The transmission history of a text of joint authorship

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The investigation of a work by several authors constitutes a task of particular interest within the large and multi-faceted field of text transmission and text edition. This paper attempts to show that it is not only through a philological and codicological approach that the problems involved in such a work might be solved, but also by taking into consideration the biographies of the authors and their personal concern when writing on that specific subject.

One example for such a text is the Ottoman biographical collection Devhâtât i-Meşâyi! which was written between 1744 and 1846, that is over a period of more than a century. It consists of a basic work with six continuations (zeyl), and is written by four more or less well-known authors of very different stature and background.

The first was Süleyman Sa’diddin Mustakımzâde Efendi (1131/1719-1202/1788), one of the most prolific and versatile Ottoman ʿulamâ of the 18th century, a member of the Kâdiriyâ and Naḳbandiyâ orders, who stood in a direct line of transmission (rivâyet) from Şeyh ʿAbdalgañî an-Nâbulusî (1050/1641-1143/1731) and whose Sufi descent (silsile) went back to Şeyh Ahmad as-Sirhindî (971/1564-1034/1624). Mustakımzâde did not participate in the popular racing for posts and honors. As a private scholar, he composed an impressive number of works that reflect both his comprehensive classical Islamic learning and his Sufi leanings.

The second author, Seyyid Mehmed Miinrb Efendi (Uoca Miinrb), was very different from Mustakımzâde; this highly talented Ayntábî came to Istanbul around 1770 to make a career and succeeded in penetrating into the highest political and 'ulama circles. He died in 1238/1822 in exile where he was sent about fifteen years earlier by Sultan Mahmud II (1808-1839) because of his role in the palace revolution under Şehm III (1789-1807) and MustaÍ-a IV (1807-1808). Seyyid Miinrb on the other hand described seven contemporary sheykhrilislams in his two zeyls which are dated c. 1800 and 1806 respectively. Both Süley- mân Fâʾik and Mektûbizâde wrote about the same nine sheykhrilislams of their time in their zeyls which are dated 1833/34 and 1844 respectively. While Mustaḵımzâde’s contribution covers about half of a complete manuscript, Miinrb’s takes about two thirds of the remaining half. Süleyman Fâʾik and Mektûbizâde’s continuations share the last third in equal parts.

In its literary form, Devhâtât i-Meşâyi! is indebted to ʿOqmánzâde Ahmed Tâ‘ib’s (d.1136/1724) Hadıkâtât i-Vüzérâ (dated 1718), a work that describes the lives of Grandvezirs in chronological order. This genre became quite popular in the second half of the 18th century and remained so right into the 19th century. While Mustaḵımzâde can be considered as one of the fathers of this genre, along with Ahmed Resmi (1112/1700-1197/1783) and others, the continuers of Devhâtât i-Meşâyi! just had to follow a given model.

Finally the fourth author, ʿAbdül’azîz Mektûbizâde Efendi (1216/1801-1279/1862), was a provincial kadi who tackled with scholarly writing in periods of unemployment.

Devhâtât i-Meşâyi! contains a series of 104 biographies of Ottoman sheykhrilislams or müftis, i.e., of the highest dignitaries within the ʿulamâ class. The biographies are arranged not alphabetically or according to periods of reign of sultans (tabaḳa), but rather in chronological order, i.e. according to periods in office. Eighty-eight of the one hundred and four biographies were included in Mustaḵımzâde’s basic work (finished in 1744, resp. 1745*) and in the two zeyls which he wrote within the next forty years. Those three parts cover the period from what was then considered the origins of the office of sheykhrilislam in the beginning of the 15th century down to the reign of Sultan ʿAbdülhamîd I in the last quarter of the 18th century. A number of Mustaḵımzâde’s contemporaries are therefore also included.

The number of extant manuscripts seems to suggest that this biographical work on the sheykhrilislams met with considerable interest. Of Mustaḵımzâde’s basic work, I was able to trace thirty-one manuscript copies and most probably, more will turn up in future. I was able to find twenty-three copies of his first continua-

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tion and sixteen of the second. Münib's first continuation is represented by twenty manuscripts, his second by eleven. I have also traced eight manuscripts of Süleyman Fâ'îk's zeyl and six of Mektûbîzade's. They make up altogether forty-four manuscripts of varying length, i.e. they contain from one to seven parts, but only two of them contain the full work of seven parts.

Editing such a text with a ‘biography’ of its own poses a number of problems. The main difficulty lies in the mixed character of text tradition, e.g. one and the same manuscript might represent different text traditions, because the various parts might have been transcribed from different copies. One or more parts might derive from excellent texts, while the rest goes back to mediocre ones. A change of handwriting calls for caution, but does not necessarily signal a change of source. In some instances, originally separate manuscripts were mixed, i.e. parts of the work from one manuscript were subsequently bound into another volume. In some cases the copyist was obviously unaware that he had missed a zeyl or had mixed them up. At this point the question of stemma must be raised. It seems that the only way that might lead to some satisfactory result is by establishing the interrelation of the available manuscripts for each of the seven parts of the work separately.

However, it is not only the efforts of scribes, illuminators and collectors that will affect today’s editorial work; the content and spirit of a text will influence it too. Devhatî l-Meṣâyiîh is a historiographical work as far as it gives historical dates and facts about a particular circle of personalities; their superior rank in Ottoman society is understood, but the history of their time remains of minor importance. It is also a work of some literary interest, particularly in reference to its genre as a biographical work. It can, e.g. be studied as such in comparison with other series of biographies. Among the four authors, Mustaḵîmzade handles best the method of classical biographical writing as it was established in the Islamic lands over the centuries.

Although not as detailed as the biographies of ‘ulamâ by Şeýhî (1078/1667-1144/1731-32) or as readable as ‘Aṭâ’î (991/1583-1045/1635), it is rich with poetry and pious phrases, thus avoiding the text’s rattling with data. It is Mustaḵîmzade’s merit to have, for the first time, presented the prestigious office of sheykhülislam via its representatives.

Originally, the book was meant to please a sheykhülislam and thus fulfill young Mustaḵîmzade’s secret hope to eventually open up a mûderris career for him. At the age of 25 he also wanted to prove with his first large book his comprehensive learning and genuine devotion to the ‘ilmîye. But, of course, he was still at the lowest echelon of the ladder, studying and collecting teaching authorizations (icâzet).

The case of Münib is quite different; he wrote his two voluminous zeyls in the prime of his life, when he was a candidate for the kadišhip of Mecca (1799) and later (1804) became a member of Sultan Selîm III’s consultative council (meclî-i mûkalîme). At this time, he could probably hope quite realistically that one day he would himself be able to reach the highest office of sheykhülislam. His writing constitutes a supreme example of Ottoman linguistic bombast. It is not a biographical work in the strict sense of the word, but rather a stunt of theological scholarliness. Why did he write it? In his introduction he does not tell us openly, but refers to the wishes of a powerful friend and sponsor. Although this is a frequent topos, Münib’s intimacy with sheykhülislams of the time and sheykhülislamzades suggests that he was indeed leering upon a promotion.

Süleyman Fâ’îk and Mektûbîzade again stuck to the rules of biographical writing; Süleyman Fâ’îk as a mocker of Ottoman high-society who nevertheless relished quite openly his intercourse with the rich and powerful. The success of his earlier biographical work, a continuation of Ahmed Resmî’s Halîfetî r-rî‘î‘esî (biographies of reisülkâtîb or chiefs of chancery), might have encouraged him to tackle with another column of society, the müftis of his time, some of whom he must have known closely. His writing is much less polished than Mustaḵîmzade’s, certainly straightforward in comparison with Münib’s and fresher than Mektûbîzade’s.

Mektûbîzade is the most modest among the four authors, judging both from his intellectual output and his success in life. But he was the only one who wanted to write as a historian, at least in the Ottoman sense of the word. This judgement can be gathered not only from his other writings, but also from the introduction to his zeyl, were he writes that he was only concerned in straightening out those facts that Süleyman Fâ’îk had twisted. Thus, Mektûbîzade turns out a true partisan of the good old order of the Empire, at a time when the solid ground seemed slipping away.

Devhatî l-Meṣâyiîh, this many-faceted series of biographies with its colorful background and varied styles was condensed into a handbook by Ahmed Rif’at (d. 1293/1876), rearranged and printed as a lithograph in the second half of the 19th century. A comparison of the two versions shows that the integral text of the manuscript work is a better witness of its time and of the personality of its authors than the well-meant abridgement. In order to support this argument, some concluding remarks will be devoted to one particular feature of Mustaḵîmzade’s basic work. This goes to show, how the general political atmosphere and the personal involvement of an author could mould a text and even lead to a separate track of textual transmission.

As we have seen earlier, Mustaḵîmzade was twenty-five years old and ready to enter the higher ranks of the mûderris career, when he finished a first version of Devhatî l-Meṣâyiîh (1157/1744). It contained the bio-
graphies of the sixty-two muftis in office down to the year 1736. Mustakımzade dedicated the book to the incumbent man in office, Seyyid Mustafa Efendi, who was the son of the notorious sheykhülislam Seyyid Feyzullah Efendi; the latter had been lynched by the mutinous soldiery during the well-known revolt against Sultan Mustafa II (1695-1703) in 1703, the so-called Edirne vakası. Mustakımzade had made Seyyid Feyzullah Efendi's biography a nice piece of apology, but it seems that Seyyid Mustafa Efendi died before he was able to promote Mustakımzade, if he ever intended to do so. Seyyid Mustafa died in March 1745, and Mustakımzade's second version of Devhat u l-Mesaviy is dated August 1745. It shows among other changes a brief biography of the late mujtahid and a shortened version of the above-cited biography of his father, Seyyid Feyzullah Efendi. But Seyyid Feyzullah Efendi's family were still around, and it might not be farfetched to suspect that it was because of this new version that the brother of the late Seyyid Mustafa Efendi, sheykhülislam Seyyid Mürtezä Efendi, failed Mustakımzade in the examinations for senior office (ruûûs) in 1750. In any case, Mustakımzade could not forget to the end of his life the injustice that had been done to him on that occasion. He gave up hopes and ambitions and retired into private scholarship.

A comparison of the two versions of Seyyid Feyzullah Efendi's biography, as represented by a Munich and a Paris manuscript respectively, illustrates the type of changes the later version of Devhat u l-Mesaviy has undergone. The Munich manuscript (M) shows the circumstantial biography of Seyyid Feyzullah in the 1744 version, while the shortened version of 1745 is found in the Paris manuscript (P). If folio 40b of P is compared with folio 41a, or 41b with 42a, a difference in handwriting is noticeable. Autopsy shows more clearly than a facsimile can, that an old folio 41 has been suppressed and the present new folio 41 has been fitted into its place. In other words, a new text has replaced an earlier one. Traces of re-working are
visible throughout the Paris manuscript; it turns out that the MS Paris contained originally the 1744 version of Devhatî l-Meşâyiḥ and was then changed into the 1745 version in a rather coarse fashion. This can again be observed on folio 42a of MS Paris where five and a half lines at the top of the page are crossed out but are still readable. The text of these deleted lines corresponds to the final lines of the biography as found in the earlier version. This observation is confirmed when the deleted lines of MS Paris are collated with lines 9-14 on folio 140a of the Munich manuscript (see plates 3, 4 and 6). Some of the contents of these last five lines (MS Munich) was incorporated into the text of the second version (MS Paris, folio 41b from line seven onward, e.g. the reference to Seyyid Feyzullâh’s times in office). On the other hand, a long paragraph from the first version of 1744 on Seyyid Feyzullâh’s son Seyyid Muṣṭafâ is left out in the later version, possibly because there is now an additional biography for him (cf. translations in the appendix).

How does this double track of textual transmission affect the edition of such a text? In this particular case it seems justifiable to give the older version more attention and weight than is usually payed to the average variants, even though the later version must have corresponded to the author’s intentions. The Paris manuscript is the only one among the known manuscripts that shows such clear signs of the author’s re-working of the text: a correction note on the margin is most probably by Mustakīmzâde himself. All other copies show either the earlier version (six copies) or the later one of 1745 (twenty-five copies). Among the latter, four manuscripts feature a mixed character, that is they represent the earlier version, but the scribes have nicely integrated the changes of the later version. Thus they represent a line of transmission from copies that had not been so radically amended, namely, torn apart and crossed out, as the Paris manuscript discussed above.

The virtues of facsimile editions have often been
contested. It is however not only the cost factor which speaks in their favor, but also that they can carry the flavor and directness of the authors' and scribes' personality. This reasoning is certainly valid in the case of the Devhatü l-Meşâyiğh.

APPENDIX

Translation of Mustakimzađe's biography of Sheykhüluslam Seyyid Feyzullâh Efendi, according to both the original and the final version of Devhatü l-Meşâyiğh.

The translation is based on the Paris (P) and Munich (M) manuscripts presented in the paper. The following MSS were also used: Paris, B.N., suppl. turc 1044: Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, H.O. 227; Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kph., Bagdatlı Vehbi 1148. A readable translation was preferred to a literal rendering of the Ottoman text. My thanks go to Dr. Hussam Saghir of the University of Frankfurt for his help with the Arabic.

MS Paris

The holder of two titles (sheykhüluslam and Sultan's preceptor, cemi'ü r-rivâyetân) Mevlânâ es-Seyyid Feyzullâh Efendi b. eş-Şeyh Mehmend, twice in office.

After spending his childhood and youth (ilhâ-i 'unvâ-i şeybâ ve 'iblâ-i ridâ-i şeybâ) in his birthplace Erzurum, he
made every effort (tesmûr-i sâk-i ûkûm ve şedd-i hâzî-yu ihtimâm ile tekmîlî-sa'î ve ictihâd) to acquire knowledge and develop his talents (tahsil-i bâ'a ve istidâd). Afterwards he went to Istanbul and became acquainted (ilfet) with people of polished manners (erbûb-i rûsans) and adopted their refined life style (temeddûmûnû). In the reign of the late Sultan Mehmed, he became superior to his peers (fâ'îk el-ekrânû) because he served as preceptor (hiyet-i ta'lûmûnû) of the fortunate princes until 1097 [begins on 28 November 1685]. Later, in 1098 [begins on 17 November 1686], he came within reach of favors (karîn-i elzâfû) by being elevated to the office of nakibû l-eyrûfû. When in the course of Mehmed Hân’s deposition and Süleyman Hân’s accession to the throne Sheyhûlislâm Debbûzgûzûû was pressured (bi'l-iktiizû-i ihtiyûrû) into retirement, the high position of sheyhûlislâm fell to (ba’âbu) Seyyid Feyzullâh. On 12 Reb. I 1099 [16 January 1688], the white robe of honor was put on his fortunate shoulders (dâsû-sa’âdet-paşlarûnû). At the time when the Grandvezir Siyavûz Pâşû became a martyr under the attack of the rebels (bâşûyûnû) and upon the reaction of the people of the city, the ignominious heads (ser-i bêlêrûnû) of the mutineers were severed from their evil bodies (cesed-i bêlêrûnû) and when Nişâncû Ismâ’ûl Pâşû was favored with the elevation to the rank of Grandvezir he acted unjustly (gadrû) towards Seyyid Feyzullâh with the intention of making of Debbûzgûzû Efendî, his kindred soul (hemsûmûgû), his mûftû. On 28 Cem. II of the aforementioned year [1099/1688], Seyyid Feyzullâh began waiting in Erzurûm to become sheykûlislâm once again (mûterakbûh-i tekarûrû-û sadîrû). When in Cem. II 1106 [begins on 17
January 1695] the late (cemet-mekân) Sultan Müştafa II ascended the imperial throne and embellished the seat of worldrule (zâher-i erke-yi cihân-bânî), he favored (râayer) the bond between teacher and pupil (âlâka-yi ta'âlim ve ta'âllum) and bestowed his protection (siyânet) on the right of noble knowledge (hakk-i 'ilm-i Serîf). In order to commit to Seyyid Feyzullâh the charge of the affairs of fetvâ, he invited him back from Erzurum. In the middle of Ramadan of the afore-mentioned year [c. 30 April 1695] Seyyid Feyzullâh entered the abode of felicity (dâr el-meýlene), Edirne, and on 10 Şev. [24 May 1695] he reached for the second time the lofty place of fetvâ, in replacement of Sheykhtilislâm İmâm Mehemd Efendi. In 1115 [1703], while the movement of the vermin [i.e. the rebellion, hareket-i haserati] came to the lofty place of fetvâ, in replacement of Sheykhtilislâm İmâm Mehemd Efendi. In 1115 [1703], while the movement of the vermin [i.e. the rebellion, hareket-i haserati] came to the surface and holding out (sebûr) seemed no longer reasonable, he was appointed to go to Erzurum, on Reb. I [begins on 15 July 1703]. While he was in the town of Varna intending to make the passage by ship, an advance guard (kâyûddar) of the rebels, who had drawn the sword of oppression (sell-i seyî-feyî) towards Edirne, insisted on his return there. The event of Kerbela was repeated and that heart-burning day was yet seen (again) to the bewilderment of understanding people (heyret-fîrmâ-yi cih-i şu'ûr). The claim of injustice (maşhûmiyet) will remain an open question (âhâne) that will be solved on the Day of the Last Judgement. It happened on the date [chronogram in Arabic]. ‘He became a martyr without doubt’ (1115). [Blessing in Arabic] May God honor him with His closeness and may He bestow His grace on him. Among the works of his pen are his evrâd under the title Kitâb al-ażkâr bi-l'âsîf wa'l-âbrâk (Recitations for evenings and mornings), a collection in Turkish under the title Muvaşşah-i letâ'îfi-î şittâ (Dispersed subtleties in muwašâh form) and a collection of his fetvâs. His first period in office under Sultan Mehmed lasted for seventy-five days, the second, under Sultan Müştafa, lasted eight and a half years. Among his noble sons are Seyyid Mürtezâ Efendi and Seyyid Mehemd Efendi who at present are dismissed from the kadiship of Istanbul. His grandson (kerîme-zade) Mîrzâzade Sâîd Efendi is dismissed from [the kadiship] of Bursa. During the aforementioned event [of Edirne], Yekçeşm Hüseyn Efendi, who had been kadi of Edirne since the year before, was made happy with the kadiaskership of Anadolu according to the saying ‘A chance is a godsent’. When he came with Grandvezir Râmi Mehemd Paşa to the [imperial] tent because of the encounter with the rebel soldiers (istikbâl-i 'asâkir-i bâğiye) he reached his desires on 14 Reb. I, according to the necessities of the time, with the elevation into the rank of müfî. But before a fetvâ could become an act (muâmele) ordained by God’s will (mükkadder) through his signature and before anything could be interfered with (müddâhale) in the name of God (müvessur), the former sheyhûlislâm İmâm Mehemd Efendi was raised to the office of fetvâ for the second time, because the overpowering soldieriy (asker-i kahr-mažher) insisted on it. Since Hüseyn Efendi had no hiding-place, he was banished, but since this event was considered of minor importance (bir maddê-i rûmûnî olmamagla) the description of it [in a separate chapter] was omitted.

MS München

The holder of two titles (sheyhûlislâm and Sultan’s preceptor, camî-yi r-tîyâsetayn) Mevlânâ es-Seyyid Feyzullâh Efendi b. eş-Şeyh Mehemd, twice in office.

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nation of that subject. Chronogram on the year of the Sheykhülislam's martyrdom: 'He became a martyr without doubt' (1115). May God honor him with His closeness and may He bestow His grace on him. During the aforementioned event, Yeçeşen Hüseyin Efendi, who had been kadi of Edirne since the year before, was made happy with the kadiaskership of Anadolu according to the saying 'A chance is a godsent'. When he came with Grandvezir Râmi Mehmed Paşa to the tent because of the encounter with the rebel soldiers he reached his desires on 14 Reb. 1, according to the necessities of the time, with the elevation into the rank of mufti. But before a fetva could become an act ordained by God's will through his signature and before anything could be interfered with in the name of God, the former sheykhülislam İmâm Mehmed Efendi was raised to the office of fetva for the second time, because the overpowering soldiery insisted on it. Since Hüseyin Efendi had no hiding-place, he was banished, but since this event was considered of minor importance the description of it was omitted. In one word, the fortunate martyr, may God honor him with utmost kindness, was a marvel of the time and a prodigy of the period, a second Sayyid [Ali b. Muhammad] al-Gurğâni and Sa'd [ad-Din] Taftânî. In short, the following distich [in Arabic] explains his personality:

God has the uncontested power
To unite all existing things in one (i.e. Feyzullah).

He studied the fine books which are kept as vakif in the library of the medrese he established near the luminous Faith mosque as one of his religious endowments, he wrote marginal notes into them and expressed his refutation of various points of discussion with glosses. I have seen a book of his evrâd under the title Kitâb al-akâr bi'l-âşiy wa'l-abkâr, a collection of muwaṣṣîn under the title Leṭāʾif-i Ǧattâ and a book of his fetvâ, written by the late Kâmi Efendi who had served as his fetvâ emâni. Seyyid Feyzullah's first term in office under Sultan Mehmed [IV] lasted seventy-five days, his second term under Sultan Muṣṭafâ [II] lasted eight and a half years. One of his sons is the lord of the Seyyids, the master of good fortune, the present holder of the office of sheykhülislam, whose splendor surpasses that of his predecessors in the mufti lineage and whose admirable manners are superior to the conduct of Kamâl [ad-Din Maš'ûd] Hûğândî, namely Seyyid Muṣṭafâ Efendi, [blessing in Arabic] may God honor him with duration [in office], protect him from pain and may He continuously encourage him to draw near. There are also Seyyid Mürtezâ Efendi and Seyyid Mehmed Efendi, who are dismissed from the kadiaskership of Istanbul and who are approaching the Throne of Grace. [Blessing in Arabic] Oh God, do not disperse them!

2 For a study of his life and work see İbnülemîn Mahâmud Kemâl İnal's introduction to his edition of Mustakîmzâde's Tuhfet-i battûfetn. Istanbul 1928, pp. 3r-85*. Also EF s.v. 'Mustakîmzâde' (B. Kellner-Hinkeke).
4 Cf. J.G.J. ter Haar's article in the present volume.
5 Our reference works have only brief notices on this interesting Ottoman, see e.g. Mehmed Tâhir Brûşân: Os-mâni mülâlfetleri 2, Istanbul 1333/1915, pp. 34-36; more details can be found in Ahmed Cevdet: Târîh Istanbul 3
7 Most detailed on his life and work is İbnülemîn Mahâmud Kemâl İnal: Son apar Türk şairleri 1. Istanbul 1969, pp. 352-355.
9 For the two tracks of text transmission see the latter part of my article.
12 Thirty-four manuscripts are found in various libraries of Istanbul: four are preserved in Cairo, three in Vienna, two in Paris, one in Berlin.
13 For more details on the various manuscripts and on textual criticism see Der Stammbaum der Großen Scheich. introduction. A particularity of Devhatî I-Meşâyiîh is its great number of marginal notes, in most cases written by the authors, and the genealogical trees of sheykhüislams, also drawn in the margins.
14 For a discussion of their work see Ali Uğur: The Ottoman 'âlemâ in the mid-17th century. An analysis of the Vâkıî't-ül-Fuzûlât of Meşhî Şehî Ef. Berlin 1986, introduction. (Islamkundliche Untersuchungen, No. 131.)
15 His mecâm'a contains numerous anecdotes of his famous contemporaries (MSS Istanbul, Üniversite Merkez Ktph. T. 3472 and T. 9577).
16 Printed in 1269/1853 in Istanbul.
17 Istanbul s.a., reprinted Istanbul 1978.
18 1099/1688 and 1106/1695-1115/1703 in office; see IA s.v. 'Feyzullah' (O.F. Köprüliî); for a detailed study of the Edirne Vaḳ'âsî see Rîfâ'at Abou-el-Haj: 'The 1703 rebellion and the structure of Ottoman politics. Istanbul 1984. (Uitgaven van het Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul, No. 52.)
19 1148/1736-1158/1745 in office; for a brief biography, see Mehmed Serhan Taşyî: Şeyhiî-islâm Seyyid Feyzullah Efendi ve Feyziyye Medresesi' in: Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları 23 (1983), pp.9-100. here pp. 43-46.

NOTES

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21 Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. turc. No. 84, dated 7 Muḥ. 1161/8 January 1748. See Aumer, Verzeichniss (München 1875), pp. 24-25.
23 folio 57b, dated 1181/began on 30 May 1767.