The Library of Şadr al-Din Qunawi and its Books

Mikâil Bayram

Introduction

Shaykh Şadr al-Din Qunawi (d. 673/1274), a scholar of the Anatolian Seljukid period, was the son of Shaykh Majd al-Din ıshaq of Malatya (d. 618/1221) (also known as the teacher of sultans) and the son-in-law and student of the famous Andalusian Sufi Muhîyî al-Dîn Ibn al'Arâbi (d. 638/1241). Shortly before his death Qunawi wrote a will ("Vâṣîqât- nâma") 1 in which he expressed his feelings, thoughts, advice and requests for his relatives and friends. In this approximately two-page long Vâṣîqât- nâma there are certain requests pertaining to the books he owned. These requests are as follows:

Those books related to philosophy should be sold, and the resulting revenue should be distributed among the poor as alms.

The books about medicine, fiqâh and hadîth should be taken to Damascus to form an endowment for those who occupied themselves with 'ilm.

The works he authored were to be given as a memory to 'Affîf al-Dîn, the husband of his daughter Şakîna.

He also states that nobody after himself should look for or interpret inner meanings (ma'nâîjîd) both in the works of his shaykh Ibn al'Arâbi and in his own works because this path ends with himself.

In this paper I shall give some information about the books owned by Şadr al-Din Qunawi and retrace their seven century-long adventure.

A. The Library of Şadr al-Din Qunawi in Konya

Şadr al-Din Qunawi died on 16 Muḥarram 673/22 July 1274. None of his requests were fulfilled except for the third item in his will, which stipulated that the works which he had authored should be given to his son-in-law 'Affîf al-Dîn. 2

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1 Selçuk Üniversitesi. Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi, Tarih Bölümü. The English translation of this article, which was originally submitted under the title "Sadru'd-dîn Konevi Kütüphanesi ve Kitapları," was prepared by Ertuğrul İ. Öksen and revised and edited by İ. Erim Binbaş. The original was published in Mikâil Bayram, Türkiye Selçukluları Üzerine Anıtlarımaları, Konya: Kâsım Yayıncılık, 2003, 196-203.

2 There are quite a few manuscript copies of this Vâṣîqât- nâma. Osman Nuri Ergin published one of these in facsimile form, Şarâ'îjat Memnuvanî II (1957), 82-83. Another copy was published by İ. Hakkı Kaymak in Konya tarîhi, Konya: 1964, 496-498, again in facsimile form.

3 In fact, certain other requests in his will were also not followed. For example, although he did not want a closed structure (kûnbîlî) to be built over his tomb, long after his death a
His students, relatives, and friends, as well as the statesmen of his time, could not consent that these materially and spiritually valuable books be sold or taken to Damascus, an act that would have deprived Anatolia of a treasure. In the months following his death, they built a soup kitchen (imārat) and a library between his tomb and his mosque-nadra complex, endowing these books here in his name. This has found its expression in the still extant inscription above the exterior gates which lead to the mosque, imārat and the library. The translation of this inscription is as follows:

This blessed soup kitchen, the tomb in which Sādr al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Išāq is buried, and the library (dar al-kutub) which contains his books endowed in accordance with the endowment act, are built in the name of his pious companions in the months of the year 676 (1279).

By whom this soup kitchen was built is not stated. However, as mentioned above it can be deduced that it was someone from the close circle of Qunuvi and contemporary notables who planned and executed the building, perhaps with the consent of Qunuvi’s daughter Sakina and her husband Afif al-Din. Nevertheless, the information we have from the later periods tells us that works authored by Qunuvi and his notebooks were not put in this library, but given to Afif al-Din as required in his will.

After Sādr al-Dīn Qunuvi’s library was founded in this manner, other people also occasionally donated books to the library. On the cover pages of these books there are records saying “this book is an endowment of Sādr al-Dīn Qunuvi.” By contrast, in those books which were left by Sādr al-Dīn Qunuvi himself Qunuvi’s signature of ownership is found instead. Quite a few of them have listening (sammā) and reading (qirā’ā) records by the teachers of Qunuvi and his close friends.

The building referred to as Sadrud-din Konevi Külliyesi still exists today. However, the nadrada, the soup kitchen and the mosque have not survived. The library consists of two parts. The stairs in the inner courtyard reach a spacious reading room on the second floor. The books were kept in the space located in the Ka‘ba direction of this second-storey reading room. The structure was renovated several times during the Ottoman period. Ferid Paşa, the governor of Konya during the reign of Abdülhamid II, carried out the last extensive repairs in 1317/1899. To what degree the structure has changed through all these repairs must remain the subject of another study.

As a result of a rearrangement of local libraries in Anatolia carried out by the Turkish government in 1926, the collection was transferred from its original location to the Yusufağa Library in Konya, where it is still in the service of readers. In this paper, I shall examine a number of Sadr al-Din Qunuvi’s books, and the question of how many of them have come down to us.

**B. The books of Sadr al-Din Qunuvi**

Sādr al-Dīn Qunuvi’s father, Shaykh Majd al-Dīn Išāq of Malatya, served under the Anatolian Seljuks and visited Baghdad several times on diplomatic missions. During his travels to Baghdad he met with the well-known scholars of his age, such as Ibn al-Athir, Ibn al-Jawzi and his son Abd al-Rahmān in Mosul and the Jazira, and acquired their works as well as those of others. Many of these works, which passed on to his son Sādr al-Dīn Qunuvi, are either autographs or copies by or in the hands of their close friends. Moreover, Sādr al-Dīn Qunuvi stayed in Syria and Egypt with his step-father Ibn al-Arabi; several works passed from his step-father to him. Among these works are autograph copies of Ibn al-Arabi’s own works and some other works that Ibn al-Arabi had brought from the Maghrib.

The autograph copies of Qunuvi’s own works were also among these books. He also collected certain small treatises and letters between him and his friends, prominent statesmen, and others in private notebooks. These notebooks provide a rich archive of the scholarly, political and cultural life of the Anatolian Seljukid period. In short, he possessed a rich, voluminous collection.

When books authored by Sādr al-Dīn Qunuvi were placed in the library built in his name, the following endowment record was written on the title page of each book:

وقف هذا الكتب الشيخ الإمام الأمام الزاهد صدر الدين أبو العباس محمد بن حسن بن محمد وهو من جماعة متأهلة فلك الله عز وجل عليه وتمكنت منه، وسرى في تنديره، وسمعت منه، والمائمون، والمخلصون، وله في جزءه من علم الله تعالى...

The translation of this endowment record is as follows:

The learned and erudite Shaykh and Imam Sādr al-Dīn Qunuvi Abi al-Ma‘ālī Muḥammad b. Išāq b. Muḥammad endowed this book which is from among the works he authored – may God have mercy upon him and strengthen his authority – to the library which was built near to his tomb so that the Muslims can benefit from it. He stipulated that it [the book] should not be taken out of it [the library] except in return for a security deposit, and not without it. Rather, they should make us of it or in its location. He accuses of sin those who alter it [i.e., this stipulation] after hearing it more so than those who alter it [without being aware of the stipulation]. God is all-hearing, omniscient.

This statement is the endowment record we find on folio 1a of his work *Mīlah Ghayb al-Jam’* copied by Yusuf b. Aymad of Denizli in 672 (1273). Similar endowment records on the title pages of all his other books imply that after his
death all of Şadr al-Din Qanavi’s books were registered. However, no list with titles and numbers of these books has survived. Therefore, we do not exactly know how many books he possessed. Nevertheless, following the Ottoman conquest of Karamanid territories during the reign of Mehmed II, the surveyors (şeyhülislam) who were sent there in 880/1475-76 to register the endowments also recorded Şadr al-Din Qanavi’s endowment in Konya. In the course of their work, they included the books in Qanavi’s library. According to their record, the number of books endowed by Qanavi was more than 200.1 When one compares this list to Qanavi’s books now in the Konya Yusuflu on library, one notices that many books were lost during the more than 700-year-long interlude. Before proceeding to the question of how these books were lost, it is necessary to briefly recapitulate some important historical information about the personal books of Şadr al-Din Qanavi.

When Şadr al-Din Qanavi was alive, he was surrounded by the many students who pursued their studies under his supervision. They read his and his master Ibn al-Arabi’s works, and copied them, and even came to prepare commentaries and author original works with his encouragement and guidance. Some of his students who authored original works also gained recognition after his death. The best-known among them are:

1. Qutb al-Din Shirazi (d. 710/1310)
2. Mu’ayyad al-Din Maḥmūd al-Jandi (d. 700/1301)
3. Fakhr al-Dīn i‘rāqi (d. 688/1289)
4. Shihāb al-Dīn Chubāb al-īrāqi (?)
5. Sa‘īd al-Dīn al-Fīghānī (d. 692/1293)
7. Izz al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī (?)

Occasionally, famous scholars came from distant places to Konya to make use of Ibn al-Arabi’s and Şadr al-Din Qanavi’s works in the original. They worked in Qanavi’s library, and copied the works of these two. Some of these well-known scholars are:

1. Ya‘qūb al-Shihrūzī (814/1412);
2. Sayyid Sharīf al-Jurjānī (816/1414);
3. the famous linguist Majd al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Fīzuţabādī (817/1414);
4. the teacher of Fāṭih Sultan Mehmed, Akṣemeddin (862/1457);

C. Qanavi’s personal writings and notebooks

According to Qâdi Burhān al-Dīn’s historian ‘Aziz-i Asturbādī, Ya‘qub al-Shīrāzī, one of the scholars of the Ertuğrul period, came from Kayseri to Konya with several carpets and offered them as presents to Şadr al-Dīn Qanavi.4 On this occasion, Ya‘qūb al-Shīrāzī found the opportunity to examine for some of the personal notebooks of Qanavi in Konya; he then composed two Mutā‘al al-nasīl which consisting of the letters and pamphlets in these notebooks. One of these collections is registered as Ms. no. 2349 in the Ayasofya (Süleymaniye) library. In this collection Ya‘qūb al-Shīrāzī brings together the correspondence between Şadr al-Dīn Qanavi and Khvājā Naṣīr al-Dīn Muḥammad, also known as Aḥāf Eren. However, Ya‘qūb al-Shīrāzī thought that this correspondence was between Qanavi and the Persian philosopher Khvājā Naṣīr al-Dīn Tūsī and suggested as much in his collection. After Ya‘qūb al-Shīrāzī, other copyists and authors also made use of these letters or simply copied from Ya‘qūb al-Shīrāzī’s work, and consequently, it became a widespread conviction that Qanavi and Tūsī corresponded.5

The second collection which Ya‘qūb al-Shīrāzī copied from the private notebooks of Qanavi is currently in the Bursa Eski Eserler Library, Hüseyin Celebi section, Ms. no. 1183. In this collection, Ya‘qūb al-Shīrāzī included some pamphlets which he thought important, as well as the correspondence between Qanavi and his close friends, both of which he found in Qanavi’s private notebooks. He marked these by using statements such as صدر من حرف النشام (I took it from his Highness the Shaykh), which means I took this from the notebook of the Shaykh, and which means I took this from the notebook of the Shaykh); using these formulas, he made clear that this collection was copied directly from the notebooks of Qanavi.6 As mentioned above, when Ottoman surveyors registered the endowments of Karamanid territory, they also registered the titles of the books in Qanavi’s library, and this list lacks the titles of Qanavi’s autograph works and his personal notebooks. This implies that these books were already missing at the time of the survey.

Like Ya‘qūb al-Shīrāzī, others had the opportunity to see his original works, personal notes and letters that were in the possession of Qanavi’s descendants. For example, in 898 (1493) a certain Hāfiz Mu‘mīn Khalīfa had access to autograph pamphlets and letters of Qanavi, and added them to the end of the Nafḥat al-nilbīyā which he copied.7 During my library research I found out that several people like him had benefited from Qanavi’s private notebooks, and made copies

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3 I. Hakki Konya, Konya Tarihi, 501-503.

4 Bâzım u Bazım, Istanbul 1928, 384.
6 İdeten, 53-54.
7 Konya Mevlevâni Müzesi Library, Ms. no. 1633.
from his autograph works. Among other examples, the copy of the *Mukatabāt* in the Ayasofya (Süleymaniye) Library Ms. no. 2412, and similarly the *Musāri’ al-musāri’* copy in Ayasofya (Süleymaniye) Library Ms. no. 2358 are reproduced from Qunavi’s private notebooks. It is not necessary to list more of them here, yet I would like to mention that one of the private notebooks of Šadr al-Din, which is in the Konya Yusufağa Library Ms. no. 7850, has survived to our time. Thus, other libraries might have the notebooks of Qunavi and autograph copies of his original works.

**Conclusion**

During the time of the Seljuks of Anatolia Konya was the foremost center of religious and spiritual learning (*ʿilm wa ṣuṭūr*) in the Islamic world. Throughout the Seljuk and Ottoman periods it assumed the role of being the center of two great spiritual movements. One of these intellectual and spiritual movements was the “jalāliya” movement started by Mawlāna Jalāl al-Din Rūmī. After Mawlānā this movement continued under the name of “Mawlāvīyya” (Mevleviyya) in the form of a ṣaḥīla. The other intellectual movement which originated in Konya was the movement of “Akhāriyya.” This movement was named after Muhāri al-Dīn Ibn al-ʿArabī who was called “al-Shaykh al-Akbar,” and was started by Shaykh Šadr al-Din Muhammad of Konya.

Šadr al-Din Qunavi stayed for a long time with his step-father and teacher Ibn al-ʿArabī, who settled in Damascus; he became his best-known student and following. In 645 (1247) Qunavi returned to Konya and stayed there until the end of his life. When he returned, he brought with him a large collection of books which he had inherited from his father Majd al-Dīn Iṣḥāq and his step-father Ibn al-ʿArabī. In Konya, he occupied himself with teaching and writing, and made Konya the center of the intellectual movement called “Akhāriyya.” He taught the works of his teacher, commented on them and trained many students. His student Muḥammad al-Dīn al-Jandī says the following in the elegy he wrote on the occasion of Šadr al-Dīn’s death:

The Caliph of the world, the word of humanity, the sea of meaning, the source of deep knowledge passed away. After the death of the Shaykh al-Islam no signs of perfection and clarity remained. If only he had not departed from us.

*Has any solver of problems and maker of truths remained after him? Is there anybody except him who shed light onto the dark valleys like the morning star at the peak?*

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8 This elegy is in Jandī’s *Nafḥāt al-rūb wa ṣuḥḥat al-fanūr*, Bana Eski Eserler Library, Hıdıye Çelebi Section, Ms. no. 1183, fol. 120b. The contemporary historian Karım al-Din Ağar’i’s *Musammat al-akhbār*, (Ankara 1944, 119-120) included this elegy in his work.

9 At that time it was common practice to lend books in this fashion. Thus, the books could be taken away to distant places. For example, a copy of the *Divan-i khatir* in the Mevlâna Müzesi Library was lent out in return for a security deposit and was taken as far as Herat. The book stayed there for years, and the famous author Sufi Husayn Vâʿız al-Kashfî wrote notes on the margins, and in the end it was returned to the lodge of Mawlâna, *Diwan-i khatir*, Mevlâna Müzesi Library, Ms. no. 67.