he Indian Sharif Muhammad Murtada al-Zabidi who died of the plague in Cairo in 1205/1791 held a fairly unique position among the Islamic scholars of his time. This was partly due to his outstanding success with two of the largest publishing enterprises of Islamic scholarship in the 18th century. He is his Tij al-umran, the largest lexicon ever compiled in the classical tradition of Arab lexicography, which earned him the great fame in many Islamic regions and even served E.W. Lane as basic text for his Arabic-English Lexicon. The second was his equally unique and comprehensive commentary on al-Ghazali's Ihya‘. The al-mad, called Itif al-sada al-murthaqin, which he finished a few years before his death and which also remained the largest commentary on the Ihya‘ now. In his mystical views and affiliations he was firmly connected with the Naqshbandiyya and transmitted its practice to his students and visitors. He also took full part in the Sufi life of Egypt in his time. The base of al-Zabidi’s fame, however, were his achievements as a transmitter and limbs of Prophetic tradition, as he had collected some of the most valuable chains of transmission which were available at this period and freely granted transmission licenses to those requesting for them. By this he was able to open the door to anybody interested in getting access to that important source of authority provided by the transmission of Prophetic Hadith. No wonder then that his licences were widely sought by visitors and correspondents from many parts of the Islamic world, ranging from India and Central Asia as far as the Sudan and Sub-Saharan West Africa.

In his own writings al-Zabidi refers to many of these contacts. The historian al-Jabarli who was himself a close student and friend of al-Zabidi, also describes his openness to his visitors, especially to the Mahribi who came to visit him in large numbers with every pilgrimage caravan. al-Zabidi himself has left a Murja, consisting of a collection of more than 600 biographical entries which apart from his own teachers and authorities included many of his visitors, acquaintances and correspondents with whom he kept exchanging letters, transmis- sion licenses, books and sometimes other remarkable news which had come to his or their knowledge. This collection was used after al-Zabidi’s death by al-Jabarli who included a large number of these biographies into his history. Al-Zabidi’s constant search for rare books and licenses in Hadith and many other fields, and his interest in perfecting the disciplines of learning themselves, are well documented in his writings.

In contrast to many other scholars in Cairo, al-Zabidi knew Turkish, Persian as even some Georgium and was therefore able to establish excellent contacts with the Turkish-speaking community. This also included representatives of the Ottoman administration and many visitors from Istanbul and from the whole of what was called by him al-Dijar al-Rumiayya. Witness to these con-
tars can be found both in al-Jabarti's lengthy biography of al-Zahidi and with al-Zahidi himself. His Ma‘jam contains many oases on visitors or residences related to these areas with whom he had come into contact in Cairo.

To a certain extent the ottoman cultural and political realities are even reflected in his lexicon.

The three sources just mentioned above-al-Jabarti's biography, al-Zahidi's Taj al-‘arun and his biographical Mu‘jam provide quite promising material for a fuller understanding of the cultural and political interplay between the provinces and the imperial center of the ottoman Empire in the 18th century. The now generally assumed story, of course, stresses the growth of separate civil and military elites which took place in so many ottoman provinces during that period, and the turn towards separate local identities which went along with Egypt. has always been central for this argument. The case of al-Zahidi, the cosmopolitan scholar maintaining close contacts with so many different local elites even farther beyond the frontiers of the Empire, would suggest that another crucial development of this period has to be taken into account if we want to understand change even at the local and provincial level. This is the growing interconnection and standardization of islamic culture and scholarship which had gained momentum since the 17th century. The ottoman religious institutions seem to have gained new vigour from this process, especially these in the provinces. But the court and the leading secretaries and scholars at the centre became also involved, in a way which substantially changed the course of religious image of the sultan's position which had already becoming increasingly important for their internal as well as external politics.

Al-Jabarti's biography of his master and friend al-Zahidi closely follows his scholarly career from his arrival in Cairo in 1167/1753 to his death in 1205/1791. He also describes in fascinatimg detail his relations with the scholars of al-Zahir, with the Mamluks and also with the ottomans. The first milestone in his career is the completion of his lexicon, in different stages from 1181/1761 until 1181/1774. From 1181 onward he begins to collect recommendatory praises (taqassees) for his work from prominent scholars. in Cairo. Its terminus was celebrated with a large festive banquet. By these public-relations activities he was able to arouse wide interest in his work. The leading Mamluk emir of his time, Muhammad Bek Abi Dhusab, bought a copy for it for his newly founded library, for the very high price of 100,000 silver dirhams. From that time on, orders for copies continued to come in from different parts of the islamic world.

The content of the Taj al-‘arun shows in some instances that Mursad al-Zahidi has taken into account both ottoman sources and an ottoman readership into account. Some references show his familiarity with the work of famous ottoman authors, like the three prominent landlords of the seeckhili islamic school, Ibn Kairad Pasha (d. 940/1534), Sidi Chabibi (d.945/1539), and Abi So‘ud al‘Imadi (d.982/1572). An important source for the history and genealogy of the Kurds which is otherwise late and only quoted by al-Zahidi is Muhammad Efendi al-Kurdi (d.1073/1662 in Medina). It might be also be appropriate in this context to mention the blind arab-physician Daud al-Arakdi (d.1068/1959) who spent long time in amalai and even learnt Greek there. He is one of the most important sources for al-Zahidi's rich additioinal material in the fields of botany and chemistry. Several entries of the Taj al-‘arun can be related specifically to the culture and history of the ottoman period. The most striking one is the long entry on Constantinople, which dwells upon nis conquistadors which was regarded as one of the Signs of the Hour, i.e. the approaching end of the world. It praises Mehmed the Conqueror and Bayezid, the successor of the present sultan whose titles are listed. The books of the Hagi Sophia are also mentioned. Even more recent historical evens in the history of the Empire are referred to in other entries: e.g. the ottoman conquest of Crete, which took place 1669, the Karamanis 16th dynasty as rulers of Tripoli since 1128/1711, and also the fights of the Crimean Tatars against the Russians called "the Christians" in the 18th century. Etymology also comes in for important terms related to ottoman culture, as in the case of the common titles Efendi and Durneh, and the meaning of the title of the rulers of Rum, which according to al-Zahidi is derived from the term hqayn, as also the ottoman equivalent qan. Let us now return to al-Jabarti's biographical account of al-Zahidi's career, where the terminus of the lexicon is also marked by his move from the al-zahir quarter to a dwelling in the vicinity of the Mamluks, in Sewayyut Lala. It was in this milieu that he started his ottoman lectures and discussions in the manner of the ancients:

"They drew near to him from everywhere and came to him from every direction, desiring to be in his company because of his being a foreigner and not like the Egyptians scholars or resembling them."

Al-Jabarti then describes how even the scholars of al-Zahir sought his authorization for his Hadith transmissions and how they gathered in the Seeckhili mosque in Saliba, far away from al-zahir, isolated from the people to that their public reputation would not be tarnished. The rumor nevertheless spread, and the fact that some of the prominent scholars had become al-Zahidi's students greatly increased his authority. From now on, his sessions became very famous. Many prominent seeckhili emirs and dignitaries attached themselves to him and invited him frequently, at times showing him with abundant presents.

It is at this point in al-Jabarti's record that high-ranking ottoman dignitaries also come in. The first ottoman dignitary to be mentioned by al-Jabarti is "Abd al-Razzaq Efendi al-Ra‘i" who came from Istanbul, heard about al-Zahidi and sought an authorization from him. He also read al-Hariri's Ma‘ramat with him in private session. This was most probably Abdurrazzaq Bahri who had been helped in the 1180/1772, participated in the Russian war and after that spent some years in Egypt as an administrator of the Minir (Minir dar alkhame manar), the next to invite al-Zahidi to honour him was the governor himself, and from then his contacts to the ottoman court were well established:

"When Muhammad Pasha Izaz al-Kahib came, he enhanced his importance with him, he brought up to him (to the Citadel) and presented him with a rabbits fur, arranging for him a ranch from his own cellular which would be enough for him by way of eats, butter, rice, firewood, and bread. He also assigned him a large pension in the register of the Two Holy Cities and the remainder, as well as produce from the storeroom. Word of him reached the government and an edict came to him for alrash allotment at the mint announcing to 150 silver para a day. This was in the year 1191/1777. His fame became great and his celebrity became widely known he was summoned to the court in the year 1194/1780 and he accepted but then declined. Messages from the head of government followed each other and they sent him gifts and treasures and precious goods in choirs. Reports of him flew far and wide and rulers of various areas, of the Turks, Hejaz, India, Yemen, Syria, of Bursa and Iraq as well as the rulers of the Mughals, Zanzur, and Fezazan, Algeria, and distant lands. Delegations to him increased from every area, and gifts come one after another from them and presents and strange things. They sent him some Fezazan sheep which are of strange appearance and large bodies, the head being similar to that of a calf. He sent the to the sultan 'Abd al-lhamid and that made an impression on them."

His relations to the sultan himself will be further dealt with below. Another peculiar contact with a high-ranking ottoman dignitary can be inferred from alw. al-Jabarti who reports a story about al-Zahidi having translated some ottoman poems written by the "great vizier Isma'il Pasha al-Ra‘i" (al-wazir al-kahar al-maqmil Isma'il al-Ra‘i) into arabic. This probably refers to Isma'il al-Ra‘is Pasha (d. 1191/1780), who served as governor of Egypt from 1192/1781 and was later deposed, banished and killed after the fall of the Grand vizier Khalil Hamud Pasha whose supporter he had already been at an earlier stage of his career. This further confirms al-Zahidi's excellent contacts with some members of the ruling elite of the empire, and even his interest in their literary production.

The greatest respect was paid to al-zahir by the ottoman admiral Ghazi Hasan Pasha who occupied Egypt in 1200/1786. He paid him a personal visit in his house and presented many valuable gifts to him:

"His intercession with him was never refused, and if he sent him a message about something, he would receive it with welcome and respect and would kiss the paper before he read it, and he would place it on his head and carry out what was in it immediately."
Al-Jabarti also mentions in the same contexts the high esteem and the perfect faith which Ahmad Pasha al-Jazairi (c. 1722-1804), the governor of Sokhna, had in al-Zabidi who had even written to him that he was the awaiz Maliki and that he would arrive with great importance. The wording which is not entirely clear suggests that al-Jazairi himself intended, 52 with implications which are yet to be clarified. The letter certainly fell into a period which in many parts of the Islamic world full of eschatological expectations (the turn of the twelfth century, 1200/1785-6).

The Indian scholar and Nawab of Bhopal, Siddiq Haasan Khan (d. 1809) who also wrote a biography of al-Zabidi mentions an ijtissar, issued by him to a Grand Vizier called Abhi al-Muzaffar Muhammad Baha, 53 The obviously wrong year (1300) makes an identification difficult; his concluding remarks: "and he died after that year" does not provide any further clue. A biography at the end of the Taj al-sans recollections in this context the famous muhaddith Raghib Pasha (d. 1176/1763). 54 This would seem a bit too early, as al-Zabidi had by then even finished the first volume of the Taj and was probably not yet that young. If the date is to be taken as 1200/1785 it could refer to Mehmed Pasha Yelgen (d. 1025/1808), who was Grand Vizier in 1195/1782 and served as governor of Egypt in the period in question (1199-1200/1784-85). 55

If al-Jabarti focuses mainly on al-Zabidi's contacts to the Ottoman ruling elite, the picture of the Mijar comes out rather differently. To be sure, there are some high-ranking visitors mentioned by al-Zabidi himself. His closest contacts, however, appear to have linked him to slaves or former slaves belonging to their entourage, a good number of them being called "Ash Abdihali"; the common name for converts whose father was unknown. 56 These persons were quite often scribes and specialists in Arabic calligraphy, and often it was this art which brought al-Zabidi close to them. He even wrote a well-known treatise on calligraphy for one of them. The other group which stands out are many scholars and young students from a wide range of provincial towns in Anatolia. Most of them visited al-Zabidi in the course of their pilgrimage before they returned home. Their names are yet to be traced in the history of the different localities, which is sometimes possible and leads to very interesting results. Taken together they suggest a high mobility of provincial scholars in Anatolia in the 18th century and a remarkably wide range of local educational activities.

The first group, i.e. the visitors and residents belonging to the Ottoman elite, even brings al-Zabidi into contact with the future Sultan 'Abdul-Hamid I, at a time when he was still living as a prince under surveillance in the "cage" (qafaa) of the palace. A young man, Ahmad Shams al-din Fadlallah (Feyyadhah), also referred to as Mahmud Cawash Zada, visited Cairo in 1183/1773. He was the son-in-law of a former Shafi'i Islamic and Moslem conversations and discussions with several scholars, among them al-Zabidi. As he asked all prominent people he met to pray for his prince heaving been he required by him to do so-al-Zabidi added a grandiloquent ijjaza for "Abdi-Hamid, calling him "Orde of Religion and the Worldly" (natwe al-din wa l-dinhe). He also wrote a special ijtissar on the use of al-sabha for him (Thuwfiq al-ashab fi mu'ajal al-alnab). This is quite typical for his writings which quite often were inspired by specific historical occasions and encounters. Al-Zabidi quotes in the same entry some verses which he wrote when the prince succeeded to the throne. The new sultan even asked for an ijtissar from al-Zabidi in 1139/1729. The text of the ijtissar poem which he sent to the sultan, part of which is quoted by Siddiq Hassan Khan, was reserved in the Library of the Dar al-ahm of the Nadwah al-'ulama' al Lucknow (Northern India). 57 Ahmad Shams al-din himself (d. 1226/1809) later held high-ranking offices in the empire. 58

Another prominent Muthlah was Feyyadhah (Reyyad), B. Qul Muhammmad el-Bulhari al-Qarnini, 59 the last Supreme Qelbi of the Qarmen who had left his homeland during the Ottoman Russian war in 1185/1772 and settled with his children in Istanbul. He visited al-Zabidi as a pilgrim in 1150(1777) and studied with him Hadith and his book commentaries. He had been a student of the famous Ottoman scholar Iman el-Halbi (d. 1724) 60 and provided al-Zabidi with a copy of one of Hadil's works about the Ghaushis' controversial theology (Layyif al-tahmin alba' minna k). This famous statement had sparked a controversy among Islamic scholars which continued for centuries and which al-Zabidi summarized in his Istam. 61 This again shows al-Zabidi's way of collecting writings and information from his visitors. It also indicates how his great books grew out of an ongoing discussion with other scholars. The Mijar has many examples illustrating this process. Fadlallah who stayed in correspondence with al-Zabidi later became Kadi of Susiya and of Baghda. 62 His son, Ramzi 'Abdulhali Pasha became a high-ranking administrator and navy commander and died at Basra (1228/1813) in the war against Russia. 63 Al-Zabidi's discussions about legal issues also came out in another entry related to a visitor from Isfahan: a preacher called Idris b. Murradi al-Kirkhani, 64 who was living in the Medrese of 'Ali Pasha corshuma near the Bayezid Mosque held a discussion with him on the following topics: a) the angels and their leaders (watul-azim), b) the vision of the Prophet (a.w.), c) the belief in angels (al-yanf) and d) the status of a Muslim who denies the will of the khamzat of a saint. Al-Zabidi put his answers together into a quara (karmaza) which he gave his visitor together with his ijaza. The most important issue in this list would be the vision of the Prophet, crucial to the Sufi practice and experience of the Tartusi muhaddadyya which was gaining importance during the 18th century. From quotations in the Icsif it can be seen that al-Zabidi was quite familiar with a book which includes a famous description of this practice by the Moresan Sufi 'Abd al-Aziz al-Dabbagh (d. 1370/1329). This is al-Biz which was written by al-Dabbagh's disciple abud b. al-Muharram al-Lami (d. 1150/1742). 65

Other scholars visiting him from Istanbul include the shaikh al-qura of the sultan 66 and Siyyeman al-Arzruni, a muhaddith of the director of the Dar al-Hadith, Osman Efendi Yasinci-Zaide (d. 1187/1773). 67 This man studied with al-Zabidi for seven months in 1194-5/1778-9, especially Hadith which he is said to have "loved" (lubed). As he is also qualified as an accomplished scholar (sunn) in the rational sciences (ma'asli), this suggests a certain shift of interest towards the Hadith which can be found also with other Anatolian visitors, one of whom came from Diyarbakur, where he had studied 'ulam 'aqilyya. But then he became attracted to the science of Hadith (ta'biyya el-qula) then al-Hadith and went to al-Zabidi for further studies in 1192/1778. 68 This would seem to confirm what is known or perhaps still rather guessed-about a general growth of interest in Hadith studies during the 18th century, which as can be seen here, also did not leave Ortozian scholars untouched.

Hadith scholarship could sometimes pose a challenge to the established Hanafite methodology and consensus. The Hanafites were often accused of regarding consensus and argument by riyaa as more important than relevance to the texts of the Quran. The origins of this dispute have yet to be traced. Important discussions about this question seem to have been going on among Indian Hanafite scholars in the first half of the 18th century. 69 A student of Shah Wali Allah, Muhammad Mu'in b. Muhammad Mannan Amin b. Tahf Allah al-Sindii (d. 1161/1748), himself and his arba'niants, insisted on the priority of the recourse to Hadith as a legal source against the consensus of the madhab. He entered into controversies with Muhammad Hadih bin 'Abd al-Ghaffar al-Sinni (d. 1174/1761) who had studied in Mecca, and also with another scholar, 'Abd al-Haq b. Safi al-Din al-Bulhari al-Dilawiri. The priority of Hadith was also strongly supported by the famous Muhammad Hayy al-Saidii (d. 1163/1751) who lived and died in Mecca and who had students from many parts of the Ottoman Empire. 70 The increasing interest of the Ortozian scholars in Hadith scholarship might perhaps be related to such controversies. It is very remarkable in this context that al-Zabidi himself wrote a defence of the Hanafite rida in 1778, demonstrating that its doctrines are largely based on sound prophetic traditions which exist in the Sunnah collections. This work, 'Uqal al-jawahir al-ma'ani fi dafkat i'nabat al-imam Ali Hanifa, was completed in 1197/1782. The Mijar (f. 141a-145b) shows that it was written at the instance of a high-ranking dignitary from North Africa, the 'ali-bashar and later Wali of the Emir of Constantine, called Ibn 'Aliqiq. He had spent much time with al-Zabidi and had become his friend. This contact indicates the political significance of al-Zabidi's synthesis of Hadith scholarship and Hanafite
The shaykh al-qari who was mentioned above is the first example of the Rumis occurring in the Mu'jam. Most of them are explicitly described as mawali, i.e., slaves or former slaves. The most prominent of them was 'Ali b. Abdallah (d. 1176), mawla of Beqir, the Chief Black Eunuch, Agba, of the Imperial Palace (Daruth-\textit{tash} agba). His frad must have been the third Beqir Agba, who held his office from 1165/1752 until 1188/1775 and then lived and died in Egypt. He is known as al-fakih al-Rumi. The Mu'jam was written by his son, who was also a well-known scholar. The Mu'jam was written by his son, who was also a well-known scholar. It is a collection of rare books which al-Zabidi used and some of which are not common among his Arab contemporaries in Cairo. A mawla of this "Ali Bashir Ur al-Sadaq" (i.e. of the waqf he held) was Hassim b. Abdallah al-Rumi (f. 298). His master had given him a broad knowledge of classical education and had him thoroughly trained in the art and practice of writing. He finally made him his own scribe (kilaf) and married him to one of his daughters. He became more and more respected for his art and his dignified conduct; he was finally given the office of the Shaykh of the teachers of calligraphy (Shaykh al-mawlad) in Cairo. Al-Zabidi was not correct for this occasion a full treatise on the art and history of Arabic calligraphy. This is one of his better known writings, \textit{Hikmat al-\textit{tabi}n bi \textit{hikmat al-d}a\textit{fi} bi (writers in 1184/1770). After a full description of the qualities and types of calligraphy and the forms and virtues required from a good scribe he traces the whole calligraphic tradition from its founders to the famous Turkish calligrapher, Hamdullah b. Mustafa al-Karimi (d. 1520), the founder of the calligraphic style which was in use in the time of the writer. From the time the main lines of the Ottoman calligraphic tradition until the time of the contemporary calligraphers in Egypt, among them the "Amir Hasan Eldeh" to whom the book is dedicated. This testifies again to the occasional and personal background of al-Zabidi's writing. It highlights another important aspect of his scholarship, namely his geological research which was not restricted to sharif land fairs or famous dynasties and tribes but was also directed to the arts of calligraphy and crafts. Before turning to a second example of this it is worthwhile mentioning that his Mu'jam mentions five other reputed calligraphers with whom he was in contact. They were of Rumi origin, one of them an old soldier of slave background who was very close to al-Zabidi and gave him lessons in calligraphy, and also ta al-Jabari whose fath in law he finally became. One of the most famous was the famous Mu'assir al-Dini (d. 1192/1776), a representative of two calligraphic traditions, one of Hamdallah and Ibn Al-San'ani whose chains of transmission are given. Al-Zabidi's calligraphical interests link him closely to the world of Ottoman portrait art, and it is certainly not by chance that most of his contacts in this field were of Rumi background. Once more this would seem to distinguish him to some extent, at least from most of the other scholars in Egypt.

The other book which is represented by one of the Rumis is architecture. Its master, also known as 'Ali b. Abdallah (al-Rumi-l-qari), was a mawla of the Amad Ahmad Kherda Sadik. He rose in the service of his master, who was liberally and became a leader of the military unit of Mu'taziliyya. He even accompanied an Egyptian delegation to Istanbul. A famous specialist in architecture and in the art of masonry, he was also unsurpassed in the teaching of this craft, even at a time when his eyes began to fail him. Finally he gave the licence to his best disciple, another Rumi, and asked the guild for his graduation. When this was agreed to by his guild, a solemn ceremony was held. Al-Zabidi was requested by the master to write a speech for him which he could present at the occasion. The text of this speech has been preserved in the Mu'jam and is also quoted in full in al-Jabari's chronicle. As the case of calligraphy, the sacred roots of this weapon in the time and the wars of the Prophet and the names of the craft are described at length, and its transmission is traced down to the present. The present master's chain leads back via Bousnans and Albanian masters to Bousnans and Albanian masters to one from Istanbul, from there taking on to a Fazani (i.e. of Arab origin), then further East to Iran and Central Asia, to a Tashkari and a Bidkhis master. The final chain is, of course, to a remoter origin from the Prophet himself. The names of the craft include special care for its transmission and the preparation of the bows and arrows. Being a weapon of jihad, a good sword should never be given into the hands of unbelievers. This speech gives a vivid impression of the ceremonial life of the craft guilds in an Egyptian and Ottoman milieu, and it shows how a leading scholar was taking part in it, by adding sacrality and dignity to the occasion. From hindsight it might appear quite outmoded and indeed inappropriate for al-Zabidi to talk of archery instead of artillery and military reform, issues that were already of great concern to the Ottoman ruling elite. From what is known about the background and experience of some of his visitors, he certainly could not have been unaware of what was going on at the northern front of the empire. Archery, however, may be taken here just as an exemplary case, which shows Al-Zabidi's genealogical approach to the Islamic culture of his time. This approach could perhaps be tentatively described as a kind of cultural archaeology, designed to verify the sacredness and legitimacy of Muslim social and cultural institutions. Hadith scholarship, genealogy and lexicography could all contribute to this. Archery is certainly not left out in his lexicon. The once common term for the cannon, muskala (lit. "khan-bi"), is mentioned in the Taj (perhaps for the first time in an Arab lexicon) and described as a major expression of Maghribi origin. This is a cultural tradition for its kind put forward in the entry on the catapult (munajjib). The priority of this long-distance war machine is stressed which was already used by the Prophet and even before him by the Arabian hero Jahlibs al-Arabid, long before the Christian invented gunpowder and cannon (qabla wa'ad al-nasr al-burd wa-l-madad). Cultural archaeology in this case provides a local ancestry for an imported foreign innovation and secures historical priority to Arabic and Islamic culture — this is an early and rather casual example of a kind of argument which would become highly important for Muslim reformers during the 19th and early 20th century.
with al-Zahiri for some time would confirm once more the shift of scholarly interest towards Hadith which was discussed above. It also throws some light on the emergence of a provincial school of Islamic learning which was closely connected with the Naqshbandiya majaddidiyya and which became highly influential in the region.

It has been possible in several instances to follow up the local traces of al-Zahiri’s visitors in their homelands, whether for anatolia or the maghreb, the eastern Sudan and even for west Africa where they already were or later became very active leaders and scholars. This variscy once more to al-Zahiri’s role as an important reference and bridging point for different local networks of Islamic scholarship and authority in the late 19th century. The Ottoman ruling elite as well as the crowned heads of Arabic and Islamic culture, and they apparently made full use of it for their own religious and cultural projects and policies. When the Arabic lexicon of the Qummas was translated into Ottoman Turkish in the early 19th century, the translator Amun Elfenbi took most of his additional explanations from al-Zahiri’s Taj al’arūs of which he is said to have owned an autograph copy.29 The Arab sea of the Qummas has thus run through al-Zahiri’s channel before turning into the Ottoman Oikyanos.


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The incredible fact that the Ottoman frontier beylik became an Empire over such a short period of time has attracted many Western researchers and scholars to delve into the history of the Ottoman State. It could be argued that there are miscellaneous determinants and dimensions that actually created the possibility for such an incredible feat to be accomplished. This volume has been edited with the aim of focusing on the main factors that gave rise to such a great civilisation. In the first place, the institutional character of the Ottoman State is of utmost importance. In order to understand the basis of Ottoman civilisation, the different patterns of its institutions should be studied, as the comprehensive analysis of the institutional structure of the Ottoman Empire might enable us to conceive how a small beylik was able to turn into one of the greatest Empires in the world. In this volume, the administrative, judiciary and military institutions of the Empire are set out as the main subject titles. In addition, there are various subjects which have been analysed, under such subtopics as bureaucracy, religion and law, shedding light on the main characteristics of Ottoman institutions.

In appreciation of the highly developed institutional structure of the Ottoman Empire, the ideational and philosophical sources cannot be underrated. Unless these sources are taken into consideration, it is impossible to grasp the various dynamics of Ottoman institutions. Therefore, this volume is entitled “Philosophy, Science and Institutions”, due to the close correlation and importance of these subjects to one another.

Contrary to conventional Euro-centric and Orientalist assumptions, which hold “science” as the peculiar praxis of the Renaissance and Enlightenment in
the West, in this volume it is generally argued that the Ottomans had a number of successes in scientific activities (îmârât fen). The Ottoman State not only promoted the development of science within the borders of the Empire, but also facilitated several interactions with scientific activities outside of its territories. During this interaction, it both benefited from and contributed to the scientific improvements made in Europe.

Additionally, this volume dedicates an important place to the development of philosophy and thought in the Ottoman Empire; although in the Ottoman Empire such major philosophical ideas as developed in Europe were not formed, rather the Ottomans focused mainly on Islamic philosophy. Yet this situation does not arise from the fact that the Ottomans lagged behind in speculative matters. On the contrary, they were not interested in philosophical issues that were outside the realm of Islamic tradition. From their point of view, Islam encompassed all ontological and epistemological matters, making any other philosophical concern dysfunctional.

Yeni Türkiye

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