) and *Adab al-mashq* (The Good Manners of Practice, ca.1533-34), Mahmud b. Muhammad's *Qavanin al-khutut* (Canons of Scripts, 1561-62).[71] Besides having the content of a technical treatise these sources also reflect a genealogical consciousness about calligraphy when they narrate the history of the Six Pens and recount the biographies of canonical masters like Ibn Muqla, Ibn al-Bawwāb and Yaqut al-Musta'simi and the founders of *talik* and *nestalik* scripts.[72]

Thanks to a recent study on Hafız-zade's *Risale-i Hat*, a technical treatise written before Mustafa 'Âlis's *Menâkıb-ı Hünerverân* has come to light.[73] The earliest copy of *Risale-i Hat* is from 1543 or 1544. Briefly, after the introductory pages praising the practice of writing and the scribe, the text deals with the ways of writing each letter, their combinations and how to write *Allah* in *muhakkak*, *sülüs* and *nesih* scripts. Considering the fact the entire text is in verse and that versification

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[71] Roxburgh, *Prefacing the Image*, 130-132. For other technical treatises by calligraphers see Carl W. Ernst, "The Spirit of Islamic Calligraphy: Baba Shah Isfahani's Adab al-Mashq," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* Vol. 112, No. 2 (Apr. – Jun., 1992), 281, note 19.

[72] Roxburgh, *Prefacing the Image*, 130-133.

[73] *Hafız-zade Risale-i Hat: Hatt'ın Şiiri: Tıpkıbasım ve Meşk Örnekleriyle Birlikte*, ed. Sadettin Eğri (İstanbul: Büyüyen Ay Yayınları, 2014).

often served mnemonic purposes, this text too might have been used for educational purposes. Although generally *Menâkıb-ı Hünerverân* is counted as the first Ottoman source that contains technical information on how to prepare ink, how to cut a pen, and how to make various paper types, etc., *Risale-i Hat* contains this type of information as well, and thus signifies the presence of an already existing literature.[74] Additionally, the other Ottoman biographical dictionaries of calligraphers that will be dealt in this thesis, Nefeszâde İbrahim's *Gülzâr-ı Savâb* contains a chapter that is organized as a technical treatise and devoted to descriptions on the preparation of ink, paper and other writing materials.

Yet, even more than universal histories, examples of the *evail* genre and technical treatises, the most obvious sign of an existing genealogical consciousness about calligraphy is found in the prefaces to albums that were composed during the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[75] In *Prefacing the Image*, Roxburgh describes these texts as "written to introduce bound collections of previously loose calligraphies, paintings, and drawings…[they] contain lists of the names of practitioners and brief biographical notes about them strung together according to master-student affiliations."[76] The biographies are connected to each other through chains of transmission, which are provided by indicating the name of the masters of each calligrapher. Thus, the biographies following each other within a mechanism of

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[74] I will not discuss *Risale-i Hat* in more details for the purpose of limiting my study on one type of source, that is the biographical dictionaries of calligraphers.

[75] For originals and translations of some of the Safavid and one of the Ottoman album prefaces see Wheeler M. Thackston, *Album Prefaces and Other Documents on the History of Calligraphers and Painters* (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2000).

[76] Roxburgh, *Prefacing the Image*, 1.

transmission construct the history of writing or calligraphy until the date the album preface was written. These texts aimed to construct relations among generations of practitioners, and this characteristic brings them closer to historywriting, more precisely, to art historical writing. In Roxburgh's words "The concept of linked practitioners constituted a history of art."[77] The album prefaces as the antecedent of the genre of biographical dictionary of calligraphers influenced the latter's inner structure and methods of organization as will be discussed in the next chapters.

1.7 Mustafa 'Âli's *Menâkıb-ı Hünerverân*

The Ottoman bureaucrat, historian and poet Mustafa 'Âli was born in 28 April 1541 in Gallipoli. He learnt logic and theology in the *medrese* during his youth. Besides Turkish, he became proficient in Arabic and Persian too. After his skills in poetry started to be renowned, he became a scribe at the court of prince Selim (later Selim II) in Konya. Instead of an *ilmiye* career he preferred a career in the chancery. He became the secretary of Lala Mustafa Paşa (d. 1580), who was mentor to Prince Selim, and accompanied the latter to various cities of the empire. After 1569, Mustafa 'Âli presented his prose collection as a gift to the grand vizier Sokullu Mehmed Paşa, and was rewarded with a *tımar* in Bosnia. Throughout his life he was employed in the middle-rank offices in the provinces. In order to gain higher ranks he wrote many works in various subjects during his lifetime. During his stay in Baghdad, around the age of forty-four, he began to write *Menâkıb-ı Hünerverân* in

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[77] Ibid., 134.

1586 and completed it in İstanbul in 1587. In the age of fifty-eight, in 1600 he died in Jeddah. [78]

In a similar vein to the preceding and contemporary album prefaces, the first Ottoman biographical dictionary of calligraphers we know so far, Mustafa 'Âli's *Menâkıb-ı Hünerverân* (completed c. 1587) presents a history of calligraphy which is driven by "the episteme of genealogy".[79] The text not only consists of biographies of calligraphers but also of the painters, illuminators, masters of decoupage, limners, binders, gold-sprinklers, rulers and repairers.[80] As one of the most comprehensive accounts of artists so far, the text presents the biographies of almost two hundred and seventy artists. Mustafa 'Âli does not limit himself to *Rumi* artists but also takes the Timurid and Safavid artists into his account[81] (See Appendix A, Table 1).

The text exhibits many features of the genres that I mentioned above as possible sources of inspiration behind the genre of biographical dictionary of calligraphers. In this regard, Mustafa 'Âli shares with his predecessors a similar discourse on calligraphy and its practitioners.[82] The preface of the text consists of

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[78] For a detailed account of his life see Cornell H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: the Historian Mustafa Âli* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1986). Also see Akın-Kıvanç, *Epic Deeds of Artists*, 17-27.

[79] I borrow the term from Roxburgh. See Roxburgh, *Prefacing the Image*, 136.

[80] Akın-Kıvanç, *Epic Deeds of Artists*, 261-282.

[81] Almost at the same period with the composition of *Menâkıb-ı Hünerverân*, at the end of the sixteenth century, the Safavid author and historian Qādī Ahmad wrote a treatise that contain some notices on the art of calligraphy, biographical information on the calligraphers and artists of his time called Golestān-e Honar. For an English translation of the text see *Calligraphers and Painters: A Treatise by Qādī Ahmad, son of Mīr-Munshī, circa A. H. 1015/ A.D. 1606*, trans. V. Minorsky (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1959).

[82] For a discussion on the representation of the act of writing and the figure of calligrapher in the Ottoman biographical dictionaries of calligraphers see the second chapter of this thesis.

eulogies to the pen and writing, discussion on the necessity of writing, holiness of the Tablet (*levh-i mahfuz*) and the Pen, and Quranic verses, hadiths and sayings of prominent figures like Imam Ali, Ca'fer as-Sâdık, Plato, Galen and Euclid about writing and the pen.[83] In the introduction Mustafa 'Âli presents the history of writing, which starts with the Prophet Idris (Enoch), and gives information on the eighteen scripts used by Arabs, Persians, Turks, Daylamis and other nationalities. The next two sections resemble a technical treatise on calligraphy and give instructions on how to cut a pen according to the writing style, types of pen, ink and paper and mention the importance of using the best quality materials for good calligraphy.[84]

The following four chapters narrate the history of writing and are divided according to the script type. The organization of the chapters is relied on master-pupil lineages and the origin of the artists as Persian or *Rumi*.[85] The first chapter is on people who recorded the Quran in Kufic script. The eulogy to Imam Ali as the most prominent writer of Kufic script follows a comparison of the Men of the Pen with Men of Sword.[86] The second chapter is devoted to the development of the Six Styles by giving the biographies of masters like Ibn Muqla, Ibn al-Bawwāb and Yaqut al-Musta'simi and his students, called by Mustafa 'Âli as the "Seven

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[83] Akın-Kıvanç, *Epic Deeds of Artists*, 159-169.

[84] Ibid., 172-176.

[85] Ibid., 37.

[86] Ibid., 178-184.

Masters."[87] After he declares the existence of the "Seven Masters of *Rum*" who are comparable to the Persians, he covers the biographies of these seven *Rumi* masters.[88] The third chapter on the scribes of the *nestalik* script consists of only Persian masters.[89] The fourth chapter, which is devoted to the writers of *çep*, *divani* and *siyakat* hands, is full of praises for *Rumi* calligraphers, who are famed for revising and beautifying the Persian style.[90] As I mentioned, the fifth chapter is on the artists of the book.[91]

It is seen that the organization of the chapters relies on an understanding of historical process. The existence of a genealogical consciousness on calligraphy within the text is very much related to Mustafa 'Âli's knowledge on the works of his predecessors, which is confirmed by his references to the written sources like the biographical dictionaries of poets by Dawlatshah and Ali Shir Nevai. Yet, these are the sources that we know only by his references. I think the text should have more written sources to reach such a comprehensive history of calligraphy and biographical dictionary of calligraphy. However, the lack of studies concerning the written materials on calligraphy produced in the Ottoman lands and came from other places into the Ottoman lands left this question unanswered for now.

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[87] Ibid., 185-206.

[88] Ibid., 199.

[89] Ibid., 206-257.

[90] Ibid., 257-261.

[91] Ibid., 261-282.

There are eighteen manuscript copies of *Menâkıb-ı Hünerverân* preserved in different manuscript libraries.[92] It seems that the text continued to be copied until the late years of the nineteenth century. The relatively high number of copies signifies that the text was quite popular. The issue of the circulation of the text calls to mind the issue of the audience of the text. It is certain that subsequent authors of biographical dictionaries were aware of the *Menâkıb-ı Hünerverân* and frequently gave references to it. Mustafa 'Âli gives a clue about his intention in writing this when he criticizes the connoisseurs of his age for giving money to worthless works of calligraphy. This suggests that he intended his text to be a guide for connoisseurs.[93] The fact that two copies were owned by the calligraphers Mehmed Emin of Crete (d. 1765)[94] and İbrâhim Tâhir[95] indicates that it was indeed known to and used by calligraphers.

Menâkıb-ı Hünerverân was first printed in Ottoman Turkish in 1926 by İbnülemin Mahmud Kemal İnal (1870-1957).[96] A second edition of the text by Müjgan Cunbur appeared in 1982 and a Persian translation by Tawfiq H. Subhani

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[92] Akın-Kıvanç examines each manuscript and printed versions of the text in detail. See Ibid., 40-62.

[93] Ibid., 95.

[94] Ibid., 42. Akın-Kıvanç argues that this copy might be owned by Mustafa 'Âli for himself. The copy probably later owned by Mehmed Emin of Crete. The manuscript is located at İstanbul University Library, Merkez Kütüphanesi, no. 9757.

[95] Akın-Kıvanç, *Epic Deeds of Artists*, 52-53. The copyist of this version was Müstakimzâde Süleyman Sâdeddin. The manuscript was part of a one hundred ninety-three-folio codex which includes two other biographical dictionaries of calligraphers, *Gülzâr-ı Savâb* and *Devhatü'l-Küttâb.* The manuscript is located at the Topkapı Palace Library, Emanet Hazinesi, no. 1232.

[96] *Menakıb-ı Hünerveran*, ed. İbnü'l-Emin Mahmud Kemal (İstanbul: Matbaa-i Amire, 1926).

was published in 1991.[97] More recently, Akın-Kıvanç has published a study

including an English translation, transliteration of the text and facsimile. Her

introduction to the edition deals with the structure, content and style of the text and

touches upon the features and history of the genre of biographical dictionary of

calligraphers.[98]

1.8 Nefeszâde İbrahim's *Gülzâr-ı Savâb*

There is not enough information on the life of Nefeszâde İbrahim Efendi. His first

calligraphy master was his father Amasyalı Mustafa Nefeszâde. Later on he received

his license (*icazet*) from Demircikulu Yûsuf Efendi (1514-1611).[99] He died in 1650.

    Gülzâr-ı Savâb, which was dedicated to Murad IV, comprises of one preface

and two chapters. The preface opens with praises to God and references to Quran,

hadiths and sayings of prominent figures on the merits of calligraphy. A discussion

on the person who actualized the act of writing for the first time in history and some

information on the emergence of calligraphy follow. The preface also gives a

narrative on writing down the revelations and the propagation of the Qur'an copies.

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[97] See Gelibolulu Mustafa 'Ali, *Hattatların ve Kitap Sanatçılarının Destanları: Menakıb-ı Hünerveran*, ed. Müjgan Cumbur (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 1982) and Tawfiq H. Subhānī, *Manāqib-i hunarvarān* (Tehran: Soroush Press, 1369/1991). Akın-Kıvanç gives information on the Persian translation of the text by Subhānī in Akın-Kıvanç, *Epic Deeds of Artists*, 31.

[98] Akın-Kıvanç, *Epic Deeds of Artists*, 3-159.

[99] For a brief story of his life see Muhittin Serin, "Nefeszâde İbrahim" in *TDVİA* vol. 32, (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2006), 523. For his and his father's biography see Müstakimzâde, *Tuhfe-i Hattâtîn*, ed. Mustafa Koç (İstanbul: klasik Yayınları, 2014), 42-43 and 486-487.

The first chapter contains biographies of calligraphers until the reign of Murad IV. This chapter is known as *Kitab-ı Küttâb* (The Book of Scribes) and begins with the life stories of canon masters like Ibn Muqla, Ibn al-Bawwāb and Yaqut al-Musta'simi. The biographies of Ottoman calligraphers and then, the writers of *talik* script are covered separately. Like *Menâkıb-ı Hünerverân*, *Gülzâr-ı Savâb* contains the story of calligraphers from a large territory (See Appendix A, Table 2). Biographies of calligraphers are ordered chronologically and according to the pedagogical lineage of master-students.

The second chapter, known as *Risale-i Midadiyye ve'l-Kırtasiyye* (*The Treatise Regarding Ink and Paper*), contains information on the technical details about the preparation of paper, pen and ink before starting to write. This chapter shows the possible audience of the text, that are the bureaucrats, copyists and calligraphers who would probably need information on the types of inks and papers and how to prepare them for writing.

There are twenty-four copies of the text located in various manuscript libraries.[100] The popularity of the text is inferred from the fact that it was copied repeatedly from 1656 to 1850. While Kilisli Muallim Rifat transliterated the text in 1938, he also abridged the text considerably[101] Fehime Demir transliterated the full text in a master thesis. She based her transliteration on a manuscript located in Millet Library, but also compared it with the manuscript copies located in the Topkapı

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[100] For information on the copies of the text see Nefeszâde İbrahim, *Gülzar-ı Savab,* 9-36.

[101] Nefeszâde İbrahim, *Gülzar-ı Savab*, ed. Kilisli Muallim Rifat (İstanbul: Güzel Sanatlar Akademisi Neşriyatından, 1938).

Palace Library and Süleymaniye Library. [102] The manuscript located in the Topkapı Palace Library was copied in 1728-1729 by Müstakimzâde Süleymân Saadettin (d. 1788), who is the author of one of the most comprehensive biographical dictionary of calligraphers *Tuhfe-i Hattâtîn*.[103] The copy was part of the same codex that was owned by the calligrapher İbrâhim Tâhir, which I mentioned before. As I mentioned, the codex comprises of three biographical dictionaries of calligraphers in order, namely, *Menâkıb-ı Hünerverân*, *Gülzâr-ı Savâb* and *Devhatü'l-Küttâb.*

The colophon does not state anything about the identity of the owner of the codex, namely the calligrapher İbrâhim Tâhir. Yet, in *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* we find a calligrapher named Tâhir İbrâhim Ağa, who might be the same person as the owner of the codex. According to his biographical entry, he was the student of Râsim Mehmed Efendi (1688-1756), who was one of the friends of Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib. He was among the people who were newly trained in calligraphy during the reign of Mahmud I.[104] He wrote innumerable Qurans, *Buhârî-i Şerîf* and *Şifâ-yı Şerîf*.[105] At the same time, he was good at preparing paper and writing materials and distinguishing various paper types.[106] In this regard, he might use the biographical dictionaries of calligraphers in order to have some information on the technical aspects of calligraphy and on the history of the craft.

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[102] Millet Library, Ali Emîrî, Târih, no.808; Süleymaniye Library, Es'ad Efendi, no. 2547/1 and Topkapı Palace Library, Emanet Hazinesi, no. 1232.

[103] Müstakimzâde, *Tuhfe-i Hattâtîn*.

[104] Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*, 203.

[105] Ibid., 203.

[106] Ibid., 204.

1.9 Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib's *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*

Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib was born in Eyüp around 1686. His father was Ömer
Efendi (1625-1686) the calligrapher. He was the grandson of the famous calligrapher
Suyolcuzâde Mustafa Efendi (d. 1686). He was taught calligraphy by Ağakapılı
İsmail Efendi (d. 1706). He was good at *talik* script. He was appointed as judge of
Rosetta, Egypt. He died in 1758 in İstanbul around the age of seventy-two.[107] His
penname was Necîba and he compiled a *divan*.[108] Three texts copied by Suyolcuzâde
Mehmed Necib are located. He copied an Arabic work on Islamic jurisprudence by
Zeyneddin Ömer b. İbrâhim ibn Nuceym (d. 1563) entitled *el-Eşbâh ve'n-nezâir* in
1714.[109] He made a copy of *Minhâcü's-sülûk ilâ edeb sohbeti'l-mülûk,* which was an
Arabic book of ethics which had been translated by Mustafa 'Âli and he dedicated it
to the grand vizier Damad İbrahim Paşa (d.1730).[110] He also composed a miscellany
that contains the official correspondences exchanged during the Treaty of Pasarowitz
(1719).[111] He wrote the inscriptions of the tombstone of his grandfather Suyolcuzâde
Mustafa Efendi. His poems were inscribed on the mausoleum of Ahmed Efendi in
Eyüp mosque, the fountains of Mehmed Ağa in Üsküdar, Defter Emini in Tophane,

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[107] For further information, see Muhittin Serin, "Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib" in *Türkiye Diyanet
Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* v. 38, (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2010), 2.

[108] Only one copy of his *divan* exists. See İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi Atatürk Library, Belediye
Yazmaları, no. 000169.

[109] Hacı Selim Ağa Library, Hacı Selim Ağa, no. 282.

[110] Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Revan, no. 418.

[111] Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Revan, no. 418.

Tersane Emini Hacı Ahmed Ağa in Kasımpaşa, Kırımî Mehmed Efendi in Otakçılar and Kadızâde close to Eyüp Sultan Mosque.[112]

The compilation of *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* was probably around 1740 while the author was almost fifty-four years old. The text comprises of a preface and three chapters. The first chapter begins with praises to the calligrapher Ottoman sultans until Mahmud I. Then, the preface gives information on the reasons of the author to write this text. The second chapter touches upon the merits of writing and the Pen. A discussion on the history and merits of writing follows. Compared to the earlier biographical dictionaries of calligraphers *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* gives a detailed inventory of its sources. There are many references to various books about the merits of writing. The third chapter covers the biographies of almost five hundred calligraphers who specialized in various script types from Ibn Muqla up to the author's time (See Appendix A, Table 3).

Each of the biographical entry in *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*, altough sometimes with a shift in balance, basically covers the artist's place of birth, family ties, lineage of master-student, career path, script types in which he excelled, oeuvre, relations with the other calligraphers, character and moral issues, patronage relations and the date of death. In some cases, especially in the biographical entries recounting the story of individuals with whom the author is familiar, further anecdotes are added. With respect to the method of organization, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* shows a major difference from the former biographies of calligraphers. Unlike the former ones, in *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* the order among the biographical entries is not structured according to the

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[112] See Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*, 23-30.

pedagogical lines of master and students, but according to the alphabetical order. While in *Menâkıb-ı Hünerverân* and *Gülzâr-ı Savâb*, the pattern in which the entries succeed one another reflects the master-student relations between the subjects of the entries, in *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* the pattern of entries obeys the principle of alphabetical order. The method of organization of the biographical dictionary renders it more user-friendly and gives insights on the possible usage of the text like a catalogue of artists for the connoisseurs.

Seven manuscripts of the text are found in various manuscript libraries.[113] Three manuscripts were copied in the second half of the eighteenth century. Kilisli Muallim Rifat transliterated a much abridged version of the text in 1942.[114] Ayşe Peyman Yaman transliterated the unabridged text in a master thesis. She based her transliteration on a manuscript located in the Topkapı Palace Library, but also compared it with the manuscript copy located in the Süleymaniye Library[115]. It seems that the text had a limited audience compared to the earlier examples of the genre. Since the author was a calligrapher close to Ahmed III and Mahmud I, it might be speculated that the text was intended to circulate in palace circles.

To explain his intention to write a biographical dictionary of calligraphers the author argues that his friend, İsmail Efendi the accountant of the agha of the Gate of Felicity (*Babüssaade ağası muhasibi*) suggested to him to write a continuation (*zeyl*) to *Gülzâr-ı Savâb* which aims at presenting the biographies of the calligraphers who

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[113] Peyman Yaman examines each manuscript copy. See Ibid., 13-21.

[114] Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb,* ed. Kilisli Muallim Rifat (İstanbul: Güzel Sanatlar Akademisi Neşriyatından, 1942).

[115] Topkapı Palace Library, Emanet Hazinesi, no. 1232, Süleymaniye Library, Fatih, no. 4359.

come after Nefeszâde İbrahim's time.[116] *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* was composed as a

biographical dictionary which also has the quality of being a continuation of *Gülzâr-ı*

Savâb. In this sense, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* might be regarded as a text which

intentionally follows the tradition of compiling biographical dictionaries of

calligraphers.

The next Ottoman biographical dictionary of calligraphers, *Tuhfe-i Hattâtîn*,

was compiled around 1788, before the death of its author Müstakimzâde Süleymân

Saadettin (d. 1788). It comprises of biographies of 2066 individuals from a broader

geography and from various professional and socio-economic backgrounds. Similar

to *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* the biographical entries are ordered alphabetically, introduce

detailed narratives on the lifes of individuals, exhibit the calligraphy training of the

individuals step by step and emphasize their career lines. In this regard, the

biographical dictionary of Müstakimzâde Süleymân Saadettin shares a lot with

Devhatü'l-Küttâb in terms of the form and style of the biographical entries.

However, since a thorough analysis of both of these texts would exceed the scope of

a Masters thesis, I will focus primarily on the *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* and leave out the

biographical dictionary of Müstakimzâde Süleymân Saadettin from discussion. This

strategy can be partly justified by the fact that *Devhatü'l-Küttâb,* not only stands as a

model for *Tuhfe-i Hattâtîn,* but also has an important position in the history of

Ottoman biographical dictionaries of calligraphers written after the first half of the

eighteenth century. As I will discuss in the next chapter, a comparison of *Devhatü'l-*

Küttâb with the previous examples of the genre demonstrates the existence of

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[116] Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*, 43-44.

stylistic and structural changes start with *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*. I argue that these changes reflect the relative transformation and diversification of the position of skills in calligraphy in the biographical entries and originate from the social, political and cultural transformations in the Ottoman world in the second half of the seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth centuries.

CHAPTER 2

THE REPRESENTATION OF THE ACT OF WRITING AND THE FIGURE OF

CALLIGRAPHER

This chapter will try to present an alternative approach to calligraphy by undertaking

a textual analysis of three biographical dictionaries of calligraphers: *Menâkıb-ı*

Hünerverân, Gülzâr-ı Savâb and *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*. By examining the representation

of the act of writing and the calligrapher in these texts, I will try to document and

analyze certain transformations. To this end, I will analyze first the prefaces of the

texts, and then the overall structure and the content of the biographical entries. Upon

first examination, the prefaces of these texts present similar discourses on the act of

writing and calligraphers. Yet, when we delve into the main body of the texts,

namely the biographical entries, some changes in the discourses on the act of writing

become noticeable. For this reason, this chapter aims to analyze the various contexts

in which the act of writing is represented in the three texts.

We shall see that all of the three texts represent the act of writing and the

calligrapher within a worldly context to a certain degree. Yet, this worldly context

does not provide a total profanation of the act of writing and the calligrapher. The

texts also attribute saintly qualities to calligraphers and a sacred quality to the act of

writing. Thus, the worldly context of calligraphy mingles with the sacred qualities

attributed to the act of writing and calligrapher in the three texts. It is important to

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note that I do not see a fixed, unchanged and undifferentiated worldly context throughout the three texts. Instead, I aim to expose the transformation of the worldly context itself from text to text. This transformation crystallizes especially in the third and latest one of our three texts, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb,* which incorporates a wider variety of individuals and touches upon a wider variety of contexts in which skills in calligraphy were applied and, which provides much more detailed information about calligraphy education compared to the previous two Ottoman biographical dictionaries of calligraphers.

2.1 The prefaces: The origins and wonders of writing

Although written in different time periods, the prefaces of *Menâkıb-ı Hünerverân, Gülzâr-ı Savâb* and *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* share a lot of common points with respect to the discourses on calligraphy. The prefaces comprise of narratives on various issues such as the invention of and the history of writing, the formation of the alphabet, the first individuals who wrote, the necessity and elevated status of the Pen and the Preserved Tablet, the merits and nobility of calligraphy. Also, references to Qur'anic verses and hadiths related to calligraphy appear in all three prefaces. The prefaces help us to understand how the authors of these texts and the broader circles of literati of which they were part perceived the act of writing and with which contexts and actors they associated it.

The prefaces display a twofold dimension in terms of the act of writing. The hadiths and Qur'anic verses referred to in the prefaces emphasize the spiritual

significance of the invention of writing. This spiritual basis paves the way for the formation of a sacred aura and discourse around the act of writing and the calligrapher. On the other hand, the authors do not merely indicate the sacred origins of writing but also characterize it as a phenomenon which has a history. In a way, they reveal the concrete and corporeal contexts of the invention of writing and its various functions in the social and political spheres.

In the previous chapter, I argued that an exclusive focus on the assumed sacredness of calligraphy for Muslim literati has led scholars to underestimate and overlook the other functions of calligraphy in the early modern world. Yet, the criticism directed at this essentialist tendency should not lead us to overlook the attribution of sacred and mystical qualities to the practice of calligraphy and the calligrapher in the early modern Ottoman biographical dictionaries of calligraphers.

Franz Rosenthal argues that from an early period onward, with the expansion of Arabic writing into the newly conquered lands and the switch to Arabic writing as an act of break with past, Arabic writing became "a sacred symbol of writing," and "in Islam, sacredness became a characteristic element in writing."[117] In a similar vein, Oleg Grabar explains the sacredness ascribed to writing with the nature of the Qur'an as a text. Since "writing was the vehicle of God's message, so God's message became a hallowed piece of writing."[118] Thus, the elevated status of writing in the Qur'an created an understanding that holds "that every letter or word had in it a

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[117] Franz Rosenthal, *Four Essays on Art and Literature in Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1971), 54.

[118] Grabar, The Mediation of the Ornament, 65.

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particle of the divine, and thus that writing itself was holy."[119] As a result,

calligraphers were venerated as individuals who were writing with the sacred letters

of the alphabet in which the revelations had been recorded.[120] The perspective on the

symbolic meaning of letters finds its reflection in Islamic cosmology and in the

beliefs of some Sufi orders like the *Hurufi*s. Accordingly, the science of letters,

occultism through letters and attributions of physical and magical characteristics to

letters became popular practices.[121]

In the prefaces to the biographical dictionaries of calligraphers, special place

is given to the discussions on the identity of the first scribe on Earth. While Mustafa

'Âli mentions only the prophets Idris and Daniel as the first persons who executed

the act of writing for the first time, the other two authors give different names like

the prophets Adam, Ishmael, Noah and Hud as the first scribes according to various

sources.[122] Nefeszâde İbrahim Efendi and Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib construct a

narrative about the invention of writing and the emergence of the alphabet. Instead of

constructing a narrative that presents writing as a phenomenon that emerged in an

epiphanic or supra-temporal manner, the authors lay out a narrative that delineates a

historical process. Their narrative begins with the invention of the alphabet, and

continues with the biographies of the first scribes of the Qur'an and three canonical

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[119] Ibid., 65.

[120] James, *The Master Scribes: Qur'ans of the 10th to 14th centuries AD*, 13.

[121] Rosenthal, *Four Essays on Art and Literature*, 50.

[122] Akın-Kıvanç, *Epic Deeds of Artists*, 176-177;Nefeszâde İbrahim Efendi, *Gülzâr-ı Savâb,* 44-46; Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*, 48.

masters, namely Ibn Muqla, Ibn al-Bawwāb and Yaqut al-Mustaʿsimi and their students.

The narrative in the prefaces of *Gülzâr-ı Savâb* and *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* begins with three persons from the Tay clan in Bevlan, namely Murar, Eslem and Amir who are represented as the first persons to write in the Arabic script. Murar was the one who draw the shape of the letters; Eslem was the one who joined and disjoined the letters; and Amir was the one who added the diacritical signs.[123] According to the narrative, the invention spread to Mecca and became known and used by the people.[124] Thus, instead of perceiving writing as an ahistorical phenomenon the authors saw a development process in the history of writing. In this process writing underwent some phases and a period of expansion.

The narrative continues with the writing down of the revelations and the names of the scribes who were responsible in this process.[125] In other words, after the invention of writing and its spread, the writing of revelations appears as a significant step in the history of writing. The names of the scribes of the revelations are indicated and praised as practitioners of a sacred act. The hadiths and sayings cited in the prefaces of the three texts serve to exhibit the merits of writing and to promote writing as a sacred and precious act. A saying attributed to the prophet Muhammad

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[123] Alain George counts the introduction of diacritical signs which are used to distinguish the phonemes of the same letter forms as the first innovation introduced to the Arabic script in the seventh century. For a discussion on the radical transformation of Arabic script with the rise of Islam see George, *The Rise of Islamic Calligraphy*, 27-31.

[124] Nefeszâde İbrahim Efendi, *Gülzâr-ı Savâb*, 45; Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*, 50-51.

[125] Nefeszâde İbrahim Efendi, *Gülzâr-ı Savâb*, 47-48; Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*, 54.

cited frequently goes thus: "He who writes the *besmele* beautifully will enter Paradise."[126] Thus, writing is promoted as an act having spiritual benefits. Another frequently mentioned saying concerning the promotion of writing is attributed to Imam Ali: "Teach your children how to write, for writing is one of the [most] unique of deeds."[127] In a similar vein, as a proof of the elevated status of writing in the Qur'an, Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib gives references to verses from the al-'Alaq and al-Qalam suras.[128]

The hadiths and sayings that promote the act of writing might be understood from the perspective that David Cressy introduces in his book. Here he examines how during the period between the Reformation and Industrial Revolution the religious and secular man promoted writing by counting its various benefits.[129] Although Cressy examines a very different context than the Ottoman world, his study might give us some insights. If the ways religious and secular man promote writing and literacy in the Tudor and Stuart England are considered, it is hard to argue that the sacredness of writing is peculiar to the lands under the influence of Islam. Clearly, similar discourses on writing were used in Tudor and Stuart England in order to promote writing as a sacred activity and as an activity, besides reading, which will provide the individuals with the salvation that Protestantism promised.

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[126] "Besmele-i şerîfe kitâbetini bir kimse tahsîn eylese Cennet'e girer." Nefeszâde İbrahim Efendi, *Gülzâr-ı Savâb*, 48.

[127] Akın-Kıvanç, *Epic Deeds of Artists*, 163-164.

[128] Surat al-'Alaq 96:3-96:5 "Reed! Your Lord is the Most Bountiful One who taught by [means of] the pen, who taught man what he did not know." from T*he Qur'an / a new translation* by M.A.S. Abdel Haleem (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 428. Surat of al-Qalam 68:1 "*Nun*. By the pen! By all they write!" from Ibid., 384.

[129] David Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order: Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge University Press, 1980).

According to Cressy, the ability to read was promoted as a vehicle for salvation because with this ability the Christian subjects would understand the Bible. Besides reading, Cressy interprets the reception of writing in this period. He argues that writing was seen as a medium that enabled one "to interact with the holy word."[130] Writing was seen as one of the God-given abilities and it was emphasized that "it should be used, like all other talents, to his glory and in his service."[131] So, it allows the individual to get a higher "Christian experience."[132] Likewise, Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib identifies writing and learning to write as part of piety and belief in his preface. Many instances that imply a relationship between writing and piety are observable in the text. For example, in the preface the author states that "[God] counts learning of calligraphy (*ta'lîm-i hatt*), for those loyal and faithful to Him, as the greatest of the numerous blessings (*ni'am*) concerning the eternal religious practices (*ibâdet i'tiyâdı*)."[133] So, calligraphy is promoted as part of the religious practices and a technique that improved the "Muslim experience."

Cressy also emphasizes that social and political functions were attributed to the act of writing. For example, in England during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the educational writers argued that literacy and thus writing would diminish the disobedience within society by providing a tool with which to teach people their

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[130] Ibid., 6.

[131] Ibid., 6.

[132] Ibid., 6.

[133] "[T]a'lîm-i hattı zât-ı bî-çûnuna muzâf ve mensûb ve ubbâd-ı ibâdet i'tiyâdı hakkında olan ni'am-i bî-adâdın a'zam ve ekreminden mahsûb eyledi." Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*, 45.

duties to other people as well as to God.[134] In a sense, literacy was seen as an important component for being a member of civil society. David Brown, a seventeenth-century master of calligraphy and ortography in London, promoted writing on the grounds that its mastery aided the governance of states, maintenance of laws, administration of justice and discipline and the teaching of piety, virtue and benefits for youth.[135]

Similar to the promoters of writing and literacy in Tudor and Stuart England, the authors of the Ottoman biographical dictionaries of calligraphers did not limit the benefits of writing to the sacred sphere. Neither did they represent calligraphy merely as the provider of spiritual benefits. Rather they pointed out that calligraphy also provide worldly advantages and rewards. According to Mustafa 'Âli calligraphy is the conveyor of honor and "[T]he art of writing is a path toward nobility and fame, which leads those who command it to glory and high station [.]"[136] In addition to calligraphy being a "rank-defining skill," Mustafa 'Âli alerts his readers to the fact that a person who has mastered calligraphy can never be poor and needy.[137] In a similar vein, Nefeszâde İbrahim Efendi refers to a saying of Imam Ali: "Beautiful writing is riches for the poor, grace for the rich and refinement for the wise."[138] Thus,

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[134] Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order*, 6.

[135] David Brown wrote books on the art of writing like The introduction to the true understanding of the whole arte of expedition in teaching write (1638) and The new invention intituled calligraphia (St. Andrews, 1622). For David Brown's works see Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order*, 9.

[136] Akın Kıvanç, *Epic Deeds of Artists*, 204.

[137] Ibid., 205.

[138] "Güzel yazı fakir için mal, zengin için güzellik, âlim için kemâldir." Translated into Turkish from Arabic by Fehime Demir. Nefeszâde İbrahim Efendi, *Gülzâr-ı Savâb*, 44.

the worldly reward of calligraphy as a moneymaking activity was also acknowledged. As I will discuss in detail, especially in *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* the abilities in calligraphy are presented as a vehicle for the individual to move a step further in his career line. Hence, the economic, social and political benefits of having skills in calligraphy were stressed in the biographical entries.

2.2 The spoken word vs. the written word: The superiority of writing

The prefaces and the biographical dictionaries of calligraphers do not say much on how the authors saw the relationship between reading and writing, whether they were seen as complementary or contrasting activities. Among the three authors only Mustafa 'Âli states that "writing is essential for reading" because for him the recitation of scriptures in an exact and accurate way depends on writing. [139] So, he sees writing as a practice complementary to reading and as essential for a true understanding. Thus, he presents writing as an important component in the construction of the meaning of a text. Other kinds of Ottoman sources like *münşe'at* collections and manuals of calligraphy might provide further clues about the early modern conceptions of the relationship between reading and writing. Such sources might help us to understand what kind of significance was attributed to calligraphy or to a particular script type. Was calligraphy perceived only as an element that increased the value of a text or was it understood also as an element facilitating the understanding of a text? For example, Adrian Gully argues that Ibn Halaf (d. 1063),

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[139] Akın Kıvanç, *Epic Deeds of Artists*, 177.

who wrote a work on epistolography in Arabic called *Mawadd al-Bayan,* remarks on the rules and role of the script in a text thus: "[j]ust as a sweet expression enhances the meaning and draws people's souls to it, a fine piece of script – in this context calligraphy – induces one to read what has been written."[140] This example from Arabic literature suggests the possibility of a relationship perceived between the beauty of the script and the meaning of a text also in Ottoman literature. For this reason, more studies on different sources related to the rules of writing might provide a better understanding of the early modern notions of reading and writing and their relation with each other.

Nefeszâde İbrahim Efendi and Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib introduce writing as an important tool for the transmission of knowledge and compare the spoken word with the written word. This comparison is illustrated in *Gülzâr-ı Savâb* with a story about the prophet Solomon. According to the story the prophet asks someone what speech (*kelâm*) is, and in return the person answers that speech is a non-permanent thing. To the prophet's second question concerning the nature and corporeality of speech the man gives the answer that speech is embodied and recorded within writing (*kitâbet*). Thus, the written word is presented as being superior to the spoken word in terms of permanence.[141] In this regard, writing is constantly represented as something that ensures the continuation and permanence of knowledge. The point is also made in a saying of Imam Ali's, which is cited in both *Gülzâr-ı Savâb* and

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[140] Adrian Gully, *The Culture of Letter Writing in Pre-Modern Islamic Society* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 65.

[141] "Hz. Süleymân nebî...bir ifrîte kelâmdan su'âl eyledi. Ol dahi: 'Bir rîh-i gayr-i bakîdir', dedi. Hz. Süleymân nebî dahi etti ki: 'Yâ anın kaydı ve bendi nedir?' dedi. Cevâbında kitâbettir, dedi." Nefeszâde İbrahim Efendi, *Gülzâr-ı Savâb*, 41-42.

Devhatü'l-Küttâb: "Knowledge is untamed. Tame it with writing."[142] Thus, one of the functions of writing presented by both authors is to provide the preservation and transmission of knowledge. Writing is represented as superior to speaking with respect to permanence.[143]

The other functions of writing counted by Nefeszâde İbrahim Efendi are preservation and enforcement of law, preventing disobedience, recording testimonies and recording of the official correspondences.[144] In a similar vein, Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib identifies the Pen and the Sword as tools for organizing and conducting business and as providers of the continuation and endurance of the states and professions. But he remarks the superiority of the Pen over the Sword.[145] Thus, the authors do not only attribute sacredness towards the act of writing but also remark its practical function. So, they also present a discourse that highlights the social and political functions of writing.

For the concerns of this study, the attribution of political and social power to the act of writing and the existence of multiple cultural attitudes towards writing in these biographical dictionaries of calligraphers are significant, and prove the need to develop an alternative perspective on the Ottoman culture of calligraphy. The authors

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[142] "İlim vahşîdir, yabânidir. İlmi yazı ile bağlayınız." Nefeszâde İbrahim Efendi, *Gülzâr-ı Savâb*, 43; Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*, 47.

[143] For a discussion on the elevation of the pen and understanding of writing as "the preservation of life, memory, speech, event" in the medieval Arabic literature see Adrian Gully, *The Culture of Letter Writing*, pp. 50-72.

[144] "Ve hıfz-ı hukûk ve men'-i temerrüd-i ukûk ve kitâbet-i şehâdât ve sebt-i sicillât bi'l-cümle kitâbetle kāim ve sâbittir." Nefeszâde İbrahim Efendi, *Gülzâr-ı Savâb*, 42.

[145] "[A]klâm-ı matiyye-i nüfûs-ı âliye-i kirâm ve umûr-ı külliyye ve cüz'iyyedeki nizâm ve memâlik ve mesâlikte bulunan devâm ve kıyâm kalem ve seyf ile olduğu mâ-lâ-kelâmdır. Ammâ kalem efdal ve ekrem, ve kitâbet bâ'is-i izz ü saâdet [.]" Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*, 46-47.

of the biographical dictionaries of calligraphers do not only refer to a limited type of writing when they say *kitâbet* or *hatt*. Rather, as mentioned in the previous chapter, they are referring to an array of practices used in the artistic, administrative, juridical and social spheres. For this reason, it is necessary to develop a perspective that can take into account the different forms and functions of calligraphy. Instead of constricting the functions and notions of calligraphy into a sacred sphere in an ahistorical way, a more inclusive and historical perspective would lead us to a better understanding of the early modern Ottoman notions of calligraphy.

Nicholas Hudson's study on the European attitudes towards writing between 1600 and 1830 focuses on the studies concerning writing and grammatology during the Early Modern Era.[146] He argues that the notions of writing underwent many transformations since the Renaissance.[147] He deals with the narratives on writing that were written from the Renaissance onwards. He observes the existence of sacred attributions to writing, which was accepted as a gift "bestowed on humanity at the creation" in the earlier centuries.[148] During the Renaissance period writing was seen as a creation of God, the occult philosophy of writing flourished and symbolic and mystic meanings were attributed to the letters with the influence of Cabbalistic ideas.[149] Yet, these tendencies were challenged with the emergence of Humanist

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[146] Nicholas Hudson, *Writing and European Thought 1600-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), xii.

[147] Ibid., 2.

[148] Ibid., 4.

[149] Ibid., 9.

ideas from the sixteenth century onwards. Hudson encapsulates his argument as follows:

> The transformation of attitudes to writing from the Renaissance to the nineteenth century was indeed a process of demystification, the gradual diminishment of the once hallowed position of the written mark, and a growing perception of writing as an ingenious, socially beneficial, but highly imperfect product of human endeavor.[150]

For now, it seems difficult to historicize the notions of writing and calligraphy in the early modern Ottoman world like Hudson does. Such a task requires us to find new sources related to writing. Yet, at least when the biographical dictionaries of calligraphers are considered, it is hard to argue that there was no transformation in the Ottoman notions of writing and calligraphy. On the contrary, we might talk about a demystification process when we think that in *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* the practice of calligraphy is presented in concrete social and political contexts more than in the previous biographical dictionaries of calligraphers. Yet, this argument should not lead us to construct a linear process of demystification. Hudson also does not argue for such a linear transition, but rather points to the multiple dimensions of written culture. It would be misleading to argue that the early modern Ottoman notions of calligraphy underwent a process of total demystification toward the eighteenth century. In fact, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* also displays a multi-dimensional perspective on calligraphy that emphasizes both the mystical significance of writing and the social and political contexts in which writing was used. Additionally, we see many examples of the usage of calligraphy for talismanic and therapeutic purposes on various objects and materials before and after the period in which *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*

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[150] Ibid., 9.

is written (see Appendix B, Figures 16 and 17). For this reason, the existing mystical and practical attributions to calligraphy should be considered together while dealing with different dimensions of the written culture.

2.3 The saintly calligraphers and the holy texts

The positioning of calligraphy within the political and social spheres in the biographical dictionaries of calligraphers raises questions concerning the relation between calligraphy and power. Were skills in calligraphy understood as a means to have greater prestige in society and to reach higher positions in administrative circles? This relationship can be understood by considering the representation of calligraphers in the biographical dictionaries of calligraphers. Such an examination would make clear the way the skills in calligraphy provided people with social and political power.

A transformation in the representation of the calligrapher in the Ottoman biographical dictionaries of calligraphers is noticeable in *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*. Saintly qualities are particularly prominent in the representation of the figure of the calligrapher in the first two biographical dictionaries of calligraphers, whereas in *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* the calligrapher is situated within various patronage relationships, and is often represented as being engaged in career building and networking. It is true that the previous two biographical dictionaries of calligraphers do not totally disregard the worldly contexts in which the practice of calligraphy was located and they also touch upon the patronage relations, salons and networking of calligraphers.

But the *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* stands apart from them with its tendency to portray a more diversified worldly context by embracing various agents and by delineating in a more detailed manner the use of calligraphy in different ways. To exhibit this peculiarity, first I will show what kinds of qualities are attributed to calligraphers in the first two biographical dictionaries of calligraphers, namely *Menâkıb-ı Hünerverân* and *Gülzâr-ı Savâb.* Then, I will focus on the *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* and illustrate how this text presents a more diversified context for the practice of calligraphy.

Esra Akın-Kıvanç draws attention to the representation of calligraphers with saintly qualities in *Menâkıb-ı Hünerverân.* In parallel to his identification of the work as a *menakıb,* Mustafa 'Âli mentions the miraculous deeds of many calligraphers while narrating their life stories. As Akın-Kıvanç remarks, their skills in calligraphy are accepted as God given and their writing implements are defined as "magic producing."[151] Additionally, in contrast to *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* the training process of the scribes is not covered in detail. Rather, short notices about the name of the master of a calligrapher are given. Thus, a calligrapher's skills in calligraphy are attributed to his master. With the help of hadiths and sayings of prominent religious figures the act of writing itself is represented as saintly. Since Akın-Kıvanç defines saintly qualities that were attributed to the calligraphers and gives some examples from the text, I will not give more details concerning the representation of the calligrapher in *Menâkıb-ı Hünerverân.*[152]

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[151] Akın-Kıvanç, *Epic Deeds of Artists*, 121.

[152] Ibid., 88.

But in *Gülzâr-ı Savâb* there are some points to discuss on the representation of the calligrapher, which has not been discussed before. It is interesting that, contrary to what might be expected, Nefeszâde İbrahim does not give much detail about the two canonical masters, namely Ibn Muqla and Ibn al-Bawwāb.[153] Yet, he mentions that the third great master, Yaqut al-Musta'simi, who was believed to be from Amasya, had a handwriting that was magical and that he exhibited some miraculous deeds.[154] It is reported that Yaqut al-Musta'simi lived for one hundred eighty years and copied one thousand Qur'ans and many other books.[155] According to the story, Abdülkādir Geylânî praised and revered him because he thought that the calligrapher had the secrets of God in his hands.[156]

Attributing mystical qualities to and praising the calligrapher who copies sacred texts is not something unique to Ottoman writing culture. A similar kind of reverence and praise was shown to the copyists of the Bible. In her study on the late antique Christian thought on the holiness of the scriptures and their copyists, Claudia Rapp argues "The copying of scripture was not just a mechanical activity but carried enormous spiritual significance for the copyist."[157] Accordingly, what we come across in the Ottoman biographical dictionaries of calligraphers is not a representation of the act of writing as a mechanical activity. Rather, to copy the

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[153] Nefeszâde İbrahim Efendi, *Gülzâr-ı Savâb*, 50.

[154] Ibid., 52-53.

[155] Ibid., 53.

[156] Ibid., 53.

[157] Claudia Rapp, "Holy Texts, Holy Men, and Holy Scribes: Aspects of Scriptural Holiness in Late Antiquity" in *The Early Christian Book*, ed. W. Klingshirn, L. Safran (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University Press, 2006) 205.

scriptures accredits the calligrapher with holiness. In this regard, writing the sacred texts beautifully is represented as an extension of religious piety. Thus, besides reading the scripture, to copy it was understood as an act enriching the piety too. The referred verses from the Qur'an on the merits of beautiful writing and hadiths concerning the merits of writing scriptures or *besmele* are supporting this idea.

Saintly qualities are attributed to one of the canonical masters of Ottoman calligraphy, namely Şeyh Hamdullah, who was also a *şeyh* of the Sühreverdiyye order like his father Mustafa Dede. His life story is narrated in the hagiographical mode. Although the names of his masters are recorded and his training process is described, his inborn talent and success in calligraphy are stressed through the narration of his miraculous birth. According to the narrative, when Mustafa Dede seeks a woman to marry in Amasya, a saint directs him to his future wife, and foretells that they will have a son who will have knowledge on many topics and who will be very famous in every city.[158] In the end, his son Şeyh Hamdullah indeed becomes famous for his skills in calligraphy. Thus, by stressing the inborn talents and narrating the miraculous deeds of the calligrapher, the author depicts him as a saintly figure.

Annemarie Schimmel points out that Ottoman calligraphers were often members of Sufi orders.[159] This might indeed be a factor behind the saintly representation of some calligraphers. Schimmel also remarks the similarity of master-student relationship in calligraphy to the "[c]lose, loving relationship between

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[158] Nefeszâde İbrahim Efendi, *Gülzâr-ı Savâb*, 59.

[159] Schimmel, *Calligraphy and Islamic Culture*, 47.

a Sufi *pir* and his *muri[d]*."[160] Additionally, family ties between the calligraphers are stated in the texts as signs of a familial talent in calligraphy. For example, in *Gülzâr-ı Savâb* there exists no information on the masters and education process of the relatives of Şeyh Hamdullah, namely his brothers Cemâlüddîn el-Amâsî and Celâlzâde Muhyiddîn el-Amâsî and Şeyh Hamdullah's son Mustafa Dede (1495-1538).[161] Rather, to signify their talents in calligraphy the author only indicates that they were relatives of Şeyh Hamdullah.

Gülzâr-ı Savâb does not only represent Şeyh Hamdullah as a saintly calligrapher. Abdullah Kırımî (d. 1590) and Ahmed Karahisârî (1470?-1556) are also represented as calligraphers with saintly qualities. The narratives of their lives consist of some stories, which serve to demonstrate their piety.[162] The common point of these three calligraphers is that they were all founders or improvers of new styles of calligraphy. As the inventors of new styles of calligraphy, they are venerated by the authors and saintly qualities are attributed to them. Not only the Ottomans but also Persian script inventors like Mîr Ali (d.1446), who invented the *talik* script according to the tradition, are represented as saintly figures[163] (see Appendix B, Figure 18). The close association between the reputation of these calligraphers as script inventors and their veneration as saintly figures tells us a lot about the merits of calligraphy in the minds of early modern authors. Also, it might be regarded as an

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[160] Ibid., 46.

[161] Nefeszâde İbrahim Efendi, *Gülzâr-ı Savâb*, 66-67.

[162] Ibid., 70-73.

[163] Ibid., 78-79.

early modern mechanism for the formation of a "school" of calligraphy by way of revering the masters who invented new scripts and whose styles highly influenced the formation of dynastic styles.

Supernatural qualities are attributed to the texts in relation to the holiness of the calligrapher.[164] The part of *Gülzâr-ı Savâb* on the history of writing touches upon the names and holiness of the calligraphers of the Qur'anic revelations. The third caliph Osman's act of copying the Quran attracted special attention from the author. The author mentions that he saw one of the Qur'ans copied by Osman in a castle in Humus. According to the story, Osman had copied a Qur'an and given it to the community of Humus after they had complained about drought. He advised the community to take the Qur'an out from the castle during times of drought and to beg for rain from God. The author argues that the community of Humus still listens to the advice of Osman and thereby it rains. [165] The narrative does not talk about the miraculous events surrounding an ordinary copy of the Qur'an. The holiness and miraculous qualities of this specific copy of Qur'an originated from the holiness of the calligrapher who copied it, namely the caliph Osman. It might be argued that the narrative is illustrating some of the early modern notions about the materiality and functions of the text. Texts were not understood only as objects to be read; they were used for their talismanic and therapeutic functions, too.

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[164] Rapp, "Holy Texts, Holy Men," 196. Rapp identifies her study as "[a]n investigation of the supernatural connotations that are tied to the materiality of the text, arising from the holiness of the text or the holiness of the scribe or from a combination of both." Her statement inspired me to discuss a similar kind of phenomenon in the Ottoman biographical dictionaries of calligraphers.

[165] "Bu abd-i fakîr birin dahi Humus'da kal'ada ziyâret eyledim. Humus ahâlîsi [...] hâlen kerâmat-ı zâhire ve vilâyât-ı bâhirelerindendir ki her kaçan ol Mushaf-ı Şerîf'i sûr-i kal'adan taşra çıkarsalar fi'l-hâl matâr-ı 'azîm nüzûl eder." Nefeszâde İbrahim Efendi, *Gülzâr-ı Savâb*, 48-49.

2.4 The calligrapher near the sultan: Scripts and the question of imperial identity

In *Gülzâr-ı Savâb* calligraphy is represented as the tool of individual not only to gain sanctity but also social power and status. To have a better understanding of the representation of calligraphy in this way, the relationship between the calligrapher and the power holders should be examined. Also, the degree of significance given to the script type by the power holders should be addressed. As an example illustrating the relationship between calligraphy and power, the scenes in which the calligraphers are depicted next to the sultan seems significant to consider. In this regard, the biography of Şeyh Hamdullah by Nefeszâde İbrahim is illustrative because it portrays a close relationship between the calligrapher and the sultan of the time Bayezıd II. According to Nefeszâde İbrahim, Şeyh Hamdullah built an intimate relationship with the sultan thanks to his skills in calligraphy. He taught calligraphy to the sultan and his sons in Amasya. When Beyazıd II came to Istanbul as the new sultan and saw Şeyh Hamdullah's calligraphy example again by chance, he recognized Şeyh Hamdullah's style and immediately commanded his men to find the calligrapher who wrote it.[166] After the calligrapher was found, the sultan made him palace scribe (*sarây kâtibi*) and an instructor of calligraphy in the palace. It is striking that, according to the narrative Bayezıd II demanded from him to find a better style than Yaqut al-Musta'simi's style. The sultan gave Şeyh Hamdullah a piece of Qur'an which was written by Yaqut al-Musta'simi and kept in the Imperial

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[166] Ibid., 59.

Treasury and suggested him to invent a better style than Yaqut al-Musta'simi. [167]

Hence, Şeyh Hamdullah retreated for a while to find a new style. The process of creation of a new style is described in the text as the result of withdrawal from worldly affairs, that is an act which once again carries saintly connotations and reinforces the saintly figuration of the calligrapher in the text. Ultimately, Şeyh Hamdullah improves the style of Yaqut al-Musta'simi. At this point the author inserts into the narrative a poem that compares and contrasts the style of the two calligraphers, namely Yaqut al-Musta'simi and Şeyh Hamdullah, and praise the latter: "Ever since the calligraphy of Hamdi, son of Şeyh, appeared/ The writings of of Yâkūt have surely vanished from the world."[168] The narrative and poem emphasize that Şeyh Hamdullah's success in ending the domination of Yaqut al-Musta'simi's style in calligraphy in the lands of Rum provided him with a position close to the sultan. Julian Raby and Zeren Tanındı point to the role of the sultan in the same account and argue that "the traditional account of his [Beyazıd II] relationship with [Şeyh] Hamdullah suggests that he also had a more active role, establishing the standards, and the artistic direction, that [Şeyh] Hamdullah should pursue."[169] They liken the role of the sultan to an enlightened ruler and the role of the calligrapher to an artistic genius in this narrative of encounter.[170]

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[167] "Sultân Bâyezîd Hân [...] hazîne-i âmiresinde mahfûz olan Yâkūt'un meşhûr ve ma'rûf olan kara varaklarından yedi varak verip buyurdular ki bu tarz-ı Yâkūtî'den bihter ve pîşter bir tarz-ı has dahi ihtira' olunsa [...] ol tarz-ı has gâyet hoş-âyende ve dil-cûyende olurdu." Ibid., 60.

[168] "Şeyh oğlu Hamdi hattı tâ kim zuhûr buldu / Âlemde bu muhakkak nesh oldu hatt-ı Yâkūt." Ibid., 60-61. The same poem exists in *Menâkıb-ı Hünerverân* too. I used the translation of Akın-Kıvanç. Akın-Kıvanç, *Epic Deeds*, 202.

[169] Julian Raby and Zeren Tanındı, *Turkish Bookbinding in the 15th Century: The Foundation of an Ottoman Court Style*, ed. Tim Stanley (London: Azimuth Editions, 1993), 98.

Şeyh Hamdullah is also depicted as being praised by the sultan before the *ulema*. In response to the religious scholars' complaints about the close relationship between the sultan and the calligrapher, the sultan honors Şeyh Hamdullah by showing a Qur'an copied by him and asks the religious scholars if any other former states had a scribe and a calligrapher like him. The religious scholars confirm the sultan and accept Şeyh Hamdullah's success and do not object when the sultan puts the Qur'an copied by him above the books written by them. [171] Here, the author puts the calligrapher above the religious scholars and thus, provide him with more social power.

The above-mentioned portrayal of the sultan and the calligrapher can indeed be interpreted, as Raby and Tanındı did, as an encounter between an enlightened ruler and an artistic genius. But a further dimension must also be added to this interpretation, one that questions the role of script for the imperial identity. According to the frequently referred story, the renovation and standardization of Six Pens by Şeyh Hamdullah helped to end the dominance of Yaqut al-Musta'simi's style and set the foundation for the creation of a distinctive style of Ottoman calligraphy. Yet, I think, the active role played by the sultan in the traditional narrative on the renovation and standardization of Six Pens by Şeyh Hamdullah should not be interpreted merely as reflective of patronage relations.

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[170] Ibid., 96.

[171] "Nev'an bunların hatırlarının inkisârını velâyetle fehm edip Şeyh merhûmun dest-i hattı olan Kelâm-ı Kadîm'i getirtip ol meclisde hâzır olan ulemâ-i zevi'l-ihtirâmın herbirine seyir ve ziyâret ettirip kemâl-i istihsândan sonra buyurdu ki böyle bir hattât-ı muhtereme ve kâtib-i hoş-rakâme mülûk-ı mâziyyeden kimse mâlik olmamıştır diye su'âl eyledikte Hz. Bâyezîd Hân'ı kemâl-i tasdîk ile tasdîk eylediler." Nefeszâde İbrahim Efendi, *Gülzâr-ı Savâb*, 62.

The degree of veneration of the calligrapher by the sultan raises questions on the possibility to regard the script type as one of the components of the early modern Ottoman imperial identity. Because the standardization that Şeyh Hamdullah brought about to Six Pens determined the future of a variety of scripts in the Ottoman lands. He standardized especially *sülüs* and *nesih* scripts and his style of *nesih* became the standard hand used by the Ottomans in copying Qur'ans.[172] The time period in which Şeyh Hamdullah made his renovation in the Six Pens, 1400s, was not only special in the history of Ottoman calligraphy. James observes that "[t]he Qur'ans and other manuscripts produced in the eastern Islamic world after 1400 reflect the relative importance of the regions in which they were made."[173] Hence, regional styles among a vast geography started to emerge. A standardization and general type of Ottoman Qur'an production was established especially from the seventeenth century onwards.[174]

If Şeyh Hamdullah was the calligrapher who initiated the emergence of an Ottoman style in calligraphy and an Ottoman style in Qur'an copying, it is striking that the traditional narrative gives an active role to the sultan of the time Bayazıd II in the process of standardization of calligraphy. Can we interpret this narrative as a sign of the inclination of the Ottoman power holders to create a distinctively

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[172] David James, *After Timur: Qur'ans of the 15th and 16th centuries*, ed. Julian Raby (New York: Nour Foundation in association with Azimuth Editions and Oxford University Press, 1992), 69.

[173] Ibid., 10. Similarly, Ḡolām-Ḥosayn Yūsofī speaks of the emergence of regional styles after 1400s in Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, Anatolia, Transoxiana and Central Asia. See Ḡolām-Ḥosayn Yūsofī, "Calligraphy VII. Calligraphy Outside Persia," *Encyclopædia Iranica, Vol. IV, Fasc. 7, pp. 704-718*; available online at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/calligraphy-2 (accessed on 5 August 2015).

[174] Tim Stanley, "Istanbul and its Scribal Diaspora. The Calligraphers of Müstakim-zade." in *The Decorated Word: Qur'ans of the 17th to 19th centuries*, ed. Manijeh Bayani et al. (New York: Nour Foundation in association with Azimuth Editions and Oxford University Press, 1999), 62.

Ottoman calligraphy style and a distinctive style for the Qur'ans produced in the Ottoman lands?[175] For now, it is difficult to answer such a question comprehensively. Yet, it is remarkable that the calligraphers that shaped the history of calligraphy in the Ottoman lands by revising older forms and creating new ones were presented in a close relationship with power holders in the biographical dictionaries of calligraphers. Not only Şeyh Hamdullah, but also calligraphers such as Ahmed Karahisarî and Hafız Osman were portrayed as being close to the power holders. In the narratives concerning the above-mentioned calligraphers, it is observable that the sultans show their preference for their calligraphy styles by commissioning them calligraphy works, studying calligraphy with them (not only sultans but also *şehzade*s are represented as having been educated by these masters) and even helping them while they are writing by kneeling down and holding the inkpot of the calligraphy master. The sultan, a figure that represents the state, venerates a person who has knowledge of calligraphy. These scenes do not only indicate the artistic value of calligraphy, but also show it as a social practice that is definitively related with power. The question about calligraphy's relationship with imperial identity remains unanswered in the absence of historical and analytical studies related to the written sources of calligraphy, the calligraphy works produced in the Ottoman lands and their dissemination over time.

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[175] There is a chapter titled as "Dynastic Styles in the Age of Empires" in Sheila S. Blair's book. Yet, the chapter does not discuss the process of and the reasons for the emergence of dynastic styles under the Ottomans, Safavids and Mughals. See Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy,* 417-589.

2.5 The geography of script

Another remarkable point in *Menâkıb-ı Hünerverân* and *Gülzâr-ı Savâb* is their way of associating the *divani* and *talik* script types with a particular territory. The two script types are subjected to a geographical division among the Ottomans and Persianate lands. The chapters of *Menâkıb-ı Hünerverân* is organized according to the scripts such as copyists of Qur'an in the Kufic script, experts in the Six Styles, scribes of the *nesih* and *talik* scripts, writers of *çep* and *divani*. The chapter on *talik* writers comprises of Persian masters. And the chapter on *divani* begins as follows: "Now, the calligraphers of diwani script in the land of Rum modified the Persian style in its entirety and transformed it into an admirable style with easy-to-read forms and characters."[176] The practitioners and modifiers of *divani* script come from the Ottoman bureaucracy. Mustafa 'Âli does not explicitly admit the presence of a division, but I think he implicitly divides the script types with a territorial perspective. It might be argued that the *talik* script is reserved for the Persianate or Safavid world, while the *divani* script is reserved for the *Rumi* or Ottoman world. In a similar vein, in *Gülzâr-ı Savâb* the *talik* writers are treated under a separate title. All of them except for Murad IV came from the broader Iranian world and were active in the Timurid and Safavid lands.[177] Thus, it might be argued that the authors insert a territorial dimension into the history of calligraphy.

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[176] Akın-Kıvanç, *Epic Deeds of Artists*, 260.

[177] Nefeszâde İbrahim Efendi, *Gülzâr-ı Savâb*, 76-83. Ali Alparslan states that Murad IV's tutor was Derviş Abdi (d. 1647) who came to Istanbul from Ispahan and learnt calligraphy there from İmâd who was famous as the founder of *nestalik* script. Alparslan also underlines that the *nestalik* script and the style of İmâd spread to the Ottoman lands in the seventeenth century with the arrival of Derviş Abdi

In the history of European calligraphy, Johanna Drucker observes a similar phenomenon. She argues that the dissemination of various scripts and calligraphy styles in Europe paved the way for the script type to play a role in "the demarcation of domains of power."[178] In this regard, the territorial differentiation or the distinct geography of calligraphy, which is also reflected on the written sources of Ottoman calligraphy, might show us a relation between the calligraphy styles and imperial identity during the early modern state building processes in both cultural zones. The fact that the *talik*, *nestalik* and *divani* scripts were standardized and started to be used in state documents in this period might be seen as another sign of such a relationship between the script type and imperial identity (see Appendix B, Figures 19-22). In other words, early modern Ottoman powerholders might have perceived the script type as a means of differentiation from other dynasties. Yet, the relation between the script types and territories should not be understood as a fixed one. This relation was also transformed over time. For example, in contrast to the previous examples of the genre, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* does not exhibit such a distinct territorialization of script, but rather portrays a more flexible and transitionary relation between the territory and script type. The *talik* and *nestalik* scripts which were associated with the Iranian world in the previous two biographical dictionaries of calligraphers are portrayed as

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to Istanbul. See Alparslan, *Osmanlı Hat Sanatı Tarihi*, 161-162. In parallel to that Nefeszâde İbrahim Efendi remarks that "Mir 'İmâd merhumun hutût-ı mergûbesi bunların zamanlarında Rûm'a gelip münteşîr olmamıştı." Nefeszâde İbrahim Efendi, *Gülzâr-ı Savâb*, 82.

[178] Johanna Drucker, *The Alphabetic Labyrinth: The Letters in History and Imagination* (London: thames and Hudson, 1995), 103. She gives the example of Carolingian miniscule. For another study that reads the script type as part of a larger imperial project and a tool in the empire building process of Philip II of Spain and constructs a relationship between calligraphy, codification and standardization of script and state power see Jessica Berenbeim, " Script after print: Juand de Yciar and the art of writing," *Word and Image: A Journal of Verbal/Visual Enquiry*, 26:3 (2010): 231-243.

popular script types in the Ottoman world in *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*. In a similar vein, the skills in *talik* and *nestalik* scripts are portrayed as being dominated by the Persian calligraphers in the previous two biographical dictionaries. Yet, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* represents *talik* and *nestalik* scripts within the domain of the expertise of the Ottoman calligraphers.

The territorial dimension of script and its crystallization within the artistic rivalry among the Ottomans and Safavids might be understood from some of the narratives concerning the calligraphers. The way Mustafa ʿÂli situates Ottoman calligraphy in an artistic rivalry among other calligraphy traditions is illustrative. *Menâkıb-ı Hünerverân* covers Timurid, Safavid and *Rumi* artists, but the venerated calligraphy style belongs to the *Rumi*s. First, he covers the biographies of "Seven Masters" who were venerated in the history of calligraphy as the students of Yaqut al-Mustaʿsimi and the transmitters of the six styles in different geographies. Later on, Mustafa ʿÂli discusses the calligraphers of *Rum* by beginning his account thus: "In addition to these, the calligraphers of Rum also have their own 'Seven Masters'."[179] The *Rumi* Seven Masters that he discussed are Şeyh Hamdullah and his six students who were active in the Ottoman lands. So, Mustafa ʿÂli tries to construct a tradition for the *Rumi*s and tries to insert this group into the history of calligraphy next to the Persian masters. He creates an analogue Ottoman or *Rumi* tradition of calligraphy besides the Persian one. As it is seen in the Safavid album prefaces, the tradition that promotes the Six Pens as a style passing from Yaqut al-Mustaʿsimi to his students

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[179] Akın-Kıvanç, *Epic Deeds of Artists*, 199.

was established by the sixteenth century.[180] *Menâkıb-ı Hünerverân* demonstrates that the end of the sixteenth century witnessed the establishment of a tradition of Ottoman calligraphy that finds its origins in the *Rumi* Seven Masters comprising of Şeyh Hamdullah and his students. Thus, in his biographical dictionary Mustafa 'Âli provides the Ottoman calligraphy practice with a basis to rely on which is determined by a territorial dimension. For this reason, I raise a question about the role played by script type as a component of imperial identity in the eyes of the Ottoman authors of biographical dictionaries of calligraphers.

Of course, in order to discuss the script type as a component of imperial identity more comprehensively, it would necessary to also investigate other types of sources such as epistolary collections or dispatches between the different Muslim-ruled empires. For instance, it would be important to examine in what ways the Ottomans prepared a document, which elements of a document was attended to and what kind of a role calligraphy style and script type played within this process. For example in Raşid's history we find a discussion about the document that would be sent to the Safavid shah in 1721, which illustrate the significance given to the script of a state document. Raşid says that three calligraphers were commissioned to write the document in three different calligraphy styles. The Qur'anic verses in *celi* style were written by Firdevsi Hüseyin Efendi, Persian couplets in *tevki* style were written by Bursalı Mehmed Efendi and the rest of the text in *nestalik* style was written by

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[180] Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy*, 286, note 4.

Veliyüddin Efendi.[181] In light of further evidence, the role of calligraphy in the Ottoman documents might be interpreted in a more clear way. Additionally, the political role of calligraphy style and script type would be manifested as opposed to their portrayal merely in an artistic sphere, which is perceived by the current scholarship on the Ottoman calligraphy in isolation from politics.

2.6 Calligraphy within artistic rivalry

Two other narratives illustrating the positioning of calligraphy as an issue of artistic rivalry between empires comes to the fore in both *Gülzâr-ı Savâb* and *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*. The issue of artistic rivalry is brought forward with the biographies of Safavid court calligraphers Şâh Mahmûd Nişâburî (d. 1564) and İmâd (d.1615).[182] The setting of Şâh Mahmûd Nişâburî's (see Appendix B, Figure 23) story is the Battle of Chaldiran (1514). During the war Shah Ismail hides the calligrapher and the painter Bihzad in a cave, because, according to the story, Shah fears that these artists might escape from his land to the side of Ottomans, due to their Sunni identiy.[183] The

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[181] Raşid, *Tarih-i Raşid* vol.IV (İstanbul: Matbaa-i Amire, 1865), 426, quoted in Philippe Bora Keskiner, "Sultan Ahmed III (r.1703-1730) as a Calligrapher and Patron of Calligraphy," (Unpublished PhD. Thesis, SOAS, University of London, 2012).

[182] For the biography of Şâh Mahmûd Nişâburî see Nefeszâde İbrahim Efendi, *Gülzâr-ı Savâb*, 82 and Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*, 192. For the biography of İmâd see Nefeszâde İbrahim Efendi, *Gülzâr-ı Savâb*, 80-81 and Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*, 232-233. The next chapter of this thesis will discuss the influence of İmâd's style in the Ottoman lands.

[183] "Sâhipkırân [...] Selim Hân [...] mesfûr Şâh İsmâil ile Çaldırân-nâm sahrada musâf eyledikleri hînde yed-i müeyyed-i pâdişâh-ı 'âlem-penâha giriftâr olmasınlar diye, Şâh Mahmûd'u ve Behzad-ı bihbûd'u bir gâr içine nihân eylemişti. Ol zamânda münhezim olup geldi cümleden evvel mezbûrları tecessüs kılmıştı. Zîrâ bunlar Sünnîler idi. Bunların firârlarından [dahi] emîn değildi." Nefeszâde İbrahim Efendi, *Gülzâr-ı Savâb*, 82.

second narrative is about the famous calligrapher İmâd (see Appendix B, Figure 24) whose style in *nestalik* influenced many Ottoman calligraphers from the seventeenth century onwards. According to the narrative shared by both *Gülzâr-ı Savâb* and *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*

> [b]ecause İmâd was one of the great sheikhs of the Nakşibendiyye path, of Hasanid genealogy (*Hasaniyyü'n-neseb*), from the Hanefi madhhab (*Hanefiyyü'l-mezheb*), a pilgrim (*hâccü'l-Haremeyn*)…a Sunni and because he was not willing to accept, like the Rafizis, the smell coming from candlewick when the candles are blown out, the merciless,Shah Abbas, the deputy of Satan, was always against him .[184]

Accordingly, Shah Abbas ordered two butcher apprentices (*iki şakird-i kassab*) to kill the calligrapher. The apprentices went to the house of İmâd in Ispahan and called out to him, saying "A letter has arrived to you from the Sunnis of the lands of Rum." Thereabouts, they killed İmâd with a knife. When news of his death arrived to India, the Mughal emperor Akbar (d.1605) cried a lot and said, "If they had not killed him, I would have given him as much gold and jewelry as he weighted."[185] In both narratives on Şâh Mahmûd Nişâburî and İmâd the calligraphers are situated within an inter-imperial sphere. The calligraphers became a tool for the emperors in order to prove their worth as patrons of calligraphy. Shah Abbas was portrayed as a patron

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[184] "Ve merkūm tarîk-i hâcegân-ı Nakşibendiyye kibârından Hasaniyyü'n-neseb ve Hanefiyyü'l-mezheb [ve] haccü'l-Haremeyn, sünni senevî, dîn-i İslâm'da kavî olup, râyiha-i fetîl-i püfkerde-i şem'-i Rafzî-meşâmm kabûlüne karîn eylemediği ecilden câ-nişîn-i vesvâs Şâh Abbâs-ı bî-insâf-i mânende-i hamâs, dâimâ taraf-ı hilâfında olmakla [.]" Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*, 232-233.

[185] "İki şâkird-i kassâb-ı hūn-rîz-i mel'anet-engîzi bir tarikle [...] İsfahan'da sâkin oldukları sa'âdethânelerinden bahâne-âmîz kelimât [...] ile taşra çıkarıp 'Sana diyâr-ı Rûm sünnîlerinden mektûb geldi' diye hançer[i] [...] bedîd edip [...] zât-ı âlî-cenâbı şehîd eyledikleri meşhûr-i deverândır [...] Şâh Hind İbn-i Celâleddin istimâ' eyledikte [...] gûya oldular ki 'Eğer İmâd-ı nâ-şâdı katl ü şehîd eylemeyip tarafıma irsâl eylemiş olalar idi, bir terâzû kefesine altun ve cevâhir ve keff-i diğerine İmâd-ı nâdirü'l-mu'âsırı sencîde ederdim' diye buyurdukları mervîdir." Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*, 232-233.

who could not appreciate the value of an artist like İmâd. Both *Gülzâr-ı Savâb* and *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* also accused him of having prevented the dissemination (*münteşir*) of İmâd's works to the lands of Rum by keeping the calligrapher occupied by commissioning him to write a very long work, that is *Shahnama* of Firdevsi.[186]

A further anecdote that illustrates the role of calligraphy in the cultural exchange and artistic rivalry that took place between the Ottomans and Safavids comes from Raşid's history. According to Raşid, Damad İbrahim Paşa organized a meeting between the Ottoman calligraphers and the Persian ambassador Murtaza Kuli Han in the year 1721 because he wanted to show the ambassador the fineness of Ottoman calligraphy. There, Murtaza Kuli Han wanted to test the Ottoman calligraphers with a fake *nestalik* kıta signed by the name of İmâd. When the Ottoman calligraphers realized that the writing was inauthentic, the ambassador was surprised by their knowledge of calligraphy and their skills in distinguishing calligraphy works. Damad İbrahim Paşa wanted the ambassador to view the *nestalik kıta*s of the Ottoman calligrapher Veliyüddin Efendi (see Appendix B, Figure 25). The ambassador, surprised by the fineness and quality of Veliyüddin Efendi's style in calligraphy, dubbed him "the İmâd of Rum" (*İmâd-ı Rum*).[187] Obviously, having courtiers who owned fine calligraphy was a source of prestige and thus, became a subject in the artistic rivalry between the two states. But, it is also interesting to notice that the tool that Damad İbrahim Paşa used in the artistic rivalry with the

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[186] "Zülâl-i âsârı diyâr-ı Rûm'a münteşir olmasın diye Şâh-ı güm-râh-ı bî-merhamet mahz-ı ihânetinden nâşî Firdevsî'nin Şâhnâme'sin bi't-tamâm tahrîr ettirip, işgâl eylemiştir." Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*, 233. Also see Nefeszâde İbrahim Efendi, *Gülzâr-ı Savâb*, 81.

[187] Raşid, *Tarih-i Raşid* vol. IV, 417, quoted in Keskiner, "Sultan Ahmed III (r.1703-1730) as a Calligrapher and Patron of Calligraphy," 85.

Safavids was Veliyyüddin Efendi's calligraphic works in *talik* and *nestalik*, scripts that were identified with the Persian tradition of calligraphy. Thus, besides being a sign of cultural interaction and artistic rivalry among the Ottomans and Safavids, the anecdote might be read as a claim of Ottoman superiority in calligraphy even in script types identified with the Persian or Safavid tradition.

Until now, I have dealt with the histories of writing presented in the prefaces. I have shown that the prefaces do not represent calligraphy as a practice that has an exclusively sacred function. The stories, hadiths and Qur'anic verses cited by the authors definitively assert that calligraphy has political and social functions, too. In this context, I discussed the role of script type as a component of the early modern Ottoman imperial identity by way of showing the territorial dimension and artistic rivalry that the authors insert into the history of Ottoman calligraphy. *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* exposes a relatively different kind of calligrapher figure, one who was embedded in a more diversified worldly context. From now on, I will focus on the *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* and discuss the feautures of the text that differ from the previous biographical dictionaries of calligraphers.

2.7 *Devhatü'l-Küttâb:* Calligrapher in the milieu

Devhatü'l-Küttâb provides a different discourse on the act of writing and a different way of representation of calligraphy and the calligrapher than the two previous biographical dictionaries of calligraphers. These differences are much more apparent in the biographical entries than in the preface, where there is still considerable

continuity with the earlier discourses. In *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* the biographies tend to be longer and more detailed compared to the previous examples of the genre. In the biographical entries of *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* the training process and the role of the actors in it are precisely indicated, the career lines are more detailed, patronage relations are manifested, specific scripts in which the individual is excelled and his oeuvre are stated.

In the biographical entries of *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* the sacred connotations and contexts of the act of writing are downplayed compared to the earlier biographical dictionaries of calligraphers. Instead the text gives detailed information on the training of the calligraphers. Rather than an allegedly inborn ability, a technical training process in calligraphy is shown to be the main factor for success in writing. In this regard, in the biographical entries the names of the masters are indicated one by one and the education process is exposed step by step. The reasons behind the act of taking up the study of calligraphy are not explained in terms of revelations, saintly miracles, inborn talents or desires. Calligraphy is taken as a practice that is learnt from certain actors and in certain institutions. Since the ways of the transmission of knowledge are narrated in a more detailed way, the idea that calligraphic ability is attained through education comes to the foreground. In this regard, it might be said that the act of and the ability of beautiful writing are presented in a more "technical" way. In the biographical entries the names of the first and sometimes second masters of the calligrapher, the names of the primary schools or institutions he attended, the specific script types that the individual learnt from a master and the training style are all indicated in detail. These detailed narratives are significant to understand both the

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positioning of calligraphy in a worldly context and the ways the individuals became acquainted with the written word in the early modern Ottoman world. For this reason the actors, institutions and the ways of the transmission of knowledge of calligraphy will be examined as they are reflected upon the text.

First it should be noted that for more than half of the calligraphers whose biographies are covered in the text it is mentioned that they had their training in calligraphy in Istanbul. These scribes were either born in Istanbul, or had migrated there for their training. So, the city of Istanbul is represented as the main training ground of calligraphers and as the intellectual and cultural capital of the empire.[188] As Blair argues, from the end of the seventeenth century onwards Istanbul had flourished as an important city of calligraphy. The Ottoman tradition of calligraphy had also become more vivid, enriched with the introduction of new styles and forms and made its place besides the other traditions of calligraphy.[189] Bursa, Edirne, Amasya and Sarajevo also appear frequently as important calligraphy centers. But compared to the previous biographical dictionaries of calligraphers the visibility of these cities, for example Amasya in *Gülzâr-ı Savâb,* decreases in *Devhatü'l-Küttâb.* The decrease might be interpreted as a sign of the weakening of the networks of calligraphy education in these cities or of the flourishing of Istanbul with new venues to learn calligraphy and becoming of Istanbul a desired city with the opportunities it

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[188] For example, "Mâh-ı nev-vücûdları burc-ı sipihr-i nücûm-ı ma'ârif olan İstanbul'da tâbân olup [.]" Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb,* 74; and "Me'vâ-yı ma'rifet-mendân olan İstanbul'dandır." Ibid., 80.

[189] Sheila Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Pres, 2006), 483-485. Also see Alparslan, 64-78. For further information on the innovations in the Ottoman calligraphy styles during the eighteenth-century see the third chapter of this thesis.

provided for the individuals who had skills in calligraphy to enter into bureaucratic and *ulema* circles.[190] The biographical entries present many individuals who migrated to Istanbul with the hope of getting an instruction in calligraphy.[191] As we learn from their biographies all these individuals after learning calligraphy found a job in the city as copyist, calligraphy instructors or in the bureaucracy and *ulema* circles.

The periods of childhood and youth are periodically referenced in the biographical entries as periods of instruction. The author emphasizes that the individual did not waste his time and devoted his childhood and youth to his education and intellectual development in various fields.[192] The author mentions for some individuals that they learned how to write from their fathers. The relationship between father and son is always defined as an educational relationship.[193] Given the scarcity of studies on early modern Ottoman notions of childhood, youth and parenthood it is hard to make detailed assessments about these sections. Yet, the author's emphasis on training and self-development during the years of childhood

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[190] For the bureaucracy cadres which became a channel for social mobility at the beginning of the eighteenth century see Fatih Yeşil, *Aydınlanma Çağında Bir Osmanlı Katibi: Ebubekir Ratib Efendi (1750-1799)*, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2010), 22. For the significant centers of calligraphy training before the emergence of İstanbul as the main training ground of calligraphy see Alparslan, 25-30.

[191] For example, "Anadolu'dandır […] Dârü's-Saltanati'l-Aliyyeti'l-Osmâniyye'ye arzû-yı tahsîl-i hüsn-i hat ve icrâ-yı mahâret vaz'ı irâb ve nukat ve aklâm-ı sitteyi itmâm için İstanbul'a geldiklerinde [.]" Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb,*124; also see the biographical entry covering Tıybî Mustafa Efendi in Ibid., 201.

[192] For example, "Unfuvân-ı şebâblarından beri evkâtın izâ'at etmeyip, nahv-i ilm ve fazl ü kemâle sarf ve ulemâ ve fuhûl meyânında te'lîfâtı ve âsâr-ı bâhirü'l-berekâtı makbûl, adîli nâ-yâb ma'ârif mendan olup, ulûm-i mütedâvileyi tekmîl buyurmuşlardır." Ibid., 129-130. This same phrase recurred with little changes throughout the text.

[193] For example, " [V]âlid-i mâcid-i kesîrü'l-mahâmidlerinden taallüm ve temeşşük buyurup [.]" Ibid., 190. For other examples see the biographical entries covering Derviş İbrâhim Efendi, Seyyid Abdullah Efendi, Seyyid Abdülhalim Efendi, Vâkıf Seyyid Yahyâ Efendi in Ibid., 143, 164, 165, 336.

and youth might be regarded as another sign that calligraphy was perceived as a practice that one learned through various agents, not as an inborn talent within a sacred context. The teaching of writing by father to son reminds us of the importance of the family as an important venue for the transmission of knowledge alongside more institutionalized settings such as the Qur'an schools.

2.8 *Imam*s and instructors at the Qur'an schools: New actors in the transmission of calligraphy skills

Compared to the earlier biographical dictionaries of calligraphers new actors in the transmission of knowledge are introduced in *Devhatü'l-Küttâb.* I*mam*s and instructors at Qur'an schools (*sıbyan mekteb*s) draw attention as two important groups in the transmission of knowledge of writing. Since *imam*s and instructors at Qur'an schools appear in *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* both as calligraphers and as calligraphy instructors a need arises to consider them as important agents of literacy in the early modern Ottoman Empire.

Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib covers the biographies of *imam*s as important agents in the transmission of the knowledge of calligraphy. They appear as calligraphy instructors and copyists of many books. They are represented as individuals whose moral probity, intellectual background and pedagogical role were appreciated by the community of calligraphers.[194] *İmam*s were generally noted to

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[194] For example, see the biographical entries covering Ahmed Efendi el-İmam, İmam Ahmed Efendi, Halil Efendi, Derviş Ali Efendi el-İmam, Tıybî Mustafa Efendi, Vasık İbrâhim Efendi in Ibid., 85, 87, 144, 201, 332.

have copied innumerable *En'âm*, *Evrâd* and Qur'an*s*.[195] One of Suyolcuzâde

Mehmed Necib's students, *imam* of Davut Ağa mosque Ahmet Efendi el-İmam, is

noted to have reproduced such works as "*Tefsîr-i Kebîr-i Fahr-i Râzî, Tefsîr-i*

Celâleyn, *Şifâ-i Kadı İyâz* and *Tefsîrü'n-Nişâbûrî*."[196] Since he produced a vast

number of copies and since books written by his hand were given place in the

libraries of *ulema,* he was also praised as a successful calligrapher.[197]

      The titles of the books that they copied are significant to consider because

they might give us clues on the possible consumers of the texts. İsmail E. Erünsal, in

his study on Ottoman booksellers (*sahaf*s), remarks that many *sahaf*s also worked as

*imam*s, *müezzin*s and *müderris*es.[198] Additionally, Erünsal points to the probate

records of *imam*s. Since in these probate records many copies of the same book can

be found, Erünsal concludes that *imam*s played an active role in the book trade.[199]

The information we gather from *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* points to the same fact. Maybe,

the *imam*s sold the *En'âm*, *Evrâd* and Qur'ans to the consumers in their community.

Or, as we learn from *Devhatü'l-Küttâb,* since the books they copied were situated in

the libraries of *ulema* there might have been a client-seller relationship between

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[195] For example, "[M]üteaddid mesâhif-i şerîfe cihân-hediyye tahrîr ve En'âm ve Evrâd-ı latîfe-i behiyye tastīr-i dil-pezîrleri makbûl-i erbâb-ı kemâl ü ma'rifet [.]" Ibid., 144; "[N]ice mesâhif-i şerîfe ve Evrâd ve En'âm ve âsâr-ı sâire-i pür-i'tibâr-ı nazîfe kitâbet buyurmuşlardır." Ibid., 166.

[196] Ibid., 85.

[197] "[V]e lâ yu'add ve lâ yuhsâ tahrîrleri mahfûz-ı kütübhâne-i kibâr-ı ulemâdır." Ibid., 85. For another example of a calligrapher whose works given place in the libraries of prominent people, see the biographical entries covering Hanif İbrâhim Efendi, Seyyid Osman Efendi. Ibid., 130 and 181.

[198] İsmail E. Erünsal, *Osmanlılarda Sahaflık ve Sahaflar* (İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2013), 115.

[199] Ibid., 125.

*imam*s and individuals from the higher echelons of the *ulema*. There is no information in the text on how the book trade between the *imam*s and their consumers was conducted. But since the author himself was a judge, it must not be a coincidence that many *imam*s he counted were copying books that judges were consulting. He might have been one of the clients of these *imam*s and thus he was able to draw a picture of the book market and to show where to find a specific type of book.

The existing studies on Qur'an schools mostly focus on the administrative and physical structure of these institutions by showing the construction process of school building, architectural elements, and geographical dimensions in the quarters, the administrative personnel of the schools and their salaries.[200] Although these are valuable and rare studies, they do not offer much information on the role of the Qur'an schools in the acquisition of literacy, and they do not address the changing practices in the education that was on offer in Qur'an schools. Rather, they give quantitative data taken from *vakfiye*s, which are the major primary sources of these studies.

On the other hand a recent study by Konrad Hirschler which focuses on the spread of the written word and its effects on the reading and writing practices in the medieval Egypt and Syria touches upon the changing dynamics and curricula of the Qur'an schools and their roles in the textualisation process and the popularization of

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[200] For example see Mefail Hızlı, *Mahkeme Sicillerine Göre Osmanlı Klasik Dönemi'nde İlköğretim ve Bursa Sıbyan Mektepleri* (Bursa: Uludağ Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1999); Özgönül Aksoy, *Osmanlı Devri İstanbul Sıbyan Mektepleri Üzerine Bir İnceleme* (İstanbul: İsmail Akgün Matbaası, 1968).

the written word.[201] One of the major merits of Hirschler's study for the concerns of my study is his historical perspective on the Qur'an schools, which contrasts with the studies conducted on the Ottoman Qur'an schools.[202] In contrast to the latter studies he does not present the Qur'an schools as static and monolithic institutions with the assumption that instruction in writing has always been in the curricula of these schools from the beginning. Rather, he argues that reading and writing became a more important component of school education after the eleventh century and he conceptualizes this transformation or new phase in the school education as "textualisation of the curricula."[203] He constructs his arguments by using various kinds of sources such as marginalia and manuscript illustrations. For the early modern Ottoman Qur'an schools there is no study that is comparable to Hirschler's, which examines the role of writing in their curricula. Yet, at the same time, it is ahistorical to assume that writing was always a part of the curricula by taking only the *vakfiye*s into account. More studies which use various kinds of sources are required in order to understand the place of writing in the early modern Ottoman children's schools, their functions and their effects on the reading and writing practices.

In *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* the instructors at the Qur'an schools appear as one of the addresses for the people who wanted to learn reading and writing skills. The instructors are depicted as masters of calligraphy and as individuals with skills in

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[201] Konrad Hirschler, *The Written Word in the Medieval Arabic Lands: A Social and Cultural History of Reading Practices* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012).

[202] Ibid., 82-124.

[203] Ibid., 83-91.

calligraphy. For example İsmail Efendi learnt *sülüs* and *nesih* from his father Hafız

Hoca and later he himself became an instructor at the Qur'an school, which was

located near to the grave of Ebu's-Suud Efendi.[204] The author ends the entry, which

covers the life story of İbrahim Efendi, with the remark that he is one of the fine

calligraphers (*hoş-nüvîsân*) among the instructors at Qur'an schools in the reign of

Mahmud I (r. 1730-1754).[205] Another individual, İsmail Efendi, who was an

instructor at the Ağakapısı Mektebi, was considered to be superior to his fellow

calligraphers in training many students[206] (see Appendix B, Figure 26). The author

himself received his first training in calligraphy at the Valide Sultan Mektebi, and he

admires and praises his teacher Mustafa Efendi for his contribution to his

development.[207] It is striking that compared to the earlier biographical dictionaries of

calligraphers, in *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* the names of the instructors and the children's

schools appear frequently. This might be interpreted as a sign of the increasing role

of Qur'an schools as institutions teaching reading and writing, and the increasing

role of writing in their curricula at the first half of the eighteenth century.

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[204] Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*, 85-86.

[205] "Ahd-i Sultân Mahmûd Hân-ı Gāzi'de bulunan muallimân-ı mektebin hoş-nüvîsânındandır." Ibid., 86.

[206] "Ağakapısı Mektebi hocası demekle şöhret-yâb, üstâd-ı âlem-gîr-i âlî-cenâb olup, hattâtînin ekmeli câ'iyü-z-zikr Derviş Ali Efendi'den telemmüz ve temeşşük buyurup nice nice şâkirdân-ı ma'ârif-mendân ile mu'âsırlarına tefevvuk buyurmuşlardır." Ibid., 73.

[207] "Bu abd-i fakîr avân-ı tufûliyette mekteb-i merkūmda mukīm ve taallüm-i Kur'ân-ı Kerîm ve âzmâyiş-i meşk-i hat ve ta'lîm edip, ol pîr-i münîrin yümn-i terbiyesi dekāyık-ı hüsn-i hatta sa'y ü himmete bâdî olmuştur." Ibid., 287. For further examples on the instructors at the Qur'an schools see the biographical entries covering Hocazâde Mehmed Efendi, Râkım Mustafa Efendi, Salâtizâde Mustafa Efendi, Mustafa Çelebi in Ibid., 134, 154, 195 and 298.

Two other institutions, Enderun and Saray-ı Galata, are presented as significant centers for instruction in calligraphy.[208] As places where the personnel for the state's bureaucratic cadres were trained, calligraphy appears as a component of their curricula. These institutions are depicted as places in which individuals were intellectually improving and gradually developing their skills in calligraphy.[209] In this fashion, Mehmet Halife's *Tarih-i Gilmani,* which is an important source about life at the Enderun, demonstrates that good handwriting was reckoned as one of the acclaimed intellectual and cultural activities maintained by the *kul*s in the palace school.[210] Both Mehmet Halife's narrative and *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* indicate that it was considered a prestigious position to be a calligraphy instructor (*meşk muallimi*) at the palace school.[211]

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[208] On the *Enderun* and *Saray-ı Galata,* see İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devletinin Saray Teşkilatı* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1984), 297-339.

[209] "Enderûn-ı Sarây-ı Hümâyûn'da sa'y ve tahsîl-i ma'rifet ve hünerle evkât-güzâr olup [.]" Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*, 293. For another example "Sarây-ı Hümâyûn gılmânından iken […] evâil-i hallerinde ressâm-ı sikke Ömer Efendi'den vâdî-i hattı görmüşlerdir." Ibid., 185.

[210] Mehmet Halife, *Tarih-i Gılmani*, ed. Kamil Su (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1976), 147-155. Also, in the memoirs of Ottaviano Bon, there exists some information on the education of *kul*s in the palace school. For example, "Then are they circumcised, and made Turks, and set to learn the Turkish tongue; and according as their several inclinations are discovered and discerned by their overseers, so are they encouraged in the same, and suffered to proceed: and such, as have a desire to learn, are taught to read and write." Ottoviano Bon, *The Sultan's Seraglio: An Intimate Portait of Life at the Ottoman Court*, ed. John Withers and Godfrey Goodwin (London: Saqi Books, 1996), 60. Also see Ibid., 69, 70.

[211] " […] Mehmet Halife adındaki kiler imamı hoş yaradılışlı, çok bilgili, akranları arasında sivrilmiş bir kimse olup Galatasaray hocalığıyle isteğine kavuştu." Mehmet Halife, 151. For another example, " Peşgir oğlanı iken Galatasaray hocalığı ile isteğine kavuştu." Ibid., 151.

2.9 *Meclis*es and friendships: Oral modes of transmission of knowledge

In addition to Qur'an schools, salons (*meclis*es) also appear as fora where knowledge about calligraphy was transmitted. There the calligraphers would converse with each other on calligraphy and share their knowledge and experiences. The salons that the calligraphers were attended were often represented as part of their education process. In *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* the salons of calligraphers are especially prominent in the biographical entries of the calligraphers who lived in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

For example, the salons that Derviş Ali el-Ma'rûf attended are depicted as having been more important for his education than his training by a master.[212] Likewise, the author writes about a certain Ahmet Efendi, one the participants of the salons, that he was a particularly important fixture of salons and stood out among his peers with his learned talk about the fine points of calligraphy. Apparently, the audience listened to him carefully and with admiration.[213] The salons appear also as spaces where the calligraphers demonstrated the fruits of their education and successful careers. To be accepted into these salons, to draw the attention of other attendants and to be appreciated by them for their skills in rhetoric, music, poetry and calligraphy were significant proofs for the success of the calligrapher in his art and career. As a sign of the calligrapher's being appreciated and admired in the salons

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[212] " [U]lemâ ve esâtîz-i hutût ile sohbet ve mecâlis-i ma'ârif-mevfûrlarında tahsîl-i kemâl ve ma'rifet edip, aklâm-ı sitteyi itkān [.]" Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*, 142.

[213] "Ve ekser şürekâ ve mu'âsırlarından imtiyâz sevdâsıyla izâ'at-ı eyyâm edip, dekāyık-ı hattan bahse ağāz eyledikde hâzır olan müstemi'în-i sâde-dilân-ı hat-nedânı dem-beste ve hayrân ederdi." Ibid., 77-78.

Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib identifies some calligraphers as charmers of salons (*safa-bahş-i mecalis*, *meclis-ara*).[214] The friendship between the author and Râsim Mehmed Efendi is presented as a mutual relationship, which was in nature instructive and which entailed an exchange of knowledge.[215] The frequent references to salons and relations of friendship in *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* as one of the training grounds provide the representation of the practice of calligraphy as a collective or social practice. It is known that from the Timurid period onward calligraphy and salon culture intertwined (see Appendix B, Figure 27). In this regard, it is seen that practicing calligraphy continued to be a part of the early eighteenth century Ottoman salons.

2.10 Calligraphy in circulation: The calligraphy example as a transmitter of knowledge

Works of calligraphy or written exempla should be counted among the tools of instruction. The calligraphers used these single sheet works to study and imitate the calligraphy styles of masters. The use of single sheet works is indicative of the existence of indirect ways of transmission of knowledge too, which was realized through the paper model alone independently besides studying under the guidance of

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[214] For example see the biographical entries covering Câbîzâde Abdullah Efendi, Çıkrıkîzâde Ali Efendi, Derviş Ahmed Çelebi, Osman Ağa, Yusuf Efendi in Ibid., 111, 112, 144, 228 and 349.

[215] " Bu fakîr rütbe-i uhuvvette nice şuhûr ve a'vâm bâ-hulûs ve mahabbet sohbet ve ülfetimiz ve tahsîl-i ulûm-i nâfi'ada şirketimiz ber-devâm olduğu esnâda dekâyık ve mezâyâ-yı hat ve kalemde mültezim olan hakâyık-nikât-ı katt belki evzâ'-ı i'râb ve nukatı dahi mahabbet zere [mübâhase ve müzâkere ile birbirimizlerinden ifâdeyi mültezim edip,] istifâden hālî olmamışızdır." Ibid., 151.

a living master. In this aspect, Roxburgh states that "[t]he paper model offered the most effective means of calligraphic transmission and dissemination[n.]"[216] The single sheet works not only present important evidence about how people acquired knowledge of calligraphy but also indicate to us how the work of a given calligrapher was disseminated.

Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib states about some calligraphers that their works were installed within students' *cilbend,* which was "a large pocket-book, a portfolio."[217] He brings this up usually in praise of the calligraphic skills of the calligrapher in question; because the masters' and students' ownership of a work of a calligrapher showed his prestigious position within the circle of calligraphers. Thus, the more a calligrapher's works circulated, the greater prestige he gained. For example, Derviş Ahmed Efendi's works of calligraphy embellished many students' pocket-books (*cilbend-i tullâb*); and the author reckons the spread of his works as a step in his career line and as the reason of his fame among the community of calligraphers.[218] So, the practice of collecting and taste of the audience could have an influence on the value and the future of a work of art.

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[216] Roxburgh, "On the Transmission and Reconstruction of Arabic Calligraphy: Ibn al-Bawwab and History" *Studia Islamica*, No. 96, Écriture, Calligraphie et Peinture (2003), 46. Roxburgh examines the remarks about the ownersip and circulation of the single sheet works, especially works of Ibn al-Bawwab, in the biographies of calligraphers.

[217] For the term 'jilbend', see *Turkish and English Lexicon*, ed. Sir James W. Redhouse, 3rd ed. (İstanbul: Çağrı Yayınları, 2006), 669. Also Mahmut Behreddin Yazır defines 'cilbend' as "[a]harlı, mühreli kağıdları, yazıları muhafaza için kullanılan mukavvadan veya deriden yapılmış, kitap kabı gibi büyükçe bir mahfaza." Mahmut Behreddin Yazır, *Medeniyet Alemi'nde Yazı ve İslam Medeniyeti'nde Kalem Güzeli* (Ankara: Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Yayınları, 1981), 176.

[218] "Metânetten ibâret mesâhif-i şerîfe-i müte'addide ve âsâr-ı latîfe-i pesendîdeleri zînet-efzâ-yı cilbend-i tullâb, zât-ı sütûde-cenâb idiler." Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*, 143. For other examples, see the biographical entries covering Çelebi İmam, Cabîzâde Abdullah Efendi, Şeref

Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib also gives information about people who collected works of calligraphy. These collectors were also significant actors in the transmission of knowledge about calligraphy. For example, İsmail Efendi possessed works of calligraphy by Şeyh Hamdullah and showed them to calligraphy students.[219] It might be presumed that the works of a prominent calligrapher like Şeyh Hamdullah had such high value that it was highly improbable for a student to own any. Thus, İsmail Efendi played the role of a mediator between the students and the works of Şeyh Hamdullah, and he was praised very much for his active role in the transmission of Şeyh Hamdullah's style to future generations of calligraphers as well as for his contribution to the students' development by providing them with access to such valuable works of art.[220] This reminds us once again of the fact that in addition to studying with master calligraphers and socializing with their patrons and friends, studying the paper model was also an important component of calligraphic instruction.

Another notable feature of the *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* is the greater diversity of types of texts that are mentioned in the text. Whereas for the most part the Qur'an is mentioned in *Menâkıb-ı Hünerverân* and *Gülzâr-ı Savâb* as a text copied by famous calligraphers, a multiplicity of texts from various genres are mentioned in the *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*. Calligraphers are not presented as copyists of sacred texts alone.

Mehmed Efendi, Salih Çelebi, Sahhaf Halil Efendi, Nuh Efendi in Ibid., 111, 111, 190, 195, 196 and 326.

[219] Ibid., 70.

[220] " Ve eslâf-ü ahlâfın nâil olamadığı Hazret-i İbnü'ş-Şeyh'in hattıyla mushaf-ı şerîf ve En'âm-ı latîf ve müdevven murakkka'ât ve kıt'a'ât sandûk-ı temellüklerini müzeyyen etmekle dil-dâde-i ni'met ve sâl-i şâhid- hüsn-i hat olan tullâb-ı sütûde cenâbı ziyâfet-i çeşm-i ibret-bîn ile kâm-yâb ve kâm-bîn buyurup isticlâb-ı hayr du'âdan hālî olmayan zât-ı mükerremlerdendir." Ibid., 75.

Some of the books that are mentioned in *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* as being copied are as follows: *Mesnevî-i Molla Celâl*, *Hamse-i Hayâtîzaâde* which consists of five tracts on medicine, Katip Çelebi's *Cihânnümâ*, Mustafa 'Âli's *Künhü'l-Ahbar*, Katip Çelebi's *Atlas*. The works from various genres such as history, *siyer* and prose writing, dictionaries, *divan*s and *mecmua*s are also indicated as being copied. Thus, the terms *hatt* and *kitâbet* are not used by the author only to refer to copying sacred books, making iconographic calligraphy works and inscriptions, but also to write or copy books on various secular subjects. When the subjects of the above-mentioned books are considered one can argue that the books also testify to a certain degree of secularization of learning in the eighteenth century.

The calligraphers in the *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* are not presented as individuals whose merits are limited with coping texts properly and having knowledge about correct phrasing and preparation of documents. As it can be deduced from the text, the skills in calligraphy were not enough to be successful and esteemed as a scribe or calligrapher. The position of the calligrapher in the milieu would be enhanced with his skills in eloquence, poetry in Arabic, Persian and Turkish, prose writing, music, etc. Thus, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* presents a literate individual whose literacy was not limited to the ability to read and write beautifully. The profile of literate as it is pictured in *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* is a polymath individual who has skills in different branches of art and socialize in different socio-cultural venues. Throughout the text this polymath individuals are situated in various milieus in which they built their career, engaged in networking, participated into patronage relations and found opportunities with the help of their skills in calligraphy and in other fields.

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Calligraphy is not presented in their life stories as their mere ability, but rather as one of the components of their identity. For a better understanding of diversification of the worldly context of calligraphy and the figuration of the calligrapher as a polymath individual in *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* the historical context in which the text is composed and its major social, cultural and political trends should be analyzed.

CHAPTER 3

A CONTEXTUALIZED READING OF THE *DEVHATÜ'L-KÜTTÂB*

3.1 The historical context

The period in which Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib wrote his biographical dictionary,

namely the first half of the eighteenth century, has been the subject of a number of

recent studies. Especially the period until 1730, which was dubbed the "Tulip Age"

in the early twentieth century, has attracted the interest of scholars. [221] In the old

historiography the period was seen as either a continuation of the *ancien régime*,

which was associated with unending decadence, or as the beginning of

modernization-cum-Westernization.[222] According to the old historiography, the

period happened to be a predecessor of secularism and Westernization and a period

of scientific and artistic revival. And, it was portrayed as a period in which the

Ottomans found many opportunities to recover from decline and decadence, but in

which their attempts to modernize/westernize were cut short by the opposition of

religious fanatics in the form of the Patrona Halil Rebellion in 1730. The emphasis of

the old school historiography was on the orientation of the Ottomans towards

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[221] For a discussion on the concept "Tulip Age" see Can Erimtan, *Ottomans Looking West? The Origins of the Tulip Age and Its Development in Modern Turkey*, (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2008). Also see Can Erimtan, "The Sources of Ahmed Refik's Lâle Devri and the Paradigm of the 'Tulip Age': A Teleological Agenda," *Essays in Honor of Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu: Societies, Cultures, Sciences: A Collection of Articles*, vol. I, (İstanbul: IRCICA, 2006), 259-278.

[222] For a comprehensive historiographical overview which examines the perceptions concerning the period between 1718-1730 that formed in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth century see Selim Karahasanoğlu, "A Tulip Age Legend: Consumer Behavior and Material Culture in the Ottoman Empire (1718-1730)," (Unpublished PhD. diss., Binghamton University, 2009). Also see Karahasanoğlu, "Osmanlı Tarihyazımında 'Lale Devri': Eleştirel Bir Değerlendirme," *Tarih ve Toplum: Yeni Yaklaşımlar* 7 (2008): 129-144.

Western Europe for the first time. Accordingly, the Ottomans were characterized only as passive and inferior recipients of Western "influences". Yet, recent studies have started to re-examine the eighteenth-century Ottoman world by adding to their historical narrative intra-structural transformations and changing dynamics within state and society.[223] Rather than seeing the beginnings of transformation in the eighteenth or nineteenth century, the new scholarship tends to conceptualize and portray a longer process of transformation in a broader global scale. Thus, rather than characterizing a fixed and an unchanged non-Western world before the nineteenth century, the new scholarship puts forward the internal and external dynamics of transformation within this world and talks about a process of "early modernity" or "early modernities" in a global scale.

Thus, in contrast to the old historiography, the concept of "early modernity" paves the way for the emergence of new perspectives on the process of Ottoman transformations. Rather than seeing the nineteenth century as the ultimate crystallization of the transformations, this concept envisages the social, cultural, political and economic transformations in a broader process. Instead of a Eurocentric model of modernity, the concept "early modernity" embraces multiple forms of modernity within a global scale and various kinds of interactions within the process of transformation, including the intractions with the non-Western world. In this regard, it points to the different dimensions and transformations of the Ottoman

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[223] Besides a discussion on the tendencies of the old historiography, Jane Hathaway puts forward some suggestions concerning the future directions of the history writing on the eighteenth century. See Jane Hathaway, "Rewriting Eighteenth-Century Ottoman History," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 19:1 (2007): 29-53. Also see Karl Barbir, "The Changing Face of the Ottoman Empire in the Eighteenth Century: Past and Future Scholarship," *Oriente Moderno* 18/1 (1999): 253-267.

world before the nineteenth century than the Westernization and decline paradigms do.

The rising power and wealth of groups other than the imperial elite such as the janissaries, local notables, bureaucrats and palace staff after the post-Suleimanic age which have been seen as the corruption of the order by the old historiography, are now perceived as phenomena showing the expansion of the state apparatus and political power to various social groups. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries witnessed the disempowerment of the sultan in relation to the development of the state apparatus as a seperate entity from the sultan.[224] Thus, the political visibility of various actors increased in this period. Regarding the eighteenth century, Baki Tezcan draws attention to the changing positions of the members of the *ulema* and bureaucracy which were two important political bodies.[225] It is important to notice that while the biographical dictionaries of the judicial elite disappeared, biographies of viziers and secretaries started to appear in the "historiographical corpus" of the eighteenth century.[226] It is a telling fact of the increasing power of the viziers and bureaucrats from the first half of the eighteenth century onwards.

The increasing political visibility of various actors and the accumulation of material wealth by various sectors of society are observable in the transformation of

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[224] Baki Tezcan, "The Politics of Early Modern Historiography" in *The Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire*, ed. Virginia H. Aksan and Daniel Goffman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 167-198.

[225] Ibid., 193.

[226] Ibid., 193.

urban space and urban practices during the eighteenth century in Istanbul.[227] An opening-up both in the patronage practices and in the architectural styles is seen. Compared to the earlier centuries, the century is remarked with increasing social mobility, which led to transformations in the consumption, recreational and cultural practices.[228] In contrast to the earlier periods in which the cultural forms, spaces and practices had been in the realm of the imperial elite to a large extend, the eighteenth century witnessed their spread to a wider urban society. In other words, the previous traces of social distinction in the architectural and patronage practices were blurred and people from a broader social spectrum began to participate in the making of the city such as people in the palace service, the military and the bureaucracy, middle class women, merchants and artisans.[229] For example, as an appropriate and cheap way of smaller-scale patronage the newly built fountains demonstrate the wide spectrum of the patrons, the existing social mobility and the newly emerging actors in the public sphere of the period.

Yet, all these developments should not be understood as a withdrawl of the imperial elite from the patronage activities and the making of the city. The tendency of the revisionist historiography to focus on smaller-scale and secular structures like fountains and pavilions "created a misleadingly democratized impression of

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[227] Shirine Hamadeh, *The City's Pleasures: Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008).

[228] Ibid., 6.

[229] Ibid., 13.

eighteenth-century Ottoman patronage."[230] It is important to notice that the beginning of the eighteenth century witnessed the transfer of the imperial court from Edirne back to Istanbul after an absence of approximately fifty years. After 1703, it is seen that the imperial elite undertook extensive building activity in the city by sponsoring imperial mosques, palaces, public gardens, fountains and other structures. In his recent PhD. thesis Ünver Rüstem observes a revival of imperial mosques during this period and argues that the sultans were still the major arbiters of taste and patrons of the empire. He does not take the patronage activities of lesser patrons and the usage of patronage as a tool of social display by people from a wider scale as primary features of the eighteenth-century Istanbul.

It is true that the remaking of Istanbul as the main imperial residence became an important concern of the state at the beginning of the eighteenth century and one of the major concerns of the state was to reestablish the Ottoman imperial identity in the city by way of patronage activities and flourishing of arts.[231] Yet, I think, to consider these two phenomena, the coming of new actors into the patronage activity and the revival of imperial patronage, as separate from or opposed each other might create an ahistorical dichotomy. An attempt to consider the patronage of different forms of art instead of architectural patronage might give us better insights on the changing patterns of patronage and cultural practices of the period. For example,

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[230] Ünver Rüstem, "Architecture for a New Age: Imperial Ottoman Mosques in Eighteenth-Century Istanbul" (Unpublished PhD. diss., Harvard University, 2013), 22.

[231] Ibid., 22. For the role of state in the remaking of Istanbul and in the flourishing of arts during the eighteenth century see Tülay Artan, "Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century: Days of Reconciliation and Consolidation," in *From Byzantion to Istanbul: 8000 Years of a Capital*, exh. cat. (Istanbul: Sakıp Sabancı Museum, 2010), 300-312; and Artan, "Arts and Architecture," in *The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603–1839*, ed. Suraiya Faroqhi, vol. 3 of *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, ed. Metin Kunt (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2006), 464–80.

Devhatü'l-Küttâb exhibits patrons of calligraphy both from the imperial elite and the upper and lower echelons of bureaucracy and *ulema*. Also, it is certain that compared to the biographical dictionaries of calligraphers written before the eighteenth century, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* represents calligraphy as an artistic practice performed by people from various segments of the society. In other words, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* represents the expansion of this cultural practice to a wider social scale. It is difficult to argue that the text portrays a cultural practice under the domination of the imperial elite and an aesthetic taste only defined by the members of the imperial elite.

The new scholarship employing the concept of "early modernity" has also emphasized the increase in transregional contacts in the eighteenth century. The eighteenth century was a period in which cross-cultural interactions increased by the flourishing of cultures of consumerism and diplomacy also in the Ottoman lands.[232] In this context, the role of art and architecture was not limited to becoming a public phenomenon. Nebahat Avcıoğlu and Finbarr Barry Flood draw attention to the art and architecture as a cross-cultural concern by showing the increasing "transregional circulation and consumption of artistic concepts, forms, images, and media" during the eighteenth century. [233] Thus, the eighteenth-century Ottoman art and architecture can be understood through an approach which tries to interpret the shared cultural forms emerged in various contexts in relation to each other. For example, Rüstem draws attention to the changes in the Ottoman conception of royal visibility and the

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[232] Rüstem, "Architecture for a New Age," 21.

[233] Nebahat Avcıoğlu and Finbarry Flood, "Introduction: Globalizing Cultures: Art and Mobility in the Eighteenth Century," Special Issue, *Ars Orientalis* Vol. 39, (2010), 9.

usage of different elements to visualize the sultan's authority like French models used in the architecture.[234] He historicizes the emergence of Ottoman Baroque and its Western sources and attributes it to a strategy of the Ottoman dynasty to reinforce its own royal visibility in the face of increasing global contact.

However, eighteenth-century Ottomans were not just interested in the West. The eighteenth-century Ottoman world also exhibited a new kind of openness to the Persian cultural world. In fact, the Ottomans were always interested in and under the influence of the medieval Persian intellectual and artistic heritage. Yet, in the eighteenth century this interest inclined towards the works of more contemporary Persian thinkers and artistic examples. In this regard, instead of the Safavid influences on Ottoman art and architecture, an interest on the Persian thought by the Ottoman intellectuals is noticeable in the period.[235] As I will discuss later, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* appears as a significant source that shows the major influence of Safavid calligraphy styles and forms on the Ottoman calligraphy. The text demonstrates that the Persian calligraphy examples were an important part of the artistic consumption of the eighteenth-century Ottoman world. Especially the increasing popularity of *nestalik* script and Safavid calligraphers such as İmâd demonstrates the increasing cultural and artistic interactions between the Ottomans and Safavids. This might be

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[234] For a discussion on the Western sources of Sadabad Palace see Rüstem, "Architecture for a New Age", 43-58. B. Deniz Çalış offers a different perspective on the transregional contacts and she examines the way the Ottomans interpreted the cultural influences of Safavid and French architectural and garden designs. She stresses the effect of Melami mystical thoughts on the process of cultural interpratation. See B. Deniz Çalış, "Gardens at Kağıthane Commons During the Tulip Period (1718-1730)" in *Middle East Garden Traditions: Unity and Diversity*, Micheal Conan ed. (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Publication, 2007), 238-266.

[235] Henning Sievert, "Eavesdropping on the Pasha's Salon: Usual and Unusual Readings of an Eighteenth-Century Bureaucrat," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları/The Journal of Ottoman Studies* XLI (2013), 159-195.

interpreted as a sign of changing dynamics of artistic and cultural dialogue between the Ottomans and the Iranian world that is realized by the decrease in the tension and rivalry with the decline of the Safavid state in 1736.

Devhatü'l-Küttâb manifests significant features of the eighteenth century such as concern for self-display, greater social mobility, increasing political visibility of various groups other than the imperial elite, flourishing culture of consumerism, increase in diplomatics and intensification of trans-regional contacts. In this chapter, I will try to analyze the text within this historical framework.

3.2 The life of the author within the biographical entries

In most of the biographical dictionaries we see that the authors also give some details about their lives in passing. In other words, their own life story is embedded in the life stories of other individuals. This fact is very much related to the authors' tendency to write about the individuals that they know personally. So, there are many instances of intersections of the life stories of the people and the authors in the biographical dictionaries.[236] Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib does not narrate his own

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[236] Hatice Aynur shows how Âşık Çelebi narrates his own life story within the biographies of other people in his biographical dictionaries of poets, namely *Meşâ'irü'ş-Şu'arâ*. Aynur observes that Âşık Çelebi does not narrate his own life story under a separate biographical entry. Instead he gives some information on his life in passing remarks in the preface of the biographical dictionary and in the biographical entries of his family members, friends, teachers and others that he had a respect for. See Hatice Aynur, "Kurgusu ve Vurgusuyla Kendi Kaleminden Âşık Çelebi'nin Yaşamöyküsü" in *Âşık Çelebi ve Şairler Tezkiresi Üzerine Yazılar*, ed. Hatice Aynur, Aslı Niyazioğlu (İstanbul: Koç Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2011), 19-56. Also see Aynur, "Autobiographical Elements in Aşık Çelebi's Dictionary of Poets" in *Many Ways of Speaking About the Self: Middle Eastern Ego Documents in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish (14th-20th century)*, Ralf Elger and Yavuz Köse (eds.), (Wiesbaden: Harasowitz Verlag, 2010), 17-26.

life story under a separate entry. Yet, we find many fragments from his life in the biographical entries about various individuals with whom he had personal contact.

For example in the biographical entry about Ömer Efendi (d. 1686), who was an instructor at the Qur'an school built by Valide Sultan near Bahçekapısı and who spent his life copying the Qur'an, we learn that he was the author's father and that he died at the age of forty when the author was only six months old (see Appendix B, Figure 28). Then, the author talks about himself and states that with the passing away of his father and then his grandfather Suyolcuzâde Mustafa Efendi (d. 1686) at the same year, he became a forlorn and helpless orphan (see Appendix B, Figure 29). He also laments that he could not ever again see the faces of his father and grandfather.[237] Under the biographical entry of a certain Osman Ağa, the author mentions that he had enjoyed conversing with Osman Ağa, and listening to his stories about the literary gatherings put together by the author's father and grandfather. He also refers to Osman Ağa as his spiritual father.[238] In a similar vein the author reveals some details of his own life in the biographical entry devoted to Mustafa Efendi, who was also an instructor at the Qur'an school of Vâlide Sultân.[239] At the end of the biographical entry the author starts to talk about himself and his personal relationship with Mustafa Efendi: "This humble man followed the above-

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[237] "Bu fakîr-i sagīr şeş mâh ve yetîm-i bî-nasîr ve penâh bulunup fevt-i cedd-i mâcid ve mevt-i [vâlid-i] kesîrü'l-mahâmid bi-emrillâhi te'âlâ sâl-i vâhidde vâki' olmakla o yüzden dahi müşâhede-i mir'ât-ı cemâl-i peder ile dede-i merhûmu olduğu ehibbâya rûşen-terdir." Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*, 215.

[238] "[B]u abd-i fakîr-i pür-taksîr nice eyyâm zevk-i sohbetlerine nâil ve nukl, nakl-i mecâlis-i vâlid ve ceddimiz ârâyiş-i bezm-i safâ-yı derûn ve neşât-bahş-i dil mahzûn olmadan hālî değil, peder-i ma'nevîmiz mesâbesinde bir pîr-i hoş-şemâil, sütûde-hasâ'il idiler." Ibid., 228-229.

[239] Ibid., 287.

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mentioned Qur'an school, learnt Qur'an and practiced calligraphy there during his childhood. Under his [Mustafa Efendi's] mastery he learnt the intricacies of calligraphy. He [Mustafa Efendi] was one of the proliferate and unique people who excelled in child pedagogy (*terbiyet-i etfâl*)."[240] One of the longest biographical entries in the text belongs to Mustafa Çelebi, who was the son of Ahmed Efendi, instructor at the Qur'an school near Baba Haydar Nakşibendî Mosque.[241] The author mentions that Mustafa Çelebi was his adopted son (*veled-i ma'nevî*) and informs the reader on his skills in calligraphy and in other areas. After mentioning that Mustafa Çelebi died at the age of fifteen because of the plague (*tâ'ûn*), the author again turns back to himself, and states how much he worried because of the death of Mustafa Çelebi. He writes that Mustafa Çelebi had helped him to compile (*cem' ü tertîb*) *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* and after the latter's death he had to interrupt his writing because of his grief. Even the poem in Arabic he added to the end of the biographical entry is on his own grief.[242] These examples show the intertwinement of biographical and autobiographical narratives in *Devhatü'l-Küttâb.* The author's inclusion of individuals with whom he had personal contact into his biographical dictionary enables him to talk about himself under the biographical entries of other people and to situate himself in the world that he portrays.

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[240] "Bu abd-i fakîr avân-ı tufûliyette mekteb-i merkūmda mukīm ve taallüm-i Kur'ân-ı Kerîm ve âzmâyiş-i meşk-i hat ve ta'lîm edip, ol pîr-i münîrin yümn-i terbiyesi dekāyık-ı hüsn-i hatta sa'y ü himmete bâdî olmuştur. Kesîrü'l-âsâr, terbiyet-i etfâlde nâdîde-i rûzgâr idiler." Ibid., 287.

[241] Ibid., 298-300.

[242] "Ah! Ölüm ve onun hallerinden neler çektim. Kalbim onun harâreti ile ne kadar yanıktır!" The poem translated into Turkish by Ayşe Peyman Yaman. Ibid., 300.

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3.3 The role of the author: The spokesman of the community, witness and connoisseur

The reason to write a biographical dictionary might be understood as a way of the author to obtain an authority over a subject or a group. In this sense, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* might be perceived as a way of Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib to claim authority in the field of calligraphy and amongst the group of people interested in calligraphy. Yet, when we read *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* it is noticeable that the author does not position himself as an authority, but rather talks about the people and their works by relying on the opinions of an anonymous community. Since the author does not specify, it is difficult to draw the characteristics of this anonymous community clearly. But it might be concluded that it consists of Istanbulites who were interested in calligraphy and who took place in the social network of the author. The sense of a community permeates throughout the biographical dictionary.

In general, the individuals and their works are told as known and liked by this community. Words like *mergûb* (desired), *makbûl* (esteemed) and *memdûh* (praised) are used frequently in order to identify an individual and his works. For example, Ömer Efendi, who was an instructor at the Qur'an school of Yeni Vâlide Mosque in Üsküdar, is described as "appreciated by skillful and sagacious people."[243] In the same manner, one of the calligraphy instructors in the palace, Hüseyin Efendi el-Hablî is described as "esteemed and praised by the old and the young."[244] The

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[243] "[P]esendîde-i erbâb-ı kemâl ve hüner olmuştur." Ibid., 247.

[244] "[M]emdûh ve makbûl-i kibâr ü sigar [.]" Ibid., 124.

success of individuals in calligraphy is represented as being decided by the consensus of the people who were interested in calligraphy.[245] In other words, the author writes as a spokesman of communal taste. Only in one or two examples does he express his own opinion or criticize the works and behaviors of a person in a negative manner. Zeynep Altok observes a similar tendency in Âşık Çelebi's biographical dictionary of poets and she argues that he never plays the role of a "modern critic".[246] In a similar vein, Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib does not generally give himself the authority to be a critic.

On the other hand, in some parts of his biographical dictionary the author ceases to write as the spokesman of communal taste and gives his own observations on a person and his works instead. In these rare instances, the author intervenes in the text in order to show the moments of selecting, evaluating and organizing his material, that is, the people whose stories are recounted.[247] He appears whether as a witness of the skills of the person or as a connoisseur evaluating the works of someone. For example, Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib mentions himself as a witness to the talents of Hüseyin Beşe ibn-i Ahmed, who was a janissary. We learn that

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[245] Cem Behar draws attention to a similar point in his book on an eighteenth century biographical dictionary of musicians. Cem Behar, *Şeyhülislâm'ın Müziği: 18. Yüzyılda Osmanlı/Türk Musıkisi ve Şeyhülislâm Es'ad Efendi'nin Atrabü'l-Âsâr'ı* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2010), 94.

[246] Zeynep Altok, "Âşık Çelebi ve Edebî Kanon" in Âşık Çelebi ve Şairler Tezkiresi Üzerine Yazılar, eds. Hatice Aynur, Aslı Niyazioğlu, 117-133.

[247] Hilary Kilpatrick, in her article on the Abu l-Farağ's (d. c. 363/ 972-3) biographies of poets, observes that the author of the biographical dictionary intervenes into the text very often. She observes that one of the reasons for these interventions is sourced from his aim to indicate his evaluating, manipulating or organizing his material. See Hilary Kilpatrick, "Abu l-Farağ's Profiles of Poets: A 4th/10th. Century Essay at the History and Sociology of Arabic Literature," *Arabica* 44, Fasc. 1 (Jan., 1997): 94-128.

although the janissary lost his right arm in the Island War (*Ada muharebesi*)[248] when he was hit by a cannon ball, he had a fairly good handwriting and copied many Qur'ans and *Delâ'ilü'l-hayrât*s. The author says that he himself saw this janissary's works, and watched him while he was writing, and it was as a result of these interactions that he decided to include an entry about him in the *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*.[249] Probably, the author felt obliged to bring up his own role as a witness and a judge of the works of this janissary because Hüseyin Beşe ibn-i Ahmed and his talents were unknown to the wider community. Similarly, the author appears as a witness in the biographical entry of Süleyman Efendi, who is said to have written with an iron pen (*demirden masnu' hâme*). The author explains the difficulty of Süleyman Efendi's calligraphy style by referring to his own unsuccessful experience: "This humble man experienced and observed in his meetings with his cherub-friend (*kerrûbî-enîs*) the impossibility of marking even a dot with the iron pen. But it was marvelous to watch him write with this pen in his blessed hands."[250] It seems that the author intervenes in both of these cases because they feature extraordinary individuals: one wrote with a physical disability and the other wrote with an unusual writing tool. Yet as a connoisseur and a witness the author verifies their ability in calligraphy on behalf of the anonymous community. Here, it is worth noting a difference between the

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[248] The author might be referring by *Ada Muharebesi* to the Ottoman war against Venice in the Peleponnese between 1715-1717. See Caroline Finkel, *Osman's Dream: The Story of the Ottoman Empire 1300-1923* (London: John Murray, 2005), 336-337.

[249] "[B]u fakîr dahi gerek hattın gerek ma'ârif-i sâiresin görüp, ricâl-i ahbâb ile dâhil-i *Devhatü'l-küttâb* kılındı." Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*, 128.

[250] "Bu fakîr celîs-nâdî-i kerrûbî-enîsleri oldukça kalem-i merkūme ile bir nokta vaz'ı mümkün olmayıp muhâl olduğu tecrübe ve müşâhede olunurdu. Lâkin [kendi] dest-i mübâreklerinde kā'ide-i mergūbe üzerine kitâbetleri temâşâ beyâna hayret verir idi." Ibid., 170.

biographical dictionaries of poets and calligraphers in terms of their order of

presentation. In the individual entries, biographical dictionaries of poets generally

begin with the biography and then give an example of the biographee's poetic output.

But, since it was impractical to include an exemplary calligraphy work of a

calligrapher in a biographical dictionary in manuscript form,, Suyolcuzâde Mehmed

Necib occasionally intervenes in the text to prove the ability of the person in the eyes

of his readers.

Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib frequently stresses his role as a witness and a

connoisseur in the biographical entries of the people whom he met in Egypt. He went

to the city of Rosetta (Reşid) as a judge and there he met with many people who

were interested in calligraphy.[251] In the biographical entries of individuals from

Egypt he remarks that he examined (*müşâhede, temâşâ*) their works. These remarks

serve to confirm the reader on their talent in calligraphy again. It might be argued

that since he wrote for an Istanbulite readership who did not have the same

opportunity to meet with individuals interested in calligraphy in Egypt and to

evaluate their works, he plays the role of a connoisseur. For example, after the author

introduced Nakkâş Ahmed Efendi who was a slave of Selim Bey, a governor in

Egypt (*ümerâ-i Mısır'dan Selim bey*), and was trained by Cezâirî Hüseyin Efendi in

sülüs and *nesih* scripts in Cairo, he again situates himself as a witness and

connoisseur in order to convince the reader in Nakkâş Ahmed Efendi's talent: "This

humble man saw [Nakkâş Ahmed Efendi's] calligraphy work, which is on the

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[251] For some of these individuals see the biographical entries for Ahmed Efendi, İsmâil el-Mısrî, Bahrî Mehmed Çelebi, Bosnevî Osman Efendi, Süleyman Efendi, Abdullah Efendi in Ibid., 78, 86, 95, 96, 171, 219-220.

pleasant pavilion of Zülfikar Bey. Nakkâş Ahmed Efendi inscribed onto the pavilion a poem about Zülfikar Bey by Alemî Ahmed Efendi, the previous judge of Cairo. The style of calligraphy is praiseworthy. He is a distinguished calligrapher."[252] In a similar vein, Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib writes that he added an entry about Abdullah Efendi, who was known as Tezkireci in the divan of Cairo during the reign of Mahmud I, after seeing his works: "I had a meeting with him in the city of Cairo and saw his respected works and thus, an entry on him was recorded in the miscellany. It is certain that he was a swift scribe (*kâtib*) and a venerable person."[253]

In this way, the author's role in the text becomes multifaceted. In my opinion, the instances that show the author as a witness and a connoisseur do not provide him the role of an authority or critic in the modern sense. In fact, his own figuration as a witness and connoisseur might be interpreted in parallel to his own purpose to represent himself as part of the network of the people interested in calligraphy. The way he posits himself as a witness and connoisseur serves to represent himself as a person who knows the language and criteria of the community. Moreover, the text praises being a person who has the capacity to discern and distinguish the talents of someone in calligraphy and the value of a work.

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[252] "Bu fakîr Mısır-ı Kahire'de merhûm Zülfikâr Bey hakkında sâbıkan Kahire-i Mısır Kadısı Alemî Ahmed Efendi [Hazretleri]nin inşâdları olan kasîde-i nazîdelerin celî müsennâ hat ile tâhrir ve nukūş-ı dil-pezîrleri mîr-i mûmâileyhin binâ eylediği hânesindeki kasr-ı ra'nâda temâşâ eyledim. Tarîka-i memdûha üzere yazmış[lardır.] Güzîde hattâttır." Ibid., 330.

[253] "Bu fakîrle Kahire-i Mısır'da görüşülüp, eser-i mu'teberleri müşâhedemiz olmakla zîver-i mecmû'a kılındı. Hakkā ki kâtib-i serî'ü'l-kalem, zât-ı muhteremdir." Ibid., 246.

3.4 The sources of *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*: Friends and books

While writing his biographical dictionary Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib used several

sources of information and he refers them explicitly. The preface where the author

discusses the creation of the Pen and the alphabet of *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* is full of

names of various books.[254] In the biographical entries of the old masters he mentions

that he took the information from *Menâkıb-ı Hünerverân* or *Gülzâr-ı Savâb.* Yet, as I

mentioned, the majority of the people whose biographies are narrated had lived

during the reigns of Ahmed III and Mahmud I. Thus, most of the people in the text

lived during the lifetime of the author. Rather than written sources, the author refers

mainly to oral sources of information that apparently helped him to write the

biographical entries of some people that he did not know personally. Sometimes he

mentions his own acquaintanceship of the people or their works; sometimes he uses

his friends as sources of information on another person. It is noticeable that the

author had a personal relationship with the majority of the individuals in the text. He

does not state his acquaintanceship with every individual in each entry. Yet, if he

does not know the individual he says that he got the information from another person

and puts a note concerning the reliability of the information.

For example at the end of the biographical entry of Hıfzi Ahmed Çelebi he

notes that "an entry [on Hıfzi Ahmed Çelebi] was added according to the description

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[254] Some of the books are as follows: *Zühretü'r-riyâz*, İmam Suyûtî's *Muhâdarât, Kitabü'l-Hey'etü's-Sünniye* and *Ma'rifetü'l-Evâil*, *Tefsîr-i Celaleyn*, Taşköprüzâde's *Mevzû'ât*. See Ibid., 46-58.

of his master [Râsim Mehmed Efendi]."[255] He got the information about Alîmî Kāsım Efendi who lived during the reign of Murad IV from Çavuşlar Kâtibizâde Refî' Mehmed Efendi (d. 1769) and he remarks its accuracy.[256] On the other hand, sometimes the author explains the reason why he left one of the biographical entries very short and deficient with his inability to find enough information about the person. For example, Osman Efendi's biography is very short compared to the others and only states that he was from Sarajevo and that he learnt *sülüs* and *nesih* from Rodosî İbrâhim Efendi. The author explains the shortness of the entry as follows: "Since this much has been learned from his companions, it is inappropriate to venture to say more about him, and thus his entry has been added into *Devhatü'l-küttâb* in this way."[257]

Thus, by way of intervening into the text in order to reveal his sources of information and their accuracy the author tries to demonstrate the reliability of his biographical dictionary. At the same time, it is understood that face-to-face relationships and familiarities determine the world and network of people interested in calligraphy that *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* portrays.[258] *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* presents a

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[255] "[Ü]stâdları [mezbûr Efendi] [Râsim Mehmed Efendi] ta'rîfiyle es-siyâde-i *Devhatü'l-küttâb* kılındı." Ibid., 133.

[256] "[Çavuşlar] Kâtibizâde Refî' Mehmed Efendi'den menkūl ve ahbâr-ı sahîhaları makbûl olmakla merhûm-i merkūm dâhil-i *Devhatü'l-küttâb* kılındı." Ibid., 238. For another individuals whose information were got from others by the author see the biographical entries for Ahmed el-Hüseynî, Hamdi Seyyid Mehmed Efendi, Hândân Mehmed, Halil Ağa, Şuğlî Ahmed Çelebi, Ganîzâde Efendi, Feyzi Efendi in Ibid., 88, 132, 137, 139, 186, 252, 253.

[257] "Şürekâsından hallerine bu kadarca ıttılā'-ı tahsîlinden nâşî beyhûde tafsîle cesâret olunmayıp dâhil-i *Devhatü'l-küttâb* kılınmaya revâ görüldü." Ibid., 232. Also see the biographical entries for Revnakî Çelebi and Samancızâde Hüseyin Efendi in Ibid., 150 and 197.

[258] Altok makes the same comment on Âşık Çelebi's biographical dictionary of poets. She also observes that *Meşâ'irü'ş-Şu'arâ* depicts a community which comprises of Ottoman administrative and

network that comprises of people who have relationships with each other and who come from various backgrounds.

In the preface of *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*, the author Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib announces that one of his friends, İsmâil Efendi who was the accountant of the Gate of Felicity (*muhâsib-âğâ-yı Bâbü's-sa'âde)*, encouraged him to write a text by stating "a treatise that comprises of the skilled writers of *sülüs*, *nesih*, *rikā'*, *reyhânî, muhakkak*, *nesta'lîk*, *celî* and *dîvânî* would be nice."[259] İsmâil Efendi suggested Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib to write a *zayl* [a continuation] to *Gülzâr-ı Savâb* which will cover the pleasant writers (*hoş-nüvîsân*) who lived after the compilation of it by Nefeszâde İbrahim Efendi (d. 1060/1650-51).[260]

As a result Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib wrote one of the most comprehensive biographical dictionaries of calligraphers in the Ottoman Empire. It covers the life stories of 500 people. (Table 3) Among these people almost 350 of them lived between the years 1650 and 1740s.[261] Thus the author mostly covers the biographies of people who were either his contemporaries or near contemporaries. Among the people who lived between 1650 and 1740s, 84 of them worked in the bureaucratic circles, 81 of them were members of the *ulema* (besides scholars and

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religious elites and thus, portrays a network of elites. She states that the world portrayed by Aşık Çelebi is defined by face-to-face relations and represents a limited facet of poetry and its practice. Altok, "Âşık Çelebi ve Edebî Kanon," 125.

[259] "[H]oş-nüvîsân-ı hatt-ı sülüs ve nesih ve rikā' ve reyhânî ve muhakkak ve nesta'lîk ve celî ve dîvânîyi müştemil ve hâvî bir risâle-i cemîle olup [.]" Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*, 43.

[260] Ibid., 43.

[261] Here and now I will refer to approximate numbers. I am not able to give the exact dates and numbers because the author does not mention the date of birth and death exactly for all the individuals. Yet, it is possible to understand in which period the individuals might lived because of the names of the patrons or the sultans indicated in the biographical entries.

judges, there exist 13 *imam*s) and 40 were from the administrative and palace elites. 57 appear as instructors of calligraphy (24 independent calligraphy instructors, 19 instructors at the palace, 13 instructors at Qur'an schools). Almost 115 people are identified merely with the multitude of their writings, not with any other profession. There exist 7 janissaries, 4 slaves, 3 booksellers and 2 traders.

When the calligraphers in the *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* are compared to those in the previous two biographical dictionaries of calligraphers two major differences are noticeable. First, neither *Menâkıb-ı Hünerverân* nor *Gülzâr-ı Savâb* contains biographies of individuals who came from varied social and professional backgrounds. Even if they came from various backgrounds the authors did not record it clearly in the way Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib did. And second, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* differs in the way it situates the skills in calligraphy within the life stories of these individuals who are coming from various backgrounds. The representation of skills in calligraphy is very much related to the transformation of the representation of the calligrapher in the three biographical dictionaries of calligraphers. As I discussed in the previous chapter, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* represents a more diversified worldly and corporeal context for calligraphy by highlighting the different positions of skills in calligraphy in the life and career of a person. Here, I will try to concretize and contextualize what I have argued in the previous chapters.

3.5 The representation of the members of the administrative and bureaucratic circles

In contrast to the old scholarship, which defines the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as a period of decline and which overlooks the structural transformations in the bureaucratic, administrative and judicial establishments, the revisionist historiography tends to show the changing dynamics of the state and its mechanisms in the early modern world. According to the studies on the institutional history of bureaucracy, in parallel to the expansion of the government during the seventeenth century offices moved out of the palace to new headquarters, numbers of the scribes increased and this growth caused an increase in hierarchization and upward mobility.[262] While guild-like patterns of recruitment were adopted by lower scribal ranks, higher scribal officials gained the opportunity to reach higher posts that had been previously dominated by the slave-military elite.[263] The rise of scribes to high political offices has been conceptualized as "the civilianization of government."[264] In this regard, the political cadres of the state transited from the people of the sword (*seyfiyye*) to the people of the pen (*kalemiyye*).[265] Christoph K. Neumann points to the influence gained by the bureaucrats in the eighteenth century in contrast to their

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[262] Carter V. Findley, "Political culture and the great households" in *The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603-1839*, ed. Suraiya N. Faroqhi, vol.3 of *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, ed. I. Metin Kunt (Cmabridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 70-71. Also see Ekin Emine Tuşalp Atiyas, "Political Literacy and the Politics of Eloquence: Ottoman Scribal Community in the Seventeenth Century" (Unpublished PhD. diss., Harvard University, 2013), 4.

[263] Findley, "Political culture and the great households," 71. Tuşalp Atiyas, "Political Literacy and the Politcs of Eloquence," 4.

[264] Ibid., 71.

[265] Tuşalp Atiyas argues that Rami Mehmed exemplifies this transition as being the first chief scribe who becomes the grand vizier. Ibid. 71.

existence as an ordinary branch of the state apparatus in the previous centuries.[266] He

defines the eighteenth century as "an age of the 'men of the pen' (*kalemiyye*)"

because most of the Ottoman politicians of the age were coming from scribal

backgrounds.[267]

The historical context for the emergence of the "men of the pen" as important

political figures is examined in a recently completed PhD. thesis by Ekin Emine

Tuşalp Atiyas. Tuşalp Atiyas' thesis opens up various vistas to have a better

understanding of *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* and the scribal world that it portrays. In her

thesis, rather than the institutional history of bureaucracy, the cultural zone of the

scribal community in the making appears as a significant issue.[268] She states that the

studies focusing on the Ottoman imperialization process present "an account of an

ever-perfecting patrimonial bureaucracy" and render the scribe as the most

elementary figure of "bureaucratic machine."[269] Yet, the evolution and

transformation of the scribal world and culture are poorly understood.

The penholders or scribes began to assert themselves much more deliberately

as an intellectual and political community 1650s onwards.[270] Tuşalp Atiyas' thesis

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[266] Christoph K. Neumann, "Political and diplomatic developments" in *The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603-1839*, ed. Suraiya N. Faroqhi, vol.3 of *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, ed. I. Metin Kunt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 54.

[267] Ibid., 54.

[268] She argues that the transformations in the bureaucratic structure and scribal culture at the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were overlooked in the current scholarship. And, she examines the reasons of the lack of studies concerning the cultural world of the scribes. See Tuşalp Atiyas, "Political Literacy and the Politic of Eloquence," 6-7.

[269] Ibid., 27.

[270] Ibid., 27.

marks a "scribal turn" in politics in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries as a result of various cultural and political transformations.[271] An elementary sign of this scribal turn is the representation of scribes as a community best fit to run the empire in various sources. The addition of the skills in eloquence (*belāgāt*) and articulateness (*fasāhat*) to the intellectual accomplishments of the scribal community is another sign.[272]

Devhatü'l-Küttâb appears as an important source that delineates the cultural zone of the scribes of the Ottoman bureaucracy. There we find scribes from various ranks of the bureaucracy and generally their biographical entries emphasize similar points. To begin with, Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib emphasizes the career lines of these people. In some biographical entries the education process and the names of masters become secondary besides the career line of the person, and sometimes are not even mentioned clearly. Most of the time the author specifies the script type in which a given calligrapher-scribe excelled and sometimes he clearly makes a connection between the calligrapher-scribe's profession and that script type. The person's knowledge of poetry or music and his skills in prose writing are remarked too. Also, one of the characteristics that the author highlights for the people from bureaucratic circles is the eloquence and articulateness/subtlety of meaning of their prose writings. For this reason, most of the people are identified with words such as prose writer (*münşî*), eloquent (*fasih*), articulate (*beliğ*) and litterateur (*edib*). It is noticeable that eloquence and articulateness are introduced as characteristics

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[271] Ibid., 9.

[272] Ibid., 131.

belonging only to the administrative and bureaucratic elites and the members of the religious establishment. Neither *imam*s, nor instructors or the people who are identified merely with the multitude of their writings are praised for their eloquence and articulateness. It might be concluded that eloquence and articulateness in language and by extension, skills in prose writing had a prominent place in the cultural milieu of the members of administrative, bureaucratic and religious establishments. For a better understanding of the author's portrayal and identification of these people, it is necessary to expose how Tuşalp Atiyas scrutinizes the place of these skills within the scribal culture of the period.[273]

She claims that as significant terms in Arabic literary criticism, eloquence and articulateness "became an integral part of the education of the scribes, since they governed the field of prose writing."[274] Accordingly, in *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* we find many instances where the author praises an individual for his skills in prose writing and his eloquence and articulateness. For example the author describes Hıfzı Mehmed Efendi who served as the chief scribe in the Istanbul customs (*İstanbul Gümrüğü başkitâbeti*) as "a prose writer who adorns eloquence (*münşî-i belâğat-*

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[273] In this context, she discusses the *Münazara-ı Tığ u Kalem* (*The Flyting of the Sword and the Pen*) written in 1683 by the director of finances of İstanbul and its vicinities (*şıkk-ı sâlis defterdârı*) Bosnavî Mehmed Şa'banzâde Efendi (d. 1708-1709). According to her the significance of this text originates from the way it portrays the scribes (*katibân*) as an intellectual community by way of referring to their rhetorical skills. Scribes are represented as people who not only secured "the continuity of the Ottoman state and institutions, but through their mastery over eloquence (*belagat*) and purity (*fasahat*) in language, made intellectual life possible in the Ottoman Empire Ibid., 134-135.

[274] Ibid., 135. For a historical analysis on the integration of eloquence and articulateness into prose writing in the Islamic intellectual traditions and in the seventeenth century Ottoman literature see Ibid., 138-161.

pîrâ), [and] a poet with an excellent style (*şâ'ir-i pâkize-edâ*)"[275] Râkım el-Hâcc
Mehmed Efendi who was in the positions of the accountant of Anatolia (*Muhâsebe-i
Anadolu*) and the director of the registry of landed properties (*defter emâneti*) during
the reign of Mahmud I is identified by the author as "the distinguished one among
the eloquent poets and the admired one among the articulate litterateurs in the
science of prose writing."[276] The author describes Behçet Mehmed Efendi who was
the private secretary of the finance minister (*defterdâr*) during the reign of Mahmud I
as "[one] whose poetry and prose writing are admitted by all, and whose knowledge
on various subjects and pleasant writing are ornament of his style; he is unique
among his contemporaries, articulate, litterateur, talented and knowledgeable about
the affairs of religion and state."[277] Not only the members of the upper echelons of
the bureaucracy but also those from the lower echelons are praised for their skills in
eloquence and articulateness.

The collective representation of scribes as an intellectual community whose
members were equipped with certain discursive tools is not a coincidence when we
consider the historical context of the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the
eighteenth centuries. The period witnessed constant warfare and hence, an increase
in diplomatic relationships that changed the role of the scribes from writers of

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[275] "[M]ünşî-i belâğat-pîrâ, şâ'ir-i pâkize-edâ [.]" Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*,
126.

[276] "[Ş]u'arâ-yı belâğat –şi'ârın güzîdesi ve fenn-i inşâda üdebâ-yı fesâhatkârın pesendîdesi [.]" Ibid.,
158.

[277] "Şi'r ü inşâ müsellim-i tab'-ı muhteremleri ma'ârif-i sâire ve kitâbet-i fâhire zînet-i kalem-i
muhteremleri, akrânı nâdir, belîğ ve edîb ve mâhir, müsteşâr-ı dîn ü devlet [.]"Ibid., 100.

accounts of conquest to "negotiators and treaty makers."[278] Thus, it might be said

that scribal skills in prose writing, correct phrasing and preparation of documents

were in high demand. Within this context the eloquence and articulateness happened

to be tools of scribes and are referred for their intellectual and political functions.

The narration of the biographies of Ahmed Paşa and Emînî Mehmed Bey are

illustrative. It is striking that these two individuals who participated in diplomatic

negotiations with foreign states were praised for their skills both in calligraphy, prose

writing and for the eloquence and articulateness of their language. The biography of

Ahmed Paşa who was from Iraq and had the penname of Ârifî goes as follows:

> After he held the positions of chancellor and chief scribe, which are
> among the distinguished offices of the Imperial Council, he was
> entrusted with the task of determining borders during the Austrian peace
> treaty. After he completed his job, the sultan honored him by granting
> him the rank of vizierate and other ranks. Later on, he was distinguished
> by being appointed commander-in-chief of Revan in Iran. The aforesaid
> excellency is both wise and learned, knowledgeable about the intricacies
> of calligraphy, and proficient in the science of musical theory; he is a
> delicate prose stylist, and an eloquent poet, and is talented in every kind
> of script type, but especially outshines his contemporaries in the *divani*
> script."[279]

In the biography of Emînî Mehmed Bey, who served as the private secretary and

steward (*kethüda*) of the vizier İbrâhim Paşa, the private secretary of the clerk of the

vizier (*mektubî-i sadr-ı âlî halîfesi*), private secretary of the director of the registry of

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[278] Tuşalp Atiyas, "Political Literacy and the Politics of Eloquence," 189-190.

[279] "[H]idemât-ı makbûle-i dîvâniyyeden nişânî ve reîsü'l-küttâb olduktan sonra Nemçe Musâlahası'nda sınır kat'ı umûruna dahi me'mûr ve avdetinde avâtıf-ı aliyye-i şehriyârîden rütbe-i vezârete irtifâ' ile bekâm ve mesrûr ve nice menâsıb-ı celîle ihrâz ve zabtıyla imtiyâz bulup, [ba'dehu] diyâr-ı İran'da Revan Seraskerliği ile ser-efrâz olmuşlardır. Müşârünileyh hazretleri sâhib-i kemâl ve ma'ârif ve dekâyık-ı hutûta ârif ve mâlik-i mülk-i fenn-i edvâr, münşî-i nâzik-edâ, efsah-ı şu'arâ-yı dânâ ve aklâm-mend olanın her birinde mâhir, lâkin hatt-ı dîvânîde akrânı nâdir olup [.]" Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*, 87.

landed properties (*mektubî-i emîn-i defter-i hâkānî*), the Moscow ambassador (*Moskov'a elçilikle me'bûs*), and head accountant (*başmuhâsebe*), similar abilities are highlighted:

> During his years as student, he was good at *sülüs*, *nesih*, *talik* and especially *divani* scripts; he has few peers in poetry and prose writing. He is capable of Qur'anic exegesis and the [study of] hadiths. He is famous for his many odes and works of rare eloquence in the three languages [i.e., Arabic, Persian and Turkish].[280]

Likewise, we learn that after Nazîf Mustafa Efendi became a master scribe (*hâcegân*) and reached some other positions, he was ordered to join the diplomatic mission that was sent to the shah of Iran by Mahmud I. The author remarks that Nazîf Mustafa Efendi was also responsible for the preparation and completion of the treaty that was sent to the shah: "He was commissioned with the preparation of the imperial edict and joined the envoy that was sent to the Iran shah. He returned after conducting the negotiations and concluding the treaty in accordance with the wishes of the public and the Sublime State."[281] In return for his service to the state, the sultan gave him a sable coat and the position of the accountant of Anatolia (*Anadolu muhâsebesi*). Nazîf Mustafa Efendi's skills in prose writing and in *nesih* and *divani* scripts are emphasized, too.[282]

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[280] "Hâl-i taleblerinde sülüs ve nesih ve ta'lîkte, husûsan dîvânîde hattât ve şi'r ü inşâda akrânı nâdir, ferîdü'l-asr, tefsîre kādir ve ehâdîse me'zûn, sâhib-i me'âsir, elsine-i selasede kasîde-i nazîde ve âsâr-ı belîgāne-i nâdîde ile şöhre-i âlemyân, zât-ı âlî-şândır." Ibid., 89.

[281] "Şâh-ı İran tarafına nâme-i Hümâyûn ve sefâret ile ba's ü irsâl olunup 'âmme-i nâs ve vükelâ-yı Devlet-i Aliyye'nin murâdı ve marzîleri üzere musâlahayı mukâleme [ve itmâm] ve emr-i musâlahanın tekmîline temessükler ile avdet edip [.]" Ibid., 321.

[282] Vassâf Abdullah Efendi was also responsible in the embassy that was sent to the Iran shah. Besides the eloquence and articulateness of his language his skills in poetry, prose writing and calligraphy are emphasized. For his biographical entry see Ibid., 334.

In the above-mentioned three examples skills in prose writing and in calligraphy are represented in connection with the service of diplomacy. Thus, besides the eloquence and articulateness skills in calligraphy are represented throughout the text as an important component of the newly identified intellectual content of the scribal community. In a similar vein to the eloquence and articulateness which are identified as discursive tools of scribes by Tuşalp Atiyas, calligraphy was another tool that had intellectual and political functions for the scribal community. In order to have a better understanding of the role of skills in calligraphy for the individuals working in the bureaucracy other kinds of sources than the biographical dictionaries of calligraphers like calligraphic or alphabetic exercises (*müfredât*) should be examined (see Appendix B, Figures 30 and 31). In this way, the functions of calligraphy for the people acting as negotiators, and what kind of a role the calligraphy played in the international affairs and cross-cultural concerns of the state might be uncovered.

3.6 The representation of the members of the religious establishment

Devhatü'l-Küttâb also narrates the life stories of various *ulema*. The *ulema* covered consist not just of scholars and judges, but also of more peripheral members of the *ulema* like mosque preachers or *imam*s. But the author's attitude towards the higher and lower echelons of the religious establishment differs. The biographical entries of scholars and judges are more detailed; they emphasize the career line and describe a wide are of expertise which comprises of poetry, prose writing, eloquence and

articulateness in general. In contrast, the biographical entries of *imam*s and preachers are shorter, emphasize the educational role of the individuals and are almost devoid of reference to any other skills than calligraphy. The biographical entries written for the members of the administrative and bureaucratic circles and of the upper echelons of the religious establishment do not display a serious difference in terms of structure. The same career-focused approach of the author is obvious in the biographical entries devoted to the high-ranking *ulema*.

Madeline C. Zilfi draws attention to the increasing focus on career lines in the Ottoman biographical dictionaries from the late seventeenth century onwards. She argues that rather than scholarly activities, bureaucratic honors became the markers of achievements in the texts (especially in the biographical dictionaries) written by members of the *ulema*. According to her, because of the existing focus on the career lines the texts do not refer to the literary output and scholarly achievements of the scholars. She finds the remarks on the literary output of the *ulema* in the biographical dictionaries insufficient.[283] *Devhatü'l-Küttâb, however,* clearly does not fit this generalization. It gives reference to the career lines, scholarly achievements and literary output of the members of the religious establishment. In a similar vein to the members of the bureaucratic establishment, members of the upper echelons of the religious establishment are praised for their skills in calligraphy, the composition of high prose and the eloquence and articulateness of their language. In other words,

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[283] Madeline C. Zilfi, "The Ottoman Ulema" in *The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603-1839*, ed. Suraiya N. Faroqhi, vol.3 of *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, ed. I. Metin Kunt (Cmabridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 209-226.

these skills are not represented as being exclusive to the members of the bureaucratic and administrative establishments.

There is reason to think that *Devhatü'l-Küttâb's* discussion of *ulema* in this connection was reflective of the social realities. Christine Woodhead draws attention to the multidimensional development of the Ottoman prose writing style and the role played by members of both the bureaucratic and religious establishments in it.[284] She relates the development of the Ottoman prose writing style, first, with the texts produced for the training of the chancery scribes in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries such as the "manuals of diplomatic style, collections of exemplars and form letters" and second, with the usage of prose writing style by the members of the *ulema* in the texts that they produced such as histories and examples of didactic literature.[285] The members of the religious establishment started to be acknowledged as masters of prose writing style by the early seventeenth century.[286]

In this fashion, skills in prose writing constitute a prominent part of the representation of the *ulema* in *Devhatü'l-Küttâb.* For example Rûhi Mustafa Efendi, a scholar who worked as the private secretary of Mehmed Emin Efendi who was the the chief physcian of the palace (*reîsü'l-etībbâ-i şehriyârî*) of Mahmud I and the previous chief military judge, is praised for his skills in prose writing. He is identified as a prose writer and eloquent.[287] The judge of Damascus Parsa Sabır

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[284] Christine Woodhead, "Circles of Correspondence: Ottoman letter-writing in the early seventeenth century," *Journal of Turkish Literature* 4 (2007), 56.

[285] Ibid., 56.

[286] Ibid., 56.

[287] Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*, 157.

Mehmed Efendizâde Abdülbâki Efendi (d. 1733) is identified as "eloquent in poetry and prose writing."[288] The scholar Vassaf Hüseyin Efendi's biographical entry emphasizes his skills in prose writing and identifies him as "one of the famous and great eloquents."[289] The entry also states that after he became the head of the office issuing *fetva*s (*fetvâ emîni*), with the order of the sultan, he was sent to Isfahan to accompany Kara Mehmed Paşazade who became an envoy there after the completion of the treaty between the two states.

The biographical entry about the scholar Hanif İbrahim Efendi gives many references to his skills in various subjects and his literary output. Another person whose works were praised by the *ulema* as the author states is Seyyid Mustafa Efendi. His commentary on *Şifa-yı Kadı İyaz* is celebrated as an eloquent and articulate prose work.[290] It is also recorded that his work was accepted to Mahmud I's library as an act of reverence.[291] In Seyyid Hüseyin Efendi's biographical entry the practice of *mülâzemet* appears. During his mülazemet the judge La'lizâde Abdülbâki Efendi copied books like *Tefsir-i Celâleyn*, *Tefsir-i Kadı* and İshak Hocası Burusevi Ahmed Efendi's *Mukaddimetü'l-Edeb*.[292] He was also famous for the other *kütüb-i nefise* that he wrote for the nobles of the age. He later on became a judge in

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[288] "[F]esahatgâh-ı şi'r ü inşâ [.]" Ibid., 98.

[289] "[B]elîğ-i bülegā-i bülend-iştihâr [.]" Ibid., 334.

[290] "Bir inşâ-yı ra'nâ-yı celîl ve bir eser-i bî-hemtâ-yı cemîldir ki, her satırı birer sünbül-i bâğ-ı cennet ve her harfi birer gevher-i yek-tâ-yı ummân-ı fazl ü belâgattır." Ibid., 130.

[291] "Şehenşâh-ı cem-câh Hazretleri kemâl-i ta'zîm-birle vaz'-ı kütüphâne-i kabûl buyurup tekrîm olunmuşlardır." Ibid. 130.

[292] Ibid., 169.

Anatolia. Seyyid Hüseyin Efendi's skills in calligraphy are represented as an asset that enabled him to reach higher positions.

3.7 Calligraphy as a gentlemanly activity

Calligraphic skills are mentioned in a very similar way in the life stories of people from the bureaucratic and administrative cadres and the religious establishment. These people showed expertise not just in calligraphy, but also a variety of other fields such as prose writing, poetry, eloquence and articulateness. In the portrayal of people from both groups skills in calligraphy are represented as one of the components of their intellectual identities. In a similar vein, Philippe Bora Keskiner argues by giving reference to *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* that during the reign of Ahmed III calligraphy became a part of the image of the Ottoman administrative and bureaucratic elite.[293] In fact, it could be argued that the ideal cultured person of the period had knowledge and skills in a wide variety of fields, not just calligraphy. In this regard, it is telling that Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib often attributes his subjects' decision to learn calligraphy to a desire to "improve the faculty for arts" (*zamîme-i ma'ârifetleri olmak için*). This phrase is frequently used in the biographical entries of people from the upper echelons of bureaucratic, administrative and *ulema* circles. In addition to its usage in the above-mentioned entries some other examples might be given. In the biographical entry of Râtib Ahmed Paşa who was among the

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[293] Philippe Bora Keskiner, "Sultan Ahmed III (r.1703-1730) as a Calligrapher and Patron of Calligraphy," (Unpublished PhD. Thesis, SOAS, University of London, 2012), 82-83. Keskiner does not explain the way calligraphy became an important component of the identity of the members of the religious establishment too.

administrative elites, skills in calligraphy are situated within his wide area of expertise. The author mentions first that Râtib Ahmed Paşa had an education in various fields and he had composed enough poetry to form a *divan* before he became twenty. The author also adds that the eloquence and articulateness of his prose writing had become famous among people and he had learnt *talik* and *divani* scripts from Râsim Mehmed Efendi in order to "improve his faculty for arts."[294] The author uses the same phrase in the biographical entry of Âtıf Mustafa Efendi who was the Imperial Register (*defterdâr-ı evvel*) during the reign of Mahmud I. He learnt calligraphy in order to "improve his faculty for arts." Besides his skills in writing he is described as an individual who was good at poetry and prose writing, among the eloquent ones and knowledgeable about the affairs of religion and state (*müsteşâr-ı dîn ü devlet*).[295] It is noticeable that these biographies belong to members of the Ottoman elite. In contrast to the biographies of low-ranking scribes or calligraphers whose profession is not mentioned, in the biographical entries of the elites, skills in calligraphy are related as one among many other areas of expertise and thus, as a gentlemanly activity. According to the author's narration they learnt calligraphy to enhance their knowledge. For the people among the Ottoman elite there is no indication of a professionalization in relation to calligraphy. Calligraphy is not represented as their only tool to reach higher positions, but rather as one of many such means and as a component of their broader intellectual and cultural formation.

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[294] "[Z]amîme-i ma'ârifetleri olmak için [.]" Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*, 153.

[295] Ibid., 239.

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Keskiner specifies the reign of Ahmed III as a period in which members of the ruling class and high-ranking officials practiced and promoted calligraphy.[296] He argues that this phenomenon was very much related to Ahmed III's self-promotion as the "calligrapher-ruler" and the imitation of his artistry and patronage of calligraphy by the ruling and bureaucratic elite.[297] He claims that

> [a]n increasing number of calligraphers were also employed as bureaucrats, which can be seen as a systematic bureaucratization of calligraphy. With this political occurrence, the status of calligraphers reached new heights and members of the upper classes were keen to practice calligraphy. Unlike earlier periods, calligraphers could also be trained under the supervision and patronage of powerful households of Paşas and muftis, who were able to promote calligraphic circles independent of the royal scriptorium.[298]

I agree with Keskiner that the practice of calligraphy gained greater prestige among the Ottoman elite. In contrast to the earlier biographical dictionaries, in *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* we see more people from the upper levels of society as being interested in and promoting calligraphy. Yet, I find his conceptualization "bureaucratization of calligraphy" quite vague. He explains that with the employment of calligraphers as bureaucrats a process of "bureaucratization of calligraphy" realized. His statement implies that the people that he defined as bureaucrats were in fact calligraphers or got an education to become professional calligraphers. According to his perspective the increase in the prestige of calligraphy provide the calligraphers to got higher positions in the state cadres.

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[296] Keskiner, "Sultan Ahmed III (r.1703-1730) as a Calligrapher and Patron of Calligraphy," 79.

[297] Ibid., 79.

[298] Ibid., 80.

Yet, in *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* calligraphy is not a field only within the interest of the scribes in the bureaucracy or the people from the administrative elite. As I have argued, the members of the *ulema* are represented as giving importance to the calligraphic knowledge. Most of the judges and scholars appear as prominent figures in the community of religious establishment with their skills in calligraphy. In this regard, rather than conceptualizing this phenomenon as "bureaucratization of calligraphy", a wider approach on the increasing importance of calligraphy should be developed. Although it is difficult to make such an approach by only one source, that is *Devhatü'l-Küttâb,* at least it is fair to argue that to own a beautiful handwriting was an acknowledged and prestigious skill in the eyes of the Ottomans living between 1650s and 1750s. It is true that the same skill is praised in the earlier written sources of calligraphy but *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* is a peculiar early example that shows the popularization of this phenomenon in a wider scale of the early modern Ottoman society.

3.8 Script type as an identity ma(r)ker

Since the text shows the functions and understanding of calligraphy on a wider scale, an opportunity arises to understand if there was a relationship between the script types and social groups. In certain instances calligraphy signalled the social group to which a person belongs. A professionalization and compartmentalization of certain script types appear among the social groups that *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* covers. There is a certain differentiation between *divani*, *talik* and *nestalik* scripts. While *divani* script

is reserved for the members of the administration and bureaucracy, *talik* and *nestalik* scripts are reserved for the members of the *ulema*.[299] Since no study has examined this differentiation in the Ottoman world at large, it is difficult to examine its representation in *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*. It is true that *talik* script had been used in the *kadı* courts and *divani* had been used in the Imperial Council for a long period of time. But I think it is more than a mere reflection of the already existing areas of usage of the scripts. For example, as Tuşalp Atiyas draws our attention, in his work *Hulasa-ı İnşa*[300] Rami Mehmed Efendi explains that different types of scripts should be used for addressing different ranks of recipients: "A correspondence between commoners (*'avam*) and viziers were to be written in *hatt* whereas letters dispatched between the members of the *'ulema* were to be written in *talik* script."[301] It is not clear what Rami Mehmed refers to by *hatt*. But his emphasis on the use of *talik* script in the letters dispatched between the *ulema* is remarkable. It might be a rule of etiquette, a way to show reverence or only a practical issue, but it is tempting to see here a relationship being posited between the identity or profession of the person and the script type. Why do we see such a compartmentalization of script types according to profession and area of function? Which historical circumstances created such a differentiation between the *divani*, *talik* and *nestalik* scripts? These are questions waiting to be answered in light of new studies that will examine new sources. But, in

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[299] For the development of *divani* script see Ali Alparslan, *Osmanlı Hat Sanatı Tarihi*, 191-192. Alparslan mentions that *talik* was the script of the members of the religious establishment from the reign of Mehmed II to Republican Era. See Ibid., 156.

[300] Tuşalp Atiyas defines this work as "a perfect beginners' guide for any inspiring member of the scribal community" since it gives information on various scribal issues. See Tuşalp Atiyas, "Political Literacy and the Politcs of Eloquence," 249.

[301] Ibid., 255.

my opinion, in *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* the remarks on the script type in which the individual excelled plays the role of an identification marker.

Additionally, specialization in *divani* or *talik* and *nestalik* might have been perceived as a sign of advanced literacy. In the *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*, *sülüs* and *nesih* are often mentioned as script types that *imam*s, instructors at the Qur'an schools, and people of unknown profession excelled at, whereas the experts in *divani*, *talik* and *nestalik* scripts were also often identified as prose writer, eloquent, articulate and litterateur. It is understood from the biographical entries that individuals first learnt *sülüs* and *nesih* and then studied *divani*, *talik* or *nestalik*.[302] In contrast to *sülüs* and *nesih*, *divani*, *talik* and *nestalik* scripts are represented as scripts that are learnt as part of a profession.

For example in the biographical entry about Râkım el-Hacc Mehmed Efendi who held positions like the accountant of Anatolia (*muhâsebe-i Anadolu*) and director of the registry of landed properties (*defter emâneti*) we read that he first learnt *sülüs* and *nesih* scripts from the *imam* of Mirahur Mosque Seyyid Abdullah Efendi.[303] Then, his study of the *divani* script is related in connection with his profession: "Since he spent much time in writing the state documents, his skill in *divani* script is far better than in other scripts."[304] Ali Efendi, another student of the

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[302] Uğur Derman explains that during the process of calligraphy training after learning *sülüs* and *nesih* together under the same master, *talik* was learnt seperately under the supervision of another master. It shows that *talik* script needs specialization. See Derman, *Letters in Gold*, 41.

[303] "[İ]mâm-ı Câmi'-i Mirâhûr Seyyid Abdullah Efendi'den vaz'-ı ketebeye me'zûn olup, sülüs ve nesihte olan sahâyif-i âsârı bülend-iştihâr olmuştur." Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*, 158.

[304] "Tahrîrât-ı umûr-ı lâzime-i Devlet-i Aliyye-i Osmâniyye sûret-i meşkte sebât ve metânet bulmakla dîvânî hatları aklâm-ı sâirelerine gālib ve müreccahtır." Ibid., 158-159.

imam of Mirahur Mosque, Seyyid Abdullah Efendi, first learnt *sülüs*, *nesih* and *rika* from his master. His expertise in *divani* is also related to his profession: "Since he is the private secretary [*mektûbî*] of the steward [*kethüdâ*] of the Grand Vizier, his *divani* script is excellent."[305] Nu'mân Efendi's skills in *divani* improved thanks to his employment as a scribe to the state.[306] Because of his position as a scribe in the janissary registrar (*yeniçeri kalemi*) Seyyid Mehmed Nesib Efendi excelled in *siyakat* and *divani* scripts.[307] Tâlib Abdullah Efendi was praised for his skills in *şikest* which he learnt while handling the affairs of the religious court: "Since he spent time with the affairs of the religious court and wrote postscript (*hamiş-i kütüb*) his skills in *şikest* script has become praiseworthy among the master calligraphers of the time."[308] Bosnevî Ahmed Efendi who was a member of the *ulema* first learnt *sülüs* and *nesih* and then *nestalik* script.[309] Thus, in a major difference from the previous Ottoman biographical dictionaries of calligraphers, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* constructs an explicit relationship between the script type, profession and social group.

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[305] "[K]ethüdâ-yı sudûr-ı âlî-şânlara mektûbî olmakla dîvânî hatları dahi kemâl-encâm olup [.]" Ibid., 222.

[306] "Hidemât-ı kitâbet-i Devlet-i Aliyye ile güzârende-i evkāt olmakla hatt-ı dîvânîleri bir dereceye müntehî ve bir rütbeye fer ü behî vermiştir ki [.]" Ibid., 323.

[307] "[Y]eniçeri kaleminde küttâb-ı zevi'l-elbâbtan olmakla şeş kalemden mâ'adâ [dahi] siyâkat ve dîvânî [.]" Ibid., 173.

[308] "Umûr-ı şeri'yyede evkāt-güzâr olmakla hâmiş-i kütüb tahrîrâtı sûret-i meşkte sebât bulmakla vâdî-i şikestte olan hatları hoş-nüvîsân-ı asrın memdûhu olmuştur." Ibid., 207.

[309] Ibid., 92.

3.9 Busy with writing (*Kitâbetle meşgûl*): *Sülüs* and *nesih* writers

A comparison of the biographical entries written about people who excelled in *sülüs* and *nesih* and the people who excelled in *divani*, *talik* and *nestalik* reveals significant differences in the way Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib portrayed these two groups of people. In order to understand this different treatment the notices of an observer from the end of the seventeenth century, the chief of the scribes Rami Mehmed, on the qualities of a scribe (*kâtib*) seems significant to consider. He describes as follow:

> No matter what style of script he writes, a man who writes is called a katib. Katib means writer (*yazucu*). If he masters calligraphy (*hüsn-ü hatt*), they call him *ehl-i kalem*. Calligraphy, orthography and knowledge are to be found together in a *katib*, yet it is difficult to find these in one person. The scribes of *nesh* and *sülüs* scripts are often ignorant.[310]

It is remarkable that Rami Mehmed saw the writers of *nesih* and *sülüs* as people of limited knowledge. According to him they do not have sufficient skills in orthography and knowledge to be considered good *katibs*. Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib does not make such a drastic statement about the deficiencies of the writers of *nesih* and *sülüs* scripts as Rami Mehmed did. Yet, the content and style of his biographical entries about *sülüs* and *nesih* writers are significantly different than the ones written about the *divani*, *talik* and *nestalik* writers. In general, the biographical entries of the former are shorter and written in simple Turkish, without extensive use of Persianisms, rhymed prose and metaphors compared to the ones written for the individuals among the administrative, bureaucratic and *ulema* circles. A specific profession is often not mentioned for them. They are characterized especially with

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[310] Tuşalp Atiyas, "Political Literacy and the Politics of Eloquence," 259.

multitude of manuscripts they produced, mostly Qur'ans, *Delâilü'l-hayrât*s, *En'âm*s and *Evrâd*s they wrote. In contrast to the detailed narratives on the familial backgrounds of the individuals among the administrative, bureaucratic and *ulema* circles, their biographical entries give very short notices about their backgrounds. It is worth to note that most of these people are not found in the main studies on the Ottoman calligraphy. Dizdârzâde Seyyid Abdullah Çelebi's biographical entry illustrates the points I have raised:

> He came from Kangırı (Çankırı) of Anatolia. When he came to Istanbul, he learnt *sülüs* and *nesih* from the above-mentioned Dede İbrahim Efendi. He became famous after he began to sign his works. He spent his time copying Qur'ans and he succeded in writing innumerable beautiful works.[311]

Another example is Osman Efendi's biographical entry:

> He is from the Boru town near Niğde, Anatolia. When he came to Istanbul, he studied various subjects, served masters and was a good disciple of wise men. He improved his skills in *sülüs* and *nesih* and obtained a license to sign his works (*me'zun bi'l-ketebe*) from Yakup Efendi. He is among the calligraphers who spent their time copying Qur'ans and *Delâ'ilü'l-hayrât*s.[312]

Many other examples might be given from the text.[313] As it is seen, the reader is only informed about the city from which the individual was coming. Skills other than

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[311] "Anadolu'dan Kangırı (Çankırı) nâm diyârdan âşikâr olup, İstanbul'a geldiğinde merkūm Dede İbrâhim Efendi'den sülüs ve nesihi kemâle encâm ve hatlarına nihâde-i ketebeden sonra şöhret-yâb ve be-nâm oldular. Evkātın mesâhif-i şerîfe kitâbetiyle geçirip, bî-nihâye âsâr-ı cemîle tahrîrât-ı pür-saâdete muvaffak olmuştur." Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*, 144-145.

[312] "Anadolu'dan Niğde Boru kasabasındandır. Âsitâne-i Aliyye'ye geldiğinde ma'rifete sâ'î ve bâb-ı esâtizaye hidmet edip, erbâb-ı kemâli murâ'i olup, hüsn-i hatt-ı sülüs ve nesihe talebleri kemâle resîde ve âtiyü'z-zikr Ya'kûb Efendi'den me'zûn bi'l-ketebe […]. Evkātı mesâhif-i şerîfe ve Delâ'ilü'l-hayrât-ı münîfe kitâbetiyle güzerân eden hattât-ı pür-inbisâtlardandır." Ibid., 248.

[313] For some of them see the biographical entries for Bakkalzâde Ahmed Efendi, Çömez Ahmed Efendi, Çömez Ömer Efendi, Hatibzâde İbrâhim Efendi, Za'îfî Mehmed Efendi, Tahir İbrâhim Ağa, Zuhûri Efendi, Ömer Efendi, Mustafa Efendi, Himmetzâde İsmâil Efendi in Ibid., 96, 113, 113, 136, 200, 203, 208, 247, 292, 342.

calligraphy are not mentioned for these individuals. Thus, calligraphy is not represented as one of the many areas of expertise of the individual or as a gentlemanly practice as it is in the biographical entries of the members of the Ottoman elite. The author does not clearly identify these people as copyists (*müstensih*); yet, he implies that they made their living by writing. There is not any fixed pattern in their identification. They can be identified as pleasant writers (*hoş-nüvîsân*), busy with writing (*kitâbetle meşgûl*), nesih writers (*nessahan*), scribes (*küttâb*) or calligrapher (*hattat*). Also it is difficult to understand how the author perceived the aesthetic or artistic capacity of the skills of these people in calligraphy because of his very brief notices. In order to understand the representation of these individuals in the text, a comparison between the biographical entries written for them and the biographical entries written for the contemporary master calligraphers who are described by the author with a major emphasis on their ability in calligraphy too, might be helpful.

It is obvious that the author treated the famous master calligraphers of the period such as Hafız Osman (d.1698)[314], Suyolcuzâde Mustafa Eyyubî (d. 1686)[315], Yedikuleli Seyyid Abdullah (d. 1731)[316], Ağakapılı İsmail Efendi (d. 1706)[317], Eğrikapılı Mehmed Râsim (d. 1756)[318], Katibzâde Mehmed Refi' (d. 1769)[319],

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[314] Ibid., 121-122.

[315] Ibid., 193-195.

[316] Ibid., 164-165.

[317] Ibid., 73.

[318] Ibid., 150.

Ressâm-ı Sikke-i Hümâyun Ömer Efendi[320] in a different way (see Appendix B, Figures 32-34). The biographical entries of these master calligraphers are longer and more detailed. Almost all of them trained many students and throughout the biographical dictionary their names appear frequently as masters of other individuals. The most striking difference between the biographies of master calligraphers and the individuals who are characterized with multitude of their writings is the author's description of their works. When commenting on the works of the latter group the author either does not mention anything about the quality or is very brief. Yet, the works of the master calligraphers are praised for their beauty. In the descriptions of their works the author uses the prose writing style that comprises of Persianisms, rhymed prose and metaphors. For example the handwritten texts done by Yedikuleleli Seyyid Abdullah are described as follows: "It is known by the masters that the delightful and charming works that he wrote for every one such as the numerous Qur'ans, En'âms, Evrâds, *kıta*s and *murakka*s were astonishing for the one who sees them."[321] Hafız Osman became prominent by reviving the works of the old master Şeyh Hamdullah. The author states that, the talented people of the time were perplexed by Hafız Osman's outstanding style.[322]

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[319] Ibid., 155-156.

[320] Ibid., 217-218.

[321] "Ve kitâbet-i pür-ibretleri olan mesâhif-i müte'addide-i dünyâ-hediyye ve En'âm ve Evrâd ve kıta'ât ve murakka'ât misillü tahrîrât-ı sâire-i latîfe-i behiyyeleri, hıyre-sâz-ı dîde-i eslâf ü ahlâf olduğu ma'lûm-i esâtize-i ehl-i insâftır." Ibid., 165.

[322] "[T]arîka-i kâmile-i İbnü'ş-Şeyh'i ihyâ ve bir rütbede hüsn ü behcet ve şîve ve nezâket-i dil-rübâ-yı hattı hüveydâ buyurdular ki müsta'iddân-ı zamanı dem-beste ve lâl eylediler." Ibid., 121.

A comparison of these descriptions with the ones done for the other individuals who are identified merely with the multitude of their writings reveals that the author attributes uniqueness only to the writings of the master calligraphers. In these cases, the beauty of the written works originates from the person who wrote it. In other words, a value is attributed to the writings according to the individual who wrote it. It might be argued that their writings had a different quality that originates from having a distinguishable style and an aesthetic value.

In the biographical entries of the master calligraphers the names of the patrons as recipients of their works are indicated. For example we learn that Ressâm-ı Sikke-i Hümayûn Ömer Efendi, before going on pilgrimage, wrote a Qur'an as a gift to Ahmed III and in return the sultan gave him one thousand gold coins. With the command of Ahmed III, Yedikuleli Seyyid Abdullah Efendi wrote two Qur'ans and one book on hadith called *Meşârık,* which was translated by the scholar Osmanzâde Ahmed Efendi. A similar narrative of patronage appears in the biographical entry of Râsim Mehmed Efendi: "He inscribed in *müsenna* script the dates of the fountains and *sebil*s which were built and renovated by the mother of His Excellency Mahmud I in 1732-33 near Azapkapısı in Galata."[323]

On the other hand, as the recipients of the works written by the people who are characterized with the multitude of their writings an anonymous community is mentioned as the recipients. For example Himmetzâde Mehmed Efendi's works and their recipients are decribed as follow: "the exquisite books written by his agreeable

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[323] "Vâlide-i Sultân Mahmûd Hân Hazretleri 1145 (1732-33) târihinde Galata'da Azapkapısı dâhilinde binâ ve ihyâ buyurdukları sebîl ve çeşmelerin târihlerini hatt-ı müsennâ-yı âb-dâr ile tahrîr-i bî-adîl buyurmuşlardır." Ibid., 151.

and high hand are accepted as luminous by the wise men."[324] In a similar vein the *kıta*s and writings of Ali Efendi are introduced as highly regarded by the masters of the time.[325] Additionally, we do not come across narratives of patronage in their biographies.

This comparison suggests that the author differentiated between the two groups in terms of the quality and aesthetic value of their calligraphy styles. In order to understand the position of people who were described merely with the multitude of the things they wrote within the world portrayed in *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* the perspective that recent studies have introduced should be considered. In this way, the representation of the function of calligraphy in their lives, the author's preference to narrate their biographies briefly, the author's identification of these people merely with the multitude of their writings and the frequent reference to Qur'ans, *En'âm*s, *Evrâd*s and *Delâ'ilü'l-hayrât*s as the texts written by them might be understood better.

İsmail E. Erünsal's recent study on Ottoman booksellers suggests that people in this second category may have been the suppliers of Qur'ans*, En'âm*, *Evrâd* and *Delâ'ilü'l-hayrât* to the booksellers or they may have been sellers of manuscript books themselves.[326] The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were a period when

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[324] "[K]ütüb-i nefîse-i âlü'l-âl tahrîr-i dil-pezîrleri ziyâ-güster-i uyûn-ı erbâb-ı kemâldir." Ibid., 342.

[325] "[K]ıta'ât ve kitâbetleri meşhûd-ı bâsıra-i esâtize-i deverân [.]" Ibid., 249.

[326] İsmail E. Erünsal, *Osmanlılarda Sahaflık ve Sahaflar* (İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2013). Also see Erünsal, "Osmanlılar Sahhaflık ve Sahhaflar: Yeni Bazı Belge ve Bilgiler," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* XXIX (2007): 99-146.

manuscript sales went up in Istanbul.[327] In the second half of the eighteenth century

there was an increase both in the numbers of probate records of booksellers and the

books in them.[328] According to Erünsal, especially the commerce of Qur'an provided

important revenue for the booksellers judging by their probate records.[329] There are

many items that were recorded as parts (*cüz*) of Qur'an in the probate records of

booksellers that Erünsal discusses. These were probably the *En'âm*, *Evrâd* and

Delâ'ilü'l-hayrât, which are mentioned as texts written by the people who are

identified by Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib with the multitude of their writing. *En'âm*

is the sixth surah of the Qur'an; emphasizes the *tevhid* belief and some practical

issues in Islam.[330] Derman states that the *En'âm* sura and the most frequently recited

suras were composed as volumes called *En'âm-ı Şerîf*.[331] The booklets containing

En'âm sura had elaborate writing, illumination and binding styles.[332] *Evrâd* is like a

miscellany of prayers to be read daily.[333] *Delâ'ilü'l-hayrât* was also a book of prayer

and it had miniatures of Mecca and Medina in it[334] (see Appendix B, Figures 35 and

36). As parts of the Qur'an these texts would often have been cheaper than the

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[327] Ibid.,140.

[328] Ibid., 158.

[329] Ibid., 167.

[330] For more details on the surah see Emin Işık, "En'âm Suresi" in *TDVİA* v.11 (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1995), 169-170.

[331] Derman, *Letters in Gold*, 26.

[332] See "En'âm-ı Şerif" in Dr. Hasan Özönder, *Ansiklopedik Hat ve Tezhip Sanatları Deyimleri Sözlüğü* (Konya: Nüve Kültür Merkezi, 2009), 47.

[333] For more details on Evrad see Mustafa Kara,"Evrâd" in *TDVİA* v.11 (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1995), 533-535.

[334] For more details on *Delâ'ilü'l-hayrât* see Süleyman Uludağ, "Delâilü'l-hayrât*"*in TDVİA v.9 (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1994), 113-114 and Derman, *Letters in Gold*, 26.

Qur'an itself. Their popularity might have stemmed at least in part from their

cheapness and in part from their briefness, which would provide an easier and

compact way of reading the sacred text.

Erünsal's examination of the probate records also reveals that in the shops of

booksellers Qur'ans from a wide range of prices were available.[335] The prices of the

Qur'an depended on the beauty of the handwriting and the name of the scribe who

copied it.[336] In some of the probate records the names of the calligraphers are noted

in order to assess the value of the books.[337] The table at the end of Erünsal's book

shows the price range of the Qur'an copies whose name of the calligrapher or copyist

was mentioned in the probate records of the booksellers.[338] It is seen that while the

Qur'ans written by famous calligraphers were sold at higher prices, those written by

less known calligraphers were sold at cheaper prices.[339] As an example of changing

prices of Qur'an according to its calligrapher or copyist Erünsal points to a document

from 17 September 1765. In the auction[340] for the books of Elhac Paşa b. Mustafa

Ağa a Qur'an was sold for 50.100 *akçe* on the assumption that it had copied by

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[335] Erünsal, *Osmanlılarda Sahaflık ve Sahaflar*, 168.

[336] Ibid., 193.

[337] Ibid., 193. For the prices of *Delâ'ilü'l-Hayrât*s according to the names of the calligraphers who copied it see Ibid., 197.

[338] Ibid., 433-450.

[339] Derman also mentions that people could buy Qur'ans according to their financial means. See Derman, *Letters in Gold*, 23. Also, Mustafa 'Âli notes the prices of books according to the quality of calligraphy. See Akın Kıvanç, *Epic Deeds of Artists*, 176.

[340] Auctions of books of a deceased person from the bureaucracy or *ulema* were another milieu of purchasing books in the early modern Ottoman world. The practive of auctions of books continued in the nineteeth century too. Erünsal examines the documents of auctions that give information on the names and prices of books. See Erünsal, *Osmanlılarda Sahaflık ve Sahaflar*, 304-315.

Mustafa Dede who was the son of Şeyh Hamdullah. Yet, after it was revealed that the manuscript was not the work of Mustafa Dede its price fell to 31.200 akçe.[341]

Besides Qur'ans the booksellers were selling calligraphy examples too. For example *kıta*s and writings in *talik* by unknown calligraphers, *kıta*s by Yedikuleli Seyyid Abdullah and exercises (*meşk*) of Eğrikapılı Mehmed Rasim are seen in one of the probate records of a bookseller.[342] Erünsal gives other examples of probate records that contain calligraphy examples by unknown calligraphers. Yet, he does not mention their price range. For this reason it is not certain if the cheaper versions of calligraphy were also in demand.

The *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* does not describe how these cheaper texts were sold to readers whether by booksellers or by the copyists themselves. Erünsal demonstrates that booksellers sometimes copied the books themselves and sometimes commissioned copyists for this task.[343] But especially in copying Qur'ans there was a trade relation between the copyists and booksellers as it can be deduced from the high numbers of Qur'ans in the probate records of booksellers.[344]

Alongside professional copyists and booksellers there were other people who copied and sold books as an extra work. I have shown in the previous chapter the copying activities of *imam*s and instructor at the Qur'an schools. Erünsal argues that the numerous copies of the same books in the probate records of judges and scholars

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[341] Ibid., 314.

[342] Ibid., 161.

[343] Ibid., 297.

[344] Ibid., 298.

shows that they were also active in book copying and selling.[345] For example he
mentions the probate record of one of the judges of Rumeli, Sahaf Halil Efendi who
as his epithet reveals, was also a bookseller.[346] *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* also mentions a
certain Sahhâf Halil Efendi who was a judge in Rumeli. He may well have been the
same person mentioned by Erünsal. Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib states that: "the
exquisite and unique books copied by his hand [*tahrir*] are stored in the boxes of the
noble *ulema* and the dictionaries of various subjects composed by him embellish the
sincere pages of the eloquent people of the world."[347]

Erünsal mentions that some booksellers resided in *medrese*s or *tekke*s, and
judging by the notices in their probate records, the books they copied were also
located in their cells in these institutions.[348] *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* also mentions
residents of *medrese*s and *tekke*s and praises the multitude of their writings. For
example Arabzâde Mehmed Efendi was a resident of Nişancı Paşa Medresesi in
Kumkapı and was praised by the author as being one of the favored (*makbûl*) and
praiseworthy (*memdûh*) ones among the scholars and litterateurs (edîb). The author
states about him that

> the unique and beautiful Qur'ans and other works written by him
> embellish the chests of wise men and connoisseurs. It is known by
> people of sense that his works and memorabilia in the treasuries of grand

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[345] Ibid., 123-126.

[346] Ibid., 123. His probate record was prepared in 9 February 1765.

[347] "[T]ahrîr-i dil-pezîrleri olan kütüb-i nefîse-i bî-hemtâ mahzûn-ı sandûka-ı kibâr-ı ulemâ ve her
fende tashîhleri olan lûgāt, zîver-i [sahâyif-i] derûn-i bülegā-yı kâinât [.]" Suyolcuzâde Mehmed
Necib, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*, 196.

[348] Erünsal, *Osmanlılarda Sahaflık ve Sahaflar*, 127.

viziers and in the libraries of the *ulema* are more valuable than precious stones.[349]

It seems that he was known only on account of his calligraphy because no other profession is indicated for him. The author also mentions that "his conversation is full of wisdom about calligraphy, he is competent to distinguish the good work and is the best among the good companions of the salon."[350] This remark shows that he shared the same cultural milieu as his clients. Another person Hatibzâde İbrâhim Efendi came from Ereğli and resided in Aşık Paşa Tekkesi at Istanbul. The author only states, "he is one the scribes who succeeded in writing many Qur'ans, *Delâ'ilü'l-hayrât*s, the noble hadiths compiled by Buhâri and other beautiful works."[351]

Erünsal points to the booksellers among the janissaries too. Yet, he does not give detailed accounts of their probate records. Seven janissaries are found in *Devhatü'l-Küttâb.*[352] The author remarks about four of them that they were copying Qur'ans and *Delâ'ilü'l-hayrât*s. For example, the author states that Habbarzâde

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[349] "[K]itâbetleri olan mesâhif-i şerîfe-i bî-hemtâ ve âsâr-ı sâire-i ra'nâları zîver-i mahfaza-i ehl-i kemâl ve ma'ârif-âşina olup […] Hazâin-i vüzerâ-yı izâm ve kütübhâne-i ulemâ-yı kirâmda âsâr ve yâdigârları cevâhirden mu'teber idiği ehl-i insâfa zâhirdir." Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*, 215-216.

[350] "[S]ohbeti hikmet-engîz-i hat-şinâs ve sâhib-i temyîz, zübde-i meclis-ârâyân-ı âlem [.]" Ibid., 216.

[351] "Nice mesâhif-i şerîfe ve Delâilü'l-hayrât ve ehâdîs-i şerîfeden *Buhâri*-i münîf ve âsâr-ı cemîle-i sâire-i latîfe tahrîrâtına muvaffak küttâbdandır." Ibid., 136. Also see the biographical entry of Konevî Ali Efendi who was a resident of Çorlulu Ali Paşa Medresesi and spent his time by copying Qur'an and teaching students calligraphy. Ibid., 266.

[352] See the biographical entries for Bektaş Ağazâde, Haci Mustafa, Hüseyin Beşe ibn-i Ahmed, Habbarzâde Abdurrahman Çelebi, Ömer Ağa, Kolozluzâde Ahmed Ağa and Giridî Mehmed Efendi in Ibid., 92, 125,128,139, 229, 264 and 269.

Abdurrahman Çelebi spent his life copying the Qur'an and other texts.[353] Ömer Ağa who was a retired (*mütekā'id*) janissary copied almost three hundred Qur'ans.[354] Maybe they were copying Qur'ans and selling them to earn an extra income.

Another group that Erünsal discusses are the traders (*Bezzazistan tüccarları*). He observes that the probate records of some traders include many copies of Qur'ans and *Delâ'ilü'l-hayrât*s.[355] For example in the probate record dated 14 December 1769 of one of the traders of Valide Han "besides six precious Qur'ans, four *Dela'il-i Şerif*, some books and more than one copy of some books existed."[356] Erünsal gives examples from other traders who had books in their shops instead of other commodities when they died, as it is understood from their probate records.[357] In *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* biographies of two traders, a yarn seller (*dekâkîn-i habbâlînin birinde bey ü şirâya mu'tād*)[358] and an ironmonger (*na'lbur dükkânında mukīm*)[359] are given. The entry about the second one of these traders seems significant in respect to the arguments of Erünsal. Yûsuf Efendi Âhenî was born in Istanbul, he

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[353] "Ömr-i azîzi mesâhif-i şerîfe ve kitâbet-i sâire-i latîfe tahrîrâtı ile güzerân edip[...]" Ibid., 139.

[354] "[B]â-defter üç yüze karîb mesâhif-i şerîfe-i safâ-güster kitâbet eylediği mazbût-ı cilbend-i ruvât ve mahfûz-ı mahfaza-i sikâttır." Ibid.,229.

[355] Erünsal, *Osmanlılarda Sahaflık ve Sahaflar*, 131. Nelly Hanna discusses the relationship of traders of Cairo with the written word between the years 1500-1800. She suggests a more flexible model of literacy in order to take different types of literacies into consideration. See Nelly Hanna, "Literacy Among Artisans and Tradesmen in Ottoman Cairo" in *The Ottoman World*, ed. Christine Woodhead (New York: Routledge, 2012), 319-331.

[356] Erünsal, *Osmanlılarda Sahaflık ve Sahaflar*, 132.

[357] Ibid., 132-133.

[358] Seyyid Abdulkadir Çelebi was selling yarn in his shop. Yet, after he learnt *sülüs* and *nesih* he entrusted his shop to some employees and devoted his time to writing. See Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*, 167-168.

[359] Ibid., 345.

learnt *sülüs* and *nesih* from Anbârî Derviş Ali and he wrote more than twenty

beautiful Qur'ans (*mesâhif-i şerîfe-i bihterîn*), *En'âm*, *Evrâd* and *murakka'ât*. He had

an ironmongery near Rüstem Paşa Mosque in Eminönü. Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib

narrates how Yusuf Efendi spent his time in his hardware store writing and teaching

students calligraphy: "Most of the time, this mine of learning, sits in the ironmongery

near Rüstem Paşa Mosque and copies Qur'ans and teaches calligraphy to the

students."[360] Maybe similar to the traders that Erünsal mentioned he was selling the

Qur'ans he copied in his shop instead of hardware.

The above-mentioned examples illustrate the individuals who sold books

probably as a way to gain extra income. But as Erünsal mentioned, there were

professional booksellers too. The probate records give limited information about

these booksellers. Yet, the biographical entries for three booksellers in the

*Devhatü'l-Küttâ*b provide some insight about their cultural milieu as well as

reception. For example, Yusuf Efendi who came to Istanbul from Edirne is identified

as being from among the group of booksellers (*sahhâf zümresinden*).[361] The author's

remark demonstrates that booksellers were seen as a professional group. Yusuf

Efendi's calligraphy is praised and the texts he copied are identified as "many

beautiful books and texts like *Delâ'ilü'l-hayrât*".[362] It would seem that Yusuf Efendi

copied books himself rather than commissioning them to other copyists. In addition,

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[360] "Ekser evkāt ol ma'den-i kemâlât, mahrûsa-i merkūmede vâki' Rüstem Paşa Câmi'i kurbünde na'lbur dükkânında […] mukīm ve onda dahi kitâbet-i pür-saâdet-i Nazm-ı Kerîm ve şâkirdân-ı müsta'iddâna meşk ta'lîm eylemekten hālî olmayıp[.]" Ibid., 345.

[361] Ibid., 349.

[362] "[K]ütüb-i nefîse-i vâfire ve Delâ'ilü'l-hayrât emsâli kitâbet [.]" Ibid., 349.

we learn that "Yusuf Efendi, being a bookseller, possessed many works of [the famous calligrapher] İbnü'ş-Şeyh [also known as Şeyh Hamdullah] and other antiquities".[363] This would suggest that as a bookseller Yusuf Efendi sold not only books copied in his own time, but also antiquarian books and earlier examples of calligraphy. In parallel to that, another bookseller Rıdvân Efendi is identified as a connoisseur of calligraphy (*hat-şinâs*) who possessed the works of old and esteemed calligraphers. The booksellers might have played the role of a trader from whom people provided raw materials for calligraphy. In Yusuf Efendi's entry the author praises his skills in preparing the writing materials and paper (*tabh-ı ahar ve terbiyye-i evrak*) that were important steps in calligraphy before starting.[364] In this regard, the text shows a multifunctional bookseller who not only sold contemporary books but also copied them, sold antiquarian books and provided the materials for writing. Also, all the three booksellers, including the judge-bookseller, are identified as people known by the community. In other words, they are represented as tradespeople who operated within a wide social network for business activities.

Until now, I have shown an important group represented in *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*, the *sülüs* and *nesih* writers who were identified mostly with the multitude of the things they wrote. I argued that as the structure and content of their biographical entries show, they might be people coming from lower strata of society and making an income through calligraphy.[365] The inclusion of these people into the text is

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[363] "[S]ahhâf zümresinden olmakla nice âsâr-ı İbnü'ş-Şeyh'e ve yâdigâr-ı eslâfa mâlik [.]" Ibid., 349.

[364] Ibid., 349.

[365] The observations of the French naturalist and traveler called Dr. G. A. Olivier who stayed in Istanbul between the years 1792 and 1795 are in accordance with my arguments. Olivier wrote that

important to consider because we do not see such an inclusive tendency in the previous biographical dictionaries of calligraphers. For this reason, in the light of the recent studies I will try to examine the historical context that paved the way for the inclusive approach of Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib.

3.10 The expansion of the written word

Dana Sajdi has argued that the eighteenth century Levant witnessed the entry of people from various social backgrounds into the world of writing, which had previously been dominated by members of the *ulema*.[366] She calls these newcomers "*nouveau* literates." While Sajdi's conceptualization of "*nouveau* literacy" is centered on the authorship of new texts, by non-*ulema*, it could be usefully broadened to include also the widening of the social profile of copyists and calligraphers.

Nelly Hanna in her study on the book ownership in Cairo between the years 1600-1800 points to a similar phenomenon in the wider Ottoman geography.[367] She argues that from the sixteenth century onwards a large Mediterranean area witnessed

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there are many copyists in Istanbul who copied Qur'ans and other books. He also observed that the young people who learn how to read and write first earn their income by copying books, after they became professionalized in calligraphy they start to write panels (*levha*) and if they find a way they enter into the bureaucracy. See Erünsal, *Osmanlılarda Sahaflık ve Sahaflar*, 300.

[366] Dana Sajdi, *The Barber of Damascus: Nouveau Literacy in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Levant* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2013), 6.

[367] Nelly Hanna, *In Praise of Books: A Cultural History of Cairo's Middle Class, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Century* (Syracuse, N. Y., Syracuse University Press, 2003).

the expansion of learning and literacy.[368] As a sign of this expansion she counts an increase in the private ownership of books, in trading activities, and in the numbers of Qur'an schools and libraries that were built, the emergence of coffee houses and the multiplication of salons as milieus for reading aloud and intellectual activities. From the seventeenth century onwards a decrease in the book prices in relation to the cheapening of paper is observed.[369] Accordingly, an increase in the numbers of cheap copies of books is seen. In a similar vein to Erünsal, whose focus is on the book market in Istanbul, Bursa and Edirne, Hanna notes that in the book market in Cairo the price of copied books also depended on the quality of calligraphy.[370] We also learn from her study that *Delâ'ilü'l-hayrât* was a best-seller in eighteenth-century Cairo, just as it was in eighteenth-century Istanbul.[371]

The representation of people from more modest social backgrounds in relation to written culture might also be read as a sign of the expansion of written culture during the period that *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* was written. In a similar vein to Cairo, Istanbul witnessed the expansion of writing in the eighteenth century. As Erünsal mentions, there was an increase in the numbers of books in the probate records. The numbers of Qur'an schools increased and like fountains they became a popular architectural structure type that was sponsored by a wide range of patrons.[372]

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[368] Ibid., 58.

[369] Ibid., 91.

[370] Ibid., 90.

[371] Erünsal, *Osmanlılarda Sahaflık ve Sahaflar*, 131 and 197.

[372] See Özgönül Aksoy, *Osmanlı Devri İstanbul Sıbyân Mektepleri Üzerine Bir İnceleme* (İstanbul: İsmail Akgün Matbaası, 1968), 68-127.

From the seventeenth century onwards libraries started to be built as independent buildings from mosques.[373] Last but not least, the first printing press publishing works in Ottoman Turkish was established by İbrahim Müteferrika in 1720. Even though print culture would not take off in the Ottoman Empire until the nineteenth century, neither was İbrahim Müteferrika's printing press a totally failed entrepreneurship.[374] Thus, printed books started to circulate in growing numbers. So, the channels of the written word expanded and diversified compared to the earlier centuries. The visibility of writing in the city increased too. The inscriptions on the buildings got longer. [375] The usage of Turkish both in the inscriptions on buildings and tombstones increased.[376] Thus, besides privately owned materials like books, the written word increasingly became visible in the texture of urban life.

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[373] İsmail Erünsal, *Osmanlı Vakıf Kütüphaneleri: Tarihî Gelişimi ve Organizasyonu* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2008), 171. For the libraries built during the reigns of Ahmed III and Mahmud I see Ibid., 170-233.

[374] For debates on the İbrahim Müteferrika printing press see Orlin Sabev, *İbrahim Müteferrika ya da İlk Osmanlı Matbaa Serüveni* (İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınevi, 2006). Sabev, "The First Ottoman Turkish Printing Enterprise: Success or Failure?" in *Ottoman Tulips, Ottoman Coffee: Leisure and Life-Style in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Dana Sajdi (New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2007), 63-83.

[375] Hatice Aynur and Hakan T. Karateke, *Aç Besmeleyle İç Suyu Han Ahmed'e Eyle Dua: III. Ahmed Devri İstanbul Çeşmeleri* (İstanbul: İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kültür İşleri Daire Başkanlığı Yayınları, 1995), 71.

[376] Ibid., 71. Also see Edhem Eldem, *İstanbul'da Ölüm: Osmanlı ve İslam Kültüründe Ölüm ve Ritüelleri* (İstanbul: Osmanlı Bankası Arşiv ve Araştırma Merkezi, 2005), 130.

3.11 Eighteenth-century Ottoman calligraphy

Martin Lings argues that in the eighteenth-century Ottoman Empire the field of
calligraphy witnessed more remarkable changes than architecture.[377] A wider
experimentation in calligraphy is seen in this period. Blair states that in this period
calligraphy in the Ottoman lands became more dynamic compared to the earlier
centuries: moreover, the Ottoman tradition of calligraphy became known among the
Arabic and Persian traditions.[378] According to the scholars working on Ottoman
calligraphy especially with the emergence of the so-called school of Hafız Osman
(1642-98) the style of Şeyh Hamdullah was transformed and elaborated. Derman
argues that with the new style introduced by Hafız Osman, Şeyh Hamdullah's style
was abandoned.[379] The century witnessed the revival of the *nesih* script, and the
proliferation of *hilye* and single-sheet works. Innovative calligraphic formats like
such as illustrated *Delâ'ilü'l-hayrât* manuscripts, portable *hilye* panels, and poetic
border inscriptions in *nestalik* script, and *kıta,* which refers to an album page, was
composed increasingly.[380] Tim Stanley refers to a decrease in the interest in the Six
Pens (*aklâm-ı sitte*) except *sülüs* and *nesih* types.[381] He designates the mid-
seventeenth century as the period in which a revival of interest in *nesih* script started

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[377] Martin Lings, *The Quranic Art of Calligraphy and Illumination* (London: World of Islam Festival
Trust, 1976), 67.

[378] Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy*, 483-485. Also see Alparslan, *Osmanlı Hat Sanatı Tarihi*, 64-78.

[379] Derman, *Letters in Gold*, 72.

[380] Ibid., 81.

[381] Tim Stanley, "İstanbul and its Scribal Diaspora", 66.

by way of an increase in the Qur'an production which is noticeable in *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* too. According to him the revival of *nesih* script reached its highest degree with the influence of Hafız Osman.[382]

Talik and *nestalik* scripts and especially the Safavid calligrapher İmâd's (d. 1615) style in *nestalik* gained increasing visibility, usage and prestige in the eighteenth century. In fact, both of these scripts had been in use in the Ottoman world from the fifteenth century onwards.[383] Yet, the previous biographical dictionaries do not refer them as script types at which the Ottomans themselves excelled. Mustafa 'Âli's *Menâkıb-ı Hünerverân* and Nefeszâde İbrahim Efendi's *Gülzâr-ı Savâb* portray an Ottoman calligraphic world which was dominated by Six Pens (*Aklâm-ı Sitte*). *Divani* script is also mentioned as an area of expertise for some Ottoman scribes in *Menâkıb-ı Hünerverân*. Yet, as I mentioned in the previous chapter, *nestalik* script is explicitly reserved for the Persian scribes in both biographical dictionaries. In *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* the influence of Six Pens except *sülüs* and *nesih* scripts and the domination of the Persian calligraphers in *talik*, *nestalik* and *şikest nestalik* diminished. Instead, *talik*, *nestalik* and *şikest nestalik* appear as scripts types that were excelled by the Ottoman calligraphers. *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* shows that İmâd's works and style expanded to Istanbul to a large extent during the first half of the eighteenth century. A lot of people in the text, especially people among the

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[382] Ibid., 67.

[383] Keskiner, "Sultan Ahmed III (r.1703-1730) as a Calligrapher and Patron of Calligraphy," 74.

members of the religious establishment, were experts in *talik* and *nestalik* and they are said to have been following İmâd's style.[384]

Talik and *nestalik* scripts gained popularity especially in the poetic inscriptions on the mansions, fountains and tombstones at the eighteenth century.[385] While *celi müsenna* script is specified for the inscriptions on mosques, *nestalik* script is specified mostly for the inscriptions on pavilions or seaside mansions. Hatice Aynur and Hakan T. Karateke explain the popularity of *talik* script by its simple style, which does not need difficult combinations of letters like inscriptions in *sülüs*.[386] They observe that during the eighteenth century while the inscriptions with short texts were written in *sülüs*, the ones with long and difficult poems were written in *talik*.[387] Since the inscriptions became longer in this period, it might be argued that the visibility of *talik* script increased too. Hamadeh argues that *talik* and *nestalik* inscriptions became a fundamental part of architecture of the era.[388]

Yet, we do not know the historical contexts of the rise of *nestalik* as a script which was frequently used in inscriptions. It is not known whether there was a systematic usage of the script types of the inscriptions according to the building types which have different functions. Questions concerning the functions of

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[384] Two people among the *ulema*, the scholar and the military judge Arif Abdülbaki Efendi and his grandson Şeref Mehmed Efendi had İmâd's *kıta*s in their collections. It is understood that Arif Abdülbaki Efendi's collection was known by the students of calligraphy and the author, and used for the purposes of education. See Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*, 235 and 190.

[385] Keskiner, "Sultan Ahmed III (r.1703-1730) as a Calligrapher and Patron of Calligraphy," 74.

[386] Aynur and Karateke, *III.Ahmed Devri İstanbul Çeşmeleri*, 73.

[387] Ibid., 73.

[388] Hamadeh, *The City's Pleasures*, 89.

inscriptions are waiting to be answered. Additionally, the reasons behind the preference of *nestalik* script, instead of other script types, in poetic inscriptions are not dealt with in the studies on Ottoman calligraphy and epigraphy. And finally, as Tabbaa points out in the context of the inscriptions in the tenth century[389], we still need to investigate what kinds of relationship existed between the calligraphic and architectural transformations which were undergoing simultaneously during the eighteenth century.

Tabbaa criticizes the approach of researchers in the field of Islamic epigraphy. He argues that, since the fields of Islamic epigraphy and paleography restricted their research "to the recording and translation of inscriptions on monuments and art objects" we do not have any examination of the artistic meaning and visual impact of inscriptions.[390] He suggests taking "the various dimensions of the relationship between the form(s) and meaning(s) of certain new calligraphic styles" into account for a better understanding of the transformations in calligraphic form.[391] In fact, studies relating to the Ottoman epigraphy are not in a different situation from the ones criticized by Tabbaa. The studies of scholars like Aynur and Karateke have introduced valuable data and have prepared the ground for future studies on Ottoman epigraphy.[392] In this respect, the field of Ottoman epigraphy is

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[389] Yasser Tabbaa, "The Transformation Of Arabic Writing: Part I," 141.

[390] Ibid., 119.

[391] Ibid., 120.

[392] See the database for Ottoman inscriptions: http://info.ottomaninscriptions.com (Accessed 01.08.2015)

ready for new questions and approaches regarding the transformations in calligraphic forms in the eighteenth century.

There are no historical studies that attempt to answer these questions concerning the eighteenth-century Ottoman inscriptions. Yet, recent studies by Edhem Eldem, Nina Ergin, Gülru Necipoğlu and İrvin Cemil Schick introduce approaches close to Tabbaa who understands the changing calligraphic forms by examining their aesthetic and referential function, or in other words, their artistic meaning and visual impact within the historical context. [393] These studies show the possibility of understanding and interpreting the function, increased visibility, forms, contents and receptions of the inscriptions written during the eighteenth century within their historical context.

The eighteenth century witnessed an increase in the patronage activity of the high-ranking bureaucrats. It is striking that they sponsored some of the public libraries and Qur'an schools built in this period. [394] It seems significant to consider that within a historical context in which calligraphy became highly esteemed, high-ranking bureaucrats whose collective identity was closely related to their skills in

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[393] Edhem Eldem, "Writing Less, Saying More: Calligraphy and Modernisation in the Last Ottoman Century" in *Calligraphy and Architecture in the Muslim World,* ed. Mohammad Gharipour and İrvin Cemil Schick (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 465-484; Nina Ergin, "Multi-Sensorial Messages of the Divine and the Personal: Qur'an Inscriptions and Recitation in Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Mosques in Istanbul" in Ibid., 105-119; Gülru Necipoğlu, "Qur'anic Inscriptions on Sinan's Imperial Mosques: A comparison with Their Safavid and Mughal Counterparts" in *Word of God-Art of Man: The Qur'an and its Creative Expressions*, ed. Fahmida Suleiman, (Institute of Ismaili Studies Conference Proceedings, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 69-104 and İrvin Cemil Schick, "The Revival of Kūfī Script During the Reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II" in *Calligraphy and Architecture*, 119-139.

[394] Shirine Hamadeh, "Splash and Spectacle: The Obsession with Fountains in Eighteenth-Century Istanbul," *Muqarnas* 19 (2002), 124. On their endowment of libraries see Erünsal, *Osmanlı Vakıf Kütüphaneleri*. On this issue, Yavuz Sezer of MIT is currently working on a PhD. dissertation entitled "Architecture of Bibliophilia: Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Libraries."

calligraphy, sponsored buildings which were directly related to the transmission of knowledge of calligraphy. When the relationship between the types of sponsored buildings and the patrons is considered a strong reflection of one of the components of the scribal identity, that is the knowledge of calligraphy, upon the architectural patronage is noticed. As a further remark, the lavishly decorated inscriptions of the buildings, besides the possible meanings and interpretations of the poems on them, might be interpreted as a way of the scribal community to demonstrate their domination over the field of calligraphy, literacy knowledge and its institutions.[395] But, still the preference of *nestalik* script in the majority of the inscriptions on the libraries, Qur'an schools and fountains remains unanswered.

The lack of studies concerning the history of Ottoman calligraphy and its evolution through transregional contacts prevents us from examining the representation of calligraphy in *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* in more detail. Yet, a discussion on how *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* represents the chains of transmission of knowledge on calligraphy and its reflection upon the structure of text might reveal some transformations in the practice of calligraphy.

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[395] Yavuz Sezer will examine in his PhD. dissertation the relationship among the architectural styles and elements of the eighteenth-century public libraries sponsored by the high-ranking bureaucrats, the increasing patronage activities of the scribal community, reading practices and book culture.

3.12 The alphabetical ordering of the biographical entries as a sign of transformation in the practice of calligraphy

The method of organization of biographies of calligraphers has a very fundamental relation with the practice of calligraphy, its rendering and its evolution. *Menâkıb-ı Hünerverân* and *Gülzâr-ı Savâb* present an arrangement according to the pedagogical lineage of masters and students. We see the same phenomenon in the prototype of the genre, that is, the album prefaces.[396] By mainly relying on the biographies of poets, Wadad al-Qadi defines the biographical dictionary as "[a] prose work whose primary structure is that of a series of biographies, regardless of the order in which these biographies succeed each other."[397] Yet, different from the biographies of poets, the earlier examples of the biographies of calligraphers are arranged with respect to a certain order: lineage of master-students. Here, we might realize that we deal with two different genres which center upon two different fields. The main difference I detect is in the notions of innovation and imitation in the Ottoman poetry and calligraphy. We see that in biographical dictionaries of calligraphers, imitation of master's work is a highly esteemed indicator of a person's success. In this fashion, the biographical entries are ordered in a way that links a student to his master, in other words, that links his style to the style of his master. For this reason, the method of organization obtained in the biographical dictionaries of calligraphers follow the

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[396] Roxburgh, *Prefacing the Image*, 137.

[397] Wadad al-Qadi, "Biographical Dictionaries: Inner Structure and Cultural Significance" in *The Book in the Islamic World: The Written Word and Communication in the Middle East*, ed. George N. Atiyeh, (Albany: State University of New York Pres, 1995), 94.

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master-student lineage which was the most important feature of the field.[398] On the other hand, innovation in the style of calligraphy is considered as a privilege of only canonized masters such as Yaqut al-Mustaʿsimi, Şeyh Hamdullah and Ahmed Karahisarî. In my opinion, for a better understanding of the difference of ordering of the biographical entries within the biographical dictionaries of calligraphers and of poets, we should examine the notions of innovation and imitation in Ottoman poetry and calligraphy. Such a comparative look might help us develop alternative perspectives on the early modern Ottoman discourses on poetry and calligraphy.

The method of organization is very much related to an intrinsic character of calligraphy and is also related to a specific purpose of writing biographies of calligraphers, that is, to unfold the pedagogical lineage of masters and students. Thus the significance given to master-student relations is reflected in the form, organization and content of biographical dictionaries of calligraphers. In the previous examples of the genre we see a tendency to construct a history of calligraphy in which the canon masters of calligraphy are the main actors and engine.[399] The difference of *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* becomes apparent at this point: It is not structured according to the lineage of master-students but rather alphabetically. As a result, the biographical entries of people who were taught calligraphy by different masters, followed different styles and excelled in different script types are ordered one after another in an alphabetical way.

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[398] For a discussion on the mechanisms of transmission in calligraphy and its reflection on the Timurid and Safavid album prefaces see Roxburgh, *Prefacing the Image*, 136-150.

[399] Roxburgh makes a similar observation on the Timurid and Safavid album prefaces see Ibid., 136-137.

The author's preference might be examined and interpreted in different ways. He might have been influenced by the alphabetical order that was used in the contemporary biographical dictionaries of poets. Or, he might have preferred the alphabetical order to render his crowded biographical dictionary more user-friendly. But, I think, the alphabetical order is very much related to the author's portrayal and the historical context of the world of calligraphy in the first half of the eighteenth century. *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* does not determine the talent and success of a calligrapher in relation to his master-student lineage but rather brings forward other features such as the career line, the cultural milieu, patronage relationships, oeuvre, etc. of the calligrapher. Thus, the domination of the master-student relationship on the representation of the evolution of calligraphy styles is shaken to a certain extent. Yet, I do not argue that the significance of master-student relationship on the calligraphy style of a person in the practical sphere diminished. Here, I only refer to the representation of the master-student relationship within the textual sphere. While the canonized masters or the key innovators of scripts happened to be the main figure in the chain of transmission in the previous biographical dictionaries, their names appear in *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* in a less consistent way. Thus, while the previous examples represent a linear historical movement towards progress and perfection of one style, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* constructs a fragmentary and non-linear narrative, which includes the evolution of various styles. In fact, this might be a result of the expansion and multiplication of the channels of transmission of knowledge in the first half of the eighteenth century. As I have shown in the previous chapter, compared to the earlier examples of the genre in *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* different agents,

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both instructors from different social backgrounds and paper models, which enabled

students to study by themselves, appear as the transmitter of knowledge of

calligraphy. In other words, the master calligrapher is not depicted as the sole

authority in learning calligraphy.

Then, how can we approach *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* as a canon forming text in

calligraphy? It is a significant question to discuss because, as I have mentioned,

scholars have mostly read biographical dictionaries as texts that were written in order

to construct canon. In her discussion on whether Âşık Çelebi tries to construct a

canon in the Ottoman poetry through writing *Meşa'irü'ş-Şu'ara* as the scholars argue

it, Altok stays on the negative side. By showing that Âşık Çelebi included the people

with whom he had a personal relationship into his biographical dictionary, she argues

that social relationship played a significant role in his choice to include a person

alongside aesthetic criteria.[400] According to her the sense of community which

infiltrated into the text prevents to construct a hegemonic structure like canon.[401] As I

mentioned previously a similar sense of community is seen in *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* too.

Unless the other written sources of calligraphy from the same period are examined, it

is not possible to evaluate which people are included and which people are excluded

from the text in order to understand what kind of a selective attitude the author

obtained. But, for now I think it should suffice to say that, similar to Âşık Çelebi,

Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib's primary concern was not to introduce a hegemonic

structure like canon. The author does not declare a preference for or give superiority

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[400] Altok, "Âşık Çelebi ve Edebî Kanon,"127.

[401] Ibid., 132.

to a specific style. On the contrary, he recognizes the practitioners of calligraphy in *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* as the followers of different styles according to the script type in which they excelled. This tendency within the text creates a pluralist discourse on calligraphy, which does not try to emphasize the impact of a sole authority.

In general it is remarked in the text that the *sülüs* and *nesih* writers were followers of the style of Şeyh Hamdullah, *talik* and *nestalik* writers were followers of the style of İmâd and/or Nergisîzâde[402], and *divani* writers were followers of the style of Taczâde[403]. It has been argued by the scholars that the influence of Şeyh Hamdullah's style diminished with Hafız Osman's renovation of his style. For this reason, the scholars read the eighteenth century as the period in which Hafız Osman's style became dominant. Yet, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* introduces the eighteenth-century Ottoman calligraphy as a world in which various styles existed. Also, more than Hafız Osman, Şeyh Hamdullah's style appears still as one of the dominant styles that many *sülüs* and *nesih* writers followed. It seems that Hafız Osman's style started to be influential in the second half of the eighteenth century.

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[402] The famous scholar and judge Nergisî (d.1635) was known especially with his prose writing style. His style in *hurde talik*, *şikest talik* and *nestalik* was revered too. For his biography and works in various manuscript libraries see Süleyman Çaldak, "Nergisî" in *TDVİA* 32 (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2006), 560-562. For an analysis of the correspondence between Nergisî and his fellow judge Veysi see Woodhead, The Gift of Letters: correspondence between Nergisi (d.1634) and Veysi (d.1627)" in *Kitaplara Vakfedilen Bir Ömre Tuhfe: İsmail E. Erünsal'a Armağan* vol.2 *Edebiyat ve Tasavvuf, Kütüphanecilik ve Arşivcilik,* ed. Hatice Aynur, et.al (İstanbul: Ülke Yayınları, 2014), 971-989.

[403] Tâcîzâde Câfer Çelebi was the insignia bearer (*nişancı*) of Beyazıd II. He was famous with his skills in porety, prese writing and calligraphy. He played a major role in the improvement of *divani* and *siyakat* scripts. For his biography and works see İsmail E. Erünsal, "Tâcîzâde Câfer Çelebi" in *TDVİA* v. 39 (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2010), 353-356.

3.13 Concluding remarks

If Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib did not construct a hegemonic structure like canon, did not play the role of a critic and did not claim authority over the field of calligraphy why did he attempt to write such a comprehensive biographical dictionary of calligraphers? In order to answer this question and examine the author's self-representation in the text some cultural practices around calligraphy seem significant to consider. As I have mentioned calligraphy was a common interest among the Ottoman elites. In this regard, many people in the text are mentioned as collectors of calligraphy. It was not a new cultural phenomenon indeed, as it is understood from the references on collecting artworks in Mustafa 'Âli's biographical dictionary of calligraphers. Yet, I think, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* reflects the expansion of this cultural practice further down the social ladder. Having the ability to evaluate a beautiful work of calligraphy and to distinguish calligraphic works of different people are represented as accomplishments. In this regard, *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* serves the author to demonstrate his knowledge in the field of calligraphy in a period in which calligraphic knowledge was esteemed.

The beginning of this chapter touched upon the emphasis of the recent studies on the concern for social display during the eighteenth century. In this context, Sajdi reads the contemporary chronicles written by the *nouveau literate*s as "a potent instrument of self-fashioning."[404] Because in these texts, the authors wrote the events

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[404] Sajdi, *The Barber of Damascus*, 8.

around them and thus, the texts were author centric.[405] In this regard, the contemporary chronicles provide the author room for self-display. It is true that Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib cannot be counted as a *nouveau literate* as a judge coming from a scholarly family which was famous in the field of calligraphy. Neither does *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* belong to the genre of contemporary history. Yet, I find many similarities between it and the history of the Damascene barber Ibn Budayr studied by Sajdi. Both of them have an emphasis in a large extent on the present of the author and expose the world and events around the author. In a sense, both of the texts provide the author with a space for self-representation. Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib represents himself not only as a person who only professionalized in calligraphy but also as a well-equipped intellectual having skills in poetry, prose writing, eloquence and articulateness too.

Sajdi explains the eighteenth century as a period that witnessed a reconfiguration in the social and political map.[406] The newly emerging order, in Sajdi's words, "was constituted around the new households and networks, which afforded fresh opportunities to individuals and groups and through which many experienced a change in social position or status."[407] Social networking became an important activity in order to reach better positions in this context. By writing a comprehensive biographical dictionary which features mostly contemporaries interested in calligraphy, Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib demonstrates his wide social

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[405] Ibid., 8.

[406] Ibid., 16.

[407] Ibid., 16.

network. In the biographical dictionary itself social networking, being known and liked by the other people were highlighted as esteemed characteristics of a person. Thus, through the text the author demonstrates his own success in social networking too. Thus, he seems to be in a good position within the world of calligraphy. The writing of the biographical dictionary might provide him with an opportunity to negotiate with the sultans and the participants of the salons for new positions. Another purpose to write such a text might be his inclination to compose a guidebook for the patrons so that they can see the contemporary people interested in calligraphy, the scripts in which they excelled, their backgrounds, oeuvre, cultural milieus while they search for someone to be their private secretaries, to commission copying a book for themselves or inscribing an architectural structure that they sponsored.

Therefore, by exposing various areas of usage of calligraphy *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* portrays a dynamic and multifaceted culture of calligraphy in the first half of the eighteenth century. In contrast to the earlier biographical dictionaries of calligraphers which frequently refer to the mystical characteristics of calligraphy and the calligrapher, Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib draws calligraphy as a worldly and corporeal practice by way of unfolding the process of self-development of calligrapher, his patronage relations, career line and cultural and social milieus in which he partook.

The author's inclusive tendency provides us with an opportunity to see the calligraphy practices of a wider scale of the Ottoman society. Also, the text demonstrates the various functions of calligraphy for different groups of the society

such as the members of the bureaucratic, administrative and religious establishments. While practicing calligraphy or to own a beautiful handwriting became a highly esteemed skill for the members of the administrative, bureaucratic and religious establishments, for some it became a way for earning their livelihood. The text does not include the people who professionalized merely in calligraphy. The people whose biographies are covered excelled in calligraphy to various degrees. Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib exhibits a broader and diversifed world of calligraphy. In contrast to the perceptions of the current scholarship on the Ottoman calligraphy, Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib, as a practitioner, does not limit the scope of calligraphy into religious or artistic sphere isolated from the social, political and cultural phenomena of the eighteenth-century Ottoman world. Instead, he puts the calligraphy into the center of the force field of societal and political affiliations.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

This thesis focused on three Ottoman biographical dictionaries of calligraphers produced between the late sixteenth and the early eighteenth century. Yet, the compilation of biographical dictionaries of calligraphers continued throughout the second half of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries in the Ottoman Empire.[408] Approximately fifty years later than Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib, Müstakimzâde Süleymân Saadettin (d. 1788) finished one of the most comprehensive biographical dictionaries of calligraphers in the Ottoman Empire, namely *Tuhfe-i Hattâtîn*. In the current scholarship on the Ottoman calligraphy, the relationship between the two texts is stated merely in order to indicate the superiority of *Tuhfe-i Hattâtîn* in terms of comprehensiveness and reliability. It is certain that *Tuhfe-i Hattâtîn* covers the biographies of calligraphers from a broader geography and situates the Ottoman practice of calligraphy into a broader context.[409] Yet, the relationship between *Devhatü'l-Küttâb, Tuhfe-i Hattâtîn* and the later biographical dictionaries of

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[408] See Tim Stanley, "After Müstakim-zade," in *Islamic Art in the 19th Century: Tradition, Innovation, and Eclecticism*, ed. Doris Behrens-Abouseif and Stephen Vernoit (Leiden: Brill Academic Publications, 2006). Some of the works written after *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* are as follow: *Tuhfe-i Hattâtîn* by Müstakimzâde Süleymân Saadettin (d. 1788); *Mîzânü'l-Hat Alâ Vaz'ı Üstâdi's-Selef* by Kebecizâde Mehmed el-Vâsfî (copied in 1784); Mizânü'l-Hat by Hakkâkzâde Mustafa Hilmi Efendi (d. 1852); *Defter-i Pâk-i Erbâb-ı Danîş* by Şeyhü'l-İslâm Sadüddin Efendi (d. 1866); *Tezkiretü'l-Hattâtîn* by Müfti Mehmed Şem'i Efendi (d. 1855); *Hatt ve Hattâtân* by Habib (1835-1894); *Mir'ât-ı Hattâtîn* by Eğinli Süleyman Efendi (d.1924); İbnülemin Mahmut Kemal İnal, *Son Hattatlar* (İstanbul, Maarif Basımevi, 1955). Some of them were printed. See Müstakimzâde, Tuhfe-i Hattâtîn, ed. Mustafa Koç (İstanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2014); Hakkâkzâde Mustafa Hilmi Efendi, *Mizânü'l-Hat*, ed. Abdülkadir Dedeoğlu (İstanbul: Osmanlı Yayınevi, 1986); Mirza Habib İsfahani, *Hatt ve Hattâtân,* ed. Ebuzziya Tevfik Bey (İstanbul: Matbaa-i Ebuziya, 1888). For some information on the content of these works see İnal, *Son Hattatlar*, 7-14.

[409] Stanley, "After Müstakim-zade," 91.

calligraphers has more to say concerning the Ottoman notions of and discourses on calligraphy.

It is important to notice that before writing his biographical dictionary of calligraphers Müstakimzâde Süleymân Saadettin first copied the previous three examples of the genre, which are the main texts discussed in this thesis. And, the three copies were collected chronologically in a miscellany either by Müstakimzâde Süleymân Saadettin or by the calligrapher İbrâhim Tâhir, whose name is specified in the colophon as the owner of the miscellany. The story of the compilation of the miscellany and its ownership by another calligrapher demonstrate the existence of a genalogical consciousness about calligraphy in the minds of the early modern Ottoman calligraphers and authors of the biographical dictionaries of calligraphers. Instead of portraying the activities of contemporary calligraphers, the biographical dictionaries of calligraphers provide the practitioners of the art with an origin and genealogy to rely on by way of drawing the scope of the practitioners from the tenth century onwards. In this regard, the biographical dictionaries of calligraphers played a significant role in creating and transmitting a genealogical narrative on Ottoman calligraphy.

Yet, the genealogical narrative on calligraphy that the authors proposed should not be considered as unchanged throughout the centuries. The current scholarship on Ottoman calligraphy has treated the Ottoman biographical dictionaries of calligraphers produced between the sixteenth and the end of nineteenth centuries merely as databanks that give information on the biographies of the practitioners of calligraphy that lived from the sixteenth century onwards. The

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biographical dictionaries of calligraphers are generally taken to be repetitive and cliché-laden sources. For this reason, few studies have attempted to examine these texts on their own and to understand the way they constructed a genealogical narrative about Ottoman calligraphy.

On the other hand, the previous three biographical dictionaries of calligraphers that this thesis has examined expose different notions of and discourses on calligraphy by way of constructing relatively different narratives on Ottoman calligraphy. In the narratives that these texts provide the history of the alphabet and writing, the representation of the functions of calligraphy and the figure of calligrapher, the position of canonical masters in the expansion of calligraphy styles, the way of transmission of knowledge of calligraphy and the role of calligraphy within the life story of an individual differ considerably. Because of this difference, an alternative reading of these sources paves the way for a better understanding of the changing notions and functions of calligraphy.

Obtaining the discourses that perceive the practice of calligraphy merely within a religious and artistic sphere prevents one from discerning the possible functions and roles of calligraphy within the political and social spheres. Yet, in major contrast to the arguments of current scholarship, the biographical dictionaries of calligraphers display the practice of calligraphy as a tool within a variety of affiliations. For example, concerning the affiliation of the practice of calligraphy to politics, the sources involve notices that show the script type as a component of the early modern imperial identity as a means of differentiation from other states. A further study that will examine the written sources of calligraphy together with the

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documents that are able to show the role of calligraphy in politics such as official correspondences might show the way the script types were subjected to a geographical division by the authors of the biographical dictionaries of calligraphers, i.e. *Rumi* lands as the scope of *divani* and Safavid lands as the scope of *talik* and *nestalik* scripts, and the role of script type in the early modern empire-building processes.

Since this thesis limits itself to the three early examples of the Ottoman biographical dictionaries of calligraphers, it does not address the biographical dictionaries of calligraphers and other written sources of calligraphy produced in different geographies. It is certain that in order to understand the accuracy, consistency and degree of the geographical compartmentalization of script types and the role of script type as a means of differentiation for the states, a comparative perspective on various calligraphy traditions is required. Such an approach would also reveal the cross-cultural attitudes towards calligraphy. A further dimension should be added which considers the varieties on the history of calligraphy and different ways of constructing the history of calligraphy that was embraced by the authors coming from different calligraphy traditions. In this regard, the narratives on the branching of calligraphy styles into various paths in different geographies after the impact of Ibn Muqla (d. 940), Ibn al-Bawwāb (d. 1022) and Yaqut al-Mustaʿsimi (d. 1299?) might be scrutinized with alternative perspectives. Also, the position of calligraphy masters who were "canonized" whether by their contemporaries or by the future generations in the histories of other calligraphy traditions, i.e. the position of

Şeyh Hamdullah or Hafız Osman in the Safavid written sources of calligraphy, might give us further perspectives on the cultures of calligraphy.

It is difficult to examine the representation of calligraphy within various spheres and affiliations without questioning the conceptualizations and approaches that are imposed upon it by the scholarship. The three biographical dictionaries of calligraphers that are examined in this thesis demonstrate the need for modifying some of the concepts that have been frequently used. Therefore, I have argued that the ambiguous adjective "Islamic" that stands before the term "calligraphy" is driven by ideas that designate a scope for calligraphy merely within a sacred and religious sphere. Additionally, contrary to the mainstream understandings of the term and practice of calligraphy the sources exhibit a variety of practices from copying secular books to Qur'ans, from composing *hilye*s to writing official correspondences. Thus, the biographical dictionaries of calligraphers appear as significant sources for the studies relating to the early modern reading and writing practices. Besides sources such as probate records and library catalogues that give quantitative data, the biographical dictionaries of calligraphers provide us with an opportunity to understand the world of people who had a close relationship with written culture and who possessed knowledge of calligraphy as well as the social attitudes towards them. In a major contrast to the earlier biographical dictionaries of calligraphers, the inclusive approach that *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* displays in comprising the biographies of individuals from a variety of social groups complies with the increasing expansion of written culture through the eighteenth century. The reflections of the increasing impact of print culture, the participation of other actors in written culture such as

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women and the transformations that were under way in the field of calligraphy onto

the biographical dictionaries of calligraphers that were written in the nineteenth and

twentieth centuries remain to be studied in the future.

Table 1: *Menâkıb-ı Hünerverân*[410]

EXPERTISE/PROFESSION	FROM THE OTTOMAN WORLD	FROM THE IRANIAN WORLD
Writers of the Six Pens	27	0
Writers of *nestalik*	1	53
Writers of *divani*	9 (4 of them are chancery scribes or prose stylists.)	4 (1 of them is a chancery scribe.)
Writers of *çep*	0	14 (10 of them are chancery scribes or prose writers.)
Calligrapher	12	73
Chancery scribe	6	4
Court calligrapher (*Saray hattatı*)	1	2
Instructor of calligraphy (*Meşk hocası*)	1 (At Galatasaray)	0
Finance minister (*Muhasib/defterdar*)	4	1
Total	61	151

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[410] The numbers in the table are approximate because the author Mustafa 'Âli does not always identify the individuals in a clear way. He does not indicate the profession of each individual. Sometimes he only mentions the script type in which the individual excelled. For this reason I prefer to use the comprehensive classification "Expertise/Profession" which can include different groupings.

Table 2: *Gülzâr-ı Savâb*[411]

SCRIPT TYPE	FROM THE OTTOMAN WORLD	FROM THE IRANIAN WORLD
Six Pens	22 (Experts especially in *sülüs* and *nesih*.)	0
Talik	2	17
Divani	1	0
Total	25	17

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[411] The numbers in the table are approximate because the author Nefeszâde İbrahim Efendi does not identify the individuals always in a clear way.

Table 3: *Devhatü'l-Küttâb*[412]

PROFESSION	NUMBER	SCRIPT TYPE	OEUVRE[413]	INSCRIPTION
Bureaucracy	84	52 *divani*	1 Sadi's *Gülistan*, 1 *Kadı Beyzavi*	
Ulema	81	55 *talik* or *nestalik*	7 various books; 50 *kıta*s and exquisite books; 1 Qur'an, *En'âm*, *Evrâd*; 1 *Delâ'ilü'l-hayrât*	4 *nestalik* inscriptions onto pavilions
Administrative elite and palace officials	57	11 *divani*, 11 *sülüs* and *nesih*, 7 *talik* and *nestalik*	2 *Şifa-yı Kadı İyaz*s; 2 Qur'ans; 33 *kıta*s and exquisite books	2 inscriptions in mosques and 1 *celi müsenna* inscription in a mausoleum
İmam	13	7 *sülüs* and *nesih*	2 commentaries; 6 Qur'ans, *En'âm*s, *Evrâd*s, *Delâ'ilü'l-hayrât*s; 5 *kıta*s and exquisite books	
Instructor at Qur'an school	13	5 *sülüs*	6 Qur'ans, *En'âm*s, *Evrâd*s, *Delâ'ilü'l-hayrât*s	
Instructor of calligraphy	24	5 *nesih*, 2 *talik*	Various books	
Instructor of calligraphy in the palace	19	7 *nesih*, 2 *talik*	Various books	1 inscription in a mosque and 1 inscription on a *sabil*
Multitude of writing/ Busy with writing[414]	115	59 *sülüs* and *nesih*, 6 *talik*	32 Qur'ans, *En'âm*s, *Evrâd*s, *Delâ'ilü'l-*	1 inscription on the gate of Kaaba, 1 in a

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[412] The numbers in the table are approximate because the author Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib does not identify the individuals always in a clear way.

[413] The names of books and works are written in the way Suyolcuzâde Mehmed Necib indicates.

[414] 115 individuals in *Devhatü'l-Küttâb* are identified merely with the multitude of the things they wrote. The author does not indicate any other profession for them.

			*hayrât*s; various books	mosque in Tunis, 3 in various mosques
Janissary	7	4 *sülüs* and *nesih*	3 Qur'ans, *En'âm*s, *Evrâd*s, *Delâ'ilü'l-hayrât*s	
Bookseller	4	3 *sülüs* and *nesih*	1 exquisite book and *Delâ'ilü'l-hayrât*	
Trader	2	2 *sülüs* and *nesih*	1 Qur'an, *En'âm*, *Evrâd*	

APPENDIX B

IMAGES
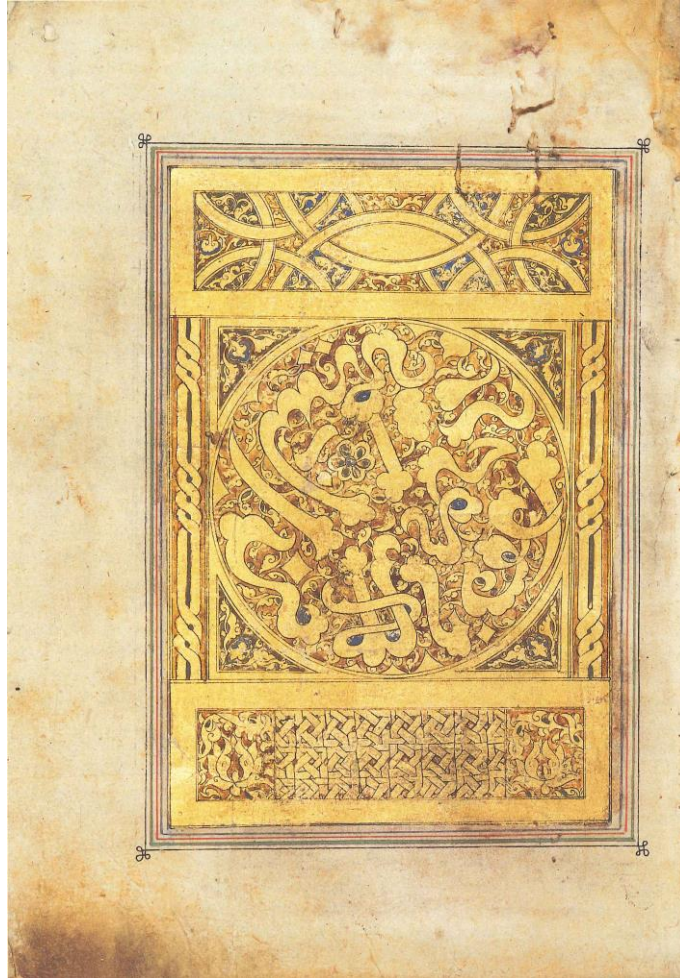
Figure 1.1. The opening page of a Qur'an in 30 parts

Great Mosque of Khanbaliq, China, the former seat of the Mongol emperor, 30

Muharram 804 (9 October 1401)

Scribe and illuminator: Hajji Rashad ibn 'Ali al-Sini

Inscription: "a'ū[dhu] bi-llāh min al-shaytān al-rajīm" ("I seek refuge in God from

Satan the accursed") (Manijeh Bayani et al, *The Decorated Word*, 10).
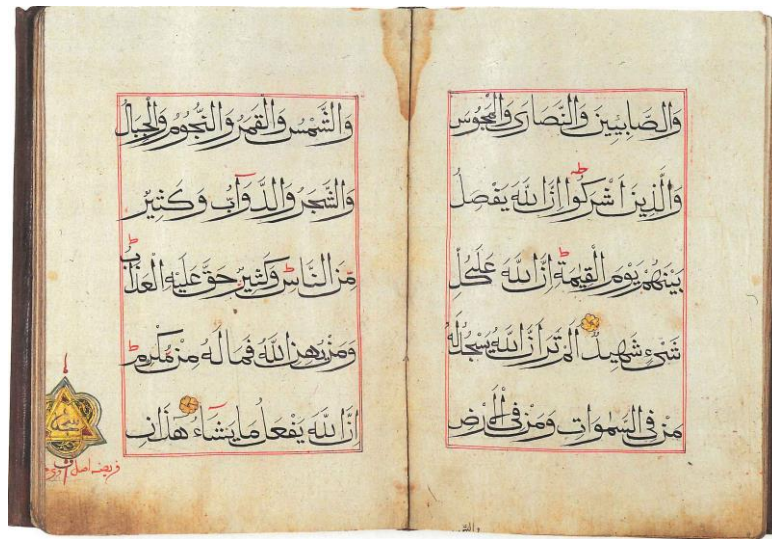
Figure 1.2. Part 29 of the same Qur'an

Script: The distinctive form of *muhakkak* used in the Chinese Qur'ans in 30 parts

(*Ibid.*, 15).

Figure 2. Qur'an in 30 parts

China, Ramadan 1013 (January-February 1605)

Scribe: 'Abd al-Latif ibn Shams al-Din al-Sini

Script: *Muhakkak* (Ibid., 21).

Figure 3. Single volume Qur'an

East Africa, Shawwal 1162 (September-October 1749)

Script: The main text is in a regional hand and the surah headings are in *nesih*.

Scribe: Hajj Sa'd ibn ? Adish 'Umar Din (Ibid., 29).

Figure 4. Single volume Qur'an

Western Sudan, late 19th century

Script: The main text in the Sudani variant of the *Maghribi* script (Ibid., 38).
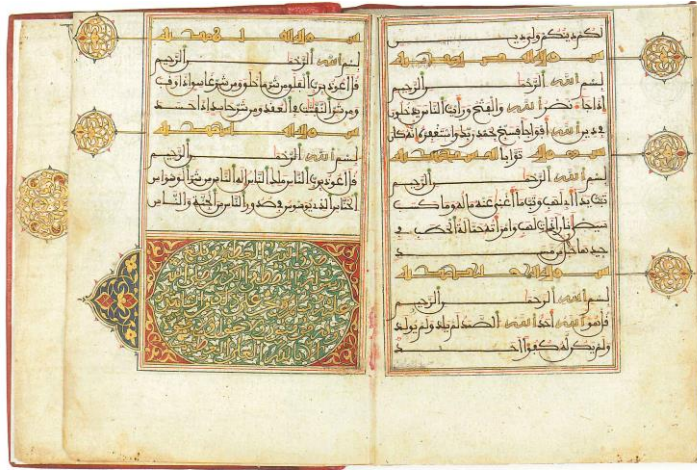
Figure 5. Qur'an in two volumes

Morocco, 18th century

Script: The main text is in *Maghribi.* (Ibid., 48).

Figure 6. Part 22 of a 30-part Qur'an

Mamluk, circa 1453-1461

Script: The main text is in *nesih* and the incidentals are in *sülüs*.

Patron: Probably Sultan Inal (James, *After Timur*, 62).

Figure 7. Single folio

Mamluk, circa AD 1430-1460

The text runs from Sūrat al-qalam, verse 35 to Sūrat al-haqqah, verse 19.

Script: The main text is in *muhakkak* and the incidentals are in *sülüs.* (Ibid., 65).

Figure 8. Double page with Sura 27:1-5 from an eight-volume Qur'an

North Africa, late 15th century

Script: Stylized version of *maghribi* script

A note in one volume says that the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V acquired it

during his expedition to Tunis and Algiers in 1535. (Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy*,

398).

Figure 9. Qur'an in two volumes

India, 15th century

Script: *Bihari*

Outer Border: Persian translation in *nesih* script. (James, *After Timur*, 106-107).

Figure 10. Single volume Qur'an

Iran, probably Isfahan, 1689-90

Script: The main text is in *nesih*, in black; interlinear translation is in *şikeste*,

in red; surah heading are in *rika*, in gold.

Scribes: Muhammad Riza al-Shirazi (main text), Ibn Muhammad Amin

Muhammad Hadi Shirazi (translation, preface and commentary).

From the preface to the interlinear translation it is understood that the text

was composed for the Safavid ruler Shah Sulayman (r. 1666-1694). (Manijeh Bayani

et al, *The Decorated Word*, 140-141).

Figure 11. Qur'an

Baghdad, 1001

Scribe: Ibn al-Bawwāb (1024) (George, *The Rise of Islamic Calligraphy*, 115).

Figure 12. Qur'an

Script: *Muhakkak*

Scribe: Ascribed to Yaqut al-Musta'simi (d. 1299?) (Serin, *Hat Sanatı ve Meşhur Hattatlar*, 64).

Figure 13. Volume containing 12 suras of the Qur'an

Ottoman, circa 1490-1500

Script: *Nesih*

Scribe: Şeyh Hamdullah (James, *After Timur*, 101).
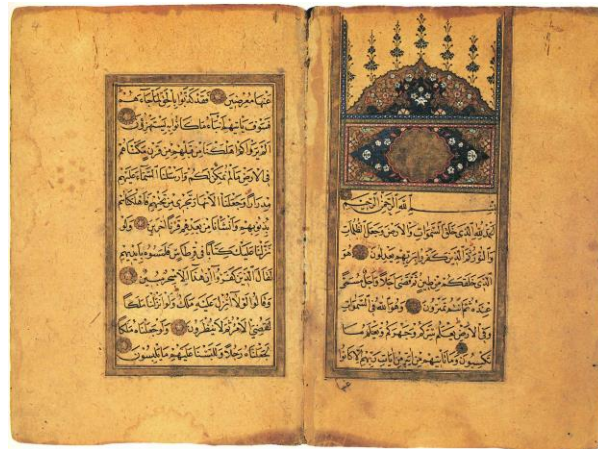
Figure 14. Single-volume Qur'an

Ottoman, circa 1490-1500

Script: The main text in *nesih*, the incidentals in *sülüs*.

Scribe: Perhaps Şeyh Hamdullah (Ibid., 101).

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Kufi

Sülüs

Nesih

Muhakkak

Reyhâni

Tevki (icâze)

İnce Tevki

Ta'lik

İnce Ta'lik

Divâni

Celi Divâni

Rik'a

İcâze
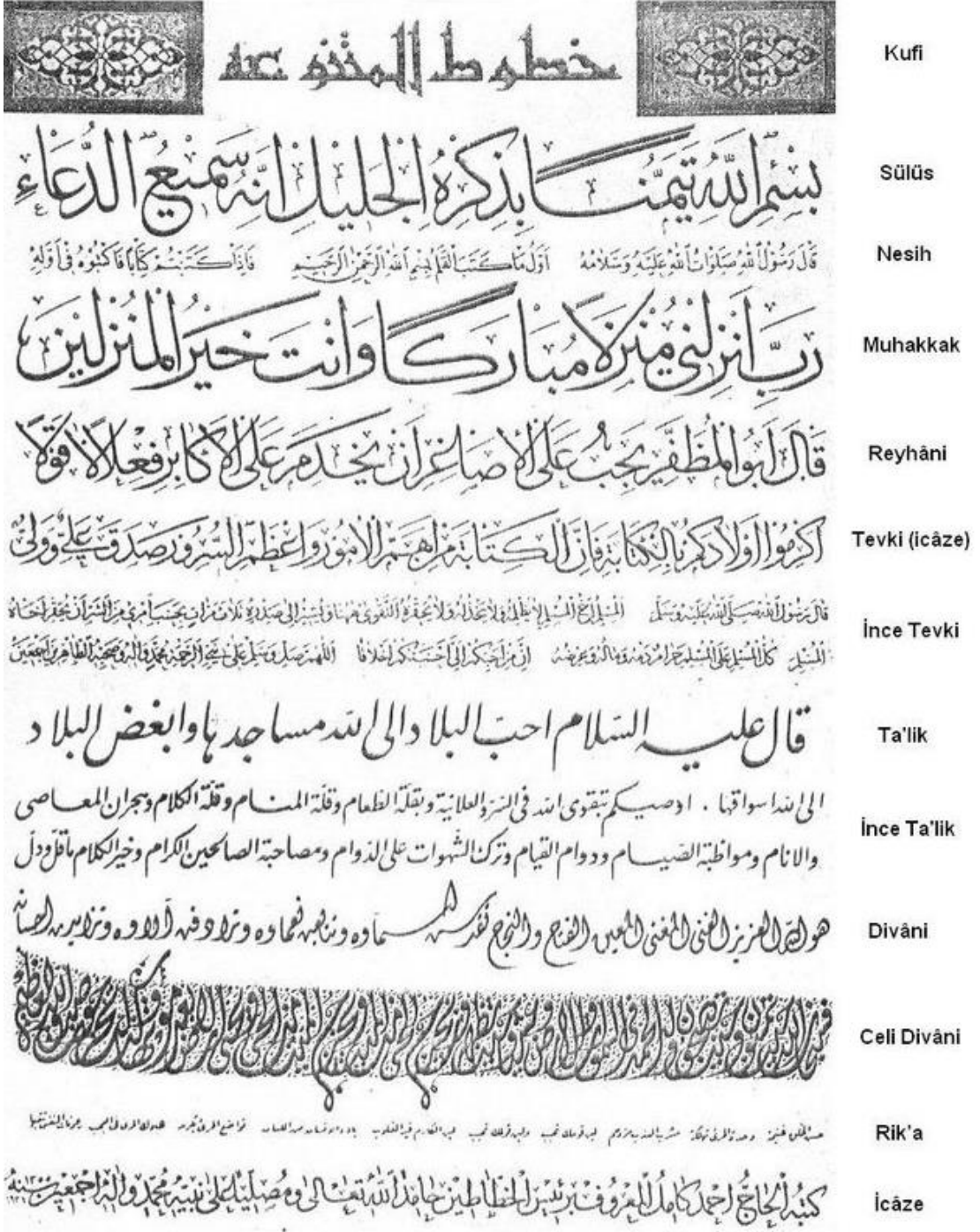
Figure 15. Panel of *Hutûtu'l-Mütenevvia* (Various Scripts)

Scribe: Hâmid Aytaç (1891-1982) (Berk, *Devlet-i Aliyye'den Günümüze Hat Sanatı*, 68).

Figure 16. Inscribed Shirt

Ottoman Empire, 16th-17th century

On the two sides of the collar a rosette with twelve slices is situated.

The writings comprise of four lines on the chests are surrounded by an arch-like figure.

On the left the surah of al-Fath (Qur'an, 48) is written, beneath the symbol of the sandal of the prophet (*Nalın-ı Şerif*) situates on two sides. (Gordon Winch and Gregory Blaxell, *İslam: İnanç ve İbadet*, 388-389).

Figure 17. Inscribed Shirt

Ottoman, 16th-17th century

Inscriptions on the arms: The first two verses of the surah of al-Fath are written from right to left and bottom to top. At the small squares *vefk*s (magic spell) are written. Beneath them, along the arm the twenty-one verses of surah of al-Hashr surah (Qur'an, 59) are written.

Inscriptions on the right side: Various verses from the Qur'an are written.

Inscriptions on the left side: Names of four angels Gabriel, Raphael, Michael, Azrael and various verses from the Qur'an are written. (Ibid., 131).

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Figure 18. *Kıta*

Safavid, 1560

Script: *Nestalik*

Scribe: Mir 'Ali of Herat (Abolala Soudavar, *Art of the Persian Courts: Selections from the Art and History Trust Collection*, 212).

Figure 19. *Hüküm* of Sultan Selim I Ottoman

Edirne, 6th-15th September, 1518

Script: *Divani*

Tuğra: "Selīmşāh bin Bayezīd Han el-muzaffer dāimā" (*Osmanlı Padişah*

Fermanları/Imperial Ottoman Fermans, ed. Ayşegül Nadir, 44).

Figure 20. *Ferman* of Shah Ismail

Safavid, 1504

Script: *Talik*

Scribe: Fakhri Beyg

Tuğra: "Orders are God's prerogatives; these are the words of the victorious and

valiant Ismail."

Seal: "The love of 'Ali and his progeny had embodied me as my soul, [I who am] the

slave of the king of men [i.e., 'Ali], Ismail son of Haydar." (Blair, *Islamic*

Calligraphy, 152).
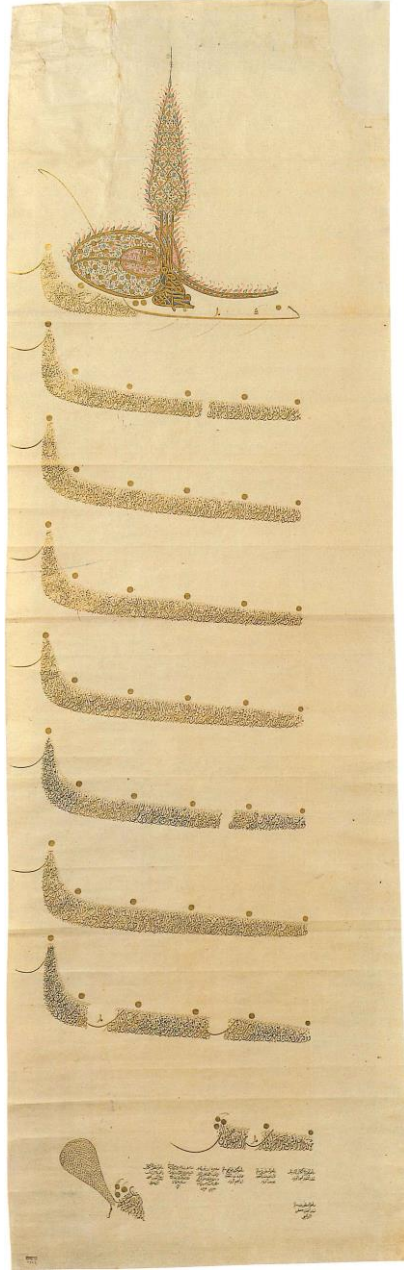
Figure 21. Mülknāme of Mehmed IV

Ottoman, 9th-17th June 1662

Script: *Celi Divani*

Tuğra: "Şāh Mehmed bin İbrāhīm Han el-muzaffer dāimā"

(*Osmanlı Padişah Fermanları*, 95).

Figure 22. Letter sent by Shah 'Abbas to King Charles I of England Safavid, c.1625

Script: *Talik* (Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy*, 440).

Figure 23. *Kıta*

Safavid

Script: *Nestalik*

Scribe: Şâh Mahmûd Nişâburî (d. 1564) (Serin, *Hat Sanatı ve Meşhur Hattatlar*, 273).

Figure 24. *Kıta*

Safavid, 1610

Script: *Nestalik*

Scribe: Mir 'Emād al-Hasani (Mir 'Emād)

Inscription: "Continually my hopes from God the exalted is that you remain upon the throne of power and fortune safe from affliction from the evil eye and that the dust of ill never touch your skirt. [Written by] the poor, miserable sinner 'Emād al-Hasani, may [God] pardon his sins and cover his faults." (trans. Wheeler Thackston) (Soudavar, *Art of the Persian Courts*, 325).

Figure 25. *Kıta*

Ottoman

Script: *Nestalik*

Scribe: Şeyhülislam Veliyüddin Efendi (d. 1768) (Serin, *Hat Sanatı ve Meşhur Hattatlar*, 290).
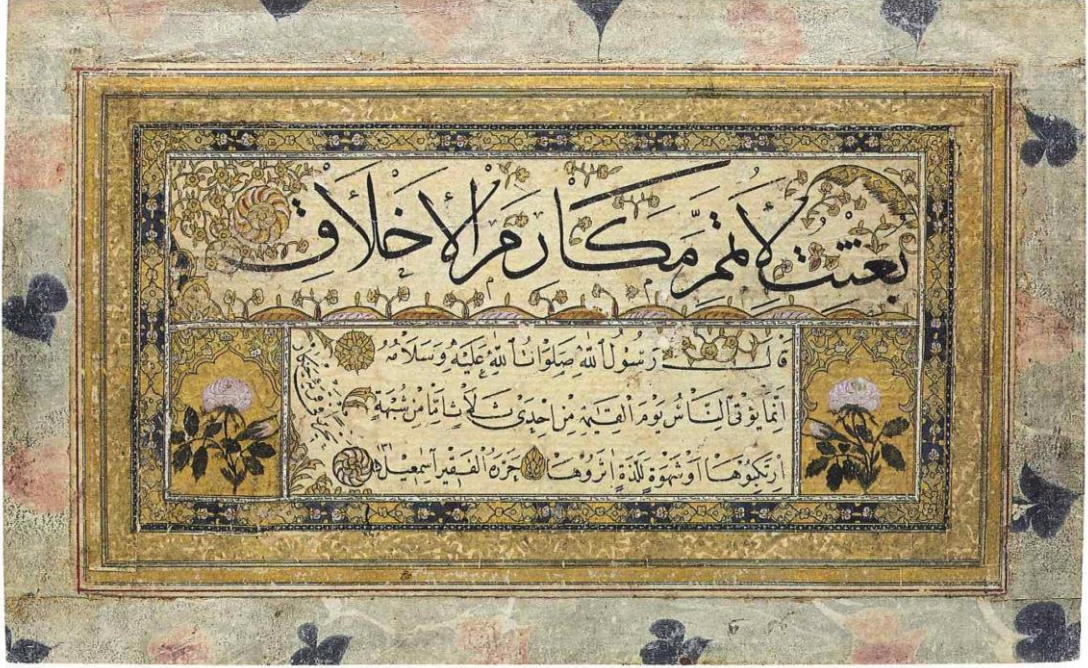
Figure 26. *Kıta*

Ottoman

Script: *Sülüs* and *nesih*

Scribe: Ağakapılı İsmail Efendi (d. 1706) (*Lines in Gold*, 158-159).

Figure 27. Calligraphic exercise

Herat?, 15th century

At the right-top an Arabic saying, "Blessings coalesce around gratitude" in *rika*

script by Ahmad al-Rumi. Copies of the phrase by the students of calligraphy

follow. The sheet might be composed at a gathering. (Roxburgh, ""The Eye is

Favored for Seeing the Writing's Form," 278).

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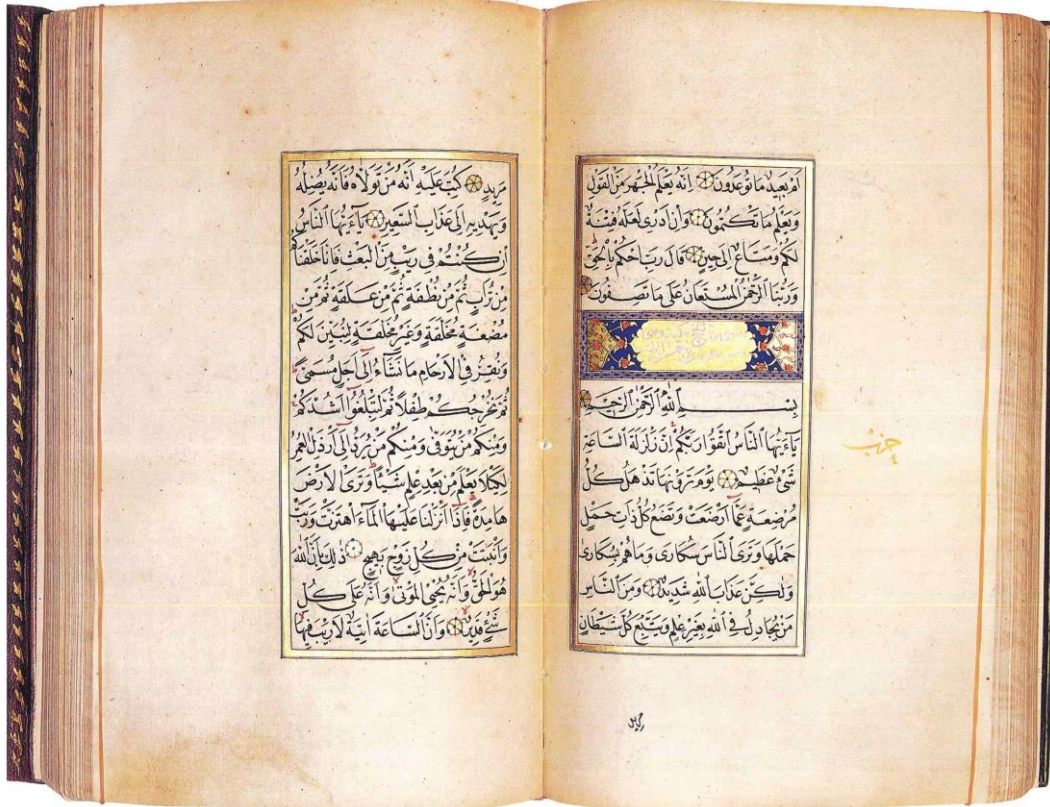
Figure 28. Qur'an

Ottoman

Script: *Nesih*

Scribe: Ömer bin İsmail (d. 1686) (M. Uğur Derman, *Sabancı University Sakıp Sabancı Museum: Selected Works From the Calligraphy Collection*, 78-79).

Figure 29. *Kıta*

Ottoman

Script: *Sülüs* and *nesih*

Scribe: Suyolcuzâde Mustafa Eyyubi (1619-1686) (*Lines in Gold*, 152-153).
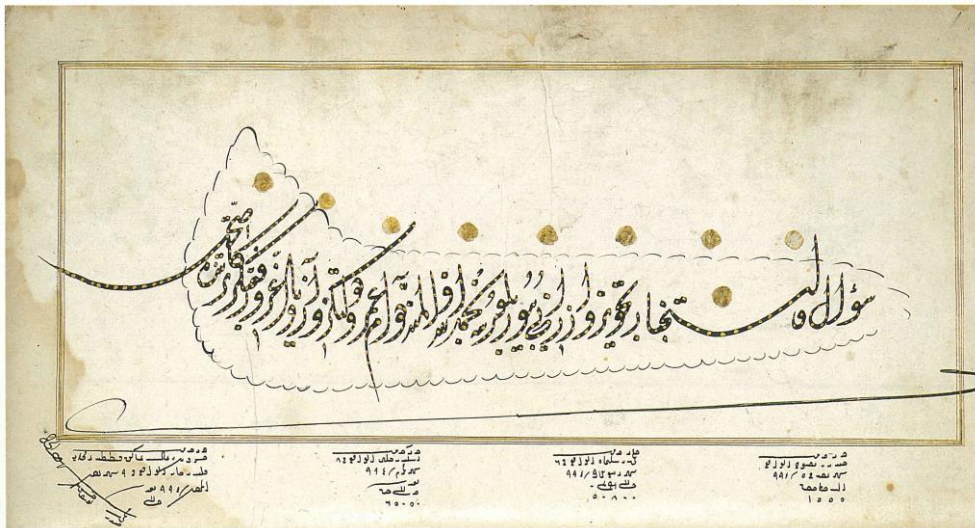
Figure 30. Album of calligraphic exercises (*Müfredât*)

Ottoman, late 16th century or later

Script: *Divani* written in *sefine* form and *siyakat*

The volume might be the exercise book of an apprentice secretary in the chancery

who needs to be literate in *divani* and *siyakat* scripts. (J. M. Rogers, *Empire of the*

Sultans, 181).
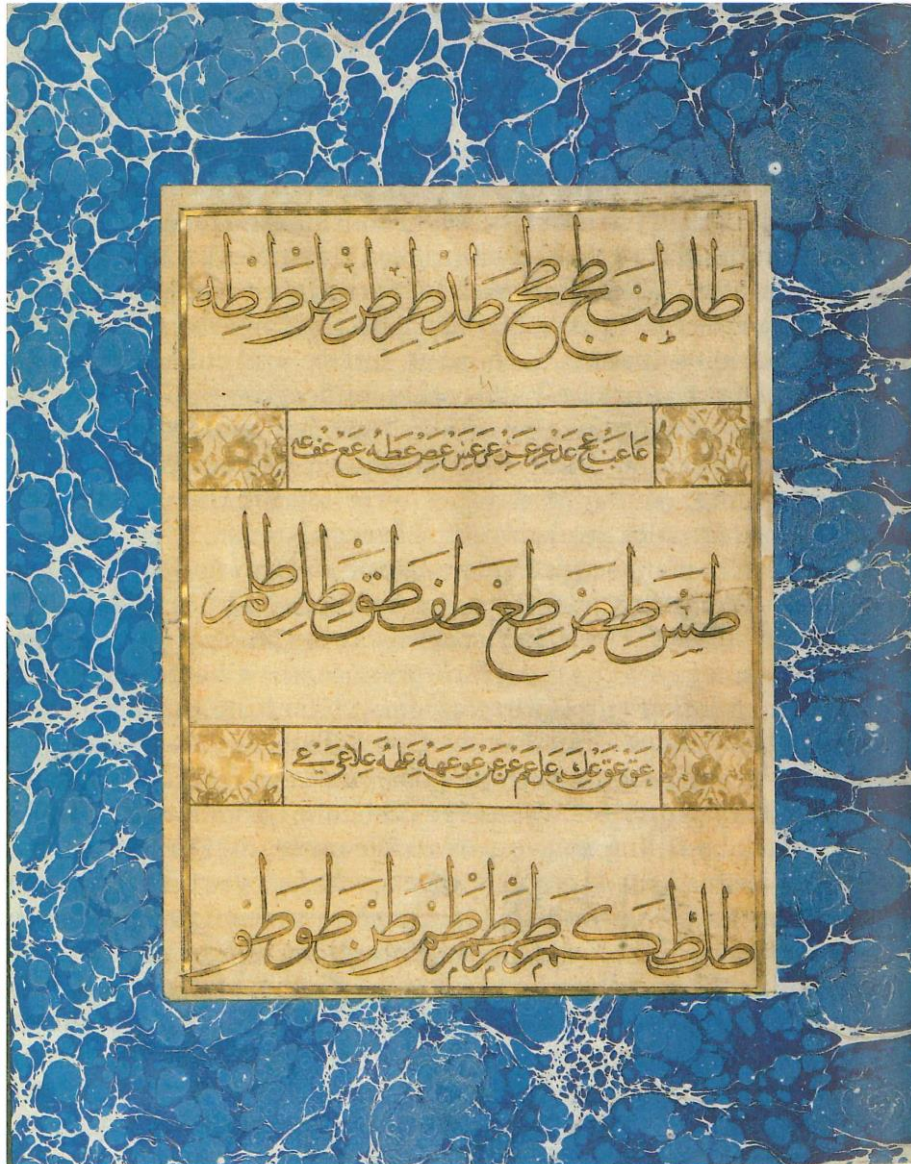
Figure 31. Page from an album of alphabetic exercises (*Müfredât*)

Ottoman, 1576-7

Scribe: Derviş Mehmed

The large lines: Combinations of ta' in *sülüs*

The small lines: Combinations of 'ayn in *nesih* (Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy*, 498).
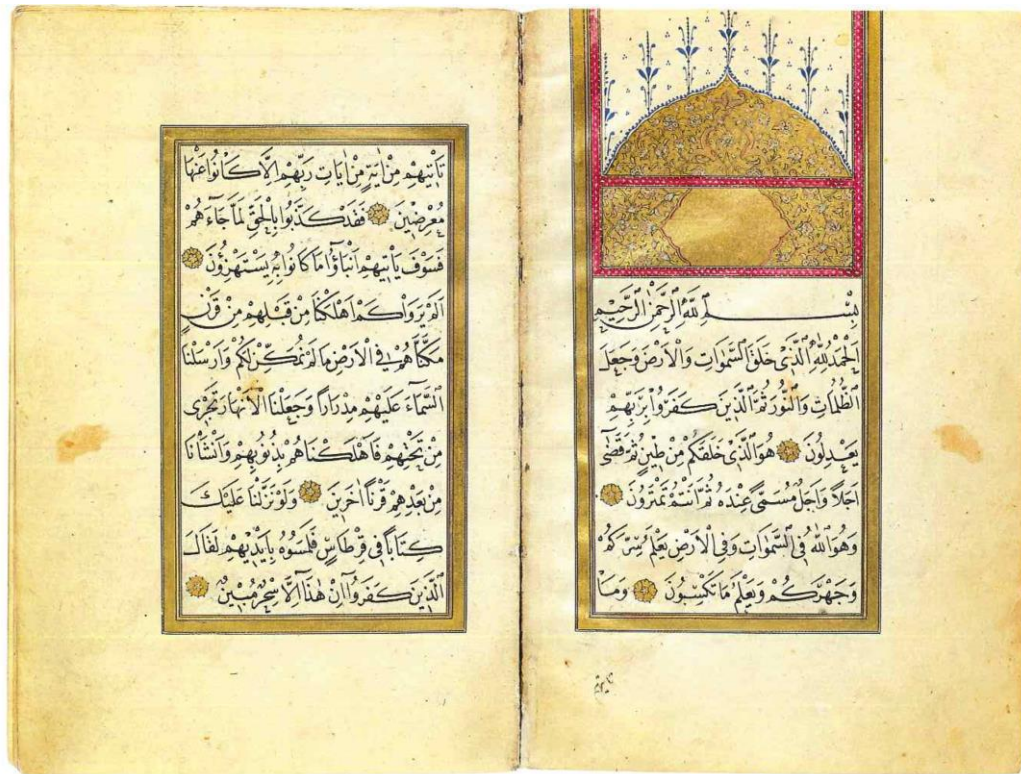
Figure 32. En'am sura from the Qur'an

Ottoman, 1684

Script: *Nesih*

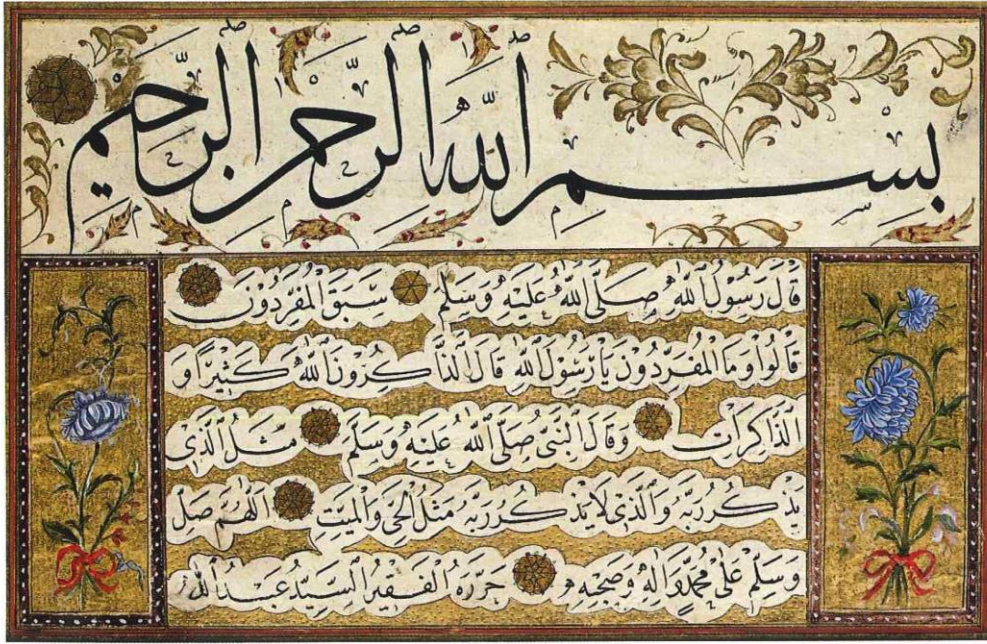Scribe: Hafız Osman (1642-1684) (*Lines in Gold*, 98-99).

Figure 33. Two *kıta*s

Ottoman

Script: *Sülüs* and *nesih*

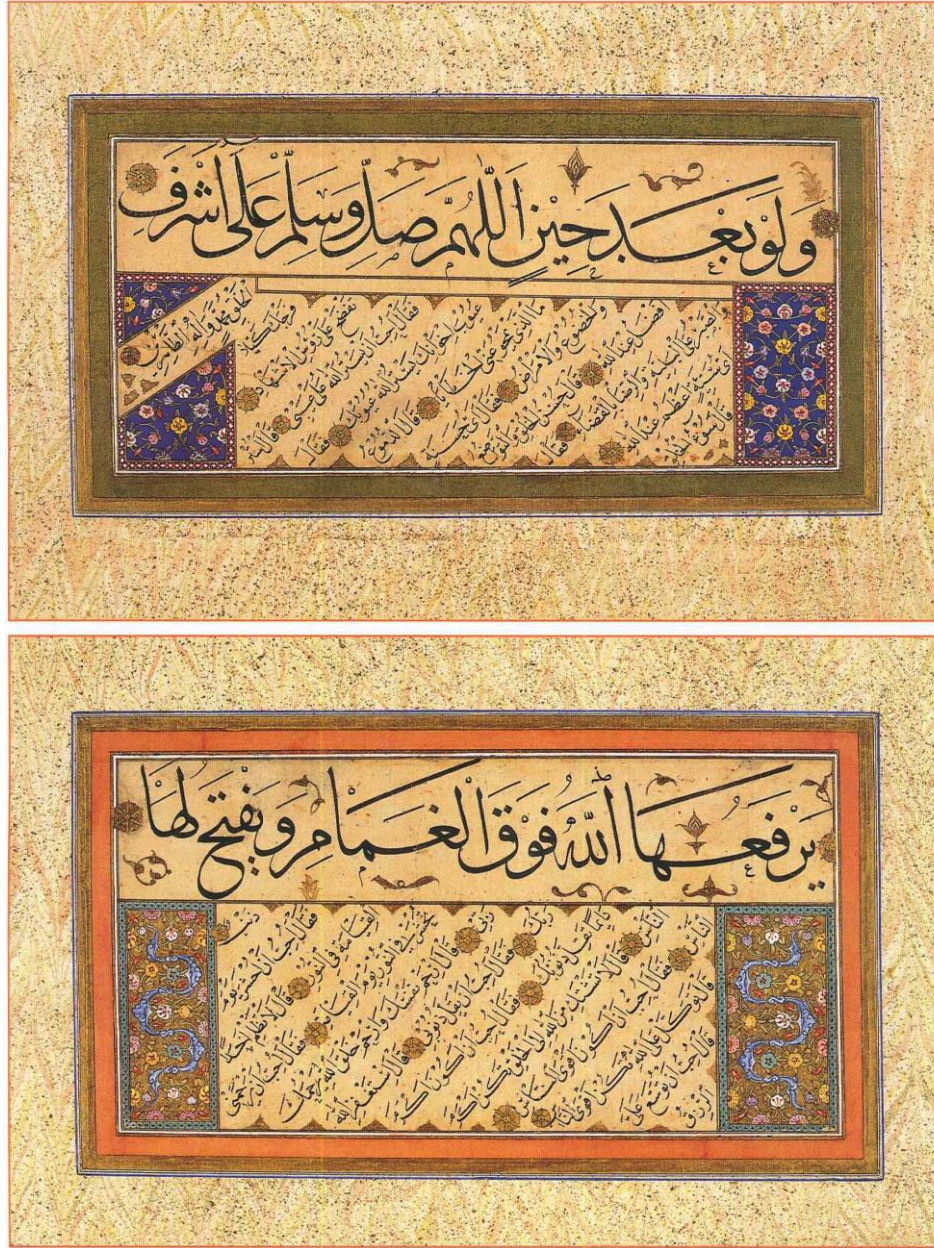Scribe: Yedikuleli Seyyid Abdullah Efendi (1670-1731) (*Lines in Gold*, 160-161).

Figure 34. *Kıta*

Ottoman

Script: *Sülüs* and *nesih*

Scribe: Eğrikapılı Mehmed Râsim (d. 1756) (Serin, *Hat Sanatı ve Meşhur Hattatlar*, 146).
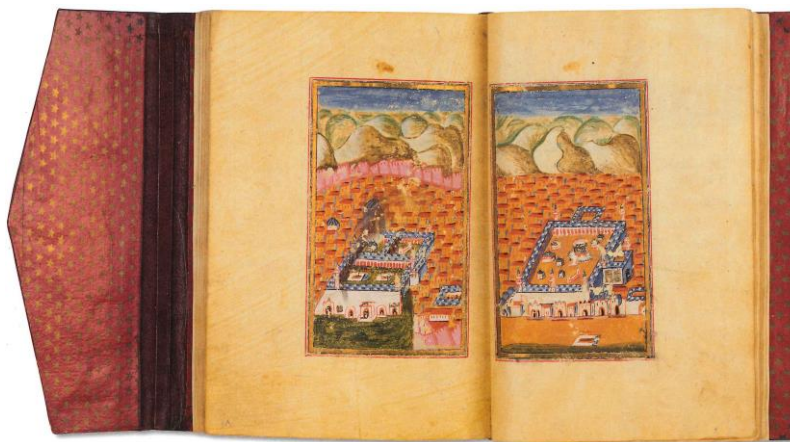
Figure 35. *Delâ'ilü'l-hayrât* of al-Juzuli copied by Şerife Emine Safvet

Ottoman Empire, late 18th century

Script: *Nesih*

Illumination: Ka'bah and the Rawdah (where the prophet and his two companions Abu Bakr and 'Umar are buried)

Signed: "Written by Şerife Emine Safvet, daughter of Mustafa Kütahi, the wife of es-Seyyid Hasan 'Ayni." (Nabil F. Safwat, *Golden* Pages, 207).
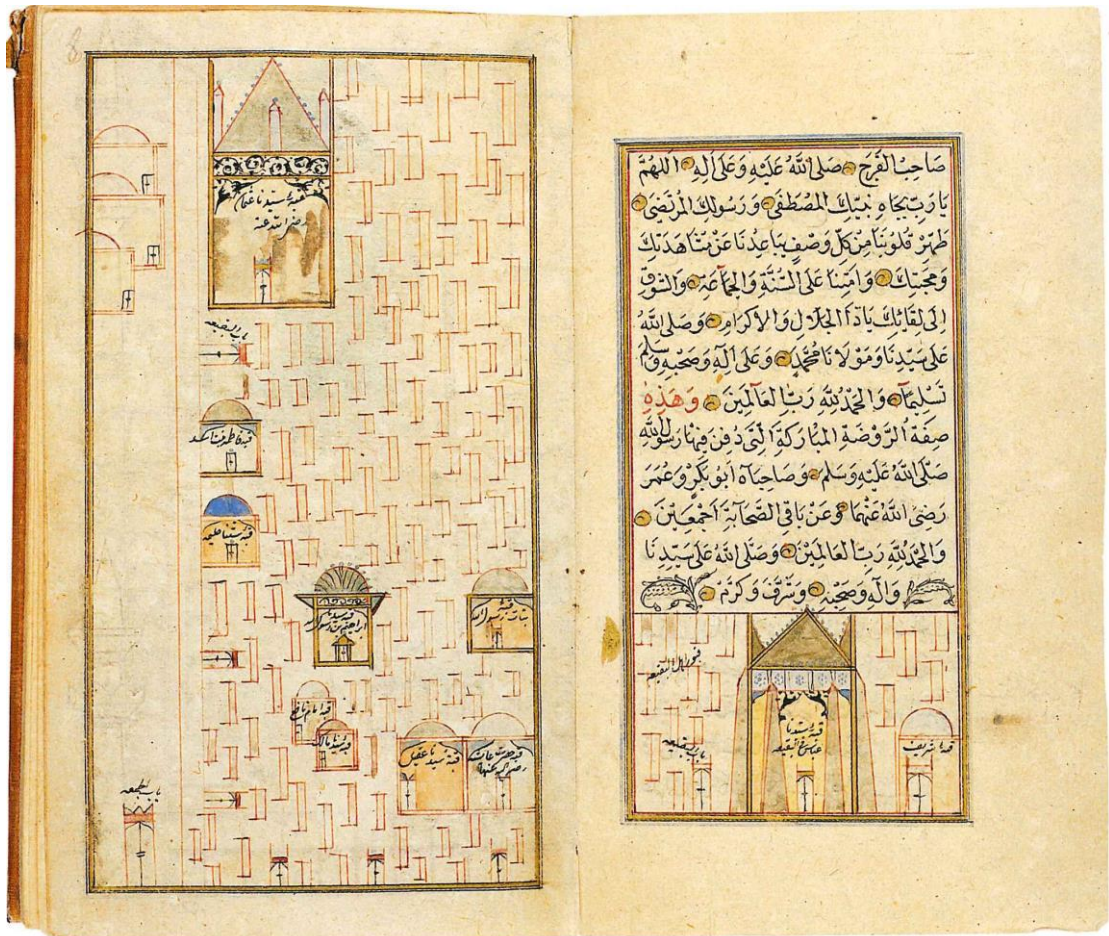
Figure 36.1. *Delâ'ilü'l-hayrât*

Ottoman Empire, 1708-1709

Script: *Nesih*

Right Page: Illustration of a part of the graveyard of *Cennetü'l-bâkî* in Medina and the mausoleum of Abbas.

Left Page: Illustration of the tombs of the caliph Osman, prophet Muhammad's children and Ayşe. (*İslam: İnanç ve İbadet*, 119).
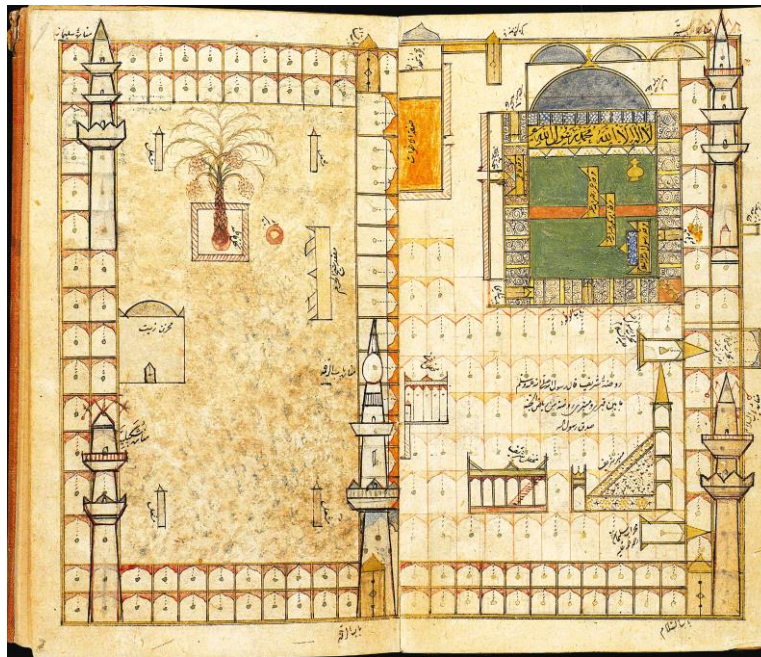
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Figure 36.2. Illustration of the Prophet's Mosque (*Mescid-i Nebevî*)

All the details of the mosque are given. The names of the all minarets are written.

Right Page: Illustration of the tomb of the Prophet (known as *Ravza-i Mutahhara*).

The dome of it is in blue. Under the dome *Kelime-i tevhid* is written in black. On the

cist outside the mausoleum it is written "the grave of Fatıma" (*merkad-ı Fatıma*).

Underneath, the pulpit (*minber-i şerif*) and meeting place (*mahfel-i şerif*) are

situated. In the middle, a hadith is written: "The area between my house and my

minbar is one of the gardens of Paradise."

Left Page: The other part of the courtyard is illustrated. Candles are situated at the

four corners. At the right *Ma'kad-i Şeyh'ül Harem* is situated. A well exists in the

middle. Near the well date palm tree of Fatma (*nahl-i Fatıma*) and on the left a

domed building called *Mahzen-i Zeyt* appear. (Ibid., 120).

Figure 36.3. Illustration of the city of Medina and its environ.

On the right page Mount Uhud, the graves of those who died at the Battle of Uhud

(625), the mausoleum of Hamza ibn Abdul-Muttalib, Mount Medina and the castle,

cisterns, the Mosque of the Two Qiblas (*Kıbleteyn Mescidi*) are seen. (Ibid., 121).

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