

3 What the Sources Say The Sociocultural Context of the Zeyrek-Hocasāde Debate

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The debate at hand between two prominent Ottoman scholars Zeyrek and Hocasāde, which was constructed through a limited number of primary source materials, concerned a hefty philosophical/theological topic regarding the validity of the philosophers’ proof of God’s unicity. In addition to the single extant copies of each scholar’s response, there are only a few extant descriptions of the actual event, compiled more than a century later. The oldest extant narrative is known to have recorded by the Ottoman *littérateur* ˆaşkōprizāde Aħmed Efendi (d. 968/1561) in a popular imperial biobibliographical dictionary called *al-Shaqā’iq al-num’āniyya fī ‘ulamā’ al-dawla al-‘uthmāniyya*, an almanac of Ottoman scholars and Sufis until his time. ˆaşkōprizāde’s narration was employed as a model for later texts, and the biographers to come embellished this narrative by adding more context and rhetorical remarks, which made the debate memorable for future generations. Nearly a hundred years after the initial debate, ˆaşkōprizāde narrated the events as follows:

One day, the virtuous scholar [Mawlānā Zeyrek] made certain claims about al-Sayyid al-Jurjānī in the presence of Sultan Meħemmed Hān. These words bothered the Sultan and he summoned Hocasāde, who, at the time,

was an instructor in Brusa working at the Mehemmed Hân Medrese, and ordered him to hold a debate with Mawlânâ Zeyrek. There was an inquiry (*su'âl*) about the proof of God's unicity by Hocasâde, and he sent this inquiry to Mawlânâ Zeyrek so that the senior scholar would pen a response to him. Afterwards Zeyrek penned his response in the presence of the Sultan. The referees present at the debate were the scholar-jurist Mawlânâ Hüsrev and the grand vizier Maḥmûd Paşa, the latter kept standing on his feet. Hocasâde started with his statement first and he stated: "Let the Sultan know that it is not necessary to deny what it is claimed. [Otherwise] I am afraid that people will say that Hocasâde denies God's unicity". Then Zeyrek settled Hocasâde's initial inquiry and responded to him. There followed a great debate, and many words were exchanged between the two. The matter was not settled on this day and the debate continued for six days. The Sultan ordered on the sixth day that each one of the contestants should peruse what they have written. Mawlânâ Zeyrek said: "I do not have an extra copy other than my own". Then Hocasâde stated: "I have another copy. I will give this to Zeyrek and then I will write what he penned at the back of my copy". Then he started to jot down Zeyrek's response. [After a while] the Sultan replied to Hocasâde in a joking manner: "Don't write Master Zeyrek's points wrong". Then Hocasâde replied: "Even if I were to copy things down wrong, my mistakes would never exceed the mistakes of my opponent". [Upon hearing this] the Sultan laughed at Hocasâde's words. Then, on the seventh day Hocasâde gained the upper hand and this was also judged as such by Mawlânâ Hüsrev. Afterwards the Sultan added addressing Hocasâde: "O Master, it is said in *ḥadîth* literature that those who were killed were killed. You verily killed this man and we witnessed this. I give his medrese post to you". At the time Mawlânâ Zeyrek was an instructor at one of the churches among the Constantinople churches [i.e. the medrese of Zeyrek] that Mehemmed Hân [had] converted into medreses before the construction of the *Şahn-ı şemân*.¹

As Taşköprizâde's account suggests, the debate on God's unicity notoriously continued for six days, and on the sixth, the Sultan asked both scholars to pen their points, rather than proceeding orally, so that on the next day it could be determined who made the most convincing argument. Finally on the seventh day, the debate came to an end upon the review of their responses, and Hocasâde was elected as the winner when the scholar-jurist Mollâ Hüsrev (d. 885/1480) announced his victory by quoting the well-known *ḥadîth* "Those who were killed were killed, and the winner [Hocasâde] had the booty".²

Disputations could be a vehicle for personal prestige and generous favors in patronage; yet, for the losing party, it could mean one's humiliation or dishonoring.³ Sometimes the expressions employed in such debates may include a metaphorical language of murder and revenge, as in the afore-

1 Taşköprizâde, *al-Shaqâ'iq*, 124-5.

2 "Man gatala qatilan fa-lahu salbuhu" (Hoca Sa'deddin, *Tâcû't-tevârîh*, 2: 467; Bosnalı Koca Hüseyin, *Bedâ'iyi'ül-vekâ'iyi'*, 2: 285b; Belig, *Güldeste-i riyâz*, 270).

3 Written or verbal, disputations could confer honors, as well as used to dishonor (*dedecora*). See the reference for Cardono's autobiography in Azzolini, "There Were No Medals", 272. The dialogue between scholars involved numerous references to terms of dishonor, such as shame (*vergogna*), and honor, such as honesty (*onestà*), courtesy (*cortesia*), and loyalty (*lealtà*) (Azzolini, "There Were No Medals", 276).

mentioned *ḥadīth* that mentioned ‘killing’. The arbitrators of the debate, more specifically Mollā Hüsrev, seemed to be disappointed with Zeyrek’s headstrong attitude in nuanced theological issues and his inability to verify the philosophers’ point, such that this may have been what subsequently led him to remove Zeyrek from his post at his new highly prestigious medrese *Şahn-ı şemân*, and conferred his post on the younger Hocasâde. At the end of the anecdote, biographical sources write that Zeyrek eventually quit teaching and moved to Brusa to lead a pious and reclusive life for the rest of his days. Though later Meḥmed II intended to win him back by offering another post, the heartbroken Zeyrek felt offended, and securing a humble amount of twenty aspers per day from a certain local merchant called Hoca Hasan, he never left Brusa again, spending his days in devotion and piety.⁴

There are some curious details about the debate in the later Turkish adaptation of *al-Shaqâ’iq* by the *littérateur* Mecdî Meḥmed Efendi (d. 999/1591), who embellished his narrative by interjecting elaborate prose and poetry describing the mood and disposition of the parties involved. The Ottoman biobibliographical sources do not specify Zeyrek’s initial question of contestation against Jurjānî, but it was widely known that this was not the first time that the young Hocasâde had, in the presence of other prominent scholars, refuted the established Zeyrek in a formal debate (see below). This remarkable debate was a final glorious round in a highly anticipated series of Ottoman intellectual boxing matches.

It may be that, remembering this initial snap exchange over a decade ago (see the miniature [fig. 3]), Meḥmed II commissioned Hocasâde again, after many years, to tackle the senior scholar’s boasts of being a more virtuous Muslim than the Timurid verifier Jurjānî. After some words about how Zeyrek praised his own rational capacity and religious devotion, Mecdî included a curious couplet from the fourteenth-century Persian ghazal master Hâfez in order to mock Zeyrek’s vanity in the debate, “Be bitter the mouth of him, who the candy [of my sweet verse] aspersed! | Be dust on the head of him, who the denier of the limpid water [of my verse] became!”⁵ – the meaning of which was interpreted by the Ottoman Sufi commentator Sûdî of Bosnia (d. 1007/1599)⁶ as “lacking thankfulness and appreciation is like denying clear water”.⁷

To dramatize the scene, the biographer Mecdî further added that Zeyrek’s bitter words passed through Sultan Meḥmed II’s chest like a sharp arrow, greatly offending him and causing him to look for unsubstantiated faults in the Sufi-scholar’s rectitude in religion with his “piercing axe”.⁸ Zeyrek found it necessary to bring refutations to silence (*ilzâm-ı iltizâm idüb*) the master verifier’s arguments related to piety. Upon this, knowing his acumen and argumentative style in philosophical arguments, the Sultan ordered Hocasâde, who was residing in Brusa at the time, to prepare an initial inquiry on

4 Ünver, “Molla Zeyrek’in gücenmesi”, 70.

5 Clarke, *The Divân-ı Hâfiz*, 946. The original lines are as follows: *bādâ dahānash talkh ke ‘ayb-e nabāt guft | khākash ba-sar ke munkar-e āb-e zulāl shud* (Mecdî, *Hadā’ikü’s-şakā’ik*, 1: 142). “Be dust on the head of him” is an idiomatic term that expresses disrespect.

6 Aruçi, “Sûdî Bosnevî”. Also for an account of his life and works, Hoca, *Sûdî, Hayatı, Eserleri*.

7 Bosnawî, *Sharḥ-e Sûdî bar Hâfez*, 2741-2.

8 “Pâdişâh-ı cemm-i ḥaşmet, fâzıl-ı mezbûruñ sihâm-ı kelâm sine-i güzârından mecrûhu’l-ḥâtır olub Seyyid Şerif Cürçânî’ye tibr-i ṭa’ana ile söz atduğundan rencide-i bâl oldı” (Mecdî, *Hadā’ikü’s-şakā’ik*, 142).

Jurjānī's section on God's unicity, in which Jurjānī evaluated positively the philosophers' version against the Dualists. Ḥocazāde, as Mecdī recounts, was known to have then prepared a written inquiry on God's unicity, which acted as an antithesis to Zeyrek's sophistical claims about the weakness of Jurjānī's evaluation of the philosophers' unicity formulation.⁹ Ḥocazāde, in turn, argued for the premise's validity in the eyes of the philosophers.

According to Mecdī, Zeyrek – often portrayed as haughty and assuming in manners (i.e. *tekebbür*) – desisted Ḥocazāde's reply and claimed that he committed 'innovation' in religion, implying that his position suggested the denial of God's unicity. Brushing off the claim of unbelief (*kufır*) with his rigid verification and argumentation method, Ḥocazāde made the most sound judgments regarding the subject matter based on the arbitrator Ḥüsrev's decision.¹⁰ The persistent Zeyrek still resisted Ḥocazāde's rejoinders and brought more counter-arguments, which were all again refuted by the junior scholar – by way of verification.

The exchange between Ḥocazāde and Zeyrek followed the formal rules of scholarly debate and investigation. 'Verification' (*taḥkik* in Ottoman Turkish),¹¹ a term also employed as a method in private reading (*muṭāla'a*) in the centuries to come as well,¹² was a key term used here to describe the utmost rigor in scholarship and reading. Along with its meanings associated with objective reasoning in scholarly research and inquiry, *taḥqıq* may also denote originality, methodological and philological rigor, comparison of primary sources, and epistemological commitment to certain truth-claims.¹³ This method indicated that the scholar in question possessed the requisite intellectual tools and expertise to analyze the sources and cull a synthesis of his own via arbitration. From the Sultan's acerbic words and ironic jokes for Zeyrek in Mecdī's prose, it is apparent that the Sultan was impressed by Ḥocazāde's debating skills and it was, therefore, no coincidence that, on the seventh day Ḥocazāde's statements were deemed more certain and truthful, dispelling the doubts about the master verifier Jurjānī's exposition.

⁹ "Menküldür ki Ḥocazāde ḥazretleriniñ burhân-ı tevḥîde mukaddimât u mebdâisi ve ḥimâyet ü muğâlaṭatla muḥâlîteden ḥâlî bir su'âlî ve kıyâsât-ı mustakîmiyetü'l-şuver gibi 'aks-ı naḳîz ve 'adem-i intâç ihtimâlî meslûb bedî'ü'l-uslûb bir sözi var idi" (Mecdî, *Ḥadâ'ikü's-şakâ'ik*, 143).

¹⁰ "Esâs-ı kelâmî aşlından te'sîs u terşîş eyleyüb mevrid-i i'tirâzî taḥkîkât-i bâri'e ve tedkîkât-ı fâ'ike ile aḥkâm eyledükden soñra kendü su'âlîni taḥrîr ü taḥkîk idüb" (Mecdî, *Ḥadâ'ikü's-şakâ'ik*, 143).

¹¹ A verbal noun of increased verb form II from the root ḥ-q-q meaning 'to be true'.

¹² There are certain other uses of *taḥqıq* especially in the seventeenth-century *âdâb al-baḥth* literature on private reading (*muṭāla'a*) practices. For the rise of 'deep reading' see El-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History*, 97-128. The Ottoman scholar Müneccimbaşı Aḥmed's (d. 11/1702) refers to the practice of *al-'ilm al-taḥqıqî* as a way of inferencing (*istidlâl*) in private reading, Örs, "Müneccimbaşı Ahmed Dede'nin", 61; for the Arabic text, 91-3.

¹³ See the forthcoming special issue of *Journal of Early Modern History* on *taḥqıq*; especially editor Giancarlo Casale's "Introduction". The articles included in the volume by Giancarlo Casale, Rajeev Kinra, Stefano Pellò, Maria Vittoria Comacchi, Francesco Calzolaio, and Efe Murat Balıkcıoğlu analyze specific cases from the Indo-Persian to the Mediterranean worlds. For the case of *taḥqıq* as 'direct experience', see the articles by Casale and Calzolaio; *taḥqıq* as 'philological rigor' and 'literary research', see Pellò's article in the same volume, as well as Dudney, "A Desire for Meaning". With regard to this term's application to the study of classical Islamic sciences: El-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History in the Seventeenth Century*. The closest cases for El-Rouayheb's sense of 'independent research' also exist in Kinra's article "The Truth is Out There (and Also in Here)". Stressing the philological and universalistic aspects of the term, Matthew Melvin-Koushki, however, extends its application to various other underrepresented disciplines including occult sciences (Melvin-Koushki, "*Taḥqıq* vs. *Taqîd* in the Renaissance of Western Early Modernity").



Figure 3 Hocaazāde (front right) and Mollā Zeyrek (far left) are portrayed seated for a debate in Muhtesibzāde Meĥmed's (d. 968/1560) Turkish translation of *al-Shaqa'iqa al-nu'māniyya*, *Ĥadā' ikū'r-reyhān*, a work completed in 967/1560. The miniature above is from a later copy of this work and is attributed to the seventeenth-century artist Nakṣi. The caption reads that Mollā Zeyrek was seated on one side of the Sultan and the Persian scholar Mevlānā Seyyid 'Alī on the other. After the Sultan welcomed Hocaazāde, who approached him to introduce himself and receive favors, the scholar placed his face in the dirt under the Sultan's feet and prayed for his longevity.⁴ The miniature seems to depict the young scholar's first encounter with Zeyrek at the foothills of Constantinople as the background suggests, yet the biographical sources mention that the scholars debated in the presence of the Sultan while being peripatetic, not seated.⁵ The depiction can be seen as a mēlange that conflated both encounters, that is, Hocaazāde's novice appearance and the current debate, since it was only during the second encounter that the grand vizier Maĥmūd Paşa (probably depicted smaller in size above) was present. During the debate, he was said to have remained standing due to his utmost respect for scholars – while others were seated. The figure seated next to the Sultan could be either Mevlānā Seyyid 'Alī or, the arbiter of the debate at hand, Mollā Ĥüsrev (probably the former). The miniaturist did not seem to have paid particular attention to the chronology and context of both events. As for the attire, the white headgear with a red top may signify one's links to the state and the bureaucratic path since the Sultan and Maĥmūd Paşa here seems to have matching tops, and likewise a green top may imply one's association with the *'ilmīyye* class (see the headgears of Hocaazāde and Seyyid 'Alī above). The Sufi-scholar Zeyrek's green robe depicted here with a green headgear may have connections to his Bayrāmī background. (Photo Courtesy: Serpil Bağcı and Ahmet Tunç Şen)

⁴ "Ol meclisde ĥazret-i Sultān'ın bir yanında Mollā Zeyrek bir yanında Mevlānā Seyyid 'Alī cāliser imiş pes pādīşāh ĥazretleri Hocaazāde'ye merĥabā hoş geldiñi deyi ĥitāb idüb anlar daĥı pādīşāh-ı 'ālem-penāñ ĥazretleriniñ ĥāk-pāylarına yüz sürüb dü 'ā idüb oturmuşlar" (Muhtesibzāde, *Ĥadā' ikū'r-reyhān* [Terceme-i şakā'ik], MS TSMK 1263, f. 90a).
⁵ *Tācü't-tevarīĥ*, 2: 469.

The Ottoman debates at the court of Meḥmed II had a ‘zero-sum’ logic, which was structured around the honor or recognition bestowed upon the contesters, since one’s being victorious also meant that the other side being on the losing end, whose prestige, reputation, and posts could be transferred to the other party. Meḥmed II punished Zeyrek by handing in his post at the prestigious *Şahn* to the victorious Ḥocazāde of Brusa. This rash move diverged sharply from the meritocratic bestowal of career lines specified in Sultan’s Code of Law and, as mentioned earlier, Gelibolulu Ālī took it as an example of Meḥmed II’s overly centralized and authoritarian rule – a transgression that violated even his own rule of law and set standards.¹⁴ In his arrogance, even after the debate Zeyrek continued to distort the truth about its outcome: whenever in the company of friends, he would claim that after Ḥocazāde denials of God’s unicity during the debate, he slapped him with his palms until the novice scholar accepted the truth – both of which were patently false.¹⁵

3.1 Lives of Two Fifteenth-Century Ottoman Professors

3.1.1 A Pious Sufi-Scholar. Mollā Zeyrek (d. 903/1497-98 [?])

Beginning his career at Brusa’s Murādiye medrese, Mollā Meḥmed, also known as Zeyrek, was a famed Sufi-scholar, who held a prestigious teaching post at the Zeyrek medrese for more than twenty years. This post was created after the Pantokrator Monastery was converted into a mosque and a medrese, immediately following the conquest of Constantinople in 857/1453.¹⁶ It seems that the rooms that once monks occupied were used for teaching during the first decade of the conquest temporarily. The eighteenth-century handbook of history of Istanbul mosques *Ḥadīkatü’l-cevāmi’* observes that the lodge (*zāviye*) next to the mosque building was given to Mollā Zeyrek directly by the endower (*vākıf*) Meḥmed II.¹⁷

The Zeyrek Medrese was one of most panoramically situated Byzantine monuments that stood on the fourth hill of the historic peninsula and overlooked the south-east across the valley to the third hill called *Oxeia* (‘steep’ in Greek), where the Süleymaniye complex is now crowned.¹⁸ Before the foun-

¹⁴ Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, 199.

¹⁵ “Mevlānā Zeyrek’ün aḥbāb u aḥzābı yanına cem’ olub keyfiyet-i mübāḥaşeden istifsār eyledüklerinde Mevlānā Ḥocazāde meclis-i pâdişâhîde tevḥide inkâr idüb cādde-i ḥaḳḳdan ‘adül eyledi. Ben amı tevḥide kâ’ il idüb ḥaḳḳa ikrâr etdürinceye değün başına başına tabānça ile zârb eyledüm. Bu mâbeynde ne mezkûruñ kendübaşına dermânı tokunub kûrulmağa kâdir oldı ve ne Mevlānā Ḥüsrev ol serfirâzi elimden almağa mâlik oldı deyü yordılar” (Mecdî, *Ḥadâ’ikü’ş-şakâ’ik*, 144).

¹⁶ Meḥmed II put *Zeyrek Medresesi Odaları*, the rooms previously occupied by Byzantine monks on the western part of the edifice, at the disposal of the scholar Zeyrek and his students (*Fatih Mehmet II Vakfiyeleri*, 35, ff. 43-4). For the Arabic of the same passage, Akgündüz, *Öztürk, Baş*, “Fâtih Sultan Mehmed’in Ayasofya Vakfiyesi”, 259, f. 13.

¹⁷ “Câmi’-i mezkûr keniseden münkâlıbdır. Vâkıfı Ebû’l-fetḥ Sultân Meḥmed Ḥân’dır. Maḥfîl-i hümayünü vardır. Veziyesi Ayasofya’dandır. Muttaşılında olan zāviyeye ibtidâ’ Zeyrek Mollā Meḥmed Efendi müderris olmağla, câmi’-i şerîfîn sebeb-i şöhret olmuşdur” (Ayvasarâyî, *Ḥadīkatü’l-cevāmi’*, 172). Another source suggests that Zeyrek’s salary and daily expenditures were met by the Ayasofya mosque (Taşköprizāde, *al-Shaḳ’i’q*, 123).

¹⁸ Magdalino, “The Foundation of the Pantokrator Monastery”, 33-5; Stanković, Berger, “The Komnenoi and Constantinople”.

datation of the Pantokrator complex between 1118 and 1136, which served as the new imperial mausoleum (after the Holy Apostles Church) for the Komnenian dynasty,¹⁹ there was an aristocratic mansion that had first become a convent at the end of the eight century, which then turned into a hospital by the Emperor Theophilos (r. 829-42).²⁰ When John II and Eirene founded the structure, the Komnenian dynasty was in power for more than fifty years. The monastery was composed of three large interconnected churches constructed in three phases – the south church dedicated to the Christ Pantokrator having served as the *katholikon* of the monastery.²¹ The edifice was associated with the sacralization of the Komnenian imperial image²² with references to early Christian themes and depictions of cosmos that paralleled those at the Great Palace, as well as the Samson cycle (often being associated with the *ghāzī* father of Digenes Akrites, a twelfth-century romance produced at the Komnenian court),²³ and the zodiac signs.²⁴ With the conquest of Constantinople by the Latin Crusaders army in 1204, the structure was converted into administrative headquarters in the hands of the Venetians²⁵ and, besides the early renovation attempts of the structure by the architect F. Çuhadoğlu between 1960 and 1970, a group of leading scholars of antiquities and architecture, including Robert Ousterhout, Zeynep Ahunbay, and Metin Ahunbay, have recently studied and started the restoration of the Zeyrek Camii after the structure gained a ‘world heritage’ status in 1985.²⁶

19 In the eighteenth century, Jean-Claude Flachet, the first merchant to the Sultan, recorded as having seen in the grounds of the Topkapı Palace, the marble tomb of Manuel I Comnenus, which was originally in the Pantokrator Monastery (Raby, “East and West in Mehmed the Conqueror’s Library”, 298). As a victory monument representing the Komnenian dynastic might, power, religiosity, the Pantokrator reflects the two ways that its patronage would have been understood, as a celebration of piety (often female; here Piroska-Eirene) and military valor (usually male) (Ousterhout, “Piroska and the Pantokrator”, 227). The Church’s interior and exterior mosaics were so lavish that its mosaics shone like the sun as noted by Russian travellers – its interior ostentation having close connections with the Pala d’Oro at San Marco in Venice (Majeska, *Russian Travellers to Constantinople*, 43 and 289; and Ousterhout, “The Decoration of the Pantokrator (Zeyrek Camii)”, 439). The Pantokrator held various relics including the headless body of St. Michael, the ‘stone of anointing’ where Jesus’ body was allegedly laid form the cross, as well as stained glass windows which signalled the Komnenian fascination with the west (Majeska, *Russian Travellers to Constantinople*, 292-4; Ousterhout, “Piroska and the Pantokrator”, 230). The edifice also held the tombs of the Komnenian emperors. In the eighteenth century, Jean-Claude Flachet, the first merchant to the Sultan, recorded as having seen in the grounds of the Topkapı Place, the marble tomb of Manuel I Comnenus, which was originally at the premises of the Pantokrator Monastery (Raby, “East & West in Mehmed the Conqueror’s Library”, 298).

20 Magdalino, “Medieval Constantinople”, 50-1; “The Foundation of the Pantokrator Monastery”, 35.

21 Ousterhout, “Architecture, Art and Komnenian Ideology”, 142-4.

22 The image of the Pantokrator represented Eirene’s policy of religious piety and poverty. She became a protector of orphans and widows, and enriched monastic dwellings with money (see the commemorative text in the appendix concerning Eirene as the “founder of the venerable monastery of the Pantokrator Saviour Christ”, in Magdalino, “The Foundation of the Pantokrator Monastery”, 53-4).

23 Hull, *Digenis Akritas* and Magdalino, “Digenes Akrites and Byzantine Literature”.

24 Ousterhout, “Architecture, Art and Komnenian Ideology”, 145-7.

25 Kotzabassi, “The Monastery of Pantokrator”.

26 Ousterhout, Ahunbay, Ahunbay, “Study and Restoration. First Report”; “Study and Restoration. Second Report”, as well as Zeynep Ahunbay’s summary “Zeynep Camii Restorasyonu” prepared for *Voyvoda Caddesi Toplantıları* (2006-2007), which can be found at <https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/159589>.

al-Shaqā'iq refers to the medrese of Zeyrek as one of the first medreses in operation before the building of the *Şahın-ı şemân*.²⁷ This suggests that education in Constantinople continued in converted church buildings until the completion of the Sultan's education complex in 875/1470-71, and after this, education at Zeyrek halted completely since the medrese building of Zeyrek was utilized as a mosque.²⁸ Mecdî's entry suggests that Mehmed II only turned [eight] churches that had been in half ruins [with non-durable edifices] at the time of the conquest.²⁹ It is, however, also noted that turning these buildings into colleges was a righteous act since the Sultan justly initiated the study of the opening verse of the Qur'ân, *al-Fātiha*, upholding God's unicity (*tevḥīd*) and benediction (*taḳdīs*) in place of obsolete Christian texts or, metaphorically speaking, the bells of the infidel community.³⁰ Erasing the Christian past meant upholding God's unicity as the core beliefs of Islam but here the sixteenth-century biographer Mecdî might have been making a subtle reference to the celebrated debate between Ḥocazāde and Mollā Zeyrek when mentioning God's unicity in the context of the Zeyrek mosque.

Mollā Mehmed was known as *zeyrek* due to his acuteness of mind, an epithet given by the mystic Ḥacı Bayrām-ı Velî (d. 833/1430), who, according to our sources, initiated him to his order with the same name.³¹ The green headgear with a red top worn by Zeyrek in the miniature above follows the early depiction of the Bayrāmî headgear. This illustration may not have paid attention to Ḥacı Bayrām's changing of the official headgear color from red to white, upon Sultan Murād II's (d. 855/1451) request, so that he would be able to distance his order from that of the Bayrāmî Sufis of Ardabil.³² Still, the Bayrāmî symbolism of unicity was a known phenomenon, also observed in the symbolism of three-folded headgears worn especially to follow the shaykh Bayrām's example.³³ Naḳşî's depiction above might have followed this detail, having missed the chronology of the change in the Bayrāmîs' headgear coloring.

The Ottoman sources regularly depicted Zeyrek as a pious scholar more preoccupied with worship (*ibâdet*) than with *scientia* (*'ilm*) – whether rational or religious.³⁴ Given that the unicity of God (i.e. *tawḥīd*) was the central

27 "Thumma naqalahu al-Sultân Muḥammad Khân 'ilâ ihdâ al-madâris [Zeyrek] allâti 'ayyanahu 'ind fath madîna Koştantîniyye qabl binâ' al-madâris al-thamân" (Taşköprizâde, *al-Shaqâ'iq*, 124). And one of the first urban edifices to be appropriated for Islamic use as the new Ottoman capital's first medrese (Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul*, 22).

28 The Ottoman Turkish endowment charter from this period also gives the impression that the place was used as a temporary teaching spot until the completion of the *Şahın-ı şemân*. See "Kenise-i mezbûre câmi' olmağ bâbında fermân-ı ḳazâ-cereyân şudûr itmişdir" (*Fatih Mehmet II Vakfiyeleri*, 35, f. 44).

29 "Eyyâm-ı sâlifâdanberi me'abâd-ı küffâr ḥâksâr olan kenâ'is-i nâ-üstevârdan sekiz 'aded keniseleri medrese idüb" (Mecdî, *Ḥadâ'ikü's-şakâ'ik*, 117).

30 "Edyân-ı bâtıla üzere olan şuhuf-ı merfû-ı mensûbeyi okudub mebnî-i me'ânî-i seb'ül-meşânî olan fûnün berâ'at-ı nişânî anîñ yerine oḳutarağ emr eyledi. Zemzeme-i ruhḥâbîni âvâze-i ḥutbe-i belâgat-nişâne tebdil idüb aşvât-ı nevâḳis küffârî bî-nevâmîsi kelbânîñ tevḥîd ü taḳdîse taḥvîl eyledi" (Mecdî, *Ḥadâ'ikü's-şakâ'ik*, 117).

31 Taşköprizâde, *al-Shaqâ'iq*, 123. Steingass defines the Persian word *zayrak* or *zîrak* as "ingenious, intelligent, prudent, penetrating, sagacious, smart, and quick in understanding or at manual labor" (Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary*, 634).

32 Bayramoğlu, Azamat, "Bayramiyye", 270.

33 Bayramoğlu, Azamat, "Bayramiyye", 270. Also for a general overview of Sufi symbolism in clothing, Muslu, "Türk Tasavvuf Kültüründe".

34 Ḥoca Sa'deddin, *Tâcü't-tevâriḥ*, 2: 467.

doctrine in Bayrāmī rituals, it is understandable why Zeyrek might have felt compelled to criticize Jurjānī's piety, exposition, as well as affirmative take on the philosophers' positions with regard to the nature of God's necessity and existence.

3.1.2 Life of a Verifier. Ḥocazāde Muşliḥuddīn Muştafā (d. 893/1488)

Born around the year 838/1434 to a rich merchant family based in Brusa, Ḥocazāde was one of the most brilliant assistants of Ḥızır Bey (d. 863/1459), a famed Ottoman theologian teaching at Meḥmed I's (d. 824/1421) prestigious Sulṭāniye Medrese in Brusa.³⁵ It should be noted that similar to the case of the affluent medieval cities of Khorasan, such as Nishapur and Marw, Brusa was a center of trade, in which traders and scholars often linked to same families, a fact that led a dominating group of upper-class merchant families having invested on education to satisfy their desire for prestige and legacy.³⁶ According to the Ottoman sources, Murād II was said to have appointed Ḥocazāde at the town of Kaştel upon graduation (probably both as a novice instructor and a jurist) during his second short reign, just before the Second War of Kosovo in 852/1448.³⁷ On his way back from this victorious campaign, Murād II reappointed him at Esiyye medrese by the Grand Mosque of Brusa with a low salary of ten aspers per day, where Ḥocazāde spent formative six years, committing *Sharḥ al-mawāqif* to memory and jotting down glosses in the marginalia of his copy. Taşköprizāde cited the sixteenth-century scholar 'Arabzāde, claiming that the contemporary Sufi-scholar Ḥasan Çelebi (d. 891/1486), who was also harshly criticized by Ḥocazāde in reply to Zeyrek below, obtained the manuscript and incorporated Ḥocazāde's memos into his own gloss.³⁸ This backstory must be the reason why Ḥocazāde lashed Ḥasan Çelebi's comments on Jurjānī's take on unicity during the debate.

It was during this time when Ḥocazāde first encountered Zeyrek during the young scholar's unsolicited visit to Sultan Meḥmed II to receive his favor. The story of the first encounter is as follows: Following the conquest of Constantinople in 857/1453, Ḥocazāde decided to show his reverence for the young Meḥmed II by congratulating him in person for his successful campaign. This encounter was perceived as a great opportunity for Ḥocazāde, who was a novice in teaching (*mülāzım*), to receive patronage from court members, or to seize a post in the Ottoman hierarchical service out of the Sultan's benevolence.³⁹ However, the junior scholar did not have enough

³⁵ Bilge, *İlk Osmanlı Medreseleri*, 68.

³⁶ See Bulliet, *The Patricians of Nishapur*, 20-7, 59 and Griffel, *The Formation of Post-Classical Philosophy*, 26; also see Rudolph, "Khōdjā-zāde".

³⁷ Biographical sources could be mistaken here since Ḥocazāde would be at the age of fourteen, but, on the other hand, he was often depicted as a child prodigy who was good at grasping complex problems and offering solutions to them. Historian Philippe Ariès has traced the age of schooling in the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century France and England to the ages seven and eight; and a boy aged between thirteen and fifteen was already a full-grown man and shared in the life of his elders (Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*, 151, 164).

³⁸ Taşköprizāde, *al-Shaqā'iq*, 137; Ḥoca Sa'deddīn, *Tācū't-tevārīḥ*, 2:, 474.

³⁹ Ḥoca Sa'deddīn, *Tācū't-tevārīḥ*, 2: 470. Meḥmed II was known for having shown (*ragbet itmek*) kindness (*lutf*) and favor (*iltifāt*) to the scholars, and Ḥocazāde thought that this was the

money to finance a trip to the new capital. He borrowed eight hundred aspers from one of his students to buy two horses, and left Brusa immediately with the student. By this way, he would be able to give his best offerings to the Sultan in time, who was at the foothills of Constantinople, waiting to leave for a new campaign towards Edirne.

According to Kâtib Çelebi (d. 1067/1657), Hocasâde presented a poem composed in praise of the scholar-grand vizier Maḥmūd Paşa,⁴⁰ who introduced him to the Sultan. This was a common way to establish contact with the Sultan or, at least, establish a reputation for oneself as a noted scholar during the early years of the nascent empire. Unlike the set standards in Meḥmed II's Code of Law, which would be promulgated later during the last years of the Sultan, academic promotions were closely monitored by the Sultan and his viziers, and prominent scholars could have proposed candidates, although the Sultan always had the last word.⁴¹ In short, Ottoman debate culture was a byproduct of this early promotion scheme based on the duplex of meritocracy and patronage.

As the story goes, Meḥmed II was chatting with two celebrated scholars of the time, the Persian scholar Mollâ Seyyid 'Alî (d. 860/1456), a student of the famous theologian Jurjânî,⁴² along with the Bayramî scholar Mollâ Zeyrek. Hocasâde joined their conversation and argued successfully against the aged scholars - allegedly dumbfounding and silencing even the senior Zeyrek during this short exchange.⁴³

Hocasâde's encounter with these experienced scholars highlighted his acuity and foreshadowed his future scholarly debates (*mubâheşât-ı 'ilmiyye*) and successes. At the end of the day, the established scholars obtained gifts from the Sultan, while the poor Hocasâde dressed in shabby clothes received no favors. His student even became annoyed at Hocasâde's inability to demonstrate competence so much that he directly accused Hocasâde of not making a good impression. Quite the contrary was true, however. After his student fell asleep at night, two guards brought Hocasâde a great number of gifts, including horses and mules, precious clothes, and ten thousand aspers. Apparently the guards had not initially believed that the scholar whom the Sultan wanted most to honor was this mendicant-looking man.⁴⁴ Hocasâde woke his disgruntled student, informing him that he had attained status and fortune (*devlete irdi*), and officially became the Sultan's tutor,⁴⁵ a 'rags-to-riches' saga often recounted in Ottoman biobibliographical sources.⁴⁶

right moment to benefit (to take a share, *behremend*) from his benevolence (*lutf u ihsân*) (Hoca Sa'deddîn, *Tâcû't-tevârih*, 2: 470; Mecdî, *Hadâ'ikü's-şakâ'ik*, 148).

⁴⁰ Kâtib Çelebi, *Sullam al-wuşûl*, 3: 339.

⁴¹ Atçıl, *Scholars and Sultans*, 74-5.

⁴² "Şerif Cürçânî hıdmetine vuşul bulub meşkûh-ı fezâ'ilinden iktibâs itmiş" (Hoca Sa'deddîn, *Tâcû't-tevârih*, 2: 456).

⁴³ Hoca Sa'deddîn, *Tâcû't-tevârih*, 2: 469; Mecdî, *Hadâ'ikü's-şakâ'ik*, 148.

⁴⁴ Taşköprizâde, *al-Shaqâ'iq*, 128; Hoca Sa'deddîn, *Tâcû't-tevârih*, 2: 471; Hüseyn, *Bedâ'iyü'l-vekâ'iyi*, 286b. Belîğ's *Güldeste-i riyâz* skips this piece of information after summarizing the whole anecdote only in two short sentences.

⁴⁵ Hoca Sa'deddîn, *Tâcû't-tevârih*, 2: 471.

⁴⁶ See Hocasâde's earlier encounter with Şeyh Velî Şemseddîn, a successor (*halîfe*) of the city saint of Brusa, i.e. Emîr Sultân, who advised him to continue his pursuit in knowledge instead of becoming a tradesman (Repp, *The Mufti of Istanbul*, 69).

The jealousy of grand viziers often invited state intervention in career paths. In the case of Hocaazâde, his career was interrupted at least twice when the grand viziers of the time decided to expel him off from Mehmed II's immediate circle. Whenever a scholar became closely associated (*takarrub*) with the Sultan, sources indicate that grand vizier Maḥmūd Paşa had always found a way to dispel this person (*dür itmîş*) from the Sultan's immediate milieu, thanks to his finesse in palace politics. Our sources indicate that, as a palace tutor, Hocaazâde worked closely with the Sultan, teaching him 'Izz al-Dīn al-Zanjānī's book on Arabic morphology.⁴⁷ They spent so much time together that Maḥmūd Paşa, allegedly became jealous (*hasad*),⁴⁸ and tricked the Sultan by misinforming him that Hocaazâde was not satisfied with his post and desired a career in religious bureaucracy.⁴⁹ In fact, such a post, on the contrary, would be resisted by many independent-minded scholars like Hocaazâde, who saw this as a way to succumb to political authority.

The grand vizier convinced the Sultan to give Hocaazâde the chief military judgeship (*kādī'asker*) in Edirne in the year 862/1457-58,⁵⁰ so that the latter would be away from the Sultan's retinue. Hocaazâde rejected this offer initially, but could not resist Mehmed II's insistence and accepted the post. Later on he regretted this decision since, for the first time, he had digressed from the academic path (*'ilm-i tarîk*) for a post in the bureaucracy.⁵¹ Dissatisfied with the position, the young scholar longed to occupy himself with teaching (*tedrîs*)⁵² and, at the age of thirty-three, he was given a post at his *alma mater* Sultāniye with a salary of fifty aspers per day.⁵³ His new teaching post at Sultāniye, as Taşköprizâde's father narrates, was a position that was far more superior to his previous posts of chief judge of Edirne and tutor to the Sultan,⁵⁴ which could be interpreted as that a medrese job might have been perceived as more prestigious than a palace or bureaucratic post. As a result, Hocaazâde was removed from the judgeship upon his own request, since it was a job that he never desired to take in the first place, and had only assumed it due to the Sultan's persistence.⁵⁵

47 The name and the nature of the work that Hocaazâde studied with the Sultan is only given in Taşköprizâde, *al-Shaqâ'iq*, 129. His notes from this time should be *Sharḥ al-'Izzî fî al-taṣrîf* (SK, MS Tekelioğlu 628). Hocaazâde's commentary is waiting to be studied.

48 Taşköprizâde, *al-Shaqâ'iq*, 129. Ottoman chronicles and biographical dictionaries included instances in which palace bureaucrats often assigned pensions to scholars and constituted a channel between scholarship and power, which were also present in the early Abbasid court (Osti, "The Practical Matters of Culture", 157).

49 Osti, "The Practical Matters of Culture" and Hüseyin, *Bedâyi'ül-veḳâyî*, 2: 287a. Hoca Sa'deddīn, *Tâcüt-tevârîḥ* mentions that Maḥmūd Paşa also devised the same scheme to the Sultan's another tutor Mollâ 'Abdülkâdir (Hoca Sa'deddīn, *Tâcüt-tevârîḥ*, 2: 501).

50 Belîğ, *Güldeste-i riyâz*, 268.

51 "Kabûlden imtinâ' itdi [...] ibrâmla râm itdi" (Hüseyin, *Bedâyi'ül-veḳâyî*, 2: 287a).

52 Hocaazâde's decision here echoes a past encounter. During his youth, he met the local Sufi Velî Şemsüddīn (d. 875/1470), one of the successors of the Sufi sheikh Emîr Sultân (d. 833/1429), who advised him never to leave the path of knowledge (Mecdî, *Hadâ'ikü's-şakâ'ik*, 142).

53 Mecdî, *Hadâ'ikü's-şakâ'ik*, 142. *Sicill-i 'Oşmânî* writes that Hocaazâde quit his military-judgeship in Edirne on his own, yet he should have been rather dismissed (*'azl*) from the office upon his request (Şüreyyâ, *Sicill-i 'Oşmânî*, 4: 490).

54 Taşköprizâde, *al-Shaqâ'iq*, 130.

55 *Güldeste's* inclusion of Hocaazâde's post at Sultāniye just after his first job at Esediyye is probably a misattribution. After mentioning that Hocaazâde left his post in Edirne, İsmâ'il Belîğ directly skipped to his second encounter with Zeyrek (Belîğ, *Güldeste-i riyâz*, 269). However,

There were two parallel career tracks that a scholar could pursue in the late fifteenth-century: academic or religio-legal (excluding other jobs that were open to medrese graduates, such as librarians, preachers, imams, schoolteachers, reciters, tutors etc.). Whenever a scholar was dismissed from these posts upon losing the Sultan's favor, he could find himself in a remote post, but his salary would not necessarily diminish, especially in certain cases of well-established scholars. In other words, a scholar-bureaucrat could lose the Sultan's favor at any time and be removed from his post even receiving an inferior one, but the salary that he received always reflected his merit, and even in such cases, losing a judgeship did only temporarily affect his academic prestige in the long run.

There were recounted cases in which a prestigious scholar lost the Sultan's favor and received a remote post upon the machinations of certain other court members, as in the case of Hocasāde in later life. Due to the grand vizier Karamanī's animosity, he was reportedly removed from the judgeship of Constantinople and given a position at the Orḥāniye medrese, along with the judgeship of İznik, the latter of which Hocasāde abandoned due to his devotion to teaching and learning. It is true that his judgeship at İznik was an inferior post after his position at Constantinople. As compensation, therefore, he was given two posts with a probably equal amount of salary compared to his previous one – one of these appointments being the most reputable teaching posts in İznik at the oldest Ottoman medrese Orḥāniye. Bāyezīd II was reported as having reversed many policies implemented during the last years of his father Mehmed II and his grand viziers.⁵⁶ For instance, when Bāyezīd II was enthroned, Hocasāde was reappointed to a teaching post at Sultāniye from one hundred aspers a day, probably in reaction against the much-hated Karamanī's decision, a figure who had favored Prince Cem (d. 900/1495) for the throne and executed after having lost the bet.

It was during his first year at Sultāniye that Hocasāde was asked to pen an initial question (*su'āl*) for the disputation against Zeyrek's unqualified criticism against Jurjānī. He was then summoned to the capital to debate Zeyrek on the topic of unicity. Shortly after the encounter, Hocasāde was also promoted to chief judge of Constantinople. In the marginalia of Mecdī's *Hadā'ikū'ş-şakā'ik*, it is reported that Hocasāde was appointed to the former position in the year 871/1466, right after the Zeyrek debate, a fact which evidenced the year of the debate at hand.⁵⁷

3.1.2.1 Hocasāde's Scholarly Breadth and Esteemed Argumentative Skills in Debate

The professional competition was ubiquitous in the Ottoman scholarly world, and the monetary rewards, as in the case of the Italian Renaissance,⁵⁸ was only second to scholarly recognition and academic promotion. In some cases though, the extra rewarding did also mark a nuanced distinction between

it is a curious question whether *Güldeste's* claim that Hocasāde was appointed to the position in place of his *Tahāfut* rival Ṭūsī was true or not. This point is not mentioned in other sources.

⁵⁶ Neşrī, *Ğihānnumā*, 320.

⁵⁷ Mecdī, *Hadā'ikū'ş-şakā'ik*, 149.

⁵⁸ Azzolini, "There Were No Medals", 270; Biagioli, *Galileo, Courtier*, 60.

the academic outputs of scholars. The accounts of Ḥocazāde's life in Ottoman biobibliographical dictionaries transition to his famed adjudication (*muḥākama*) on Ghazālī's *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*⁵⁹ written in competition with the Persian Ash'arite Sufi-scholar 'Alā' al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 887/1482).⁶⁰ Kātib Çelebi narrates the Sultan's order as follows: Ḥocazāde completed the manuscript in four and Ṭūsī in six months, and the Sultan favored the former by presenting each ten thousand silver coins (*dirham*), but an additional precious mule (*bughla nafīsa*) only for Ḥocazāde. Ṭūsī's departure from the land of Rūm is often attributed to his disappointment associated with the debate.⁶¹ Most of the Ottoman biographical sources, as well as references in contemporary scholarship, say that Ṭūsī's receiving less favor and recognition (minus a mule) could be the main reason for Ṭūsī's return to his homeland.⁶²

Ḥocazāde was among the seven scholars who, according to the seventeenth-century encyclopedist Kātib Çelebi, combined post-classical Avicennan philosophy (*ḥikma*) with the Islamic doctrine (*Sharī'a*), and were among the famed arbitrators of knowledge during the day, who upheld the validity of certain arguments and proofs included in the philosophical corpus.⁶³ Today he is mostly remembered for his aforementioned adjudication on the *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, as well as numerous scholarly debates that he participated in and won. He was one of the few scholars during his time who predominantly worked on topics related to metaphysics and physics,⁶⁴ and wrote super-glosses on almost all medrese handbooks of philosophical theology and post-Avicennan philosophy, including Abharī's *Hidāya al-ḥikma*, Ṭūsī's *Tajrīd al-i'tiqād*, and Jurjānī's *Sharḥ al-mawāqif*, suggesting his interest, aptitude, and erudition in philosophical studies.⁶⁵

Ḥocazāde was a master in debate, participating in many scholarly disputes. He was recorded of having only lost once,⁶⁶ which was to the fellow scholar Ḥayālī (d. 845/1470 [?]), a master in theology and creed. The latter

59 Mecdī, *Ḥadā'ikū's-ṣakā'ik*, 149; Taşköprizāde, *al-Shaqā'iq*, 130; and Belig, *Güldeste-i riyāz*, 269. For the intellectual context of the adjudications, Özerverli, "Arbitrating between al-Ghazālī and the Philosophers" and Balıkcıoğlu, *A Coherence of Coherences*, 346-61.

60 Ḥocazāde prepared his adjudication after having received Zeyrek's post at the *Şahn* (Ḥoca Sa'deddīn, *Tacū't-tevārīḥ*, 2: 467).

61 "Fa-kataba al-Mollā Khojazāda fī arba'a ashhur wa-kataba al-Mollā al-Ṭūsī fī sitta ashhur. Fa-faḍḍalū kitāb al-Mollā Khojazāda 'alā kitāb al-Ṭūsī, wa-'aṭā al-Sultān Muḥammad Khān li-kull minhā 'ashara ālāf dirham wa-zāda li-Khojazāda bughla nafīsa wa-kāna dhālik huwa sabab fī dhihāb al-Mollā al-Ṭūsī 'ilā bilād al-'Ajm" (Kātib Çelebi, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 1: 513). Also see the section about Ṭūsī's *Dhakhīra fī al-muḥākama bayna al-hukamā' wa'l-Ghazālī*: "'Alā' al-Dīn 'Alī al-Ṭūsī al-mutawaffā sana [...] allafahā fī al-Rūm wa-lammā šāra marjūḥan bi-ta'līf-i Khojazāda taraka al-Rūm wa-sāfara 'ilā Khorāsān" (Kātib Çelebi, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 1: 825).

62 Kātib Çelebi, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 1: 825. For instance also see "wa-kāna huwa al-sabab fī dhihāb al-Mollā al-Ṭūsī 'ilā bilād al-'Ajm" (Kātib Çelebi, *Sullam al-wuṣūl*, 2: 403).

63 Kātib Çelebi, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 2: 680. For the analysis and context of Kātib Çelebi's designation see Balıkcıoğlu, *A Coherence of Incoherences*, 1-23.

64 For instance, see Ḥocazāde's treatise on rainbows, as well as on the hypothetical center of the world: Fazlıoğlu, "Evrenin Bir Merkezi Var mıdır?", and Ziaee, "Ḥocazāde's Contributions to Islamic Sciences".

65 For a tentative list of Ḥocazāde's extant works: Balıkcıoğlu, *A Coherence of Incoherences*, 466-72.

66 Ḥocazāde's case brings the example of the well-read and formidable debater Italian theologian Achillini who, according to a document called "Dispute in Scolari", appeared in forty-four scholarly disputes, either as a disputing Master or as a supervisor of a student's disputation exercise (Matsen, "Alessandro Achillini (1463-1512) and 'Ockhamism'").

was known for his extreme solemnity, and he was only spotted once smiling (*tebessüm*) in his life, which was when he was declared victorious against the master verifier. In the wake of the debate, Ḥayālī refers to Ḥocazāde in a derogatory manner as the grandson of “Şāliḥ the stingy” (*bin Şāliḥ baḥīl oğlunuñ*) referring to his privileged background.⁶⁷ The debate itself is depicted in the Topkapı copy of Muḥtesibzāde’s translation of *al-Shaqā’iq*, and Ḥayālī is portrayed there with an open mouth (maybe having a quirky smile). Mecdī wrote that Ḥayālī beat Ḥocazāde in a debate due to his divinely inspired power (*kuvve-i kudsiyye*),⁶⁸ a capacity that dwelled in saints, which implied that the verifier Ḥocazāde lacked this quality. Ḥocazāde was said to have filled with fear (*havf*) whenever Ḥayālī’s name came up. This was because of the latter’s superiority in knowledge⁶⁹ since Ḥocazāde was able to sleep with peace of mind only after Ḥayālī’s death.⁷⁰

It was clear that scholarly disputations were how fledgling scholars built their reputation and fame, yet in some cases, they even made a fool of themselves, as in the case of the young and ambitious scholar Ḥatībzāde who tried to challenge the senior Ḥocazāde but overturned twice.⁷¹ Ḥatībzāde was proud of his scholarly preoccupations and was said to have spent all of his life reading and studying – never expecting a career outside academia. As mentioned earlier, his competitiveness was embroiled in scandals, to the degree that there were several occasions where Ḥatībzāde made a fool of himself and tried to challenge his seniors in a hasty manner without being able to make right justifications. His youthful vanity (*gurūr-ı şebāb*) was often emphasized partially because of his premature attempt to challenge senior scholars.⁷²

During his first attempt at debating Ḥocazāde, the Sultan immediately dismissed the novice Ḥatībzāde. Meḥmed II challenged the young scholar, asking whether he was actually capable of debating with a master verifier, having contested his competence in Islamic sciences.⁷³ The Sultan and his viziers generally decided who would debate with whom. When it came to merit and rank, there was always a question of reputation, and junior scholars were not expected to challenge their seniors without justifiable reason, especially for the sake of gaining rash prestige, since an outright respect for the experienced elders was a strict rule of moral conduct to be abide by.

⁶⁷ Ḥoca Sa’deddīn, *Tācū’t-tevārīḥ*, 2: 479. Mecdī mentions that this is Ḥocazāde’s nickname (*mütelaḳḳıb*) (Mecdī, *Ḥadā’ikū’ş-şakā’ik*, 159).

⁶⁸ Mecdī, *Ḥadā’ikū’ş-şakā’ik*, 159.

⁶⁹ Meḥmed Tāhir does not mention this incident between two scholars, but writes that Ḥayālī was on the same level with Ḥocazāde in terms of knowledge (Bursalı Meḥmed Tāhir, *‘Oşmanlı Mü’ellifleri*, 1: 291).

⁷⁰ Taşköprizāde, *al-Shaqā’iq*, 141.

⁷¹ A similar penchant for controversy was the case of Galileo whose case was documented by numerous treatises written by him and his adversaries (Azzolini, “There Were No Medals”, 264, f. 17). It was noted in biographical sources that Ḥatībzāde’s preoccupation with knowledge (*iştigāl-i ‘ilm*) was motivated by his greedy passion for winning scholarly debates (*galebe-i ḥurşdan*) to prove his intellectual superiority (Ḥoca Sa’deddīn, *Tācū’t-tevārīḥ*, 2: 483). Indeed it was true that he was able to win most of the scholarly debates that he participated, but with the exception of those with Ḥocazāde (Hüseyn, *Bedāyi’ü’l-veḳāyi*, 2: 291a; Taşköprizāde, *al-Shaqā’iq*, 147).

⁷² Ḥoca Sa’deddīn, *Tācū’t-tevārīḥ*, 2: 473.

⁷³ “Anıñla baḥşe kâdir misin?” (Ḥoca Sa’deddīn, *Tācū’t-tevārīḥ*, 2: 473). *Tācū’t-tevārīḥ*’s account in probably based on an Arabic exchange in *al-Shaqā’iq*: “Anta taqaddara al-baḥḥ ma’hu?” (Taşköprizāde, *al-Shaqā’iq*, 147). Yet the exchange is not included in Hüseyn, *Bedāyi’ü’l-veḳāyi*.

Having broken such a rule of etiquette, Ḥatībzāde seemed to have been dismissed from the Sultan's immediate circle and appointed to a certain medrese so that he would continue his teaching and learning away from the Sultan's sight.⁷⁴

Ḥatībzāde challenged the master verifier for a second time, and the story is as follows: after his post at the *Şah̄n*, Ḥocazāde left academia one more time to become the judge of Constantinople. Yet, after a short period, he was removed from the post due to the intervention of the grand vizier Ḳārāmānī Meḥmed Paşa,⁷⁵ a student of his academic nemesis Ṭūsī. Our sources point out that there was a connection between Ḳārāmānī and Ṭūsī, an emphasis that suggests that Ḳārāmānī's intervention could be associated with the debate. Ḳaramanī convinced the Sultan that the air of Constantinople had a bad impact on Ḥocazāde's memory and promoted him to a double appointment as the chief jurist of İznik and the head of Orḡāniye medrese at the same time.⁷⁶ The judgeship of İznik was a less paid post than that of Constantinople in the Sultan's Code of Law, and Ḥocazāde's double appointment both as a teacher and a jurist to compensate the loss could be attributed to his relegation to an inferior position in teaching through the intervention of the grand vizier.⁷⁷ After some time Ḥocazāde left the judgeship for good, and devoted himself to full-time teaching (*tedrīs*) at Orḡāniye, a school where Ḥayālī was previously appointed.

It was during his İznik days that the bold Ḥatībzāde challenged the senior scholar after being provoked (*taḥrīz*) by the same notorious Ḳaramanī Meḥmed Paşa.⁷⁸ The exact nature of the challenge is not mentioned; however, there is a treatise attributed to Ḥocazāde on the nature of good and evil (*ḥusn wa-qubūḥ*) in certain sources,⁷⁹ which dealt with the question of whether good and evil were absolute (*muṭlaq*) or essential (*dhātī*) qualities, or whether they were among intellectible beings (*ʿaqliyyāt*).⁸⁰

After being summoned, Ḥocazāde went to Constantinople to visit the tent of Ḳaramanī in the company of Mollā Yarḥişārī, a scholar at the medrese of Murād Paşa, as well as two of his best students Mollā Bahāüddīn and Mollā Sirācüddīn, both of whom were teaching at the *Şah̄n* at the time. When Ḳārāmānī Meḥmed told Ḥocazāde that he was summoned to the capital to participate in a debate with Ḥatībzāde, the master scholar replied that the scholars in his company were already capable of debating him, and his two best students, Mollā Bahāüddīn and Mollā Sirācüddīn, who also held posts at the *Şah̄n* like Ḥatībzāde, were rather his equals - definitely not him. Ḥocazāde then added that he would only face him if only Ḥatībzāde

74 Taşköprizāde, *al-Şaqāʿiq*, 147

75 The story should have taken place sometime during the grand vizierate of Ḳārāmānī Meḥmed between the years 882/1477 and 886/1481.

76 Belig writes that Ḥocazāde was promoted to the latter post in place of Ḥasan Çelebi in the year 877/1472-73 (Belig, *Güldeste-i riyāz*, 269).

77 Yet Orḡāniye is considered as the first medrese founded by Orḡān Gāzī and was not inferior to the prestigious Sulṭāniye in salary (quoted in Bilge, *İlk Osmanlı Medreseleri*, 68).

78 Ḥoca Saʿdeddīn, *Tācūʿt-tevārīḥ*, 473; Ḥüseyn, *Bedāyīʿü'l-veḳāyi*, 2: 287b.

79 As for Ḥocazāde's treatise on good and evil: *Risāla fī al-jadhr al-aşam*, SK, MS Esad Efendi 1143/18, fols. 89-91; MS Şehid Ali Paşa 2830/21, fols 74a-b; MS Halet Efendi 802, fols 52b-56b. As for Ḥatībzāde's reply, *Risāla fī ḥall maghlaṭat al-jadhr al-aşam*, Bayezid Devlet, MS Veliyüddin Efendi 2122; SK, MS Laleli 2200.

80 Köse, "Ḥocazāde Muslihiddin Efendi", 209.

beat his students first. The grand vizier insisted, but another scholar in his company, Sinân Paşa, warned him that when Hocaazâde debated with scrutiny, there was no way to win.

Mehmed II's previous rhetorical remark whether Hâtîbzâde had the right credentials to challenge Hocaazâde also echoes the scholar-vizier Sinân Paşa's warning.⁸¹ After Sinân Paşa's intervention, Kârâmânî Mehmed chose not to organize the debate. The sixteenth-century compiler Mecdî further speculates that Hâtîbzâde allegedly spread the fake news (*töhmety eyledi*) that the reason why Hocaazâde avoided debating him was that the master got scared of (*havf*) or intimidated (*haşyet*) by Hâtîbzâde's scholarly scrutiny.⁸² The anecdote suggests that there was a clear distinction in terms of rank and merit among the Ottoman ulema, and whoever dared to challenge a senior scholar without any legitimate reason could be ended up being ridiculed. It was right after this debate that Mehmed II passed away and Bâyezîd II was enthroned, so the challenge attempt must have been around the year 886/1481.⁸³

3.1.2.2 Common Phrases Used for Hocaazâde's Vast Knowledge in Various Sciences

The classical titles and epithets given to the patrons and scholars with a good record of public disputations generally included the fifteenth-century Italian ideals of excellency (*magnificentia*) and magnanimity (*maganimitas*), both of which had connotations that placed wisdom, glory, and civic conduct above all else with an emphasis on the greatness of one's soul.⁸⁴ If one were asked to provide the best phrase to designate Hocaazâde's scholarly attitude, his (sometimes presumptuous) assertiveness and ambition (*hırş*) in knowledge would be the most suitable conditions to describe his personality. In addition to his ambition, Mecdî also underlines Hocaazâde's perseverance (*azm*) in knowledge. He further quoted Taşköprizâde's father's words that when Hocaazâde's legal opinion was challenged due to a legal disagreement (*hilâf*), he presumptuously claimed that he belonged to an elite group of scholars who had the ultimate license to offer authoritative solutions to legal issues by reasoning.⁸⁵

Hocaazâde's pride in his knowledge did not always stop him from being overly competitive or making *ad hominem* comments and jokes about his students or academic rivals. However, when it came to scholarly issues, if he was wrong, he would stand corrected and give the other person his due. In an anecdote that only appears in Mecdî, Sultan Husayn of Herat sent presents to the newly crowned Bâyezîd II via his emissary from Khorasan in the year 866/1481, a fledgling scholar who wanted to study with Hocaazâde during his time in the lands of Rûm. The person who narrated this story was also in the same class with the emissary from Khorasan, and they read Jurjânî's gloss on Ibn Hâjib's work in the principles of jurisprudence *Sharh mukhtaşar al-muntahâ* together. The scholar from Khorasan had two objec-

81 "Anıñla münâzara itmeğe kâdir olmaz" (Mecdî, *Hadâ'ikü's-şakâ'ik*, 151).

82 Mecdî, *Hadâ'ikü's-şakâ'ik*, 151. This piece of information is not included in other sources.

83 Mecdî, *Hadâ'ikü's-şakâ'ik*, 151-2.

84 Stephens, *The Italian Renaissance*, 98-102.

85 "Tabakam tabaka-ı 'âliyedir, rütbe-i ictihâda vüşülüm" (Mecdî, *Hadâ'ikü's-şakâ'ik*, 152).

tions to Hocaazāde and the narrator of the story objected to the emissary convincingly. The next day, when the emissary from Khorasan made another objection, Hocaazāde did not favor his student's answer and, this time found the emissary's point justifiable. Later when they went over Jurjānī's text one more time, Hocaazāde changed his mind and, instead, accepted his student's reply. This shows that the experienced master did not refrain from correcting himself when someone caught his misreading.⁸⁶

The most common phrases employed in praise of Hocaazāde include Arabic expressions and adjectives, such as intelligent (*zakī*), virtuous (*faḍīla*), good at writing and speaking (*ḥusn al-tahrīr wa'l-taqrīr*),⁸⁷ as well as epithets, such as the learned scholar (*'ālim*), perfect human being (*kāmīl*),⁸⁸ and savant (*baḥr*, *mubaḥḥir* or *baḥru'l-faḍā'il*).⁸⁹ There are certain Persianized Ottoman Turkish constructions which emphasized his scholarship and perfection (*'ilm ü kemāl*), deep knowledge and perfection (*dāniş ü kemāl*),⁹⁰ distinction in knowledge (*şeref-i 'ilm*)⁹¹ and virtues in knowledge and learning (*fezā'il-i 'ilm ü 'irfān*).⁹² And some works did not refrain from referring to him as a philosopher (*ḥakīm*).⁹³

3.2 The Diversity of Genres in Philosophy and Theology. Two Types of Scholars at Fifteenth-Century Ottoman Medreses

In biobibliographical sources, there were two different registers of science denoting the philosophical corpus, *falsafa* and *ḥikma*, each possessing distinct connotations in the fifteenth-century Ottoman scholarship. Along with a third discipline, the philosophical theology of the post-classical scholarship (*kalām*), these three genres incorporated a lot of Aristotelian conceptions through Avicenna's works in later centuries.

Falsafa and *ḥikma* could have been used interchangeably in many sources; yet they might have also conveyed a subtle distinction such that *falsafa* could be used as an umbrella term which included Ancient Greek Philosophy, whether Aristotelian or Platonic, and the Neo-Platonist thought, as well as their incorporated forms in the Islamic tradition (i.e. Graeco-Arabic philosophy and Illuminationism). *Falsafa* could or could not have been in line with the teachings of religious sciences and classical theology. That is, for instance, Islamic theology accepted that the world was created by an omnipotent God at a specific time (*ex nihilo*); whereas the Aristotelian-Neoplatonist tradition in the works of Muslim philosophers Fārābī and Avicenna conceded the pre-eternity of the world, meaning that the world was never created but always emanated pre-eternally.

86 Mecdī, *Hadā'ikü'ş-şakā'ik*, 155. The late nineteenth-century dictionary *Ḳāmūsü'l-a'lām* misrepresents this story by asserting that there were people who came all the way down from Khorasan to study with Hocaazāde (Sāmī, *Ḳāmūsü'l-a'lām*, 3: 2064).

87 Hoca Sa'deddīn, *Tācü't-tevārīḥ*, 2: 468.

88 Taşköprizāde, *al-Shaqā'iq*, 129.

89 Belig, *Güldeste-i riyāz*, 262.

90 Belig, *Güldeste-i riyāz*, 262 and 264.

91 Hüseyn, *Bedāyi'ü'l-veḳāyi*, 2: 286a.

92 Belig, *Güldeste-i riyāz*, 263.

93 Al-Kaḥḥāla, *Mu'jam mu'alifī al-kutub*, 12: 290.

On the other hand, the term *ḥikma*, which means ‘wisdom’ in Arabic, seems to gain a special meaning in post-classical Islam, specifically after the thirteenth century, such that the term *ḥikma* was reserved for the canonized reworkings of Aristotelian-Neoplatonist doctrines in Avicenna’s philosophical works, most importantly, including those Avicennan doctrines that did not go against the cosmological assumptions of Islamic theology. In other words, the term *falsafa* belonged to the scholarly pursuit of previous centuries, but for the fifteenth-century Ottoman intellectual context, *ḥikma* was still vital and, by this way, post-classical Avicenna philosophy would be the best way to describe this common genre. According to his scrutinous study on the formation of the post-classical philosophical tradition in the greater Islamic world, Frank Griffel observes that the texts in *ḥikma* could report, doubt, and criticize Avicenna, as well as implementing the principle of sufficient reason and endorsing or correcting Avicennan philosophy.⁹⁴

The difference between certain scientific disciplines, as in the cases of *falsafa*, *ḥikma*, and *kalām*, was often blurred, and the definition, as well as the categorization of these disciplines, could cross one another. Thus, it is not easy to exactly determine which category should be used to classify a particular philosophical or theological medrese handbook. Both the Sultan’s Code of Law and Gelibolulu Âlî’s *Kühû’l-ahbâr* give an outline of the hierarchical organization of Ottoman medreses based on the levels of education, studied texts, and salary. According to these sources, the most common philosophical and theological handbooks studied at Ottoman medreses were Abharî’s *Hidāya al-ḥikma* in *ḥikma*, Tūsî’s *Tajrîd al-i’tiqād* and Jurjānî’s *Sharḥ al-mawāqif* in *kalām* and Ḥayālî’s gloss on the *Sharḥ al-‘aqā’id* in Muslim creed.

Most of the Ottoman encyclopedists distinguished *kalām* from *ḥikma* such that the latter category included the post-classical handbooks extracted or compiled from the Avicenna corpus, such as *al-Ishārāt wa’l-tanbīhāt*, *Hidāya al-ḥikma* and *Ḥikma al-‘ayn*.⁹⁵ With regard to discussions in metaphysics and natural philosophy, *ḥikma* was also taken on the same level with *kalām*⁹⁶ such that metaphysics and natural philosophy were covered by both *ḥikma* and *kalām* texts save their differences in approach, origin, and scope. The traditional Avicennan-Aristotelian themes, on the other hand, continued with certain modifications and mitigations in the post-classical renderings of *ḥikma*, corresponding to the general outline of the religious community on basic issues.

Avicenna’s modified doctrines were still in use and dominated the scientific paradigm save his emanative cosmogony.⁹⁷ Common handbooks of philosophical theology *Tajrîd* and *Sharḥ al-mawāqif* were known to have synthesized certain philosophical and theological doctrines under the cosmological frameworks of the theologians, rejecting the Avicennan emana-

94 Griffel, *The Formation of Post-Classical Philosophy*, 326, 341, 407, 524.

95 Avicenna’s *Ishārāt* was categorized under *ḥikma* (see Kâtib Çelebi, *Kashf al-zunûn*, 1: 94). In the same vein with Uzunçarşılı and Baltacı, İzgi has classified *Hidāya al-ḥikma* and *Ḥikma al-‘ayn* as works in *ḥikma*, and has a lengthy list of their commentaries and glosses under the categorization of “theoretical *ḥikma*” (İzgi, *Osmanlı Medreselerinde İlim*, 2: 115-27).

96 “Kamâ’anna al-ḥikma al-ṭabî’iyya wa’l-ilâhiyya minhâ bi-manzila al-kalâm minhâ” (Kâtib Çelebi, *Kashf al-zunûn*, 1: 677).

97 In the sixteenth-century Safavid world, there is an upsurge of interest in early layers of Graeco-Arabic philosophy as a reaction against the domination of the Avicennan *ḥikma* in philosophical studies, see Pourjavady, Schmidtke, “An Eastern Renaissance?”.

tionist scheme. In that regard, for the context of the post-Avicennan scholarship, these handbooks gave a new perspective to *kalām* such that they could also be characterized as texts in ‘philosophical theology’, which had elements from Graeco-Arabic philosophy and its post-classical interpretation. There were, thus, certain crossovers between *ḥikma* and *kalām* by the time of the Ottomans.

The significance of this categorization was that there existed three types of genres, e.g. *falsafa*, *ḥikma*, and *kalām*, that dealt with metaphysical and physical questions in Ottoman scholarship and, since there were different approaches to similar questions, such as existence, quiddity, causality, and unity, there also existed different typologies of scholars who followed different formulations among Ottoman handbooks.

Ḥocazāde and Zeyrek represented two different types of scholars in the sense that the former was a type who tended to incorporate elements from philosophical works or, at least, when the question of the validity of the philosophers’ doctrines came about, he tried to outline, acknowledge, and defend the philosophers’ positions as clearly as possible. Zeyrek, on the other hand, seemed to be more prone to the theological corpus and tended to reject most controversial aspects of Arabic philosophy due to his ontological assumptions about the nature of God and the universe. Each represented a distinct ‘scholar type’ that prevailed at Ottoman medreses, and the reason why the Sultan may have asked them to present on such a fundamental topic in theology could be to see how different types of scholars would react to the philosophers’ formulation, a fact which indicates the scope of the Sultan’s patronage, education policies, as well as scholarly interests.

3.3 Ottoman Culture of Court Debate and Disputation Etiquette

The Zeyrek-Ḥocazāde debate followed the formal rules of debate and disputation in the style of ‘questions and answers’ (*masā’il wa-‘ajwiba*), a technique of argumentation that included unsolved problems or inquiries followed by explanations and refutations.⁹⁸ The written disputations were set forth as motives and authorities supporting the opposite view often in the form of invalidations, objections, replies, and counter-arguments. This method of argumentation was construed differently from monographs since the scholar’s main intention was not to set his own views in the form of a systematic account with clearly outlined supporting arguments. Through certain *dubia*, the scholar investigated each and every case, and arbitrated among possible options. Recent studies have shown that this formula constituted a new science of ‘dialectical inquiry and investigation’ (*ādāb al-baḥṭh wa-l-munāzara*) in post-classical Islamic intellectual history, which was not only limited to Arabic literary context, but extending to other Islamicate traditions.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Daiber, “Masā’il Wa-Adjwiba”, 636. The genre also existed previously in Syriac and Nestorian sources: Pietruschka, “Streitgespräche”, 159; Clarke, *The Selected Questions of Ishō bar Nūn*; and for the prevalence of this genre among Nestorian, Jacobite, and Melkite scholars, see Varsányi, “The Concept of ‘aql in Early Arabic Christian Theology”. For the context of dialectic in early Arabic philosophy, see Miller, *Islamic Disputation Theory*, 52-86.”

⁹⁹ Miller, *Islamic Disputation Theory*, 196. Also for its influence in Urdu literature, Bruce, “Debate Literature, Urdu”.

Among the conspicuously low number of works on dialectic (*jadal*) in 'Aṭūfī's Ottoman palace inventory, there were no early dialectic books included before the thirteenth century. The holdings mostly constituted Turco-Persian works with only a few Ottoman manuscripts, yet the standard handbook of disputation of the day was a short treatise by the fourteenth-century astronomer and mathematician Shams al-Dīn al-Samarkandī,¹⁰⁰ who was, according to Larry Benjamin Miller, the first Arab logician to have devoted himself, *qua* logician, to the logic of debate,¹⁰¹ by turning the Aristotelian dialectic into an alternative appellation for the science of disputation based on demonstration (*istidlāl*) and investigation (*baḥth*).¹⁰²

The verifier Samarkandī most notably defines *munāzara* as a way of speculative reasoning (*naẓar*) directed at revealing truth through mutual effort; and the activity of *naẓar* here denotes paying attention to meanings (*iltifāt al-nafs 'ilā ma'ānī*).¹⁰³ Arriving at truth is not the only function of such investigations, whereas it is also about invalidating the other side's assertions.¹⁰⁴ According to Samarkandī's texts on the fundamentals of Arabic disputation (*al-Qusṭās* and his epistle on *ādāb al-baḥth*), the scholarly debates should ensue as follows: the claimant (*mu'allil*) sets down his thesis (*iddi'ā'*) and argument (*qawl*) and, when establishing his proof (*dalīl*), he also lays out two sound premises (sing. *muqaddima*), being responsible for the validity of the proof. The exchange then begins in the form of 'questions and answers' in theological dialectic.¹⁰⁵

For Samarkandī, both sides of the disputation are called *mu'allil* since both are responsible for bringing out sound justifications in order to demonstrate their own rationales, whereas starting with the seventeenth-century Ottoman scholar Saçaklızâde, the later scholars rather assign *mu'allil* unilaterally to the person who defends a thesis, i.e. the scholar on the side of the assent (*taşdıq*).¹⁰⁶ In this case, Ḥocazâde as a defender of the philosophers' proof falls under the role of the 'claimant', whereas Zeyrek who challenges the validity of the philosophers' demonstrative reasoning by a series of rebuttals is the 'questioner' (*sā'il*).

The questioner has several options: he may raise specific objections (sing. *man'*) and counter-objections/indications (sing. *munāqaqa*) directed at one

100 El-Rouayheb, "Books on Logic (*Mantiq*) and Dialectics (*Jadal*)", 894-5.

101 Nevertheless Belhaj has argued that Larry Miller's and Nicholas Rescher's statement about *ādāb al-baḥth* as being a 'logical art' of disputation is inaccurate since this claim has been often conflated with the logicization of *jadal*. Samarkandī's main agenda, instead, was to reorganize debates in theology and philosophy on the same model adopted for juridical dialectic, so that debates in both disciplines would be upgraded to the level of rigorous abstract argumentation through the partial syllogization of legal dialectic. In short, Samarkandī transformed juridical dialectic into an art of disputation - his concern for theology and philosophy being only secondary (Belhaj, "Al-Samarkandī's *Ādāb al-baḥth*", 46-7, 53). For Rescher's statement, see Rescher, *The Development of Arabic Logic*, 209.

102 Miller, *Islamic Disputation Theory*, 107.

103 Güney, *Kemālüddīn Mes'ūd b. Hüseyin Eş-Şirvânî'nin (905/1500)*, 139. *Naẓar* also has the senses of 'approach', 'logical inquiry', and 'investigation' in Avicenna terminology (Janos, *Avicenna on the Ontology of Pure Quiddity*, 99).

104 Güney, *Kemālüddīn Mes'ūd b. Hüseyin Eş-Şirvânî'nin (905/1500)*, 140-2.

105 For an outline of argumentation and debate etiquette in post-classical disputation theory, see Karabela, *The Development of Dialectic*, 127-39; especially see the chart on 137-9, as well as the Arabic edition on 266-79; and Miller, *Islamic Disputation Theory*, 196-234.

106 Pehlivan, "Saçaklızâde'de Mu'allil", 188-9.

or more premises of an argument, devise an objection to the claimant's proof in a general way without establishing the truth of the purported conclusion (*naqd*), and bring out counter-evidences (sing. *mu'āraḍa*) to set up a proof contrary to the one set up by the opponent.¹⁰⁷ *Man'* asks specifically for further proof or evidence (*dalīl*) to support a statement, whereas *naqd* is directed at the charge of incommensurability of the *definiens* and the defined - challenging what is generally accepted (*al-mashhūr*).¹⁰⁸ *Naqd* often argues for the absence of judgment from the evidence, and *munāqaḍa*, in contrast, denotes "disagreement" or "contradiction" by disallowing a premise of the proof, often formulated as "we do not grant x".¹⁰⁹ According to Samarkandī, the opponents can turn the tables at any moment, directing questions at one another's arguments. A contestant is always obliged to respond to every objection that a claimant brings.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, refutations (sing. *naqd*) are directed at the contestant's inconsistencies in argumentation by way of contradiction.¹¹¹ Once there are no further objections and the refutation has been established, a contestant is silenced (*ifhām*), or expected to concede the outcome (*ilzām*)¹¹² - the latter of which is often through forcing your opinion to commit a mistake.¹¹³ One of the contributions of Samarkandī's new method in disputations concerning philosophy and theology includes an accentuation on *taqrīr* and *tahrīr*, as a way of identifying the main problematic, as well as restricting argumentation only to the subject matter under the rubric of *ta'yīn maḥall al-nizā'*.¹¹⁴

In light of the new studies, Khaled El-Rouayheb has argued that the practice of commentary and gloss associated with the genre of *ādāb al-baḥth* was not simply "comment-mongering" as previously thought, which rather transcended the generic structure of recrossing familiar grounds in the same familiar way, by undergoing significant reformulations and developments in the centuries to come.¹¹⁵ Samarkandī's text was the most prevalent work in this genre with a number of significant early commentaries, including *Sharḥ ādāb al-Samarkandī* by the verifier Kamāl al-Dīn Mas'ūd b. Ḥusayn al-Shirwānī (d. 905/1500) - arguably the most popular commentary in *ādāb al-baḥth* at the fifteenth-century Ottoman medreses with more than 170 copies in Turkish manuscript libraries.¹¹⁶

¹⁰⁷ El-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History*, 60-96; esp. 72-5. Belhaj, "Al-Samarkandī's *Ādāb al-baḥth*", 49-51.

¹⁰⁸ Miller, *Islamic Disputation Theory*, 109.

¹⁰⁹ Miller, *Islamic Disputation Theory*, 112, 122.

¹¹⁰ Miller, *Islamic Disputation Theory*, 110.

¹¹¹ Güney, *Kemālüddīn Mes'ūd b. Hüseyin Eş-Şirvānī'nin (905/1500)*, 160.

¹¹² Miller, *Islamic Disputation Theory*, 111.

¹¹³ "Innahu qad yakūn al-gharaḍ min jānibay al-khuṣūṣa ka-layhumā taḡliḥ al-khaṣm" (Güney, *Kemālüddīn Mes'ūd b. Hüseyin Eş-Şirvānī'nin (905/1500)*, 140).

¹¹⁴ In his *Tahāfut*, Ḥocazāde, for instance, recontextualizes Ghazālī's discussions which he deemed to be the inferior *jadāl*, under the new rubric of "locating the main point of contention" via *taqrīr* and *tahrīr* (Pehlivan, "Ādābu'l-Bahs ve'l-Münāzara", 95, 99).

¹¹⁵ El-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History*, 71.

¹¹⁶ For the epithets of 'verifier' used for Samarkandī and Shirwānī, as well as the list of glosses on Shirwānī's commentary on the former, see Kâtib Çelebi, *Kashf al-zunūn*, 1: 39-40. According to his autobiography, Taşköprizāde was said to have studied this work at a young age (Taşköprizāde, *al-Shaqā'iq*, 554).

Having expanded on Samarkandī's outlined aspects, Shirwānī's popular commentary makes certain points regarding how to attain precision without falling into the common fallacies associated with the method of scholarly investigation in disputations. For instance, Shirwānī divides counter-objections/indications (sing. *munāqqāda*), which are directed at refuting the antecedent of the argument into two types for argumentational rectitude: in order for counter-objections to be effective, one could also include an additional point of substantiation (*shāhid*), supplementing the refutation of the overall claim. If the latter is the case, then this is called an 'overall refutation of a proof' (*naqd ijmālī*); if not, it is considered to be resorting to 'haughtiness' (*mukābara*).¹¹⁷ For the case of setting up proofs against the opponent's points by propounding another proof (*mu'āraḍa*), Shirwānī further comments that these types often appear in sophisticated arguments (*mughalāṭa*) such that if the adversary's so-called new proof corresponds to the claimant's initial version, then this is called an 'inversion' (*qalb*).¹¹⁸ Lastly, with regard to *naqd*, Shirwānī adds that if the questioner argues that the proof does not correspond to the proof's consequent, it is again called an 'overall refutation'; and if the questioner rejects the validity of the proof according to his criteria for evidencing, then it would be a 'counter-indication by way of inversion' (*mu'āraḍa 'alā sabīl al-qalb*).¹¹⁹ In addition to these types of objections, there are also justifications (sing. *mustanad*) that can be employed in debates, which are rather weaker forms of objections based on the claimant's assumptions.¹²⁰

Another classical work on *ādāb al-baḥth* based on Samarkandī's urtext is the *littérateur* Ṭaşköprizāde's popular and useful manual at the intersection of ethics, logic, and law, which, nevertheless, made less demands on students by leaving out Samarkandī's abstruse examples in theology and philosophy,¹²¹ but also including the primary proof attested at the Zeyrek-Ḥocazāde debate: the proof in reciprocal hinderance (*burhān al-tamānu*).¹²² The genre of *ādāb al-baḥth* went beyond the rules of argumentation and logical reasoning, having also covered the moral conduct and etiquette of debates in accordance with Islamic norms. In that sense, it was necessary for the debater to avoid the criteria of conciseness/brevity, redundancy, strange/ambiguous words, responding without understanding the adversary's thesis, digressions, laughing or raising one's voice, underestimation, as well as disputing with someone who inspired him fear or veneration.¹²³

In the context of disputation etiquette, Ṭaşköprizāde warns that unsubstantiated refutations directed at the questioner may be perceived as

117 Güney, *Kemâlüddîn Mes'ûd b. Hüseyin Eş-Şirvânî'nin (905/1500)*, 158-9, 170-7.

118 Güney, *Kemâlüddîn Mes'ûd b. Hüseyin Eş-Şirvânî'nin (905/1500)*, 158-9.

119 Güney, *Kemâlüddîn Mes'ûd b. Hüseyin Eş-Şirvânî'nin (905/1500)*, 160-1.

120 Güney, *Kemâlüddîn Mes'ûd b. Hüseyin Eş-Şirvânî'nin (905/1500)*, 161-2.

121 El-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History*, 72. Yet it should be noted that Samarkandī's text assumes that there were different ways of arguing in *hikma* and *kalām*, providing different sets of examples for these genres (Griffel, *The Formation of Post-Classical Philosophy*, 14).

122 The unicity of the Necessarily Existent was one of the most popular topics discussed in *ādāb al-baḥth* (see Güney, *Kemâlüddîn Mes'ûd b. Hüseyin Eş-Şirvânî'nin (905/1500)*, 195-6).

123 Belhaj, "Ṭaşköprüzāde's *Ādāb al-baḥth wa-al-munāzara*", 291-2. Belhaj has also suggested that the Aristotelian origins of *ādāb al-baḥth* is unfounded; the genre rather had roots in ethics and juridical dialectic (Belhaj, "Ṭaşköprüzāde's *Ādāb al-baḥth wa-al-munāzara*", 299).

‘haughtiness’ (*mukābara*), that is, the outright rejection of the claimant’s thesis without any evidence or direct proof, a move that was often associated with scholarly precipitation, superciliousness, and arrogance.¹²⁴ Following Samarkandī’s manual, Taşköprizāde mentions another fallacy in argumentation called ‘usurpation’ (*ghaṣb*), which is a way of avoiding the questioner’s initial thesis by introducing a fresh new position, a move to be avoided by verifiers, i.e. scholars who based their scientific positions on scholarly arbitration.¹²⁵ This might have been the reason why Ḥocazāde warned his opponent in the initial written response that any question related to the Avicenna’s notion of ‘pure existence’ would be perceived as a digression, probably knowing that Zeyrek could resort to usurpation. Ḥocazāde here follows Samarkandī’s principle of ‘designating the main point of contention’ (*ta’yīn maḥall al-nizā*).

In several cases during the debate, Zeyrek repeated the theologians’ view without qualifying his opponent’s points, and he did not seem to engage in the philosophers’ proofs by rejecting their views outright or disregarding their textual evaluations (see chapter 4 below). It was probably due to Zeyrek’s failing of these two proscribed protocols that the main arbiter (*ḥākim*) of the debate, Mollā Hüsrev, might have considered some of Zeyrek’s debate tactics in the context of *mukābara* – all the more since, as we will see below, in two instances he dared to declare himself as the *fait accompli* winner in the presence of the Sultan and other attendants. While Ḥocazāde seemed to have taken the *munāzara* etiquette more seriously by only focusing on verifying the truth, Zeyrek was more interested in his opponent’s assent and silencing so that his position would be accepted without further hesitation, having failed in fulfilling the criterion of verification. In the eyes of the attendants, the scholars differed in scholarly approach, argumentation and execution, and thus the official winner was announced to be Ḥocazāde.

3.4 A Question of Unbelief

Zeyrek’s claim of Ḥocazāde’s unbelief (*takfīr*) occupies a special place in Ottoman Turkish biobibliographical sources, and the accusation is often recounted as follows: after a day of discussion, Zeyrek accused Ḥocazāde of denying the unicity of God by using the expression *inkār al-tawḥīd*¹²⁶ and continued to repeat his objections insistently. In his commentary on Tūsī’s handbook of philosophical theology *Tajrīd al-i’tiqād*, Shams al-Dīn al-Işfahānī (d. 749/1348) noted that *kufr* denoted a lack of belief in a single God (*īmān*), since it precluded obedience, not in the absolute sense, but with regard to

¹²⁴ “Fa-‘in mana‘a bi’l-shāhid fa-huwa al-naqd. Wa-ammā mana‘uhu bilā shāhid fa-huwa mukābara gayru masmū‘atin ittifaqan”. See the edition of Taşköprizāde’s *Risāla fī ādāb al-baḥth* in Karabela, *The Development of Dialectic*, 272; the translation and analysis of this epistle in Arif, “The Art of Debate in Islam”, 207 and Belhaj, “*Ādāb al-baḥth wa-al-munāzara*”, 303-6.

¹²⁵ For the Arabic text, Güney, *Kemāluddīn Mes‘ūd b. Hüseyin Eş-Şirvānī’nin (905/1500)*, 167, “Wa-ammā mana‘ahu bi’l-dalīl; fa-huwa ghaṣb gayru masmū‘ ‘ind al-muḥaqqiqīn” (Karabela, *The Development of Dialectic*, 272; Arif, “The Art of Debate in Islam”, 206-7).

¹²⁶ Taşköprizāde, *al-Shaqā‘iq*, 124. Or see the Ottoman Turkish “tevhīd-i münkir imiş” in Ḥoca Sa‘deddīn, *Tacūt-tevārīḥ*, 2: 467.

the particular articles of belief.¹²⁷ Zeyrek's accusation did not yet have a serious impact on Hocaẓāde as in the case of the sharp-tongued scholar Mollā Luṭfī (d. 900/1495), a victim of political intrigue who was claimed to have committed apostasy or concealed belief (*zandaqa*), as well as, according to the contemporary scholar Ḥatībẓāde, provided support for the obsolescent doctrines of the philosophers (*tamassaka bi-muḥmalāt al-falāsifa*).¹²⁸ Unlike apostasy, the claim of *takfīr* may not imply dire consequences¹²⁹ and was not particularly covered as a topic in jurisprudence manuals.¹³⁰ Unbelief was perceived as a lighter form of apostasy since the latter was closely associated with non-monotheist traditions as in the Dualists arguing against God's unicity.¹³¹

The accusations of unbelief, as Sonja Brentjes suggests, may have differing rationales, such as covering religious matters, issues of social relationship (including loyalty towards a patron, upholding an oath, exerting influence in scholarly circles, ruining competitors for positions of power and wealth, etc.), standards of proper behavior and culture, as well as military conflicts and rebellions.¹³² Yet, for the context of scholarly exchange, the shades of the *takfīr*'s meaning can also vary from intellectual inferiority, shallow learning, age or status, the power dynamics between the two men,¹³³ as well as supporting the doctrines of the philosophers.¹³⁴ In his encyclopedia of sciences, Taşköprizāde set 'religious benefit' as a criterion for any science, whether rational or religious. According to him, if unicity was discussed in the context of the Mu'tazilites, such a central doctrine could be harmful; this should not, nonetheless, expunge its significance as a topic of

127 Al-Işfahānī, *Tasḍīd al-qawā'id*, 2: 1219.

128 Winter, "İbn Kemāl (d. 940/1534) on Ibn 'Arabī's Hagiology", 142. For the politics of hatred and jealousy involved in Mollā Luṭfī's execution, see the articles by Şükrü Özen: "Molla Lutfi'nin İdamına Karşı Çıkan" and "İslâm Hukukunda Zındıklık Suçu". According to Özen, *münkir* and *zındık* are two different categories in Islamic jurisprudence – yet the denial of God's unicity or existence could have also led one to be condemned to death due to the claim of *zandaqa*. Also for the case of Mollā Kābız (d. 933/1527) (Ocak, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Zındıklar*, 203-50). By referring to the post-classical verifiers like Jurjānī, Taftāzānī, and Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī (d. 631/1233), the verifier İbn Kemāl gives a detailed analysis of lexical and religio-legal definitions of the term *zındık* along with its shared valences with *munāfiq* and *mulḥid* (See İbn Kemāl, "Taşhīḥ lafẓ al-zındık wa-tawḍīḥ ma'nāhu al-daḥiḳ").

129 The later writings of Ghazālī point out that capital punishment may be applied to "unbelief" (Griffel, "Toleration and Exclusion", 352). As Griffel has pointed out, Ghazālī denied the right of repentance (*istitāba*) to those found guilty of *zandaqa*, yet this also paved the way for state representatives to adjudicate the status of one's belief based on one's external actions, thereby blurring the distinction between internal unbelief (*kufr*) and professed apostasy (*irtidād*) (Griffel, "Toleration and Exclusion", 344-54; al-Tikriti, "A Contrarian Voice", 66; al-Tikriti, "Kalam in the Service of State", 131-49).

130 Özen has observed that religious rulings concerning *takfīr* were not covered by the books of Ḥanafī jurisprudence but generally amended in lieu of legal opinions (Özen, "Molla Lutfi'nin İdamına Karşı Çıkan", 61-2). For instance, Mollā Ḥüsrev's *Durar al-ḥukkām fī sharḥ gurar al-aḥkām*, a work in jurisprudence completed and presented to Mehmed II in the year 883/1478, does not mention *takfīr* as a topic.

131 For instance, see Kristó-Nagy, "Denouncing the Damned *Zındıq!*".

132 Brentjes, "The Vocabulary of 'Unbelief'", 107.

133 Brentjes, "The Vocabulary of 'Unbelief'", 113, 117.

134 In the context of Safavid Shi'ism, for instance, the Sunnism of Ibn 'Arabī's school, its association with mystical monism, as well as the socially disruptive elitism of *ḥukamā'* were bases for unbelief (Rizvi, "The *Takfīr* of the Philosophers (and Sufis)", 245).

scholarly debate.¹³⁵ Arabic philosophy, in this sense, was only deemed valid as long as it could be employed for the sake of religious benefit.

Disputations and exchanges could often serve as an opportunity and a means for revenge, in which the other party was expected to fall into disrepute.¹³⁶ Zeyrek's allegations about Hocasâde's unbelief, therefore, could be characterized as a retribution against the young scholar's assault on Zeyrek's prestige. Hocasâde objected to Zeyrek's claim by stating that refuting a particular proof would not necessarily undermine the overall statement, since Zeyrek's point of his denial of God's unicity would only undermine the proof itself, not the overall statement that God is singular.¹³⁷

Frank Griffel has noted how the legal meaning of *kufir* had changed during the time of Ghazâlî, from a matter that God dealt with in the Afterlife, that is, rarely implying any action more than social sanctioning, to a legal term that the jurists, the rulers, and their military had to observe and take action especially after the Shâfi'ite legal tradition started to associate this concept with apostasy.¹³⁸ Thus, the claim of *takfir* was not legally binding and could only have rather limited social consequences, such as some scholars' refraining from greeting or welcoming philosophers etc. In other words, declaring someone an unbeliever (i.e. the act of *takfir*) was a tactic often used to slander one's theological opponent with the (rare) implication of legal sanctions – especially in the early theological disputes. Following Ghazâlî to an extent, Zeyrek might have accused Hocasâde with *takfir* probably due to the latter's pro-*falsafa* views in the debate, though this claim was not common and did not have rigid legal consequences (maybe with the exception of the fallen scholar-vizier Sinân Paşa, d. 891/1486).¹³⁹ For the Ottomans, the accusation of *kufir* might have had a rhetorical connotation since, in the case of Zeyrek, it indicated a resorting to *ad hominem*, which signaled that the accuser might have lost the debate, or simply gone straight to the top during the exchange.

It should be noted that the *takfir* of the philosophers was a minority view among the later generations of Ottoman scholars. An Ottoman jurist and scholar of high caliber Cârullâh Efendi (d. 1151/1738) was said to have dismissed Ghazâlî's *takfir* of the philosophers, arguing that the claims of *takfir* are legal opinions and even if there is a single person in the religious community who does not have the same opinion, the claim is ruled out.¹⁴⁰

Another reason for Zeyrek's accusation could be a historical reference to the early reception of *burhân al-tamânu'* among religious scholars, such as 'Abd al-Laṭîf al-Kirmânî (d. 505/1111) and Abû al-Mu'in al-Nasafî (d. 508/114-15), who deemed this proof to be an outcome of unbelief. In his book of Matûrîdite theology *Tabşira al-adilla*, Nasafî voiced this view, after having cited the Mu'tazilite scholar Abû Hâshim al-Jubbâ'î's (d. 321/933) objection to the proof, by deeming it to be incomplete due to its false prin-

135 Taşköprizâde, *Mevzû'âtü'l-'ulûm*, 1: 335.

136 For the cases of revenge from the Italian Renaissance in the context of artistic competition, see Holman, "For Honor and Profit", 556-63.

137 "Delîle i'tirâz ve inkârdan müdde'âyı inkâr lâzım gelmez" (Hoca Sa'deddîn, *Tâcü't-tevârîh*, 2: 467).

138 Griffel, *al-Ghazâlî's Philosophical Theology*, 104-5; *Apostasie und Toleranz im Islam*, 223-6.

139 Hoca Sa'deddîn, *Tâcü't-tevârîh*, 2: 499.

140 Arıcı, "Müzmin Felsefe Okuru Cârullah", 16-20.

principles.¹⁴¹ In other words, before the philosophers employed the Necessarily Existent in *burhān al-tamānu'*, there had been an early context, in which failing to provide a certain proof in *tawhīd* was associated with unbelief.¹⁴² Zeyrek's claims of Ḥocazāde's unbelief and the former's use of the term *tamma al-dast*, a term borrowed from Jurjānī's text which signified that his opponent was formally silenced in the debate, shows that he saw Ḥocazāde as an apologist for the philosophers' doctrines that went against the fundamental aspects of Sunnī creed, including God's unicity.

3.5 Extant Manuscripts

There is a single extant copy of each exchange written during the final day of the debate. The treatise titled *Risāla li-Mawlānā Zeyrek fī baḥth nafs al-māhiya*, also recorded as *Mubāḥatha bayna Ḥocazāde wa-Zeyrek Efendi* in manuscript catalogues, includes Zeyrek's positions and rejoinders in lieu of lemmata in reply to Ḥocazāde. The manuscript is housed at Süleymaniye Library in MS Giresun Yazmalar 99, ff. 120b-121b,¹⁴³ and the initial title suggests that the central topic of discussion concerns the nature of God's quiddity. The text seems to be written in a cursory manner without following many of the classical conventions of consonant pointing, vowel marks, and supplementary diacritics, as well as manuscript framing, which indicate that the text might have been for personal use. The *waqf* seal on the flyleaf is partially defaced and unreadable (see [fig. 4]).¹⁴⁴ The flyleaf also lists the titles of the works in red ink.

Unlike Ḥocazāde's text, the treatise does not include an invocation (*ḥamd ü senā*) section, as well as an introduction stating the overall argument and context. It is, therefore, hard to reconstruct Zeyrek's text, envisioning the subject matter covered each day. The manuscript must have been from the year circa 1082/1671, a date noted by the copyist Mu'īd Meḥmed Efendi¹⁴⁵ at the end of another treatise in the same manuscript, that is, Şadr al-Dīn al-Shirāzī's (d. 903/1497) super-gloss on the famed handbook of logic called *al-Shamsiyya*, by Najm al-Dīn 'Omar al-Kātibi al-Qazvīnī (d. 675/1277).¹⁴⁶

141 See the reference for *kufr* in the context of the proof for God's unicity, see al-Nasafī, *Tabṣira al-adilla*, 88; Yavuz, "Vahdāniyyet", 429. For a list of those scholars who deemed this proof as unbelief, see Ibn Kūtluboḡa, *Hāshiya 'alā al-musāyara*, 49. A contemporary of Zeyrek, Ibn Kūtluboḡa (d. 879/1474) writes in his commentary on his teacher Ibn Humām's *al-Musāyara* that the demonstration of God's singularity via the proof from reciprocal hindrance is an impossibility by way of rational proofs due to its allegedly false principles (Ibn Kūtluboḡa, *Hāshiya 'alā al-musāyara*, 49).

142 Yavuz, "Vahdāniyyet", 429.

143 This *majmū'a* was initially recorded under 3571, which was later changed into MS Giresun 99. The same collection also houses a copy of Ḥocazāde's *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* (see MS Giresun 107).

144 It seems that there are two seals on the flyleaf, one in the middle and the other on the lower left side. Most probably the latter is the acquisition (*temellük*) seal. Hasan Tetik of Süleymaniye Manuscript Library was kind enough to check the original flyleaf to see whether the seals could be read, but no avail.

145 An instructor at the prestigious Süleymaniye medrese, as well as the jurist of Haleb, Mu'īd Meḥmed Efendi (d. 1090/1679) was an established scholar of his time known for his knowledge in various Islamic sciences (Şeyḫī Meḥmed, *Vekāyi'ül-fuḍalā I*, 3: 459-60).

146 See Şadr al-Dīn al-Shirāzī, *Hāshiya 'alā ḥāshiya 'alā al-shamsiyya* housed at Süleymaniye, MS Giresun Yazmalar 3571, f. 48b.

Zeyrek's rejoinder is included in MS Giresun Yazmalar 99, a miscellany (*majmū'a*) with twenty-three treatises on a wide range of subjects from logic, astronomy, natural philosophy, and theology to disputation, semantics, and eschatology, written mostly by the famous post-classical Persian verifiers of philosophical theology – such as Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209), Naşir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, Jurjānī, Shirāzī, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawānī (d. 918/1502), as well as the Ottoman scholar 'Alī Kuşçu (d. 879/1474), who has two works listed, which are his famous treatises concerning theoretical astronomy (*hay'a*) and the science of imposition ('*ilm al-waḍ'*) in semantics. There are two eschatological works attributed to the classical Arabic philosopher Avicenna (d. 428/1036) in the manuscript, one on the throne of God ('*arsh*), and the other on grave visitations, proceeding Ghazālī's epistle on death and the Afterlife. Ṭūsī has the greatest number of philosophical treatises with specific discussions covering complete causes, eternal life of souls after body, and separate substances. In the context of the central topic of our current debate, one could count Rāzī on God's unicity, as well as Ḥusayn al-Ḥalḥālī (d. 1030/1621) on the proof of God's necessary existence as treatises the closest.

Risāle fī al-tawḥīd by Rāzī is a short treatise that outlines different approaches to God's singularity in the Islamic world, ranging from the standard Sunnī and Shī'ite views to the explanations purported by various scholarly communities, such as theologians, philosophers, Illuminationists, mystics, and star-worshippers. In spite of his partial sympathy towards each of these groups, Rāzī prefers the positions of philosophers and theologians as valid, even upholding the philosophers' view being stronger than the former due to its religious authentication based on reasoning.¹⁴⁷ It is highly interesting that such a treatise acknowledging the validity of the philosophers' proof is included in the same compilation with Zeyrek's defense of the theologians' position.

Ḥocazāde's defense of the philosophers is preserved at Süleymaniye Library under the title of *Risāla fī al-tawḥīd* in MS Ayasofya 2206, ff. 12-21. Similar to MS Giresun Yazmalar 99, Ayasofya 2206 is also a miscellany compiling seven treatises written in various subjects, including theology, creed, eschatology, and *ḥadīth* commentary. Most notably, the collection includes the popular gloss on Şa'd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī's *Sharḥ al-'aqqā'id* prepared by the Ottoman scholar Şemseddīn Ahmed bin Mūsā el-Ḥayālī (d. 875/1470 [?]), as previously noted, the only scholar who was known to have won a debate against Ḥocazāde.

The flyleaf includes the small round seal of the Ottoman Sultan Selīm I (r. 918/1512-926/1520) but not Bāyezīd II's almond-shaped seal that may be found in the extant books included in 'Aṭūfī's palace inventory (see [fig. 5]). Given these facts, the manuscript is probably dated from the reign of Selīm I. According to Gülru Necipoğlu, the 915/1509 earthquake, also known as the Lesser Apocalypse (*küçük kıyāmet*), transformed the Inner Treasury into a storage space crowded with accumulating treasures. A couple of years after the disaster, Selīm I decided to lock down the room, which was still in need of repair, in order to close the space (except for his rare visits), es-

¹⁴⁷ See Ceylan's chapter on Rāzī's arguments from the existence of God, which is based on the Persian translation of the work housed in Süleymaniye, MS Fatih 5426 and, for Rāzī's upholding of the philosophers' view being stronger, see f. 23a (Ceylan, *Theology and Tafsir*, 109-11).

pecially until the annual revenues came from the newly conquered Egypt.¹⁴⁸ The inscription on the upper right corner, *odadan çıka ‘arabī*, an expression that could be also found in books included in Bāyezīd II’s famed library, indicates the circulation policy of the book, further suggesting that the work might have been transferred from the Privy Chamber to the Treasury for reading or study purposes, a convention practiced from Selīm I onwards.¹⁴⁹

There is a *waqf* inspection note on the flyleaf written by an inspector named Şeyhẓāde Aḥmed, who worked for the Pious Endowment of the Two Holy Cities (*Awqāf al-ḥaramayn al-sharīfayn*). The inscription indicates that the book was bequeathed by Maḥmūd I (r. 1143/1730-1168/1754)¹⁵⁰ most probably to the public library that he established adjacent to the Ayaşofya (Hagia Sophia) mosque when renovating the edifice. The collection today is known as Ayasofya, which was transferred to the Süleymaniye Library in 1968.¹⁵¹ The date of bequest should be after 1147/1734 since Maḥmūd I received the epithet of *el-Gāzī*, i.e. ‘the holy warrior’, after having taken Tabriz back from Nāder Shāh Afshār (d. 1160/1747), which he lost it to him again during the following year.

MS Ayasofya 2206 is a well-preserved, meticulously-prepared *majmū’a* with a conscious attention given to writing conventions, including consonant pointing. The script is elaborate, and the folio layout displays a clear ruling pattern of text framing and bordering. The invocation section and the first two words (i.e. *qāla/aqūlu*) of some lemmata (indicating the authors of the cited remarks) are copied in red ink. The change of color in subheadings may suggest a transition from one discussion to another, perhaps even implying each successive day in the timeline of the debate.

Coming from the early 1870s, an Ottoman writer and political activist Nāmık Kemāl (1840-88) was known to have penned a series of biographies of prominent Ottoman Sultans, including Sultan Meḥmed II, crediting him as one of the key historic Muslim figures who transformed the Ottomans into a civilized society.¹⁵² With the intention of criticizing the rulers of his time, as well as historicizing an imagined past to be proud of, Kemāl instrumentalized Meḥmed II as an idealized enlightened figure in Turkish history, whom he believed to have single-handedly established the conventions of the Ottoman scholarly culture. For Kemāl, Meḥmed II was the founder of a civilizing Muslim state on a truly nationalistic basis, whose existence culminated in Ottoman nationalism;¹⁵³ yet his political motivations and interest in giving the Sultan the utmost intellectual agency led him misconstrue the factual realities of this debate. He rather utilized this scholarly event as a landmark of the Sultan’s accomplishments without paying much atten-

¹⁴⁸ Necipoğlu, “The Spatial Organization of Knowledge”, 9.

¹⁴⁹ Necipoğlu, “The Spatial Organization of Knowledge”, 21.

¹⁵⁰ “Der vaḳf-ı hāzā’l-nüşḫatü’l-celile Sultān’l-ā’zīm ve’l-ḥākānū’l-mu’azzam mālikü’l-dīn ve’l-muḥarrameyn ḥādimü’l-ḥarameyni’l-şerīfeyn es-Sultān bin es-Sultān bin es-Sultān el-Ġāzī Maḥmūd Ḥān vaḳfen şāḫiḫen şer’iyyen li-men ta’āla ve-istirāde ve-emāne ve-isti’āde ḥāledallāhu mülkehu ‘illā Muḥammed ḥarrarahu el-faḳīr Aḥmed Şeyhẓāde el-müfettiş bi-evḳāfi’l-ḥarameyni’l-şerīfeyn evvelihimā” (*Risāla fī al-tawḫīd* in MS Ayasofya 2206, 1a). For a similar note by the same inspector with a similar inscription: Sobieroj, *Variance in Arabic Manuscripts*, 177-8.

¹⁵¹ Necipoğlu, “The Spatial Organization of Knowledge”, 23; Kut, “Sultan I. Mahmut Kütüphanesi”, 99-103.

¹⁵² Kaplan, “Namık Kemal ve Fatih”, 74-6; Brockett, “When Ottomans Become Turks”, 406-8.

¹⁵³ Kuran, “Ottoman Historiography of the Tanzimat Period”, 426-7.

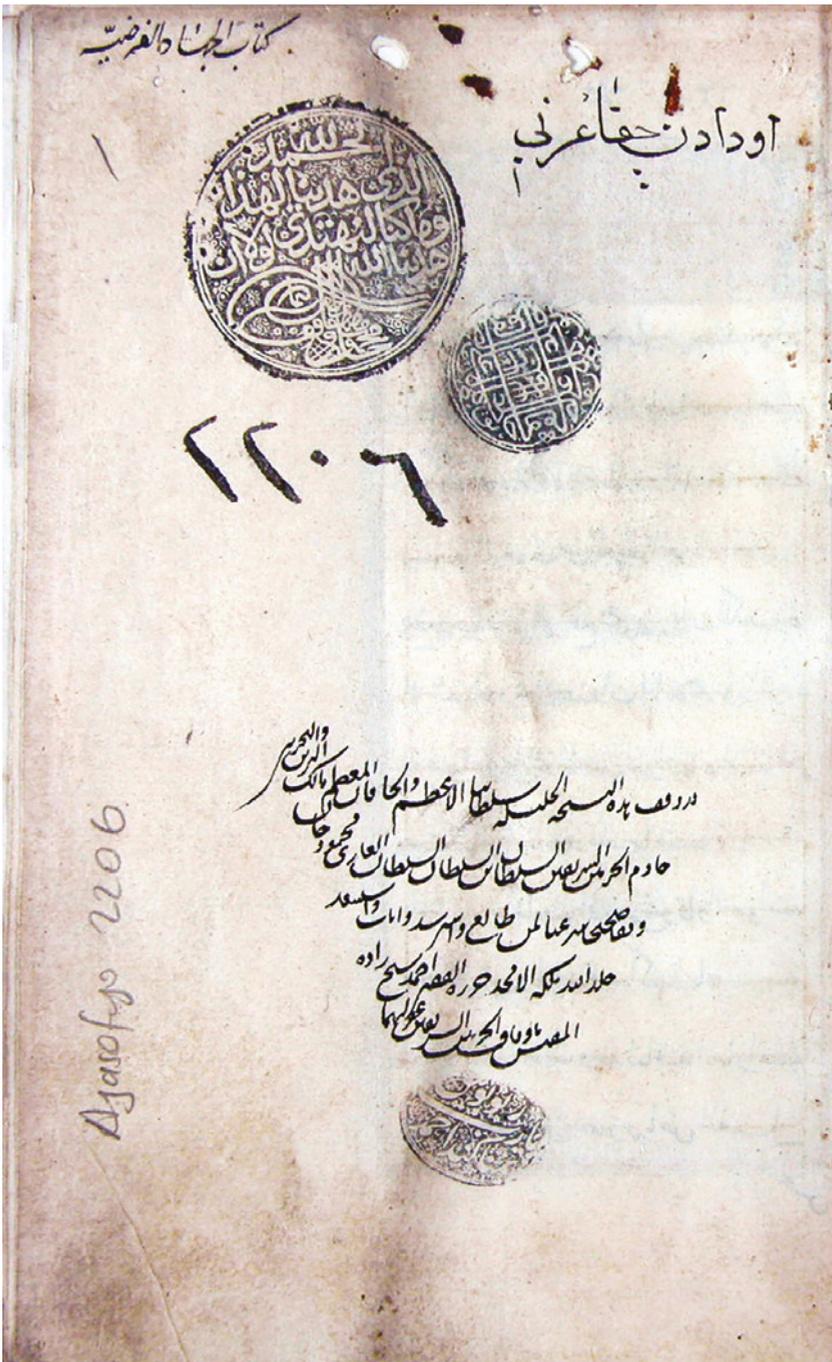


Figure 5 MS Ayasofya 2206 is stamped with the small round Inner Treasury seal of Selim I (center), the large round waqf seal of Mahmud I (upper left), and the oval seal of his waqf inspector (bottom). Selim I's seal represents the perpetuity of his endowments, stating "My trust/confidence comes from my Creator" in Arabic (*tawakkuli' ala khāliki*)

* For the waqf seals of Selim I and Mahmud I respectively, see Kut, *Yazma Eserlerinde Vakıf Mühürleri*, 20, 31.

tion to the content or the efforts of scholars, even mispronouncing Zeyrek's name as *Ḥatībzāde*.¹⁵⁴

İsmail Hakkı İzmirli (1869-1946), a celebrated teacher and scholar of Islamic theology and philosophy, was one of the first modern scholars to write on the debate along with the Turkish physician and historian Süheyl Ünver (1898-1986).¹⁵⁵ Having corrected Nāmık Kemāl's encyclopedic mistakes, İsmail Hakkı noted that the debate concerned the philosophers' version of the argument from reciprocal hindrance (*burhān al-tamānu'*). Yet, when parsing the main point of contention, he made an oversight by constructing the proof generically around the "impossibility of having two Gods with equal power (*qudra*)", instead of establishing the "reducibility of necessity and existence into quiddity/essence in God" as the central discussion of the debate. İsmail Hakkı İzmirli, in that context, might have based his impressions of the debate on biobibliographical sources, since the question of God's attribute of power was neither mentioned in the debate nor as part of the main context. He further notes that Ḥocazāde, in a similar fashion with Taftāzānī, did not see the philosophers' formulation as certain (*qaṭ'ī*) but presumptive (*ẓannī*).¹⁵⁶ Still, there does not seem to be a reference in the debate mentioning the name of the Timurid theologian Taftāzānī per se. Most recent scholars seem to have based their description on secondary sources overlooking the extant copies of the debate.

154 "Giceli gündüzlü eṭrāfını ihāṭadan bunca aşhāb ma'rifeti dā'imen ḥuzūrunda baḥş itdirür ve ba'zı göre kendi mümeyyiz olurdu. Nitekim Ḥocazāde ile Ḥatībzāde beyninde cereyān iden işbāt-ı vācib cedel meşhūrunda hük-m-i Fātih idi" (Kemāl, *Evrāk-ı Perişān*, 251). Instead of acknowledging Maḥmūd Paşa and Mollā Ḥüsrev in decision-making, Kemāl chose to give the full agency to the Sultan, probably mixing the current debate with Ḥatībzāde's unsolicited attempt with the senior Ḥocazāde (Balıkcıoğlu, *A Coherence of Incoherences*, 86-90).

155 The debate is briefly mentioned in Ünver via İsmail Hakkı's notes written especially for his book, see Ünver, "Molla Zeyrek'in güvenmesi", 68-73, as well as İzmirli, "Tevhid Burhanı meselesi", 209-10 and Adivar, *Osmanlı Türklerinde İlim*, 40. There are no studies at hand about the philosophical content of the debate. Also see S. Arslan, "Osmanlı Entelektüel".

156 Ünver, *Fatih Külliyesi*, 209.

