

STUDIES ON THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

Edited by
İsmail Hakkı Göksoy
İsmail Hakkı Kadi



REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE MINISTRY
OF CULTURE AND TOURISM
PRESIDENCY FOR TURKS ABROAD
AND RELATED COMMUNITIES





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MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND TOURISM OF REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE
PRESIDENCY FOR TURKS ABROAD AND RELATED COMMUNITIES

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Ankara 2024

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FOREWORD

The strategic equations that have been in place until recently have faced sharp challenges during the last decades, and the existing balances have undergone a significant change also. International relations have entered a new process on a global scale in terms of influence capacity and cooperation. International politics has placed the “East” at the center of the geopolitical and geostrategic axis with all its elements, moreover, in this new process the Asian Continent as a whole has come to the fore. This rise of the continent indicates that the countries of that region will become both important and powerful actors in this century through new international cooperation mechanisms.

Considering both their population and their place in the world economy, Asian countries are expected to play an extremely critical role in the new process in which the “Rise of Asia” is evident in all respects. Under the leadership of our President, our country pursues a humanitarian and enterprising foreign policy approach which prioritizes peace, prosperity and stability on a global scale. In view of the rise of the Asian Continent -especially Southeast Asian countries- our country has been striving for a long time to intensify its relations with both the continent in general and Southeast Asian countries in particular and to bring these relations to a higher level.

Our Asia policy, shaped around the “Asia Again Initiative” and standing out with its political, economic and cultural dimensions, constitutes a viable and broad perspective set of policies covering the entire continent, which is rich and diverse in every sense. Our relations with Southeast Asian countries are realistic and consistent and these relations are carried out in harmony with the political and cultural differences of the countries in the region.

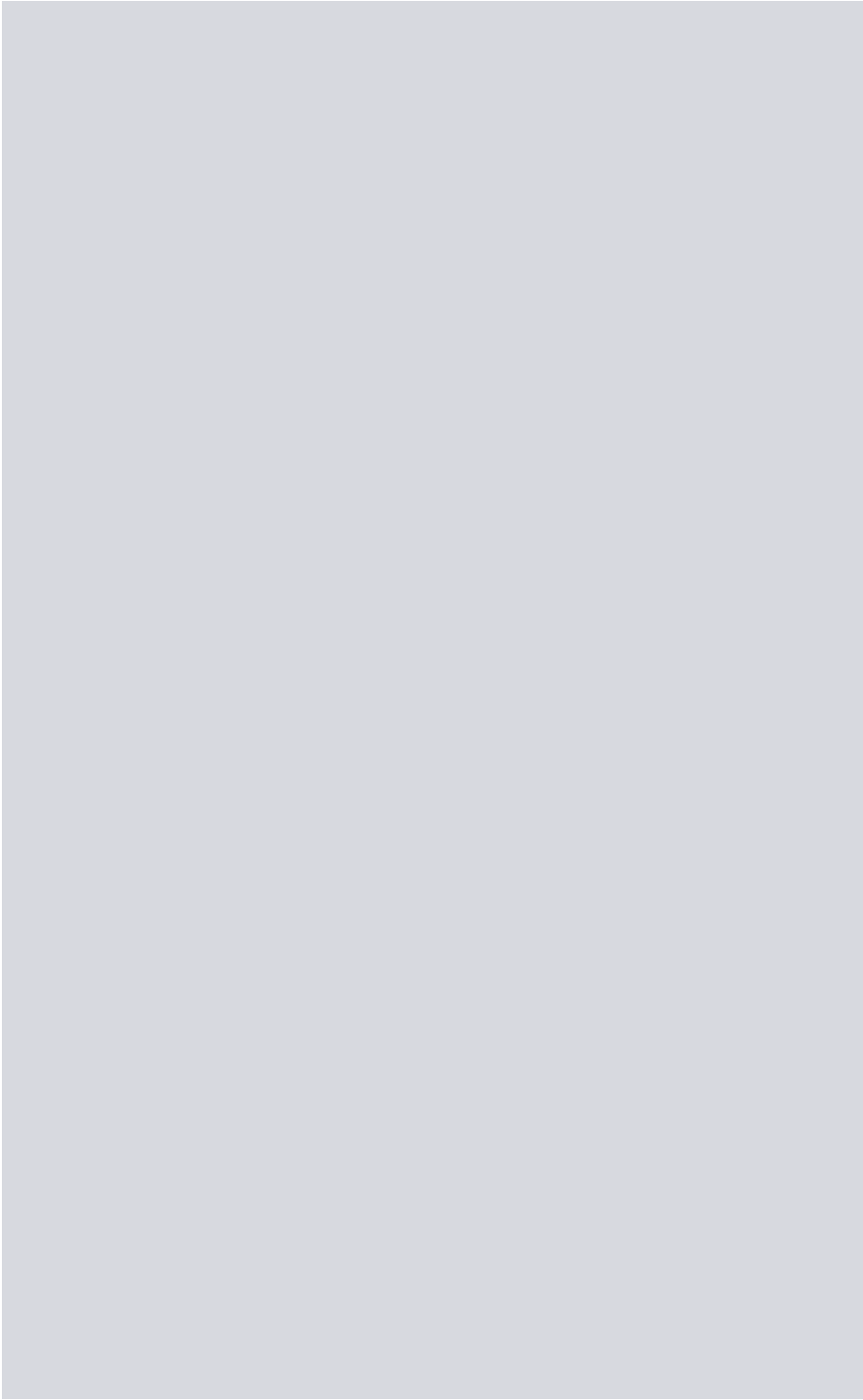
Our country gradually strengthens its economic and political relations with the countries of the region, with the United Nations (UN) as well as with other international organizations. One of the most tangible indicators of our intensifying relations with the countries in the region is the declaration of Türkiye in 2017 as the “Sectoral Dialogue Partner” of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the

world's eighth largest economy. This intensification is, of course, strengthened and nourished by our deep-rooted rich history together with the close and sincere ties that we established with these countries in the past.

It is important to study our relations with Southeast Asian countries from a historical perspective, and to put them on a more solid and legitimate basis in order to strengthen the bridges between the region and Türkiye; along with establishing more effective and functional relations and cooperation for the future.

I would like to congratulate those who have contributed to this meaningful work, which aims to reveal the relations between the Ottoman Empire and the vast geography of Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore and the Philippines, and to contribute to our current relations with the countries of the region. I hope that the work will be useful for researchers, decision-makers and practitioners and will make a substantial contribution to literature.

Mehmet Nuri Ersoy
Minister of Culture and Tourism
Republic of Türkiye



FOREWORD

Asia has significantly increased its weight in global politics with its strong economy, effective trade volume, vast geography, and young and dynamic human resources. It has enhanced these capabilities with its recent breakthroughs in political, cultural, and military aspects. So much so that a considerable part of the international community agree that the Asian continent, and particularly Southeast Asian countries, will be among the most important playmakers of the next century.

Being aware of the fact that the place and role of Asia, and particularly Southeast Asian countries are growing on a global scale and gaining space day by day, Türkiye is strengthening its activities towards the region not only through diplomatic relations but also in cultural, social, and economic aspects. The new relations were initiated with the policy of “Opening to the Asia-Pacific Region” and have reached the dimension of strategic partnership today with many countries and international organizations. These relations are carefully maintained by preserving their depth, functionality, and multidimensionality.

The Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB) carries out its activities with the aim of strengthening our economic, social and cultural relations with cognates and related communities. It also carries out its activities towards Asian and Southeast Asian countries with great care and determination. Within the scope of these activities, preserving the common historical and cultural heritage with these countries, with the people of the region and to transfer it to the future, has an important place. Our past, has placed this transfer process on our shoulders as a significant responsibility. The proper realization of this requires an indepth study of the past as well as the meaningful and rational use-in line with the goals to be determined for the future-of the information obtained as a result.

Based on this need, a project titled “Ottoman-Southeast Asian Relations” was developed and put into practice with the support of our Presidency and in cooperation with Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakif University the Center for Ottoman-Malay World Studies (OSMAD). The articles prepared within the scope of the project, in which distinguished academics from our country and the countries of the region, each of whom have accomplished important work in their field, took direct initiative, to bring out this valuable work.

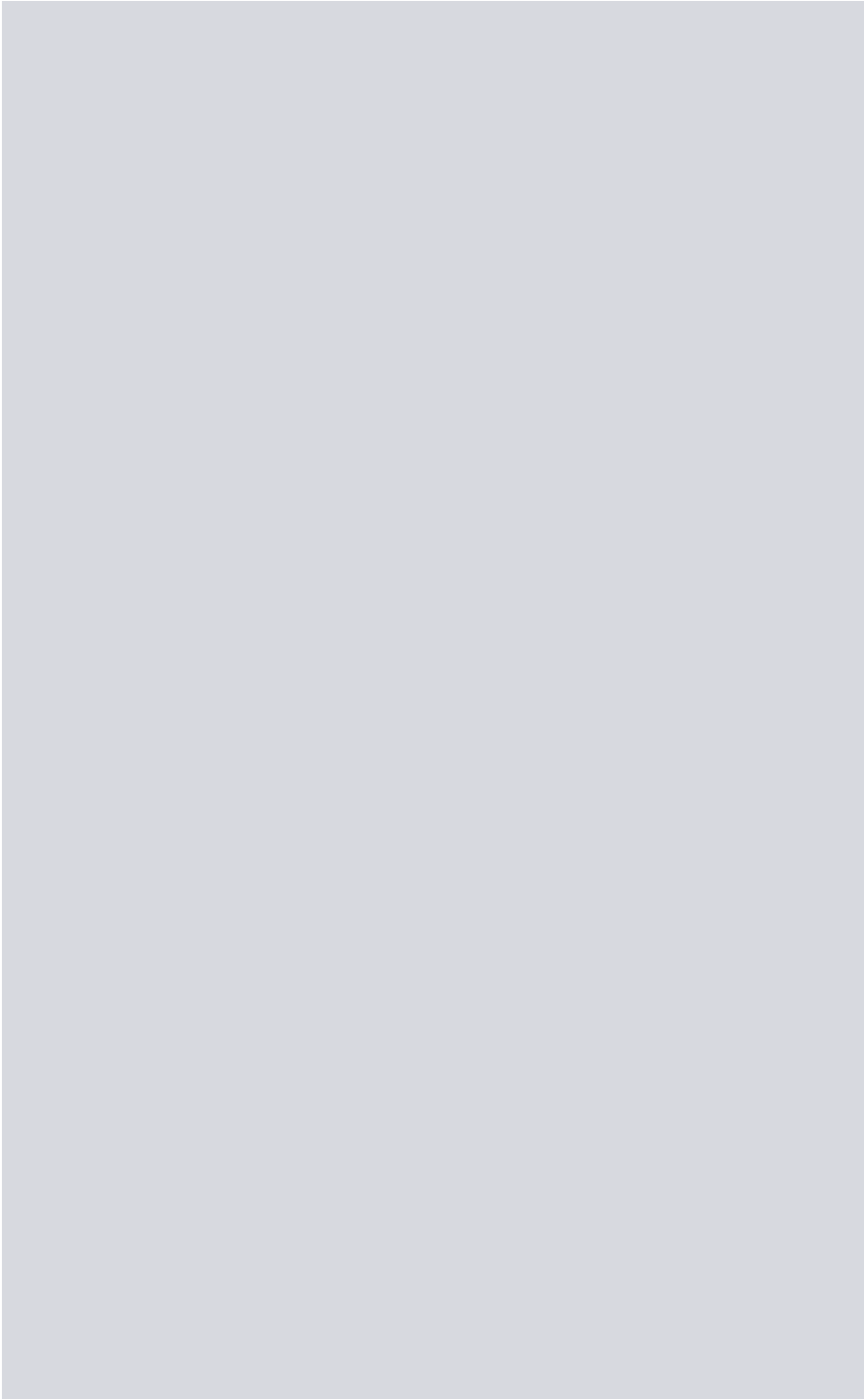
I would like to thank everyone who contributed to this valuable book, especially Prof. Dr. İsmail Hakkı Göksoy and Prof. Dr. İsmail Hakkı Kadı, which we are happy to publish within YTB Publications. I believe this work will be used as an important resource for our academic world, our institutions organizations that carry out studies on the region and all researchers interested in the field.

Hoping that the work will reach its audience...

Abdullah Eren

President

The Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB)



PREFACE

The Ottoman Empire, which ruled on three continents for six centuries, interacted with many different parts of the world during its reign; developed religious, political, economic, and social networks and has left ancient traces in many different geographies. In terms of its political borders, its relations with the archipelagos in the region beyond the Persian Gulf, which is also called Southeast Asia today, important academic studies have been brought to light in the last quarter of the century. It has been acknowledged that these relations are multifaceted in many different aspects.

The Center for Ottoman-Malay World Studies (OSMAD), which was founded in 2015 in joint collaboration of our university and the International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM), was established in a period when these academic studies gained momentum. They specifically enabled light to be shone on our ancient relations with the region. The possibility to both coordinate and gather the studies carried out in this field under one roof and to contribute to our relations with our country and today's regional countries through our ancient relations. Our center, that conducts various research and publications in the context of this vision and mission, continues its activities with the support and cooperation of other institutions working within this field.

The intellectual preparations for this book, which emerged with the support of Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities commenced in 2019 and was shaped by meetings with many researchers and academics working in the region. Our finalized research proposal was accepted as a project by the Presidency in March 2020. However, our project was postponed for a long time due to the Covid-19 pandemic conditions that emerged afterwards. In early 2022, the project became fully active; many academics and researchers from Türkiye and the region working in this field, have conducted research in archives in Türkiye and in many different parts of the world. This book is the result of all the long-term work and effort.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities to Prof. Dr. İsmail Hakkı Göksoy and Prof. Dr. İsmail Hakkı Kadı, who made significant contributions to the research process of the project and the editorial process of the book, to all researchers and experts, and also Serdar Çöp, whose efforts from the initial steps of the project to the printing stage of the book are noteworthy.

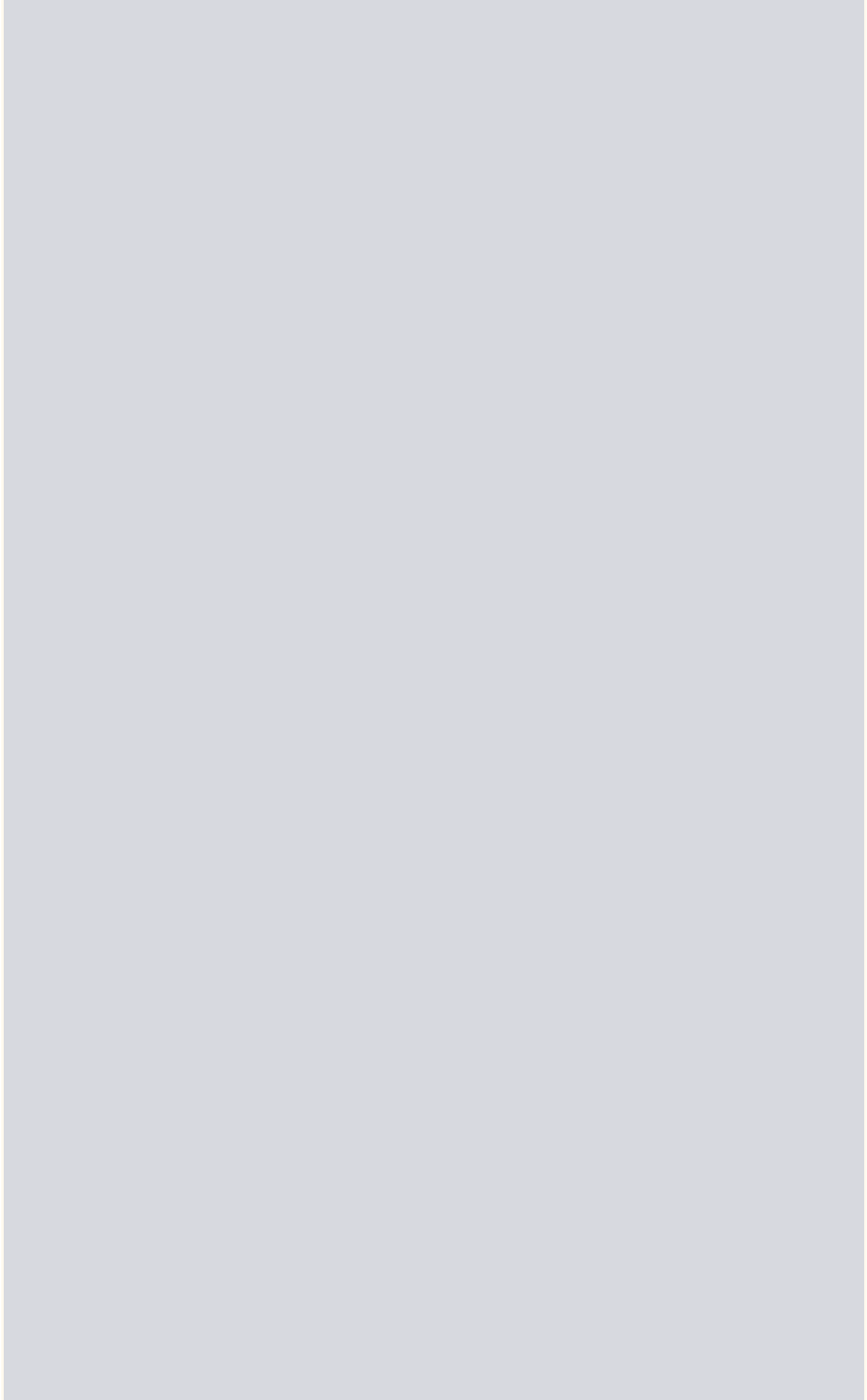
I hope that the book will make positive contributions to our relations with the region.

Prof. Dr. Fahameddin Başar

Director

The Center for Ottoman-Malay World Studies

Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakif University



INTRODUCTION

İsmail Hakkı Göksoy¹

İsmail Hakkı Kadi²

Despite the long distance, there have always been commercial, religious, political, and cultural relations between the former Ottoman geography and Southeast Asia through the Indian Ocean. Today, the Southeast Asian harbors play an important part of the Muslim societies in the world. Indonesia, one of the most important countries in the region, is the most populous Muslim country in the world with a Muslim population approaching 250 million. In Malaysia and Brunei, also in the region, Malay Muslims constitute the majority of the population. In addition, in the southern regions of The Philippines and Thailand and in countries such as Singapore and Myanmar, a significant Muslim population lives as a minority. All these countries gained their independence from Western colonial powers at the end of the WWII.

In fact, the relations between the former Ottoman territories, currently Turkey; the Middle East, and Southeast Asia have a quite long history. The most important factor connecting the societies living in Southeast Asia to the former Ottoman geography, today called the Middle East, has been commercial activities. As a matter of fact, the commercial relations that existed between West Asia and Southeast Asia in the early ages continued to grow more intensely after the birth of Islam. Muslim sailors and merchants have operated on the international maritime trade route from the Arabian Peninsula, Iran, and the Indian coast to China since the early Islamic times. Visiting various port cities in the Malay and Indonesian islands on this route allowed them to develop commercial relations with the merchants and political authorities in the region. Beyond their commercial activities, Muslim sailors and merchants played a pioneering role in introducing Islam to the people of the region thanks to their Muslim identity.

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As a result of the adoption of Islam as a religion by the Malays and Indonesians in Southeast Asia, political and cultural relations between the two regions developed along with commercial activities also. Especially in the early 16th century, when Syria, Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula came under the Ottoman rule during the reign of Yavuz Sultan Selim (r.1511- 1520), the connections between Malay and Indonesian Muslims in Southeast Asia with the Hejaz region, and the holy places of Islam, continued through the Ottomans until modern times. In fact, these relations were not only limited to the religious and cultural ties established through the Hejaz region as a religious center, but were also developed with Istanbul, the capital of the Ottoman Sultans who held the office of the Caliphate. Furthermore, political, diplomatic, and military relations were established between the Ottoman Empire and some Muslim sultanates in Southeast Asia from the beginning of the 16th century.³ The memory of the connections of the Malays and Indonesians with the Turks during the Ottoman period has been preserved in the social memory through various works of classical Malay literature and this knowledge based on oral narratives has been preserved until today. When we read the results of some research carried out on these texts, we see that the influences and interactions were not observed only in political and military fields but also in religious, cultural, and educational fields.⁴

Research on political, military, social, religious, and cultural relations together with the connections between the Ottoman geography and Southeast Asia have been increasing recently. As a matter of course, the proliferation of our sources of information and the realization of mutual contacts more than in previous centuries have an important contribution to this. Although our sources of knowledge in Turkish regarding the relations and interactions during the period before the 19th century are limited, our sources in Turkish have increased considerably in parallel with the development of press and broadcasting activities, especially since the second half of this century. Besides, information and narratives referring to the relations established between the Ottoman geography and Southeast Asia have become richer due to the opening of Ottoman diplomatic missions in the region. Until recently, academics and researchers in various countries working on Southeast Asia have generally used sources written in European languages and their access to Turkish sources has remained quite limited. Works written by European authors, travelogues and archival sources of Western states have gained more importance withing the context

3 On these relations, see Anthony Reid, "Sixteenth Century Turkish Influence in Western Indonesia", *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, Vol.10, No:3, 1969, pp.395-414; İsmail Hakkı Göksoy, "Ottoman-Aceh Relations as Documented in Turkish Sources", *Mapping the Acehnese Past* (eds: R.M. Feener, P. Daly and A. Reid), (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2011), pp. 65-96.

4 For an assessment of Turkic-related narratives in classical Malay-Indonesian literature, see Vladimir Braginsky, *The Turkic-Turkish Themes in Traditional Malay Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

of the relations between the two geographies. Therefore, the relations and interactions between the Ottoman geography and Southeast Asia were shaped in the light of knowledge and narratives produced in European languages other than Turkish and partly in the languages of Muslim societies in the region, namely Malay/Indonesian and other local languages of Muslim societies in the region.

In the second half of the 19th century, during the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II (r.1876-1909), the Ottoman Empire opened diplomatic missions in the region, particularly in Batavia (Jakarta), and Ottoman-Southeast Asian relations gained a new momentum. The flow of information about the region in Turkish gradually increased through various reports and documents sent by the consuls to the center regarding the developments in the region. As a result, research on the relations between the Muslim sultanates in the region and the Ottoman Empire has recently gained more importance. Indeed, in 2015, an important book on the history of political, diplomatic, economic, and cultural relations between the Ottoman Empire and Southeast Asia was published as part of an international project supported by the British Academy. This book, which was meticulously edited by two British scholars, was an important work of research on the different aspects and dimensions of Turkish connections with the region during the Ottoman period.⁵ This book, contributed by specialized academics from different countries working on the region, consisted of 14 chapters. Each chapter reveals the different relationship network and impact between the two regions. The work has been an important stage in revealing the different interaction and relationship networks between the Ottoman geography and Southeast Asia and in the development of academic knowledge. At the same time, the work showed that new and different topics could still be explored in more depth between these two geographies, where various connections have existed throughout history.

The importance of Ottoman archives has been emphasized by historians and academic experts in the context of researching the Ottoman Turkish impact and network of relations on the Muslim societies in Southeast Asia. Besides, the same institution (British Academy) transcribed and translated important and selected documents related to the region in the Ottoman archives and made them available to regional experts who are unable to use Ottoman Turkish.⁶ Through the work, which is an archival study and manuscript publication, it has provided access to a great deal of content and information on different developments beyond what is known about the relations between the Ottoman Empire and Southeast Asia. A similar

5 See A. C. S. Peacock and Annabel Teh Gallop (eds), *From Anatolia to Aceh: Ottomans, Turks, and Southeast Asia*, Published for the British Academy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

6 İsmail Hakkı Kadi and A.C.S. Peacock, *Ottoman-Southeast Asian Relations: Sources from the Ottoman Archives*, 2 Volumes (Leiden: Brill, 2019).

publication of archival documents from the Ottoman period on the relations between Turkey and Indonesia, supported by a Turkish company owning some commercial investments and commercial relations in Indonesia, was also carried out by Turkish experts in manuscripts and archives.⁷ Transcriptions of important and selected documents in the Ottoman archives related to the relations between the two countries were completed and their translation into Indonesian was published in a separate book.⁸ Although this study needs some elaboration for a more accurate understanding of the documents, it serves as an important resource especially for Indonesian researchers and academics who cannot access Turkish sources.

This kind of archival research and manuscript publication has revealed so far, the fact that additional specific research needs to be carried out in various fields in the context of Ottoman- Southeast Asian relations by using different materials of knowledge. Existing research on the relations and interactions of these two different Muslim geographies with each other has also been reviewed in the light of archival records, newspaper and magazine articles written in Ottoman Turkish during the Ottoman period, and some studies were published as a result. This study was initiated with a similar goal and purpose, but it took some time to publish the results of the research in the format of a book due to unavoidable reasons.

The study was conducted within the scope of a project funded by the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB) under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and coordinated by the Center for Ottoman-Malay World Studies (OSMAD) affiliated with Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakif University. In early 2020, with the initiative of the center, the project was discussed in a workshop meeting attended by Turkish academics who study on Southeast Asia in Turkey and YTB officials working in the region. At this meeting, it was decided to conduct research on more specific topics in the context of the interactions and relations between the Ottoman geography and the Malay- Indonesian world and to publish the research results as a book. However, due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic worldwide around the same time and Turkey being seriously affected by this pandemic as of March 2020, the objectives and conditions of the initially envisaged research changed, and it was even decided to postpone the project for a while. At the end of 2021, it was decided to carry out the research topics determined within the existing possibilities and to publish each research topic as a chapter in an edited book. Except for a few research topics planned at the beginning, most of the topics have been completed and prepared for publication.

7 Mehmet Akif Terzi, Ahmet Ergün and Mehmet Ali Alacagöz. *Ottoman-Indonesian Relations in the Light of Ottoman Documents* (Istanbul: Hitay Holding, 2017).

8 For the Indonesian translation see, Mehmet Akif Terzi, Ahmet Ergün and Mehmet Ali Alacagöz. *Turki Utsmani-Indonesia: Relasi dan Korespondensi Berdasarkan Dokumen Turki Utsmani*. Translated by Muhammad Zuhdi (Istanbul: Hitay Holding, 2017).

This research-based study consists of six chapters. The first chapter is a study written by İsmail Hakkı Göksoy titled “Ottoman Shaykh al-Islām of The Philippines Mehmet Vecih Efendi: His Life, Duties and Activities”. There have been some studies on the assignment of Mehmet Vecih Efendi to The Philippines as Deputy Shaykh al-Islām, and these studies have touched upon different aspects of the subject. One of the most comprehensive studies among these, is the one conducted by William G. Clarence-Smith. In the first of his studies, generally based on English-language sources, Clarence-Smith discusses Mehmet Vecih Efendi within the context of the relations and connections between the states in the Middle East (Ottoman, Iran, Egypt) and The Philippines during the first decades of the American administration in the country.⁹ Another study on the Mehmet Vecih Efendi’s assignment as an Ottoman official to the United States of America focuses on his various attempts to travel to The Philippines through the initiatives of the American administration there.¹⁰ His third study is based on the proceedings of an international symposium on the historical and cultural heritage of Nazareth in Palestine. That paper touches upon Vecih Efendi’s life and his assignment to the Philippines and portrays him as a person of Nazareth within the context of important personalities raised in Palestine.¹¹

A comprehensive study on the original Tagalog language, Arabic and English translations of the letter written by the Moros to the Ottoman Sultan, and presented to the caliph by John P. Finley, who travelled to Istanbul as the representative of the Moros, and the characteristics of the religious movement led by Haji Abdullah Nuno in Taluksangay, was conducted by Japanese researcher Midori Kawashima.¹² The assignment of Mehmet Vecih Efendi to The Philippines was also discussed in a Turkish article by Turkish researcher Hasan Türker, using some Ottoman archival documents. However, as the title of the article suggests, he evaluated the assignment of Vecih Efendi to The Philippines as an attempt by the American government to suppress the Moro resistance rather than the request of Moro Muslims.¹³

9 See William G. Clarence-Smith, “Middle Eastern States and the The Philippines under Early American Rule, 1898- 1919”, *From Anatolia to Aceh: Ottomans, Turks and Southeast Asia* (ed: A.C.S. Peacock and Annabel Teh Gallop), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp.199-220.

10 William G. Clarence-Smith, “An Ottoman Notable in America in 1915-16: Sayyid Wajih al-Kilani of Nazareth”, *American and Muslim Worlds Before 1900* (ed: John Ghazvinian- Arthur Mitchell Fraas), (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2020), pp.139-148.

11 William G. Clarence-Smith, “Wajih al-Kilani, Shaykh al-Islam of the The Philippines and Notable of Nazareth, 1913-1916”, *Nazareth History & Cultural Heritage: Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference*, Nazareth, July 2-5, 2012 (eds: Mahmoud Yazbak et al.), (Nazareth. Municipality of Nazareth Academic Publications, 2013), pp.171-192.

12 Midori Kawashima, “The ‘Whiteman’s Burden’ and the Islamic Movement in the The Philippines: The Petition of the Zamboanga Muslim Leaders to the Ottoman Empire in 1912”, in İsmail Hakkı Kadı- Andrew Peacock, *Ottoman-Southeast Asian Relations: Sources from the Ottoman Archives*, (Leiden: Brill, 2019), vol.2, pp.877- 929.

13 Hasan Türker, “Upon the Request of the United States, Mehmet Vecih was Assigned to the The Philippines as Shaykh al-Islām (1913)”, *Journal of Historical Studies*, vol.33, sy.2, 2018, pp.521-543.

Mehmet Vecih Efendi has also been indirectly mentioned in some doctoral theses and a few articles on the American administration in The Philippines. Among these, the American researcher Joshua Gedacht has dealt with him in the context of his relations with the American administration of that period and especially with the representatives of the understanding of Islam defined by John Park Finley as “modern Islam” and “cosmopolitan Islam.”¹⁴ However, these studies have been based mainly on official English-language records and sources of American origin. Ottoman archival records in Ottoman Turkish and other Turkish sources on Mehmet Vecih Efendi were not consulted. Therefore, Göksoy’s study on Mehmet Vecih Efendi, based on archival documents and other newspaper articles written in Ottoman Turkish, which constitute the main sources of the subject, has provided a noteworthy value to the existing studies. Besides, the re-evaluation of the existing work about Vecih Efendi in English and the content of various articles about him in American newspapers has increases the value of this study.

The second chapter of the book is about the Malay publications printed within the borders of the Ottoman Empire and the Ottoman provincial printing house in Mecca, that also printed books in Malay. Although we have some information about this printing house in various studies, most of them are based on non-Turkish sources.¹⁵ Official records in Ottoman Turkish, which are the main sources of the subject, have not been used so far. Hence, the utilization of the primary sources on the subject comes into prominence. The chapter titled “Malay Publications Printed in The Ottoman Empire and Mecca Provincial Printing House”, prepared by Filiz Diğiroğlu, has been approached in this context. The Hejaz region under Ottoman rule was not only a place where Muslim pilgrims from Southeast Asia performed the pilgrimage, but also an important center where young Malays and Indonesians came to improve their religious knowledge and to pursue further religious studies. Southeast Asian Muslims who came to the Hejaz for these purposes would extend their stay. In fact, over time, a Malay community emerged in the Hejaz, which the Meccans and Ottomans called “Ashâbü’l-Jawıyyün” or “Javanese residents”. The term “Jawi”, derived from the word for the island of Java, was then used to denote any Muslim from the Malay-Indonesian world.¹⁶

Diğiroğlu’s study first provides introductory information about the presence of Malay and Indonesian Muslims from Southeast Asia who came to Mecca under the

14 Gedacht, Joshua, “The ‘Shaykh al-Islam’ of the The Philippines and Coercive Cosmopolitanism in an Age of Global Empier”, in *Challenging Cosmopolitanism, Coercion, Mobility and Displacement in Islamic Asia* (ed: Joshua Gedacht and R. Michael Feener), (Edinburg University Press, Edinburg 2018), pp.171-202.

15 The most comprehensive of these is the joint work of Ahmad Ishak and Redzuan Othman. See, Md. Sidin Ahmad Ishak-Mohammad Redzuan Othman, *The Malays in the Middle East: With a Bibliography of Malay Printed Works Published in the Middle East* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 2000).

16 Azyumardi Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern ‘Ulama’ in the 17th and 18th Centuries* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004), p.3.

Jawi community for education and pilgrimage in Hejaz. It then discusses the development of printing in Mecca, the status of private printing houses in the city and the establishment of the Mecca provincial printing house. In this context, based on the extensive use of the Ottoman *salnames*, solid information about the structure, functioning and employees of the Mecca provincial printing house was obtained, and this data was evaluated in the study. Among the employees of the printing house were two Malay editors with the name Fatani, specifically tasked for the printing of Malay books. These proofreaders (*musahhih*), Sheikh Ahmad Fatani Effendi, and Sheikh Dawud Fatani Effendi, worked meticulously in the selection of Malay works to be printed and the revision of those works during the printing process. Contrary to what has been stated in various studies up until now, it has been discovered that Sheikh Dawud Fatani was not the director of the printing house, but rather the authorized and responsible official for the printing of the Malay works. In addition to the official Ottoman Provincial (*Wilayat*) Printing House in Mecca, there were also private printing presses established and operated by various individual investments in the city, and the total number of Malay works printed in these printing houses was higher than those printed in the provincial printing press. However, it is noted that the most basic works were printed at the official provincial printing house, and the proportion of Malay works printed in the early years was as high as 27 per cent of the printed works in total.

Another important contribution of Diğiroğlu's work is her study on Malay book printing in Istanbul, the center of the caliphate. Although Istanbul was mentioned in various sources as one of the places where Malay books were printed, we had little information about the details of this process. In fact, we knew little about what Malay books, in which printing houses, and by which processes they were printed. In this section, based on the Ottoman archival records and the printing information of Malay books in various libraries, we can learn about the Malay works printed in the *Matbaa-i Osmaniye* in Istanbul. As a matter of fact, the first Malay book printed in this printing house was the first Malay tafsir book, *Tercümânü'l-Mustafid*, written by the Sumatran scholar Abdürraûf Sinkilî (d.1693). Moreover, thanks to Diğiroğlu's study, we can learn that some Malay books were also printed in other printing houses in Istanbul. Among those, it is noteworthy to mention the Malay-language book *Bidâyetü'l-Hidâye* by Hacı Muharrem Efendi, which was printed at the *Şirket-i Hayriyye* printing house. At the end of the study, utilizing the records of the Ottoman *Meşihat* archives, a list of Malay-language works printed in Mecca and received by the office of the Shaykh al-Islam in Istanbul in 1912 was compiled.

In the third chapter of the book, İsmail Hakkı Kadı analyses the visit of Sultan Abu Bakr of Johor to Istanbul in 1893, based on the Ottoman official records and reports published in the newspapers of that period. The literature on both the history

of Johor and Ottoman-Southeast Asian relations, and our knowledge on this visit has been almost entirely limited to the references in the memoirs of Wilfrid Scawen Blunt¹⁷, a British citizen residing in Egypt at the time. The Ottoman sources on this visit had not been properly evaluated by then.¹⁸ This situation led to a significant contextual deficiency in the study on the introduction of the Ottoman legal system *Mecelle* as a civil law in Johor in 1893.¹⁹ In his study, Kadı presents the chronology and details of Abu Bakr's visit to the Ottoman Empire based on the Ottoman sources. From this point of view, he critically analyses Blunt's account of this visit. The study shows that the visit was not limited to Cairo and Istanbul, Abu Bakr also visited Izmir, where he travelled around the city and met with Governor Abdurrahman Pasha. As an indication of the official interest shown to Sultan Abu Bakr, it is pointed out that he was welcomed with an official ceremony in Edirne during his journey from Istanbul to Europe.

Kadı also argues that Blunt's account of both the role he played in the visit and the character of Sultan Abu Bakr should be approached with skepticism. The study stresses that it sounds suspicious of Blunt's memoirs to portray Sultan Abu Bakr, who had met many members of the dynasty, including the Queen of Britain, and had established close friendships with some of them, as someone who had no hope or interest in meeting Sultan Abdul Hamid II. Therefore, it is underlined that Blunt may have endeavored to overestimate his role in the visit. As a matter of fact, Syed Mohamed al-Saqqaf, whom Ottoman sources consider to be the most important person after Sultan Abu Bakr was among the visitors from Johor, and who is described as Abu Bakr's nephew, is not mentioned in Blunt's memoirs at all; that is also considered as an extension of Blunt's effort to highlight himself. According to Kadı, Blunt's claim that Sultan Abu Bakr was unable to meet with anyone in Egypt and that he intermediated for him to meet with Mohamed al-Muwaylihi, Mohamed Tawfiq al-Bekri, Mohamed Abduh, Abdüsselam Pasha, and Gazi Ahmed Muhtar Pasha should be approached with caution. This is because Abu Bakr's retinue, al-Saqqaf, was one of the richest businessmen in Singapore who had frequent contact with the Ottoman authorities and acted as the Ottoman consul in Singapore, even though he did not have an official appointment. He also mentioned that al-Saqqaf was occasionally on the agenda of the Dutch and British colonial administration due to his relations with the Ottoman Empire and his "Pan-Islamist" attitudes and activities. From this point of view, Kadı points out the narrative that Sultan Abu Bakr

17 Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *My Diaries, Being a Personal Narrative of Events, 1888-1914: Part One 1888-1900* (New York: Alfred A. Knoff, 1922).

18 Nuramirah Binti Shahrin's Master's thesis at Marmara University should be mentioned as the first attempt in this direction. See Nuramirah Binti Shahrin, "The Relationship Between the Sultanate of Johore and the Ottoman Empire" (Master's Thesis, Marmara University, 2019)

19 Iza Hussin, "Textual Trajectories." *Indonesia and the Malay World* 41, no. 120 (2013), pp.255-272.

owed his contacts in Egypt and his subsequent reception by Sultan Abdul Hamid II to Blunt is not credible.

The fact that *Mecelle* was declared as the civil law in Johor after Sultan Abu Bakr's visit to Istanbul and that the Ottoman Consul Ahmed Ataullah Efendi, who died in Singapore in 1903 and buried in the cemetery of the Sultans of Johor, are indicators of the contribution of this visit to the rapprochement of the two societies and the development of the relations between them.

Another chapter of the book is co-authored by Alaeddin Tekin and Alwi Alatas, entitled "Hadramis as Ottoman Subjects in Singapore and Batavia". The Arabs of the Hadramout region, located between Yemen and Oman in the south of the Arabian Peninsula, have a long history of travel to Southeast Asia by sea along the Indian coast. These journeys are even traced back to pre-Islamic times. It is known that traders from the Hadramout region migrated to the Indian coast, Southeast Asia and the East African coast at various times. The number of Hadramis that migrated to these locations was so large that over time, two Hadramouti segments of the Hadramouti Arab community emerged: those who stayed in the homeland (*balad*) and the *muhajirs* (*mahjar*).²⁰ Hadrami Arabs in the diaspora maintained their cultural ties to a particular extent with the Hadramout region, that they considered their homeland. However, since they shared the same faith and similar religious values, they were able to merge easily with the Muslim societies they lived in. In the late 19th century, the Arabs from Hadramout in Southeast Asia lived mainly on the island of Singapore under British rule and in Batavia (Jakarta), Surabaya and some Sumatran cities under Dutch rule. These Hadramis, the majority of whom were merchants, gained important positions in society through their marriages with local women and their influential activities in education and trade. The fact that some of them had a family tree dating back to the Prophet Mohamed and belonged to the Sayyed clan, that ensured them a respected position in the pious Muslim communities in which they lived.²¹

Various scientific meetings have been organized on Hadramis at different times and various publications have been made so far. These publications have dealt with different topics such as the phenomenon of migration among the Hadramis, their role in political, commercial, religious and socio-cultural life together with their contributions to the societies they live in.²² In 1997, similar topics were discussed in papers

20 Linda Boxberger, *On the Edge of Empire: Hadhramawt, Emigration and the Indian 1880 - 1930s* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), p.3.

21 For more information, see Peter G. Riddell, "Arab Migrants and Islamisation in the Malay World during the Colonial Period", *Indonesia and the Malay World*, Vol. 29, No. 84, 2001, pp.113-128.

22 The first of these is based on the proceedings of a symposium organised in London in 1995. Ulrike Freitag - William Gervase Clarence-Smith (eds.), *Hadhrami Traders, Scholars and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750s-1960s* (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

presented at another scientific meeting held in the Netherlands and those papers were also published in a book.²³ Moreover, different book studies have been carried out on Hadramis and these studies have focused on the role of Hadramis in the political, economic, religious, social, and cultural fields of the community, who generally settled around the Indian Ocean and in the Southeast Asia region.²⁴ Yet, there has not been an independent study that deals with the relations between the Hadramis in the region and the Ottoman Turkish authorities collectively although there is scattered information and evaluations about them in various publications. Therefore, this study conducted by Tekin and Alatas has been a noteworthy work in terms of revealing the content and dimension of the Hadramis' relations with the Ottoman Turkish authorities. In the introductory part of the study, the Hadramis' contacts with the region, their presence there, and some data on population are provided, and then the role and influence of the Hadramis in the Ottoman consulates in the region is emphasized. The Ottoman consuls appointed to the region made the Hadramis feel intimate with the Ottomans since most of the Muslim Arabs were under Ottoman rule at the time and considered them as an important segment of society for co-operation. The first honorary Ottoman consuls in the region were appointed from among the Hadrami merchants, and during the time of the permanent Turkish consuls, Hadramis worked as interpreters and auxiliary staff in the consulate offices (*şehbenderhane*).

In the rest of the study, the citizenship issue of the Hadramis and the Ottoman consuls' support for their attempts to be recognized as citizens are discussed. Since the Arabs from Hadramut in Indonesia were categorized as "Foreign Orientals" (*Vreemde Oosterlingen*) by the Dutch colonial government, subjected to various restrictions such as free travel and considered inferior in legal terms, they claimed that they were Ottoman subjects and demanded to be considered European. Although some Turkish consuls supported their attempts, they could not obtain a definite result.²⁵

Tekin and Alatas's study also cover Hadramis' initiatives in the field of education, their role as intermediaries in the political and diplomatic relations between the sultanates in the region and the Ottoman Empire, and their contributions to social affairs and charitable activities. As a matter of fact, Hadramis acted together with the Ottoman consuls in sending students from the region to the capital of the Empire to provide education for their children at schools in Istanbul. It is underlined

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23 Huub de Jonge - Nico Kaptein (eds.) *Transcending Borders: Arabs, Politics, Trade and Islam in Southeast Asia* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002).

24 Among these, the following works are particularly worth mentioning: Ahmed Ibrahim Abushouk - Hassan Ahmed Ibrahim (eds.), *The Hadhrami Diaspora in Southeast Asia: Identity Maintenance or Assimilation?* (Leiden: Brill, 2009); Noel Brehony (ed.), *Hadhramaut and its Diaspora: Yemeni Politics, Identity and Migration* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2017).

25 On this subject, see İsmail Hakkı Göksoy, *Osmanlı-Türk Tesirleri in Southeast Asia* (Isparta: Fakülte Kitabevi, 2004), pp.106-119.

that most of the Southeast Asian students studying at different schools in Istanbul were scholarship students of the Ottoman government and they were children of Hadrami families.

In addition, Arab figures from Hadramout were well known in diplomatic circles or high-level delegates sent to Istanbul by various sultanates in the region, especially from Aceh. At the same time, Arab families from Hadramout assisted the Ottoman authorities in socio-cultural and relief activities. As a matter of fact, they played important roles in collecting aid on behalf of the Red Crescent (Hilal-i Ahmer) Society for the families of Turkish soldiers who were martyred and wounded in the Balkan Wars and in contributing to the Hejaz railway project. Until the end of the WWI, the Arabs from Hadramout in the region generally acted together with the Turkish authorities as an important intermediary community between the Southeast Asians and the Ottoman Empire and bridged the development of relations between the two regions. However, after the war, some of them changed their attitude in favor of the British. It should also be noted that the Hadramis were not only a segment of society that the Ottomans co-operated with in their relations in the region, but also contributed significantly to the economic opening of the region, to the translation of Middle Eastern religious movements and Arabic religious publications into Malay.

Another chapter of this book is about Rogayah Hanım (d.1904), an Ottoman lady whose descendants played an important role in the political and intellectual life of Malaysia. This chapter, entitled “An Ottoman Legacy in Malaysia: Rogayah Hanım” was written by one of her descendants, Syed Hussein Farid Alatas. There have been some publications on the subject both in Malaysia and Turkey, but most of them have been introductory studies for the public. A few studies have attempted to deal with the subject in an academic manner.²⁶ According to the widespread belief, Rogayah Hanım was a concubine of Caucasian origin and after being raised in the Ottoman *harem* organization, she was gifted by Sultan Abdulhamid II to Sultan Abu Bakr of Johor. However, there is very little solid and historical information about her. In particular, no written documents and records have been found so far about her life before her journey to Johor and when and how she was gifted to Sultan Abu Bakr. Most of what is known about her is based on the oral accounts of her descendants or people connected with them. These accounts are presented in a manner that is partly incompatible with historical facts and contains various contradictions. Much of what is told, is about the period after Rogayah Hanım’s arrival at the Johor palace began. We have more information about her life in Malaysia, her marriages, and her descendants. There is also Hatice Hanım who travelled from Turkey to Johor with Rogayah Hanım. Sultan Abu Bakr married Hatice Hanım and

26 For such a study in Turkey, see Mehmet Özay and Ekrem Saltık, “The Myth and Reality of Rogayah Hanım in the Context of Turkish Malay Relations (1864-1904),” *İnsan ve Toplum* 5, no.9 (2015), pp. 55-74.

his brother Ungku Abdul Majid married Rogayah Hanım. However, Rogayah Hanım became more famous than Hatice Hanım who married the Sultan. This is since the descendants of Rogayah Hanım, who married the Sultan's brother and had two more marriages after his death, raised statesmen and intellectuals who played important roles in Malaysia's political life, economic, academic, and intellectual institutions.

In his article, Alatas first gives some brief information about the two sultans (Abdul Hamid II and Abu Bakr) and then records the stages of how Abu Bakr took the title of *Mihrace* and then sultan from the title of *Temenggong*. He then discusses the various views on when and how Rogayah Hanım was brought to Johor, including the narratives and possibilities accordingly. In this context, he refers to the European travels of Sultan Abu Bakr and emphasizes his efforts for recognition and promotion of Johor and its modernization. He then underlines that his first visit to Istanbul took place in 1893, but that Rogayah Hanım could not have been given as a gift as a result of her meeting with Abdülhamid II during this visit. Since Rogayah Hanım married Sultan Abu Bakr's brother Ungku Abdul Majid in 1886 and gave birth to her first child the following year. He focused on the possibility that Rogayah Hanım may have come to Johor at an earlier date by some other means. According to him, the opinions about Sultan Abu Bakr's previous travels to Europe in 1875 and 1879 also contain some contradictions. As a matter of fact, there is no Malay record of him visiting Istanbul during these travels. Consequently, among the oral accounts, he also mentions the possibility that Rogayah Hanım was taken to Johor through other intermediaries. Since there is no solid information about how and when Rogayah Hanım travelled to Johor, according to him, it is not possible to reach a definite conclusion on the issue.

Farid Alatas then focuses on the progeny of Rogayah Hanım, providing brief information about her marriages and the children born from them. After the death of her first husband and the father of her two children, Ungku Abdul Majid in 1889, Rogayah Hanım married Habib Abdullah bin Muhsin Alatas, a Sufi from the al-Attas family, in 1890 and had one child from this marriage. However, as this marriage did not last long, she married for the third time with Dato Jaafar, who later became the first Prime Minister of Johor, and had children from him also. Among the children born from this and other marriages and their descendants, there were important personalities such as prime ministers, politicians, economists, and academics. In addition, Rogayah Hanım was instrumental in establishing warmer and closer relations between the Johor Sultanate and the Ottoman dynasty and strengthening the historical ties between Turks and Malaysians. Farid Alatas' study is important in terms of comprehending important issues related to Rogayah Hanım and recognizing the role of her descendants in the political and intellectual life of Malaysia without going into too much detail on the subject.

In the last chapter of the book, Orhan Çolak analyses the photographs of Indonesia and Malaysia in the Yıldız Photograph Albums and examines an aspect of the relations between the Ottoman Empire and Southeast Asia that has never been touched upon before. The visual material, which was probably influential in the formation of the perception of the late Ottoman Sultans, especially Sultan Abdülhamid II about the region, is introduced with examples. In the introduction of Çolak's article, firstly, information is provided about the Yıldız Photograph Albums. In addition to numerical data on the material covered by the collection, information on the emergence of the collection is also provided, followed by some data on the emergence and development of photography in Indonesia and Malaysia.

According to the data provided by Orhan Çolak, there are 129 photographs of Malaysia and Indonesia in the Yıldız Photograph albums. Some of these photographs are of the rulers of the region, and one of them is apparently a photograph taken by the chief photographer Abdullah Freres during the visit of Sultan Abu Bakr of Johor to Istanbul. The rest of the photographs in this group belong to Sultan Abu Bakr of Johor, as well as Sultan Abdussamed of Selangor, Sultan Mohamed Suleiman of Kutai, Sultan Mohamed Seyfeddin II of Sambas, and other local rulers. Another group of photographs in the Yıldız Photograph Albums consists of rural and urban landscapes and buildings from Indonesia and Malaysia. It is understood that these were mostly obtained or copied from albums published by photographers operating in the region, particularly Woodbury & Page. Another group of visual material consists of photographs of tribes and people from different social groups in the region. Çolak's article is an important contribution to our study in terms of revealing one of the factors that shaped the perceptions of the late Ottoman Sultans about the region.

Finally, it would be appropriate to mention here that two organizations and their employees, apart from the chapter authors and editors, have made significant contributions to the emergence of this book. The Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB), which put the project on its agenda and supported it with close interest from the beginning, deserves to be thanked not only for the financial support it provided, but also for their close interest and encouragement in the emergence of the study. The Center for Ottoman-Malay World Studies (OS-MAD) at Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakif University, which coordinated the project, and especially the secretary of the center, Serdar Çöp, deserve to be thanked for their extraordinary contributions both in the project design and in the process of the emergence of the study. We would also like to thank Najihah Binti Mohd Fauzi for joining us during the pre-publication stage of the work.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE OTTOMANS' SHAYKH AL-ISLAM OF PHILIPPINES, MEHMET VECİH EFENDİ: HIS LIFE, DUTIES AND ACTIVITIES

İsmail Hakkı Göksoy¹

Introduction

One of the extraordinary appointments of the Ottoman Empire abroad was the assignment of a Shaykh al-Islam to the Philippines in 1913. Seyyid Mehmed Vecih Efendi (d. 1916), who was working as a clerk in the *Meşihat* Office (The Office of Shaykh al-Islam) when he was appointed to this post upon the request of Filipino Muslims and through the intervention of American Major John Park Finley. So far, some studies have been conducted about him based on foreign sources, however, they have used Turkish sources in a very limited way. Therefore, it is necessary to handle the subject comprehensively based on Ottoman archive records, the *Meşihat* archive and Turkish sources, which are the main sources of the subject. Thus, this research aims to examine the subject by re-evaluating both the information in Turkish sources and the data in foreign sources and research.

In this context, the information on Mehmet Vecih Efendi in the studies conducted by various researchers based on the Ottoman archive documents, the ulama registry file in the *Meşihat* Office and the letters he wrote on his way to the Philippines, the English newspaper articles about him and the records in the American archives were collected and re-evaluated. In light of this information, the Ottoman-Philippine Relations, the letter sent by the Moros to the Ottoman Sultan and Caliph, the arrival of American Major John Park Finley to Istanbul as

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the Moro representative, Vecih Efendi's family, education and teaching, and his official appointment as "Deputy Shaykh al-Islam" to the Philippines are discussed under subheadings. Following this, his journey to the Philippines and his impressions in India and Singapore during this journey, his welcoming in the Philippines, his activities and departure from the country are analysed. After his return to Türkiye, again being sent to the USA, his attempts before the American administration to return to the Philippines and his death there are examined. Thus, his life and struggle before and after going to the Philippines have been investigated and have endeavoured to be brought to light.

Prior to moving on to the main topic, it is useful to briefly recall some basic information about the existence of the Muslim community in the Philippines, the characteristics of the Spanish and American administrations in this country, as well as the resistance of Moro Muslims against the American occupation, and Ottoman-Philippine relations. The Philippines, which consists of many islands in Southeast Asia, is a country with the largest Catholic Christian population in the Asian continent. However, it also has a significant Muslim population, the majority of whom live in Mindanao and Sulu archipelagos in the south of the country. According to the 2015 census of the Philippine Statistics Authority, the total population of the country was 100,979,303. Of this population, 80 per cent (80,304,061) were Catholic Christians, 10 per cent Protestant Christians (around 10 million), 6 per cent Muslims (6,064,744), 2 per cent other religions (1,839,936) and the rest belonged to tribal beliefs.²

The first contact of the Philippines with Islam began in the 9th and 10th centuries when it joined the international maritime trade from the Red Sea to the China Sea, which was mainly controlled by Muslims. During this period, Muslim merchants of Arab origin used to stop by some Philippine islands to buy goods such as pearls and spices and to stay during their journey from Borneo to China. As of the end of the 13th century, the process of Islamization started among the local people and small Muslim communities were formed on the islands over time. Islam spread peacefully with a slow development over centuries among the indigenous population through diplomacy, internal conquests, and political marriages based on cooperation with tribal chieftains. The earliest archaeological evidence for the presence of Muslims is a Muslim tombstone of Tuan Makbalu at Bud Dato on the island of Jolo, dated 1310.³ Islam, which entered the Philippine islands through the island of Borneo via Muslim traders of Arab origin, gained political power with the establishment of two Muslim sultanates in Sulu in 1450 and in Mindanao in

2 Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), *2019 Philippine Statistical Yearbook* (Manila: PSA Publication, 2019), 14, 65 (Table.1.10).

3 İsmail Hakkı Göksoy, "Filipinler'de İslamiyet (Islam in the Philippines)," *Diyanet İlmî Dergi* 31, no.3 (1995): 89.

1515.⁴ Even before the arrival of the Spanish in the Philippines at the beginning of the 16th century, the whole country was already in the process of Islamization where there was a ruler in Manila named Rajah Sulayman, a relative of the Sultanate of Brunei.⁵ The Spanish sailor Ruy Lopez de Villalobos, who came there in 1542, named the islands the Philippines in honour of Philip II, then crown prince and future king of Spain. The Spanish established their first settlement in Cebu in 1565, and in the war with the Muslims in 1571 when they expelled them from the Northern and Central Philippine islands, in order to prevent the spread of Islam in the north. As a result of the Christianization of the indigenous people in the north by the Spanish, Islam only persisted in the southern parts of Sulu and the western parts of the island of Mindanao.⁶

The Spanish used the term “Moro”, which they used for the Muslims in Andalusia and North Africa, and for the Muslims here they called them Moros. Although Muslims strongly rejected this term, which had a derogatory meaning in the early periods, they started to adopt it as an identity during the American administration. The Philippine Muslims, also called Moro Muslims, are divided into 13 sub-tribal groups in terms of language and ethnic structure. Among them are Maranaos, Maguindanaos, Iranuns, Tausugs and Samals being the most populous groups. Almost all of these Muslim groups are Sunni and belong to the Shafi’i sect.⁷

For more than 300 years, the Moros have been engaged in a struggle called “juramentado”, known in history as the Moro wars, against the Spanish assisted by the Christian Filipinos who took action to forcibly Christianize, Muslims. Only towards the end of the 19th century, the Spanish were able to establish dominance over the islands in the south. In 1878, the Sultan of Sulu was forced to recognise the sovereignty of the Spanish who occupied their lands on the condition that their religion, customs and local institutions would not be touched.⁸

4 Cesar Adib Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, Third Edition, (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1999), 12-13, 25.

5 Najeeb M. Saleeby, *Studies in Moro History, Law and Religion*, (Manila: Bureau of Public Printing, 1905), 16-19.

6 İsmail Hakkı Göksoy, “Filipinler: Ülkede İslamiyet (Philippines: Islam in the Country)”, *Türkiye Diyanet Foundation Encyclopedia of Islam* 13 (İstanbul: TDV Publishing, 1996), 84-85.

7 Göksoy, “Filipinler: Ülkede İslamiyet (Philippines: Islam in the Country)”, 84.

8 Göksoy, “Filipinler’de İslamiyet (Islam in the Philippines)”, 91-93.

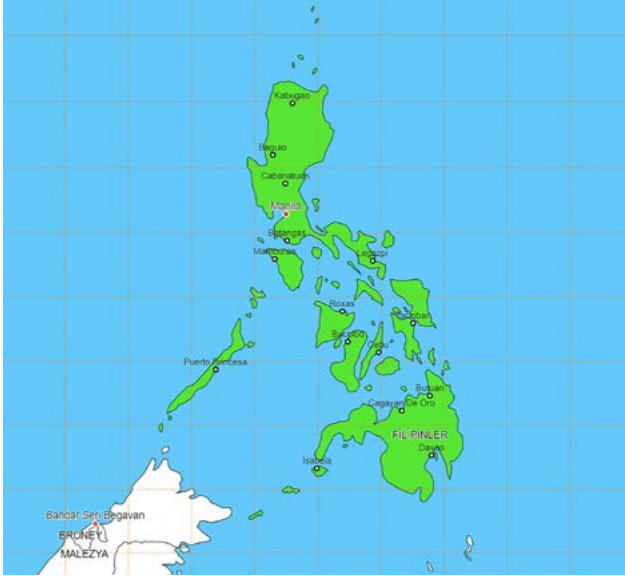


Image 1: Map of Philippines

(Source: Milli Savunma Bakanlığı Harita Genel Müdürlüğü, Dünya Teşkilatlar Atlası, “Filipinler”, <https://dta.harita.gov.tr/AllCountry/ShowCountry/52>)

In the Philippines, which remained under Spanish rule until 1898, after the Cavite uprising in 1872, the independence movement against the Spanish developed in the north. The supporters of independence under the leadership of the nationalist leader E. Aguinaldo captured the whole island of Luzon except for Manila in 1898 and he declared the independence of the Philippines in Malolos. However, when Spain lost the war against the American-backed local insurgents, it ceded the Philippines to the United States of America in exchange for 20 million US dollars with the Treaty of Paris on December 10, 1898.⁹ This time, the Filipino nationalists led by Aguinaldo started to fight against the Americans. After two separate delegations were sent to the country in 1899 and 1901 by the then US President William McKinley, whereby promising the Philippines autonomy and then independence, they ended their resistance with the arrest of Aguinaldo in March 1901. However, the Moros in the south, fearing that the American administration would not be different from the Spanish administration, resisted and refused to co-operate with Aguinaldo. Although the American government signed a peace treaty with the Sultan of Sulu in 1899, this could not be maintained. According to the treaty, the American administration would respect the religion, customs and traditions of the Muslims, the rights of the sultan and the datu, and in return

9 Federico V. Magdalena, “Moro-American Relations in the Philippines,” *Philippine Studies* 44, no.3, (1996): 427-428.

the Muslims would end the struggle against the American army together with the recognition of the American sovereignty.¹⁰

The American administration unilaterally abolished the treaty after clearing the nationalists clustered in Luzon and Visaya, however, the army units under the command of General Leonard Wood and General John Pershing continued to occupy the islands of Sulu and Mindanao. The places where Muslims lived were turned into a separate administrative unit called the “Moro Province” and the American military administration was established in the region. The Moro Province was administratively divided into five sub-military governorates, namely the provinces of Sulu, Cotabato, Davao, Lanao, and Zamboanga. The city of Zamboanga was also the main centre of the Moro Province governorate. Although American officials pledged not to interfere in the internal affairs and customs of the Moros and stated that they were striving to educate, develop and civilise them in a democratic autonomy, fighting continued.¹¹ Until the end of 1913, the US military conducted a series of military operations under the guise of maintaining peace and tranquillity in the region, ending smuggling and piracy, and preventing the slave trade. The most violent of these were the military actions of Bud Dajo in 1906 and Bud Bagsak in 1913, which resulted in the deaths of thousands of Moro fighters.¹²

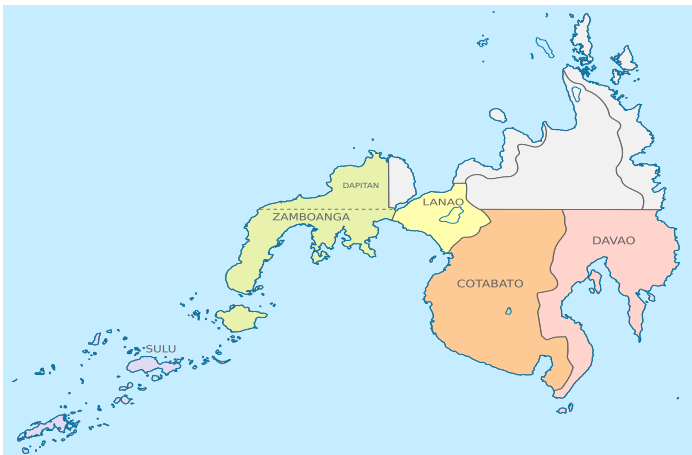


Image 2: Moro Region and Five Provinces Under American Administration

(Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/3e/Districts_of_Moro_Province.svg)

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- 10 Michael Hawkins, “Imperial Historicism and American Military Rule in the Philippines’ Muslim South,” *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 39, no.3 (2008): 414.
 - 11 Peter G. Gowing, “Muslim-American Relations in the Philippines, 1899-1920,” *Asian Studies* 6, no.3 (1963): 373-374. Pute Rahimah Makol-Abdul, “Colonialism and Change: The Change of Muslims in the Philippines,” *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 17, no.2 (1997): 316.
 - 12 Karine V. Walther, *Sacred Interests: The United States and the Islamic World, 1821-1921* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 211-219.; Magdalena, “Moro-American Relations in the Philippines,” 428-429.

Although the American administration granted Muslims more religious freedom than the Spanish, its main policy in the south was to make the Moros part of the wider Christian Philippine community. For this reason, they supported the migration of the Christian population of the north to the island of Mindanao; through government institutions, educational activities and various infrastructural services, large numbers of northern Christian migrants settled in the southern islands. They encouraged the activities of Protestant missionaries to spread Christianity among the Moros, while prohibiting slavery and piracy, which were common in the region. Like the Spanish, the American authorities were fundamentally opposed to the Moros' contact with their co-religionists in the Malay world and other Islamic countries. In particular, they were always sceptical of visits to the islands by Arab and other foreign Muslim inviters and their activities in the region.¹³

The Ottoman Influence on the Moro Resistance and Ottoman-Philippine Relations

From the early years of the occupation, American officials had realised the influence of the Ottoman Sultan and Caliph on the Moro resistance in the south. While many of them preferred to break the Moro resistance through military measures and oppression, some thought that peace and tranquillity could be achieved in the region by establishing good relations with Moro leaders and respecting their beliefs and traditions. Some even believed that the Ottoman Sultan could mediate in suppressing the resistance, that the Sultan's call to quit the resistance in his capacity as caliph would have an effect on the Moros, and that they would eventually cooperate with the American authorities.¹⁴ Hence, with the approval of President William McKinley, US Secretary of State John Hay wrote a letter to his ambassador in Istanbul, Oscar Solomon Straus, in March 1899, asking the Ottoman Sultan and the Caliph for assistance in requesting the Moro Muslims in the Sultanate of Sulu to lay down their arms and recognise American rule. Ambassador Straus made an appointment with Sultan Abdulhamid II. He persuaded the Sultan to call on the Filipino Muslims to cooperate with the Americans, and it was reported by the ambassador that the Sultan sent a telegram to this effect to the Hijaz in April to be delivered to the Moro pilgrims arriving in the Hijaz during the pilgrimage season. In the telegram, Abdulhamid II explained that the Americans guaranteed that the people in the islands could freely practice their religion and advised the Moros to peacefully accept US rule.¹⁵ In addition, Straus later wrote in his memoirs that the then US President McKinley

13 Cesar Adib Majul, "The Moro Struggle in the Philippines", *Third World Quarterly* 10, no. 2 (1988): 898.

14 Walther, *Sacred Interests*, 176-177.

15 For Straus' letter of 23 September 1899 to Secretary of State John Hay, see, Department of State, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States (Year 1899)*, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1901), 770.

congratulated him on this achievement and sent him a personal thank you letter for saving the lives of many Americans in the Philippines.¹⁶

Although there is no record of such a telegram in the Ottoman archives, it is understood that there was communication attempt between Istanbul and Hijaz to gather information about the situation in the Philippines through Moro pilgrims. As a matter of fact, on April 3, 1899, coinciding with the same dates, the Emir of Mecca Avnürrefik and the Governor of Hijaz Ahmed Ratıb Paşa sent an encrypted message to Istanbul in which they conveyed information about the situation in the Philippines. Accordingly, it was reported that the Sultan of Sulu in the Philippines had sent a letter with a delegation of 6 people to the Hajj and requested that a “knowledgeable and reputable person” be sent to the Philippines to advise Muslims and make necessary notifications in the region. They mentioned that a year earlier (1898), the Sultan of Sulu, Jamalul Kiram, and his entourage had come to Hijaz to perform the pilgrimage and talked about the wars they had fought against the Spanish. Although it was decided that the Minister of Defence of the Sultan of Sulu would come to Hajj this year, it was stated that he could not make the pilgrimage due to the American occupation in the region, and now the region was under American occupation.¹⁷ A few years later, the New York-based *Elmira (Star) Gazette* reported that the Moros wanted a Turkish teacher and that the Ottoman Sultan wanted to send “Islamist” officials to awaken the Muslims in the Philippines.¹⁸ Therefore, it is understood that the Moros’ demand for a religious representative from the Ottoman Sultan was voiced from the early years of the American occupation.

Although cultural ties were established with Moro Muslims who came to Hijaz to do the pilgrimage and to be educated, the Ottoman Empire did not have an official representative office in the Philippines during the Spanish rule. The business of the Ottoman subject merchants operating in this country was carried out by the French representative office. This situation also continued in the first years of the American occupation. However, after the proclamation of the Second Constitutional Monarchy in 1908, the Ottoman Empire wanted to open an Ottoman consulate in the Philippines in order to take care of the affairs of the Christian Arab immigrants, the majority of whom were Ottoman subjects from Syria and Lebanon and made a

16 In his memoirs, Ambassador Straus records that this idea first emerged after the Washington correspondent of *Chicago Record*, William E. Curtis, had a meeting with an official working at the Turkish embassy in the United States, and that Curtis brought it to the attention of the American Secretary of State, John Hay, who informed the ambassador in a letter. See, Oscar S. Straus, *Under Four Administrations: From Cleveland to Taft, Recollections of Oscar S. Straus* (Boston/New York: The Riverside Press, 1922), 143-147.

17 BOA, Y.PRK.UM. 45/40; Also see, İsmail Hakkı Kadı- Andrew Peacock, *Ottoman-Southeast Asian Relations: Sources from the Ottoman Archives I*, (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 442-443.

18 *Elmira Gazette (Star Gazette)*, “Sultan Sending Panislatamic Emissaries to Philippines”, 22 July 1902. The same news was later shared by Ohio-based *The Marion Star*, “Turkish Sultan and Philippines” (23 July 1902) and *Delphos Daily Herald* “Turkish Sultan and Philippines” (28 July 1902).

living by trade. Furthermore, it wished to take a closer interest in the Moro Muslims in the south and to help protect their rights. On July 26, 1910, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs proposed to the Grand Viziership Office the appointment of Necip Halil Bey, Consul General of Ragusa (Dubrovnik), as First-Class Consul General to the Philippines.¹⁹ The appointment of Necip Halil Bey, who was originally a Christian Arab, was approved the following day.²⁰

In his report dated 18 June 1911, which he prepared after commencing his duty in Manila, Necip Halil Bey mentioned that the number of Moro Muslims in Mindanao and the surrounding islands was more than 300.000, that they were not well known by the Islamic world, and that they were ignorant and in poverty. Necip Halil, who also met with the Sultan of Sulu Jamalul Kiram in Manila, recommended that the Ottoman Empire should send teachers to these islands in order for the Filipino Muslims to overcome this ignorance. He stated that if teachers were sent to the island, their salaries and other expenses could be covered by the local government.²¹ In another report that he prepared on the development of trade with the Philippines, he emphasized that there were around 200 Ottoman subject merchants of Christian origin in the Philippines, most of whom came from Lebanon and Syria, but only 111 of them were registered with the consulate and suggested that these merchants could mediate in the sale of Ottoman manufactured goods in this country.²² Following the appointment of Necip Halil Bey as the Consul General to Abyssinia in March 1912, no new representative was assigned to Manila and the German representative office handled the affairs of Ottoman subjects.²³

Petition from the Moro Leaders of Zamboanga to the Ottoman Sultan.

In their resistance against the Americans, the Moros saw the Ottoman Sultan, whom they regarded as the Caliph of all Muslims, as well as their protector in times of hardship; and voiced that they were loyal to him in their struggle against the Americans. On the other hand, while meeting with the datus, the tribal chiefs in

19 BOA, İHR.423/1328/B-22; Also see, Kadı- Peacock, *Ottoman-Southeast Asian Relations* 1, 456-457.

20 BOA, İHR., 423/22; Also see, Selim Hilmi Özkan, "Filipin Başşehbenderliği'nin Açılması ve Necip Halil'in Faaliyetleri (The Opening of the Philippine Consulate General and the Activities of Necip Halil)," *Yeni ve Yakın Çağlarda Osmanlı Diplomasisi (Ottoman Diplomacy in the New and Recent Era)*, ed. Ahmet Dönmez (Ankara: Grafiker Publication, 2019), 305.

21 BOA, HR. SYS., 1010/10; Özkan, "Filipin Başşehbenderliği'nin Açılması ve Necip Halil'in Faaliyetleri (The Opening of the Philippine Consulate General and the Activities of Necip Halil)", 306.

22 For the evaluation of this report, see, Adem Kara, "Osmanlı Devleti-Filipin Ticari İlişkileri (The Trade Relations Between The Ottoman Empire And The Philippines)", *Journal of Turkish Studies* 8, no.5 (2013): 331-343.

23 Özkan, "Filipin Başşehbenderliği'nin Açılması ve Necip Halil'in Faaliyetleri", 305.

the Lanao region, the Moro Regional Governor General John Pershing was trying to convince them by saying that the United States was allies with the Ottoman government.²⁴ As a matter of fact, the American officials in the Moro region recognised the moral devotion of the Moros to the Ottoman Caliph from the first days of the occupation and this issue was raised from time to time during their encounters with the Datus. In particular, some of the datu in the Lanao region, who resisted the American occupation, stated that they would offer their allegiance only to the Ottoman Sultan, not to the Americans. For example, Datu Gundar in Maciu, whom General Pershing met during the military operations in 1902, told him that those fighting against the Americans recognised the “Sultan of Istanbul” as the head of the supreme government. General Pershing informed him that the Ottoman Sultan was a friend of the Americans and that US citizens could travel freely throughout the empire. whereby Gundar promised to pass this information on to the opposition Maranao leaders. Again, in April 1907, Datu Nurul Hakim, who lived near Lake Lanao, wrote a letter to an American officer named John McAuley Palmer stating that he had “special orders from the Ottoman Sultan Abdulhamid II” not to allow Americans to come to the region. However, after mutual threats, datu’s farm in Rumayas was occupied and destroyed by American troops.²⁵

In 1912, Moro leaders in and around Zamboanga province in the Moro Region, under the leadership of local Muslim leader Haji Abdullah Nuno, prepared a petition to be presented to the Ottoman Sultan through the Turkish Embassy in Washington. This petition, signed by Haji Abdullah Nuno and 58 others, requested that the Muslim people in the Moro region be educated in religious matters and that a representative be sent to assist them. Major John Park Finley, an American Governor of Zamboanga province in the Moro region, had a positive approach to this request of the Moros. Although the petition was prepared by a Moro commission headed by Nuno, it is presumed that Finley also played a role in its finalisation.²⁶ Unlike other American and Filipino officials, Finley, who established good relations with the Moros, had a positive view on the establishment of cultural ties between the Moro region and the Islamic world. On 29 March 1912, a public meeting was held with the Samal people in the town of Taluksangay, about twenty kilometres from the city of Zamboanga, and Moro leaders from Zamboanga and its surroundings designated Finley as their “absolute delegate” (plenipotentiary) during this meeting. He was chosen to deliver

24 Oliver Charbonneau, “Civilizational Imperatives: American Colonial Culture in the Islamic Philippines, 1899-1942”, PhD diss., University of Western Ontario, 2016, 190.

25 Charbonneau, “Civilizational Imperatives,” 393-394.

26 Midori Kawashima, “The ‘Whiteman’s Burden’ and the Islamic Movement in the Philippines: The Petition of the Zamboanga Muslim Leaders to the Ottoman Empire in 1912”, in İsmail Hakkı Kadi-Andrew Peacock, *Ottoman-Southeast Asian Relations: Sources from the Ottoman Archives 2* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 884-885.

the prepared petition to Sultan Mehmed Reşad through the Ottoman Embassy in Washington. He was also given a seal to indicate that he was the absolute delegate of the Moro Muslims.²⁷

The petition was signed by 58 Moro leaders, including local administrators, datus, imams, muezzins and tribal chiefs in and around the city of Zamboanga, led by Haji Abdullah Nuno.²⁸ The petition, which requested the Ottoman Sultan to send a religious representative to the region, noted that as Muslims in the Moro region of around half a million, their ancestors had been practising Islam for 300 years and that in addition to a place of worship, the mosque in Taluksangay provided religious education. The petition continued as follows:

“We thought of requesting [him], begging [his] forgiveness without remorse from His Excellency. There is a need for you to look into and observe the actual conditions of life of your humble subjects in the Moro Province, because, from our viewpoint, what we have requested is not [an] excessive [request], as we are children of Islam. For this reason, your humble subjects plead with humility, requesting that an emissary from His Highness [the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire] be sent here to observe our speeches and actions in the Moro Province, to help us and the Governor of the Moro Province, and to teach us two things, [namely,] how our customs and laws of Islam can be combined with the American customs and laws, and especially how we may follow the words of God and uphold/establish the religion of Muhammadiyyah, as stated in the Qur’an and hadith of the Prophet, may God’s blessings and peace be upon him, so that we may not violate [the principles and laws of] the American government”²⁹

As stated in the petition, this representative would assist the Moros “in aligning their laws and customs ... with the laws and customs of the American Government.” In addition, the representative would advise and assist the Moros in “attaining the beautiful, true and pure Islam” as set forth in the Qur’an and Hadiths of the Prophet Mohamed, without contravening the laws of the state.³⁰ The petition then introduced Major John Park Finley, who had been governor of Zamboanga province for 10 years, to the Ottoman Ambassador in Washington and the Ottoman Sultan. It stated that they had appointed Finley as their absolute delegate and that he would deliver the petition by hand. The Moros regarded him as “more than a

27 Charbonneau, “Civilizational Imperatives,” 394.

28 The original petition in Tausug and its Arabic translation are in the Ottoman archives. See, BOA İ.MBH. 12/1331-C-011. A black and white photographic reproduction of the original and its English translation are in the John F. Finley Papers in the Archives of the US Military History Institute in Pennsylvania. For the original petition, Arabic and English translations, and their review, see Kawashima, “The ‘Whiteman’s Burden’”, 877-929.

29 Kawashima, “The ‘Whiteman’s Burden’”, 910.

30 Charbonneau, “Civilizational Imperatives”, 394-395.

father or an older brother” and he had been unanimously accepted as “Tuan Maas” a year earlier (18 May 1911), which in local custom meant an adult gentleman who is listened to. “Because he is well acquainted with our customs and circumstances, and we see him more than a parent and as a father who always takes good care of his children. He is a man of wisdom, seventy thousand times knowledgeable and extremely compassionate and full of love and affection for all people, whether poor or rich, small or large, male or female, old or young”. The petition described Finley with those words.

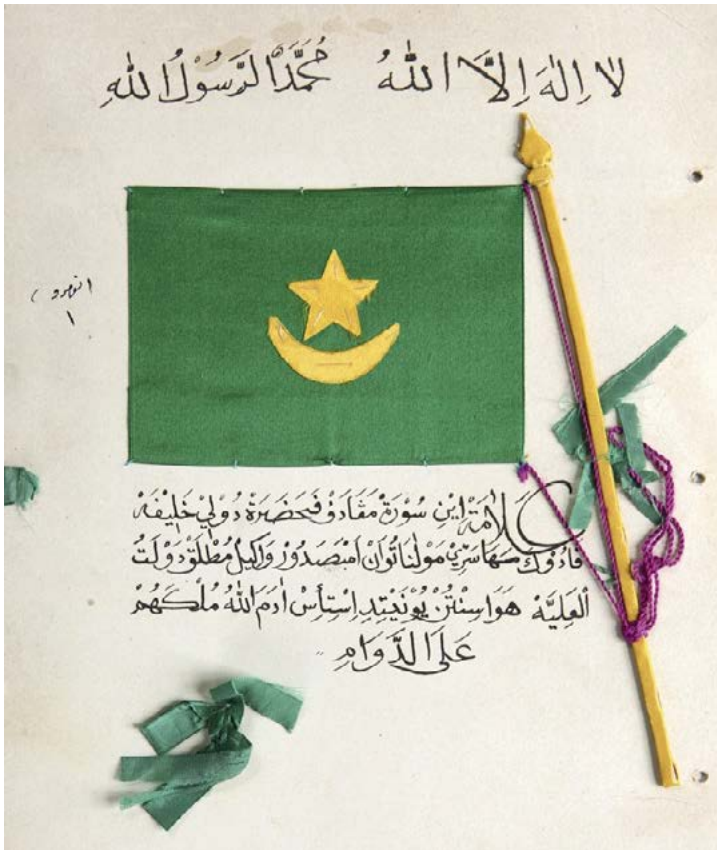


Image 3: Front Cover of the Moro Petition

(Source: BOA, I.MBH 12/1331/C-011)



Image 4: Back Cover of the Moro Petition
(Source: BOA, ĩMBH 12/1331/C-011)

The petition ended with words of praise to the Ottoman Sultan. “As humble subject Muslims here in the Moro Region, we do not know of any qualified person other than Your Excellency to help us and our religion. As he is a follower of the Islamic faith living above and below the wind; the magnitude of the love and compassion of His Majesty the benevolent and merciful Sultan is so great that he can clear the murky water, illuminate the darkness and resolve the chaos, and knows how to convey our desires to the appropriate authority.”³¹

The front cover of the petition was decorated with a rectangular Moro flag with a yellow crescent moon and a five-pointed star on a green background. The flag was attached to a yellow stick with a red string and green ribbons were tied in bows. On the upper part of the flag, the Shahadah, which is the Islamic declaration of faith, and the title of the recipient (His Excellency, the Absolute Delegate of the sublime state in Washington...) were written in the Tausug language. The flap on the other side of the envelope was decorated with red, yellow and green ribbons and bows, and two 4x4 magic squares were added in the hope that the petition would reach the addressee.³²

Before handing the petition to Finley, the people gathered with the teachers in the mosque on Friday to pray for Finley’s safe journey and safe delivery of the

.....
31 BOA ĩMBH. 12/1331-C-011.
32 Kawashima, “The ‘Whiteman’s Burden”, 889.

petition. On April 10 they gave the petition to him in his office with a large Moro group. The moment of delivery was also photographed and recorded in history. Finley left Zamboanga for the USA on April 12, 1912, with the petition.³³



Image 5: Delivery of the Petition to Finley
(Source: Kadı-Peacock, 2019: 928)

The Arrival of American Major John P. Finley in Istanbul as Moro Representative

Shortly after the preparation of the petition, Major Finley was summoned to Washington for consultations on the Moro issue by order of the U.S. Department of Defence. Taking the prepared petition with him, Finley arrived in Washington in June 1912 after a stopover in Manila. He sought support from senior American officials to obtain the approval of the American administration and to take the petition to Istanbul himself.³⁴ Explaining the contents of the petition he had brought to them, Finley met with Republican President William H. Taft and Secretary of Defence Henry L. Stimson through Chief of Staff Leonard Wood in Washington. Upon learning the contents of the petition, incumbent President Taft dismissed it as

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33 Kawashima, "The 'Whiteman's Burden'", 885. For photograph, see 928. Also see Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakif University Center for Ottoman-Malay World Studies, "Hacı Abdullah Nuno: Filipin Müslümanlarından Sultan Reşad'a Mektup (Hacı Abdullah Nuno: Petition from Philippine Muslims to Sultan Reşad)", (<https://osmanlimalay.fsm.edu.tr/Osmanli-Malay-Dunyasi-Calismalari-Uygulama-ve-Arastirma-Merkezi-Osmanli-Malay-Dunyasi-Iliskileri--Filipinler-ile-Iliskiler>).

34 W. Thompson, Wayne. "Governors of the Moro Province: Wood, Bliss, and Pershing in the Southern Philippines, 1903–1913." PhD diss., University of California, San Diego, 1975, 233-237.

worthless and said that the matter should be discussed by the government. He also objected to Finley's travel to Türkiye to deliver the petition by hand.³⁵



Image 6: American Major Finley (5) and Haji Abdullah Nuno (3)
(Source: Kadi-Peacock, 2019: 928)

However, Finley did not give up and emphasized the importance of establishing contact with the Ottoman Sultan on various platforms. During his stay in the United States, Finley attended the Lake Mohonk Conference, where he delivered a speech in which he advocated cooperation with the Ottoman Empire in sending a religious representative to the Philippines who would “teach the virtues of modern Islam and the knowledge of the enlightened and progressive understanding of Islam.”³⁶ Finley considered it necessary to take advantage of the influence of the Ottoman Sultan as the caliph of Muslims over the Moros in order to ensure peace and tranquillity in the Moro region and to break the resistance of the Moros against the Americans. He even wrote that in 1900, the American ambassador in Istanbul discussed the Moro issue in the Philippines with Sultan Abdulhamid II, and as the caliph of all Muslims, he prevented the Moros in Mindanao from making jihad against the American administration.³⁷ Finley believed that the Moros resorted to immoral practices such as

35 William Clarence-Smith. “Middle Eastern States and the Philippines under Early American Rule, 1898-1919”. *From Anatolia to Aceh: Ottomans, Turks and Southeast Asia*, edited by A.C.S. Peacock ve Annabel Teh Gallop, 202. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

36 Kawashima. “The ‘Whiteman’s Burden’”, 885-886.

37 John P. Finley, “The Mohammedan Problem in the Philippines,” *The Journal of Race Development* 5, no.4 (1915): 356-358,360.

slave ownership, banditry, murder, drinking and opium consumption because they lacked accurate and sufficient knowledge about the religion of Islam. He believed that if they were given a proper religious education, they would become good citizens and would therefore refrain from organising attacks against members of other faiths and other harmful practices. He acknowledged that they needed a competent religious teacher and believed that a respected Muslim leader who would come to the region would stop the Moros' resistance to American rule.³⁸ He argued that if the Moros learnt their religion correctly and if dialogue was established with them, this resistance would certainly be broken. "If the religion of the Moros is respected, everything will be easy," he said. He believed that the Islam practiced in Mindanao was corrupt and he encouraged the development of a more modern and moderate understanding of Islam among the Moros. Through the American administration, the Moros needed help and advice in order to achieve "true Islam".³⁹ Finley, who was an intellectual as well as a soldier, took various initiatives to ensure the economic development of the Moros, and evaluated and published his activities in this direction in a separate article.⁴⁰

Finley was a firm believer in bringing a Muslim teacher from the Ottoman Empire, in addition, he believed that this teacher could be a panacea in Moroland. As a matter of fact, in a report on the subject he gave to the top officials, he wrote, "*A modern Mohammedan from Constantinople, selected with due care and official approval, may be brought to the Moro Province to aid the government in successfully combatting the vicious habits of the Moros that now so seriously retard their progress, and which American laws and Christian priests have not been able to reach*"⁴¹ When this modern Muslim official is brought to Mindanao, he could educate the people "according to the provisions of the Qur'an and American laws regarding ceasing immorality, slavery, illegal use of weapons and resistance to legitimate authority". By inculcating "loyalty to the government and religion", this Turkish religious official could help the Moros to become "good citizens" and "good Muslims".⁴²

After spending six months in the United States, Finley gained support to carry out his plan from the newly elected Democratic President W. Wilson after the November 1912 presidential election. Approving Finley's visit to Türkiye, he telegraphed

38 Gedacht, Joshua. "The 'Shaykh al-Islam' of the Philippines and Coercive Cosmopolitanism in an Age of Global Empire." *Challenging Cosmopolitanism, Coercion, Mobility and Displacement in Islamic Asia*, edited Joshua Gedacht and R. Michael Feener, 171-172. Edinburgh: Edinburg University Press, 2018.

39 Finley, "The Mohammedan Problem in the Philippines", 359-360.

40 See John P. Finley, "Race Development by Industrial Means among the Moros and Pagans of the Southern Philippines," *Journal of Race Development* 3, no.3 (1913): 343-368.

41 Joshua Gedacht, "Islamic-Imperial Encounters: Colonial Enclosure and Muslim Cosmopolitans in Island Southeast Asia, 1800-1940" (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2013), 362-363.

42 Gedacht, "Islamic-Imperial Encounters", 363.

him to leave for Istanbul without delay. Wilson requested that Finley obtain a letter from the Ottoman Sultan stating that the American administration guaranteed all civil and religious rights of the Moros and would not interfere with their religious beliefs, and that the Moros should refrain from any resistance to government authority.⁴³

Finley arrived in Istanbul on March 13, 1913, with a personal letter of recommendation from the Secretary of Defence Stimson addressed to W. W. Rockhill, the American Ambassador in Istanbul. The U.S. Department of State asked Ambassador Rockhill, who was not aware of his arrival, to assist Finley in informal discussions with the religious authorities in Istanbul.⁴⁴

Ziya Paşa, the Ottoman Ambassador in Washington, in his letter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs dated February 26, 1913, stated that Finley had been sent to Istanbul “in the capacity as a representative”, but the American administration refrained from officially approving his mission and saw him only as a representative chosen by the Moros. He noted that if it was deemed appropriate for Finley to come to Istanbul and receive a letter of recommendation from the Caliph, this would be greatly welcomed by the American cabinet, as had been the effect of the call of the Caliph earlier (1899). It was hoped that this would avoid the expense and death of more American soldiers in the Philippines. In return, the Ambassador suggested that the Ottoman government demand some benefits from the United States such as easing pressure on the abolition or restriction of polygamy, reducing patent tax and customs duties to 4 per cent.⁴⁵

Finley came to Istanbul as a special representative in the capacity of the “Absolute Delegate of the Muslim People of the Philippines”, where he met with American circles, that included the American ambassador in the capital. He was a guest at the American College for Girls in Üsküdar, where he was introduced to Dr. Rıza Tevfik, who taught language and literature at the college. It was through him that he met with Grand Vizier Mahmud Şevket Paşa and Şehzade (Prince) Yusuf İzzeddin Efendi also.⁴⁶ Following his meetings and friendship with Major Finley, Rıza Tevfik wrote a long article about the purpose of Major Finley’s visit to Türkiye, the American state and administration’s view of religions, and the situation of Philippine Muslims,

43 The Sun (New York), “Wilson Approves Appeal to Sultan,” 18 February, 1913.

44 Thomson, “Governors of the Moro Province”; 235; Clarence-Smith, “Middle Eastern States and the Philippines”, 202.

45 BOA İ.MBH. 12/1331-C-011 (1); For the transcript and English translation, see Kadı-Peacock, *Ottoman-Southeast Asian Relations* 2, 931-935.

46 Gültekin Yıldız, “Halifenin Yokluğunda Hilafet Tartışmaları: 150’lik Rıza Tevfik’in Amman’dan Londra’ya Gönderdiği Bir Mektup Üzerine (Discussing the Issue of Chaliphate in the Absence of Chaliph: Some Remarks on a Letter of Political Emigre Rıza Tevfik from Transjordan to London),” *Divan: Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* 14, no. 26 (2009/1): 163.

including Finley's photographs taken with Filipino Muslims.⁴⁷

After these meetings, Finley was received by Shaykh al-Islam Mehmed Esad Efendi on March 27, 1913. In his first meeting with the Shaykh al-Islam, he verbally gave some information to Esad Efendi about the Moro Muslims, of whom he was the absolute delegate, and asked him to present their petition to the Caliph. Two days later, in his second meeting with the Shaykh al-Islam, he handed over the Moro petition he had brought with him to be presented to the Caliph. He also gave Esad Efendi an eleven-item memorandum containing the advice to be included in the reply that would be addressed to the Philippine Muslims with a request for the necessary action to be taken. In the fourth article of this memorandum, it is stated that the American state was religiously neutral and respected all religions and that the Moros should obey the current government. In the fifth article, it was stated that some Moros had committed murder against Christian and American officials in violation of the basic principles of Islam. Moreover, stating that a letter was to be written to them calling on them to refrain from such crimes and to state that such bad acts were also against the religion of Islam. They were also asked to refrain from dishonorable acts, such as gambling, consumption of alcohol, theft, lying, looting, plundering and adultery, which were also prohibited by the Qur'an. In the memorandum, apart from the Moro Muslims' request for a knowledgeable and virtuous Muslim religious teacher, he requested that beautiful calligraphy plates with verses of the Qur'an be sent to be hung in the mosque in Taluksangay and that these be given to him.⁴⁸ During his meetings with Shaykh al-Islam, the legal counsel and translator working at the American embassy, A.K. Schmavonian was also present. This person also translated from English to Turkish the letter that Finley framed to be written to the Moros.⁴⁹ Shaykh al-Islam Esad Efendi agreed with the matters requested by Finley and presented the Moro petition to Sultan Reşad together with the memorandum on March 31, 1914.⁵⁰ On the same day, Sultan Reşad ordered that the petition and other documents be forwarded to the Grand Viziership Office through the chief clerk's office to be discussed.⁵¹

On April 5, 1913, the Grand Vizier, through his undersecretariat, sent the letter and other documents to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the condition that they

47 Rıza Tevfik, "Filipin Müslümanları ve Makam-ı Hilâfet (Philippine Muslims and the Caliphate)" *The İctihad Journal* 65, 22 May 1913: 1403-1406.

48 BOA, HR.SYS., 70/36. For the transcripts and English translations of Finley's memorandum and petition to the office of Shaykh-ul-Islam, see Kadı-Peacock, *Ottoman-Southeast Asian Relations* 2, 935-939.

49 Clarence-Smith, "Middle Eastern States and the Philippines", 202-203. For an evaluation of this memorandum, see, Hasan Türker, "ABD'nin Talebi Üzerine Mehmet Vecih'in Filipinler'e Şeyhül-islam Olarak Görevlendirilmesi (1913) (The Assignment of Mehmet Vecih to the Philippines as Shaykh al-Islam Deputy on the Request of the United States (1913))", *Tarih İncelemeleri Dergisi* 33, no.2, (2018): 526-528.

50 BOA İ.MBH. 11/R-016; Also see Kadı-Peacock, *Ottoman-Southeast Asian Relations* 2, 939-940.

51 BOA İ.MBH. 11/R-016; Kadı-Peacock, *Ottoman-Southeast Asian Relations* 2, 940-941

be returned and asked for an opinion on Finley's identity and capacity, as well as his requests.⁵² In his reply dated April 21, 1913, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mehmed Said, referred to the letter of the Ottoman Embassy in Washington dated 26 February 1913, noting that Finley was currently a governor in the Philippines and a true representative of the Philippine Muslim people. The reply expressed that "although the American administration does not officially recognise his status as a representative, it attaches special importance to his mission". He was convinced that it would not be beneficial to take any action on the requests proposed by Ziya Paşa, because the American side would refuse such requests, saying that Finley did not have any official duties. However, he suggested that it would be appropriate to mention the items in the memorandum related to religious matters that were requested to be included in the letter to be sent by the Caliph to the Philippine Muslims, except for the fourth and fifth items (the call for the Moros to give up resistance against the Americans and obey the American administration).⁵³

On May 14, 1914, the issue was discussed at a special meeting of the Council of Ministers (*Meclis-i Vükela*) attended by all Ministers, and the government decision was notified to Sultan Reşad. Accordingly, it was decided that three or four people from the virtuous scholars would be selected by the *Meşihat* Office and sent to the Philippines "to give advice and suggestions and to teach religious sciences". A letter addressed to the Philippine Muslims would be written by the *Meşihat* Office on behalf of the Caliph, translated into Arabic and given to the representative (Finley). It was also decided that the blessed plates to be placed in the mosque built in Taluk-sangay would be supplied by the Ministry of Awqaf and given to the representative as a gift from the Caliph.⁵⁴ A draft text addressed to the Philippine Muslims was also prepared by the Grand Viziership Office and expressed satisfaction with the petition sent by the Moro Muslims and the representative. It was stated that they were pleased that Moro Muslims were living a religious life and building mosques, but it was noted that there were reports that some of the Muslim people were ignorant and dared to commit prohibitions stated in the Holy Qur'an, such as killing, wounding, drinking alcohol and committing adultery. They were advised to refrain from such sins. It was emphasised that all the requested demands were fulfilled by the Caliph, and it was reported that with his decision, several valuable scholars would be sent to teach religious sciences, deliver sermons and give advice to the Muslim people on the islands. It was reported that beautifully decorated calligraphy samples would be sent with Finley as a gift from the Caliph to be hung in the mosque built in

52 BOA HR.SYS. 70/36; Kadi-Peacock, *Ottoman-Southeast Asian Relations* 2, 941-942.

53 BOA İ.MBH. 12/1331-C-011 (3); Kadi-Peacock, *Ottoman-Southeast Asian Relations* 2, 942-944.

54 BOA İ.MBH. 12/1331-C-011 (4); Kadi-Peacock, *Ottoman-Southeast Asian Relations* 2, 944-946.

Taluksangay city.⁵⁵ However, in this draft text, no reference was made to the relations of Muslims with the American administration and obedience to their government. A copy given to the press also does not contain such a statement.⁵⁶

The decisions taken by the Council of Ministers were approved by Sultan Reşad on May 15, 1913 and were notified to the Grand Viziership Office by the chief clerk's office.⁵⁷ On May 17, 1913, the Grand Vizier proposed that Finley be received by Sultan Reşad, and on the following day, the Sultan's chief clerk office made an appointment for the meeting on Thursday afternoon.⁵⁸ On May 22, 1913, Sultan Mehmed Reşad V received Finley as the special representative of the American President for half an hour in the Ambassadors Hall of the Dolmabahçe Palace.⁵⁹ Sultan Reşad thanked the American state for recognising freedom of religion for all religions and stated that the Moros should be given administrative autonomy. Muslim religious teachers should teach in public schools and that they should be loyal to the legitimate rulers of the Qur'an.⁶⁰ The meeting was conducted through an interpreter and the first clerk of the palace was also present. Finley read the prepared text paragraph by paragraph and the interpreter translated it into Turkish. Sometimes the Sultan asked questions during the interview. After the meeting, the Sultan took his guest to the Grand Hall. Finley described his meeting with the Sultan as "I had the great pleasure of meeting the Caliph of the Muslims". He said that he had also played a role in the construction of the mosque in Taluksangay, and the Sultan was very pleased with his behaviour and thanked him for his service. Two days after his meeting with Sultan Reşad, Finley was received by Şehzade (Prince) Yusuf İzzeddin Efendi and Dr. Rıza Tevfik accompanied him and acted as his interpreter. Finley described Rıza Tevfik as "one of the most beautiful men of the empire, a famous philosopher and scholar who knew every European language". He stated that he met with the Şehzade for an hour and that he was very pleased with his mission. Finley, who described his meeting with Sultan Reşad in an interview with an American newspaper, said that Grand Vizier Mahmud Şevket Paşa accepted the Moro letter "as a purely religious document" and that he informed the Shaykh al-Islam of this situation.⁶¹

Sultan Reşad honoured Finley with the award of a third degree *Mecidiye* Order in return for his services to the Muslims in the Philippines. Upon the Sultan's order, an

55 BOA İ.MBH. 12/1331-C-011 (2); BOA, MV. 231/123; Kadi-Peacock, *Ottoman-Southeast Asian Relations*, c.2, s.947-950.

56 Mahmud Esad, "Filipin Ahali-yi İslamiyesine (To the Muslim People of the Philippines)," *Şebilürreşad* 10, no.248 (12 June 1913): 229-230.

57 BOA İ.MBH. 12/1331-C-011 (5); Kadi-Peacock, *Ottoman-Southeast Asian Relations* 2, 950-952.

58 BOA İ.MBH. 12/1331-C-14; Kadi-Peacock, *Ottoman-Southeast Asian Relations* 2, 952-953.

59 BOA, İ.MBH., 12/40; MB.İ., 168/6; "Sultan Honors Major Finley", *The Sun* (New York), 4 June, 1913.

60 Clarence-Smith, "Middle Eastern States and the Philippines", 203.

61 "Col. Finley, Envoy of Moros, Spoils Turks' Old Tactics", *The Sun* (New York), 15 June, 1913.

imperial decree was issued on May 29, 1913, with the joint signatures of the Grand Vizier and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the duty of fulfilling this was entrusted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁶² In addition, he was given a certificate with a *tughra* on it as the “absolute delegate of the Moros”. Framed calligraphic ornaments and other decorations to be placed in the Taluksangay Mosque were also handed over to Finley at the American Embassy as a gift from the Caliph.⁶³



Image 7: Taluksangay Mosque, May 1911.
(Source: Kadi-Peacock, 2019: 929)

Mehmed Vecih Efendi’s Assignment to the Philippines and Finley’s Return

The *Meşihat* Office selected Seyyid Mehmed Vecih Efendi, one of its clerks, as the clergyman requested by Finley to be assigned to the Philippine islands and recommended him to Sultan Reşad. Shaykh al-Islam Esad Efendi described him as “an outstanding clerk” and a “virtuous, successful and good-natured person from a pure lineage”.⁶⁴ On April 10, 1913, *Sebilürreşad* (a Turkish print magazine) announced his selection to its readers in the short news section under the title “*Şuûn*” as follows. “Due to the religious ties of the Philippine Muslims to the Caliph, the application

62 BOA İ.TAL. 483/1331-C-14; Kadi-Peacock, *Ottoman-Southeast Asian Relations* 2, 953-954.

63 BOA, BEO., 4173/312948; 4174/313019; MV., 231/123; “Sultan Honors Major Finley”, *The Sun (New York)*, 4 June, 1913.

64 Clarence-Smith, “Middle Eastern States and the Philippines”, 203.

made by their absolute delegate, John Finley, to teach Islamic faith, worship and ethics, was deemed appropriate by the *Meşihat* Office and “the appointment of Geylanizade Seyyid Mehmed Vecih Zeyd Efendi, one of the virtuous and well-dressed and civil servants, as a lecturer has been approved.”⁶⁵ Sultan Reşad, who accepted the proposal of the *Meşihat* Office, approved the assignment of Mehmed Vecih Efendi to the Philippines on May 13, 1913 as “*Deputy Shaykh al-Islam*.”⁶⁶ Although it was initially thought that he would be assigned as “Muallim”, his official appointment and title was “Deputy Shaykh al-Islam”, probably in order to ensure that he was seen as a more respected representative.

The petition addressed by the Moro Muslims to the Ottoman Caliph, Finley’s arrival in Istanbul as their absolute delegate, his meetings with the Shaykh al-Islam and Sultan Reşad, followed by the appointment of Seyyid Mehmed Vecih Efendi to the Philippines were reported in Turkish newspapers and magazines in Istanbul such as *Sebilürreşad*, *Tasvîr-i Efkâr*, *Tanin*, *İctihad* and *Servet-i Fünûn*. In its issue dated May 28, 1913, *Tasvir-i Efkâr* newspaper announced the appointment of Mehmed Vecih Efendi by publishing the pictures of him and Finley and by placing Finley’s meeting with Sultan Reşad on the front page.⁶⁷ Earlier, *Tanin* newspaper had also featured an interview with Finley on its front page through one of its correspondents, Halide Edip. In the interview, Halide Edip and Finley emphasised the similarity of American and Ottoman interests in developing societies far from the borders of the two states. In fact, Halide Edip asked Finley whether the Moros would develop under American rule as a result of their contact with civilisation, to which he replied that civilisation could bridge the cultural gap between different races and religions.⁶⁸ In an article published under the signature of Rıza Tevfik, *İctihad* magazine also discussed John Finley’s mission and included Rıza Tevfik’s meetings with John Finley and his views. Finley stated that the American state had no official religion and was neutral towards all religions. He emphasised that the American administration respected the religion of Moro Muslims and worked for their advancement.⁶⁹ A similar article written by Rıza Tevfik was also published in *Servet-i Fünûn*.⁷⁰

65 *Sebilürreşad* 10, no. 239 “Filipin (Philippine)” (10 April 1913): 87. For the same news, see *Tasvir-i Efkâr*, “Filipin Ahali-yi İslamiyesi (Muslim People of the Philippines)”, no.716, (14 April 1913).

66 Clarence-Smith, “Middle Eastern States and the Philippines”, 203.

67 *Tasvir-i Efkâr*, “Filipin Ahali-yi İslamiyesi (Muslim People of the Philippines)”, No.770, 28 May, 1913.

68 *Tanin*, “Makam-ı Hilafete Filipin Müslümanları Hakkında Bir Müracaat (An Application to the Caliphate about the Muslims of the Philippines)”. No.1565, 9 April, 1913. Although Halide Edib’s name was not mentioned in the newspaper, it was reported that she was the interviewer. See Joshua Gedacht, “Native Americans, the Ottoman Empire, and Global Narratives of Islam in the US Colonial Philippines, 1900-14,” in *American and Muslim Worlds Before 1900* ed. John Ghazvinian- Arthur Mitchell Fraas, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2020), 136.

69 Rıza Tevfik, “Filipin Müslümanları ve Makam-ı Hilâfet (Philippine Muslims and the Caliphate)”, *İctihad* 65, (22 May 1913): 1403-1406.

70 Rıza Tevfik, “Filipin Müslümanları ve John Park Finley (Philippine Muslims and John Park Finley)”, *Servet-i Fünûn*, No:1146, 27-30.

The travelling expenses and salary of Mehmed Vecih Efendi, who was assigned to the Philippines in the capacity of Deputy Shaykh al-Islam, were decided upon as a result of the correspondence between the *Meşihat* Office and the Grand Viziership Office. According to the letter from the Grand Viziership Office, Finley would write to Istanbul after providing the necessary allocations and per diems for Mehmet Vecih and other officials, and the appointed officials would then be sent to the Philippines.⁷¹ Therefore, the travelling expenses and salaries of the religious representatives and religious officials to be sent to the Philippines would not be covered by the Ottoman Government. Finley then offered Vecih Efendi a monthly salary of 50 British pounds sterling for his service in the Philippines, but no agreement was made. Finley recommended that Vecih Efendi be employed as a permanent teacher in the Moro Region Public Schools Unit and that his salary be paid by this unit.⁷² After Finley returned to the United States from Istanbul, in his report to the Department of Defence, he requested that Vecih Efendi be given a paid position by the Philippine Public Schools Department, but the Department of Defence officials in Washington did not take any action in this matter.⁷³ In the end, no formal agreement was made regarding his salary for his service in the Philippines, but it was envisaged that he would be employed as a staff member of the Philippine Public Schools Department and receive a salary from there.

After Mehmed Vecih Efendi's assignment to the Philippines was finalised, on June 3, 1913, he was given the title of "*bilâd-ı hamse payesi*" by the Sultan himself by increasing his rank from "*Edirne paye-i mücerredî*".⁷⁴ The following day, Vecih Efendi was examined at the hospital due to a stomach ailment, and since he needed to continue his treatment under the supervision of a doctor and rest, he was given medical leave for two months.⁷⁵ Therefore, it is understood that Vecih Efendi's discomfort, which he suffered from time to time, had begun before he travelled to the Philippines.

In the meantime, Finley, who had arrived in Istanbul in an unofficial capacity as the representative of the Philippine Muslims, achieved his goal at the end of two months and returned to the USA with a letter addressed to the Moro Muslims from the Shaykh al-Islam, insignia and gifts. On July 13, 1913, he arrived in Manila. However, although Finley did not officially resign from the governorship of Zamboanga province, which he had held as an appointment in addition to his main military duty, General John Pershing, the Governor of the Moro Region, had appointed another

71 BOA, BEO., 4174/3131019; HR.TO., 601/73; Also, see Türker, "ABD'nin Talebi (The Request of the USA)", 529.

72 Clarence-Smith, "Middle Eastern States and the Philippines", 203.

73 Thomson, "Governors of the Moro Province", 240.

74 Meşihat Archive, MŞH.SAİD., 59/9/8.

75 Meşihat Archive, MŞH.SAİD., 59/9/7.

man, George A. Helfert, to replace him after his departure from Zamboanga. Pershing had long distanced himself from Finley's ideas, claiming that the Moros who supported him were a small group. In February 1913, when Pershing heard of Finley's possible return, he wrote an impassioned letter to Governor-General William C. Forbes, informing him that no officer more objectionable than Major Finley had ever served in the Moro and that he had never been loyal to him. Forbes conveyed Pershing's wishes to the Secretary of Defence in Washington, stressing the policy of civilian appointments of governors at the provincial level. Although Finley made attempts to be reassigned to Zamboanga, Pershing arranged for him to be assigned to the "30th Infantry Battalion" in Manila. Thus, Finley had irrevocably lost the governorship of Zamboanga province.⁷⁶

Finley initially postponed the delivery of the Caliph's letter addressed to the Moro Muslims and the gifts he had brought with him until the arrival of Vecih Effendi.⁷⁷ However, at the end of July 1913, with the permission of the Governor-General, he travelled from Manila to Zamboanga to collect his accumulated mail and then journeyed on to Taluksangay and the island of Jolo. In Taluksangay, he delivered the few gifts he had brought from Istanbul for the Moros to Haji Abdullah Nuno, however the letter written to the Moro Muslims was not handed over.⁷⁸ On September 24, 1913, the US Department of Defence telegraphed Manila enquiring whether Finley had been given an opportunity to deliver the Sultan's message and gifts to the Moros, and Finley was ordered to go to Zamboanga with Regional Governor Pershing. On October 30, 1913, the Moros gave Finley a warm welcome in Zamboanga and the Sultan of Sulu was present also. Finley informed the Sultan of Sulu about his mission in Istanbul and informed him of a meeting that would be held in Taluksangay if Vecih Efendi came. However, Pershing, who was disturbed by his attempts, wanted Finley to return to Manila without completing his mission, and prevented the Sultan's gifts given in Istanbul from being delivered to the Moros, putting them in a chest and then giving him a certificate of receipt. Apart from the letter and all the valuable gifts given in Istanbul, he left only the Ottoman *Mecidi* Order, given to Finley himself and which had never been given to any military official below the level of general prior to this.⁷⁹ However, on November 1, 1913 Finley somehow found a way to deliver the letter and gifts to Haji Abdullah Nuno, in the presence of a large Moro community of several thousand people who later welcomed him.⁸⁰ The Moro Muslims, who had been waiting for the Sultan's letter and valuable gifts for a long

76 Thomson, "Governors of the Moro Province", 235-236; Clarence-Smith, "Middle Eastern States and the Philippines", 200.

77 Clarence-Smith, "Middle Eastern States and the Philippines", 204.

78 Thomson, "Governors of Moro Province", 239-240.

79 "Moros Regret Maj. Finley's Departure After Ten Years of Peaceful Rule", *The Sun* (New York), 2 August, 1914.

80 Thomson, "Governors of Moro Province", 240.

time, received them only in an atmosphere of personal and political strife among American officials.

Mehmed Vecih Efendi's Family, Education and Civil Service Life before His Appointment

We were able to obtain accurate information about the pre-appointment life, family and education of Mehmed Vecih Efendi, who was assigned to the Philippines as “*Deputy Shaykh al-Islam*”, through the ulama registry file in the *Meşihat* office where he worked.⁸¹ In his biography, written in his own handwriting on May 30, 1910, when he was a civil servant at the Correspondence Office of the *Meşihat* Office, he states that his name was es-Seyyid Mehmed, his pseudonym was Vecih. His fame was Geylanîzâde, his nickname was Zeyd and he was known by the pseudonym Vecih. His father's name and pseudonym were es-Seyyid al-Shaykh Mehmed Münib, and that his father was also known by this name and pseudonym. Both he and his father were addressed as efendi. His father, who was alive at the time of writing, was the Sheikh of the Qadiri dervish lodge in Nablus in Palestine and held the rank of *İzmir paye-i mücerredi*. He stated that he traced his lineage from his father to the founder of the Qadiri order, Abdülkadir Geylani (d.1165), and that he belonged to the Geylani clan. He expressed that through him his lineage reached to Hazrat Ali and the Prophet Mohamed. He was born as the son of a Qadiri Shaykh on February 13, 1882, in the Yasmine (?) neighbourhood of Nablus, Palestine.⁸² Later he was also known as Nablusî because of the city of Nablus where he was born.

Vecih Efendi started his early education with the Qur'an and basic religious knowledge he had received from his father, and then he attended the Jami' al-Kabir Madrasa in Nablus. He took courses on tafsir, hadith, fiqh, theology and ethical sciences from the *muderris* (professors) in this madrasa. He went on to study at the *ibtidai* (primary school) and *idadi* (secondary school) schools in Nablus and graduated from these schools with two diplomas with “*alâ*” (very good) grades. In addition to these diplomas, he took religious lessons from Abdullah el-Kudûmî and Musa el-Kudûmî and received an *ijazetname* (licence). However, samples of these certificates and *ijazetnames* are not included in the ulama registry file. He voluntarily participated in education and training activities for a while in the Qadiri dervish lodge where his father was the sheikh. He received another *ijazetname* due to his success in the examination held on his own request. He also stated that he was authorised to read and teach Bukhari's corpus of hadith as a buharihan. A hardworking

81 The documents in the Ulama Registry File of Vecih Efendi in the ISAM Library and the analysis and summary of some Ottoman archival documents related to him were analysed and summarised by Zübeyir Tetik, Research Assistant at the Department of Islamic History, Faculty of Divinity, Süleyman Demirel University. I would like to thank him for his contribution to this project.

82 Meşihat Archive, MŞH.SAİD., 59/9/1.

and successful student who was eager to read from an early age, Vecih Efendi could speak and write Turkish and Arabic as his mother tongue, in addition to his religious education. He also learnt Persian, French, English and German as foreign languages and was able to speak, read and write these languages, although not at a very good level.⁸³ He learnt Persian and French in the schools he attended in his homeland and German as a result of private lessons he took from a German teacher during his stay in Istanbul.⁸⁴ On his way to the Philippines, where he was assigned as the “Deputy Shaykh al-Islam”, he made sermons and speeches in some madrasas in India, sometimes in Arabic, sometimes in both Persian and French, to students, *muderris* and participants. His speeches in India were translated into Urdu by people who knew these languages.⁸⁵ Again, during his stay in the United States, many American newspapers described him as “a multilingual modern Muslim scholar” and a “linguist” who spoke six languages.⁸⁶

As evidence of what he wrote in the registration document, he stated that he had wrapped his genealogy (family tree), one *fermân-ı âli* (supreme imperial edict), one *berât-ı âli* (imperial patent), one *şehadetname* (diploma), two *ijazetname*, two *mürasele-i şerife* (letter of appointment) and a certificate of Nablus sanjak administrative council in his registration document, on the condition that it was given to him. In addition, he expressed that he did not have some of his *ijazetnames* and documents with him, as they had remained in his hometown of Nablus and that he would send them when he returned.⁸⁷ However, these documents are not included in his Ottoman ulama registry file. He most probably received the originals of these documents later.

Vecih Efendi, who served as a *muderris* with the certificate issued by the Nablus regentship of the Qadiri dervish lodge, commenced his first civil service career on May 8, 1899, when he was 17-18 years old. He held the position as a teacher of Ottoman Turkish and Calculus courses at the Nablus Mekteb-i Kebir Primary School for a salary of 115 kuruş. About a month later, on June 13, 1899, his salary was increased to 120 kuruş. On March 14, 1900, his salary was increased by 20 kuruş to 140 kuruş, and on March 14, 1902, his salary was increased by 10 kuruş to 150 kuruş. In addition, on October 21, 1902, he was given the rank of “*ba-ibtidai hariç* (beginner

83
Meşihat Archive, MŞH.SAİD., 59/9/1; 59/9/11.

84 William G. Clarence-Smith, “Wajih al-Kilani, Shaykh al-Islam of the Philippines and Notable of Nazareth, 1913–1916”, in *Nazareth History & Cultural Heritage: Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference*, Nazareth, July 2–5, 2012, eds. Mahmoud Yazbak et al. (Nazareth: Municipality of Nazareth Academic Publications, 2013), 172–173.

85 For example, see Mehmed Vecih, “İkinci Mektup: Aligir Medrese-i İslamiyesi (Second Letter: Aligir Madrasa of Islam)”, *Sebilürreşad* 11, no.286 (5 March 1914): 425–426.

86 For example, see “Shaykh Smiles at Rolling Sea”, *New York Tribune*, 13 August 1915.

87 Meşihat Archive, MŞH.SAİD., 59/9/1.

level)”, which was the rank of those who worked as a *muderris* in the *hariç* madrasa (primary school), which constituted the first level in the Ottoman madrasa system.⁸⁸

After serving as a teacher for about four years, in November 1903, he was appointed as the assistant principal of Nablus Mekteb-i Kebir Primary School and his salary was increased to 190 kurus. In the meantime, on September 8, 1904, he requested to be appointed to a higher position, as *Muallim-i Evvel* (head teacher) at the Gaza Rüşdiye School (junior high school), however he was informed that it was not possible for him to be appointed because İbrahim Edhem Efendi, the teacher at the Merkab Rüşdiye School, had been appointed to the aforementioned school.⁸⁹ After working in his current position for one year, on November 18, 1904, his salary was increased by 50 kurus and reached 240 kurus. On March 14, 1906, his salary was cut and reduced to 123 kurus. The reason for this was that no tax deductions had been made for schoolteachers and education officers in Nablus prior to this. However, as of the beginning of 1906, 5% of the salary of these civil servants was deducted from their pension (retirement) deduction and 1% to be transferred to the exemption (dismissed civil servants) fund.⁹⁰ On August 29, 1906, he was promoted to the rank of “*ba-ibtida-i dahil*”, which was the rank of those who teach in the *dâhil* madrasas, which constituted the second level in the Ottoman madrasa system.⁹¹

On December 14, 1906, Vecih Efendi came to Istanbul on leave while leaving a deputy in his place. During his leave, he received half of his salary.⁹² After staying in Istanbul for a few months, he returned to his hometown of Nablus in March 1907 and continued in the same position for about five or six months. In the meantime, on March 4, 1907, he received the rank of “*mûsule-i sahn*”, that being the rank of *Sahn-i Semân* madrasa which prepares for higher education in the Ottoman madrasa education system and comes after the rank of *hareket-i dahil*.⁹³ However, although his rank was increased, his salary was reduced and he voluntarily resigned from his position as a teacher and assistant principal at the end of August 1907, which he had served in for about eight years, stating that the salary given was not enough for him to make a living. However, shortly after leaving his post, on September 10, 1907, he was given the rank of *İzmir paye-i mücerredi*.⁹⁴

It is understood that after leaving his position as a teacher and assistant principal in his hometown of Nablus, Vecih Efendi came to Istanbul and attended courses

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88 Meşihat Archive, MŞH.SAİD., 59/9/1.

89 BOA, MF.IBT., 150/98.

90 Meşihat Archive, MŞH.SAİD., 59/9/1; 59/9/4.

91 Meşihat Archive, MŞH.SAİD., 59/9/1.

92 Meşihat Archive, MŞH.SAİD., 59/9/1; BOA, MF.MKT., 1046/61.

93 Meşihat Archive, MŞH.SAİD., 59/9/1.

94 Meşihat Archive, MŞH.SAİD., 59/9/1.

for a while to prepare for an exam. As a matter of fact, in an interview he gave to American reporters later, he stated that he studied in Istanbul for a while in order to become a *kadi* (judge) in the courts, yet he left this course after being appointed as a *kadi* in a district and then started to work as a clerk in the office of Shaykh al-Islam.⁹⁵ About a year after his arrival in Istanbul, on July 15, 1908, he was successful in the examination conducted by the commission formed by the Kütahya Shariah Court and was appointed as the acting *kadi* of Altıntaş district of Kütahya Sanjak with the title of “*niyabeti şeriyye*”. However, after serving here for about a month, he resigned from his post voluntarily and returned to his hometown Nablus. After the principal of the Nablus Mekteb-i Idadi (Nablus High School) left Nablus to join the Army of Action formed by the Unionist officers, on April 20, 1909, he worked as a volunteer teacher for a while in the writing, calculus and history lessons at this school.⁹⁶

Vecih Efendi was appointed as the Second-Class Civil Servant of *Bab-ı Fetva* Correspondence Office (*Meşihat* Office) upon the decision of *Bab-i Fetva Tensik* Commission during the staff reorganisation in the Ottoman Empire in 1909. He began his new duty in Istanbul in September 1909. He was assigned within the *Meşihat* Office for about three months, from December 8, 1909 to March 14, 1910, in order to find Turkish equivalents for Western terms. He was also engaged in the translation of a Turkish law textbook into Arabic. The book was titled *Miyâru'l Adalet* and was written by a *muderris* named Ömer Hilmi Efendi (d.1889). He took part in the commissions formed in the *Meşihat* Office, and also voluntarily taught mathematics once in a week in the madrasas around the Süleymaniye Mosque.⁹⁷ In his registration document dated May 30, 1910, he stated that he had never abused his position during his duties and that he had not undergone any investigation.⁹⁸

On May 12, 1912, he wrote to the *Meşihat* Office with the signature of Mehmed Vecih, a civil servant of the Correspondence Office, requesting a one-month leave of absence and accordingly, he was granted a one-month annual leave as of July 6, 1912. While he was on leave, on July 15, 1912, he again wrote a petition to the Office with his own signature and requested an extension of his leave to one more month. This request was also approved, and his leave was extended for one more month on August 6, 1912.⁹⁹ There is no information about why he took this leave or where he went. He returned to his post in September 1912, and about six months later, while he was still working as a clerk at the *Meşihat*, he received a new appointment that would change his life.

95 “Sayid Effendi Calls Upon Scott”, *The Sunday Star*, the Sunday supplement of *The Washington Star*, 10 October, 1915.

96 *Meşihat* Archive, MŞH.SAİD., 59/9/1; 59/9/2.

97 *Meşihat* Archive, MŞH.SAİD., 59/9/1.

98 *Meşihat* Archive, MŞH.SAİD., 59/9/1.

99 *Meşihat* Archive, MŞH.SAİD., 59/9/5; 59/9/6.

Mehmed Vecih Efendi's Journey to the Philippines and the Places He Visited

After his appointment as Deputy Shaykh al-Islam in the Philippines, Mehmed Vecih Efendi completed his travel preparations and planned to leave Istanbul in October 1913. However, since the months of the Hajj pilgrimage that year coincided with the time of his journey and as his journey was on the same route, he probably took advantage of this opportunity whereby he sent a petition to the *Meşihat* Office on September 10, 1913, requesting permission to perform the Hajj pilgrimage. His request was approved, and he was allowed to visit Hijaz and perform his pilgrimage. On September 29, 1913, he left his post in Istanbul to go to his duty station in the Philippines.¹⁰⁰

Leaving Istanbul by ship in October 1913, Vecih Efendi travelled first to the Lebanese port of Beirut and then to Jeddah via the Egyptian port of Alexandria. He stayed in Hijaz for nearly a month and performed the pilgrimage, and he also contacted and met with 106 Moro pilgrims from the Philippines that year.¹⁰¹ On December 5, 1913, Mehmed Vecih Efendi arrived in the Indian port city of Mumbai on board a British ship from the port of Jeddah. On December 10, 1913, he left Mumbai and visited the cities in the interior of India. He went to important cities in India such as Delhi, Aligarh, Deoband, Agra, Bhopal and Kolkata where Muslim people lived. After travelling around India for about a month, he reached Singapore on January 7, 1914. Vecih Efendi stayed there for eleven days and on January 18, 1914, he took a ferry from Singapore to the Philippines arriving on January 28, 1914, after a ten-day journey.

During his journey to the Philippines, he wrote many letters and sent them to Istanbul to be published in *Sebilürreşâd* magazine. These letters were published in different issues of the magazine in the "*Mekâtib*" column under the title "Philippine Letters". In the first letter, the magazine announced this to its readers as "*These are the letters sent by Mehmed Vecih Efendi, one of the young and distinguished scholars, who was elected by the Meşihat Office and sent to the Philippine islands to teach Muslims about their Muslim faith upon the invitation of the Americans*".¹⁰² In these letters, Vecih Efendi provided information about the places he had visited during his journey to the Philippines and wrote about the situation of the Muslim people living in those places, the cities, madrasas and societies he visited. He included details regarding the important personalities

100 Meşihat Archive, MŞH.SAİD., 59/9/10.

101 Clarence-Smith, "Middle Eastern States and the Philippines", 204.

102 Mehmed Vecih, "Filipin Mektupları-1: Yolda Bombay'dan (Philippine Letters-1: On the Road from Mumbai)", *Sebilürreşâd* 11, no. 286 (5 March 1914):425.

he met, and many events, memories and recollections he experienced. His first letter was written on December 10, 1913, in the port city of Mumbai in India. According to this letter, after landing in Mumbai on Friday morning, he settled in a hotel and met up with the imam of Zakariya Masjid. He led the Friday prayers in this mosque and read a sermon on Islamic brotherhood and the duties of Muslims. After the prayer, the Muslim people honoured him and applauded him, and all the Muslims there cried and said "Amen" to his prayers for the caliph. The next day he travelled by train to Surat, six hours away, and from there to the towns of Rander and Beryad, 8 km away. He gave speeches in mosques and Islamic clubs there, sometimes in Arabic and sometimes in Persian. However, his speech at a club called *Encümen-i İslam* in Rander town was delivered in French and translated into Urdu by a local Muslim interpreter who knew French. Indian Muslims in the places he visited welcomed him with bouquets of roses and placed ornate flower necklaces around his neck as per the Indian custom, and even offered him sweets and sherbets. On December 9, 1913, Vecih Efendi returned to Mumbai, where he met with Consul General Halil Halid Efendi and left for Delhi on the evening of December 10, 1913.¹⁰³

In Delhi, he met with Dr Mukhtar Ahmed Ansari, an Indian Muslim who had come to Istanbul with the Indian Red Crescent delegation, and this person assigned his brother Hakim Muhammed Ahsen Efendi to be Vecih Efendi's guide. He travelled with him by train to Aligarh, two hours away, where they visited the Islamic Madrasa (Anglo-Muhammedan College), a modern Islamic educational institution opened under the leadership of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan. On December 16, 1913, he wrote his second letter in Aligarh and gave information related to this madrasa. He stayed in the guest house of the madrasa and gave a lecture in a hall attended by all the teachers and students, including German and British orientalist teachers.¹⁰⁴

After staying in Aligarh for two days, he travelled with his Indian companion to Deoband, where the Dârülulûm Madrasa, a traditional Islamic educational institution, was located. Several teachers of the madrasa met him at the railway station, and he stayed in the guest house of the madrasa. Later, he met Mahmud Hasan, the head of the madrasa, who was given the title of "*Shaykhul-Hind*", and there too he gave a lecture. In his speech, he emphasised the duties of religious scholars and the importance of not falling into disputes among Muslims. At the end of the lecture, the madrasa teachers asked him various questions about the situation of the Ottoman Empire and the state of the statesmen. He made explanations to strengthen

103 Mehmed Vecih, "Filipin Mektupları-1 (Philippine Letters-1)", 425.

104 Mehmed Vecih, "İkinci Mektup: Aligir Medrese-i İslamiyesi (Second Letter: Aligir Madrasa-i İslamiye)," *Sebilürreşad* 11, no.286 (5 March 1914): 425-426.

their loyalty and love for the Ottoman Caliph. In his third letter written here, he gave information about this educational institution.¹⁰⁵

Vecih Efendi then travelled to the historic city of Agra, where the Taj Mahal is located, and visited the Taj Mahal built by the Mughal ruler Shah Jahan upon the death of his wife Arjumand Banu Begum (Mumtaz Mahal) in 1631. He then went on to Bhopal and wrote his fourth letter dated December 23, 1913 in Bhopal.¹⁰⁶ There, he was met at the railway station by Shahzade Hamidullah Khan, the son of Jahan Begum, the last female ruler of the local government of Bhopal, and was hosted at Jahan Begum's palace. He was admitted to the presence of Jahan Begum in the palace and spent time with her for a while. Jahan Begum asked him to put his hand on the head of her young son to bring him good luck. He put his hand on the son's head by saying the *basmala*. He was allocated a mansion named "*Hayat-efza*" for his accommodation and he travelled to the said mansion in an automobile with the second chamberlain appointed as his guide.¹⁰⁷

On the third day of his stay in Bhopal, Jahan Begum received him again and presented him with four dresses (*hilat*). She took the reference letter (tarifnâme) carried with him and written by the *Meşihat* Office which introduced Vecih Efendi to all ulama and the Muslim people, because Jahan Begum considered it blessed and hoped that it would bring blessings. Afterwards, Jahan Begum took the *hilat* from the chamberlain and put it on him and asked him to convey her veneration and respect to the Caliph. During his stay in Bhopal, some scholars, community leaders and the vizier of the local state of Bhopal visited him in the "*Hayat-e efza*" mansion. The vizier invited him for lunch, the *kadi* for dinner and the head of the madrasa for a tea banquet. When the mufti of the town, who visited him at the mansion, expressed the desire of the Muslim rulers of Bhopal to recognise the Ottoman *Meşihat* Office as a religious authority, he told the mufti that he should submit his private opinion on this matter to Ruler (Hâkime) Jahan Begum and that it would be more appropriate for them to act according to whatever she deemed appropriate. If the purpose of this affiliation was to ask for a fatwa, he stated that all Islamic countries had made many applications to the *Meşihat* and these had been answered. When he visited the madrasa in Bhopal, the students there delivered a eulogy to the Caliph and declared their devotion. However, Vecih Efendi noted that in some places Muslims could not freely express their loyalty to the caliphate due to British oppression.

105 Mehmed Vecih, "Filipin Mektupları-3: Yolda Diyubend'den: Diyubend'de Medrese-i Diniyye (Philippine Letters-3: On the Road from Diyubend: Madrasa-i Diniyye in Diyubend)", *Sebilürreşâd* 12, no.287 (12 March 1914): 15-16.

106 Mehmed Vecih, "Filipin Mektupları-4: Yolda Bohopal'dan: Bhopal Hakimesi Huzurunda (Philippine Letters-4: On the Road from Bhopal: Before the Judge of Bhopal)", *Sebilürreşâd* 12, no.288 (19 March 1914): 36.

107 Mehmed Vecih, "Filipin Mektupları-4 (Philippine Letters-4)", 36.

After staying in Bhopal for three days, he returned to Agra to attend the Ilm-i Islam Congress (Scientific Islamic Congress) upon invitation and made a short speech as foreign scholars also attended the congress. On December 31, 1913, Vecih Efendi arrived in Kolkata, boarded a British ferry and left for Singapore on the following day (January 1, 1914). Although he stayed in Bhopal for three days, he kept his fourth letter quite short and described his experiences there in his fifth letter written in Kolkata, dated December 13, 1913. This letter was also published as a continuation of the fourth letter.¹⁰⁸

Vecih Efendi, who left India by boarding the ferry in Kolkata on January 1, 1914, to go to Singapore, wrote his impressions of the 29 days he had spent in India in his sixth letter on the ferry and sent it from Penang, the port city of Malaysia, on January 4, 1914. This time he added the Geylanî patronymic in front of his name.¹⁰⁹ In his letter, which he wrote under five subheadings, he first drew attention to the fact that Muslims in India were divided into many factions under the heading of “The Ridiculousness in the Name of Religion in India”. He stated that the members of each sect regarded the members of other sects who were not from their own sect as apostates and even went to extremes by accusing some of them as polytheists and others as infidels. According to him, the main reason for this sad situation was the harmful words and behaviour of people who “pretended to be scholars” among the ignorant people in towns and villages. For example, he said that many of the dervishes affiliated to a religious order believed in the divinity of the *awliya* and their prophethood. Under the heading “The Important Duty Imposed on the *Meşihat* Office”, he stated that the *Meşihat* Office must send books and treatises in languages that people can understand, and devoted guides who know the eastern languages, in order to guide and show them the right path. Under the title “Political Conflict among Indian Muslims”, he drew attention to the existence of a deep political conflict among Indian Muslims. He wrote that some of them aspired to unite with Hindus and form an Indian nation, while others argued that uniting with Hindus would harm Muslims because of their large population, their superiority in knowledge and wealth. Under the heading “Islamic Imam Spies”, he emphasised the scientific inadequacy of most of the imams and preachers, and he also emphasised that some foreign imams, especially from places like Mecca, Medina and Egypt, were spying for the British against Muslims. As an example, he wrote that the Egyptian imam of the largest Friday Masjid in Kolkata spied for the British for 10 British liras. Under the sub-heading “People’s Distrust Regarding Aid”, he stated that when the Muslim people realised that some of the aid collected for the victims of the Balkan War in Türkiye was allocated to the food and drinks of influential people, many people stopped giving aid,

108 Mehmed Vecih, “5: Bohopal Hakimesi’nin Hilat İhsanı (5: Bhopal Judge’s Bestowal of Hilat)”, *Sebilürreşâd* 12, no.288 (19 March 1914): 36-37.

109 Mehmed Vecih Geylanî, “Filipin Mektupları 6: Yolda (Philippine Letters 6: On the Road)”, *Sebilürreşâd* 12, no.289 (26 March 1914): 55-56.

but after the arrival of the Consul General Halil Halid Efendi, the public's confidence in this matter increased.¹¹⁰

After Penang, Mehmed Vecih Efendi arrived in Singapore under British rule on January 7, 1914. He wrote his seventh letter dated 16 January 1914 under the pseudonym "Mehmed Vecih el-Geylani, a religious officer in the Philippines."¹¹¹ He stayed in a hotel on the first day in order to board the first ferry to the Philippine islands. The following day however, Syed Omar as-Sakkaf (d. 1927), one of the wealthy Muslim merchants of Arab origin in Singapore, had heard about his arrival and send his son of Syed Mohamed as-Sakkaf (d. 1931) to pick him up. Upon his insistent invitation, Mehmed Vecih Efendi settled in their gardened mansion. In his letter from Singapore, he wrote about the places he visited in Singapore, the people he met, the Islamic societies and their activities, and his own observations. During his stay in Singapore, Vecih Efendi held meetings with Muslim communities of Arab, Indian and Malay origin on the island and was invited to speak at various events. He met with prominent merchants and scholarly figures in Singapore, including Haji Hussein Effendi, an Indian merchant, Ali Haydar Effendi, the Imam of the Arab Mosque, and Haji Mohamed Hakim Effendi, the head of the Dâruttalim Society. He gave sermons and read sermons at the Arab Mosque in Singapore. Under the sub-heading of his letter "A Capable Murshid, a Muslim Consul is Required", he stated that no official had been appointed after the former consul general Atullah Efendi, who had passed away. He highlighted that a consul who was knowledgeable in current issues needed to be appointed to Singapore. Representatives of the Islamic societies in Singapore organised banquets for him every day and he had sincere conversations with them after the meal. They even took him on a sea cruise on a 25-person steamboat decorated with Turkish flags, and another steamboat with 40-50 people accompanied them.¹¹² The Malay press in Singapore showed interest in him and the staff of the weekly Malay newspaper *Neracha* held a meeting with him at the Adelphi Hotel whereby the newspaper informed its Malay readers about his mission.¹¹³

After staying in Singapore for eleven days, Vecih Efendi left the island on a German ferry for the Philippines on Saturday, January 18, 1914. He wrote his eighth letter on the ferry on his way to the Philippines. The letter was devoted to his departure from Singapore harbour and the interviews he gave to the American missionaries and journalists he met on the ferry.¹¹⁴ The day before his departure, Haji Hüseyin

110 Mehmed Vecih, "Filipin Mektupları-6: Yolda (Philippine Letters 6: On the Road)", 55-56.

111 Mehmed Vecih Geylani, "Filipin Mektupları-7: Singapur'a Muvasalat (Philippine Letters-7: Arriving in Singapore)", *Sebilürreşad* 12, no. 290 (2 April 1914): 72-73.

112 Mehmed Vecih, "Filipin Mektupları-7 (Philippine Letters 7)", 72-73.

113 Mohammad Redzuan Othman, "Pan-Islamic Appeal and Political Patronage: The Malay Perspective and the Ottoman Response," *Jurnal Sejarah*, no.4 (1996): 103.

114 Mehmed Vecih Geylani, "Filipin Mektupları-8: Singapur'dan Müfârakat (Philippine Letters-8: Leaving Singapore)", *Sebilürreşad* 12, no.291 (9 April 1914): 92-93.

Efendi of Madras, a friend of the Ottomans applied to the Governor of Singapore and obtained permission to close the street leading to the pier for half an hour to allow the Muslim population to see him off. The next day, as he boarded the ferry, he was seen off by hundreds of Muslims who came to the pier accompanied by *takbir* and *salawat*. Sherbets and sweets were offered to those who came, roses and jasmine were sprinkled on them, and they raced to kiss his hand, his skirt and the places he had stepped on. He managed to get away from the crowd in about an hour and when he got on the ferry, he thanked and greeted them all in a loud voice.¹¹⁵

In its issue dated January 21, 1914, the Malay newspaper *Neracha* also reported his farewell from the port with great enthusiasm and wrote that the port of Singapore was crowded with Muslims from all parts of the society to bid him farewell. Upon his arrival in the Philippines, Vecih Efendi wrote to the editors of *Neracha* to express his gratitude for the hospitality he had received during his short stay on the island, and the newspaper reported this in its issue of March 3, 1914, along with Vecih Efendi's recommendations.¹¹⁶

On the ferry travelling to the Philippines, five American newspaper reporters interviewed him and asked him various questions. He went to a separate lounge on the ferry and gave answers to the questions asked by each of them. The reporters' questions generally centred on John Finley's visit and how his application was received in Istanbul, the nature of the mission assigned to him and his thoughts on the matter. He stated that Finley's initiative was received very positively by the office of Shaykh al-Islam and the Caliphate. When asked about his mission, he emphasised that his mission was to educate and advise the Muslims in the Philippines in their religious affairs and "to advise them, in a religious language that they should not remain uninterested and unwilling to scientific and economic progress in order to be the best subjects of the American State". While fulfilling this duty, he stated that he gave convincing answers that if the Philippine government fully facilitated, the desired result would definitely transpire.

He also met two American Protestant female missionaries travelling to Zamboanga on the ferry and included the content of the meetings with them under the subheading "Women Missionaries".¹¹⁷ Vecih Efendi, who was very impressed by their activities, continued in his letter by saying, "What would we lack if we could establish such auspicious societies and send suitable people from among the great

115 Mehmed Vecih, "Filipin Mektupları-8 (Philippine Letters-8)", 92.

116 Othman, "Pan-Islamic Appeal and Political Patronage", 103.

117 One of these missionary women Vecih Efendi met on the ferry was Mrs. Lorillard Spencer from New York, who was engaged with missionary activities among Muslim women and girls on the island of Jolo. See, Department of Mindanao and Sulu, *Report of the Department of Mindanao and Sulu (Philippine Islands) 1914 I*, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1916), 389.

scholars to spread the religion of Islam all over the world? He recommended that Muslim inviters should be sent to Islamic lands through the associations to be established and that the Ottoman government should facilitate them.¹¹⁸

In early October 1913, Vecih Efendi departed from Istanbul to the Philippines and reached Zamboanga, the Moro city where he was to serve, on January 28, 1914, after a 3.5-month journey. He was accompanied by a group of about 100 Moro pilgrims on the ferry from Singapore. At the port of Zamboanga, he was welcomed by a large group of Moro Muslims waiting for him, and by the former governor of the province, John Finley.¹¹⁹

Mehmet Vecih Efendi's Activities in the Philippines and His Departure from the Country

By the time Mehmed Vecih Efendi arrived in Zamboanga, the Regional Governor General Pershing, who never got on well with Finley, had been transferred to another post in the USA in December 1913. Frank W. Carpenter, the first civilian regional governor, had been appointed in his place as the process of demilitarization and Filipinisation had begun in the local administration. The name of the regional governorship was also changed to Mindanao and Sulu regional governorship, preferring geographical names instead of the word Moro. After Finley, George A. Helfert was also in the governorship of Zamboanga province. Finley had travelled from Manila to Zamboanga a few days earlier to greet Vecih Efendi and informed the authorities about the matter. His enthusiastic reception in Zamboanga and elsewhere left a deep and lasting impression on the American official, P. D. Rogers, Secretary-General to the Regional Governor. He described the official reception of the Deputy Shaykh al-Islam in Zamboanga and the favour shown to him by the Moro Muslims in a several-page writing, which he later wrote in the following words:

"It was a bright, sweltering day when the appointed one of the Sultan of Turkey arrived. Major Finley was on the dock to meet him, also several hundred Moros, including all the Moro priests [imams] in the vicinity. It was indeed a very interesting looking crowd, and I had never seen so many variegated robes and umbrellas in my reception committee before which had gone on board to meet him, I was introduced to him by the Major. I do not remember his name, but his title, I was told, was Sheik ul Islam. At least, it was by this appellation that he was known while among us.

118 Mehmed Vecih Geylani, "Filipin Mektupları-8: Singapur'dan Müfârekât (Philippine Letters-8: Leaving Singapore)", *Sebilürreşâd* 12, no.291 (9 April 1914): 93.

119 Clarence-Smith, "Middle Eastern States and the Philippines", 204.

The Sheik ul Islam was a pious man, tall, slender about thirty years of age, with a of very fair and fine complexion. He wore a long, dark brown robe and a white turban. He was reticent, but of very polite manners, and spoke a little English.

When the Moro priests [imams] had finished the ceremony of kissing the Sheik's hand, the procession started. It was headed by Major Finley, supporting the Sheik ul Islam on his arm, with a Moro holding a large umbrella over them. They marched by the civil government offices to Major Finley's residence at the Army Post, where the Sheik also took up his temporary residence."¹²⁰

Mehmed Vecih Efendi then travelled with Finley to the town of Taluksangay and the surrounding towns and villages on the islands of Jolo and Basilan, where he held public meetings. Wherever he went, the Moros showed great interest in him and welcomed him with joy. In the crowded public meetings, Vecih Efendi generally advised the Moros on the need to follow the good moral principles of Islam and to be good citizens.¹²¹ The first public meeting, organised with Major Finley, was held in Taluksangay, near Zamboanga, where he also gave some advice to women. Rogers later described this meeting, which he attended to report on the order of the regional governor, as follows:

"About ten thousand Moros attended this meeting, including several hundred priests of various ranks, and other titled personages, such as datus, panglimas, maharajas and orangkayas. Both men and women were dressed in their most gaudy raiments.... I regarded this as the most beautiful and spectacular congregation I have ever seen. No camp meeting in the United States could compare with it."¹²²

During Vecih Efendi's visit to the island of Jolo, the datus and other Moro chiefs came to the ship in the port and welcomed him with enthusiasm. While the Moros showed no interest in Mrs Spencer, a Protestant missionary from New York, who came on the same ship and whom he had met on the ferry from Singapore, there was a great outpouring of affection for the Shaykh al-Islam. The New Jersey-based newspaper *The Plainfield Courier News*, in its news about a Protestant missionary official to be appointed to the city of Jolo, also mentioned Vecih Efendi's visit to Jolo and reported it as follows:

"The arrival of the Mohammedan envoy was the occasion of the most notable exhibition of the Moro faith witnessed since the beginning of American

120 P.D. Rogers, "Major Finley and the Sheikh Ul Islam: A Hitherto Unpublished Chapter of History," *Philippine Magazine* 36, no.1 (1939): 19,28-29. Quotation, page 29.

121 Clarence-Smith, "Middle Eastern States and the Philippines", 204.

122 Rogers, "Major Finley and the Sheikh Ul Islam", 29.

*occupation. A throng of five thousand Moros greeted the envoy with transport of fanatical fervor and religious devotion. Prostrating themselves in the dust they implored an opportunity to kiss his feet and his clothing, begged him for a blessing and entreated him to remain with them always.*¹²³

Despite all this enthusiasm and joy, Vecih Efendi encountered various problems less than two weeks after his arrival in the Philippines. Some officials in Zamboanga were convinced that his real aim was to reawaken the Moro jihad among the population and reported him to the governor-general. Prominent Catholic Christian politicians in Manila were uncomfortable with his crowded visits in the country and his meetings with Moro leaders. American officials viewed Vecih Efendi as “a Muslim propagandist” and strongly opposed Finley’s initiatives and his wearing of military uniform while holding meetings with Vecih Efendi. Regional Governor Frank Carpenter wrote to the new Governor-General Francis Burton Harrison on February 8, 1914, stating that Finley’s actions were “unwarranted and probably against public order” and that he was constantly requesting transportation in the region.¹²⁴ He expressed concern that the Shaykh al-Islam might also be the instigator of a possible holy war among the Moros and argued that his activities in the region posed a threat to public order. Carpenter even considered Taluksangay to be “the most powerful propaganda centre of Muslim religious fanaticism” in the Moro region and “a source of opposition to the goodwill practices” of the administration.¹²⁵ J. Franklin Bell, the Army Commander of the Philippines, wrote to Harrison on February 11, 1914, sharing similar views and calling Finley’s actions “militarily objectionable.” He considered Vecih Efendi to be “an agent of the Islamic revival” and saw his activities in the region as a “serious threat to public order.” Finley’s travels with Vecih Efendi, while wearing the uniform of a US Army officer, was an additional source of concern. Bell did not consider it appropriate for an army officer to participate in such an activity, which he characterised as “religious propaganda.” Bell also believed that Vecih Efendi’s mission would hinder the civilising influence of the American administration in the region and the efforts of various Christian missionaries to civilise the Moros.¹²⁶ The same circles declared that the real reason behind Vecih Efendi’s visit to the Philippines was to call Muslims to revolt against the American administration and to declare jihad.¹²⁷

Governor-General Harrison ordered Finley and Vecih Efendi to come to Manila after receiving complaints about Finley from both the American authorities in

123 “Bishop Brent May Not Accept”, *The Plainfield Courier News* (New Jersey), 14 May 1914.

124 Charbonneau, “Civilizational Imperatives”, 190, 397.

125 Joshua Gedacht, “Islamic-Imperial Encounters”, 366-367.

126 Charbonneau, “Civilizational Imperatives”, 397-398.

127 Clarence-Smith, “Middle Eastern States and the Philippines”, 204.

Zamboanga and the military officials in Manila, and later from the Speaker of the Assembly, Sergio Osmena.¹²⁸ With instructions from Harrison, Army Commander General Bell telegraphed Zamboanga on February 10, 1914, ordering Finley and the Shaykh al-Islam to be sent immediately to Manila on the first ship. Regional Governor Carpenter appointed his Secretary-General Rogers, who travelled to the island of Basilan the same day to deliver the order to them. He found them resting in the house of a datu in Panigayan, in an afternoon sleep, and had Finley awakened to give them the order. The next day he put them on a ship in the port of Zamboanga and sent them to Manila.¹²⁹ Finley and Vecih Efendi travelled to Manila on an old Spanish-era civilian ship carrying people, goods and livestock, without waiting for the arrival of the military ship that was on a regular voyage.¹³⁰

After the two reached Manila, they met up with Army Commander General Bell on the first day and Governor General Harrison on the following day. At the Governor General's request, a meeting was organised and Finley reported on their activities so far and the appointment of Vecih Efendi. He stated that Vecih Efendi made a great impression on the people in the places they had visited and that this was beneficial for the American administration. However, the Governor-General, disturbed by the complaints he had received, stated that the principle of the separation of religion and state affairs also meant that it was not possible for the administration to officially pay him a salary and for the state to employ a Muslim teacher.¹³¹ In order not to contradict this principle and not to put the American administration in a difficult situation, who had promised not to interfere in the religion and customs of the Moros, the Governor-General requested that the agreement between Finley and Vecih Efendi be ignored in return for an appropriate compensation. Or, like other religious leaders, he could come to the region as a religious official sent by the Caliph, without any relationship with the government and without receiving any salary or aid from the government, to educate the Moro people and show them the right path. However, when Vecih Efendi opposed and resisted these proposals, the Governor-General did not decide immediately and kept him waiting in Manila for another month.¹³²

According to the plan initially envisaged by Finley and communicated to the authorities in Istanbul, Vecih Efendi was to be allocated a position in the education unit in the Philippines and would receive his salary from there. His term of service

128 Thomson, "Governors of Moro Province", 240.

129 Rogers, "Major Finley and the Sheikh Ul Islam", 29.

130 "Moros Regret Maj. Finley's Departure After Ten Years of Peaceful Rule", *The Sun* (New York), 2 August, 1914.

131 Clarence-Smith, "Middle Eastern States and the Philippines", 204.

132 *Tasvir-i Efkar*, "Filipin Mektupları-3. Filipinli Dindaşlarımız ne Haldedir?" (Philippine Letters-3. What is the Condition of Our Filipino Co-religionists?), no:1070, 6 May 1914; Clarence-Smith, "Middle Eastern States and the Philippines", 205.

was to last for a year or a year and a half. However, it is understood that the authorities in the Philippines and Regional Governor Carpenter strongly opposed this plan. In fact, on February 8, 1914, Finley wrote and sent a petition from Zamboanga City to the *Meşihat* Office in Istanbul, requesting from the Shaykh al-Islam for the Ottoman government to “allocate a suitable salary” for Vecih Efendi’s livelihood and the family he had left behind. He cited the fact that the Muslim population of the Philippine islands was very poor, that the authorities had stated that it would be inappropriate to impose an additional tax burden on them, and that it was not possible to financially support any religious or sectarian belief group since the United States government did not have an official religion. He also stated in his petition that Vecih Efendi wished to be appointed as a consul in the region.¹³³ However, considering that Vecih Efendi was called to Manila a few days later and that it took time for the petition to reach Istanbul by post, this offer was of little importance.

During his stay in Manila, Vecih Efendi met and received the support of Dr Najeeb Saleeby, a Christian medical doctor originally from Lebanon, and some Christian merchants of Syrian and Lebanese origin who were Ottoman subjects.¹³⁴ Although Najib Saleeby, who had previously served in the Moro region, supported his stay in the Philippines, he was unable to convince the authorities.¹³⁵

Meanwhile, in Manila, where Vecih Efendi was summoned, he was diagnosed with a serious physical illness and was advised that he needed to undergo treatment to regain his health.¹³⁶ Governor-General Harrison finally convinced Vecih Efendi to leave the country and paid for his return ticket from the official emergency fund, to keep him away from the Philippines, and return to Istanbul on April 3, 1914. Officially, it was announced through the *Manila Times* newspaper that Vecih Efendi had returned to his country due to health problems.¹³⁷ Harrison then arranged for Finley’s transfer to a military unit in Texas and his return to the United States.¹³⁸

133 BOA, HR.TO.601-73. In the archive, there is only the Turkish translation of this petition sent under the signature of Finley.

134 *Tasvir-i Efkâr*, “Filipin Mektupları-2 (Philippine Letters-2)”, no:1040, (6 April 1914): Türker, “ABD’nin Talebi (The Request of the USA)”, 532.

135 After graduating from the Syrian Protestant College (American University of Beirut), Dr. Najeeb Saleeby continued his education in the USA and later became an American citizen. After the Americans occupied the Philippine islands, he came to the Philippines in 1900 as a military doctor and served in the Moro region. Upon leaving the army, he came to Manila and continued his profession as a doctor. Establishing good relations with the Moros, Saleeby published the information he collected about the Moros in a book. See Najeeb M. Saleeby, *Studies in Moro History, Law and Religion* (Manila: Bureau of Public Printing, 1905).

136 Department of Mindanao and Sulu, *Report of Mindanao and Sulu Department*, 393.

137 Clarence-Smith, “Middle Eastern States and the Philippines”, 205.

138 Thomson, “Governors of Moro Province”, 241. Harrison later told Rogers that it had cost 6,000 pesos (kurus) to send away the Sheikh-ul-Islam from the Philippines. See Rogers, “Major Finley and the Sheikh Ul Islam”, 29.

Mehmed Vecih Efendi's Return to Türkiye and the Traces He Left in the Region

After arriving in Zamboanga, Vecih Efendi continued to write about his activities and impressions under the title Philippine Letters and sent them to Istanbul for publication. However, his first letter could not be found, and in the introduction of his second letter, apparently written in Manila, he stated that he was writing about the situation in the Philippines and Finley's services to the Moros there. *Tasvir-i Efkâr* newspaper published his second letter on the front page with the signature "from our special correspondent". It also included a photograph of him with a group of Moro Muslims. The caption "Greetings from the Philippines" was written on the photograph. In his letter, he noted that upon his arrival in Zamboanga, he was welcomed with an elaborate ceremony organised by Finley and the Moro people. However, he stated that some circles, who were disturbed by Finley's initiative for the Moros, adopted a hostile attitude towards him after the welcoming ceremony. Although he was extremely sensitive to the American administration, he wrote that local Catholic politicians were very disturbed by the fact that he and Finley visited the settlements and other islands and established warm relations with the Muslim population.¹³⁹



Image 8: Vecih Efendi with the Moros
(Source: *Tasvir-i Efkâr*, 6 April 1914)

139 *Tasvir-i Efkâr*, "Filipin Mektupları-2 (Philippine Letters-2)", no:1040, (6 April 1914); Also, see Türker, "ABD'nin Talebi (The Request of the USA)", 531-532.

In his third letter from Manila, he drew attention to the fact that the Moro people had become the target of Christian missionaries and reported some of the activities of Charles H. Brent, the leader of the Protestant Church, and Lorillard Spencer, a millionaire woman missionary, to Christianise the Moros. He also became familiar with the policies of the American government and noted that he was considering leaving the administration of the Moros in the future to the Filipinos, the indigenous Catholic Christian people who made up the majority of the country. However, he reported that the Moros were against this idea and believed that “it would be a thousand times better to die than to be subordinated to the Filipinos”¹⁴⁰

Most of the American officials and local Christian officials in the country were very worried that the Moros showed great favour to Vecih Efendi and that they established a bond with the Ottoman Empire. After his departure from the Philippines, Regional Governor Carpenter, who reported on the developments in Mindanao and Sulu from January to July 1914, described Vecih Efendi as an “extremist Muslim propagandist” directed from Istanbul and disguised as an official. He mentioned his name and activities under the heading of “missionary activities” in the region and wrote that he was “the only Muslim missionary in Mindanao and Sulu who travelled from Istanbul to Zamboanga”. He argued that his activities in the region posed a “serious threat” to public order and would hinder the success of the government policy of organising the Christian, Muslim and pagan elements of the Philippines into a single homogeneous community. He continued his report as follows:

“The introduction into this region of reactionary and militant propaganda, so notoriously is that radiating from Constantinople, must prove fatal to immediate and continued progress in the execution of the government’s programme here. Furthermore, the insistent pretense of this emissary from Constantinople that he was clothed at least with quasi-governmental authority would if he were allowed to remain here, unavoidably place the government in a position before the people false to its constantly and authoritatively stated policy of refraining from intervention in the spritual affairs of the people and humiliating to most Americans and well-wishes of American institutions.”¹⁴¹

John Finley, on the other hand, regarded Vecih Efendi’s mission in the Philippines as an absolute success and later wrote an article about his mission in the *Army and Navy Weekly*, a newspaper for serving and retired soldiers in the Philippines. Although the article was published anonymously, Finley was identified as the author. In the article, Finley described the Moros’ devotion to Vecih Efendi as follows:

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140 *Tasvir-i Efkar*, “Filipin Mektupları-3. Filipinli Dindaşlarımız ne Haldedir? (Philippine Letters-3. What is the Condition of Our Filipino Co-religionists?)”,no:1070, (6 May 1913); Türker, “ABD’nin Talebi (The Request of the USA)”, 533-534.

141 Department of Mindanao and Sulu, *Report of the Department of Mindanao and Sulu*, 391-393. Quotation,392.

“For them it was as the coming of the Messiah; their hopes were at last fulfilled. Being Orientals, their expressions of joy were the same as those of the crowds that followed Jesus in Galilee in days of old.”

Finley argued that the link between Istanbul and Moroland would, contrary to what had been claimed, improve the situation of the Moros and help overcome the difficulties faced by the American administration in the region. He also made the following assessment:

“So long as the Moslem allows Christian missions in his territory, why should he not establish Moslem missions in ours, especially as we are on his territory to proselytize and he only comes to ours to teach his own. In a country that welcomes Buddhists, Theosophists, and any ‘ism’ on earth, it seems a little hard to explain just why we should refuse to allow the influence of a refined, educated, high class Mohammedan gentleman, such as Wajih Gilani proved himself, to be exerted on behalf of the Moros when it would so obviously make for their betterment and for the settlement of the difficulties that now surround the question of their government.”¹⁴²

On April 3, 1914, Vecih Efendi left the Philippines and arrived in Singapore on a German ship he boarded in Manila. Here, the Muslim community he had met before welcomed and hosted him again with great enthusiasm. Officials of the Malay newspaper *Neracha* organised a meeting in his honour at the Adelphi Hotel in Singapore and treated him as “the Shaykh al-Islam of the entire Malay world”. The newspaper reported that although he was expected to serve in the Philippines for a longer period, he had to return to Istanbul for treatment due to his illness. After staying in Singapore for two days, Vecih Efendi travelled to Penang, where he was greeted at the port by an enthusiastic Malay Muslim crowd of about 200 people. They turned his presence into a good opportunity by taking him to a mosque called Masjid Melayu on Acheen Street and asked him to make a speech in the mosque. In his speech, delivered in Arabic and translated into Malay, Vecih Efendi emphasised the need for Muslims to help each other in good works and advised them to open schools for the education of Muslim children. According to Othman, sending a representative of the Shaykh al-Islam from Istanbul to this region, “however short-lived, further cemented the image of the Turks as the guardians of Islam among the Malays”. The marvellous Malay reception he received was also described as a completely spontaneous event.¹⁴³

142 Charbonneau, “Civilizational Imperatives”, 399.

143 Othman, “Pan-Islamic Appeal and Political Patronage”, 103-104. In Türkiye, in recent periods, his mission has been seen as the shaykh al-Islam of the Malay world. See, Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakıf University Center for Ottoman-Malay World Studies, “Muhammed El-Vecih El-Geylani El-Nablusi: Malay Dünyasının Osmanlı Şeyh-ül İslâmı (Muhammed El-Vecih El-Geylani El-Nablusi: The Ottoman Shaykh al-Islam of the Malay World)”, <https://osmanlimalay.fsm.edu.tr/Osmanli-Malay-Dunyasi-Calismalari-Uygulama-ve-Arastirma-Merkezi-Osmanli-Malay-Dunyasi-Iliskileri--Wajih>.

After a long sea voyage lasting of more than a month, Vecih Efendi arrived in Istanbul in May 1914, continued his treatment for a while, and after his recovery, he sought to return to the Philippines to serve the Moros. On September 23, 1914, he wrote a letter from Istanbul to Lindley M. Garrison, the American Secretary of Defence, requesting funds from the ministry to ensure his return to the Philippines. In the letter, he mentioned the “deplorable situation” of the Moros and stated that the “religious authorities in Istanbul” wanted him to help “teach them the correct moral principles” of Islam.¹⁴⁴ However, he did not receive any results from this attempt.

In November 1914, the Ottoman Empire entered the First World War on the side of the Allied Powers, which included Germany. In the hope of regaining his health, he returned to Palestine, the land where he was born and raised, and preferred to live in Nazareth, where some of his family also resided. His residence in Nazareth was mostly based upon family and health reasons. Vecih Efendi’s sisters married Sharif and Hussein Zubi brothers from the Zubi family of Nazareth, whom he had met in Istanbul, and his brother Galip also took a daughter from the Zubi family.¹⁴⁵

Assignment of Mehmet Vecih Efendi to the United States of America

Vecih Efendi lived in Palestine from the first months of the First World War and did not give up the idea of returning to the Philippines. While in Nazareth, he is reported to have prevented the prosecution of some Christian Arabs by the Ottoman military authorities. In December 1914 he was involved in the release from prison of seven Christians from the Accra district who had been accused of collaborating with Russia and imprisoned. In early June 1915, he intervened on behalf of 126 Christians from Nazareth accused of having relations with the captain of a French warship. He is also said to have protected Najib Nassar, editor of the Arabic newspaper *Al-Karmil* in Haifa, from prosecution.¹⁴⁶ Najib Nassar, who came from a Greek Orthodox Christian background, wrote a fictionalised account of his memoirs and the hardships he had suffered during the war years. In early 1915, when a British missionary told him that he was wanted by Ottoman soldiers, he went to the house of his friend Vecih Efendi, who advised him to hide in the confusion until the truth of the news became clarified. Following his advice, Najib hid in a family house known as the Kavars for about two weeks and wrote that only a few people knew about it, including Vecih Efendi.¹⁴⁷

While in Palestine, Vecih Efendi met and established good relations with Otis A. Glazebrook, the American Consul General in Jerusalem. Glazebrook was an elderly

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144 Charbonneau, “Civilizational Imperatives”, 399.

145 Clarence-Smith, “Wajih al-Kilani, Shaykh al-Islam of the Philippines”, 176-177.

146 Clarence-Smith, “Middle Eastern States and the Philippines”, 207-208.

147 Raja Shehadeh, *A Rift in Time: Travels with My Ottoman Uncle*, (New York: OR Books, 2011), 22-23,24.

retired pastor in New Jersey, Virginia, and a close friend and political ally of President Wilson of the Democratic Party. He supported both his candidacy for governor of New Jersey and for president. Glazebrook even wrote a personal letter of recommendation introducing Vecih Efendi to President Wilson after it became clear that he was going to America.¹⁴⁸

In the meantime, Vecih Efendi attracted the attention of Ahmed Cemal Paşa, the commander of the 4th Army, who was serving in the wider Syrian region, and Cemal Paşa tried to obtain information about him. On April 19, 1915, he sent a telegram from his headquarters in Jerusalem to the Ministry of Interior, asking who he was and to what extent he could be trusted. If he was sent to the Philippines again, he asked for an opinion on whether he could do any good.¹⁴⁹ On April 22, 1915, the Ministry of Interior replied that he was a “trustworthy and intelligent” person and that he would be “especially successful in spreading the jihad in India.”¹⁵⁰

After this, Cemal Paşa personally took care of Vecih Efendi’s return to the Philippines in the capacity of Shaykh al-Islam in order to establish relations with the US government, which still maintained its neutrality in the war, and to mobilise the Muslim communities living in the British colonies in South and Southeast Asia.¹⁵¹ As a result of the correspondence between the Ministry of Interior and the *Meşihat* Office, it was decided to send Vecih Efendi to the Philippines again.¹⁵² Thereupon, Cemal Paşa must have consulted with the American Consul General in Jerusalem, as Glazebrook informed the US Ambassador in Istanbul, Henry Morgenthau, on June 4, 1915 that Cemal Paşa wanted “Vecih, the Mufti of the Philippines, appointed by His Majesty as the religious teacher of the Moros” to go to the United States. In addition, Cemal Paşa summoned Vecih Efendi from Nazareth to Jerusalem, where he met him personally and told him to make preparations for his departure to the USA.¹⁵³ On June 17, 1915, Cemal Paşa sent an encrypted letter to the Ministry of Interior, stating that he had sent “Vecih Bey, the Shaykh al-Islam of the Philippines” to the USA to go to the Philippines on an American ship and that he had given him 400 liras that was to be paid from the discretionary fund so that he could manage there until he received money.¹⁵⁴

On June 21, 1915, the US Ambassador in Istanbul, Morgenthau, informed the Secretary of State in Washington that Cemal Paşa had agreed to the urgent request

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148 Clarence-Smith, “Middle Eastern States and the Philippines”, 208.

149 BOA, DH. ŞFR, 468/23.

150 BOA, DH. ŞRF, 52/82.

151 Türker, “ABD’nin Talebi (The Request of the USA)”, 536-537.

152 BOA, DH.ŞRF, 468/23; 52/82.

153 Clarence-Smith, “Middle Eastern States and the Philippines”, 208-209.

154 BOA DHEUM.KLU. 9/12; Kadi-Peacock, *Ottoman-Southeast Asian Relations* 2, 954-955.

of Mehmed Vecih, the Shaykh al-Islam of the Philippines, to travel to the United States and that he wished to hold discussions with US government officials on Philippine Muslim affairs. However, he wrote that this time Cemal Paşa had requested permission for two other persons to accompany him, and that if Cemal Paşa's request was rejected, many American citizens waiting to go to the United States might not be allowed to leave the port of Beirut.¹⁵⁵ Morgenthau, without waiting for the ministry's reply, wrote to Beirut the same day and requested that all three be allowed to board the ship. Consul General Glazebrook wrote the same day that, in addition to those waiting in Beirut harbour, Cemal Paşa had allowed 40 Armenians and 50 Italian citizens to embark from Jafa. On the same day (26 June) that the American ship *Tennessee*, sailing between the Far East and Europe, left the port of Beirut, the American government announced that it did not approve of Vecih Efendi's travel to the United States, but the ship had already left Beirut with its passengers.¹⁵⁶ Thus, it is understood that Morgenthau, while trying to get the Americans out of Beirut, did not want to offend the Turkish authorities and allowed Vecih Efendi to pass to Barcelona.¹⁵⁷

Due to the war, the Ottoman government had banned all travel from the vast Syrian coast on May 3, 1915, therefore many non-Muslims, Entente states and American citizens were left waiting in the port cities of the region. With this, Cemal Paşa allowed those waiting in the ports of Beirut and Jafa to cross to British-controlled Egypt on the same ship. On June 26, 1915, Vecih Efendi boarded the American *Tennessee* in Beirut and sailed first to the Egyptian port of Alexandria and then to Barcelona, Spain, the ship's final destination. On July 25, 1915, he boarded a Spanish ship named *Manuel Calvo*, which departed from there and went to New York.¹⁵⁸

Mehmed Vecih Efendi's Mission in the USA and His Attempts to Return to the Philippines

Vecih Efendi arrived in New York City, USA on a ship from Spain on August 12, 1915, with his Moro servant Tahir, who was accompanying him.¹⁵⁹ Tahir, his Moro servant, was detained by the customs authorities at Ellis Island for a while as he was under the age of 16 but was released upon Vecih Efendi's request. The two of them

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155 Clarence-Smith, "Middle Eastern States and the Philippines", 209. It is stated that one of the people who travelled to the USA with Vecih Efendi was a Moro servant named Tahir, whom he had brought with him on his return from the Philippines, and the other was a person assigned by Cemal Paşa to act as his interpreter and secretary. See Clarence-Smith, "Middle Eastern States and the Philippines", 209.

156 Clarence-Smith, "Middle Eastern States and the Philippines", 210.

157 Thompson, "Governors of Moro Province", 242.

158 William Clarence-Smith, "An Ottoman Notable in America in 1915-16: Sayyid Wahih al-Kilani of Nazareth," in *American and Muslim Worlds Before 1900*, ed. John Ghazvinian- Arthur Mitchell Fraas (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2020), 140.

159 "Kin of Mahomet Here To Pray on Skyscraper Top", *The Evening World* (New York), 12 August, 1915.

settled in the Hotel Sevilla together in the evening of the same day. The American newspapers of the period were very interested in his arrival in the USA, his identity and his thoughts, including the content of the interviews they had conducted in their newspapers. The *New York Tribune* described him in the next day's issue as an important "scholar, educated diplomat, linguist and direct descendant of the Prophet Muhammad". It reported that he had met with the Sultan in Istanbul and had witnessed the heavy bombardment and gunfire on the Gallipoli Peninsula as he left the country. Vecih Efendi stated that he had come to America to inform them that Moros were not bad people and that he wished to express this on various platforms. He was quoted as saying, "in time the Moros would be citizens of which the United States need not be ashamed."¹⁶⁰ The *New York Times* introduced him as the Religious Commissioner of the Ottoman Empire in the Philippine Islands and noted that he was assigned to provide education to his Muslim co-religionists in the Philippines.¹⁶¹

American newspapers reported that he was very impressed by the skyscrapers of Manhattan and said, "Manhattan's skyscrapers would make ideal places to offer Mohammedan prayers."¹⁶² This news was later shared by many American newspapers as an interesting news item.¹⁶³ The newspapers reported that he was a born diplomat, fluent in many languages, including English, and a special envoy of the Ottoman Sultan and that he was a former clerk of the Shaykh al-Islam in Istanbul.¹⁶⁴ In October, some newspapers reported that when the ship he was travelling on docked in New York harbour, Vecih Efendi's eyes were fixed on the skyscrapers of Manhattan and that this was when he made the aforementioned remark.¹⁶⁵ They also published photographs of him in robes and turban, noting that he was wearing an oriental robe over a European-style dress, and that he carried with him a genealogy reaching back to the Prophet Mohamed.¹⁶⁶

160 "Sheik Smiles at Rolling Sea", *New York Tribune*, 13 August, 1915.

161 "Sheikh Here to Lecture", *New York Times*, 13 August, 1915.

162 "Telegraph Briefs", *The Day Book (Chicago)*, 13 August, 1915; "Likes Skyscrapers", *The Muncie Evening Press (Indiana)*, 13 August, 1915. For the same news, see Ohio-based *Xenia Daily Gazette*, "Great Alter", 13 August, 1915.

163 *The Burlington Free Press*, 17 August 1915; *The Union Republican* (Winston-Salem), 26 August 1915; *The Tampa Tribune* (Florida), 27 August 1915; *The Salina Daily Union* (Kansas), "Mohammad's Hitherto Unheard of Visit to Gotham", 11 September 1915. For the same title and news, also see *The Chronical Telegram* (Ohio), 14 September 1915; *The Kansas City Globe*, 16 September 1915; *The Salina Union* (Kansas), 14 September 1915.

164 *The Union Republican*, "Sheikh Sayid M. Wajih Gilani", 26 August 1915; *The Tampa Tribune*, "Sheikh Sayid M. Wajih Gilani", 27 August 1915; *The Kane Republican*, "Sheikh Sayid M. Wajih Gilani", 19 August 1915; *Durham Morning Herald*, "Scion of Mohammad Thinks New York Skyscrapers, A Good Place to Worship", 19 August 1915; *The Fort Wayne Daily News*, "Scion of Mohammad", 23 August 1915;

165 The sentence attributed to Vecih Efendi is as follows: "As the liner came up the bay the sheik gazed at the Manhattan's skyscrapers and remarked what fine places they would make from which to offer up a Mohammedan prayer." See *The Mound Valley Journal* (Kansas), "He Liked the Skyscrapers", 08 October 1915; *The Perry County Times*, "He Liked the Skyscrapers", 14 October 1915; *The Owensboro* (Kentucky), 20 October 1915; *Asbury Park Evening Press* (New Jersey), 20 October 1915; *The Evening Republican* (Columbus), "He Liked the Skyscrapers", 21 October 1915.

166 The same newspapers. Some of the American newspaper clippings, including Vecih Efendi's quote about the skyscrapers of Manhattan, were obtained and brought to my attention by Serdar Çöp, secretary of the Center for Ottoman-Malay World Studies Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakif University. I would like to thank him for his help.

In New York, Vecih Efendi attracted the attention of many American journalists, some of whom interviewed him at the hotel where he stayed. Vecih Efendi, who was mentioned in various American newspapers, resided in New York City for some time and visited the Ottoman Consulate General there and the Turkish Mosque in Manhattan, which had opened in 1910. He met with the imam of the mosque, Mehmed Ali Efendi, who worked as an official attached to the Ottoman Embassy in Washington.¹⁶⁷



Image 9: Vecih Efendi in New York
(Source: New York Tribune, 13 August 1915)

After his arrival in New York, Vecih Efendi sent "three open letters and one paper dollar" to be delivered to his family living in Nazareth. These were delivered to the Consulate General of Thessaloniki by the Mufti's Office of Thessaloniki and

167 İşıl Acehan, "Osmanlı'nın Filipinler Şeyhülislamı Muhammed El-Vecih El-Geylani'nin Manhattan Ziyareti (The Manhattan Visit of Muhammed El-Vecih El-Geylani, Ottoman Sheikh-ul-Islam of the Philippines)", <https://forumusa.com/amerika-usa-amerika-birlesik-devletleri/osmanli-seyh-ul-islami-new-yorkta-bu-gokdelenlerden-azan-okumak-ne-guzel-olurdu/> (Published: March 10, 2019). Acehan, who drew attention to Vecih Efendi's remark about the skyscrapers of Manhattan, has also been instrumental in his recent recognition in Türkiye.

sent to the Ministry of Interior for delivery to his family through the Governorate of Beirut with the consulate's letter dated September 22, 1915.¹⁶⁸

After staying at the Hotel Sevilla in New York, Vecih Efendi travelled to Philadelphia, where he resided in a house on Oak Lane Avenue.¹⁶⁹ During his stay in Philadelphia, he made various attempts to negotiate with American officials in the capital city of Washington about his return to the Philippines. First, on September 2, 1915, he wrote to US President Wilson from Philadelphia, requesting a meeting about his return to the Philippines. He also explained in his application that Glazebrook, the Consul General of Jerusalem, had entrusted him with a letter of introduction and that he wanted to present it in person. He wrote that his communications to the Moros in the Philippines would establish "their highest respect and affection for the great government" represented by the President.¹⁷⁰

When he received no response from this attempt, Vecih Efendi asked to meet the Minister of Defence, Lindley M. Garrison. Garrison oversaw the Bureau of Insular Affairs, which also functioned as the American Colonial Office and was responsible for civil affairs in the American colonies abroad. On September 23, 1915, Vecih Efendi wrote to the Secretary of Defence Garrison requesting a meeting. In his letter, he stressed that Finley's mission to Istanbul had been recognised by the Ottoman government and that his own mission required official recognition by the American government and requested that he be appointed to an official position in the Philippines. He also stated that his service to the Moros would promote their welfare and help them to fully obey the law, which he would always encourage. The Secretary of Defence Garrison copied Vecih's letter and sent it to Governor-General Harrison of the Philippines and to the Regional Governor in Zamboanga in the south.¹⁷¹

However, the American authorities did not grant his request for a meeting with either President Wilson or the Minister of Defence, Garrison. In fact, the Department of State, having received advance notice of Vecih Efendi's arrival in the United States, wrote a memorandum to his colleagues in the ministry before his arrival in New York, requesting that the news of this meeting be kept at the lowest level if the American President gave this Ottoman representative the opportunity to meet. The Ministry of Defence also considered this meeting inadvisable in the face of the determined opposition of the Governor-General of the Philippines, Harrison. This was because Harrison insisted that Vecih Efendi be treated only as a personal

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168 BOA, DH.KMS., 34/24.

169 *The Courier Journal* newspaper (Louisville, Kentucky) reported on 5 September 1915 that he was residing at the Hotel Sevilla in New York. He used the address "506 Oak Lane Avenue, 629 North, 15th Street" as the address of the house where he stayed while in Philadelphia. See Clarence-Smith, "An Ottoman Notable in America", 143.

170 Clarence-Smith, "An Ottoman Notable in America", 146; Charbonneau, "Civilizational Imperative", 400.

171 Clarence-Smith, "An Ottoman Notable in America", 145-146.

missionary. The Bureau of Insular Affairs also made an effort to prevent Vecih Efendi from meeting with President Wilson. Finally, the American government wrote to Vecih Efendi through the Department of State, informing him that it was not possible to make an appointment and that he should act through the “Turkish Chargé d’Affaires” in Washington.¹⁷²

Vecih Efendi then tried to contact the lower-ranking General Hugh L. Scott, who was serving in the southern Philippines and was now the Chief of Staff of the US Army. In the meantime, it appears that Vecih Efendi also contacted his friend John Finley, who was serving in a military unit in Texas. Finley had also tried to support and help him to return to the Philippines while he was in the United States. As a matter of fact, Finley wrote a letter of recommendation to the Chief of Staff Scott on September 23, 1915, suggesting that Vecih Efendi’s return to the Philippines would be in the best interest of the American administration and that he was the most suitable person to teach the Moros “their religion and their duty to the government in maintaining public order and development in the region.”¹⁷³

Around the same time, Vecih Efendi also contacted Dr. Najeeb Saleeby, a Lebanese native in the Philippines whom he had met in Manila and with whom he had established a close relationship. He asked him informally for the opinion of the authorities on whether he could return to the Philippines. Vecih Efendi received a telegram signed by Saleeby and Hashim in which they advised him to inform the official channels appropriately before returning to the Philippines. They also wanted him to write to the American authorities to express the support of respected Syrian personalities in the Philippines for his return to the Philippines. The Hashim who signed the telegram was Najib T. Hashim, a close friend of Saleeby’s, a Protestant Christian of Lebanese descent from a Greek Orthodox family living in the Philippines.¹⁷⁴

Most probably with the support of John Finley, Vecih Efendi travelled from Philadelphia to Washington in early October, hoping to meet with the Chief of Staff Scott. In its Sunday supplement (*The Sunday Star*) of October 10, 1915, the *Washington Star* announced that Vecih Efendi had arrived in Washington to meet with Scott and shared his interview with its readers. The Sunday Star published a photograph of Vecih Efendi in a white shirt, bow tie, robe and fez over a white turban, and reported that he had travelled to the capital Washington to meet with the Chief of the General Staff, General Scott, and that he had dinner with the Turkish Ambassador. The newspaper described him as a “pure Arab” descendant of the Prophet Mohamed but “as blond as the Teutons [Germans], tall and thin, with auburn hair, sparse beard

172 Clarence-Smith, “An Ottoman Notable in America”, 146.

173 Charbonneau, “Civilizational Imperatives”, 400.

174 Clarence-Smith, “An Ottoman Notable in America”, 144.

and moustache". It was written that when he travelled to the Philippines the Moros there welcomed him as a Muslim prince. It was also emphasised that Vecih Efendi was tolerant towards other races and Christians and that he opposed the independence of the Philippines.¹⁷⁵

In fact, Vecih Efendi's view on the independence of the Philippines was related to the view advocated by the Moros. As a matter of fact, the Moros did not support the independence movement of the Filipino nationalists and preferred to remain under a separate administration. In the event of the establishment of an independent Philippine state, the Moros had stated that they would prefer that the Muslim regions be excluded from the new independent state to be established and that they would prefer to remain under the US administration until an independent state was established for Muslims.¹⁷⁶ In the 1920s and 1930s, they even applied to the American administration with petitions signed by many datus and asked that the Moro region be kept outside the borders of the independent Philippine state. Clearly, they insisted that they did not want to be ruled by Christian Filipinos.¹⁷⁷

Vecih Efendi wrote a letter to Scott on October 11, 1915, from Washington, requesting a meeting. Copying the letter of recommendation he had received from Glazebrook and enclosing his business card with the inscription "Seyyid M. Vecih Zeyd el-Geylanî, Shaykh al-Islam of the Philippines", he asked Scott to assist him in securing a meeting with President Wilson. In his second letter to Scott, dated October 14, 1915, he wrote that he wished to present the President's wife with a "Damascus silk cloak trimmed in gold" that he had brought with him and asked him if this was an acceptable gift according to American custom. He also stated that the Ottoman Sultan had appointed him to the post on the recommendation of John P. Finley, now a lieutenant general in the American army. He stated that until now he had always paid for his mission himself. In his reply to Vecih Efendi on October 16, 1915, Scott, who was a soldier but approached the issue in a diplomatic manner, stated that he had no power to interfere in the President's affairs and that under these circumstances it would be more appropriate for him to submit his letter through the Turkish representation in Washington. Scott, however, said that he would be pleased to shake his hand in person and would consider it a pleasure to introduce him to the Minister of Defence.¹⁷⁸ Probably encouraged by his private meeting with Scott, Vecih Efendi wrote again to the Secretary of Defence Garrison a week later, on October 23, 1915, requesting a meeting mediated by Scott, but received no response.¹⁷⁹

175 The Sunday supplement of *The Washington Star* newspaper, *The Sunday Star*, "Sayid Effendi Calls Upon Scott", 10 October 1915.

176 Makol-Abdul, "Colonialism and Change", 318-319.

177 Majul, "The Moro Struggle in the Philippines", 899.

178 Clarence-Smith, "An Ottoman Notable in America", 146.

179 Charbonneau, "Civilizational Imperative", 400.

While in Washington, Vecih Efendi gave a speech at the National Press Club, an influential American press club, and was subsequently given temporary honorary membership by the club's management. It is understood that he was given this honorary membership because of his good relations with American press officials, and as a result of a laudatory interview with him in the Sunday supplement of the *Washington Star* of October 10, 1915.¹⁸⁰

Another debate about Vecih Efendi's return to the Philippines was the means by which he should travel to the Philippines. Finley, who thought that he should return to the Philippines by military transport, wrote to Chief of Staff Scott on October 2, 1915, requesting that Vecih Efendi be sent on board a military ship that would sail from San Francisco to Manila in early November 1915. Vecih Efendi tried to get Scott's support in this matter, but Scott wrote to Vecih Efendi on October 12, diplomatically replying that this would be against the rules of the Ministry of Defence. Scott also wrote privately to Finley on the same date, being more explicit about the matter and saying that Secretary of Defence Garrison was not always prepared to stand against the views of Governor-General Harrison. Vecih Efendi could go to the Philippines without any official recognition and only as a Muslim missionary. Moreover, if his activities posed a threat to public order, he should be removed from the country. Scott stated that he personally favoured Vecih Efendi's return to the Moro region, believing that he could be useful in "restoring peace and tranquillity to the country". However, the Bureau of Insular Affairs was strongly opposed to such an option. On November 15, 1915, it wrote to Vecih Efendi, stressing that he could travel to the Philippines, but not "by military transport" and without any official recognition by the government. The Bureau argued that official recognition of a Muslim figure would violate the separation of religion and state enshrined in the United States Constitution. To this, Vecih Efendi replied that adequate conditions for the management of his health in terms of rest and diet would not be possible on a merchant ship.¹⁸¹ In response, the Bureau replied on February 1, 1916, that only American officials and employees had the right to board a military vehicle. In response to Vecih Efendi's requests, the Bureau also stated that the principle of separation of church and state meant that "the government has nothing to do with religious affairs on the islands and will not interfere with anyone carrying out such activities". On the same date, the Bureau of Insular Affairs also wrote to Governor-General Harrison to instruct him to allow Vecih Efendi to return to the colony privately, but to give him absolutely, no official recognition or assistance.¹⁸² Thus, the authorities in the United States and the Philippines strongly opposed Vecih Efendi's attempts to

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180 Clarence-Smith, "An Ottoman Notable in America", 143.

181 Clarence-Smith, "An Ottoman Notable in America", 146-147.

182 Charbonneau, "Civilizational Imperatives", 401.

return to the Philippines as an official, saying that he could only go as an individual Muslim preacher.

In the interviews with newspaper reporters while in the United States, Vecih Efendi emphasized that his main task as the Shaykh al-Islam of the Philippines was to improve relations between the Moros and the American authorities. He stated that one of the reasons he came to the United States was to raise funds for the education of the Moros. For example, *The Richmond Times Dispatch* newspaper announced that he had come to America to collect aid for the Moros in Mindanao.¹⁸³ *The Courier Journal* newspaper based in Louisville (Kentucky), after stating that Vecih Efendi was a descendant of the Prophet Mohamed and the Shaykh of the Philippine islands under American administration, wrote that he would stay in America for a while in order to raise funds for the education of the Moros in Mindanao.¹⁸⁴ Although Vecih Efendi attributed his return to his homeland from the Philippines to his illness, he told the reporter of *The Washington Star* that one of the main reasons for his return to Türkiye was to collect donations from wealthy and philanthropic Muslims for the Moros and to find suitable educators removed from fanaticism and take them to the Philippines.¹⁸⁵

One of Vecih Efendi's main goals in America was to "introduce the true principles of Islam" to Americans, and he particularly attached importance to the development of relations between Muslims and Christians. On various occasions, he emphasized that Islam envisages establishing good relations with other religions and sects, and that it was especially important to live in friendship and peace with Christians. In an interview with the *New York Tribune* reporter after his arrival in the USA, he stated that Islam prioritizes good relations with other religions, the importance of living in friendship and reconciliation with Christianity, and the necessity of avoiding conflicts and jealousy between sects. He emphasized the need to ensure freedom of religion for members of different religions and beliefs and adopted a tolerant attitude towards other races and Christians. He noted that there are several Qur'anic verses and hadiths of the Prophet on these issues. When reporters inquired about his views on women and polygamy, he emphasized that men and women were equal before the law, that differences existed only in terms of physical characteristics, and advocated the education of women and giving them the right to vote. He said that although Islam allowed polygamy, he always defended monogamy. He told the American reporter: "I believe in only one wife. Although my religion allows one, two, three,

183 *The Richmond Times Dispatch*, 15 August 1915.

184 "Lineal Descendant of Mohammad Here," *The Courier Journal (Louisville)*, 5 September 1915.

185 The Sunday supplement of *The Washington Star* newspaper, *The Sunday Star*, "Sayid Effendi Calls Upon Scott", 10 October, 1915.

or four wives, I have only one wife".¹⁸⁶ Later, writing to the Secretary of Defense Garrison, he stated that one of the reasons he was in America was to present his views on Islam, "the most peaceful and progressive religion".¹⁸⁷ During his stay in America, Vecih Efendi tried to present a modern understanding of Islam both in his letters to American officials and in his interviews with newspaper reporters. His views in this direction attracted the attention of the American media.¹⁸⁸

He told newspaper reporters that before he travelled to the Philippines again, he was going to publish a pamphlet or booklet to correct some of the misconceptions and perceptions of Americans about Islam. The booklet he intended to publish was titled "What saith Sheikhu Islam of the Philippines".¹⁸⁹ However, this work was never printed and is presumably a manuscript entitled "Truths of the Islamic Religion" which was found among his personal belongings that were handed over to his family after his death.¹⁹⁰

The American press was also very interested in Vecih Efendi's attire and wrote about his clothes in great detail. For example, *The Courier Journal*, after emphasizing that, contrary to popular belief, he was "as blond as the Scots", described him as "tall and thin, with blond hair that peeked out from the ends of his cap, a light moustache and short beard, light blue eyes, and that he was kind and humorous". It was written that he wore a white turban wrapped over a red fez, light grey silky socks, low-heeled leather shoes, a pleated and starched white shirt, a black silk bow tie and a black robe with a long linen collar standing upright.¹⁹¹

Vecih Efendi, while preserving the basic values of religious tradition, had an innovative and modernist understanding of Islam. Indeed, Clarence-Smith has noted that he was influenced by the Egyptian scholar Rashid Rida's innovative understanding of Islam. He stated that on his way back to Istanbul from the Philippines, he met with the Khedive of Egypt in Alexandria at the end of April 1914 and that Rashid Rida was present at this meeting. Rashid Rida, in his commemoration letter after his death, described Vecih Efendi as not only a friend but also a reliable ally in awakening a wider Islamic world.¹⁹²

While in Philadelphia, Vecih Efendi suffered a relapse of his kidney disease and

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186 "Qoran Aids Sheik in Suffrage Quiz: One Wife is Enough; Women Equal Men Mentally", *New York Tribune*, 14 August, 1915.

187 Clarence-Smith, "An Ottoman Notable in America", 143.

188 Gedacht, "Native Americans, the Ottoman Empire", 137.

189 "Sheikh Smiles At Rolling Sea", *New York Tribune*, 13 August 1915; "Lineal Descendant of Mohammad Here" *The Courier Journal* (Louisville), 5 September 1915.

190 Clarence-Smith, "An Ottoman Notable in America", 143.

191 "Lineal Descendant of Mohammad Here", *The Courier Journal* (Louisville), 5 September 1915.

192 Clarence-Smith, "An Ottoman Notable in America", 143.

was examined by a doctor specializing in kidney inflammation and chronic nephritis of the kidneys. There he made contact with a well-known physician Dr Anthony John Baker, who was said to be a member of the Ahmadiyya sect.¹⁹³ In Philadelphia, he also established good relations with settlers of Ottoman immigrant origin who had emigrated to the United States from Syria, Lebanon and Palestine. At the time, Philadelphia had a significant population of Arabic-speaking Ottoman immigrants, mostly of various Christian denominations, with a small number of Muslim families. There was a Palestinian Muslim family named Mohammed Ahmed who settled in Philadelphia in 1908. While in New York, Vecih Efendi must have frequently visited the headquarters of *al-Huda al-Arabiyya*, the first Arabic newspaper published in America, and shared his plans with the editors of the newspaper. This newspaper announced Vecih Efendi's death with a large advertisement. Later, *al-Manar* magazine in Cairo also published the news of his death.¹⁹⁴

It is estimated that Vecih Efendi spent the last months of his stay in America with the financial support provided by the Ottoman representation. As a matter of fact, Celal Bey, the Consul General in New York, wrote to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on December 17, 1915, stating that Vecih Efendi, who was still in Philadelphia, had to go to the hospital for a month for treatment due to the chronic kidney disease he was suffering from, and that in addition to his illness that "even his cash was about to run out". He requested the Ministry to allow him to receive aid in order to prevent him from being miserable and poor.¹⁹⁵

In early February 1916, due to his worsening illness, Vecih Efendi moved his residence to Richmond, Virginia, where he thought the climate would be more favorable and made contact with people of Lebanese and Syrian origin. Among them was Mr Dibb, who announced his death and sent his belongings to the Turkish consulate in New York. In addition, the Lebanese merchant Halil el-Dibsi informed his family in Nazareth of his death, but his letter did not arrive until after the end of the war. Vecih Efendi resided at the expensive and prestigious Jefferson Hotel in Richmond, still known today as a historic hotel.¹⁹⁶

The Death of Mehmet Vecih Efendi in the United States of America

Vecih Efendi's life in America ended with his death in Richmond, Virginia. His chronic kidney disease worsened in early 1916, along with heart disease. As his illness progressed, he was admitted to Hygeia Hospital in Richmond. Hüseyin Bey, the Ottoman consul in Washington, visited him in the hospital, and Mr Dibb, a

193 Clarence-Smith, "An Ottoman Notable in America", 143-144.

194 Clarence-Smith, "An Ottoman Notable in America", 144-145.

195 BOA, HR.UHM. 186-61.

196 Clarence-Smith, "An Ottoman Notable in America", 145-146.

Lebanese resident of the city, also took great care of him throughout his illness. He died at Hygeia Hospital in Richmond on May 4, 1916, when he was only 34 years old, and was buried in the Hollywood Cemetery in the city.¹⁹⁷

The Richmond Times Dispatch announced the death of Vecih Efendi in its issue dated 6 May 1916 with the headline “Sultan’s Representative Dies at Hygeia Hospital”. Presenting him as the special “religious representative of the Sultan of Turkey” in the Philippine Islands. The newspaper reported that he passed away at Hygeia Hospital where he had been hospitalized due to his long-standing illness. It stated that Hüseyin Bey, the consul at the Turkish Embassy in Washington, had been informed of his death and that his body was being held pending further instructions from the embassy. It wrote that a month earlier he had suddenly fallen ill and had been hospitalized from the Jefferson Hotel, with only his Moro maid Tahir by his side. He was described as a Muslim scholar of “extraordinary culture” who “spoke six languages” and was “the author of several books”.¹⁹⁸

The same newspaper reported details of his funeral on the back pages of its next day’s issue. According to the news report, Vecih Efendi was buried in the Hollywood Cemetery in the city at 5 pm on Saturday, May 6, 1916, after the imam of the Turkish Consulate in New York City, performed the religious duties. The newspaper reported that the war conditions did not allow the transportation of his body to his hometown and that it could be carried out after the war if his relatives wished.¹⁹⁹

With his untimely death in America, Vecih Efendi was unable to fully fulfil the mission he had undertaken, and death took him away before he could see the realization of his projects.²⁰⁰ However, there were also those who rejoiced his untimely death. Even two years after Vecih Efendi’s death, Moro Regional Governor Carpenter, who did not want to see him in the Philippines, considered his death as a “timely” death that eliminated a possible threat to public order in the region.²⁰¹

When Vecih Efendi’s family living in Nazareth did not hear from him for a

197 Clarence-Smith, “Wajih al-Kilani, Shaykh al-Islam of the Philippines”, 189.

198 “Sultan’s Representative Dies at Hygeia Hospital”, *The Richmond Times Dispatch*, 6 May, 1916.

199 *The Richmond Times Dispatch*, “Buried in Hollywood,” May 7, 1916, p.11. The news in the newspaper about his burial is as follows: “Syed Mohammad al-Gilani, Sheik-ul-Islam of the Philippine Islands, was buried yesterday afternoon at 5 o’clock in Hollywood Cemetery. The Imam, or high priest attached to the Turkish Consulate in New York city, performed the last rites over the grave. War conditions in Europe required the burial of the distinguished Turkish sheik in this city. At the expiration of war the body may be reinterred in his native land, if relatives so desire”.

200 Clarence-Smith, “An Ottoman Notable in America”, 147.

201 Charbonneau, “Civilizational Imperative”, 401

long time, they became skeptical about whether he was alive or not and asked for help from Azmi Bey, the Governor of Beirut at the time. Azmi Bey reported the situation to the Ministry of Interior on July 3, 1916.²⁰² The Consulate General in New York sent a letter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on July 12, 1916, stating that Vecih Efendi had died on May 4, 1916, in Richmond, Virginia, unable to recover from the chronic illness he had contracted. Informing that his funeral was performed by Mehmed Ali Efendi, the imam in charge of the Ottoman Embassy in Washington, and his body was buried in the Richmond cemetery. His personal belongings, including two bags, a chest, a wooden box and a bag, were sent to the Consulate General by N. F. Dibb, an Ottoman subject residing in Richmond.²⁰³ The Ministry of Interior wrote to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on November 9, 1916, requesting information about his. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in its letter to the Ministry of Interior on November 19, 1916, referred to the letter of the Consulate General in New York and notified the news of his death to be delivered to his family. In addition, the *Meşihat* Office was also notified.²⁰⁴

Vecih Efendi died at a very young age and left behind a family in need of care. Cemal Paşa, who had arranged for him to go to America, was very saddened to hear the news of his death and thus wrote to the Ministry of Interior on November 20, 1916, asking the government to provide assistance to his family left behind. He described Vecih Efendi, who had been sent to America “to undertake jihad in the Muslim world in the Far East”, as “a valuable and self-sacrificing person” and proposed that a special law be passed by the parliament and a salary of 1,500 kurus be allocated for him from the national service order. He stated that he had left behind “two unmarried sisters, three unmarried daughters and a little boy besides his mother and wife” and that these children were between the ages of seven and eighteen and were still residing in Nazareth.²⁰⁵ However, the Minister of Interior Talat Bey stated that it would be very difficult for the parliament to enact a law on national service salary for the family, and it was decided in the meeting of the Council of Ministers that the requested 1,500 kurus would be given to the grieving family as a one-off payment.²⁰⁶

After the war, members of Vecih Efendi’s family continued to reside in Nazareth and Nablus. His son Suri later worked in the court in Nazareth during the

202 Türker, “ABD’nin Talebi (The Request of the USA)”, 538.

203 BOA DH.EUM.4.Şb. 8/20.

204 BOA, HR.UHM., 186/61; BOA DHEUM.4.Şb. 8/20; Kadı-Peacock, *Ottoman-Southeast Asian Relations* 2, 955-956.

205 BOA DH.KMS. 42/13; Kadı-Peacock, *Ottoman-Southeast Asian Relations* 2, 956-957.

206 BOA, DH.KMS., 42/13; BOA, MV., 205/63.

British Mandate and his daughter Fatima worked in another office. Through the intermarriage of the Zubi family in Nazareth with the Geylani family, the two families became related. During the Arab-Israeli war in 1948, his son Suri was killed in an explosion and his daughter Fatima emigrated to Amman. Today, it is stated that the family lineage continues in Palestine and Jordan.²⁰⁷

One of the objectives of this research was to uncover Vecih Efendi's grave in Richmond. Our attempts in this direction yielded result while we were doing the final readings of the manuscript of this book. Vecih Efendi's burial place in the Hollywood Cemetery was rediscovered on May 4, 2023 (the 107th anniversary of his death at the hospital) by Assoc. Prof. Melis Hafez, a faculty member of the History Department of Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond and her colleague Prof. Dr. Ryan K. Smith, an expert on the historical cemeteries in Richmond.²⁰⁸ In the cemetery records, his full name was spelled as "Sayed M. Wajah Gilani" and it was indicated that he was buried in the 75th grave on the 4th row of the 22nd Single Graves Section. According to the records he was buried on May 6, 1916.²⁰⁹ Because the exact place of the grave was not marked Assoc. Prof. Melis Hafez and Prof. Dr. Ryan K. Smith firstly located the grave with the number 76 and then determined that the grave just next to it belonged to Vecih Efendi.²¹⁰ It is important that the relevant state institutions contact the cemetery administration and build a memorial in accordance with Islamic tradition at the site.

207 Clarence-Smith, "Wajih al-Kilani, Shaykh al-Islam of the Philippines", 191.

208 For the details of the news, see <https://osmanlimalay.fsm.edu.tr/haber/Mehmed-Vecih-Efendinin-107-Yil-Sonra-Ilk-Ziyaretcileri2023-05-18-16-04-34pm>

209 For this information, see <https://www.hollywoodcemetery.org/genealogy/burial-records>. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Assoc. Prof. Melis Hafez and her friend Prof. Dr. to Ryan K. Smith who shared this information and the photos of the site with us. I would also like to thank my esteemed colleague and the co-editor of this book, Prof. Dr. İsmail Hakkı Kadi for making this possible by contacting our colleagues in the USA.

210 The grave numbered 76 next to Vecih Efendi, belongs to Julius A. Spiegel who died on 20 May 1916 and was buried on 22 May 1916. See <https://www.hollywoodcemetery.org/genealogy/burial-records>.

Search Burial Records

Enter a name below to search our burial records:

first: sayed

Tour Information

Search Results
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Sayed M. Wajah Gilani

Born: Unknown Died: Unknown
Service: 05/06/1916 Age: 32

Section: 22 Single Graves
Plot: Row 4 Sub Plot | Niche | Crypt: Grave 75

[Get Directions](#) [View & Submit Memories](#)

Other Plot Occupants
No other occupants for this plot.

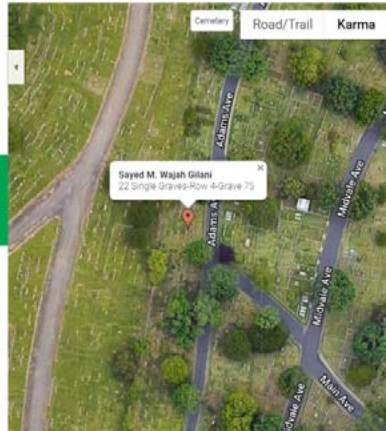


Image 10: Vecih Efendi's burial record at Hollywood Cemetery (<https://www.hollywoodcemetery.org/genealogy/burial-records.>)

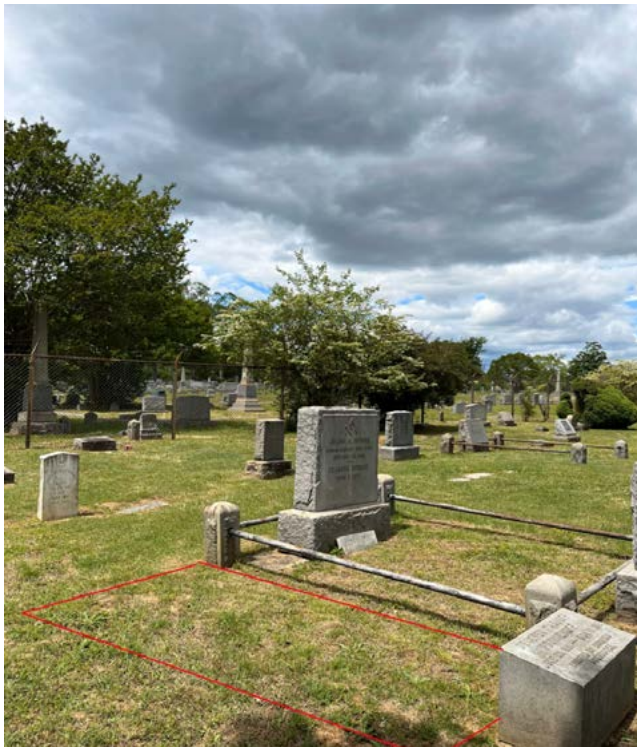


Image 11: The exact place where Vecih Efendi was buried (Photo by Assoc. Prof. Melis Hafez, 4 May 2023)

Conclusion

As a result of the information and evaluations made so far about Mehmet Vecih Efendi, known as the Shaykh al-Islam of the Philippines, and his mission, it is possible to conclude the following. The demands of the Moro Muslims in the Philippines for the Ottoman Sultan and Caliph to send a respected religious representative to the region had been voiced since the early years of the American occupation. However, this desire of theirs was realised with the approval of Major John Park Finley, the Governor of Zamboanga, and as a result of his initiatives. The American administration in the Philippines wanted to take advantage of the influence of the Ottoman Sultan over Moro Muslims, as the caliph, in order to break the Moro resistance. The Moro Muslims in and around Zamboanga city chose Finley as their absolute delegate representative to deliver to the Ottoman Sultan the Moro petition prepared under the leadership of Haji Abdullah Nuno, requesting that a religious representative be sent. Initially unable to obtain the approval of the American government, Finley, with the approval of the newly elected Democratic President Wilson, travelled to Istanbul as the special representative of the Moros to deliver the petition to the addressee and ensured that the Moro petition was presented to Sultan Reşad through the office of Shaykh al-Islam. Finley, who was received very positively by both the Shaykh al-Islam and the Ottoman government officials in Istanbul, achieved his goal and all Moro requests mentioned in the petition were fulfilled by the Ottoman government.

As the religious representative requested by the Moros, Mehmed Vecih Efendi, who was working in the *Meşihat* Office, was assigned to the Philippines as “Deputy Shaykh al-Islam” upon the proposal of the office of Shaykh al-Islam and the approval of Sultan Reşad. The fact that he was a *seyyid*, received a good religious and official education and spoke many languages played an important role in his appointment to this position. Leaving Istanbul in October 1913, Vecih Efendi visited important religious centers in India and Singapore on his way to the Philippines by sea and left an important mark as the Ottoman representative on Indian and Malay Muslims. When he arrived in Zamboanga, Philippines, on January 28, 1914, he was welcomed with an official ceremony by Finley and a large Moro community. Vecih Efendi, together with Finley, attended meetings organized in various places and made religious speeches to the Moros. Wherever he went, the Moro people welcomed him with great love and enthusiasm and respected him as the representative of the Ottoman Sultan and Caliph. However, his activities in the Philippines and his stay in the country were very short. Many American and Filipino officials other than Finley wanted him to leave the country, fearing that his

activities would not break the Moro resistance, on the contrary, would lead to the revival of the Moro jihad. He left the Philippines two months later, citing kidney disease as the reason.

After returning to Türkiye, Vecih Efendi sought various opportunities to return to the Philippines and to serve the Moro Muslims. During the First World War, he was sent by the Ottoman government to the United States of America, this time in June 1915, to go to the Philippines. Although he made various attempts to return to the Philippines before the American administration, the American government officials strongly opposed his return to the Philippines in an official religious capacity and did not allow him to return. Vecih Efendi remained in the United States for nearly nine months, where he acted as a respected Ottoman representative, a tolerant advocate of Christian-Muslim interaction, a preacher of the modern understanding of Islam, and a defender of the rights of Moro Muslims. While in the United States, he established good relations with the Christian and Muslim immigrant settlers of the Ottoman subjects of Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian origin living in the cities of Philadelphia and Richmond, where he resided.

Vecih Efendi embraced his mission as the Shaykh al-Islam of the Philippines, valued it greatly and endeavoured to represent his position everywhere. However, his tenure was short-lived due to his chronic kidney disease and his efforts to serve the Philippine Muslims came to an end with his untimely death at a young age. On this occasion, it would be an appropriate decision to keep his name and memory alive by giving his name to a mosque, school or a center that could be built around Zamboanga in the Philippines with the contribution of Türkiye.

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CHAPTER TWO

MALAY PUBLICATIONS PRINTED IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND MECCA PROVINCIAL PRINTING HOUSE

Filiz Dıđırođlu¹

Introduction

It is known that Southeast Asians have been travelling to the holy lands to perform the pilgrimage and have been in contact with Mecca-Medina since they became Muslims.² The journey to the holy lands was not only for the purpose of being a pilgrim, but also for the purpose of studying religious sciences, and sometimes both were possible. Some of those who received education in Islamic sciences in Hijaz returned to their countries and worked as teachers, while others remained in the holy cities to train students and continue their scholarly activities. By the third quarter of the 19th century, steamship technology not only brought the holy cities closer, but also made travelling cheaper and safer, allowing more pilgrims and students from Southeast Asia to come to Mecca. The Al-Azhar Mosque and Madrasa in Cairo also emerged as an attractive venue for Islamic education for the Malay-Indonesian world. As a natural extension of this interest, a community of Javanese residents emerged in Mecca and Cairo. These Malay and Indonesian Muslims, who lived in Mecca and Cairo under

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2 This study would not have come into existence without the help and support of a number of individuals. Firstly, I would like to thank Mr Süheyl Sapan for providing access to his collection of Hijaz newspapers. I am grateful to my esteemed colleague Güllü Yıldız, who generously shared her knowledge of Islamic sciences and bibliography and with whom we conducted the research in the Leiden library. I would like to thank my students Sinem Akyol and Nurbanu Yılmaz who took part in the archival research of the study, Elif Dıđırođlu who translated the Arabic sources, and Abdülevvel Siddiq and Naciye Tamimi, who provided valuable insights and access to information related to *ketebe* records in Jawi books. Lastly, I am grateful to İsmail Erünsal, whose vast knowledge in the field of bibliography greatly benefited this study, for his kindness in reading the manuscript and his contribution to its finalization.

Ottoman rule, were referred to as “Jawis” or “Javanese” in Arabic and Ottoman Turkish, in reference to the most populous Java Island in the region. However, there is limited information available in the literature regarding the daily lives, activities, and reasons for settlement of the Javanese in Mecca and Cairo.³ Additionally, the printing and publishing activities for the people of Java and the neighbouring islands, which began in Cairo but were also actively carried out in Mecca during the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II, have received limited academic attention.

This study examines the “books in Jawi” [Kitab Jawi] produced and traded in the Ottoman world. First of all, it should be stated that the texts defined as “Jawi” was the common language among Muslims in Southeast Asia and a written language based on Arabic script.⁴ This article discusses the printing and publishing activities for the people of the Java islands, which commenced in Cairo. They were intensified in Mecca during the reign of Abdülhamid II, and were also present in Istanbul, the centre of the caliphate. The study aims to understand the reasons for the Ottoman Empire’s permission to publish in a language that was not spoken within its territory, as well as the means by which it directly or indirectly supported such printing and publishing activities. Additionally, the study examines the relationship established with the region through various religious texts, specifically the *Mushaf* (written copy of the Quran), which were gifted to the Java islands. The religious book relationship between the Ottoman Empire and the Malay world is analysed with a particular emphasis on the production of books for the Malay world by the provincial printing house in Mecca.



Image 1: *Makkah Al Mukarram, Haram al-Sharif and Kaaba Muazzama* (Grand Kaaba).
(Source: Istanbul University Library, Abdülhamid Han II Photograph Albums, nr. 90770)

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- 3 For a valuable study of the Javanese who settled in Mecca, see Muhammad Arafat bin Mohammad, “Be-Longing: Fatanis in Makkah and Jawi.” (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2013).
 - 4 Jawi script, which is considered one of the most important contributions of Islam to Malay culture, consists of an alphabet based on Arabic script. While the Jawi script was initially used only in Islamic books, with the Malay language spoken in the Malay-Indonesian world becoming a common alphabet in writing, its usage area expanded and became widespread in the writing of other texts. Md. Sidin Ahmad Ishak, “Malay Book Publishing and Printing in Malaya and Singapore 1807-1949” (PhD diss., University of Stirling, 1992), 16, 52.

This study seeks to address a range of questions, with a particular focus on the Mecca printing house that hosts Jawi publications. Specifically, the study aims to investigate the following: the institutional structure, functioning and technical infrastructure of the Mecca printing house; the procurement of technical components such as printing equipment, paper, ink, and Jawi type; the rate of Javanese⁵ employment within the institutional structure and the structural distribution of this employment in the institution; the meaning and significance of the title “*musahhih*” in front of the names of the Javanese employed in the printing house and whether similar practices exist in other provincial printing houses; the volume of publishing activities for the Malay world; any correspondence related to the books to be printed in the printing house and the extent of Ottoman authorities’ involvement in these decisions, together with the presence of any references to Malay publishing activity in Istanbul within Ottoman sources.

It is known that the intellectual potential in Mecca revitalises during the pilgrimage periods through the pilgrim candidate scholars, students, and travellers. In addition to this, ordinary believers’ interest in basic level epistles or *Mushaf/juz* (parts of the Quran) to acquire religious knowledge has always put Mecca in an advantageous position in terms of book trade. This has led to a robust book market for both manuscripts and printed books. It is of interest to examine whether there is a specific focus on the Malay world among the activities of booksellers/*sahafs* (second hand booksellers) in Mecca, and if so, who these booksellers/publishers may be. Additionally, it is important to consider the quantities of Jawi books published in the Mecca printing house, and the pricing and distribution methods of these publications. Furthermore, an examination of the role played by Javanese *tullab* (students) and *huccac* (pilgrims) in the book trade in Mecca would provide valuable insight. The subject of this study is the examination of available data on these and other related questions.

5 For the Ottomans, the definition of “Java” [Jawa] corresponded to a fairly large region that included not only the island of Java but all the islands in Southeast Asia. The Ottoman use of the terms “Javanese *huccac* (pilgrims), *tullab* (students) and merchant” were inclusive of everyone in the Malay and Indonesian world, regardless of local differences. For both the ordinary people and the Ottoman authorities, all those from Singapore, Malaysia, Aceh, Padang, Batavia, Patani and other parts of the archipelago were Javanese. M.C Low, who observed the usage of the term in a similar context in the Ottoman archival documents suggests that the term could also include some other groups such as Chinese and Filipino pilgrims who travel through Singapore to the Holy Sites. See. M.Christopher Low, *Imperial Mecca Ottoman Arabia and the Indian Ocean Hajj*, Columbia University Press, 2020, Introduction, note 13.



Image 2: Javanese Pilgrim and His Family

(Source: Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Atatürk Library, nr. 27850)

The Development of the Printing House in Hijaz

The earliest record we have encountered in the Ottoman archives regarding the printing house in Hijaz dates back to 1872, which mentions a private printing house belonging to an individual named Ali Muhtar, one of the Hindu *mujāvirs* residing in Mecca. The printing house was closed upon the discovery of its operation without a licence. Two years later, the project of establishing a state printing house in Medina came to the fore, but it appears that this project was not realised as evidenced by the opening of the provincial printing house in Mecca in the summer of 1883. The request of the *sahaf* Seyyid Abdullah Nureddin Efendi, one of the *mujāvirs* of Mecca, to open a lithographic printing house in order to print books was positively received and permission was approved by the capital in the summer of 1876.⁶ Dutch orientalist C. Snouck Hurgronje, in his famous book about Mecca, mentioned the existence of printed Malay books in Mecca before the provincial printing house, and stated that in 1876 a lithographed book by Zaynuddin on prayers and worship had entered circulation.⁷ In this case, the possibility that this book was printed in the printing house of *sahaf* Nureddin cannot be ignored. However, among the books with a certain date in Ishak-Othman's list, which has been meticulously compiled and includes

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 6 Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye Directorate of State Archives Ottoman Archives (Hereafter, BOA), MF MKT 36/97, 39/58.

7 C. Snouck Hurgronje, *Mekka in the Latter Part of the 19th Century* (Leiden/ Boston: Brill, 2007), 306.

quite a few undated editions, the earliest record of publication is dated 1859 and is a book by Daud b. Abdullah al-Fatani printed in Cairo.⁸ Therefore, it is a fact that Malay printed books have been in circulation in Cairo since 1859. Zaynuddin's book in Mecca may have originated from Cairo, or it may have been printed in the printing house of the Meccan *sahaf* who had permission to open a printing house in Mecca at that time. If this is the case, it can be inferred that the private printing house in Mecca hosted a Malay-language publication about 7 years before the official provincial printing house of the Ottoman Empire. In fact, it should be stated that prior to the operation of the provincial printing house, Cairo-printed religious books catering to the needs of the Malay world were available in Cairo and Mecca.⁹

The opening of the provincial printing house in Mecca marked the beginning of a second and important phase in the production of books for the Malay world within Ottoman territories. Opened on August 8, 1883, the printing house printed its first book within a few months. Osman Nuri Pasha, the famous and zealous governor of Hijaz, who presented this book, *Manasik al-Hajj*, to Sultan Abdülhamid, emphasised that the book was published upon the request of a merchant. The Mecca printing house, like other provincial printing houses, was designed to meet both the needs of the state and the demands of publishers and booksellers in that region.¹⁰ Additionally, it was noted that a significant number of books were printed in Ottoman lands, particularly in Egyptian printing houses, and sent to India and the Java islands via Mecca and Cairo. Underlining that the printing quality of the Mecca printing house was much better and that this was also appreciated by the tradesmen, the governor stated that if the printing house was expanded, there would be no need for the Egyptian printing houses.¹¹

8 Md. Sidin Ahmad Ishak and Mohammad Redzuan Othman, *The Malays in the Middle East: With a Bibliography of Malay Printed Works Published in the Middle East* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 2000), 79. The catalogue also shows an 1841 edition of the book in Mecca; however, there is no evidence of a printing house in Mecca at that time. This is one of Daud al-Fatani's most famous works and the manuscript copy was completed in Mecca in 1841. (See, Francis R. Bradley, *Forging Islamic Power and Place: The Legacy of Shaykh Davud bin Abd Allah al-Fatani in Mecca and Southeast Asia*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2016), 81. It is highly probable that the information in the catalogue belongs to the manuscript copy of the work.

9 Regarding the Jawi press in Cairo, see Nico Kaptein, <https://www.kitlv.nl/blog-jawi-books-cairo/>.

10 For phrases expressing the working order and conditions of the printing house in accordance with the spirit of the period, see BOA, MF MKT 81/80.

11 "... Mekke-i Mükerrermeden Hindistan ve Cava adalarına külliyyetle kütüb ve resâil nakl edenlerin badema Mısır matbaalarına müracaata lüzum görmeyeceklerinin katiyyen anlaşılaraq [matbaanın] tevsiinin muhtaç olduğu..." ("... it is absolutely clear that those who transport books and literature from Mecca to India and the Java islands will no longer need to resort to the Egyptian printing houses, and that the expansion [of the printing house] is necessary ...") BOA, YPRK SRN 1/88; DH MKT 1342/6.



Image 3: Osman Nuri Pasha, Governor of Hijaz, 1885

(Source: Istanbul University Library, Abdülhamid Khan II Photograph Albums, nr. 90850/165)

The comparison with the Egyptian printing houses and presses in question cannot be considered a coincidence, and one wonders what was intended. Could the proposal to expand the Mecca printing house as an alternative to the Egyptian printing houses and the subsequent correspondence be interpreted as a strategy implemented by Ottoman bureaucrats to shift the production of Javanese-language literature from Cairo to Mecca? It is possible, as the issue has both political and commercial dimensions. There is a vibrant book market in Mecca and the share of books and treatises on the Malay world in this market is not to be underestimated. Moreover, considering the fact that educated Malays especially those from madrasas, are able to easily follow religious books in Arabic also; it is obvious that neither the state nor the private sector will refrain from selling books to an audience allured to Malay and Arabic books. Furthermore, given the Ottoman Empire's prominent role in the Muslim geography, it is likely that the Mecca printing house was utilised as a tool to address the expectations of the Malay world within the framework of Abdülhamid II's pan-Islamist policies. This is supported by the observations of Dahlan (1816-1886), the Shafi'i mufti of Mecca, who praises the establishment of the printing house by Sultan Hamid to publish in Turkish, Arabic and Javanese as a beneficial service in the last part of his work *Futuhât*.¹² Similarly, Mehmed Emin el-Mekki, a senior Ottoman bureaucrat, in his work describing the service of the Ottoman

12 Ahmed b. Zeyni Dahlan, *Al-Futuhât al-Islamiyyah* 2, 1304/1886, (Cairo 1968), 485; İrfan Aycan, "Dahlân, Ahmed b. Zeyni," *Türkiye Diyanet Foundation Encyclopedia of Islam (DİA)* 8, (Istanbul: TDV Publishing, 1993), 416-417.

caliphs to the holy lands, proudly mentions that the provincial printing house, which was built in a two-storey masonry building on the land opposite the government building, had the infrastructure to print books in “Arabic, Turkish, Persian, Hindi and Javanese” and that all forms of religious books were produced and distributed to Islamic lands.¹³ On the other hand, a Malay named Shaykh Uthman Shihab al-Din al-Funtiani (Pontianak) wrote a poem dedicated to Sultan Abdülhamid to commemorate the establishment of this productive printing house initiative.¹⁴



Figure 4: Mecca Provincial Printing House.

(Source: BOA, FTG.f, nr.1749)

Mecca Provincial Printing House

First, it is necessary to acknowledge the variations in the naming of the Mecca printing house that can be observed in literature and records. While the official printing house of the province of Hijaz is mainly referred to as the Hijaz printing house (*Hicaz matbaası*), Mecca printing house (*Mekke matbaası*) or Provincial printing house (*Vilayet matbaası*) in Turkish literature, it is also referred to as State printing house (*Matbaa-i Miri*) in Arabic records and various library records.

13 Mehmed el-Emin el-Mekki, *Hulefâ-yı izâm-ı Osmâniyye Hazarâtının Haremeyn-i şerîfeyndeki Âsâr-ı Mevrûre ve Meşkûre-i Hümâyûnlarından Bâhis-i Târîhi Bir Eserdir* (Istanbul 1318).

14 Ermy Azziaty Rozali, “Sheikh Wan Ahmad al-Fatani and the Malay Publications in the Middle East,” *Asian Social Science* 11, no. 24 (2015): 92 (90-94). The mentioned poem must be the poem on the last page of the book entitled *Fath al-Mecca*, which was published in 1311/1894 in the praised printing house.

Additionally, the seal bearing the inscription “*al-Matbaah al-Mirriyyah bi-Makkati al-Mahmiyyah, 1300*” can be found on the introductory or final pages of most books. Perhaps the name “*Matbaah al-Umm al-Kura*” used in the description of the printing place of the 1303 (1886) edition of *Jam'al-Fawa'id* should be added to the list of names used to refer to the printing house.¹⁵ Moreover, this is the only instance where an adjective is used on the book covers, instead of referencing Mecca directly. In addition to these, the use of “*al-Matbaah al-Miriyyah al-Ka'inah*” is also mentioned in the literature.¹⁶ However, the word “*kain*” in this context means “the Miri printing house in Mecca”, and although it is grammatically included in the phrase “Miri printing house” in this way, it is not necessary to be used as a name as mentioned in the literature. At the same time, the phrase “*al-Ka'inah*” as it is used here seems to have been named by Ishak-Othman with this title because the printing house printed books in various Muslim languages for the Islamic geography.¹⁷ What is meant is that this miri (state) printing house in Mecca, is referred to by different names in the literature.



Image 5: The seal of the Mecca Provincial Printing House on books with the inscription “*al-Matbaah al-Mirriyyah bi-Makkati al-Mahmiyyah, 1300*”

(Source: *Bidāyat al-Mubtadi*, 1320, s. 52)

In the vast Ottoman geography, it is evident that despite their official character, provincial printing houses and newspapers were centres of culture and played a pivotal role in the development of culture in many aspects.¹⁸ In the Ottoman lands, Hi-

15 For this edition of *Jam'al-Fawa'id*, see Leiden Library, 8203 A 9. For the names of Mecca, including “*al-Umm al-Kura*”, see *Hicaz Vilayet Salnamesi (Hijaz Provincial Yearbook)* (1306), 178.

16 Ishak-Othman, *The Malays in the Middle East*, 27; Ermy Rozali, *Sheikh Wan Ahmad al-Fatani*, 91.

17 I would like to thank my esteemed colleague İsmail Hakkı Göksoy for drawing my attention to this issue during the editorial reading of the book.

18 For detailed information on this subject, see Uygur Kocabaşoğlu - Ali Birinci, “Osmanlı Vilâyet Gazete ve Matbaaları Üzerine Gözlemler (Observations on Ottoman Provincial Newspapers and Printing Houses)”, *Kebikeç* 2 (1995): 101-121.

jaz was one of the provinces that joined late in the race to establish a printing house, and from the very beginning, it was formulated by considering the potential of pilgrims in Mecca, as well as the needs and demands of the local population. Therefore, the practice of bilingualism (the local language [Arabic] and the official language [Turkish]) in the provincial printing houses was further extended to accommodate the languages spoken by the pilgrims in Mecca. When examining the works printed by the provincial printing houses, it is noteworthy to highlight the presence of the Javanese language, in addition to the Arabic-Turkish bilingualism.

Upon examination of the Ottoman provincial yearbook to gain insight into the institutional structure and functioning of the printing house, it becomes apparent that the provincial printing house, which began operations under the management of Abdülğani Efendi from Damascus, expanded its staff within a few years. After Abdülğani Bey, İbrahim Ethem Efendi served as the director in the early 1890s.¹⁹ In the autumn of 1905, upon the request for a printing license for a book, it is understood that Abdülğani Efendi was again the director of the printing house.²⁰ Another individual mentioned as the director of the printing house is Mahmud Bey.²¹ When Mahmut Bey did not return from his leave in Istanbul, Nuri Efendi, the province's former director of documents, was appointed in his place.²² After the resignation of the director and the clerk, who remained in office for a few weeks, new appointments were made. Abbas Efendi, the chief typesetter with 26 years of service and experience, was appointed as the director and Ragıp Bey was appointed as the scribe (*kitabeta*).²³ The typesetters formed the backbone of the printing house and their experience enabled one of them to rise to the highest position. However, both their difficult and arduous duties had the possibility of affecting their health. In fact, Mehmet Cemil Efendi, who worked as a typesetter at the provincial printing house for 19 years, had to resign from his position in 1904 due to eye problems, and was paid a salary.²⁴

The printing house, which initially began operations with nine personnel, reached its largest staff of 28 in 1887-88/h.1305. From the earliest years, under the supervision of the director, a full-fledged printing staff was at work with the *mu-sahhih* (proofreader) who prepared the book for publication, the typesetters who prepared the book for printing, the staff who operated the technical machines and the bookbinders who bound the book and made it ready for sale. While there were

19 *Hicaz Vilayet Salnamesi (Hijaz Provincial Yearbook)* (1309), 157.

20 BOA, MF MKT 869/32.

21 BOA, DH MKT 2857/36.

22 *Hicaz (Hijaz)*, nr. 21, 10 Ra 1327/ 1 April 1909, p.1, item 3.

23 *Hicaz (Hijaz)*, nr. 24, 9 April 1325/22 April 1909, p.2, item 1.

24 BOA, DH MKT 889/85. For correspondence regarding the salary payment, see BEO 2414/180985, 2485/186311, 2575/193103.

no Javanese staff in the first year, in the following years, 2 Jawi *musahhih* took care of the books in a very consistent manner. As can be seen, while Governor Osman Pasha was presenting the first book they had printed to the Caliph-Sultan, he expressed that there was a demand for the expansion of the printing house together with the potential of making this printing house the only address for the books to be sent to the land of Java, which was not ignored. In addition, two Javanese scholars residing in Mecca were assigned as “*musahhih*”. The names we come across in the 1885-86 yearbook are Shaykh Ahmad Fatani [Ahmad b. Mohamed Zayn al-Fatani] (1856-1908)²⁵ and Shaykh Daud Fatani. As their names suggest, they are of Patani origin. Although it is not mentioned in the yearbooks, another *musahhih* is Shaykh Idris al-Kalantani. This is because, among the *musahhih* of the Egyptian edition of *Tarjuman al-Mustafid (Tafsir of Qadi Baydawi)*, he is one of the names mentioned as the *musahhih* of the Jawi books in the Mecca printing house alongside two other *musahhih*.²⁶ Although it is not known how long Idris al-Kalantani continued to work at the Mecca printing house, it is certain that he continued to work at Majid al-Kurdi’s Taraqqi printing house as a *musahhih* and even editor of Jawi books.²⁷

25 Francis R. Bradley, “al-Fatāni, Ahmad b. Muhammad Zayn,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Three*, ed. Kate Fleet et al., (Leiden: Brill, 2016). Accessed: 22 September 2022. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912-ei3-COM-30122>.

26 See Leiden Library, 893 A 12.

27 For the books in which he is mentioned as a *musahhih*, see Leiden Library, nr. 8202 A 23, 890 B 30, 890 B 56, 8201 A 23.

Table 1: Mecca Printing House Staff (1885-86)

Director and Chief Typesetter	Abdülgani Efendi
Assistant Machinist	Ali Efendi
Arabi <i>Musahhih</i>	Shaykh Abdulhamid Efendi
Associate	Mehmed Efendi
Jawi <i>Musahhih</i>	Shaykh Ahmad Fatani Efendi
	Shaykh Daud Fatani Efendi
Typesetters	Hüseyin Hüsnu Efendi
	Abdurrahman Efendi
	Ömer Efendi
	Ahmed Mazhar Efendi
	Ahmed Ziyaeddin Efendi
	Abbas Efendi
	Mehmed Receb Efendi
	Mustafa Şemseddin Efendi
	Mehmed Cemil Efendi
	Ahmed Mekki Efendi
Roller maker	Abdülhamid Ağa
Bookbinder	Shaykh Salih Efendi
Associate	Hacı Seyyid

Source: Provincial Yearbook, 1303 (1885-86), p. 65-66.

Table 2: Mecca Printing House Staff (1891-92)

Director	İbrahim Ethem Efendi	
Arabi <i>Musahhih</i>	Müderresinden Dağıstani Cafer Efendi	
Associate	Mehmed Said Efendi	
Jawi <i>Musahhih</i>	Shaykh Ahmad Fatani Efendi	
Associate	Shaykh Daud Fatani Efendi	
Chief Typesetter	Ömer Fevzi Efendi	
Deputy Typesetter	Abbas Efendi	
Typesetters	Mehmed Receb Efendi	
	Mehmed Rüşdü Efendi	
	Aburrahman Sahaf Efendi	
	Nasib Sıdkı Efendi	
	Mehmed Halebi Efendi	
	Abdüllatif Efendi	
	Ahmed Mazhar Efendi	
	Ahmed Sezai Efendi	
	Lithography Instructor	Said Efendi of Damascus
	Deputy	Es-Seyyid Ahmed Allam Efendi
Typographic printer	Yusuf Efendi	
Bookbinder	Salih Şuayb	
Mechanic	Elmas Ağa	
	Mehmed of Damascus	
	Yusuf Ağa of Erzurum	
	Yusuf Ağa of Kazan	

Source: Provincial Yearbook, 1309 (1891-92), p. 157.

The sources on Daud [b. Ismail] al-Fatani, one of the Jawi book *musahhih* of the printing house, are not as informative as they are on his colleague Ahmad Fatani. The first point to note is that he is not and should not be confused with the famous Patani scholar Daud [b. Abdullah b. al-Idris] al-Fatani (d.1847)²⁸, who had a

28 Oman Fathurrahman, "Dawud al-Fatâni," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, ed. Kate Fleet et al., (Leiden: Brill, 2016). Accessed: 22 September 2022. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912-ei3-COM-27713>

significant impact on the Malay world with his many works. Secondly, he was Ahmad al-Fatani's assistant in the printing house. Apart from the yearbooks, his name is first encountered in the Malay translation of Ataullah Iskenderi's famous book *Hikam*, which was printed at the Miri printing house in 1884-85/h.1302. Here, his name is mentioned together with Ahmad Zayn al-Fatani as Shaykh Daud b. al-merhum Ismail Fatani, while his name is mentioned separately in the colophon (*ketebe* record) of *Sirāj al-Huda*, which was printed in 1892-93/h.1310.²⁹ In the preface of *Sirāj al-Huda* by Sumbāwī, one of the famous Malay scholars, there was also *Ziyā al-murid* written by Daud al-Fatani, and it appears that the *musahhih* Daud Fatani prepared this edition for publication by himself. As for *Hikam*, it seems that it was published in collaboration with Zayn Fatani.

Shaykh Ahmad Fatani is another name mentioned as the *musahhih* of Jawi books in the Mecca printing house. Born in Patani in 1856, Ahmad Fatani migrated to Mecca with his family at the age of six due to the pressure on the ulama by the Kingdom of Siam. Furthering his education in the holy city, Fatani soon gained a high reputation in Mecca. By the 1870s he was recognised as a prominent scholar in Mecca and had many students from the Malay world. Some of the students he educated became religious leaders or notable personalities when they returned to the Java islands. In addition to being an extraordinary and innovative teacher, Ahmad al-Fatani was a great scholar whose works covered Islamic sciences, medicine, history and modern politics.³⁰ This information can be confirmed from many reliable sources in literature. However, the following information, which is probably transferred from Malay narratives to Turkish literature, is slightly uncertain.

It is reported that Shaykh Ahmad Fatani established a union in Mecca in 1884 under the name of *Rabitatü Ulemâi'l-Malayu Fetani*, to gather Malay scholars under one roof. Moreover, he participated in the International Islamic Congress held in Istanbul in 1885 as the representative of the sheriff of Mecca. It is suggested that at the congress he presented his work about Mecca *Sebilül-Mühtedin li't-Tefekküh fi Umurid-Din* to Abdülhamid II. It is stated that he dedicated this book to the Sultan and the latter appointed him as the head of the provincial printing house in Mecca, which printed Malay books.³¹ However, this information has not yet been confirmed by Ottoman sources and it is uncertain whether this position was a result of a book dedication. It is known that he was considered suitable for an editorial position responsible for Malay publications, rather than the head of the printing house.

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29 Leiden Library, nr. 8202 A 16; 863 B 7.

30 Sidin Ahmad Ishak, "Malay Book Publishing and Printing in Malaya and Singapore 1807-1949" (PhD diss., University of Stirling, 1992), 109-111.

31 Ali Bulut, "Fetâni, Ahmed", *Türkiye Diyanet Foundation Encyclopedia of Islam*, (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Foundation Publication, 2020), EK-1, 449-450.

Furthermore, this assignment was not his first experience in the printing business, as he had worked as a *musahhih* in the Halabi printing house, which was famous for printing Jawi books, as well as in the Miri printing house in Cairo.³² Probably this experience paved the way for him to work in the printing house in Mecca. Additionally, it is noteworthy to mention that the information about the subject and author of the book he reportedly presented to the Sultan is inaccurate. The publication was printed in Istanbul in 1303, but the author of the two-volume book on Shafi'i fiqh was not Ahmad al-Fatani, but Amir al-Din Mohamed Arshad b. Abdullah al-Banjari al-Malayvi, one of the first generation of Malay scholars in Mecca, who produced manuscripts in Malay and trained many students.³³ As can be seen, although the accuracy of the information about Ahmad al-Fatani's relationship with Istanbul is questionable, the possibility that he may have had an influence on the printing of Jawi books in the caliphate centre at that time should not be overlooked.

Ahmad al-Fatani was said to have been in contact with the printing houses in Egypt, and while working with the famous Halabi printing house, he left due to a difference of opinion between them. He formed a friendship with the well-known Meccan bookseller Mohamed Fida al-Kashmiri and his eldest son Abdul Ghani, and persuaded them to publish a Jawi book. With the support of Mohamed Fida al-Kashmiri, he printed the book of the Malay scholar Shaykh Abd al-Samad al-Falimbani, titled *Hidayah al-Salikin*, at the printing house of Shaykh Hassan al-Tukhi near Al-Azhar. Despite claims that this book was the first Jawi book published in Egypt,³⁴ Ishak-Othman's bibliographies indicate that there were earlier editions in Cairo.³⁵ This work, which he was instrumental in getting printed in Cairo, was available for purchase in the shop of the bookseller Fida. Ahmad Fatani must have attached great importance to this book as he later printed it himself when he was responsible for Jawi books at the Mecca printing house.³⁶ It is likely that Ahmad Fatani's friendship with the bookseller Mohamed Fida and his eldest son Abdul Ghani, which had begun prior to his appointment at the Mecca printing house, continued during his tenure at the printing house. It is possible that the work of Abdul Ghani Fida, who printed Seyyid Osman's book *Manasik al-Hajj* and *Umrah* in 1893/1310 at the Mecca printing house, was facilitated due to this friendship.

32 Regarding his work at the Halabi printing house, see Ermy Rozali, *Sheikh Wan Ahmad*, 91. Regarding his work as a *musahhih* in the Miri printing house established by the Ottomans near the Al-Azhar Mosque in 1859, see Christopher M. Joll, *Muslim Merit-Making in Thailand's Far-South*, (London/ New York: Springer, 2012), 45.

33 For the only copy of the book in Istanbul, see Beyazit Manuscript Library, nr. 1980.

34 Rozali, *Sheikh Wan Ahmad*, 91.

35 Ishak-Othman, *The Malays in the Middle East*, 79; Regarding Daud b. Abdullah al-Fatani's *Furu' Al-Masa'il*, published in two volumes in Cairo in 1841, also see Azyumardi Azra, "The Patani 'Ulema': Global and Regional Networks," *The Ghosts of the Past in Southern Thailand: Essays on the History and Historiography of Patani*, ed. Patrick Jory (Singapore: NUS Press, 2013), 104.

36 For the one printed at the Miri printing house in Mecca in 1893-94/h.1311, see Leiden Library, 890 A 28.

Under the supervision of Ahmad al-Fatani, who oversaw Javanese publishing, the printing house in Mecca greatly enriched Islamic literature in the Malay language and was instrumental in the production of many books. Ahmad Fatani must have had a well-organised plan to print as many high-quality books as possible. It appears that he was appointed to this position about a year after the opening of the printing house, potentially having spent that time preparing for the role. He meticulously edited and published Malay-language manuscripts, notably those of Daud al-Fatani. He was assigned to edit not only the books in his native language but also Arabic books by Arab scholars such as Barzanjī and Jazūli. In addition to his editorial work at the printing house, he wrote many books in Arabic and Malay,³⁷ some of which were published by the Miri Printing House.³⁸ Based on his performance as a publisher and author, it is evident that he had an admirable commitment to his work.

Shaykh Ahmad al-Fatani began by publishing what he considered to be the most important teachings of Daud al-Fatani, and during his tenure at the printing house, about 75 per cent of the works published were by Daud al-Fatani.³⁹ His preference for printing Daud al-Fatani's works in the printing house was probably not due to a fellow-countryman relationship, as Hurgronje claims. The fact that 900 of the 1400 manuscripts produced by Patanese scholars during the 19th century were copies of Daud Fatani's writings⁴⁰ proves his popularity in the Malay world, which must have been the reason for his preference. This preference not only highlights the breadth of the author's readership but also the commercial acumen of Ahmad Fatani. The popularity of these early publications and the abundant revenues that were a natural consequence were essential for the continuation of the Malay-language publishing activity, and Ahmad Fatani was acutely aware of this. Daud Fatani's texts remained the most popular collection of Malay works even a century after his death, and it was essential to capitalise on this popularity. Moreover, the publication of Daud Fatani's works was not exclusive to the Mecca printing house. Publishers in Istanbul, Mumbai, Cairo, Singapore, Penang and most recently Patani also profited from a similar endeavour.⁴¹ The presence of Daud Fatani, a renowned scholar and author, in Mecca, the students he trained and the books he wrote were not only extremely important in terms of their influence on Malay-Indonesian scholarship, but also

37 Ishak-Othman, *The Malays in the Middle East*, 61.

38 For some of these, see the Leiden Library, 8203 A 4, 893 F 24, 8202 A 22, 8202 A 25, 890 B 59.

39 Francis R. Bradley, "The Social Dynamics of Islamic Revivalism in Southeast Asia: The Rise of Patani School, 1785-1909" (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2010), 477. For a detailed list of Daud al-Fatani's works and copies, see Francis R. Bradley, "Sheikh Daud bin Abdullah al-Fatani's Writings Contained in the National Library of Malaysia," *Jurnal Filologi Melayu* 15, (2007): 122-140. (121-141); Same author thesis, 222-262.

40 Francis R. Bradley, "Sheikh Da'ud Al-Fatani's Munyat Al-Musalli and The Place of Prayer in 19th-Century Patani Communities," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 41, no. 120 (2013): 3-4. (1-17)

41 Muhammad Arafat Bin Mohamad, "Be-Longing: Fatanis in Makkah and Jawi" (Phd diss., Harvard University, 2013), 58-59.

contributed greatly to its wide dissemination through its wide reach, as it was printed in Mecca in line with the developing printing technology and Ahmad Fatani's judicious choices. The copy of Daud Fatani was highly advantageous because the Muslims of the archipelago, who came to the holy lands every year for pilgrimage and education obtained it from Mecca. Considering the possibility that in the eyes of the owner, the copy printed in the printing house under the patronage of the caliph was more reliable and reputable than those printed in other places, there is no doubt that the Meccan copy was materially and spiritually fruitful.

Ahmad al-Fatani (Shaykh Wan Ahmad), was a meticulous scholar who oversaw the Jawi books at the Mecca printing house. Evidence of his scholarly rigor can be observed in the editions of the books he prepared. For example, when he wanted to publish or print a work, he would collect various versions of the work, and if he could not access the original copy of the work, he would gather all available copies. In addition to the original copies and versions, he would also obtain lithographed copies to use in the editions he prepared.⁴² He would also state on the book covers that he could not access the author's original copy of the works he published and note that he tried to prepare them for publication in the most accurate way.⁴³ If the work was translated from Persian or Arabic into Malay, he would compare the translation to the original work to correct any linguistic errors or sequential confusion found in the translated copies. Additionally, if the work was written by an unknown author, he would use competent grammar analysis to determine the language and style of the author.⁴⁴ He would make comparisons of the language and style to establish the authenticity of a work, as demonstrated in his examination of *Syarah Hikam Melayu* and explained this in the copy of the book printed in Mecca in 1884.⁴⁵ In the same year, in the last pages of *Hikam*, which he was instrumental in publishing, he conveyed to the readers his strong findings that the word preferences of the translator mentioned in the final pages did not belong to the person in question.⁴⁶ He also sought to enhance the authenticity of the work by stamping the seal of the printing house at the end of the books he published, enabling readers to easily identify it. He warned the readers not to trust copies that were without the seal or with other seals. He included statements bearing his seal at the end of many books, indicating that such copies had not undergone the same rigorous proofreading process as those from the Mecca printing house and therefore contained numerous errors and should not be trusted.⁴⁷ In this way, he warned the readers by saying "beware of

42 Rozali, *Sheikh Wan Ahmad*, 93.

43 For a book cover with such a statement, see Leiden Library, 8203 A 38.

44 Rozali, *Sheikh Wan Ahmad*, 93.

45 Rozali, *Sheikh Wan Ahmad*, 93.

46 Leiden Library, 863 B 7.

47 For a work with this phrase, see Leiden Library, 890 B 17.

our imitations” and elevated his printing house to a more prestigious position than others. Another aspect of Fatani’s style is the poetry he wrote on the book covers or on the final page, some of which included the date of publication. *Jam’al-Fawa’id*⁴⁸ or *Sabil al-Muhtadin*⁴⁹, which were printed in the Miri printing house, are among the publications that can serve as an example of chronogram with poetry.

As Bradley points out, the tenure of Shaykh Ahmad Fatani’s management of the printing house can be divided into two main periods. The first period covering the years 1301-14/1884-96, during which he published many of the most popular works of the period, and a second period covering the years 1319-25/1902-8.⁵⁰ In his first year in office, Fatani printed 12 books in Jawi (Malay) at the Mecca printing house. A total of 43 works were printed that year, 30 in Arabic and 1 in Turkish. Therefore, taking into account the Turkish yearbook, 68% of the works published in the printing house in 1885-86/h.1303 were in Arabic, 27% in Jawi and 5% in Turkish.⁵¹ Considering that some of the Arabic works had equivalents in the Malay world, it can easily be said that almost half of the printing house’s production, perhaps slightly more, was aimed at the communities speaking Jawi.

The pace of the printing house or, more precisely, the rate of circulation of the book in question can be understood from some reprint requests of the printing house manager, but in this case, where the exact circulation is unknown, the evaluations will be incomplete. Nevertheless, it is possible to make cautious estimations. For example, the date of the licence for the previous printing of *Khatam Al-Quran*, for which the printing house manager requested for a reprint in May 1905, was November 1900. This book was sold out in almost 4 years, leading to the initiation of the reprinting process. The *Mawlid al-Sharif*, which was also requested to be printed in the same licence petition, seems to have been sold out in a similar period of time.⁵² Considering the fact that *Mawlid* and *Khatam Al-Quran* were widely read books among Muslims and that other printers and booksellers would not hesitate to print them and thus their abundance in the market. Therefore, this four-year period in which the Mecca printing house went to reprinting seems to be a rather reasonable time. In addition to these, it is worth mentioning *Kifajat al-Gholam fi Bajjan Arkan al-Islam*, which reached six editions in the Mecca printing house, indicating its popularity and circulation.⁵³ In this context, Sumbāwī’s *Bidāyat al-Mubtadī*, which was in its seventh edition, should also be noted. To provide an insight, it can also

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48 Leiden Library, 8203 A 9.

49 Leiden Library, 863 B 17.

50 Bradley, *The Social Dynamics of Islamic Revivalism*, 477.

51 *Hicaz Vilayet Salmamesi (Hijaz Provincial Yearbook)* (1303), 202-204.

52 BOA, MF MKT 866/39, Lef 2, 4 May 1321/ 17 May 1905.

53 Leiden Library, 863 B 16.

be mentioned that 1400 copies of *al-Durr al-Thamin*⁵⁴ were printed in Mumbai in the same period. Yet, this work of Daud Fatani is one of the first Jawi books printed in the Miri printing house. Considering that 1200 copies of a book were printed at a time in the Ottoman printing house in the mid-19th century⁵⁵, it can be assumed that between 1200-1500 copies of each book were reproduced.

Based on the examples available, it can be concluded that the books printed in the Mecca printing house had a unity in terms of their forms, page layout and cover design, and that they possessed certain formal characteristics. However, there is a lack of detailed and regular information regarding the technical features of the printing house, the number of books printed, and the prices of the books. In the yearbook published in the first year of the establishment of the printing house, it is mentioned that the calendar and map could not be printed due to the lack of a lithograph machine in Mecca, however it was hoped that this deficiency would be eliminated in the following years.⁵⁶ Although we do not see a map in the fifth and last yearbook printed, the fact that someone was employed as a lithography instructor should be read as a concrete step of the printing house's intention to utilise this technique. We observe that the letters required for the printing house were brought from Istanbul and that the printing house director reiterated his demands when necessary.⁵⁷ Additionally, there is limited information on how the printing house procured paper, one of its most basic needs. There is also limited information about the working hours and periods of the Mecca printing house, one of which is that its operations were interrupted for a few weeks due to the intensity of the pilgrimage periods.⁵⁸

The Hijaz provincial printing house also published materials other than books, such as the *Hicaz* newspaper, which was published in Arabic-Turkish. As this weekly newspaper has yet to receive academic attention, it is difficult to determine its impact on the cultural life of the region. However, it is understood that the newspaper did not confine itself to Hijaz or the Arab-Turkish geography, and that it had a target audience within the Muslim world. This is evidenced by the fact that, in the early months of its publication, it was announced to the readers that the newspaper and the printing house had an agency in Singapore.⁵⁹ When the advertisement is

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54 Leiden Library, 863 B 8.

55 This information can be found in various parts in Ayşe Tek Başaran's detailed study of the first phases of Ottoman printing in the 19th century. Ayşe Tek Başaran, "The Ottoman Printing Enterprise: Legalization, Agency and Networks, 1831–1836" (PhD diss., Boğaziçi University, 2019).

56 *Hicaz Vilayet Salnamesi (Hijaz Provincial Yearbook)* (1301), 182.

57 For the receipt showing that the director of the Hijaz provincial printing house received the letters ordered to the Mekteb-i Sanayi-i Şahane for use in the printing house, see BOA, DH MDK 91/4.

58 Regarding the *Hicaz* newspaper apology to its readers for the publication disruption caused by this, see *Hicaz*, nr. 141, 6 Muharram 1332.

59 "In order to facilitate the access of our Muslim brothers in Singapore to our newspaper, one of the respected merchants, al-Sayyid al-Hajj Muhammad Efendi Abu Bakr Madâni, has assumed the agency of the *Hicaz*

examined, it is seen that a direct connection was established with the Malay world through a respected merchant, and that an endeavour was made to try to strengthen the existing literary relationship through the press. It is not coincidental that the representative of the newspaper and the printing house were located in Singapore, as Singapore had progressed towards becoming a printing centre in the Malay world since the first quarter of the 19th century and had gained a significant position by the middle of the century.⁶⁰

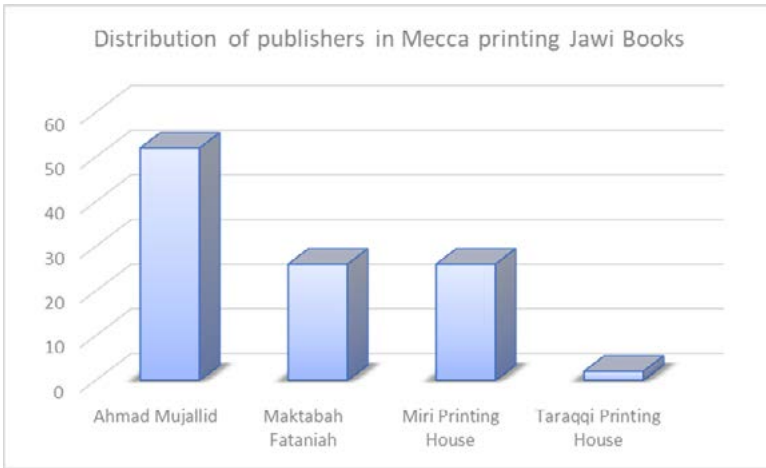
In addition to its publishing activities, the printing house was also involved in the book control system, which was unique to the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II. As befitting its cosmopolitan population, books from the presses of India, Tunisia and Egypt arrived and it is understood that these were controlled by the provincial printing house. However, since the governor of Hijaz was unable to perform this duty correctly due to the intensity of the printing house, he stated that it would be more appropriate to appoint an inspector within the Directorate of Education for this task, as was done in other provinces. Istanbul, upon evaluating this request, offered the following solution: Since the books coming to Hijaz from these provinces would generally be books related to sects and religion, it would be appropriate for the four imams of sects in Mecca to evaluate these books.⁶¹

Another service of the provincial printing house in Mecca was to assist booksellers in printing books, as elsewhere. There were booksellers and *sahafs* in Mecca who benefited from this service and printed Arabic and Jawi books. By examining Ishak-Othman's inventory, we come across the following table of booksellers-publishers who were also engaged in the printing and buying and selling of Jawi books.

.....
 newspaper and printing house, and those who wish to do so are advised to apply to him", *Hicaz*, nr. 9, p.2, item 2. 19 Dhu al-Hijjah 1326/12 January 1909.

60 For the publication history of Singapore, see Sidin Ahmad Ishak, *Malay Book Publishing*, 35-40, 69-73. Ian Proudfoot, *Early Printed Malay Book*, Academy of Malay Studies and The Library University of Malaya: 1993, s. 36-46.

61 BOA, DH MKT PRK 1018/45 21 April 1303; DH MKT 1422/71.



Source: Ishak-Othman, *The Malays in the Middle East*, p. 73-86.

As can be seen, two institutions stand out among the Meccan booksellers in the field of Jawi publications. The first is the establishment of Ahmad bin Abdullah Mujallid, also known as Ahmad Mujallid, a Malay of Indian descent. In an advertisement published in 1892, he listed about fifty titles of Malay books by various authors that were published by him.⁶² He was a publisher and bookbinder based at Bab al-Salam near Masjid al-Haram. It will be recalled that this was the bookseller district of Mecca at that time. Mujallid Ahmad, who was a highly enterprising and successful publisher, followed in his father's footsteps and pursued the art of both publishing and bookbinding like him. His father, Mujallid Abdullah Hindî, used to print books in many different places such as Cairo, Mumbai and Mecca and sell them in his shop in Mecca. Mujallid Abdullah, one of the publishers mentioned in the Jawi book printing in Istanbul, deserves recognition as one of the architects of the Jawi press in the capital. It is clear that the Mujallid family, father and son, played a significant role in the Mecca-centred Jawi book trade.

From the statements in Ishak-Othman's study, it appears that the institution of Mujallid Ahmad and al-Karimiah Printing House may be the same institution.⁶³ However, apart from the fact that Mujallid printed a large number of books, there is no concrete evidence linking him to the al-Karimiah Printing House. In addition, it is noted that the al-Karimiah Printing House produced publications that were clearly distinguishable by their use of thicker type and larger font, similar to Jawi prints from the Indian subcontinent. Most of the prints observed confirm this observation. Therefore, it is believed that the al-Karimiah Printing House was an

62 Ishak-Othman, *The Malays in the Middle East*, 62.

63 Ishak-Othman, *The Malays in the Middle East*, 63. Sidin Ahmad Ishak, *Malay Book Publishing*, 113.

independent printing house in the Mumbai area. If this is the case, it should not be surprising that the Mujallid family of Indian origin would have established connections with the printing house in Mumbai.

Another notable institution was the *Maktabah Fataniah*, probably an enterprise led by Ahmad al-Fatani. For several decades in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, this bookshop was highly influential in the sale of books and was located in the Kashashiyah district of Mecca. This bookseller, situated in the centre of the booksellers in Mecca, not only sold books, but likely also engaged in publishing as well. However, it is known that many of the books it sold were printed at *Matbaah al-Miriyyah*.⁶⁴ It is also known that this institution was one of the main suppliers of materials for many of the *pondok/pesantren* schools in Malaysia, Indonesia, Patani and Cambodia, which provided Islamic education in the traditional madrasa style.⁶⁵ Considering that the same person managed the *Maktabah Fataniah*, which was such an active institution, and the Jawi books of the provincial printing house, the publications of these two institutions can be evaluated together, and their activities can be equated with those of Mujallid Ahmad's institution.

Although it cannot be compared to them in terms of volume, the Taraqqi Printing House, founded by Majid al-Kurdî, which is seen in the graphic, was also one of the prominent institutions in the printing of Jawi books.⁶⁶ In early 1909, Majid al-Kurdî obtained a printing licence, and in 1913 he chose to print what is considered to be the most popular religious book in the Malay world, *Muhimmat al-Nafais*, written by Dahlan, the Shafi'i mufti of Mecca. The fact that this book, which provided fatwas based on Shafi'i fiqh for issues encountered by the Javanese in Mecca in their daily lives, was printed 5 times in different cities indicates its popularity,⁶⁷ and the experienced Meccan bookseller must have preferred to print this book as a work with guaranteed sales in the first years of his printing house's operation.

As can be seen, a large part of the activities of the printing house and the aforementioned booksellers in Mecca were aimed at Malay readers. This included students, teachers, and pilgrims visiting the holy sites in the Middle East, and books on the Hajj were often sought after by pilgrims who spent months in Mecca and

64 Ishak-Othman, *The Malays in the Middle East*, 61.

65 Ishak-Othman, *The Malays in the Middle East*, 62.

66 The name of this printing house is mentioned as *Matbaah al-Turki al-Majidiyah* in Ishak-Othman's list; however, it is more accurate to refer to it as Taraqqi, the name given to the printing house by its founder Majid al-Kurdî. For this reason, the name Taraqqi is preferred in the graph.

67 This book, consisting of around 130 judgements on various subjects by the Shafi'i ulama in Mecca, was printed in thousands of copies and circulated for years after it was written. According to Nico Kaptein, it even made Indonesians realise that they were part of the "ummah". See, Nico Kaptein (ed.), *The Muhimmat al-Nafais: A Bilingual Meccan Fetwa Collection for Indonesian Muslims from the End of Nineteenth Century* (Jakarta: INIS Press, 1979), 1-16.

Medina.⁶⁸ Apart from this audience, the Jawi books had a ready market in Malaysia, Indonesia, and southern Thailand. The books were most likely imported into this region by pilgrims returning from the pilgrimage, or by intermediaries and organisations that facilitated the pilgrimage process.⁶⁹

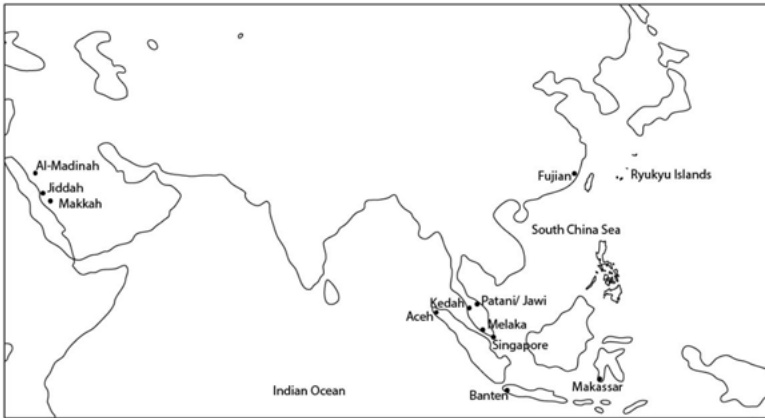


Image 6: From Mecca to Patani.

(Source: Muhammad Arafat Bin Mohamad, “Be-Longing: Fatanis in Mecca and Jawi”, Doctoral Dissertation, Harvard University, 2013, p. X)

Jawi Press in Istanbul

The results of our examination of the Ottoman Archives indicate that Istanbul merits significant consideration as a major centre for the production of Malay-language publications for the Malay world. Although Istanbul has been acknowledged in literature among the places that printed books in Jawi, there is limited information available regarding the details of the printing there, the books printed and the printers.

Tarjuman al-Mustafid, also known as *Tafsir of Qadi Baydawi*, written by scholar Abdul Rauf al-Singkili (d.1693) from Aceh, must have been the first Jawi book printed in Istanbul.⁷⁰ It is understood that an experiment was made in Istanbul prior to the printing of Jawi books by the provincial printing house in Mecca. *Tafsir of Qadi*

68 Regarding the great influence of Ahmad Fatani, who handled the Jawi books of the Mecca printing house, on the Javanese pilgrims for the first time with the printing house, see Bradley, *Forging Islamic Power and Place*, 14.

69 Ishak-Othman, *The Malays in the Middle East*, 62.

70 Although it was widely known as the tafseer of *Qadi al-Bayzawi*, Peter Riddel argues that this naming of *Tercüman al-Mustafid* is inaccurate because it made more use of the *Jalalayn* tafsir, which was among its sources, see Peter Riddel, “Abdurrauf Singkili”, *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 3rd edition, 2007, Leiden: Brill, V. 1. P. 22. For the first emphasis in literature on the Ottoman authorities’ and documents’ adoption of the common name *Kadi Beyzavi* for *Singkili’s* famous tafsir, see Ismail Hakkı Kadi and A.C.S. Peacock, *Ottoman-Southeast Asian Relations: Sources from the Ottoman Archives*, vol. 2, Leiden: Brill, 2020, p. 621.

Baydawi was printed in Istanbul in 1302 AH/1884, probably, at a time when the Jawi *musahhih* had not yet been assigned to the Mecca printing house or had only recently been appointed. The *tafsir* was printed in *Matbaa-i Osmaniye* (Printing House of Osmaniye), and the same printing house reprinted it years later. In fact, in his petition to obtain the necessary permission from the Ottoman authorities, the director of the printing house stated that he wanted to print the *Mushaf al-Sharif* with Jawi *Tafsir*, also known as *Tafsir of Qadi Baydawi [Tarjuman al-Mustafid]* because it was out of print and that the reason for reprinting was due to the demand of the Muslim population in Java.⁷¹ As it is a religious text, *Tarjuman al-Mustafid* also required the approval of the *Meşihat* office. The reprint was approved on the basis of the fact that the mufti's office in Istanbul did not have an expert in Jawi, and on the basis of the authoritative opinion of the Javanese *musahhih* scholars in Mecca, who had examined and approved the previous edition.⁷² The Ottoman religious authorities particularly emphasised the printing from the certified copy of the Javanese *musahhih*.⁷³ In fact, this behaviour of the *Meşihat* reaffirms the caliph's trust in the Jawi *musahhih* in Mecca. It is noteworthy that the first edition of this translation and *tafsir* work, which contributed significantly to the development of Islamic knowledge in the Malay world, was printed in Istanbul. Although reprinted in Istanbul years later, it is understood that this work deeply influenced the Malay world and was also printed in Cairo and Mecca over the years.⁷⁴ While the first edition of this *tafsir* was published in Istanbul, it should also be mentioned as the first Jawi book published in Istanbul.⁷⁵

71 BOA, MF MKT 865/52, Lef 1.

72 *Meşihat* Archive, Tedkik-i Mesâhif-i Şerife ve Müellefât-ı Şer'iyye Department Books, nr. 1785, pdf 133, nr. 31; BOA, MF MKT 865/52, Lef 3.

73 BOA, MF MKT 865/52, Lef 2.

74 Ishak-Othman, *The Malays in the Middle East*, 76.

75 Since the date of the Cairo edition of the book in question is not given in Ishak-Othman's bibliography, the Istanbul edition of 1882 is considered the first. This will remain valid until an earlier edition date is found.

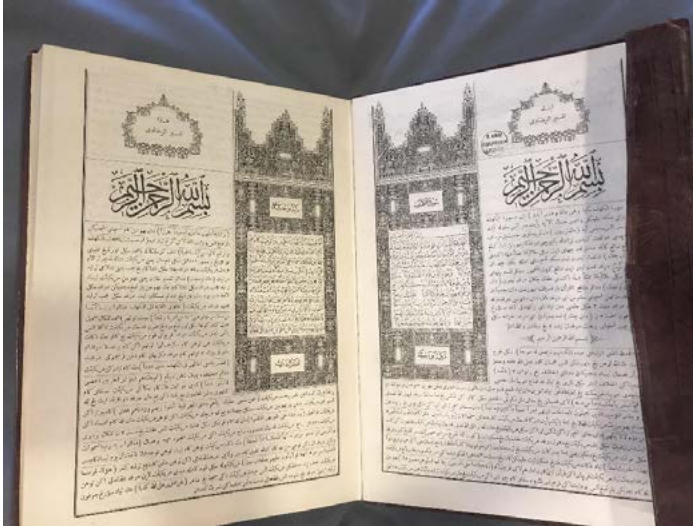


Image 7: *Tafsir of Qadi Baydawi [Tarjuman al-Mustafid]*, c.II, Constantinople, 1302.

The manuscript copy of *Tarjuman al-Mustafid*, which is considered to be the first Malay translation and *tafsir* of the Qur'an written by Abdul Rauf b. Ali al-Fansuri al-Jawi al-Singkili by utilising the *tafsirs* of Baydawi and Jalâlêyn, was sent to Istanbul for printing approval and was discovered in Bursa.⁷⁶ It is thought that the Istanbul editions were reproduced from this copy approved by the Ministry of Education. The contribution of Abdul Rauf al-Singkili's student and successor Baba Daud al-Rumî to the work is specifically mentioned in the introduction of the text. The original copy of the work passed first to the author's descendants and then to the Malay scholar Shaykh Ahmad b. Mohamed Zayn al-Fatani and was first published by Shaykh Ahmad al-Fatani.⁷⁷ If the publisher of this first edition, as quoted by Mehmet Özay, is Ahmad al-Fatani, who worked as a *musahhih* at the Mecca printing house, it can be inferred that he was responsible for preparing the Istanbul edition for publication. However, no relation of Ahmad al-Fatani, the *musahhih* and the editor of the books in Jawi at the Mecca printing house, to this edition has been identified. In fact, the book's colophon (*ketebe* record) lists al-Shaykh Ebi Bekir ibn Abdullah el-Kuddus el-Tubanî el-Cavî as the *musahhih* and several Meccan booksellers as the owners of the book's publishing rights.⁷⁸ The Egyptian edition of this

76 We are grateful to Mr. Osman Nuri Solak, a manuscript expert and the head of the Rare Books Department of Uludağ University Faculty of Theology Library, who identified this copy and informed us about it. Since this copy is in an inventory that has not yet been catalogued, no reference number can be given. (From an oral interview with Osman Nuri Solak on 27.08.2022)

77 Mehmet Özay, "Açe'de Bir Türk Alimi: Baba Davud (A Turkish Scholar in Aceh: Baba Daud)," *Marmara University International Journal of Theological and Islamic Studies* 33 (2014): 183.

78 *Tarjuman al-Mustafid* II, 316.

tafsir, the date of which is not known, was edited by the Jawi *musahhih* of the Mecca printing house, one of whom is identified as Ahmad al-Patani. In our opinion, this edition should be dated after 1885-86/h.1303 or even later. This conclusion is drawn from two rationales. Firstly, Idris al-Kalantanî, whose name is mentioned among the *musahhih*, must have worked at the Mecca printing house after 1891-92/h.1309, because his name is never mentioned as the *musahhih* of the Mecca printing house in the state yearbooks until this date. Secondly, the red colour of the titles on the cover and the first two pages of the book, that is, the quality and style of printing, indicate a date later than the Istanbul edition.

The printing of the Malay *tafsir* in Istanbul in 1884, followed by the printing of twelve books at the printing house in Mecca the following year, suggests that the Ottoman Empire pursued a conscious and simultaneous policy in the production of printed publications in Jawi and supported their production. In the *ketebe* record of this *tafsir*, the Meccan booksellers are mentioned as the individuals whose efforts were instrumental in the creation of the book and who held exclusive legal and financial rights to it: al-Shaykh Ebi Talip el-Meymenî, al-Shaykh Fida Mohamed al-Kashmirî, and al-Shaykh ‘Abdullah al-Mujallid. The booksellers trusted al-Shaykh Ebi Bekir ibn Abdullah el-Kuddus el-Tubanî el-Cavî to proofread this important book and appointed him as the *musahhih*. Therefore, this initial attempt in Istanbul was initiated at the request of the booksellers in Mecca and was printed under their “*dhimma* (possession)”. Although *Matbaa-i Osmaniye* (Istanbul), where the book was printed, was a private printing house, it can easily be said that these initiatives align with state policy, as it functioned as a semi-state printing house in terms of its nature and functions.⁷⁹ The exact number of copies of the *tafsir* in Jawi that were printed is unknown, but an idea can be obtained by tracing the information in the reports of the printing house inspectors regarding the second edition. The reports indicate that the *tafsir* was printed at the *Matbaa-i Osmaniye* during the first half of 1906 and then again for 40 days in autumn, which suggests that it had a high circulation.⁸⁰ The fact that the *Matbaa-i Osmaniye*, which oversaw this extensive printing effort in Istanbul, pointed out the demand from the Malay world when seeking permission to print, suggests at first that it was sent directly to Muslims in the Java islands. However, it is highly likely that the books were circulated through Mecca. This is supported by the fact that the demand for the first edition came from Meccan booksellers. In addition, it should be noted that the Caliph-Sultan

79 For detailed information on *Matbaa-i Osmaniye*, see Ali Birinci, “Osman Bey ve Matbaası: Ser-kurena Osman Bey’in Hikayesine ve Matbaa-i Osmaniye’nin Tarihçesine Medhal (Osman Bey and his Printing House: Introduction to the Story of the Chief Chamberlain Osman Bey and the History of *Matbaa-i Osmaniye*)” *Müteferrika* 39, (2011/1): 3-148.

80 For some of the reports on the printing of the Jawi *tafsir* at *Matbaa-i Osmaniye*, see BOA, DH MDK 97-100, 102-105.

responded favourably to requests from Malay Muslims or Ottoman ambassadors, particularly for *Mushaf*, and that these requests were met as much as possible.⁸¹ *Matbaa-i Osmaniye* was the printing house that held the privilege of printing *Mushaf* in the Ottoman Empire for a long time and served as the sole authority to meet these requests. In this respect, it is not surprising that the printing of the Qur'an with *tafsir* took place there.

Among the booksellers and printers of Istanbul, another printer who printed noteworthy Jawi books was Hacı Muharrem Efendi from Bosnia. Hacı Muharrem, who seems to have been one of the prominent private printers in Istanbul, sent the books he printed to the Muslim geography outside the Ottoman Empire, such as to India, Java, Crimea and Kazan.⁸² His printing house located under his mansion in Fatih was a very active business.⁸³ As it will be remembered, within the framework of the printing policies of the Abdülhamid II period, every book to be printed in the Ottoman lands was examined before printing and those with a licence could be printed. Hacı Muharrem's petition to the Ottoman authorities for permission to print religious books in Jawi in Istanbul is dated December 14, 1886. Although the names of the books are not explicitly stated in his petition, he emphasises that the subjects are related to "*aqā'id al-Islam and umūr al-din*" and that he requested permission to publish them in Hijaz.⁸⁴ The date of this initiative is noteworthy, as it was within a year of the publication of books in Jawi at the state printing house in Mecca, under the supervision of Javanese *musahhah*, and that a private printing house in Istanbul embarked on a similar activity. While this literary relationship between Mecca and the Malay world was initially established through a semi-state printing house, it is seen that a private printing house in Istanbul was also involved in this relationship without much delay. This situation could be interpreted as an entrepreneur's commercial venture, that is, a printer's entry into a field that he perceived as profitable. If so, the fact that he wanted to print 3-4 books at once in the first time can be attributed to his boldness as a merchant. On the other hand, the possibility that he received demand through intermediaries should not be ignored. In fact, in the *ket-be* record of Sumbāwi's *Bidāyat al-Mubtadī*, which he printed in 1887-88/h.1305, it is explicitly stated that the book was printed in Istanbul on the "*dhimma* (possession)" of al-haj Abdullah Mujallid in Mecca. This book, which was revised (*tashih*) by Nur Mohamed and collated (*mukabele*) by Mohamed Husayn, was printed under

81 For the proposal of the Batavian ambassador to present *Mushafs* printed in *Matbaa-i Osmaniye* to the notables of the Java population, see BOA, İ. HR 290/ 18200-2. Regarding the gift of *Mushafs* to around 12,000 Malay residents of South Africa upon the recommendation of the Ottoman ambassador, see BOA, BEO, 3875/290609, 3882/291149. Regarding the nearly 2000 copies of *Qalām al-Qadīm* sent to the Java islands by Shaykh Salih Efendi of Tunisia, see BOA, HR İD 1373/54.

82 BOA, DH MDK 46/54.

83 BOA, DH MDK 72/136, Lef 16.

84 BOA, MF TTD 8/170, 26 Ra 1304/23 December 1886.

the auspices (*ihitimam*) of Qadi Fath Mohamed and Qadi Abdulkirim.⁸⁵ The reason behind the printer Bosnevî Hacı Muharrem Efendi's printing of books for the Malay world was probably to meet the demands of Meccan booksellers such as Mujallid Abdullah. The popularity of Sumbâwî's book in the Malay-Indonesian world can be better understood when it is considered that the seventh edition of this work was printed in 1902-3/h.1320 in the Mecca printing house and in 1913-14/h.1332 in the Taraqqi printing house established during the Constitutional Monarchy II period.

The first of the books printed in Istanbul by Hacı Muharrem's printing house, which is understood to have been called *Şirket-i Hayriye*, was *Bidāyat al-Hidayah*.⁸⁶ Authored by Muhammed Zeyn b. Celāluddin el-al-Ashî from Ache, this book is the commentary of *Umm al-Berâhîn*. The copy used for printing was prepared by the calligrapher Hafız Filibevî Mehmet Zihni Efendi and the printing took place in 1885-86/h.1303.⁸⁷ The following year, Hacı Muharrem printing house printed *Babu'n-nikah*⁸⁸ and *Tuhfetü'r-râgûbîn*⁸⁹, which included notes on the margins indicating Arabic sources. Both books, bear the seal of the *Şirket-i Hayriye* on the back page, while it is specifically stated that *Tuhfetü'r-râgûbîn* was printed under the *Şirket-i Hayriye* "dhimma (possession)". In 1887-88/h.1305, *Sebilü'l-Mühtedîn li't-tefakkuh fi emri'd-dîn*⁹⁰, written by al-Banjari on Shafi'i fiqh, was printed, and the following year, *Minhaj al-Salam* by Sumbâwî was printed. *Sebilü'l-mühtedîn* was written by the calligrapher Filibevî Zihni Efendi, who had previously prepared copies of the Jawi book for the same printing house. The last page of *Minhaj al-Salam* bears the seal of *Şirket-i Hayriye*, and in the last page of the book, it is specifically written that it was printed in the company's "dhimma (possession)". It should be noted that this work of Sumbâwî was printed and circulated in Mecca printing house in 1885-86/h.1303 prior to the Istanbul edition.

85 Sumbâwî, Yûsuf al-Gâni b. Sawwâl, *al-Bidāyat al-mubtadi wa-'umdat al-awlâdi*, Istanbul, 1305, p. 120. Leiden Library, 8202 D 31.

86 In his discussion of the Jawi books in Istanbul, Bradley mentions an edition of *Bidāyat al-Hidayah* dated 1887 of an unknown printing house. He thinks that this edition, which he refers to as an edition of an unknown printing house, was copied from the edition of Ahmad al-Fatani, which was previously printed at the Miri printing house in Mecca.

87 Leiden Library, 890 B 19.

88 Leiden Library, 815 D 10.

89 Leiden Library, 890 B 4.

90 This book is the only book in Jawi in Istanbul libraries today. In the catalogue information of this book in the Manuscript Library, the language was entered incorrectly and recorded as Arabic. See Manuscripts Institution, Beyazit Library, nr. BM 1986.

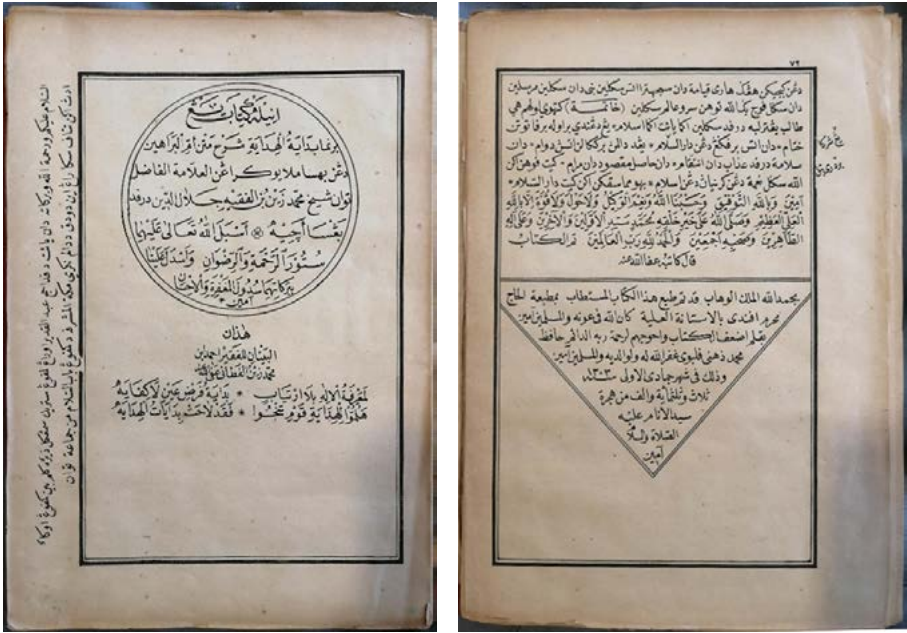


Image 8: The First Jawi Book Printed in Hacı Muharrem Efendi's *Şirket-i Hayriye*: *Bidāyat al-Hidayah*

Another book mentioned in the literature as one of the Istanbul editions is *Min-hāj al-Abidin*. The printing house of this book is listed in Othman-Ishak's list as "Hacı Mahrah? Efendi" and as "Matba'ah al-Haj Muhammad Afandi" in Bradley's thesis.⁹¹ Assuming that this is the result of a typographical error or other misreading, this printing was also carried out at the printing house of Hacı Muharrem Efendi. Another Istanbul-based printing house, *Matbaatü al-Alam* (Alem Printing House), which focused on the production of books for the Malay world, printed *Al-Bahjah al-saniyyah tahsil al-maram* in 1306. Bradley records this Istanbul edition as an anonymous printing house without mentioning the name of the printing house.⁹² However, it is clearly written on the book cover that Alem Printing House printed the edition in question. As far as can be determined, Bradley's assumption that at least five other works of Daud al-Fatani, including *al-Durr al-Thamin*, *Ghayat al-maram*, *Kayfiyyat Khitam al-Qur'an*, *Nahj al-raghibin*, and *al-Syad wa al-za-ba'i*, which may have been printed in Istanbul around the same time has not been verified. The author takes this assumption a step further and claims that almost all the Jawi books in the Istanbul press were the works of Shaykh Daud Fatani. He even suggests that the printing operations in Istanbul, as in Mecca, may have been

91 Bradley, *The Social Dynamics of Islamic Revivalism*, 486. Ishak-Othman, 80.

92 Bradley, *The Social Dynamics of Islamic Revivalism*, 486.

linked to a member of the family.⁹³ However, only three of the 11 Jawi books (*Minhaj al-A'bidin*, *Babu'n-nikah*, *Al-Bahjah al-saniyyah*) that have been identified belong to Daud al-Fatani.

The emergence of the printing of Jawi books in Istanbul occurred simultaneously with that of the Mecca printing house. It is a fact that the printing of Jawi books in Istanbul paused after the first Jawi book was printed in Istanbul, the *Tafsir of Qadi Baydawi*, followed by the 5-book effort of the Hacı Muharrem printing house and the single-book attempt of the Alem printing house. The first Jawi book, the *Tafsir of Qadi Baydawi*, which included the printing of the Qur'ân, was only officially permitted to be printed in the centre of the caliphate.⁹⁴ It is known that it was printed at the request of Meccan booksellers, and the following Hacı Muharrem initiative was intended to meet similar demands. In the Ottoman capital, where the Jawi language was not spoken or read, it cannot be claimed that these editions were printed with the readers of Istanbul in mind. The publishing preferences of the printers suggest that they were popular texts in demand to meet the needs of the book market in Mecca. Moreover, the records that explicitly mention the publishing network (printer-publisher-sometimes the copyright holder and occasionally the person who wishes the book to be put into circulation) indicate that this was a movement initiated by the efforts of Meccan booksellers rather than the Istanbul printers. Additionally, the emphasis on the fact that some of the books printed in Hacı Muharrem's printing house were in the "*dhimma* (possession)" of *Şirket-i Hayriye* suggests that the bookseller carried out the printing activity on his own initiative, that is, by assuming full responsibility. However, the difficulties and costs associated with transporting the books to Mecca must have led to the realisation that this was neither a sustainable nor a profitable venture.

On the other hand, the intensive work of the Mecca printing house, as well as the Cairo and Mumbai prints, sufficiently supplied both the Meccan book market and the areas where Jawi books were read. Therefore, while Istanbul was a location for the production of Jawi books, it remained within a very limited scope when compared to the Mecca printing house. However, considering the reprints of *Khatam Al-Quran* and *Mawlid*, which were reprinted by the *Matbaa-i Osmaniye* in the centre of the caliphate in the early 20th century, it can be stated that Istanbul continued to print Jawi books, albeit at a slower pace than other printing centres.

93 Bradley, *The Social Dynamics of Islamic Revivalism*, 487.

94 On the printing of the Quran in the Ottoman Empire, see Filiz Dıġiroġlu, *Osmanlı'da Dini Matbuat (Religious Press in the Ottoman Empire)* (Istanbul: Dergah Publishing, 2022), 36-48.

Conclusion

As can be observed, the Jawi press produced in the Cairo-Mecca-Istanbul triangle within the Ottoman territories served both the Javanese in the Ottoman state and the broader geography speaking the Jawi language (Malay). The Ottomans' strategic positioning of the Mecca printing house in terms of Jawi publications from the 1880s onwards suggest a calculated policy by Caliph Sultan Abdülhamid II. The successful book printing and trading operations managed by the Javanese scholars employed in the printing house, which responded to the needs of the book market in Mecca, demonstrate the precision of both the assignments to the printing house and the selection of books to be published. Ahmad al-Fatani, his assistant Daud al-Fatani, and Idris al-Kalantanī, who later joined them, should be remembered as the key figures in the publication of Jawi books in the official provincial printing house of the Ottoman Empire.

It seems that Ahmad al-Fatani played a significant role in decision-making for the *musahhih* committee during the printing operations. He not only determined which book to publish and when, but also published texts in accordance with classical Islamic copyright tradition, incorporating his own notes and edited texts, even writing in the margins of the works. Moreover, he composed his own works also. It could be argued, with slight exaggeration, that with the exception of Cairo, almost no book was published without being touched by the hand of Ahmad al-Fatani, who was the primary figure in Jawi book publishing in the Ottoman Empire. His editorial preferences and contributions, such as determining the work to be published, compiling or annotating, as well as his translations or works written by himself, supports this interpretation. The demand from booksellers, who were the actors of a vibrant book market like Mecca, also contributed to the increased activity of the printing house. These entrepreneurs, who did not want to send their customers, the Javanese *huccac* (pilgrims) and *tullab* (students), out of their shops empty, spared no effort and expense to keep the books printed both in the Mecca printing house and in Cairo-Istanbul-Mumbai in their shops. In summary, Mecca, which had brought Muslims from all over the world together through the pilgrimage and year-long intellectual activities, was establishing a new bond with the Java islands, which was not independent of politics and religion, thanks to these activities in the provincial printing house and this time through printed books.

ANNEX 1: List of Mecca-printed Jawi books received by the Office of Shaykh Al-Islam in 1912

Name	Author
Babu'n-Nikah	
Bediatu az-Zaman	Shaykh Abd al-Samad bin Mohamed Salih
Bulugh al-Maram	Shaykh Daud bin Abdullah al-Fatani
Al-Jawahir al-Saniyyah	Shaykh Daud bin Abdullah al-Fatani
Al-Durr al-Thamin	Al-Shaykh Daud ibn al-Shaykh Abdullah al-Fatani
Al-Durr al-Nafis	Al-Shaykh Mohamed Nefs bin Idris al-Banjari
Al-Bahjah al-Wardiyyah	Al-Shaykh Daud ibn al-Shaykh Abdullah al-Fatani
Al-Qaul al-Minkah/Munakkah?	Al-Sayyid Abu Bakr bin Mohamed Shata
Fath al-Mutafakkirin	Al-Shaykh Ahmad b. Zayn
Firkenin [FuruKenen?]	Mufti Jamaluddin ibn Mohamed Arshad
Hidayah al-Rahman	Mohamed ibn Abdullah al-Azhari
Hidayah al-Sail	Mohamed Husayn bin Abd Latif
Hidayah al-Salikin	Shaykh Abd al-Samad Falimbani
Iddah al-Albab Li Murid Nikah Bi al-Sawab	Al-Shaykh Daud ibn al-Shaykh Abdullah al-Fatani
Kashf al-Ghummah	Al-Shaykh Daud ibn al-Shaykh Abdullah al-Fatani
Kayfiyyah al-tariqah al-naqshabandiyah	
Kisah Yusuf	Al-Shaykh Daud ibn Abdullah al-Fatani
Kifayah al-Awam	Al-Hajj Abd al-Samad bin Mohamed Salih
Kitab al-Firkadin?	Mohamed bin Isma'il Daudi al-Fatani
Luktatu'l-Aclan/Nuktatu'l-Aclan?	Ahmad bin Mohamed Zayn bin Mustafa al-Fatani
Melhatu't-Tecvid/Tecdid?	Al-Shaykh Mohamed bin Mohamed Salih Kalantani
Manaqib al-Shaykh Mohamed Saman/k?	Shaykh Mohamed al-Azhari

Name	Author
Manasik al-Hajj	Al-Shaykh Daud ibn al-Shaykh Abdullah al-Fatani
Munyah al-Musall	Al-Shaykh Daud ibn al-Shaykh Abdullah al-Fatani
Mevrudu'z-Zımmān/Zıllan?	Al-Shaykh Abdullah Sunkur
Mezheb-i Şafii Üzerine Feteva-yı Mutemedede	
Minhaj al-Salam	Al-Shaykh Mohamed Zaynuddin al- Sumbāwī
Minhaj al-A'bidin	Al-Shaykh Daud ibn al-Shaykh Abdullah al-Fatani
Muqaddimah al-Atfal	Mohamed Husayn bin Abd Latif al- Kelakubi? al-Fatani
Nüzhetü't-Taraf	Author Al-Shaykh Husayn bin Sulayman al-Funtiani [Pontianak]
Siraj al-Qari	Mohamed Salih bin Zaynal Abidin ibn Mohamed al-Fatani
Sullamu al-Mubtadi	Shaykh Daud bin Abdullah al-Fatani
Sharhi Kashf al-Ghummah	Al-Shaykh Daud ibn al-Shaykh Abdullah al-Fatani
Talim al-Ajam	
Tanbih al-Ghafilin	
Umdat al-Murid fi aqaid al-tawhid	Daud bin Isma'il al-Fatani
Vişahu'l-Efrah	Mohamed bin Ismail Daudi al-Fatani
Zehratu'l-Murid fi Aqaidi al-Tawhid	Al-Shaykh Mohamed Ali bin Abdul Rahman bin Abdulgafur Kutan al- Kalantani

Source: *Meşihat* Archive, *Tedkik-i Mesâhif-i Şerife ve Müellefât-ı Şer'iyye* Department
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CHAPTER THREE

A VISIT ON THE MARGINS: SULTAN ABU BAKAR OF JOHOR'S VISIT TO ISTANBUL (1893)

İsmail Hakkı Kadı¹

One of the least studied aspects of Ottoman-Southeast Asian relations is Sultan Abu Bakar of Johor's (1833-1895) visit to Istanbul in 1893.² The available literature on Sultan Abu Bakar's career focuses mostly on his friendly relations with Britain and its representatives in the Malay Peninsula and emphasise his frequent visits to Europe, particularly to England. In 1866 it appears that he was received by Queen Victoria and continued his contacts with British royals during his visits in 1878, 1885-86, 1891, 1893 and in 1895. In this general picture, his itinerary to Istanbul seems an exceptional occurrence despite its far-reaching impact on Johor in the form of adoption of the *Majallah* as the civil code in the country. Due to this important impact and several interesting aspects of this itinerary it deserves some scholarly scrutiny.

Abu Bakar has been a significant figure in the history of Malay peninsula in general and Johor in particular. He is considered as the founder of modern Johor due to his promotion of economic, administrative, and legal reforms during his reign (1862-1895). The introduction of the first constitution, the development of the agricultural economy of Johor and his successful avoidance of formal British colonialism during his reign, vary among his achievements.³

Sultan Abu Bakar's visit to Istanbul took place towards the end of his significant career. So far, the occasional references of this visit were based on *Hikayat Johor*⁴ and

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3 On Abu Bakar's achievements especially in the economic sphere, see Carl A. Trocki, *Prince of Pirates: The Temenggongs and the Development of Johor and Singapore 1784-1885* Reprinted ed. (Singapore: NUS Press, 2012).

4 A. Rahman Tang Abdullah, *Hikayat Johor dan Tawarikh Almarhum Sultan Abu Bakar: Kajian, Transliterasi dan Terjemahan Bahasa Inggeris* (Johor Bahru: Yayasan Warisan Johor, 2011)

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt's diaries⁵, which were cited mostly without much criticism. Another flaw of this literature is that the Ottoman sources related to Sultan Abu Bakar's visit are not utilised adequately to verify Blunt's narrative, which above all reflects a colonial perspective on the issue.⁶ Thus, this study constitutes an attempt to weigh Ottoman source material on Sultan Abu Bakar's visit to Istanbul against Blunt's narrative in order to gain a better understanding of the event, its details, chronology and the significance in the context of the relations between the Ottoman Empire and Southeast Asia in general, and Johor in particular. However, we should also mention that Blunt remains an important source on the event as it is mainly Blunt's narrative that put some flesh on the otherwise meagre and formal references in Ottoman official records to Abu Bakar's visit to Istanbul. Another source that remedies the situation are the Istanbul newspapers of the period, which frequently referred to Abu Bakar's itineraries in Istanbul during his stay. Therefore, in this study, Blunt's passages on the topic will be quoted extensively and their content will be discussed in the light of Ottoman sources and what we otherwise know about the context.



Image 1: Sultan Abu Bakar of Johor in 1886

(Source: <https://www.rct.uk/collection/2907317/sultan-abu-bakar-ibrahim-of-johore-1833-95>)

5 Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *My Diaries, Being a Personal Narrative of Events, 1888-1914: Part One 1888-1900* (New York: Alfred A. Knoff, 1922).

6 For a fine attempt in this direction, see Nuramirah Binti Shahrin, "The Relationship Between the Sultanate of Johore and the Ottoman Empire" (Master Thesis., Marmara University, 2019).

The first questions which Blunt's account provokes is whether Sultan Abu Bakar had the intention and hope to have a personal reception with Abdülhamid II at the outset of his travel. If we are to believe Blunt, he did not:

“Abu Bakar only wanted a little personal sympathy as a Mohammedan from Mohammedans. He was too humble minded to expect much notice from Abdul Hamid, and had nothing of any importance to say to him.”⁷

Abu Bakar was a person who had been received by Queen Victoria in 1866. when he had a humbler title (*Temenggong*). and was invited to attend a State Ball at Buckingham Palace in 1878, when he was still not recognised as Sultan but as *Maharaja*. Therefore, it is hard to believe that Abu Bakar was such humble-minded and hopeless about a possible reception with Abdülhamid II. Moreover, the veneration of Ottoman Sultan-Caliph among the Muslim people and political elite of Southeast Asia in general and Johor in particular⁸ meant that a reception with Abdülhamid II would have significant political benefits for Abu Bakar, who made every endeavour to promote the status and prestige of his dynasty during his lifetime. Therefore, it is unlikely that a person like Sultan Abu Bakar who owed much to his close relations with British royals and statesmen, would not have realised or not have been interested in the benefits of a successful reception with the Ottoman Sultan-Caliph. Abu Bakar must certainly have been aware of the importance of such a meeting for his prestige and must have had at least some intention and hope for a reception with the Ottoman Sultan-Caliph. Thus, the narrative of Dato' Haji Mohd. Said bin Haji Sulaiman in his *Hikayat Johor*, stating that the aim of Abu Bakar's trip was to meet the Ottoman Sultan⁹ sounds much more plausible.

On his way to Istanbul, Abu Bakar must have arrived in Cairo around mid-March 1893, as Blunt relates that Abu Bakar had been in Cairo for two weeks when they met at Sheykh Obeyd¹⁰ on March 31, 1893. Blunt described him as “a good old Indian gentleman of very simple manners and much bonhomie.”¹¹ and reported that “He lunched with us, notwithstanding Ramadan, talking pleasantly in pidgin English,

7 Blunt, *My Diaries*, 95-7.

8 See Ermy Azziaty Rozali, Wan Kamal Mujani, and Azmul Fahimi Kamaruzaman, “Relation between the Ottoman Empire and the Johor Sultanate: Perception and Influence,” *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 7, no. 2 (March 2016) and S.J.N Muhammad, N.S.A Rahman, NRNM Affendi, Asmiaty A, “Influence of the Turkish Empire on Malaya in the Malay Manuscript of the Leiden University Library Collection,” *Psychology and Education*, (2021) 58(2): 5957-5965.

9 A. Rahman Tang Abdullah, *Hikayat Johor dan Tawarikh Almarhum Sultan Abu Bakar: Kajian, Transliterasi dan Terjemahan Bahasa Inggeris* (Johor Bahru: Yayasan Warisan Johor, 2011), 124-5. cf. Syed Farid Alatas, “An Ottoman Legacy for Malaysia: Rogayah Hanim” in this volume.

10 Sheykh Obeyd was a stud farm near Cairo founded by Wilfred Blunt to raise Arabian horses. See Elizabeth Longford, *A Pilgrimage of Passion: The Life of Wilfrid Scawen Blunt* (London: Tauris Parke, 2007).

11 Blunt, *My Diaries*, 95

which did not altogether mar his dignity.”¹² The Sultan was accompanied by “a young Malay, the general of his army, and his English secretary, Captain Creighton.” Abu Bakar complained to Blunt that Lord Cromer¹³ discouraged him from mingling with Egyptians and that he did not meet anybody other than English officials during his two weeks’ stay in Cairo upon which Blunt, reportedly offered to help him:

“I offered to put him in the way of this, which much delighted him, and as good luck would have it, Mohammed Moelhi called, while we were sitting on the roof, and I introduced him and sent Mohammed back with him to Cairo, to take him, today being Friday, to the Mohammed Ali Mosque for prayers, and I am to take him on Sunday to the Shaykh el Bekri and get Mohammed Abdu and other Shaykhs to call on him, and we will put him in the right way to an introduction to Sultan Abdul Hamid when he goes on to Constantinople.”¹⁴

The names that Blunt mention in this sentence were quite significant figures and require some attention for a better insight into the context in which Abu Bakar’s visit took place.

“Mohammed Moelhi” who accompanied Abu Bakar to the Mohammed Ali Mosque for Friday prayers, was Mohammed al-Muwaylihi (1858-1930), a member of the prominent Egyptian al-Muwaylihi family and the son of the renowned Egyptian political journalist Ibrahim al-Muwaylihi.¹⁵ Shaykh al-Bekri (1870-1932), the other figure mentioned in the sentence was the young Shaykh of Bekriyye dervish order and the *Naqibuleshraf*.¹⁶ Al-Bekri was known as an admirer of Cemaleddin Efgani’s ideas and had been in contact with Abdülhamid II, who highly appreciated his scholarly capabilities.¹⁷ Another name referred to in the sentence, Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905), was an Egyptian Islamic scholar, journalist and Grand Mufti of Egypt, and a major figure of Muslim reformism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.¹⁸

12 Blunt, *My Diaries*, 95

13 Evelyn Baring (26 February 1841–29 January 1917), as Consul-General of Egypt, was the practical authority in Egypt since 1882, when it was occupied by the British.

14 Blunt, *My Diaries*, 95

15 Muḥammad al-Muwayliḥī (1274-1348/1858-1930) was an Egyptian writer and political journalist, a career that he shared with his prominent father, Ibrāhīm al-Muwayliḥī, with whom he also published the reputable and incisive newspaper *Miṣbāḥ al-Sharq* (Light of the East). Other notable works include “Critique of Shawqī’s Collected Poems and Cure for the Soul”. <https://nyupress.org/author/muhammad-al-muwaylihi/>. See also Roger Allen, “Muḥammad Al-Muwayliḥī’s Coterie: The Context of ‘Hadīth ‘Isā Ibn Hishām.” *Quaderni Di Studi Arabi* 18 (2000): 51–60. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25802894>. I am indebted to Dr. İbrahim Halil Üçer for these references.

16 The *Naqibuleshraf* was a highly esteemed official position in the Ottoman Empire responsible for the affairs of the descendants of the Prophet Mohammed. See Ş. Tufan Buzpınar, “Nakibüleşraf,” *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*: <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/nakibulesraf>.

17 İrfan Gündüz, “Bekri, Muhammed Tevfik,” *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*: <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/bekri-muhammed-tevfik>.

18 M. Sait Özervarlı, “Muhammed Abduh,” *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/muhammed-abduh>.



Image 2: Shaykh al-Bekri

(Source: https://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF_%D8%AA%D9%88%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%82_%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D9%83%D8%B1%D9%8A)

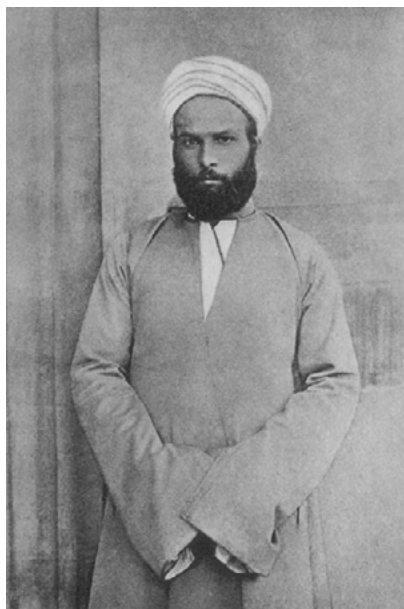


Image 3: Muhammad Abduh

(Source: https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammed_Abduh)

In his diaries Blunt states that he acted as a translator during the conversation between al-Bekri and Abu Bakar and provides interesting details:

“2nd April -To Cairo, where I took the Sultan of Johore to Sheykh el Bekri, acting for him as interpreter. This was a difficult matter, as the poor old Sultan’s English is hardly intelligible, and his ideas are most embroiled, and his manner, too, for an Oriental, is strangely bad, and I fear he shocked el Bekri by a certain *sans-façon* in speaking of holy things, though I was able to smooth down his more unfortunate remarks, as interpreters do. The truth is they were at cross purposes. What el Bekri wanted to find out was whether the Sultan had any pan Islamic ideas, whether he wanted to see Abdul Hamid at Constantinople for a political purpose, and whether he would encourage pan Islamic missionaries at Johore. The old man, on the other hand, only wanted a little personal sympathy as a Mohammedan from Mohammedans. He was too humble minded to expect much notice from Abdul Hamid and had nothing of any importance to say to him. Thus, each misunderstood the other. ‘Do the Mohammedan Princes in India,’ the Sheykh asked, ‘communicate with each other as such, and do they communicate with the Sultan at Constantinople?’ To which the other replied that the Malay princes knew each other, but not the others. They had never had the smallest communication with Constantinople, and the Ottomans looked on them as Kaffirs. A Turkish man-of-war had once come and stayed some time at Singapore on her way to Japan, and it was not till just before she sailed that they discovered that Johore was Mohammedan. Then everybody had been delighted. That was the only communication that had ever taken place with the Turks. They saw many Arabs of the Hedjaz at Singapore who came to trade, but they were ignorant men, though some were rich. He would like to go to Constantinople, but he would not put the Sultan to the trouble of receiving him. He was only a small sovereign and had nothing of importance to say. As to missionaries, he would be delighted if the Sheykh would send them a professor to teach them their religion. They were all Shafais at Johore. They said their prayers in Arabic but did not know the meaning of the words; the Koran was not translated into Malay except some parts of it. He was having a translation made, they were all very ignorant. The young Sheykh el Bekri hardly knew, I think, what to make of it all.”¹⁹

It is apparent that the Turkish man-of-war mentioned in the conversation was the *Ertuğrul* Frigate, which Abdülhamid II sent to Japan to improve mutual relations between the two countries. The frigate departed in July 1889 from Istanbul and arrived in Yokohama in June 1890; its return voyage witnessed the greatest naval disaster of Turkish history as the *Ertuğrul* sunk near Kushitomo off the coast of Japan on September 16, 1890. On its way to Japan, the frigate had called at various ports

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19 Blunt, *My Diaries*, 95-7.

including Bombay, Colombo, Singapore and Saigon. The frigate called at Singapore for a prolonged period from November 15, 1889 to March 22, 1890. The commander of the frigate sent frequent reports to Istanbul describing the great enthusiasm with which the local Muslims welcomed the Ottoman frigate in South Asian ports including Singapore.²⁰ Therefore, the allegations about the belated discovery by the crew that Johor was Muslim, are in fact not corroborated by Ottoman sources.

In this account Sultan Abu Bakar is depicted as someone totally alien to the agenda, rhetoric and mindset of the activists of Muslim solidarity. As we will note below, Ottoman official documents recorded at least twice that Abu Bakar remarked that the name of the Ottoman Sultan Caliph was recited during Friday prayers in Johor, thus indicating that he was more or less familiar with at least the rhetoric that would resound with these people. Nevertheless, it might be possible that the presence of Blunt, a curious Brit, during the conversation may have discouraged Abu Bakar from making such remarks to al-Bekri.

According to Blunt, Abu Bakar's conversations with others appeared to be more successful:

“The good Sultan of Johore was more successful with other Egyptians whom I took him to. At Abdul Salaam's the Pasha was on all fours to His Highness, and me for bringing him. He described to them his patriarchal way of governing his country with a walking stick- like the first Caliphs ' Abdul Salaam remarked - and how he liked, when he was at home with his wife and his mother, to sit on the floor and eat with his fingers. He wanted to find somebody doing that, but at Cairo there were European chairs and sofas everywhere. We have promised to show him that, too, and he is to go on to Mohammed Abdu”²¹

Abdul Salaam was also a member of the “al-Muwaylihi” family and a member of the Egyptian Parliament who opposed the British occupation and made fiery speeches calling for the liberation of Egypt in the late 1870s. In his speeches, he accused the government of being hypocritical against the Egyptian people, together with the British and French ambassadors.²²

Blunt's description of Abu Bakar's contacts in Egypt gives the impression that he was exclusively in touch with the prominent figures of the “Pan-Islamic” network,

20 Süleyman Nutki, *Ertuğrul Firkateyni Faciası* (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2005). See İsmail Hakkı Kadı and A. C. S Peacock, *Ottoman-Southeast Asian Relations: Sources from the Ottoman Archives* (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 244-58. and İsmail Hakkı Göksoy, “Acehnese Appeals for Ottoman Protection in the Late Nineteenth Century.” In *From Anatolia to Aceh: Ottomans, Turks and Southeast Asia*, ed. A.C.S. Peacock and Annabel Teh Gallop, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 175–197 (Proceedings of the British Academy; 200).

21 Blunt, *My Diaries*, 97

22 Yusuf Ramiç, “Müveylihi Ailesi,” *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*: <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/muveylihi-ailesi>

which was quite influential in those days. Then the obvious question is whether Abu Bakar had any contacts without Blunt's mediation or knowledge. Probably the Sultan had some, during his one-month stay from mid-March to April 12, when he left for Istanbul. However, except for Ahmed Muhtar Paşa's short report of their meeting, there are no other sources on Abu Bakar's contacts in Egypt beyond Blunt's diaries.

Abu Bakar's meeting with Ahmed Muhtar Paşa was apparently not without Blunt's knowledge, as he relates that on April 2, after the meetings with al-Bekri and Abdul Salaam, he visited Ahmed Muhtar Paşa, who promised to arrange a meeting with Abu Bakar. Ahmed Muhtar Paşa (1839-1919), the prominent Ottoman field marshal who served in the Crimean and Russo-Turkish wars and later became the Grand Vizier, was the Ottoman High Commissioner in Egypt from 1885 to 1908.²³ Blunt was apparently not present at Abu Bakar's meeting with Ahmed Muhtar Paşa, as he does not refer to it in his diaries. Nevertheless, on April 9, Ahmed Muhtar Paşa informed the Sultan about their exchange of visits with Abu Bakar and reported that Abu Bakar told him that during Friday prayers the name of Abdülhamid II was mentioned before his own name in Johor. He also reported that Abu Bakar would depart for Istanbul on Wednesday, April 12, and arrive there on the day before the Eid al-Fitr to watch the *Selamlık* procession²⁴, on that occasion.²⁵ On April 12, the British embassy in Istanbul informed the Sublime Porte of Abu Bakar's departure from Alexandria and communicated that he was expected to arrive in Istanbul on Sunday, April 16.²⁶

23 Rifat Uçarol, "Gazi Ahmed Muhtar Paşa," *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*: <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/gazi-ahmed-muhtar-pasa>

24 The ceremonial procession of the Sultan to the mosque on Fridays and on religious feast. See Mehmet İşşirli, "Cuma Selâmlığı," *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/cuma-selamligi>

25 "Telegram, 9 April 1893

To the exalted Chief Secretary of the Private Imperial Apartments

As the ruler of the Islamic government of Singapore-Johor located in South Indochina has come to Cairo, we have visited each other. During a conversation he told that he ensured that the exalted name of His Majesty the Caliph is mentioned before his own name from the pulpits during the Friday sermon in his country. He will leave Cairo with the khedival mail steamer on Wednesday, arriving in Istanbul on the day before the feast at the end of Ramadan. I would like to inform you that he intends to see the public procession of the Sultan on the feast day and to stay at the state hotel. Ahmed Muhtar." BOA Y..PRK.MK.. / 5 – 105 cf. İsmail Hakkı Kadı and A. C. S Peacock, *Ottoman-Southeast Asian Relations: Sources from the Ottoman Archives* (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 367.

26 BOA BEO / 183 – 13658.



Image 4: Gazi Ahmed Muhtar Paşa

(Source: https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahmed_Muhtar_Pa%C5%9Fa)

When the Sultan was informed about Abu Bakar's departure from Alexandria, he ordered the Foreign Ministry to provide information about the visitor. The palace requested a thorough investigation into the purpose of Abu Bakar's itinerary, including the places he visited, where he was planning to go after Istanbul, together with what he did in Egypt and why he was visiting Istanbul.²⁷

The request of Abdülhamid II for clarification about Abu Bakar's visit was answered the next day. The note of the Foreign Ministry was based on the information obtained from the British Embassy in Istanbul. The Ottoman government

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27 BOA BEO / 183 – 13712.

often sought information from the British Embassy when they were approached by a ruler or country, which they did not have a lot of knowledge about.²⁸ The note stated that Abu Bakar's itinerary was primarily for leisure and did not have a particular purpose. It was not clear which places he visited on his way, but it was assumed that he travelled directly to Egypt where he stayed for some time without a particular purpose. Reportedly, Sultan Abu Bakar wanted to visit Istanbul to express his allegiance to the Caliph as a Muslim. It was also not certain where Abu Bakar was planning to go from Istanbul, but the Ambassador did not doubt that he would travel to London, where he had a splendidly furnished house. The Embassy reported that Abu Bakar was a prosperous man and liked to stay in London. Johor was one of the few independent governments in its region and had friendly relations with Britain. Its Muslim population was estimated to be between 150,000 and 400,000 people. The British government had an official named Creighton in Abu Bakar's entourage to supervise his political interactions.²⁹

On April 13, the Istanbul newspaper *Sabah* announced that the Sultan of Johor was expected to arrive in Istanbul on the next day (Friday).³⁰ This can be considered as a quite early coverage of the visit though the date of arrival was probably not correct. The exact date of his arrival is not mentioned in Ottoman official sources, but we may assume that the date (April 16) mentioned by the British Embassy was correct, as the ships travelling between Cairo and Istanbul must have been operating on a regular schedule.

On his way to Istanbul, the ship carrying Abu Bakar to Istanbul called in on Izmir where he exchanged visits with the governor Abdurrahman Paşa and went sightseeing in the city. In Istanbul, Abu Bakar was welcomed by the Minister of Protocol Münir Paşa and Aide of the Sultan Ahmed Ali Paşa with a welcoming ceremony.³¹ Ahmed Ali Paşa (1841–1907), better known with his nickname “Şeker”, meaning sugar or candy in Turkish, was an Ottoman painter, soldier, government official and Minister of Protocol from 1896 onwards. Ahmed Ali Paşa was frequently appointed to accompany and entertain foreign visitors in the Ottoman capital and had done so with the Siamese Prince Damrong, who visited Istanbul in November 1891.³² He was also appointed to accompany and entertain Abu Bakar

28 Ismail Hakkı Kadı & A.C.S. Peacock & Annabel Teh Gallop, “Writing history: The Acehese embassy to Istanbul, 1849-1852,” in *Mapping the Acehese Past*, ed. R. Michael Feener, Patrick Daly and Anthony Reid (Leiden: KITLV, 2011), 180.

29 BOA Y..A... HUS. / 272 – 135.

30 *Sabah*, 1 Nisan 1309 / 13 April 1893.

31 *Tercüman-ı Hakikat*, 9 Nisan 1309 / 21 April 1893.

32 Ismail Hakkı Kadı & A.C.S. Peacock, *The Ottoman Empire and The Kingdom of Siam Through The Ages* (Bangkok: Institute of Asian Studies, 2017), 35 and 57.

during his stay in Istanbul. Moreover, the government also assigned carriages from the Imperial Stable to the guest.³³



Image 5: Ahmed Ali Paşa

(Source: <https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/portal/seker-ahmet-pasa>)

On April 19, Abdülhamid II was informed that on that day Sultan Abu Bakar was taken to Topkapı Palace to see the imperial treasury and visited the Süleymaniye and the Sultan Ahmet Mosques, where he recited the Qur'an and remarked that the name of the Caliph was recited during Friday prayers in his country. Abu Bakar was reportedly very grateful for the hospitality he encountered in Istanbul. The following day, he had lunch at the British Embassy, visited Dolmabahçe

Palace afterwards and hosted a banquet for some people, including Ahmed Ali Paşa, in the evening.³⁴ On April 20, Abu Bakar, accompanied by Ahmed Ali Paşa and on board of the carriages of the Imperial Stable, visited the Imperial Museum and other places in Istanbul.³⁵ According to the Istanbul newspaper, *Tercüman-ı Hakikat*, by April 21, Abu Bakar had already visited several places, including Hagia Sophia, Sultan Ahmed, Bayezid, Süleymaniye, Karye-i Atika (Kariye), Yeraltı, Arab and Eyüp mosques, Topkapı Palace, Imperial Museum, and the School of Fine Arts. After visiting the Grand Bazaar, Abu Bakar reportedly went to the Antique Shops of Sadullah, Osman and Ahmed Effendis. It was also reported that he was taken on a steamboat tour of the Bosphorus.³⁶

On Saturday, April 10, the British Embassy sent a note to the Department of Protocol of Yıldız Palace, which was apparently a part of a longer correspondence between the Palace and the Embassy. However, the preceding correspondence between the parties is not available. In the note, the Embassy stated that if the Sultan were to have an interview with Abu Bakar and order the Ambassador to be present on the occasion, the Ambassador would be in a difficult position with respect to Abu Bakar as well as his own state, as Britain recognised Johor as an independent state. However, if the Sultan organised a banquet for Abu Bakar, the situation would be different, and the British Ambassador would be able to join without any reservations.³⁷

On the same day the Istanbul newspaper, *Sabah*, which until then had been spelling Johor mistakenly as Yohor and the name of the ruler as Mohammed, explained to its readers that the country's correct name was Johor, and its ruler was Abu Bakar Khan. Reportedly, Abu Bakar had his nephew Mohammed Said Khan in his entourage. According to the news report two days earlier, the British Embassy organised a banquet in Abu Bakar's honour, attended by Dutch, Spanish and American Ambassadors and the dragoman of the British embassy, as well as Ahmed Ali Paşa, Hacı Kasım İnci (reportedly Abu Bakar's secretary) and Syed Mohammed. According to the news report, in the afternoon Abu Bakar and his entourage visited Dolmabahçe, Beylerbeyi and Çubuklu Palaces.³⁸ *Tercüman-ı Hakikat* also reported that Abu Bakar had watched the Friday procession (on 21 April) (*selamlık resmi*) of Abdülhamid II and had a complimentary conversation with him.³⁹

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34 BOA Y..PRK.BŞK. / 30 – 99.

35 Sabah, 9 Nisan 1309 / 21 April 1893.

36 Tercüman-ı Hakikat, 9 Nisan 1309 / 21 April 1893.

37 BOA Y..PRK.BŞK. / 30 – 99.

38 Sabah, 10 Nisan 1309 / 22 April 1893.

39 Tercüman-ı Hakikat, 10 Nisan 1309 / 22 April 1893.

“Hacı Kasım İnci”, who was referred to in the news report as Abu Bakar’s secretary, was likely the person referred to by Blunt as “A young Malay, the general of his army.”⁴⁰ Mohammed Said and Syed Mohammed mentioned in the news reports must have been Syed Mohammed al-Saqqaf (1836-1906), a prominent and wealthy Hadrami and a close associate of Abu Bakar who acted like an Ottoman honorary consul in Singapore and travelled frequently to Europe and Istanbul. He is frequently referred to in connection with the Kukup land concession accorded to him by Abu Bakar in Johor, where he established the so called “Constantinople Estate.”⁴¹ Anthony Reid refers to al-Saqqaf as “the most influential of Singapore Muslims in the 1880s and ‘90s.”⁴²

Al-Saqqaf’s presence in Abu Bakar’s entourage seems to be a crucial aspect of the visit because of his significant connections with the Ottoman Empire. A few mentions of al-Saqqaf’s name in Ottoman official documents and newspapers suggest that he may have played a crucial role in Abu Bakar’s successful reception in the Ottoman capital. For instance, during *Ertuğrul* Frigate’s call in Singapore from November 15, 1889, to March 22, 1890, the crew was hosted several times at al-Saqqaf’s house for banquets, which were described extensively in the newspapers published in Istanbul.⁴³ About a year later in January 1891, Ahmed Rifki, Ottoman Consul General in Batavia, noted that:

“His Excellency Syed Mohamed bin Saqqaf Efendi, a resident of Singapore, has moved and migrated to Jeddah together with his family. He was born in Singapore and engaged in commerce. With the assistance of good luck, he accumulated a limitless wealth and fortune, but later, due to some kind of dispute with the British government, he deemed it unwise to stay there, and left Singapore for Jeddah together with 130 members of his family on board the Lloyd Company’s steamboat Poseidon, hired for eight thousand British pounds. The aforementioned [Syed Mohamed] has achieved a good name by publicly making his submission [of loyalty] to the Eternal State of His Majesty the Caliph last year out of allegiance, patriotism, and devotion to the most highly Exalted Sultanate, and he has the sincere approbation and respect of all...”⁴⁴

40 Blunt, *My Diaries*, 95.

41 Ermy Azziaty Rozali, “Sayid Muhammad Al-Sagoff in Johore- Ottoman Sovereign Relations,” *Advances in Natural and Applied Sciences* 6, no.6 (2012): 893-897 and H. Taner Seben, *Singapurdaki İlk Temsilciliklerimiz ve Başkonsolos Ahmed Ataullah Efendi* (Singapur: T.C. Singapur Büyükelçiliği, 2013).

42 Anthony Reid, “The Ottomans in Southeast Asia,” *ARI Working Paper*, no. 36 (2005): 12, www.nus.ari.edu.sg/pub/wps.htm.

43 Hatice Kırkaya, “İkinci Abdülhamid Döneminde (1876-1908) Osmanlı Singapur İlişkileri” (Master Thesis., Manisa Celal Bayar University, 2019), 28-30.

44 BOA Y.A.HUS. 244/15 cf. İsmail Hakkı Kadı and A. C. S Peacock, *Ottoman-Southeast Asian Relations: Sources from the Ottoman Archives*. Leiden: Brill, 2020), 802-3.

Syed Mohammed al-Saqqaf's interactions with the British authorities in Singapore had some difficulties, as documented in the literature, but no mention is made of his permanent move from Singapore to Jeddah.⁴⁵ Anthony Reid notes that he travelled to Europe after the departure of the *Ertuğrul* Frigate from Singapore and returned in 1892, and that this journey was perceived as an attempt to bring the Acehese plight to Ottoman attention.⁴⁶

It is apparent that al-Saqqaf's interactions with the Ottomans preceded as well as succeeded Abu Bakar's visit. In November 1899, the Ottoman Consul General in Batavia informed the Ottoman government with a note that "it will be most beneficial to send around two hundred copies of the Arabic translation of the history of the war between the Sublime State and Greece. [The books should be] insured and consigned to the person called Syed al-Saqqaf in Singapore who is informed regarding the issue."⁴⁷ When Ahmed Ataullah Efendi, the Ottoman Consul in Singapore died in a car accident in November 1903, the funeral procession started from al-Saqqaf's house where the body was kept.⁴⁸ As late as 1914, this time the son of Mohamed al-Saqqaf, Syed Omar al-Saqqaf hosted Mehmed Vecih Efendi, the Islamic teacher appointed by the Ottoman government to the Muslims of Moro when the latter stopped over in Singapore on his way to the Philippines.⁴⁹ Mohamed al-Saqqaf bin Ahmad al-Saqqaf who accompanied Sultan Abu Bakr during his visit to Istanbul, was Syed Omar al-Saqqaf's (d.1927) uncle. After his uncle's death in Hejaz in 1906, Syed Omar al-Saqqaf returned to Singapore and became the head of the Alsagoff company.⁵⁰

45 See Ermy Azziaty Rozali, "Sayid Muhammad Al-Sagoff in Johore- Ottoman Sovereign Relations," *Advances in Natural and Applied Sciences* 6, no.6 (2012): 893-897.

46 Anthony Reid, "The Ottomans in Southeast Asia," ARI Working Paper, no. 36, (2005): 12-23, www.nus.ari.edu.sg/pub/wps.htm.

47 BOA MEMKT. 462/33 cf. İsmail Hakkı Kadı and A. C. S Peacock, *Ottoman-Southeast Asian Relations: Sources from the Ottoman Archives* (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 614-15.

48 H. Taner Seben, *Singapurdaki İlk Temsilciliklerimiz ve Başkonsolos Ahmed Ataullah Efendi* (Singapur: T.C. Singapur Büyükelçiliği, 2013), 13.

49 See İsmail Hakkı Göksoy, "The Ottomans' Shaykh Al-Islam of Philippines, Mehmet Vecih Efendi: His Life, Duties and Activities," in this volume.

50 See Bonny Tan, "Syed Omar bin Mohamed Alsagoff", [singaporeinfomedia: https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_1624_2009-12-31.html](https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_1624_2009-12-31.html)



Image 6: Syed Mohammed al-Saqqaf (1836-1906)

(Source: H. Taner Seben, *Singapurdaki İlk Temsilciliklerimiz ve Başkonsolos Ahmed Ataullah Efendi*, Singapur: T.C. Singapur Büyükelçiliği, 2013, p. 46)

It is noteworthy that in his several pages long narrative about Abu Bakar's visit to Egypt and Istanbul, Blunt does not mention al-Saqqaf's name even once, while the Ottomans considered him the second most important person among the visitors and referred to him consistently as Abu Bakar's cousin. This raises questions about Blunt's emphasis on his own crucial role in introducing Abu Bakar to the "pan-Islamic" network in Cairo including, Shaykh al-Bekri and Muhammad Abduh. This is because, as a Sayyid himself, al-Saqqaf would not have had a lot of difficulty in accessing Shaykh al-Bekri, who was the head of the Sayyids.⁵¹ Moreover, the information available about al-Saqqaf indicates that he himself was very much an advocate as well as an activist of Muslim solidarity and would not have much trouble in finding his way to this network.⁵² Furthermore, the close relationship between Abu Bakar and al-Saqqaf also casts doubt on Blunt's narrative of the conversation

51 In another article I have discussed the role of the Sayyid network in the relations between the Ottoman Empire and Southeast Asia. See İsmail Hakkı Kadi, "An Old Ally Revisited: Diplomatic Interactions Between the Ottoman Empire and the Sultanate of Aceh in the Face of Dutch Colonial Expansion," *The International History Review*, 43:5, (2021): 1080-1097, DOI: 10.1080/07075332.2020.1726433.

52 Anthony Reid, "Nineteenth Century Pan-Islam in Indonesia and Malaysia," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 26, no. 2 (1967): 278. doi:10.2307/2051930; Anthony Reid, "The Ottomans in Southeast Asia"; *Asia Research Institute, Working Paper Series*, no. 36, (February 2005): 10-13, National University of Singapore; Ermy Azziaty Rozali, "Sayid Muhammad Al-Sagoff in Johore- Ottoman Sovereign Relations," *Advances in Natural and Applied Sciences* 6, no. 6 (2012): 893-897.

between Shaykh al-Bekri and Abu Bakar, which implies that the parties were of a totally different mentality and world view and had difficulty understanding each other. Given Abu Bakar's close relationship with al-Saqqaf, he was likely well versed in the outlook of these people who approached matters from the perspective of Muslim solidarity.

If we are to return to the course of the visit, according to the news reports of *Tercüman-ı Hakikat* on April 23 and 24, Abu Bakar visited Topkapı Palace, Hagia Sophia and Sultan Ahmed Mosques, the Grand Bazaar, School of Fine Arts, Imperial Museum and some other locations including Mercan, Beyazıt, Süleymaniye, Şehzadebaşı, Okçularbaşı, Divanyolu, Cağaloğlu, Beyoğlu, Tophane and Sirkeci.⁵³ The fact that some of these places were mentioned in earlier news reports among places that Abu Bakar had visited, suggests that he either revisited these places or the news reports were not entirely accurate.

On Monday, April 24, Abu Bakar's visit to Istanbul reached its peak, when he dined with Abdülhamid II at Yıldız Palace. According to the official announcement, Abu Bakar was accompanied by his entourage, while the Ottoman Foreign Minister and the officials of Yıldız Palace were present as well.⁵⁴

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, who had not accompanied Abu Bakar from Cairo to Istanbul, arrived in the city a week later, on April 23. Thus, on the day of the banquet, he was in Istanbul but not as a guest at the Palace. Nevertheless, in his diaries, he provides a lively description of the afterwaves of the banquet. The day after the banquet he met the Russian Ambassador, Nelidoff, and gave an account of their conversation:

"I found him much intrigued about the Sultan of Johore, who to his immense surprise found himself an object of vast curiosity at Constantinople, and who, thanks to Sheykh el Bekri's introduction, had been received with all ceremonious honour by Abdul Hamid, though the Court had refused from the first to acknowledge him as having any claim to calling himself a Sultan. Nevertheless, he was credited by everyone with a very high position as a Mohammedan Prince in the Malay States. Nelidoff told the story of what the Sultan's chamberlain had said of him when Nelidoff had asked who and what he was. "Jene connais pas de Sultan de Johore, mais il ya un prince de ce nom qui a demandé audience de sa Majesté le Sultan." Nelidoff was curious to know how many subjects Johore contained, and when I told him "only half a million" was greatly disappointed. He had been reckoning on him, I think, as a possible ally for Russia on the borders of India."⁵⁵

53 Tercüman-ı Hakikat, 12 Nisan 1309 / 24 April 1893 and 13 Nisan 1306 / 25 April 1893.

54 BOA DH. MKT. PRK / 1357-141.

55 Blunt, *My Diaries*, 98-99

On the same day Blunt visited Abu Bakar's hotel and noted his observations about it as well:

"Going on the same afternoon (25th April) to a hotel where he was staying I found the Johore suite in the seventh heaven of delight over their reception last night by the Sultan. Two state carriages had been sent for them with an escort of cavalry - this had been denied them in London at the Queen's Jubilee. They had been entertained at a state banquet, and Sultan Abdul Hamid had embraced his brother monarch and had bestowed on him the First Class of the Order of Osmanieh in diamonds, and on the suite correspondingly high decorations. I did not see the old gentleman himself, he being with the dentist. Mohammed Moelhi alone was not decorated, though as a matter of fact it was entirely owing to him that Johore had been received at all. The Sultan had refused at first, saying he was only an Indian Rajah, but Moelhi managed to persuade the palace people through Jemal ed Din, and the brilliant reception accorded was the result. Jemal ed Din was at the banquet..."⁵⁶

The controversy surrounding the recognition of Abu Bakar as a Sultan does not feature in Ottoman sources, but it is important to mention that all Ottoman sources refer to him as *Cohor Hâkimi Ebu Bekir Han* i.e. Abu Bakar Khan, ruler of Johor. This confirms Blunt's claim of Ottoman reluctance to recognise him as a Sultan.

The presence of Cemaleddin Efgani at the banquet is an important detail which is absent from both Ottoman official documents as well as news reports. Cemaleddin Efgani (1838-1897) was a prominent political activist and Islamic scholar who travelled throughout the Muslim world and Europe during the late 19th century. He is one of the founders of Islamic Modernism, as well as an advocate of Islamic unity against imperialist interventions.⁵⁷ His presence at the banquet suggests that the Ottoman administration perceived Abu Bakar's visit from the perspective of a specific political agenda, that is Muslim solidarity, rather than an ordinary diplomatic visit.

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56 Blunt, *My Diaries*, 100.

57 See Hayreddin Karaman, "Efgani, Cemaleddin," *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/efgani-cemaleddin>.



Image 7: Cemaleddin Efgani

(Source: https://fi.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jamal_al-Din_al-Afghani)

Despite their silence about Efgani's presence at the banquet, Ottoman sources give precise information about the decorations accorded to the visitors on that evening. Abu Bakar was decorated with a bejewelled and al-Saqqaf (described as Abu Bakar's paternal cousin) first class *Osmani*; Captain Creighton (described as Abu Bakar's chief of staff) second class *Mejidi*; Abu Bakar's doctor third class *Osmani* and Kasım (described as Abu Bakar's secretary) third class *Mejidi*.⁵⁸

In the aftermath of the reception with Abdülhamid II, the newspapers continued to report about Abu Bakar's itineraries in Istanbul. *Sabah* and *Tercüman-ı Hakikat* reported that on April 25 by way of Cağaloğlu he visited the Nuru Osmaniye Mosque, the General Library at Beyazıt and the Grand Bazaar and bought some pieces from the Bedesten.⁵⁹ According to a report submitted by Ahmed Ali Paşa, on April 26, Abu Bakar and his entourage went on board a steamboat to Eyüp where they visited the Bahariye Mevlevi Lodge and participated in the service. After the service they had coffee and candies with the Shaykh of the lodge and

58 BOA İ.TAL. / 19 – 30; BOA BEO / 197 – 14730; Sabah, 16 Nisan 1309 / 28 April 1893.

59 Sabah, Tercüman-ı Hakikat, 14 Nisan 1309 / 26 April 1893.

visited the tomb of Eba Eyyüb El Ensari before returning to their hotel.⁶⁰ On April 27, newspapers in Istanbul reported on the toothache of the guest, and that on the previous day Abu Bakar took a trip on the Bosphorous and visited Üsküdar and Çamlıca⁶¹, though the latter visits seem improbable in light of Ahmet Ali Paşa's itinerary report on that day. Reportedly on the 27, they visited Beyoğlu, the Bosphorous, the Cistern of Philoxenos along with Faith, Kariye-i Atik and Hırka-i Şerif mosques, and the dervish lodge of Merkez Efendi and Ahmed Ali Paşa's mansion in Mercan. The following visit they went to Yıldız Palace to watch the Friday possession of Abdülhamid II together with a visit to Beyoğlu, Şişli and Kağıthane. On April 29, Sabah newspaper reported that Abu Bakar was to leave Istanbul the following Monday.⁶²

It seems that on April 29, Blunt spent his time together with the guests. He describes the lunch they had together with Abu Bakar, Ahmed Ali Paşa and the other companions at a table where ten people who spoke five different languages, including English, French, Turkish, Arabic and Malay. In the evening they dined at Ahmed Ali Paşa's mansion while music was playing.⁶³ *Sabah* reported that they also had visited the Valide Mosque in Aksaray before they went to Ahmed Ali Paşa's place.⁶⁴ According to *Tercüman-ı Hakikat*, on April 30, they visited the Hagia Sophia, Little Hagia Sophia, Sultanahmed, Şehzade, Fatih and Hırka-i Şerif Mosques as well as the Imperial Museum and places like Beyoğlu and Bosphorus. The newspaper reported on April 1, that Abu Bakar was to depart from Istanbul on that day.⁶⁵ It was in fact Blunt who departed after receiving Abu Bakar and Mohammed al-Muwaylihi at his place. Blunt notes that they were happy as al-Muwaylihi too was decorated with a *Mejidi* medal of the second class.⁶⁶ Ottoman official records confirm this belated decoration of Mohammed al-Muwaylihi.⁶⁷

After Blunt's departure from Istanbul, Abu Bakar continued to enjoy his stay in the city. On May 2, he was reported to have visited the Princes' Islands.⁶⁸ On May 4, they went to Kağıthane on board a boat and lunched in the garden of the Royal Pavilion. On May 6, they went on board a steamboat to the Asian side of Istanbul,

60 BOA Y.PRK.MYD. / 12 – 68.

61 Sabah, Tercüman-ı Hakikat, 15 Nisan 1309 / 27 April 1893.

62 Sabah, Tercüman-ı Hakikat, 16 Nisan 1309 / 28 April 1893 and 17 Nisan 1309 / 29 April 1893.

63 Blunt, *My Diaries*, 103-4.

64 Sabah, 20 Nisan 1309 / 2 May 1893.

65 Tercüman-ı Hakikat, 19 Nisan 1309 / 1 May 1893.

66 Blunt, *My Diaries*, 105.

67 BOA İ.TAL. / 19 – 40.

68 Sabah, 21 Nisan 1309 / 3 May 1893.

had lunch at Hakkı Paşa's waterfront mansion, and explored Çamlıca.⁶⁹

On May 10, Abdülhamid II was informed about Abu Bakar's entourage who would be present at the farewell reception on the next day. One name on the list was apparently somewhat puzzling for the Sultan and required explanation. This was no other than Mohammed al-Muwaylihi. The Sultan was informed that he was the son of Ibrahim, a member of the council of education, and had been in the entourage of Abu Bakar. Ahmed Ali Paşa told the Palace that it was Abu Bakar's wish to have Mohammed al-Muwaylihi in his entourage during the reception. On the other hand, the first dragoman of the British Embassy informed the palace that there was no any obstacle in his participation at the reception since he was present at the first one. It depended totally on the wish of the Sultan whether he was going to participate at the reception or not.⁷⁰

On the afternoon of Thursday May 11, Abu Bakar and his entourage were received at Yıldız Palace, where they listened to the recitation of the *Mevlid*. After the reception and the cemony, Abu Bakar left Istanbul for London by train that evening.⁷¹ Both the reception and the departure of Abu Bakar were reported by Istanbul newspapers the next day.⁷² When the train arrived at Adrianople station, the officials welcomed Abu Bakar with an official ceremony.⁷³ From Sofia he sent a telegram to Abdülhamid II expressing his gratefulness for both the hospitality and entertainment which he had received in Istanbul. He stated that he would never forget the memory of this hospitality and will inform his Muslim subjects about the honour and compliments bestowed upon him by the Caliph.⁷⁴ Abdülhamid II responded to Abu Bakar's telegram on May 15, to he express his sincere pleasure in hosting him in Istanbul.⁷⁵

The exchange of compliments and sincere friendly sentiments between the two sovereigns continued for a while. On May 17, the Ottoman Embassy in Vienna informed the Ottoman government that Abu Bakar had visited the Embassy together with his entourage and expressed their gratefulness for the hospitality they received in Istanbul. According to the Embassy's telegram, Abu Bakar and his entourage were to dine at the embassy the following Saturday.⁷⁶ Meanwhile, Istanbul newspapers continued to report about Abu Bakar's contacts in Vienna. *Sabah* reported that the ruler of

69 BOA Y..PRK.BŞK. / 30 – 99: Tercüman-ı Hakikat, 26 Nisan 1309 / 8 May 1893.

70 BOA Y..PRK.BŞK. / 30 – 99.

71 BOA DH. MKT. PRK / 1359–90 / 2, 3, 4.

72 Tercüman-ı Hakikat, 30 Nisan 1309 / 12 May 1893.

73 Tercüman-ı Hakikat, 1 Mayıs 1309 / 13 May 1893.

74 BOA Y..PRK.BŞK. / 30 – 99 / 3.

75 BOA Y..PRK.BŞK. / 30 – 99 / 1, 2.

76 BOA Y.A.HUS. / 274 – 36 / 2 cf. İsmail Hakkı Kadı and A. C. S Peacock, *Ottoman-Southeast Asian Relations: Sources from the Ottoman Archives* (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 364.

Johor arrived in Vienna and had a reception and dinner with the Emperor. Abu Bakar was reportedly decorated with a First-Class Order of Franz Joseph while his entourage received other medals.⁷⁷

On May 22, the Ottoman Embassy in Vienna informed the Ottoman Foreign ministry that the previous Saturday Abu Bakar and his entourage including “his cousin” Syed Mohammed al-Saqqaf, his doctor, his secretary and an official (all wearing their Ottoman decorations) visited the Embassy, dined there and expressed their gratefulness for the hospitality they had received in Istanbul.⁷⁸ The news was reported by *Sabah* and *Tercüman-ı Hakikat* on May 25.⁷⁹

About a year after his visit, Sultan Abu Bakar sent a felicitatory telegram to Abdülhamid II, who responded expressing his pleasure.⁸⁰ This was followed by the visit of Dato Sri Amar d’Raja Abdul Rahman to Istanbul to deliver the medals that the Johor Court deemed suitable for Ottoman statesmen who entertained Sultan Abu Bakar during his stay in Istanbul. The ambassador bore a letter from Dato Menteri of Johor, Jaffar Bin Hadji Mohamed, which was dated, February 26 1894. The emissary from the Johor Court obtained a passport from the Ottoman Embassy in London before June 14, which arrived in Istanbul in July. In return the emissary and his companions were decorated by Sultan Abdülhamid II.⁸¹

Abu Bakar’s visit to Istanbul sparked interest regarding Johor in both the Ottoman administration and the public, that is reflected in occasional references to issues pertaining to Johor. When Abu Bakar died in London in 1895, the news was communicated to Abdülhamid II.⁸² Likewise, the coronation of Ibrahim was covered by *Servet-i Fünûn*, another Istanbul newspaper, which published a photo of the new Sultan as well. The newspaper reported that Ibrahim was born in 1861 and had a good education and training.⁸³

77 Sabah, 6 Mayıs 1309 / 18 May 1893 and 9 Mayıs 1309 / 21 May 1893.

78 BOA HR.TO.. / 114 – 75 and 76; BOA Y.A...HUS. / 275 – 4 / 1, 3.

79 Sabah, Tercüman-ı Hakikat, 13 Mayıs 1309 / 25 May 1893.

80 BOA Y..PRK.BŞK. / 35 – 86, 12 April 1894.

81 BOA HR. SFR.3... / 428 – 16; BOA İ.TAL. / 57 – 13.

82 BOA Y..PRK.ŞA. / 21 – 46.

83 Servet-i Fünun, 22 Haziran 1311, 4 July 1895.



Image 8: Sultan Ibrahim of Johor in *Servet-i Fünun*, 22 June 1311 / 4 July 1895

It is clear, that the interactions between the two courts went beyond what is documented in available sources. Otherwise, it would be difficult to explain why the Ottomans would accord decorations in 1898 to Sultan Ibrahim of Johor and Abdurrahman, described as the vice-chairman of Johor's cabinet. Sultan Ibrahim received a bejewelled *Osmani* like his late father while Abdurrahman was decorated with a Second Class *Osmani*.⁸⁴ A regular part of the interactions between the courts was probably the exchange of felicitations on various occasions, such as the anniversary of Abdülhamid's coronation.⁸⁵ The Ottoman consulate in Singapore must have been another channel of interaction. When Ahmed Ataullah Efendi, the Ottoman consul in Singapore, died in a car accident in November 1903, he was buried at the Johor Royal Cemetery in Teluk Blangah, Singapore, and the tragic news was communicated to the Ottoman court by Sultan Ibrahim.⁸⁶ One and a half month after the death of Ahmed Ataullah Efendi, the German Consul in Singapore who acted as the vice-consul for the Ottomans as well, informed the Ottoman government that Sultan Ibrahim requested a passport for himself and his entourage consisting of some of his ministers, to travel through Ottoman domains without being subject to customs examination and other inconveniences. It was also noted that the date of the travel

84 BOA İ..TAL. / 137 – 21; BOA BEO / 1136 – 85153.

85 BOA Y..PRK.NMH. / 8 – 69.

86 BOA Y.PRK.NMH. 9/44 cf. İsmail Hakkı Kadı and A. C. S Peacock, *Ottoman-Southeast Asian Relations: Sources from the Ottoman Archives* (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 450. On Ahmed Ataullah Efendi and his death see H. Taner Seben, *Singapurdaki İlk Temsilciliklerimiz ve Başkonsolos Ahmed Ataullah Efendi* (Singapur: T.C. Singapur Büyükelçiliği, 2013).

was not specified,⁸⁷ but it was apparently intended during Ibrahim's visit to Europe in 1905, which Abdülhamid II was informed with an official notification.⁸⁸

Considering these occasional interactions, it would be surprising if Johor did not appear among the places from where the Ottoman Red Crescent received financial aid during the Balkan wars, which mobilised Muslim communities all around the world at an unprecedented level. In 1913, Mohammed Emin b. Hasanuddin and Abdurrahim from "Public Works Department" in Muar collected money from the people in Muar and sent it to the Ottoman Red Crescent for "orphans, widows, and persons sustaining wounds in the recent Türkiye-Balkan war".⁸⁹

Conclusion

In the year Abu Bakar visited Istanbul, the *Majallah*⁹⁰ was promulgated as a code of civil law in Johor,⁹¹ and two years later in 1895, the first constitution of Johor was adopted. While the constitution has been considered as a sign of British influence over Johor,⁹² the *Majallah* was obviously imported from the Ottoman Empire after Abu Bakar's visit, which lasted almost one month from April 16 to May 11, 1893. The sequence of events raises questions about whether Abu Bakar personally met with Ahmed Cevdet Paşa (1823-1895), the great 19th century Ottoman scholar and statesman, and the main editor of *Majallah*, who was still alive, retired and devoted to his study in the Bebek district of Istanbul.⁹³ If such a personal encounter may have convinced Abu Bakar to promulgate the *Majallah* in Johor, might it be too speculative to point to Cemaleddin Efgani's constitutionalist ideas as a source of possible inspiration for Sultan Abu Bakar's constitutionalism? After all, Efgani was quite a significant figure in Istanbul and according to Blunt's narrative, he played a crucial role in Abu Bakar's reception by Sultan Abdülhamid II. The interactions between the two during Abu Bakar's days in Istanbul might have been far more beyond what is noted in the sources.

87 BOA Y.A.HUS. 467/3; Ismail Hakki Kadi and A. C. S Peacock, *Ottoman-Southeast Asian Relations: Sources from the Ottoman Archives* (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 414.

88 BOA Y.A...HUS. / 492 – 64.

89 BOA BEO / 4206 – 315440; BOA BEO / 4214 – 315984; BOA BEO / 4229 – 317130.

90 More precisely *Mecelle-i Ahkâm-ı Adliyye* was the Ottoman civil code codified by a commission under the supervision of Ahmed Cevdet Paşa between 1869-1876. See Mehmet Akif Aydın, "Mecelle-i Ahkâm-ı Adliyye," *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/mecelle-i-ahkam-i-adliyye>.

91 On the promulgation of *Majallah* in Johor see Abd Jalil Borham, "The Influence of Turkish Ottoman Islamic Civil Law in 19th Century in the State of Johor, Malaysia," *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*, 3/8 (August 2013): 59-62.

92 For a critical evaluation of this approach see Iza Hussin, "Textual Trajectories," *Indonesia and the Malay World* (2013), 41:120, 255-272, DOI: 10.1080/13639811.2013.798074.

93 Yusuf Halaçoğlu-Mehmet Akif Aydın, "Cevdet Paşa," *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/cevdet-pasa>. It is tempting to note that Abu Bakar died (4 June) only nine days after Cevdet Paşa (26 May) in 1895.

As for Blunt's narrative on Abu Bakar's visit to Istanbul, a cross examination with Ottoman sources suggests his diaries should be read cautiously. He curiously ignores Syed Mohammed al-Saqqaf and does not mention his name even once, while Ottoman sources regard al-Saqqaf as the second most important person among the Johorean visitors, consistently describing him as a paternal cousin of Abu Bakar.

The consistent reference to Mohammed al-Saqqaf as Abu Bakar's cousin raises questions about whether it was a misunderstanding or a deliberate choice on the part of the Johoreans. The fact that the same reference appears in the report of the Ottoman Ambassador in Vienna suggests that the Johoreans preferred to project Mohammed al-Saqqaf as Abu Bakar's cousin. The reason behind this remains unclear.

On the other hand, why Blunt totally ignored Mohammed al-Saqqaf in his narrative of the events is probably more obvious. Blunt might have ignored al-Saqqaf simply to be able to emphasise his own role in Abu Bakar's access to the "Pan-Islamic" network in Egypt and Istanbul, which he argues to have played an important role in the success of the visit. Al-Saqqaf, as a Sayyid with some activism in Muslim solidarity, had the required qualifications and the potential to access the very network to which Blunt claims the pride to have introduced Abu Bakar. Recognising al-Saqqaf as a part of the Johorean delegation would not enhance the cogency of his narrative.

Blunt's narrative is flawed from some other aspects as well. His representation of Abu Bakar as someone without any hope to have an audience with Abdülhamid II does not fit Abu Bakar's figure, who had various receptions and friendships with British and other royals to which he owed much during his reign. Moreover, Blunt's representation of Abu Bakar as indifferent to the prestige that an audience with Abdülhamid II would provide him, does not fit Abu Bakar's figure who tried very hard to rise the status and title of his dynasty from *Temenggong* to *Maharaja* in 1868 and then to that of Sultan in 1885. After all, it was a period, when a number of rulers from the Malay Peninsula and the Indonesian Archipelago tried to access the Ottoman court to harness prestiges.⁹⁴ Abu Bakar must from the outset have had the intention to obtain a reception from Abdülhamid II and be aware of the benefits of it as a ruler of a Muslim domain.

Another aspect of Blunt's narrative that requires a critical evaluation is his description of Abu Bakar's conversation with al-Bekri, where Abu Bakar is depicted as someone totally alien to the agenda, rhetoric, and mindset of the activists of Muslim solidarity. As someone having al-Saqqaf by his side on his way to Istanbul, it is

94 See İsmail Hakkı Kadı and A. C. S Peacock, *Ottoman-Southeast Asian Relations: Sources from the Ottoman Archives* (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 75-325.

unlikely that Abu Bakar was so unaware. Moreover, Ottoman official documents recorded Abu Bakar saying at least twice that the name of the Ottoman Sultan Caliph was recited during Friday prayers in Johor, indicating the contrary. It might be the case that the presence of Blunt, a curious Brit, during the conversation may have discouraged Abu Bakar from making such remarks to al-Bekri.

Nevertheless, Blunt's account of Abu Bakar's visit remains a valuable source shedding light on many details of the event, which otherwise would have gone unrecorded owing to Ottoman official documents' disinterest in such details. Without Blunt's account, Abu Bakar's meeting with al-Bekri and Efgani would have gone totally unrecorded, as would Blunt's perception of these contacts. Additionally, the Ottoman's reluctance to use the title "Sultan" for Abu Bakar would also have gone without notice if Blunt had not referred to it. Both Ottoman official records as well as newspapers referred to him exclusively as *Cohor Hâkimi Ebu Bekir Han* (Ruler of Johor Abu Bakar Khan). This Ottoman attitude might have sounded somewhat mean regarding British recognition of Abu Bakar as Sultan since 1886. However, we should take into consideration that for the Ottomans, using the title Sultan for Abu Bakar would insinuate a status equal to the Ottoman Sultan, while was far from the case for the British.

The reception of Sultan Abu Bakar in Izmir by the governor of the city requires some scrutiny as well. It is true that this reception is not something comparable to the receptions with Ahmed Muhtar Paşa in Egypt and Sultan Abdülhamid II in Istanbul. However, it is nevertheless indicative of the interest and sensation that the arrival of a Muslim ruler from the Far East could create, even in a cosmopolitan international trade hub such as Izmir, without anybody lobbying for it. Then one wonders whether Sultan Abu Bakar really needed Blunt or any intermediaries for an adequate reception at the Ottoman Court.

It is tempting to ask whether during and after the visit Abdülhamid II and Abu Bakar had ever reflected about their commonalities as rulers of somewhat independent states in an international setting characterised by new imperialism. Despite the substantial size difference between the two countries, they were both struggling to maintain what was remaining of their sovereignty within the context of the same international political setting. One response to the prevalent problems was obviously to introduce reforms and modernise various aspects of the state, military, and industry. In this regard, the modernisation experience of a fellow oriental Muslim state could be much more valuable than that of the modern West. The adoption of *Majallah* in Johor can be considered as an example of this realisation and the potential to borrow from others' modernisation experiences.

Beyond the *Majallah* in Johor, Abu Bakar's visit to Istanbul seems to have created

an awareness and interest in the affairs of these distant fellow Muslims. The occasional appearance of Johor in Ottoman newspapers and official records after the visit clearly illustrates these benefits. The story of Ahmed Ataullah Efendi's appointment to Singapore as the Ottoman Consul in 1901, his subsequent death in a car accident in 1903, and his burial in the Johor Royal Mausoleum all have their roots in this growing interest and awareness.

The study of Sultan Abu Bakar's visit to Istanbul also illustrates an interesting aspect of the day-to-day relationships between various political, religious and diplomatic actors with different or seemingly conflicting political agendas in an early 19th century setting. Ottoman authorities, British diplomatic representatives, the so called "Pan-Islamist" network as well as a Britishman with an anti-imperialist reputation, all seem to have worked together towards the success of Abu Bakar's visit, who was in turn known as sympathetic to British policies but had a close associate in the person of al-Saqqaf, who was then a character of a different order.

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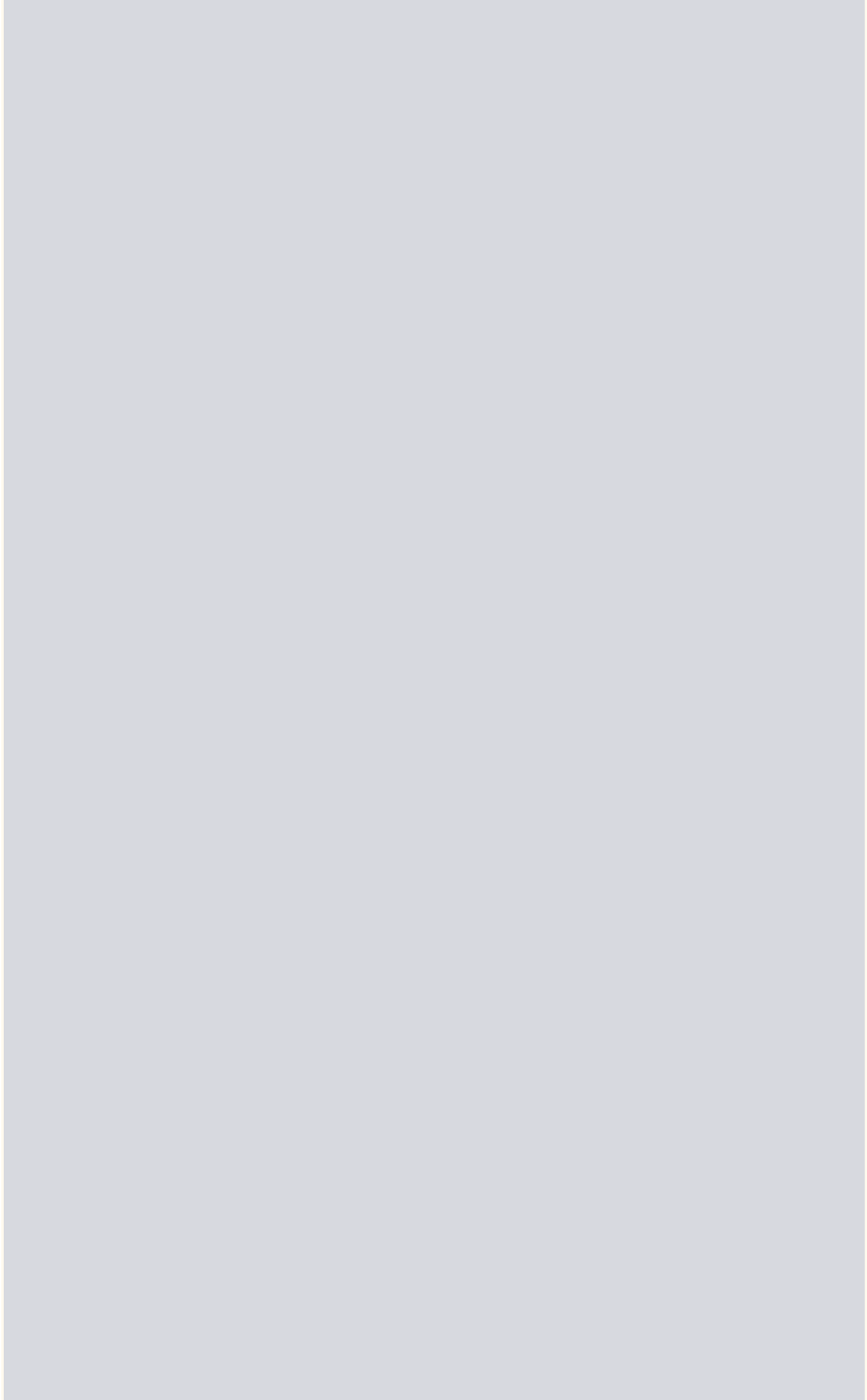
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CHAPTER FOUR

HADRAMIS AS OTTOMAN SUBJECTS IN SINGAPORE AND BATAVIA

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Introduction

For centuries the Indian Ocean has provided a vast trading network between South Arabia and the South China Sea, passing the Malacca Strait. Ḥaḍramawt in South Yemen that lays on the shores of the Arabian Sea was naturally exposed to this network and its people were attracted to travel and migrate to certain coastal destinations, not only to escape economic constraint but to participate in proselytizing activities also. R. B. Serjeant, when discussed about the Sayyids of Ḥaḍramawt, pointed India as the initial attention of their eastward migration, where they settled in several important commercial centers. Yet, their most important migration was to Southeast Asia and their presence in this region had preceded the Dutch.³ The Sayyids or the Alawis of Ḥaḍramawt whose lineage are connected to Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib were of course not the only participants of the diaspora, for the other Ḥaḍramis were also involved in the enterprise. The connection of the two regions, the Arabian Peninsula and Southeast Asia, can be curiously seen in the mentioning of Mas'ūd al-Jāwī who invested al-Yāfi'i, a Yemenite Shāfi'i scholar in the 14th century, with a *khirqah* (Sufi cloak).⁴ The appellation of al-Jāwī indicates that he came from the Southeast Asian region, either

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3 R. B. Serjeant, *The Saiyids of Ḥaḍramawt* (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1957), pp. 24-25.

4 Al-Yāfi'i, *Mir'at al-Jinan*, Vol. 4 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1997), p. 232.

of pure local descent or of Arab blood, and his spiritual undertaking in Yemen represented reciprocal relationship in that network.

While the information regarding the early migration and settlements of the Ḥaḍramis in Southeast Asia is limited and most of them seemed to have been absorbed in local posterity and identity. The migration of the Ḥaḍramis to India and the Netherlands East Indies (colonial Indonesia) rose from the end of the 17th century, especially after the appearance of steamships and the opening of the Suez Canal in the second and third quarter of the 19th century.⁵ Most of the Arabs that came to Java Island from Singapore, first stopped by in Batavia, and then spread to the other regions. The number of new arrivals that were approved by the Batavian government on average was more than a hundred annually, and most of them then stayed (not going back).⁶ According to Dutch sources, their population in the Netherlands East Indies was calculated to be around 20,500 in 1885 and increased to 29,000 in 1905.⁷ However, according to some Ottoman archival records, this Hadrami population in the archipelago was estimated at around 40,000 in 1898⁸ and increased to 60,000 in 1902.⁹ This rapid rise of Ḥaḍrami population, which not only occurred in the Netherlands East Indies, but also in the British Straits Settlements, continued in the following decades. Accordingly, they represented the Arab descents in the region. The second half of the 19th century offered challenges and dynamism to these Ḥaḍramis: the increase of economic opportunities and achievements, direct and indirect unfair colonial treatments, and the transmission of reformist ideas that would connect them with the Middle East and the Ottoman.

The Ottoman Empire, which at around the same period struggled to rebound itself from a worsening decline, interested to revive its past influence. Pan-Islamic idea was nurtured to unite the Muslim world under the Ottoman leadership and formal guardianship was administered in this direction. The sending of Turkish consuls, installed in the second half of the 19th century in Batavia and Singapore, could serve as a means to foster relationship with the local Muslim communities and as a leverage before the growing European powers. The pro-reform Ḥaḍramis and the local sultanates that were under disappointing colonial policies and threats actively pursued the status as Ottoman subjects, in order to relief themselves from colonial harassment. The hope that came along with the presence of the Ottoman consulates

5 Ulrike Freitag, *Indian Ocean Migrants and State Formation in Hadhramaut: Reforming the Homeland* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), pp. 47-48.

6 L.W.C. Van den Berg, *Hadhramaut dan Koloni Arab di Nusantara* (Trans: Rahayu Hidayat) (Jakarta: Indonesian Netherlands Cooperation in Islamic Studies/INIS, 1989), p. 73.

7 Anthony Reid, "Nineteenth Century Pan-Islamism in Indonesia and Malaysia," *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 2, 1967, p. 269.

8 BOA, Y. A. HUS, 385/2.

9 BOA, Y. PRK. AZJ, 46/10.

offered a fresh consolation. The Ḥadrami leaders soon gathered around the Ottoman consuls and became important players in pan-Islamic activism, thus engendering vibrant communities that centered in Singapore and Batavia.

The Opening of Turkish Consulate in Singapore and Batavia

The majority of the population in Southeast Asia were Muslims and the Ottoman Sultans had a great impact on them due to the holding Caliphate. For this reason, the Ottoman Caliphate wanted to establish two consular centers for the Southeast Asian Muslims in two different important cities, Singapore (1864) and Batavia (1882). It was not easy for the Turks to open these centers because both of these cities were headquarters and completely controlled by colonial states, the British Empire and the Netherlands. For such reasons, the Ottoman Sultans firstly appointed some wealthy and influential Arabs or Hadramis, who had already settled in these cities, instead of Turkish diplomats. When the policy of the appointment of these consuls by the Caliphs was examined, it showed that firstly they generally selected from Hadrami descendants, and then they appointed some Turkish diplomats from the center.

With some demands from local sultanates in Sumatra (Aceh, Riau and Jambi), calling for the Ottoman mediation in their conflict with colonial powers, the Ottoman was interested in assuming this role in the region. However, the colonial powers united in their absolute abhorrence of the Ottomans fostering peace for Muslim people. Britain and the Dutch worked hand-in-glove to stifle Ottoman influence in South and Southeast Asian affairs. They viewed with consternation legitimate activities they could not suppress, such as the opening of Ottoman consulates throughout the region. However, the Dutch did not look at these demands positively for a long time, as it was uncomfortable with a representative of the Caliph in the Islamic geography that it colonized. As a result, the first consulates of the Ottoman Empire for the Asian Muslims opened in British India, Bombay¹⁰ and Kalküta,¹¹ (1849) and Singapore (1864).

The installation of representatives of the Caliph in major cities in South and Southeast Asia, including Batavia (Jakarta) and Singapore had serious implications on the potential of Pan-Islamism to inspire Muslims of the region to oppose colonization. Finally, Britain was unable to forestall the Ottoman demand to open a Consulate in Singapore in 1864, to the consternation of the Dutch as well.¹² Apparently, for some economic and diplomatic reasons, the Ottoman Empire did not make a

10 Known today as Mumbai.

11 City of Calcutta served as the capital of India during the late 18th and early 20th centuries.

12 Anthony Reid, "The Ottomans in Southeast Asia" *Asia Research Institute, Working Papers Series* (NUS), No. 36, 2005, p. 11.

direct appointment to Singapore from Istanbul; rather it appointed an Honorary Consul from Hadrami descendants. Syed Abdullah bin Omar al-Junayd, a resident Hadrami and a wealthy merchant in Singapore, was finally appointed as an Honorary Consul of the Caliph to Singapore in 1864.¹³ Even though the Netherlands had no right to talk on Singapore, this appointment made the Dutch very worried as influential Muslims, especially the Hadramis, of the Indies were now able to go to Singapore easily circumventing the traditional suppression of Hadrami travel activities under Dutch policy, and get in touch with Ottoman representatives and the outside world in general.

Syed Abdullah bin Omar al-Junayd is a second-generation migrant in Singapore. His father came from Palembang, settled in Singapore soon after the British occupation in 1819, and ventured into a wealthy executive.¹⁴ Syed Abdullah was well known by some Ottoman diplomats. Before he was appointed as an Honorary Consul of the Caliph to Singapore, it appears that he approached a prominent British statesman, Edward Henry Stanley, to meditate in his appointment. Then, London Ambassador Kostaki Bey sent a recommending letter about al-Junayd to the Ottoman Foreign Ministry on 30 June 1864 and he wrote as follows;

“Syed Abdullah bin Amr al-Junaïd, who is a close friend of Mr. Stanley (Edward Henry Stanley, later British Foreign Minister, 1826–1893), the elder son of Lord Stanley (Three-time British Prime Minister, Edward George Geoffery Smith-Stanley, 1799–1869), and a Hadrami residing in Singapore and one of the richest merchants of that place, previously sent a petition to be presented at the Sublime Porte requesting his appointment as the consul of the Sublime State in Singapore. Mr. Stanley brought up this matter and requested my mediation in getting this enthusiastic request accepted. It is understood from the verbal declaration of the said Mr. Stanley that, more than just being a rich man, the said Syed Abdullah is a genuinely righteous man, obedient and loyal to the Imperial Sultanate, possesses all possible merits and levels of competency, and also knows the English language. It is left to Your Ministerial Highness’s approval as to whether the said Syed Abdullah should be appointed as consul of the Sublime State to Singapore.”¹⁵

13 H. Taner Seben, *Singapur’daki İlk Temsilciliklerimiz ve Başkonsolos Ahmed Ataullah Efendi*, T.C. Singapur Büyükelçiliği (2014), pp. 6-7.

14 Sumit K. Mandal, “Natural Leaders of Native Muslims: Arab Ethnicity and Politics in Java under Dutch Rule,” in Ulrike Freitag and W.G. Clarence-Smith (eds.) *Hadhrami Traders, Scholars, and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750s-1960s* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), pp. 189-190.

15 BOA. İ.HR. 208/11999. See, for a full translation of the document; Ismail Hakki Kadı and Andrew C.S. Peacock, *Ottoman-Southeast Asian Relations: Sources from the Ottoman Archives*, 2 Vols., (Leiden: Brill, 2019), pp. 422-423.

Finally, Syed Abdullah bin Omar al-Junayd was appointed to Singapore with the approval of the Queen of England on September 26, 1864. The approval of the Queen was also reported in the newspaper of *The London Gazette* on September 27, 1864, as follows “The Queen has been pleased to approve of Said Abdullah ben Omer el Djenid”.¹⁶ According to the Ottoman archival documents on this appointment, he was one of the richest people in Southeast Asia and a loyal servant of the Caliph, and he was undoubtedly an esteemed figure to be entrusted with this important position.¹⁷

The appointment of Syed al-Junayd was soon reflected in the Singaporean media, and the following news was reported in *The Straits Government Gazette*, a local newspaper in Singapore, dated February 10, 1865; “*al-Junied has been appointed Turkish Consul at Singapore.*”¹⁸ However, after his fortuitous death in 1865, the Dutch exerted serious pressure on the British to prevent the Ottomans from appointing a new consul.¹⁹ They must have worried regarding the Sultan’s influence over the Muslims in the region, and Britain might have acted in this direction because they ignored this request for a long time.

Unfortunately, we do not have enough information about al-Junayd’s consular experience in Singapore due to his short duty. One year after his death, his brother Syed Junayd bin Omar al-Junayd reported the news of his brother’s death and his obedience to the Ottoman State.²⁰ When Syed Abdullah bin Omar al-Junayd passed away, Tungku Mohamed Arifin, a member of the royal family in Sumatra, requested to be appointed as a new Ottoman consul to Singapore in 1871.²¹ However, according to a report from the Ottoman Foreign Affairs, the Ottoman Grand Vizier recommended Syed Abdullah’s younger brother, Syed Junayd bin Omar al-Junayd, to the Ottoman Sultan as a new Ottoman Consul in 1882.²² This application had been ignored by Foreign Office but in a report prepared by the British Embassy in Istanbul in 1884, it was stated that the Turkish authorities wanted to appoint Junayd as an honorary consul to Singapore and that they would not reevaluate this idea.²³ Despite all repression, the Ottoman government tried to appoint him as a new honorary consul, however the Ottoman foreign affairs gave up this insistence in the same year

16 H. Taner Seben, *Singapur’daki İlk Temsilciliklerimiz ve Başkonsolos Ahmed Ataullah Efendi*, T.C. Singapur Büyükelçiliği (2014), p. 7. See; *The London Gazette* (No. 22897-4615), September 27, 1864.

17 BOA, I. HR, 208/11999.

18 *The Straits Government Gazette*, February 10, 1865.

19 Anthony Reid, “The Ottomans in Southeast Asia” *Asia Research Institute, Working Papers Series* (NUS), No. 36, 2005, pp. 11-12.

20 BOA, HR, TO, 448/8.

21 BOA, HR, TO, 454/56.

22 BOA, I.HR, 286/17881.

23 Ulrike Freitag, “Arab Merchants in Singapore Attempt of a Collective Biography,” *Transcending Borders; Arabs, Politics, Trade and Islam in Southeast Asia*, (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2022), p. 127.

as a result of British pressure. Although Syed Junayd officially could not become the new Ottoman Consul, the Muslims of the region respected him for many years as a representative of the Caliph in Southeast Asia. Even if he was not officially an honorary consul, he connected with Sublime Port and sent some petitions from 1871 to 1873.²⁴

Mohamed al-Saqqaf, another wealthy Hadrami merchant in Singapore, was appointed as a new Ottoman Consul to Singapore. Al-Saqqaf was one of the grandsons of Sayid Abdul Rahman al-Saqqaf, a merchant who came from Hadramawt to Singapore in 1824. Although there is no official letter about his appointment, Anthony Reid claimed that he served as an honorary consul in Singapore in the 1880's. However, the British also did not allow him to function effectively due to Dutch pressure. Despite all the pressure and threats, this person was able to continue in his post for a long time.²⁵ There are many doubts regarding his appointment. If al-Saqqaf was an Ottoman consul, why was it not mentioned in any reports of the Ottoman consulate in Batavia? For instance, in an 1891 report by the Consul General in Batavia, Ahmed Rifki Bey introduced Syed Mohamed al-Saqqaf just as a resident of Singapore.²⁶

His grandfather, Sayid Abdul Rahman, set up the firm *Alsagoff and Company* in 1848 to manage a large part of the Straits Settlements exports such as timber, rubber, sago, coconut, cocoa and coffee to Arab and European countries.²⁷ Mohamed al-Saqqaf also owned a transportation company by the name of "Singapore Steamship and Co" in Singapore. He established some strong relations with the Ottomans Pashas while he was carrying local pilgrims to Hijaz.²⁸ He also had a good relationship with Sultan Abubaker, the Sultan of Johor, and they travelled together to Istanbul and Europe in 1879 and 1893. Al-Saqqaf planned to stop in Istanbul in order to meet with the Ottoman Sultan for his full appointment to Singapore.²⁹ Al-Saqqaf's family was very influential in Singapore, moreover some members of this family were appointed important position in British Singapore.³⁰ Despite many doubts as to whether he was an Ottoman consul, it is a fact that he was seen as an Ottoman representative to Singapore for a while.

24 BOA, HR. SFR, 3. 200/1.

25 Anthony Reid, "Nineteenth Century Pan-Islamism in Indonesia and Malaysia," *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 2, 1967, p. 271.

26 BOA, Y. A. HUS, 244/15.

27 Ermy Azziaty Rozali, "Sayid Muhammad Al-Sagoff in Johore- Ottoman Sovereign Relations," *Advances in Natural and Applied Sciences*, 6(6): 893-897, 2012, p. 893.

28 H. Taner Seben, *Singapur'daki İlk Temsilciliklerimiz ve Başkonsolos Ahmed Ataullah Efendi*, T.C. Singapur Büyükelçiliği (2014), p. 8.

29 Mohammad Redzuan Othman, "The Middle Eastern Influence on the Development of Religious and Political Thought in Malay Society, 1880-1940," Ph.D. thesis submitted at the University of Edinburgh, 1994, pp. 303-304.

30 Ulrike Freitag, "Arab Merchants in Singapore Attempt of a Collective Biography," *Transcending Borders; Arabs, Politics, Trade and Islam in Southeast Asia*, (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2022), pp. 128-129.

During his unceremonious term of office, one of the most important was the transit of *Ertuğrul Frigate*, going to Japan, in Singapore for the approximate duration of three months. Meanwhile, many Acehnese came to Singapore, where they met with Mohamed al-Saqqaf, and requested assistance for the ongoing Dutch war.³¹ When it was learned of the *Ertuğrul Frigate* arrival in Singapore, the Acehnese quickly prepared a letter to present to the Ottoman Sultan. A delegation was drafted to take this petition to Singapore, however when the delegation arrived, the *Ertuğrul* had already left the port. Syed Mohamed al-Saqqaf sent a representative to Aceh in 1892 and promised them to fulfil these demands.³² It was also reported in the Istanbul newspapers of the period regarding his active support to the Muslims of the region. The most important newspapers of the period, *Tercumân-i Hakikât* and *İkdâm*, brought his Pan-Islamist activities to the agenda in Istanbul.³³

Towards the last years of the nineteenth century, when the Dutch were in an ongoing battle with some Sultanates in Sumatra, they did not want these local Sultanates to contact the Ottoman representative in Singapore, just across Sumatra, during these wars. In an Ottoman archival document dated March 25, 1901, it was decided that an Ottoman diplomat, Ataullah Bey, from the center (rather than a local Hadrami), would be appointed as a new Ottoman Consul, because Singapore was the most important commercial port in Asia, and many Hadramis lived there.³⁴

While the previous consuls worked under obscure diplomatic status,³⁵ Ahmed Ataullah Bey was formally recognized as the Ottoman consul. A ceremony was held to honor the opening of the first Ottoman consulate in Singapore, attended by a number of influential Arab traders.³⁶ At the end of 1902, he celebrated the birthday of the Ottoman Sultan in the consulate in Robinson Road. It was attended by Singaporean Muslim leaders including Hadrami families of al-Saqqaf and al-Kâf, as well as some Western diplomats.³⁷ However, he passed away a year later due to an accident. His body was brought from hospital to the house of Syed Muḥammad al-Saqqaf in

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31 Ibid, 186.

32 Anthony Reid, "Nineteenth Century Pan-Islamism in Indonesia and Malaysia," *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 2, 1967, pp. 278-279.

33 Hatice Kırkaya, "İkinci Abdülhamid Döneminde (1876-1908) Osmanlı Singapur İlişkileri." Master's Thesis submitted at Celal Bayar University, (2019), p. 23.

34 BOA, İ. HR, 371/22.

35 See Ulrike Freitag, "Arab Merchants in Singapore: Attempt of a Collective Biography," in Huub de Jonge and Nico Kaptein (eds.), *Transcending Borders: Arabs, Politics, Trade and Islam in Southeast Asia* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2022), pp. 126-128.

36 "A Turkish Ceremony," *Straits Budget*, November 23, 1901, p. 11, <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitbudget19011123-1.2.78>

37 "Sultan of Turkey's Birthday," *Straits Budget*, November 19, 1902, p. 11, <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitbudget19021119-1.2.60>

Java Road and attended by a number of Muslims who wished to pray and to pay their respect to the late consul.³⁸ The coffin that brought his body was covered with the Turkish flag and the Union Jack, and his funeral was attended by thousands of people from different creed and races. The news noted that “it may safely be said that a long time has passed since such an imposing cortege has passed through Singapore,”³⁹ showing the popularity of the consul. He was only about forty years when he passed away and served as consul in Singapore for two years.⁴⁰

Despite all the Dutch pressure against the Caliph’s representatives in Singapore, the Ottoman Foreign Ministry decided to open a consulate in 1882 in Batavia, the headquarter of the Dutch colonial possession in the archipelago. Several Ottoman diplomats would serve as Consuls of the Caliph in Batavia, most of whom were in service for less than 5 years. The first Consul in Batavia was also an Arab resident of the region but the next consuls were Turks. The first archival record regarding the appointment of the first Ottoman Consul to Batavia was prepared in 1881. The Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs requested a representative to be sent to Batavia from the Ottoman Embassy in The Hague to protect the rights of Hadrami merchants who claimed to be Ottoman citizens. They engaged in commercial activities between the archipelago and the Hejaz. The Ottoman Embassy in The Hague reported to Istanbul that to open a new representative office in Java would cost around 10,000 Dutch Florins, and there was no official budget for this. Some innovative maneuvers by the Grand Vizier and the Sultan resulted in the appointment of Syed ‘Abd al-‘Azīz (al-Musawi) al-Baghdādī, who was also a merchant and lived in the region, and he was officially appointed as Consul on February 17, 1882.⁴¹

The appointment was also reported in Dutch Newspapers in the following month, highlighting the Ḥaḍrami citizenship status and the Arab complaints of colonial inequality as the background for the opening of the consulate.⁴² ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Baghdādī, also mentioned as Syed Aziz Effendī, was born in Iraq and his commercial activities in the Netherlands East Indies allowed him to be close to the people in the region, especially the Ḥaḍrami community in Batavia. He married a local woman of royal descent.⁴³ Later on he married his eldest daughter to ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Alawī

38 “Death of the Turkish Consul,” *Straits Budget*, November 12, 1903, p. 13, <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitbudget19031112-1.2.93>

39 “Impressive Scenes,” *Straits Budget*, November 12, 1903, p. 13, <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitbudget19031112-1.2.94>

40 “Death of the Turkish Consul,” *Straits Budget*, November 12, 1903, p. 11. <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitbudget19031112-1.2.82>

41 BOA, I. HR, 285/17778.

42 See for example “Turkije,” *Haarlemsche Courant*, March 13, 1882, p. 1.

43 A. Heuken SJ, *Historical sites of Jakarta*, (Jakarta: Yayasan Cipta Loka Caraka, 2000), p. 291; Alwi Shahab, *Saudagar Baghdad dari Betawi* (Jakarta: Republika, 2004), p. 3.

al-‘Atţās⁴⁴ who came from a wealthy Ḥaḍrami family and who would become a fervent supporter of Pan-Islamism.

Although the Dutch Government protested to the Ottoman Empire about the permission given to Abd al-‘Aziz Efendi and did not approve his appointment,⁴⁵ the Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs refused the assumption that there was any irregularity in the document given for this appointment. The Ottoman Foreign Ministry thought that it would be more beneficial to appoint a Turkish diplomat, as too many petitions began to be submitted about assuming Ottoman citizenship by Ḥaḍramis living in the region. Besides, the presence of a Turkish diplomat in the region would increase the loyalty of the people to the Caliph. As a result, Ali Galip Bey was appointed as the first Turkish Consul to Batavia on April 12, 1883, with the approval of Sultan Abdulhamid II.⁴⁶ He would hold office for three years, until he departed for Europe at the end of March 1886.⁴⁷ He was well educated and experienced as a translator in the Ottoman Palace prior to being appointed to Batavia. During his tenure, he issued an official announcement in a Dutch newspaper in French⁴⁸ and communicated with the European consuls in French language.⁴⁹ Not only with the Ḥaḍramis, but Galip Bey also built a relationship with the local Muslims. He investigated any grievance related to pilgrimage and local rebellion, fostering an impression that all the Muslims were under the aegis of the Ottoman Sultan and therefore causing irritation to colonial officials.⁵⁰

A newspaper informed its readers in June 1886 that Ali Galip Bey was transferred to Bombay, while Ismail Bey, an Ottoman consul in Serbia, was chosen to be the new consul in Batavia.⁵¹ In all probability, Ismail Bey did not come to Batavia, unless he is the same person as Rifki Bey who was acknowledged as the new consul for Batavia in January 1887.⁵² Rifki Bey departed from Marseille to Batavia on May 22, 1887.⁵³ He served as consul until the end of 1891, which was longer than the previous Ottoman consuls. He sent many reports about the Aceh War and gave information regarding the situation in Aceh. According to his analyses, “the Dutch will

44 Kazuhiro Arai, “Arabs who traversed the Indian Ocean: The History of the al-‘Attas family in Hadhramawt and Southeast Asia, c. 1600 - c.1960” (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan, 2004), p. 246.

45 Jan Schmidt, *Through the Legation Window 1876-1926 – Four Essays on Dutch, Dutch-Indian and Ottoman* (Istanbul: Nedherlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul, 1992), p. 86.

46 İsmail Hakkı Göksoy, *Güneydoğu Asya’da Osmanlı-Türk Tesirleri*, (Isparta: Fakülte Kitapevi, 2004), p. 97.

47 “Nederlandsch Indie,” *Bataviaasch Handelsblad*, March 27, 1886, p. 6.

48 “Avis.,” *Sumatra Courant*, 12 April 1884, p. 3.

49 “Nederlandsch Indie,” *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*, 20 February 1886, p. 2.

50 Snouck Hurgronje, et al., *Nasihāt-nasihāt C. Snouck Hurgronje semasa Kepegawaiannya kepada Pemerintah Hindia Belanda, 1889-1936*, Vol. IX (Jakarta: INIS, 1994), pp. 1739-1740.

51 “Telegrammen uit de Locomotief,” *De Nieuwe Vorstenlanden*, June 7, 1886, p. 3.

52 “Benoemingen, enz., op heden,” *Java-Bode*, January 10, 1887, p. 5.

53 “Nederlandsch Indie,” *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*, June 13, 1887, p. 1.

not be successful in this war and the new state to dominate the region could be Germany.”⁵⁴ Despite this, he was unpopular among the Ḥaḍramis and the Muslims in the Netherlands East Indies, for his lack of religious observance and his preference to speak French and wear European clothes.⁵⁵ It is interesting to note that whereas the Arab hope and voices had initially prompted the inception of the Turkish consulate in Batavia, Rifkî Bey was transferred from Batavia to Barcelona because of strong criticism, posted in a Pan-Islamic media, by a Singaporean Arab.⁵⁶

Not a lot is known about the next Ottoman consul, Veli Chemsi (Şemsi) Bey. His name had already been mentioned as the next consul in Batavia by the middle of October 1891, while he was previously working as the second secretary in the Turkish consulate in St. Petersburg.⁵⁷ His career background in a European environment was underlined by a Dutch newspaper in characterizing his distinguished manner.⁵⁸ Another newspaper reported an official recognition for his post in Batavia at the beginning of December that year.⁵⁹ He was reported as being temporarily absent since 1893, but he never returned to his post until the new candidate, Rifkî Effendi, was appointed as a new consul for Batavia towards the end of 1895.⁶⁰ There is no clear indication that the latter named is the same person as the previous consul, but he was mentioned as previously working in the Batavian consulate and had already made many friends in the Netherlands East Indies. Whatever the case, he passed away on the day of his departure to Batavia and therefore another person, Fuad Bey, was named as the next consul general.⁶¹ Fuad Bey arrived in Batavia on January 20, 1896⁶² and ran the Turkish consulate for about one year. He departed for a five-months leave for Europe in January 1897,⁶³ but there is no report that he returned to continue his career in Batavia.

A few European names were in fact mentioned as temporary Turkish consuls in Batavia when the post was vacant. When Ali Galip Bey went to Europe in 1886, the affairs of the Turkish consulate in Batavia was handled by the consul of French, Mr. Jouslain.⁶⁴ J. C. Kraft became an acting Turkish consul in Batavia after the absence of Veli Bey, but we do not know any detail about this person, except that he was

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54 BOA, Y. A. HUS, 246/18.

55 “Plaatselijk Nieuws,” *Bataviaasch Handelsblad*, December 5, 1891, p. 9.

56 “Nederlandsch Oost-Indie,” *Dagblad*, January 13, 1892, p. 1; “Java News,” *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 8 December 1891, p. 352, <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/singfreepresswk18911208-1.2.26>.

57 “Plaatselijk Nieuws,” *Bataviaasch Handelsblad*, October 17, 1891, p. 6.

58 “Nederlandsch Indie,” *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*, November 23, 1891, p. 1.

59 “Consulaire Berichten,” *De Tijd*, December 2, 1891, p. 2.

60 “Nederlandsch Indie,” *Java-Bode*, September 28, 1895, p. 2.

61 “Nederlandsch Indie,” *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*, December 17, 1895, p. 1.

62 “Aangekomen Passagiers te Batavia,” *De Locomotief*, January 20, 1896, p. 3.

63 “Gemengd Indisch Nieuws,” *Soerabaiasch-Handelsblad*, January 27, 1897, p. 6.

64 “Nederlandsch Indie,” *Bataviaasch Handelsblad*, March 27, 1886, p. 6.

replaced in the middle of 1895 by another European, Mr. W. H. Schulz.⁶⁵ Schulz acted as a Turkish consul more than once between 1895 and 1898. He was a German commercial agent and did not seem to have a diplomatic background.⁶⁶ Most probably these inductions were made by the Netherlands East Indies government without serious consideration or approval by the Ottoman. This was more consistent with the Dutch colonial resoluteness for the commercial and non-political function of the Turkish consulate.⁶⁷

In early October 1897, the next Ottoman consul, Kamil Bey arrived in Batavia. The Dutch colonial government continued to reluctantly accept the appointment, feeling anxious about retaliation for their consulate in Jeddah.⁶⁸ Despite his short tenure of only about one year, Kamil would become the most upsetting Ottoman consul for the Dutch colonial government, and, vice versa, nourishing the expectations of the Ḥaḍrami community. Some European articles and reports listed his grievous sins: avoiding coronation ceremonies, seducing some local princes to shift their loyalty, publishing defamatory articles in the palace magazines (Istanbul) such as *Malumat* and *Servet*, and sending several Ḥaḍrami boys to study in Istanbul.⁶⁹ In short, he was accused as the main figure behind Pan-Islamic machination in the region, so he was finally dismissed on October 13, 1898 on the insistence of the Dutch colonial government. It was highly expected that he would leave Batavia as soon as possible, but Kamil only departed from that city at the beginning of December that year, accompanied by seven Arab children who would pursue their education in Istanbul.⁷⁰

Soon after that, at the end of December, he went to Liverpool to serve as an Ottoman consul in that city.⁷¹ Maybe he is the only Ottoman consul that still continued his Pan-Islamic propagation to the people in the Netherlands East Indies after his term in office was over, as the Ḥaḍramis also seemed to continue communicating with him. At the beginning of 1900, Kamil published circular letters and distributed them among the Ḥaḍramis in Java. He suggested the Batavian Ḥaḍramis to continue their struggle to be equal with the Europeans by paying a lawyer and sending the request to the Netherlands East Indies Governor General, the Dutch Queen and also to Constantinople.⁷² One of his Ḥaḍrami friends, Taha al-Haddad, indeed came to

65 "Nederlandsch Indie," *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*, June 26, 1895, p. 2.

66 "Telegrammen uit de Locomotief," *De Nieuwe Vorstenlanden*, January 22, 1897, p. 5.

67 "Een Gevaarlijke Gast," *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*, December 9, 1898, p. 1.

68 "Nederlandsch Indie," *Java-Bode*, October 6, 1897, p. 2.

69 Schmidt, *Through the Legation Window*, p. 87-88.

70 "Een Gevaarlijke Gast," *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*, December 9, 1898, p. 1.

71 "Soerakarta 31 December 1898," *De Nieuwe Vorstenlanden*, 31 December 1898, p. 2.

72 "Uit de Indische Bladen – De Arabieren," *De Tijd*, February 13, 1900, p. 2.

Istanbul with financial support from the other Ḥaḍramis, moreover he used that opportunity to approach influential people in that city and spread criticism about the Dutch colonial government.⁷³ According to Jan Schmidt, Kamil Bey was declared an “unwanted man” (*faiseur d’embarras*) by the Dutch.⁷⁴

Kamil Bey was exchanged with Emin Bey, the Consul of Liverpool, thus the latter was appointed as the Consul of Batavia.⁷⁵ Emin Bey was appointed as the Ottoman consul in the middle of October 1898.⁷⁶ He was reported departing from Istanbul in the middle of December that year.⁷⁷ Around the middle of March 1899, Emin Bey arrived in Tanjung Priok, Batavia, welcomed by a number of Ḥaḍramis. Soon after that, he accepted an interview by a *Java-Bode* journalist in Batavia, during which this 32-year-old consul mentioned his previous diplomatic career and tried to improve the image of the Ottoman consulate.⁷⁸ Unlike his predecessor, he dealt more carefully with the pan-Islamic movement and to a certain degree caused dissatisfaction among the militant Muslims in Java and Singapore. He received a letter of critic in English from some leading Singaporean Muslims, comparing him with Kamil Bey who was considered “doing his duties as consul formerly in Netherlands India to the greatest satisfaction of all the subjects of his Majesty the Sultan.”⁷⁹ Even though Emin Bey served as Consul in Batavia until April 20, 1900,⁸⁰ he departed from Batavia on August 16, 1900.⁸¹

Sadik Belig(ğ) Bey came as the Ottoman consul in Batavia after Emin Bey, and not the other way around as suggested by Jan Schmidt.⁸² During his tenure, the Ottoman consulate began to pay attention to trading opportunities.⁸³ In 1904, Sadik Bey was succeeded by Haji Rasim Bey, who previously served as a consul general in Taganrog.⁸⁴ According to his appointment document, his full inauguration date is January 16, 1904.⁸⁵ His attention to commercial activities was even greater than his

73 Hurgronje, *Nasihah*, 1994, p. 1772.

74 Schmidt, *Through the Legation Window*, p. 87.

75 BOA, HR. SFR. 3, 473/63.

76 “Consulaire Berichten,” *De Tijd*, October 14, 1898, p. 2. The date for the appointment of Emin Bey in the Ottoman Archives documents is given as August 1898. See; BOA, HR. SFR. 3, 473/61; HR. SFR. 3, 473/63; HR. SFR. 3, 473/65; HR. SFR. 3, 473/66.

77 “De Consul-generaal van Turkije,” *De Locomotief*, December 16, 1898, p. 2.

78 “Soerakarta 13 March 1899,” *De Nieuwe Vorstenlanden*, March 13, 1899, p. 2; “De Nieuwe Turksche Cons.-Gen.,” *De Locomotief*, March 14, 1899, p. 2.

79 “Netherlands India,” *Straits Budget*, 5 April 1900, p. 10, <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitsbudget19000405-1.2.71>

80 BOA, BEO. 1473/110459.

81 “Telegrammen,” *Soerabaiasch-Handelsblad*, August 16, 1900, p. 6.

82 Schmidt, *Through the Legation*, 1992, pp. 88-89.

83 “Handelsbetrekkingen met Turkije,” *De Locomotief*, July 9, 1903, p. 2.

84 “Het Turksch Consulaat-Gen. te Batavia,” *De Nederlander*, February 13, 1904, p. 2.

85 BOA, BEO. 2263/169665.

predecessor. Commercial function was no more considered secondary to Islamic propaganda for the Ottoman consulate during Rasim's diplomatic career in Batavia.⁸⁶

Haji Rasim Bey aspired to increase trade between Istanbul and Batavia and he encouraged and facilitated commercial activities in order to boost trade relations between these two jurisdictions.⁸⁷ Despite this, he still maintained the association with the Ḥaḍrami community well, he even tried to improve the consulate's relationship with Syed 'Uthmān Bin Yaḥyā, a leading traditional scholar and the Mufti of Batavia.⁸⁸ Previously, the Ottoman consulate under Kamil Bey was in a hostile relationship with Syed Uthmān.⁸⁹ Haji Rasim Bey also applied some Pan-Islamic propaganda in Indonesia and worked with Hadrami diaspora in Batavia. The most prominent Pan-Islamic activities of Haji Rasim Bey was to introduce the Hejaz Railway project to the Muslims of the region, and to organize aid campaigns.⁹⁰

Haji Rasim Bey was succeeded by Erched Bey who was admitted as the new Ottoman consul in Batavia in January 1910.⁹¹ He was said to be a supporter of the Young Turks who had just controlled power in Turkey.⁹² However, he held this office for less than two years, for in early 1911, another Ottoman consul was appointed.⁹³ This new consul, Refet Bey, was appointed in Batavia on March 4, 1911.⁹⁴ Refet Bey, who had been suspected since the beginning as a Pan-Islamic supporter,⁹⁵ was the last and the longest serving Ottoman consul in Batavia. While the previous consuls to a certain degree also experienced the dynamic changes in the Ottoman Caliphate and in the world, Refet Bey served his country throughout the First World War and he witnessed the demise of the Ottoman Empire.

The issue of Arab citizenship remained during his time and the Ottoman consulate among others continued trying to assist, by providing Turkish passports. In March 1914, several Arabs were reported to have passes as Ottoman subjects in Surabaya, but their travel documents were not approved and therefore they were removed from the Netherlands East Indies. The Ottoman and German consulates that

86 "Het Turksche Consulaat-generaal te Batavia," *Algemeen Handelsblad*, March 31, 1909, p. 1.

87 "Nederlandsch Indie," *Soerabaiasch-Handelsblad*, November 8, 1905, p. 6.

88 Hurgronje, *Nasihah*, 1994, p. 1794.

89 *Ibid.*, pp. 1631-1632; Niko Kaptein, "Sayyid 'Uthmān on the Legal Validity of Documentary Evidence," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, Vol., 153, No.1, 1997, p. 99.

90 İsmail Hakkı Göksoy, *Güneydoğu Asya'da Osmanlı-Türk Tesirleri*, p. 104.

91 "Turksch Consul te Batavia," *Deli Courant*, January 25, 1910, p. 2.

92 "Uit de Indische Bladen," *The Tijd*, July 21, 1909, p. 5; "Untitled," *The Straits Times*, June 28, 1909, p. 6, <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19090628-1.2.45>

93 "Turksch Consul te Batavia," *De Sumatra Post*, May 13, 1911, p. 6.

94 BOA, I. HR. 435/20.

95 "Uit de Kolonien," *De Avondpost*, April 12, 1911, p. 6.

initially interceded could not settle the problem and finally had to distance themselves from the case.⁹⁶

They did not always fail in assisting their Arab friends. In a different case, a Ḥaḍrami Syed, Agil al-Saqqaf, put the pictures of the Ottoman, German, and Austrian Emperors in his shop in Surabaya. Being sensitive in a war situation, a few British customers were furious at him and reported it to the Dutch government. Despite its neutral stance during the war, a Dutch police officer came the following day and took the pictures without any warrant, only to be returned later on after the Ḥaḍrami reported the incident to the German consul.⁹⁷ Sympathy for Germany among the Muslims was influenced by their leaning towards the Ottoman Empire and the latter's alliance with Germany during the war.⁹⁸ The war alliance made the Ottoman and German consulates sometimes work together in defending the Muslim subjects in the Dutch East Indies or in protesting against enemy's detrimental statement. On one occasion in 1914, for example, both consulates in Batavia officially protested against the British offensive allegation that Germany had bribed the Ottoman to ally with Germany in the Great War.⁹⁹ Not only responding to others, the Ottoman consulate also actively published the Turkish version of the war news in a few local media such as *Oetoesan Hindia* and *Sin Po*.¹⁰⁰

The situation was becoming less favourable for the Ottoman with the revolt and separation of Sharif Ḥusayn of Makkah from the Ottoman Empire. Even Sarekat Islam association in Batavia had received a wire from Jeddah, informing in English that the rulers of Hejaz had changed, asking them to spread the information and to send a wire about the departing pilgrims.¹⁰¹ However, a few months later, *Oetoesan Hindia*, the mouthpiece of Sarekat Islam and a periodical issued by an Arab-funded company,¹⁰² hinted its inclination and informed its readers that:

*“Soerat2 kabar dari fihak serikat Entente memoedji keras akan kelakoean-
nja bekas Sheriff Hoessein telah berontak melawan pada keredjaan Osmani-
ah itoe. Tetapi sebaliknya: hampir segenap doenia Moeslimin di Hindia kita*

96 “Onze Oost,” *Algemeen Handelsblad*, April 26, 1914, p. 9.

97 “Binih tidak Setia,” *Oetoesan Hindia*, April 4, 1916, p. 1.

98 Kees van Dijk, *The Netherlands Indies and the Great War, 1914-1918* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2007), p. 622.

99 “Deutsch-Turksch Protest,” *De Preangerbode*, November 7, 1914, p. 3.

100 See, for example, “Persangkalan dari Fihak Turkije,” *Oetoesan Hindia*, April 11, 1916, p. 1; “Kabar dari Fihak Toerkie,” *Sin Po*, July 1, 1915, p. 2.

101 “Kabar dari Arab,” *Pertimbangan*, July 22, 1916, p. 7.

102 On the relationship between *Oetoesan Hindia*, Sarekat Islam and the company Setia Oesaha, in which Hasan bin Semit had a considerable share, please see Sumit K. Mandal, *Becoming Arab: Creole Histories and Modern Identity in the Malay World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 174 and William Gervase Clarence-Smith, “Hadhrami Entrepreneurs in the Malay World, c. 1750 to c. 1940,” in Ulrike Freitag and W.G. Clarence-Smith (eds.) *Hadhrami Traders, Scholars, and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750s-1960s* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), p. 307.

mentjela keras akan perboeatannja bekas Seriff jang telah berchianat kepada Califah.”

[the Entente’s news agencies highly praised the behaviour of the former Sharif Husayn who had rebelled against the Ottoman Empire. But on the contrary: almost all Muslims in our Indies strongly reproach the actions of the former Sharif who betrayed the Caliph].

This new reality, in concert with the other separatist movements in Arab countries, had challenged the Ottoman as the spiritual leader, even if it was only symbolic, of the Muslim world. It also gave a practical consequence: the arrangement for pilgrimage to the holy cities. The Arab nationalism had the potential to attract the sympathy of the Ḥaḍrami community in the Netherlands East Indies, as the sayyid background of Sharif Ḥusayn to the Ḥaḍrami Sayyid community. Some sayyids then started to swing their support for the Hijazi cause.¹⁰³ This is also the case of Syed ‘Umar al-Saqqaf in Singapore who was among the earliest Arab leaders who turned his support to Sharif Husayn.¹⁰⁴

In a rebuttal article representing the voice of the Batavian Ottoman consulate, it is mentioned about the distribution of pro-Entente Arabic pamphlets that sought the favour of the Arab people and the natives in the Netherlands East Indies. According to the article, the pamphlets were distributed by British and French agents, as well as by Arabs from the sayyid group who were enticed by the British agent. The article mentioned how those pamphlets, that were originally distributed in the Arab region, “*soeda di toelis dalem bahasa dan hoeroef Arab dan semoeanja tjoba maoe kasi oendjoek banjak sympathie (kesian) pada bangsa Arab, serta kasi harepan dan perdjandjian ...*” [have been written in Arabic language and letters and everyone is trying to show a lot of sympathy (pity) to the Arabs, and give hope and promise ...].¹⁰⁵ In answering this, among other things, the article wrote:

“Tetapi semoea itoe perdjandjian jang berharga dari fihak Inggris dan Fransch tjoema djadi bintjana dan koerang kasetia’an dan koerang iman, dan Inggris serta Fransch poenja toedjoean aken menanem bibit kebentjiaan dan soepaja bertjere-bereinja kaoem Moeslimin di dalem djadjahan Turkye soepaja Inggris dan Fransch bisa timboelken brontakan dan kekaloetan di dalem djadjahan Turkye dan soepaja moesoe-moesoenja Turkye bisa senang sadja poekoel dan taloeken ia poenja djadjahan dan negri-negri soetji Mekka dan Medina.”

103 Mandal, *Becoming Arab*, 2018, pp. 190-191.

104 Mohammad Redzuan Othman, “Conflicting Political Loyalties of the Arabs in Malay before World War II,” in Huub de Jonge and Nico Kaptein (eds.), *Transcending Borders: Arabs, Politics, Trade and Islam in Southeast Asia* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2022), p. 40.

105 “Turkye,” *Pertimbangan*, November 21, 1916, p. 3.

[But all these valuable promises on the part of Britain and France will only become a disaster and will reduce loyalty and undermine faith, and Britain and France have the aim of nurturing the seeds of hatred so that the Muslims will scatter in the Turkish colonies in order that Britain and France can cause rebellion and chaos in the Turkish possessions and so Turkey's enemies can easily beat and conquer those colonies and the holy lands of Mecca and Medina.]¹⁰⁶

Refet Bey also described the importance of the Ottoman as “*KEPALA dari Islam*” [the head of Islam]. According to him, the enemy wanted that this head should be cut to conquer the Muslim world, thus enabling their soldiers to “*masoek kadalem negri itoe dengen poera-poera aken membri keamanan. Padahal itoe moesoe nanti doedoek disitoe selama-lamanja*” [enter the countries under the pretence of providing security. Whereas the enemy will sit there forever].¹⁰⁷

Refet Bey, however, was not only involved with the war issues, but also with the Ḥaḍrami affairs and sometimes with the recent antagonism in that community. It is reflected, for example, in the case of Alatas School in Batavia which received certain accusation regarding one of its teachers that seemed to have affected the consul's judgment. therefore the school director published an open letter to the Ottoman consulate to clarify the issue, explaining the absurdity of the allegations and the benevolent reasons behind the establishment of the school. The director, M.O. Hachimi, adjured the Ottoman consul: “*Timbanglah p. toean Consul dengen mengambil alesan jang tersoerat itoe! Kerna p. toean wakil Chalifatoel-Moeslimin*” [Consider your majesty Consul by taking the stated reason! Because your majesty is the representative of the Muslim-Caliph]¹⁰⁸ Another report informed us that on one occasion Refet Bey came to al-Irshad School, tested the knowledge of the students in several subjects like Geography, History, Mathematic, and Islamic Jurisprudence, and was amazed with their progress.¹⁰⁹

There are several other things that the consulate did during this period, such as answering the accusations against the Armenian massacre and receiving complaints from the native people in Condet, Batavia, who were oppressed by the colonial authorities. Refet Bey continued in his position after the end of the First World War, until the abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate in 1924, during which all the overseas Ottoman consuls were called home. Hence, Refet Bey went back to Ankara in March 1924.¹¹⁰

.....
106 *Ibid.*

107 “Turkye. II,” *Pertimbangan*, November 22, 1916, p. 3.

108 “Al-Atas School,” *Pertimbangan*, December 30, 1916, p. 3.

109 “Soerat Kiriman,” *Pertimbangan*, February 23, 1917, p. 5.

110 Frial Ramadhan Supratman, “Rafet Bey: The Last Ottoman Consul in Batavia during the First World War 1911-1924,” *Studia Islamika*, 24 (1), 2017, pp. 33-68.

Citizenship Issue and Mutual Support

The opening of the Ottoman consulate in Batavia was closely related to the issue of citizenship, a status that the Ḥaḍramis of the Indies strived for, for decades. Along with the appointment of ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Baghdādī in 1882, it was stated that the Arab people from Ḥaḍramawt were the subjects of the Ottoman Sultan and they had to be treated equally as the Europeans. It admonished the Dutch regarding the treaties of 1859 and 1863 between the Ottoman and the Netherlands, requiring that as the Dutch people in the Ottoman territory were treated equally, the Sultan’s subjects in the Netherlands had to enjoy the same treatment.¹¹¹ This issue was complicated and while the Dutch colonial government admitted the status of those who came from the European part of the Ottoman Empire, such as most of the Turkish consuls, as equal to the European people, it refused to do the same for its Asian inhabitants, which of course includes the Arabs. This perplexing colonial policy was highlighted more than once by Snouck Hurgronje (the orientalist advisor of the Dutch Government on Islamic issues) in his advice.¹¹²

Ironically, ‘Abd al-‘Azīz himself was not acknowledged by the colonial government as an Ottoman subject that was equal to the Europeans, for he was born in Baghdad, the Asian part of the Ottoman territory. This affected the inheritance tax imposed on his sons, for there were different colonial regulations for the Europeans and the non-Europeans in the Netherlands East Indies. The problem was settled and ‘Abd al-‘Azīz’s family was considered equal to the European only after the family was able to provide proof that ‘Abd al-‘Azīz’ father, Said Gedder – whose name seems a corruption of the Arabic Syed Haydar – was born in Istanbul.¹¹³

The Ḥaḍrami’s claim referring to the colonial perspective was even more remote. Ḥaḍramawt was an independent region in many parts of its history, controlled by scattered small kingdoms and tribes. Though the Ottoman sometimes made a claim to this region, in reality it hardly exercised its authority to the people of Ḥaḍramawt.¹¹⁴ Therefore, the colonial government had never acknowledged the Ḥaḍramis as Ottoman subjects or as equal to the Europeans.

A question can be raised as why the Ḥaḍramis really strived for this status. The main problem was actually the racist colonial policy that created a strict social stratification regulated by law. Under this system, the Ḥaḍramis in the Indies were put under the category of Foreign Orientals (*Vreemde Oosterlingen*), who were in the

111 “Uitsluitend Agent for Europa E. Elsbach te Parijs,” *Suriname*, April 7, 1882, p. 2.

112 See for example Hurgronje, *Nasihah*, 1994, p. 1696-1697.

113 “Nederlandsch Indie,” *Bataviaasch Handelsblad*, March 13, 1889, p. 7.

114 Natalie Mobini-Kesheh, *The Hadhrami Awakening. Community and Identity in the Netherlands East Indies, 1900-1942* (New York: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications, 1999), p. 20.

middle stratum and different from the Europeans and the natives. Under a quarter system, they had to live in their specific urban quarters that became too dense at the end of the 19th century. They also needed a special pass to travel, all of which disturbed their lives and livelihoods as merchants. The same difficulties were not faced by the Europeans or those who were considered equal to the Europeans. Hurgronje is right when he said that this is the main problem that urged the Ḥaḍramis to seek equality with the Europeans¹¹⁵ and were therefore released from the unfairness. Along with the attraction of Pan-Islamism and the reformist ideas, they looked for a way out through the Ottoman patronage. It soon developed into an anti-colonial agitation through the opening of the consulates in Batavia, as well as through the aid of the Singaporean Ottoman consuls and Pan-Islamic periodicals. Their endeavors had irritated the Dutch and British colonial governments. The Dutch colonial government would gradually alleviate the quarter system policy for the Ḥaḍramis in the 1910s and finally abolished it in 1919,¹¹⁶ but it had never equalized the Ḥaḍramis with the Europeans.

Some Ḥaḍramis in the Netherlands East Indies also sought to send their children to study in Istanbul. A few Ḥaḍrami children from one family started to enroll in Istanbul educational institutions in 1895 with the help of an Ottoman official in Egypt. Some other Ḥaḍramis followed suit, facilitated by the Ottoman consulate in Batavia to obtain the Ottoman scholarship. There were totally seventeen Ḥaḍrami children who went to Istanbul in three batches between 1895 and 1899.¹¹⁷ The sending of these students had created disconcertion regarding their status of citizenship, which was discussed in the meeting between the Dutch Parliament and Foreign Minister in early 1899.¹¹⁸ The Dutch were for sure afraid of Pan-Islamic consequences of this educational endeavor. Some of the students had indeed created sensation when they came back to Batavia in Ottoman fashion. The claim of Ottoman citizenship, however, was not easily realized. Certain higher education in Istanbul was reserved for Ottoman citizen and the Ḥaḍrami students could not automatically enrolled as. They needed a special permit or to apply for citizenship.¹¹⁹ Most of the students would return to the Netherlands East Indies and to their transient citizenship status.

115 Hurgronje, *Nasihah*, 1994, p. 1771.

116 Huub de Jonge, "Dutch Colonial Policy Pertaining to Hadhrami Immigrants," in Ulrike Freitag and W.G. Clarence-Smith (eds.) *Hadhrami Traders, Scholars, and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750s-1960s* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), p. 105.

117 Alwi Alatas and Alaeddin Tekin, "The Indonesian-Hadramis' Cooperation with the Ottoman and the Sending of Indonesian Students to Istanbul, 18802-1910s," *Tarih İncelemeleri Dergisi*, Vol. 37 No. 1, 2022, pp. 27-52.

118 BOA, Y.A.HUS, 394/96.

119 Alatas and Tekin, "The Indonesian-Hadramis' Cooperation," 2022, p. 41.



Image 1: Students from Jawa in the Ashiret School in Istanbul.

(Source: *Servet* newspaper, No:463-98, 15 Jumada al-Awwal 1317/ 21 September 1899)

The issue of citizenship was particularly sensitive for contemporary Ḥaḍrami migrants. They were considered as foreigners, Foreign Orientals, who were affected by unpleasant colonial regulations. The colonial government unceasingly rejected their claim for the Ottoman citizenship. However, when W. H. Ingrams became the British resident adviser in Mukalla, and Ḥaḍramawt, he visited Singapore and Batavia in the middle of 1939, there was no reservation by the Dutch colonial government or the press in mentioning the Ḥaḍramis as British subjects (*Britische onderdanen*).¹²⁰ As a matter of fact, Ingrams had just become a British resident adviser in that region through successive treaties in 1937 and 1939 with the main tribal kingdoms in Ḥaḍramawt, the Qu'ayṭi and Kathīrī Sultanates.¹²¹

The Ḥaḍramis did not only seek for the Ottoman help and backing, but they also lent their support for the Ottoman and its people. At the beginning of the 20th century, the Ottoman consulate in Batavia was actively collecting funds for the construction of Hejaz Railway that would connect Damascus and Mecca, of which the Ḥaḍramis had become the main contributors.¹²² However, a more organized fundraising was initiated in the 1910s with the occurrence of wars in Europe. First of which was the Balkan wars and then the First World War, both involving the Ottoman. In 1912, the Ḥaḍramis had a meeting in the office of Jam'iyyat Khayr in Batavia to establish a Batavian branch

120 "Batavia Viert den Kroningsdag," *Het Nieuws van den Dag*, Mei 12, 1937, hlm. 5.

121 Ulrike Freitag, "Hadhramis in International Politics c. 1750-1967," in Ulrike Freitag and W.G. Clarence-Smith (eds.), *Hadhrami Traders, Scholars, and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750s-1960s* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), p. 127-128.

122 See for example Hurgronje, *Nasihah*, 1994, p. 1793.

of the Red Crescent (Hilal-i Ahmer) that was centered in Istanbul.¹²³ On December 2, of the same year, they transferred 12,000 Francs to the president of the organization in Istanbul through a trading company, the Ned. Handel Maatschappij. The news notification in *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad* was signed by the secretary-treasurer (*secretaris-penningmeester*) of the Batavian Red Crescent, S. Aboebakar Abdullah Alatas.¹²⁴ Five days later another 12,000 Francs were transferred.¹²⁵ On January 7, 1913, another 12,000 Francs were sent,¹²⁶ and again on 19 March, 1913, 10,000 Francs.¹²⁷ A total of 46,000 Francs was sent. Moreover Aboebakar Alatas had served as the president of the organization during the last two transfers. This financial aid came from the Muslims in Java to assist in providing an ambulance for the victims of war.¹²⁸ We are not sure about the continuation of the Red Crescent in Batavia, but on January 23, 1915, a Red Crescent Committee of the Netherlands East Indies (Comite Alhilaloel Ahmar Hindia Belanda), led by Syed Hasan bin Abdurachman bin Semit was reported to and well received by the Resident of Surabaya. A meeting to plan the programs of the committee was to be held in the following day in the office of Aldjamiah Alarabijah Alchaeria in that city.¹²⁹ It was formally established on January 27, 1915, aiming at channeling the donations of the people in the Netherlands East Indies to the Red Crescent organization in Turkey.¹³⁰ Just a few weeks earlier, an amount of f46.43¹³¹ had been collected for the Red Crescent organization, but it was Sarekat Islam in Batavia that took care of the donations.¹³² There is a probability that the Batavian Red Crescent, as previously discussed had already been dissolved or the establishment of a new institution was intended to expand the collections of donations. Regardless, while the Batavian Red Crescent worked to help the victims of the Balkan War, this new Surabayan Red Crescent operated during the First World War. While the Ḥaḍramis still played an important role in the committee, Sarekat Islam now came to the fore. Syed Hasan bin Semit, acted as president of the committee while Oemar Said Tjokroaminoto became its vice-president, and the commissioners consisted of sayyids, syaikh, and hajis.¹³³

As already known, Hasan bin Semit was a Ḥaḍrami and a commissioner of Central Sarekat Islam (CSI). By the network had expanded: The Ottoman consulate, the

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123 Mandal, *Becoming Arab*, 2018, p. 170.

124 "Kennisseving," *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*, December 4, 1912, p. 4.

125 "Kennisseving," *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*, December 9, 1912, p. 4.

126 "Kennisseving," *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*, January 8, 1913, p. 4.

127 "Vereeniging "Alhilal Al Ahmar," *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*, March 22, 1913, p. 18.

128 "Hulp van Java aan de Turken," *De Sumatra Post*, December 19, 1912, p. 12.

129 "Alhilal Alahmar," *Oetoesan Hindia*, January 23, 1915, p. 1.

130 "Alhilaloel Ahmar," *Neratja*, November 8, 1917, p. 1.

131 Even if the price occurs as f46.23 in the primary source, it would be like f46.230.

132 "Alhilal Alahmar," *Oetoesan Hindia*, January 2, 1915, p. 1.

133 "Alhilal Alahmar," *Oetoesan Hindia*, January 25, 1915, p. 1.

Hadramis, and Sarekat Islam. This network can be seen in a news report, which is summarized below:

On March 18, 1916, Syed Hasan bin Semit, went from Surabaya to Semarang to attend a wedding at the house of Habib Hasan Almoesawa. The next day he travelled to Batavia, followed and accompanied by Tjokroaminoto in Tjikampek. Arriving in the Kemayoran Station in Batavia, they went to the house of Djojosoediro, a commissioner of CSI. The following day, Monday, they visited the office of adviser voor Ind. zaken, to meet Mr. Cignett. The next day, there was an audience in the palace and in the afternoon, they attended a celebration of Bintang Timoer. On Wednesday, Tjokroaminoto departed to Bandung, while Syed Hasan visited the Turkish Consul-General Mr. Refet Bey to discuss the importance of the Alhilal Alahmar association in the Netherlands East Indies. After that, he went to the house of a certain Sayyid where they discussed matters regarding the fate of the backward Arabs until 2 o'clock in the morning. Later in the morning, he visited the grave of Habib Kramat Loearbatang, and then he had lunch at the house of Syed Mohamed bin Abdurachman bin Shahab. Soon after that, he departed to Bandung and was picked up in city by Abdul Moeis. Both of them attended several Sarekat Islam programs in Priangan.¹³⁴

By September 1915, the Red Crescent committee in Surabaya had collected f 20,000 and transferred it to the Red Crescent in Turkey.¹³⁵ The committee did not only receive donations from Muslims in Java, it also received, for example, donations from Makasarese Muslims and Chinese which amounted to f 1,000.¹³⁶ According to Sumit Mandal, the operation of this organization finally ended for violating Dutch neutrality in war.¹³⁷ It is something worth pondering about, that in 1916 when the Pan-Islamic endeavor to unite the Muslim world would start to unravel, an enthusiastic writer pointed to the reciprocal help that occurred between the Muslim in the Netherlands East Indies and the Ottoman:

“Satoe doea boelan setelah timboelnja perang Europa, telahirlah di Soerabaja soeatoe perhimpoean jang besar sekali ertinja bagi kaoem Islam, jai-toe “Comite Alhilaloel’ahmar Hindia Belanda”. Sepandjang oedjarnja chabar2 jang kami dengar, Comite ini soedah mengirimkan oeing sedjoemlah f 20.000 kepada perhimpoean “Alhilaloel’ahmar” Di Turkije, oentoek meringankan kesoekarannja soldadoe2 Osmaniah jang menanggoeng sangsara di dalam medan perang. Soenggoehpoen f 20.000 dan derma dari Comite

134 “Perdjalanannja,” *Oetoesan Hindia*, April 3, 1916, p. 1.

135 “Oentoek “Alhilaloel-Ahmar” Turkije,” *Oetoesan Hindia*, September 21, 1915, p. 1.

136 “Alhilaloel Ahmar,” *Oetoesan Hindia*, October 13, 1915, p. 5.

137 Mandal, *Becoming Arab*, 2018, p. 170.

Alhilaloe'lahmar dilain2 tempat itoe tiada seberapa besar djoemlahnja, tetapi ialah menoenjoekkan satoe tali perikatan jang mengikat batinnja Kaoem Moeslimin di beberapa bahagian doenia. ... pertjajalah kami dengan sepe-noeh-penoehnja bahwa tali perikatan itoe akan dapat menoenjoekkan ke-koetaan dan pengaroehnja, apabila sampai ada datang perloenja.”

[One or two months after the commencement of the European war, in Surabaya an association of great significance to Muslims, namely the “Alhilaloe'lahmar Committee of the Dutch East Indies”, was born. According to reports that we have heard, this Committee has sent a sum of f 20,000 to the “Alhilaloe'lahmar” association in Turkey, to ease the hardships of the Ottoman soldiers who suffered in the battlefield. Even though the f 20,000 and donations from the Alhilaloe'lahmar Committee in other places are not a lot in number, they show a bond that binds the hearts of Muslims in several parts of the world. ... we believe wholeheartedly that the bond will be able to demonstrate its power and influence, should the need arise.]¹³⁸

The Mission of Hadrami Envoys from Southeast Asian Sultanates to Istanbul

Many Muslim envoys had come to Istanbul from around the Muslim World after the colonial invasions of the Muslim World since the middle of the 16th century. The lack of a powerful state in South and Southeast Asia during these years made the task of the Portuguese easier as they were able to occupy Goa and Malacca in 1511. However, their desire to dominate all of South and Southeast Asia and the expansionist policy they followed must have disturbed the local states in the region. The best example of this situation was Aceh Daru's-Salam Sultanate located in Northwest Sumatra. The location of Aceh Sultanate was also quite important for Arabian and Gujarati Muslims and merchants because most of these foreigners firstly had to arrive at the Acehnese ports if they wished to enter the archipelago.¹³⁹ Hence, we know that the first Islamic state of the Southeast Asia was established in these Acehnese lands with the name of Pasai Sultanate in 1290s.¹⁴⁰

All the new ideas, cultures and religions affecting the whole of Southeast Asia have always started from the Islands in the West, Sumatra, and progressed to the Islands of the East.¹⁴¹ For this reason, the Sultanate of Aceh welcomed many foreigners from the West and the majority of them from Hadramawt, Yemen. All this

138 “Naiklah Deradjat Kaoem Islam!,” *Oetoesan Hindia*, April 11, 1916, p. 1.

139 Hee-Soo Lee, *Islam ve Türk Kültürünün Uzak Doğu'ya Yayılması: Kore'de İslamiyet'in Yayılması ve Kültürel Tesisleri*, (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 1988), pp. 35-36.

140 M. C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia since 1300*, (Londra: MacMillan, 1991).

141 Syed Hussein Alatas, “Reconstruction of Malaysian History”, *Revue du sudestasiatique*, No. 3, 1962, pp. 219-245.

information shows us that Hadramis must have settled in Aceh and then some of them migrated to east of the archipelago. With the invasion of Westerners in the Indo-Malay World, Hadramis played a mediator and envoy role between local states in Southeast Asia and the Caliph in Istanbul.

After the Portuguese settled themselves in Malacca, the Muslim sultanates in the Indo-Malay World attempted to expel the Portuguese from the archipelago. The most influential and important of the figures in the region was the Acehnese Sultan, Alâuddin Ri'ayat Shah al-Qahhar (r.1537-1571). According to the primary records and many secondary sources on the Acehnese demand from the Ottoman Empire, Sultan Alâuddin Shah must have sent his ambassadors to Istanbul in around the 1565s.¹⁴² However, we have limited information about these ambassadors. The original letter, which was prepared by the Acehnese Sultan, was written in Arabic and it had to be translated into Turkish in Jeddah or around Hijaz. One of the names of these envoys was Hussein Effendi, who is called "The Rank Measurer of Knowledge," but we are not sure they were from Hadramawt.¹⁴³

After a long rupture in relations between the Southeast Asian and the Ottomans, the Acehnese sent a new delegation to Istanbul in 1849, and the envoy named Mohammed Ghauth headed this delegation.¹⁴⁴ However, we do not think he was a Hadrami, as we know from his family name, Ghauth – Ghus, he could be someone of Gujarati descent. In another Ottoman archival record, the Governor of Hejaz prepared a report about the strategic geographical location of Aceh for the Sublime Port of the Ottoman Empire in 1869. As a result of the investigations carried out by the Governor of Hejaz, we can understand that all this information was provided by Shah Muhammed Ahmed Bâcenî, from a Hadrami family (Shaykh Mohamed bin Ahmad Ba Junaid).¹⁴⁵ In the same serial number of the archives document, there is more information about the Dutch cruelties in Aceh which was provided by another Hadrami named Ali bin Umar al-Junaid Ba Alawi.¹⁴⁶ Of course, the reason for preparing this information was for the Sultanate of Aceh to receive Ottoman support.

One of the most popular and well known Hadrami envoys from Southeast Asia to Istanbul was Habîb 'Abdur-Rahmân az-Zâhir. He was born in Yemen (Hadramawt)

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142 7 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri, BOA, A {DVNSMHM.d, 7/244. [20.09.1567]; See also Razulhak Şah, "Açı Padişahı Sultan Alaeddin'in Kanuni Sultan Süleyman'a Mektubu." *Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi*, Vol.,5, No:8-9, 1967, pp. 373-409.

143 Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Arşivi E-8009. See for the whole translation of the letter; Ismail Hakkı Kadı, Andrew C. S. Peacock, *Ottoman-Southeast Asian Relations: Sources from the Ottoman Archives*, 2 Vols., (Leiden: Brill, 2019), pp. 33-51.

144 BOA, İ.HR, 66/3208; BOA, İ.HR, 67/3270.

145 BOA, İ.MMS, 37/1524.

146 BOA, İ.MMS, 37/1524 (12). See, for a full translation of the document; Ismail Hakkı Kadı and Andrew C.S. Peacock, *Ottoman-Southeast Asian Relation: Sources from the Ottoman Archives*, 2 Vols, (Leiden: Brill, 2019), pp. 168-185.

in 1833 and sent by his father to Egypt to receive an Islamic education at the age of five. He had broad intellectual interests, and travelled extensively in the major cities of Europe, Arab World and Southeast Asia. Finally, after three years of residence in Singapore and Johor, he arrived to Aceh in 1864 and continued his life there. He became a famous scholar, who rose to prominence in a short time in Aceh. The Acehnese Sultan, Ibrahim Mansur Shah (r.1857-1870), appointed him as Head of the Great Mosque (*Meuseugit Masjid Raya*),¹⁴⁷ and subsequently Head of Religious Affairs, in addition, he became a prominent statesman for the Acehnese. Following many services to the Acehnese, az-Zāhir was finally appointed as the Grand Vizier (Prime Minister).¹⁴⁸ The most important of his diplomatic missions, of course, was his visit to Istanbul as an envoy of Mahmud Shah (r.1870-1874), in 1873.

After visiting Mecca, he and his delegation arrived in Istanbul on April 27, 1873, on a registered Egyptian steamship, *Tanta*.¹⁴⁹ During his months of travel, the Dutch-Acehnese War (1873–1904) had not officially started,¹⁵⁰ however everyone was sure that this war would begin as soon as possible. After staying in a guesthouse in Istanbul, Habīb ‘Abdur-Rahmān az-Zāhir and his team moved to the Imperial Guesthouse on May 4. They carried out lobbying activities for almost seven months as they were close to the Ottoman Palace. Az-Zāhir visited the Sublime Porte almost every day, and was able to have frequent appointments with the Ottoman political leaders about the Dutch conflict in Aceh.¹⁵¹ He was very busy in the Ottoman bureaucracy, and due to his works in Istanbul, some Ottoman newspapers and journals began to take an interest in the ongoing news in Aceh, such as *al-Jawā’ib* (The Arabic newspaper was published in Istanbul between 1861-1884), *La Turquie* (The French newspaper began publishing in Istanbul in 1866), and *Basiret* (The Turkish newspaper was published between 1870-1908 in Istanbul). Apart from the aforementioned, some Western newspapers also dealt with this war in Aceh. The Ottoman Foreign Ministry archived some news reports from the *Morning Post* (25 February 1874)¹⁵² and the *Lokomotiv* (5 June 1899)¹⁵³ about the Dutch-Acehnese War (1873–1904).

147 C. Snouck Hurgonje, *The Acehnese I* (Leiden: Brill, 1906), pp. 161-163.

148 Anthony Reid, “Habib Abdur-Rahman az-Zahir (1833-1896),” *Indonesia (Cornell Modern Indonesia Project)*, 13, 1972, pp. 44-51.

149 Schmidt, *Through the Legation Window 1876-1926*, p. 59.

150 Anthony Reid, “Habib Abdur-Rahman az-Zahir (1833-1896),” p. 54.

151 Göksoy, *Güneydoğu Asya’da Osmanlı-Türk Tesirleri*, p. 78.

152 BOA, HR. SFR.3 206/71.

153 BOA, HR. TO. 356/30.



Image 2: Habib Abdur Rahman az-Zahir (1832-1896)
(Source: Reid, 1972: 37)

This Hadrami ambassador started to become more prevalent in the Ottoman press and bureaucracy with each passing day. It caused concern and panic among the Dutch Government, whose lobbying efforts in Istanbul secured the full support of the British against the Acehnese. The French, Russian, German, Austrian, and Italian embassies in Istanbul all united to put pressure on the Ottoman Foreign Ministry to advise them not to interfere with the Dutch incorporation of Aceh.¹⁵⁴ Aside from the intrigues of the Western colonial powers aiming to undermine the Acehnese delegation, this issue also increasingly disturbed some Ottoman government officials. The Caliphate and the Grand Vizier offices demanded a persecuted Muslim state be given aid and assistance, yet the political and geographical conditions did not allow them to make any attempt in this direction.¹⁵⁵ In the meantime, according to the news in *Basiret*, this

154 Schmidt, *Through the Legation Window 1876-1926*, p. 58.

155 Göksoy, *Güneydoğu Asya'da Osmanlı-Türk Tesirleri*, p. 84.

Hadrami envoy of the Sultanate of Aceh and Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire, Mithat Pasha, had a long interview in the Sublime Porte.¹⁵⁶ Habib 'Abdur-Rahmân az-Zâhir also brought some documents and records from Aceh to show the ancient relations between the two states in the 16th century.¹⁵⁷

Habib 'Abdur-Rahmân az-Zâhir wished to return to Indonesia as soon as possible with a positive response from the Sublime Porte as his mission took longer than he had expected and with the possibility of the Dutch War at any moment made him even more impatient. His last meeting with the Ottoman Foreign Minister had not been very positive, and he received the answer that "Aceh was too remote for Turkiye to able to do anything on its behalf."¹⁵⁸ However, some Ottoman archive documents dated September 1873 shows that the Caliph was very pleased with az-Zâhir's mission in Istanbul and the loyalty of Acehnese people to the caliphate. The following statements in the report are pivotal; "In this particular instance, the commitment he has demonstrated, greatly pleased the Caliph, who wished the Sultan of Aceh to be informed of his contentment. The necessary information can be learned from Habîb 'Abdur-Rahmân az-Zâhir Efendi, as the issues related to his mission conveyed to him verbally are in detail."¹⁵⁹ In addition to this information, on another page of the same document, it was decided that a first degree of the Ottoman insignia (*Osmanî*) be given to the Acehnese Sultan, Mahmud Shah, and the second degree of this was given to az-Zâhir.¹⁶⁰ Based on the information in these primary documents, these positive events show that the Hadrami envoy's mission to Istanbul on behalf of the Acehnese Sultanate resulted in relative satisfaction.

The Ottoman Empire noted in some documents that they actually wanted to play a mediate role between the Netherlands and the Acehnese.¹⁶¹ Like the Acehnese Sultan, the Prime Minister of the Ottoman Empire decided to also give a decoration and a letter to this Hadrami ambassador, Habib 'Abdur-Rahmân az-Zâhir, due to his outlining the efforts of the Ottoman Caliphate for the Indonesian Muslims in December 1873. Aside from these ornamentals, az-Zâhir had not secured any material support, he finally left Istanbul on December 18, 1873.¹⁶² Indeed, he was the last official representative of the Acehnese Sultanate sent to Istanbul.¹⁶³ The example of

156 Adem Efe et al., *Basiret ve Direniş; Basiret Gazetesinde Açe'deki Hollanda Savaşının İlk İki Yılımı Ele Alan Metinlere Dair*, (İstanbul: İbn Haldun Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2018), pp. 47-53; See; *Basiret*, (No. 945), June 5, 1873.

157 *Ibid*, See; *Basiret*, (No. 933), May 22, 1873.

158 Reid, *The Contest for North Sumatra*, p. 105.

159 BOA, İ.HR, 260/15583, [2]. See for translation; Mehmet Akif Terzi, Ahmet Ergün and Mehmet Ali Alacagöz, *Osmanlı Belgeleri Işığında Osmanlı Endonezya İlişkileri* (İstanbul: Hitay Holding, 2017), pp. 261-267.

160 BOA, İ.HR, 260/15583, [1].

161 BOA, İ.HR, 260/15586.

162 Göksoy, *Güneydoğu Asya'da Osmanlı-Türk Tesirleri*, pp. 86-87.

163 Schmidt, *Through the Legation Window 1876-1926*, p. 62.

az-Zâhir shows us that Hadramis played a crucial role in the connection between the Ottoman (Caliphate) and Southeast Asia.

During the war between the colonial powers and the local Sultanates, the most commonly used method of contacting the Southeast Asian Muslims for the Ottomans was via the mediation of the governors of Hejaz, whereby the Governor had a good connection with Hadramis in Southeast Asia. For example, some Turkish rifles and bullets were found in the luggage of Habib 'Abdur-Rahmân az-Zâhir's son-in-law, Syed Ali Alawi, on December 22, 1882, during the war with the Dutch when he went back to Aceh from the Hejaz according to a report by the Dutch Government.¹⁶⁴ Another example of Turkish weapons brought by Hadramis and locals on their way back from the pilgrimage was when nine Acehese pilgrims returned from Mecca to Aceh with a total of 250 swords, which were also captured by Dutch forces around Aceh.¹⁶⁵

Similar to the Acehese, the Sultanate of Jambi in Indonesia also decided to send a delegation to Istanbul because of their struggles with the Dutch in the second half of the nineteenth century. When a ruler in Southeast Asia wanted to send envoys to the Ottoman Empire, they generally selected from people of Hadrami descent. The Sultan of Jambi, Sultan Taha Safiuddin, prepared a delegation to Istanbul and this delegation delivered a letter prepared in Arabic to the relevant authorities in Istanbul in 1858. When the relevant documents are examined again, it is understood that this petition was brought to Istanbul by a Hadrami envoy named Syed Sharif Ali ibn Alawî bin Hasan el-Jafri al-Alawî.¹⁶⁶ It is very interesting that almost all the ambassadors sent from the region to Istanbul were of Hadrami origin. Probably all these letters were translated from local languages into Arabic by these Hadramis and given to the Ottoman diplomats.

Another ambassador delegation sent from the region to Istanbul was from the Riau region in Dutch East Indies. Riau is located at the eastern exit of the Malacca Strait, between East Sumatra and South of Singapore. With regards to an archival document dated February 11, 1857,¹⁶⁷ the Sultan of Riau, Ali bin Emir Ja'afar, sent two ambassadors to Istanbul. They initially arrived in Mecca on their way in order to submit their petition to the Governor of Hejaz. These two envoys were Sheikh Ahmed Efendi of Java, and Syed Husain of Mecca. Taking into consideration their seal on the documents, their full names were given as "*Ahmed bin Osman El-Halidi Naqshbandi Es-Shazeli* and *Es-Sayyed Zeyn Ibn-i Huseyn Al-Jufri*."¹⁶⁸ The name of Al-Jufri is also

164 Reid, *The Contest for North Sumatra*, p. 138.

165 Reid, *Ibid.*, p. 138. Also see; İsmail Hakkı Göksoy, "Acehese Appeals for Ottoman Protection in the Late Nineteenth Century," in A.C.S. Peacock and Annabel The Gallop (eds.), *From Anatolia to Aceh: Ottoman Turks and Southeast Asia*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 178.

166 BOA, i. HR, 173/9431.

167 BOA, i. DH, 368/24377.

168 Alaeddin Tekin, "Restoration of Riau Sultanate-Ottoman Relations (1857-1904) Explanatory Factors", *Al-Shajarah: Journal of the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC)*, 26 (2), p. 185.

known as a Hadrami Sayyid family name. Indeed, the main reason why these people were chosen from the Hadramis was that they were the first to come to the Hejaz region and were in contact with the Ottoman governors in this region.

The demands of the Hadramis from the Ottoman Empire were not only in Indonesia. They had a very strong diaspora in many different regions in Southeast Asia, from Java to the Philippines and Thailand. The best example of this situation is that we can see that Hadramis was also influential in the Patani region, which is located within the borders of Thailand today. The Patani Sultanate had a close relation with the Ottoman lands of the Hijaz, in particular through a community from Patani who were based in Hijaz. Sultan Sulaiman (1890–1899), the ruler of Patani, sought Ottoman support against the Siamese for his trip to Istanbul in 1898. His petition, of which the original seems to be lost, found its way to the Ottoman consulate in Batavia, where it was considered alongside the complaints of Hadramis in Batavia about their treatment by the colonial authorities. According to documents, Sublime Port had taken this issue into consideration and would investigate into the actions of the Dutch government against the Hadramis.¹⁶⁹

Conclusion

Since the first years of the 14th century, when Islam began to spread in Southeast Asia, a serious Arab influence started to dominate the region. Unquestionably, the people that attracted the most attention from these Arabs were the Hadramis. They lived and involved in commerce in the archipelago. They historically propagated Islam throughout Southeast Asia and then served as bridges between Istanbul and Nusantara when Westerners invaded the region. Thanks to these Hadramis and their presence in the ports of Arabia and in the Indo-Malay World, linking by their trading and family connections, communication with Sublime Port improved and was more fruitful. With the mediation of these Hadramis, some local states in Sumatra such as Aceh, Jambi, and Riau could easily communicate with the Ottoman Sultan. The Hadramis could closely follow Pan-Islamist ideas in the 19th century due to their Arabic fluency. They were able to access some Pan-Islamic Arabic magazines and papers published in Cairo, Beirut, and Istanbul by subscription, or bring them along on their arrival to the archipelago. Last of all, due to their mediation role between the Ottoman Empire and the Southeast Asia, the political, economic, and religious relations improved.

The Dutch Government wanted to control of all Indonesian islands and they decided to divide the inhabitants of the archipelago into three groups: Europeans,

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169 BOA Y.A.HUS. 389/5. See, for a full translation of the document; Ismail Hakki Kadı and Andrew C.S. Peacock, *Ottoman-Southeast Asian Relations: Sources from the Ottoman Archives*, 2 Vols., (Leiden: Brill, 2019), pp. 369-377.

Indigenous, and Foreign Orientals. At first, only the Chinese were in this third group, but later Arabs and Indians were included in the Foreign Orientals. They were not happy with this decision because according to this new regulation the Hadramis needed a special pass to travel all over the country, despite being predominantly merchants. They demanded that they be included in the European category, like the Ottoman citizens, but the Dutch did not take this demand seriously.

One of the results of this study, is that we examined the Hadramis crucial role as an Ottoman honorary consul in two important centers in Southeast Asia, Singapore and Batavia. Notably, the Ottoman Consulate in Singapore were supervised by some of the members of the Hadramis for a considerable time. In another sub-title of this study, the cooperation between the Hadramis in the region and the Ottoman Empire was mentioned. As a result of the discriminatory attitude of the Colonial Governments toward the Hadramis, they started to gather around Ottoman-oriented Pan-Islamism in the Netherlands East Indies since the 1880s. In this process, a few Hadrami families living in the region sent their children to Istanbul to receive education.

The cooperation between the Ottoman Empire and the Hadramis in Southeast Asia was not just in one single scope. It was spread in some different fields from diplomacy to religion. They had a mission as ambassador on behalf of the states in the region sent to Istanbul. As examined previously, even when sending ambassadors to Istanbul, some Indonesian states generally selected their envoys from among the Hadramis. Their activities in this wide area are undoubtedly commendable. In order to show their loyalty to the Ottoman caliph, they organized aid campaigns for the Ottoman Empire from time to time. At the beginning of the 20th century, they collected some money in the region for the Ottoman Empire that were fighting bloody wars in these years and sent this to the Turkish Red Crescent. They did not collect money just only for the Turkish Red Crescent, but they also organized aid campaigns for the Hejaz Railway Project.

With the strengthening of nationalism and factionalism in that era and the impact of Great War, the spirit of Islamic unity was scattered, the declining Ottoman moved faster to its graveyard, and the Hacırami community was decried by internal conflict. In all probability, each party finally lost its confidence in the other party. While the Hacırami lost faith in the Ottoman that was defeated, divided and reduced, the Ottoman consul might also baffle with the swelling hostility within the Hacırami community. Thus, the promising Pan-Islamic cooperation was, unfortunately, unsuccessful in the end.

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CHAPTER FIVE

AN OTTOMAN LEGACY FOR MALAYSIA: ROGAYAH HANIM

Syed Farid Alatas¹

Introduction

Rogayah Hanım (c.1864-1904), known as Rukiye Hanım in Turkish, was an Ottoman woman whose descendants had prominent roles in the intellectual and political life of Malaysia. Her arrival in Johor was believed to have been facilitated by the relationship between the Ottoman Sultan and Caliph Abdülhamid II (1842-1918) and Sultan Abu Bakar (1833-1895) of Johor. Previous writings on Rogayah Hanım, Malaysia's Ottoman legacy, are plagued by errors and assumptions unsupported by available evidence. It is commonly stated that she was gifted to Abu Bakar by Abdülhamid II, but this claim is difficult to verify. Notably, there is also a lack of mention of Rogayah Hanım as a member of the Ottoman imperial harem in written and oral accounts. This chapter aims to provide a clearer understanding of Rogayah Hanım's background and her status in Johor after her migration from the Ottoman state. The chapter begins by providing brief information on the two sultans involved.

There exists limited common ground between Sultan Abdülhamid II and Sultan Abu Bakar of Johor. While both rulers can be considered progressive and modernizing, having introduced constitutions in their respective states, the differences between them were far more significant. Abdülhamid II (r. 1876-1909) ruled over a realm that had lasted for centuries, having been founded at the end of the 13th century. By the time of Abdülhamid's rule, however, the empire was in a state of decline and eventually dissolved in 1922, followed by the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924.²

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2 Stanford J Shaw & Ezel K. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey. Vol.2: Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808–1975*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977; Halil

Abu Bakar, on the other hand, was the first sultan of modern Johor. It is important to note that Abu Bakar did not initially assume the title of sultan, but instead held the position of *Temenggong*, a title of nobility associated with the chief of public security. Richard Winstedt, a British orientalist and colonial administrator, speculated that Abu Bakar's trip to England in 1866 led him to recognise that the title *Temenggong* was unknown in Europe. This realisation may have instilled in him the belief that a more prestigious title would be more fitting.

"Perhaps his gracious reception by royalty set him thinking ... Why should he not assume a title more in accord with his birth, his power and his place? Accordingly on 18 April 1868, Abu Bakar sent his cousin Engku Haji Mohamed and his Dato' Bentara (Ja'far bin Haji Mohamed) to Riau to that genealogist and prolific historian Raja Ali Haji [the author of the *Tufhat al-Nafis*] (his deceased uncle's brother-in-law) to needle the way to the Yamtuan Muda and enquire if the Temenggongs could now assume "sovereign power", --- which in fact they had assumed already, but at Riau it was a euphemism for "a royal title".³

In 1868 Sultan Abu Bakar acquired the title of Maharaja of Johor and eventually assumed the title of Sultan in 1885.⁴ During his reign (r.1862-1895) he struggled to maintain Johor's independence from British rule, while other parts of the Malay Peninsula were either directly or indirectly under British control. Indeed, this did not mean that Johor was totally independent of the British. To avoid the level of control of the state by the British that was to be found in other Malay states, Sultan Abu Bakar had to rule in a manner that was consistent with British interests in the state. As a result, there was far less formal British supervision of Johor, in comparison to the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States.⁵ It wasn't until the rule of his successor, Sultan Ibrahim (r.1895-1959), that Johor eventually accepted a British Advisor and became a British protectorate as part of the Unfederated Malay States.⁶

In addition to his role in modernising Johor in the late 19th century, Sultan Abu Bakar is also associated with Malaysia's Ottoman legacy through his connection with Sultan Abdülhamid II.

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Inalcik and Donald Quataert, eds. *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1914*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

3 R. O. Winstedt, "A History of Johor 1365-1895 AD", *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 10, no.3 (1932): 1-167, 109. Cited in Carl A. Trocki, *Prince of Pirates: The Temenggong and the Development of Johor and Singapore 1784-1885* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2007), 153.

4 Trocki, *Prince of Pirates*, 154-4, 193.

5 See Eunice Thio, "British Policy towards Johore: From Advice to Control", *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 40, no.1 (1967): 1-41.

6 See J. M. Gullick, *Rulers and Residents: Influence and Power in the Malay States 1870-1920*, (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1992), 115.

The Gift to Sultan Abu Bakar

In 1893, Abu Bakar visited Istanbul during his extensive travels abroad.⁷ In fact, Sultan Abu Bakar was the most travelled among the Malay sultans, having made trips to India, England, Java, China, Japan and Türkiye between 1875 and 1895.⁸

It is commonly accepted by the descendants of Rogayah Hanim that Sultan Abu Bakar was gifted with two Ottoman ladies of Circassian origin by Abdülhamid II. Their names were Khadijah Hanim (Turkish: Hatice Hanım) (d. 1904) and Rogayah Hanim (Turkish: Rukiye Hanım). Another account suggests that Rogayah Hanim was from Abkhazia,⁹ the people of which are also a Northwest Caucasian group like the Circassians. However, contrary to what is stated by Asmah Haji Omar in the *Riwayat Ungku Aziz*, it is unlikely that she was an ethnic Turk,¹⁰ but rather a Caucasian of Circassian or Abkhazian origin. Pamela Ong's speculation that she was Armenian and that her entire family perished in the 1915 killings of Armenian Ottoman citizens during World War I¹¹ is unsubstantiated and contradicts the oral accounts among the descendants of Rogayah Hanim.¹²

According to oral accounts, Sultan Abu Bakar was presented with two ladies during one of his trips to Istanbul, the origin and biographical details of whom remain scarce. If these oral accounts are accurate, and the ladies were indeed gifted to Abu Bakar by Abdülhamid II, they would have been members (Turkish: *cariye*) of the Ottoman harem, as it would not have been possible for Abdülhamid II to gift ladies to another ruler who were not in his possession. The Circassia region of the North Caucasus, lying to the east of the Black Sea, was the source of a mass influx of Circassians to the Ottoman realms in the 19th century.¹³ Many Circassian girls were sold as slaves or voluntarily joined the Ottoman harem to be brought up and trained as women servants and/or concubines in the palace. It should be noted that the harem was not merely a collection of women available to the Ottoman Sultan for sexual purposes but served a more significant role within the palace.

7 For an overview of the relations between the Ottomans and the Malay World since the sixteenth century, see Anthony Reid, "The Ottomans in Southeast Asia", Asia Research Institute, *Working Paper Series*, no. 36, (2005).

8 Haji Mohamed Said bin Haji Sulaiman, *Hikayat Johor dan Tawarikh AlMarhum Sultan Abu Bakar* (Singapore: Malay Publishing House, 1940); A. Rahman Tang Abdullah, "Sultan Abu Bakar's Foreign Guests and Travels Abroad, 1860s-1895: Fact and Fiction in Early Malay Historical Accounts," *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 84, no.1 (2011) 1-22.

9 Asmah Haji Omar, *Riwayat Ungku Aziz* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa & Pustaka, 2015), 75.

10 Asmah Haji Omar, *Riwayat Ungku Aziz*, 62, 74, 75.

11 Pamela Ong Siew Im, *One Man's Will: A Portrait of Dato' Sir Onn bin Ja'far* (Penang: The Author, 1998), 20.

12 On the debate surrounding the killings, see Ronald Grigor Suny, Fatma Müge Göçek & Norman M. Naimark, eds., *A Question of Genocide: Armenians and Turks at the End of the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

13 Veronika Tsibenko, "The Lost Circassia and the Found Circassians: Caucasian Migration to the Ottoman Empire", *Türkiyat Mecmuası* 32, no.1 (2022): 405-431, 407.

The imperial harem, known as the *Harem-i Hümayûn*, was an institution comprising the female members of the sultan's household and included his consorts, female slave servants and eunuchs. It was effectively run, not by the sultan himself, but by his mother, who was known by the title of *valide sultan*. The women of the harem, including those acquired as slaves, received education and training for various types of duties.¹⁴ According to the *Riwayat Ungku Aziz*, Rogayah Hanim was brought to the harem of the then Ottoman Sultan Abdülaziz (r. 1861-1876), where she received an education that approximated that of a finishing school.¹⁵

Many of these women would eventually be married off to men who would go on to occupy administrative positions in the empire. In fact, and contrary to popular perception, only a small percentage of the women of the harem had sexual relations with the sultan - most would marry into the Ottoman political elite or remained in service to the *valide sultan*.¹⁶ It was common for Ottoman sultans to gift women from the harem. It goes without saying that it was from among those *cariye* with whom the sultan did not have sexual relations, that women were selected to present as gifts to high-level administrative families in the provinces or foreign Muslim rulers abroad to create strong ties with them. This practice, though strange to modern sensibility, was common during those times.

If this was the case for Rogayah Hanim and Khadijah Hanim, it is unlikely that they were born Muslims, as it was not the practice of Ottoman sultans to keep Muslim-born women as female slaves.¹⁷ This also suggests that their names, Rukiye and Hatice, were given to them after they were acquired by the palace and converted to Islam.

It is believed in circles outside of those of the descendants of Rogayah Hanim that she and Khadijah Hanim were sisters, but this information is not reported among the descendants of Rogayah Hanim.¹⁸ The notion that they were sisters is widely believed among circles outside of the families that are descendants from Rogayah Hanim and has also found its way into academic writing.¹⁹ Additionally, it is believed that Sultan Abu Bakar had in fact been gifted three, not two ladies.

14 Betul Ipsirdi Argit, *Life After the Harem: Female Palace Slaves Patronage and the Imperial Ottoman Court* (Cambridge Univ Press, 2022), 39-64.

15 Asmah Haji Omar, *Riwayat Ungku Aziz*, 75.

16 Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapi Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 180.

17 Mehmet Özey and Ekrem Saltık, "The Myth and Reality of Rukiye Hanim in the Context of Turkish Malay Relations (1864-1904)," *Insan ve Toplum* 5, no.9 (2015): 55-74, 60.

18 This was also confirmed in what was told to me by my father, Syed Hussein bin Ali bin Abdullah bin Muhsin Alatas (1928-2007), a grandson of Rogayah Hanim, and by my father's youngest brother, Syed Zed Alatas (1932-2010). See also, Syed Hassan Al-Attas, *Nota Kembara Seorang 'Abid: Sekelumit Riwayat Habib Muhammad bin Salem al-Attas dan Tebaran Anak Hadhrami* (Singapore: Masjid Ba'Alwi, 2010), 142.

19 See, for example, Özey and Saltık, "The Myth and Reality of Rukiye Hanim", 58, 61, 66.

The third lady, Fatimah al-Aruj (Fatimah bte Aoorjah) (d. 1933), was married to Syed Abubakar bin Omar Aljunied. Syed Omar was a wealthy merchant, originally from the Ḥaḍramawt, and who established himself in Palembang before eventually settling in Singapore in 1819 shortly after Raffles' arrival.²⁰ One of Syed Omar's sons, Abubakar, was said to have been close to Sultan Abu Bakar.²¹

Khadijah Hanim became the fourth wife of Sultan Abu Bakar, while Rogayah Hanim married three times: first to the brother of Sultan Abu Bakar, Ungku Abdul Majid (1845-1889), then to a Hadrami Sufi from Bogor, Habib Abdullah bin Muhsin Alatas (1840/1-1933), and thirdly to Dato' Ja'afar Mohamed (1838-1919), the first Chief Minister of Johor.

Rogayah Hanim: From Istanbul to Johor

As mentioned earlier, it is said among the descendants of Rogayah Hanim that she was presented, along with Khadijah Hanim, to Sultan Abu Bakar of Johor by the Ottoman Sultan Abdülhamid II. It is believed that Sultan Abu Bakar had made several stops in Istanbul during his various trips to Europe. This generally held view, however, is contradicted by at least two written sources that provide first-hand accounts of Abu Bakar's visit to Istanbul, which suggest that he met Abdülhamid II only once, thus implying that Abu Bakar may have travelled to Istanbul only once.

The exact dates and circumstances surrounding Rogayah Hanim's arrival in Johor remains unknown. If the story that she was presented to Sultan Abu Bakar by Sultan Abdülhamid II is true, this would have taken place in 1893, during the Sultan Abu Bakar's only recorded meeting with the Ottoman Sultan. However, this contradicts the fact that Rogayah Hanim had already been married in Johor prior to 1893, as her first marriage to Abu Bakar's brother, Ungku Abdul Majid took place in 1886.²² Their sons, Ungku Abdul Aziz and Ungku Abdul Hamid, were born in 1887 and 1888, respectively. Ungku Abdul Majid passed away in 1889.²³ This leads to the conclusion that Rogayah must have been presented to Abu Bakar in 1886 or earlier. There is no record of Abu Bakar making a trip to Istanbul prior to 1893, and if he had, he would not have met Abdülhamid II at that time, as their first meeting took place in 1893.

As previously noted, Khadijah Hanim became the fourth wife of Sultan Abu Bakar, as a result of his only known encounter with Sultan Abdülhamid II in 1893 during what might have been his first and last trip to Istanbul. The *Hikayat Johor*,

20 Syed Hassan Al-Attas, *The Aljunied Family of Singapore* (Singapore: Masjid Ba'alwie, 2021), 2-4.

21 Al-Attas, *The Aljunied Family of Singapore*, 14.

22 *Berita Pusaka Rogayah Hanim*, Issue 3, 10 April 2001.

23 *Berita Pusaka Rogayah Hanim*, Issue 3, 10 April 2001.

written by Dato' Haji Mohd. Said bin Haji Sulaiman who served in the administration of Sultan Abu Bakar, mentions that the Sultan's intention for this trip was to meet the Ottoman Sultan whom he had not met previously.²⁴ Wilfred Scawen Blunt (1840-1922), the anti-imperialist English poet and writer, who accompanied Abu Bakar on his trip to Istanbul, confirms that this was the Sultan's first meeting with Sultan Abdülhamid II.²⁵

In April 1893, Blunt introduced Sultan Abu Bakar to a Shaykh al-Bakri in Cairo, a prominent advocate of pan-Islamism, who was to facilitate the meeting with Sultan Abdülhamid II. In the same month, Abu Bakar set off from Cairo to Istanbul, as stated in a telegram from the Ottoman High Commissioner in Cairo, Ahmed Muhtar Pasha, on April 9, 1893:

"As the ruler of the Islamic government of Singapore-Johor located in south Indochina has come to Cairo, we have visited each other. During a conversation he told me that he ensured that the exalted name of His Majesty the Caliph is mentioned before his own name from the pulpits during the Friday sermon in his country. He will leave Cairo with the khedival mail steamer on Wednesday, arriving in Istanbul on the day before the feast of Ramadan. I would like to inform you that he intends to see the public procession of the Sultan on the feast days and to stay at the state hotel."²⁶

It was due to Shaykh al-Bakri's introduction that Abu Bakar was received with great honour by Abdülhamid II. It is very clear from Blunt's account that this was the first meeting of the two sultans.²⁷ Blunt relates the contents of the discussion between al-Bakri and Sultan Abu Bakar:

"What el Bekri wanted to find out was whether the sultan had any panislamic ideas, whether he wanted to see Abdul Hamid at Constantinople for a political purpose, and whether he would encourage panislamic missionaries at Johore. The old man, on the other hand, only wanted a little personal sympathy as a Mohammedan from Mohammedans. He was too humble minded to expect much notice from Abdul Hamid. And had nothing of any importance to say to him. Thus, each misunderstood the other. 'Do the Mohammedan Princes in India,' the Sheykh asked, 'communicate with each other as such, and do they communicate with the Sultan at

24 A. Rahman Tang Abdullah, *Hikayat Johor dan Tawarikh Almarhum Sultan Abu Bakar: Kajian, Transliterasi dan Terjemahan Bahasa Inggeris* (Johor Bahru: Yayasan Warisan Johor, 2011), 124-5.

25 For an interesting account on Blunt, see Luisa Villa, "A 'Political Education': Wilfred Scawen Blunt, the Arabs and the Egyptian Revolution (1881-82)", *Journal of Victorian Culture* 17, 1(2012): 46-63.

26 BOA Y.PRK.MK.5/105. Cited in Ismail Hakkı Kadı & A. C. Peacock, *Ottoman-Southeast Asian Relations: Sources from Ottoman Archives*, Vol. 1 (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2020), 367. I am grateful to Tayfun Akgün for having alerted me to the publication of this work.

27 Wilfred Scawen Blunt, *My Diaries: Being a Personal Narrative of Events 1888-1914*, (London: Martin Secker, 1932), 95-100.

Constantinople?' To which the other replied that the Malay princes knew each other, but not the others. They had never had the smallest communication with Constantinople, and the Ottomans looked on them as Kaffirs. A Turkish man-of-war had once come and stayed some time at Singapore on her way to Japan, and it was not till just before she sailed that they discovered that Johore was Mohammedan. Then everybody had been delighted. That was the only communication that had ever taken place with the Turks."²⁸

Sultan Abu Bakar expressed a desire to visit Istanbul but was hesitant to inconvenience the Sultan with a meeting as he considered himself a small sovereign with nothing of great significance to convey.²⁹

Furthermore, any Ottoman records that have been recovered are far pertaining to the relationship between Johor and the Ottoman state refer only to 1893 as the first and only occasion of Abu Bakar's visit to Istanbul. It is also necessary to state that there is no mention of Khadijah Hanim and Rogayah Hanim in these documents. What is known, however, is that Abu Bakar was received by the Ottoman palace with much ceremonious honour.

"They had been entertained at a state banquet, and Sultan Abdul Hamid had embraced his brother monarch and had bestowed on him the First Class of the Order of Osmanieh in diamonds, and on the suite correspondingly high decorations."³⁰

This suggests that Abu Bakar may have acquired Rogayah Hanim through other means if he had made a trip to Istanbul prior to 1893, or that Rogayah Hanim had arrived in Johor independently of the Sultan. Ramlah Adam writes that Rogayah Hanim was brought to Johor from Türkiye by Abu Bakar in 1879,³¹ but there is no record of the Sultan having visited Türkiye in 1879 even though his various visits abroad were meticulously recorded. Speculation surrounding the year of Abu Bakar's visits to Istanbul exists, however, there is no historical basis for any suggested years apart from 1893. The *Riwayat Ungku Aziz* states that Rogayah Hanim arrived in Johor in 1875. Apart from the fact that Sultan Abu Bakar went to Istanbul only in 1893, it also must be noted that Sultan Abdülhamid only began his reign in 1876, a year after Rogayah Hanim's supposed arrival in Johor. This casts doubt on the story of her being gifted by Sultan Abdülhamid II.

According to this account, it would not have been Sultan Abdülhamid II who gifted Rogayah Hanim to Sultan Abu Bakar. Instead, it would have been Sultan Abdülaziz, Abdülhamid's predecessor. However, there is no evidence of communication

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28 Blunt, *My Diaries*, 96.

29 Blunt, *My Diaries*, 96.

30 Blunt, *My Diaries*, 100.

31 Ramlah Adam, *Dato' Onn Ja'afar: Pengasas Kemerdekaan* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa & Pustaka, 1992), 5.

between Abu Bakar and Abdülaziz. *The Riwayat Ungku Aziz* offers a different account, that a wealthy Hadrami merchant based in Singapore named Syed Mohamed bin Ahmad bin Abdul Rahman Alsagoff (1836-1906),³² facilitated the *hijrah* (migration) of Rogayah Hanim to Johor around 1875. Alsagoff was a close friend of Sultan Abu Bakar, who also had strong ties with the Ottoman palace. This was the same Alsagoff who was offered the Kukub Concession (later known as Constantinople Estate), had accompanied Abu Bakar on his trip to Istanbul in 1893, and was also awarded the Order of Osmanieh (Nişan-i Uthmaniyah) by Sultan Abdülhamid.³³ The following letter of 1893 from the Ottoman embassy in Vienna to the Ottoman foreign ministry, expressing Abu Bakar's gratitude for having been received by Abdülhamid in Istanbul, and also mentions Alsagoff:

“His Highness the ruler of Johor came to the imperial embassy and expressed his gratitude for the favourable treatment he received from His Imperial Majesty during his stay in the Abode of Felicity and appealed me to present to the illustrious imperial threshold his [the ruler of Johor] loyal sentiments to the illustrious and holt person of our lord, His Majesty our Sultan, the Commander of the Faithful. He was accompanied by his nephew Syed Mohamed al-Saqqaf, his doctor, and one official. Two hours after their visit, I visited them at their hotel, where I was received with complete kindness and respect. I have invited him together with his entourage to dinner at the imperial embassy on Saturday evening.”³⁴

If the account regarding Alsagoff's involvement is taken into consideration, it raises the issue of how and why Rogayah Hanim remained possibly unmarried or married without child in Johor for a substantial period, approximately twelve years until the birth of her first child, Ungku Abdul Aziz in 1887. According to her descendants, she was married to Ungku Abdul Majid in 1886.

Rogayah Hanim's Descendants

Rogayah Hanim's first marriage was to the younger brother of Sultan Abu Bakar, Ungku Abdul Majid. Ungku Abdul Majid was not only the younger brother of the Sultan, but also an important figure in the governing body of Johor, the Council, having headed it in 1885.³⁵ There is a brief account by Florence Caddy (1837-1923),

32 Asmah Haji Omar, *Riwayat Ungku Aziz*, 75.

33 Syed Mohsen Alsagoff, *The Alsagoff Family in Malaysia: A.H. 1240 (A.D. 1824) to A.H. 1382 (A.D. 1962)* (Singapore: The Author, c. 1963), 11. For more on Syed Mohamed Alsagoff, see Tayfun Akgün, “The Ottoman Consulate in Singapore (1864-1926),” In *Islam, Culture and History in the Malay World*, ed. Hafiz Zakariya (Kuala Nerus: Penerbit UMT, 2022), 105-132; and Syed Mohsen Alsagoff, *The Alsagoff Family in Malaysia: A.H. 1240 (A.D. 1824) to A.H. 1382 (A.D. 1962)* (Singapore: The Author, c. 1963).

34 BOA Y.A.HUS.274/36(3). Cited in Ismail Hakki Kadi & A. C. Peacock, *Ottoman-Southeast Asian Relations: Sources from Ottoman Archives* Vol. 1, (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2020), 364-365. Note that Syed Mohamed Alsagoff is wrongly referred to as Abu Bakar's nephew.

35 Trocki, *Prince of Pirates*, 167.

an English non-fiction writer, of her visit to the residence of Ungku Abdul Majid and Rogayah Hanim, when she was touring Siam and Malaya:

“We were invited to-day to a garden-party at Mathna, the country-seat of the Unkoo Abdul Medjid, the Sultan’s brother.... While the rain continued, we ladies visited the harem, furnished in semi-European style, where the Unkana, a Turkish lady, dressed in black satin, with a “pouff” dowlily arranged in European fashion, received us dumbly, as she could speak no Frankish language, but cordially...”³⁶

Ungku Abdul Majid and Rogayah Hanim had two sons from their marriage, Ungku Abdul Aziz (1887-1951) and Ungku Abdul Hamid (1888-1940). Ungku Abdul Aziz served in various capacities in the administration of Johor, including the position the sixth Chief Minister. Ungku Abdul Hamid was the head of the Department of Translation in Johor³⁷ and was the father of Royal Professor Ungku Abdul Aziz (1922-2020).

Ungku Aziz was an economist trained at Raffles College in Singapore. He then taught economics in the 1950s and the early 60s at the University of Malaya in Singapore. Ungku Aziz moved to Kuala Lumpur in 1962, where he taught at the University of Malaya and served as its Vice-Chancellor from 1968 to 1988. He was considered to be an authority on rural poverty in Malaysia. To date, he is the sole recipient of the title of Professor Diraja (Royal Professor) by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong.³⁸ Ungku Aziz was married to the prominent journalist and writer, Sharifah Azah binti Syed Mohamed Alsagoff (1928-2012), better known as Azah Aziz. They were the parents of Tan Sri Zeti Akhtar Aziz (b. 1947), who served as the governor of Bank Negara Malaysia from 2000 to 2016.

The second marriage of Rogayah Hanim was to the Sufi saint, Habib ‘Abdullah bin Muhsin Alatas of the Al-‘Attas lineage,³⁹ in 1890.⁴⁰ Born in Ḥawrah, Ḥaḍramawt, he moved between Ḥaḍramawt, Hijaz, and Java, until finally settling in Bogor, where he acted as a religious leader until his death in 1933. His *manaqib* is widely known in Ḥaḍramawt, in parts of the Arab world, and in the Malay world. Of significance is his composition of spiritual odes (*qasa’id*; sing. *qasidah*).⁴¹ The marriage came

36 Florence Caddy, *To Siam and Malaya in the Duke of Sutherland’s Yacht ‘Sans Peur’* (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1889), 249-50.

37 Ramlah Adam, *Dato’ Om Ja’afar*, 5-6.

38 “In Memoriam: Ungku Abdul Aziz bin Ungku Abdul Hamid,” National University Singapore, published January 5, 2021, <https://fass.nus.edu.sg/news/2021/01/05/in-memoriam-ungku-abdul-aziz-bin-ungku-abdul-hamid/>.

39 For more on the Al-‘Attas lineage see Syed Farid Alatas, “Al al-‘Attās and Ḥaḍrami Arab Migration to the Malay World,” *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 94, (2021): 51-73.

40 *Berita Pusaka Rogayah Hanim*.

41 Diwan Majmu’ Qasa’id al-Habib al-Imam al-‘Arif bi Allah Abdullah b. Muhsin b. Muhammad al-‘Attas nafa’ana Allah bi hi wa-l-muslimin, 1372 AH [manuscript].

about when Ḥabib ‘Abdullah bin Muḥsin visited his close friend, Salim bin Aḥmad bin Muḥsin Al-Attas, the first mufti of Johor. There in Johor he married Rogayah Hanim,⁴² who was recently widowed, as her first husband, Ungku Abdul Majid, had passed away in 1889. Her only child from this second marriage was Ali (b. 1890). Born and raised in Johor, he was initially separated from his father due to Rogayah Hanim not accompanying Ḥabib ‘Abdullah upon his return to Bogor. Ali later went to Bogor at around the age of seventeen to live with his father.⁴³ Two of Ḥabib ‘Abdullah’s grandsons, Syed Hussein Alatas (1928 – 2007) and Syed Mohamed Naquib Al-Attas (b. 1931) became prominent scholars in their respective fields after receiving higher education in the West and settling in Malaysia. In contrast, Ḥabib ‘Abdullah’s other grandsons remained in the traditional religious sector in Indonesia. Today, an annual visitation or *ḥawl*, commemorating his death and spiritual legacy is held in Bogor, where he is buried.⁴⁴

It is widely believed that Sultan Abu Bakar was not happy with the marriage between Habib ‘Abdullah and Rogayah Hanim. One possible reason is that the Sultan would not have wanted Rogayah Hanim to accompany Habib ‘Abdullah to Bogor and leave Johor. He would not have agreed with her taking her two sons with her, nor would he have wanted her to leave her two sons in Johor. Whatever the reasons, the marriage was dissolved, and Habib ‘Abdullah returned to Bogor. Abu Bakar then arranged for Rogayah Hanim to marry Dato’ Ja’afar bin Mohamed (1838-1919).⁴⁵ All these events took place in 1890, probably within the space of a few months.

Thus, the third marriage of Rogayah Hanim was to the first Chief Minister of Johor, Dato’ Ja’afar. His service in the government of Johor began as a clerk at the age of sixteen and rose to the positions of Acting Chief Minister in 1866 and then Chief Minister in 1873.⁴⁶ He also accompanied Sultan Abu Bakar on his first trip to Europe in 1866. Dato’ Ja’afar had married five times, and one of his marriages was to Rogayah Hanim. Three of his sons went on to become Chief Ministers after him, including the prominent figure of Malay nationalism, Dato’ Onn Ja’afar (1895-1962). Upon the birth of Onn, his father asked the then mufti, Syed Salim bin Ahmad Al-Attas, to name the child. The mufti gave the name Onn (‘Aun) formed from three letters of the Arabic alphabet, that is, *‘ain*, *wau* and *nun* which carry the meaning of help,

42 Al-Attas, *Nota Kembara*, 88.

43 Personal communication, Syed Zed Alatas (d. 2010), Kuala Lumpur, various occasions, 2009-2010. He was the third grandson of Habib ‘Abdullah b. Muḥsin.

44 For more on Ḥabib ‘Abdullah b. Muḥsin Alatas, see Al-Attas, *Nota Kembara*, 81-102; Kazuhiro Arai, “Arabs Who Traversed the Indian Ocean: The History of the Al-Attas Family in Hadramawt and Southeast Asia”, (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2004), 178-185.

45 *Berita Pusaka Rogayah Hanim*; Ramlah Adam, *Dato’ Onn Ja’afar*, 3.

46 Ramlah Adam, *Dato’ Onn Ja’afar*, 3.

aid, relief, helper or aide, referring primarily to God's help or succour.⁴⁷ Onn became the seventh Chief Minister of Johor (1947-1950). He is known for his opposition to the idea of the Malayan Union proposed by the British and for founding the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) in 1946, an organisation which he headed till he resigned from it in 1951. He was the father of Tun Hussein Onn (1922-1990), the third prime minister of Malaysia.

Dato' Onn's sister, Azizah Ja'afar, was married to Syed Mohamed bin Omar bin Mohamed Alsagoff from Singapore in 1926, a Justice of the Peace for Singapore and a Municipal Commissioner.⁴⁸ Apparently, Sultan Ibrahim was unhappy with these plans for marriage as he was reported to have expressed interest in marrying Azizah Ja'afar. This resulted in the Chief Kadhi failing to show up to perform the wedding ceremony. Subsequently, Dato' Onn wrote an angry letter to the General Advisor, complaining of the failure of the Chief Kadhi to perform his duties. As this was seen as an indirect criticism of Sultan Ibrahim, it led to his dismissal and exile to Singapore in 1927.⁴⁹ Eventually, the marriage between Azizah and Syed Mohamed took place, and the couple had two children, Sharifah Azah Alsagoff and Syed Omar Alsagoff, who died tragically in the Hiroshima atomic bomb attack during World War II. Azah Aziz went on to marry Ungku Abdul Aziz bin Ungku Abdul Hamid, as previously mentioned.

The order of Rogayah Hanim's marriages is as stated above. It is necessary to stress this as there have been instances of the wrong sequence being stated. For example, Özey misstated the order as Ungku Abdul Majid, Dato' Ja'afar, Abdullah bin Mohsen Alatas.⁵⁰

Conclusion

The field of research on the Ottoman Empire's interactions with the Malay World remains largely untapped. While a few studies have been conducted in this area, most have been focused specifically on Ottoman-Aceh relations.⁵¹ Established scholars such as Anthony Reid, İ. H. Göksoy, İ. H. Kadı, and İ. Yurdakul have been the pioneers of Ottoman-Malay World studies.⁵² In addition, other scholars,⁵³ in-

47 Al-Attas, *Nota Kembara*, 134; Ramlah Adam, *Dato' Onn Ja'afar*, 7. On the meaning of 'aun, see Edward William Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1874), Book. 1, Part 5, 2203.

48 Alsagoff, *The Alsagoff Family in Malaysia*, 19.

49 Zainah Anwar, *Legacy of Honour* (Kuala Lumpur: Yayasan Mohamed Noah, 2011), 84; personal communication with Zainah Anwar, 30 April, 2022.

50 Özey Mehmet, *Islamic Identity and Development: Studies of the Islamic Periphery* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 28-29.

51 Akgün, "The Ottoman Consulate in Singapore."

52 See their works cited in Akgün, "The Ottoman Consulate in Singapore."

53 See Saim Kayadibi, ed., *Ottoman Connections to the Malay World: Islam, Law and Society*, (Petaling Jaya: The

cluding a younger generation of Turkish and Malaysian scholars are continuing with such studies and expanding the scope to include areas beyond Aceh. Examples are Alaeddin Tekin,⁵⁴ Ahmed Çağrı Inan⁵⁵ and Nuramirah Shahrin.⁵⁶ In addition some Turkish scholars are venturing into the study of Malay history itself, or comparative studies between Ottoman and Malay history. Examples are Tayfun Akgün,⁵⁷ Ahmed Çağrı Inan.⁵⁸

Regarding the specific case of Rogayah Hanim, her importance as part of the Ottoman legacy of Malaysia stems from her descendants who held significant positions in the political and intellectual spheres of Malaya and Malaysia. The context of pan-Islamism does not appear to be relevant in comprehending Rogayah Hanim's connection with the Johor royal family. It has been noted that Abu Bakar had little interest in pan-Islamism, an orientation very much promoted by Abdühamid II in order to repel colonial expansion in the Muslim world.⁵⁹ Another significant impact that the Ottomans had on Johor, unrelated to Rogayah Hanim, is the *Majalah Ahkam Johor of 1893*, indicating how Abu Bakar was inspired to adopt Ottoman law as the basis for his own constitution. The *Majalah* is a Malay version of the Ottoman Civil Code, the *Majallah al-Ahkām al-Adliyyah*, also known as the *Mecelle*, which was translated in 1913 during the reign of Sultan Ibrahim of Johor. The constitution, however, was in effect since 1893.⁶⁰

It is noteworthy that a Circassian woman, who was most likely a palace woman from the Ottoman sultan's harem, and about whom so little is known, had yielded descendants a few thousand kilometres away from the region of her birth, who occupied significant roles in the political and intellectual spheres of Malaysia. Rogayah Hanim was linked to the royal family of Johor, the Ḥaḍrami *sayyids* and the Malay

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Other Press, 2011).

54 His doctoral thesis was *Ottoman-Sumatran Relations, 1849-1904*, International Islamic University Malaysia, 2020.

55 His MA thesis at the International Islamic University Malaysia is entitled "Management of Socio-Cultural Differences in Islamic Civilization: The Experiences of the Ottoman Sultanate (1839-1865) and Malaysia (1957-1976)."

56 "The Relationship between the Sultanate of Johore and the Ottoman Empire", MA Thesis, Marmara University, Istanbul, 2019.

57 Currently working on a PhD thesis at the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization on Malay historiography. The title of his thesis is "Autonomous History in Malaysia, 1960s – 1990s: The Writings of Malaysian Historians". The title of his MA thesis at the International Islamic University Malaysia is "A Study of Sayyid Shaykh al-Hadi's (1867-1934) and Abdullah Ahmad's (1878-1933) Contributions to Islamic Reform in the Malay World".

58 Currently working on a PhD thesis at the University of Malaya. The title of his thesis is "Malayan Historiography from the Perspective of British Amateur Historians".

59 Mohamad Firdaus Mansor Majdin, "The Malay World Relations with the Ottoman Caliphate with Special Reference to Pan-Islamism in Malaya," In *Islam, Culture and History in the Malay World*, ed. Hafiz Zakariya (Kuala Nerus: Penerbit UMT, 2023), 133-162;

60 Abd. Jalil Borham, *Majalah Ahkam Johor: Kod Undang-Undang Sivil Islam Kerajaan Negeri Johor 1331 H/1913 M* (Johor Bahru: Penerbit UTM, 2002).

political elite through her marriages to influential figures from Johor and Java. However, her marriages did not elevate her prominence in history, as her absence in historical accounts of Johor attests. To date, searches in both Ottoman and Malaysian archives have failed to provide any information about her background, including her birthplace, her upbringing among the Ottomans, the circumstances in which she went to Johor, and her life among the Johorean royalty. For someone about whom so little is known, what she produced is of much historical value. Her legacy was her descendants. And it should be the duty of her descendants to honour her by learning as much as possible about her biography and appreciating her role in history.



Image 1: Rogayah Hanım (Rukiye Hanım)

(Source: <https://cilisos.my/hishammuddins-ancestor-served-the-turkish-sultan-heres-how-msia-turkey-became-bffs/>)



Image 2: Khadijah Hanim

(Source: <https://garystockbridge617.getarchive.net/amp/media/kitlv-7824-lambert-and-co-gr-singapore-the-sultana-of-johor-in-the-company-66df9a>)



Image 3: Khadijah Hanım (Hatice Hanım)

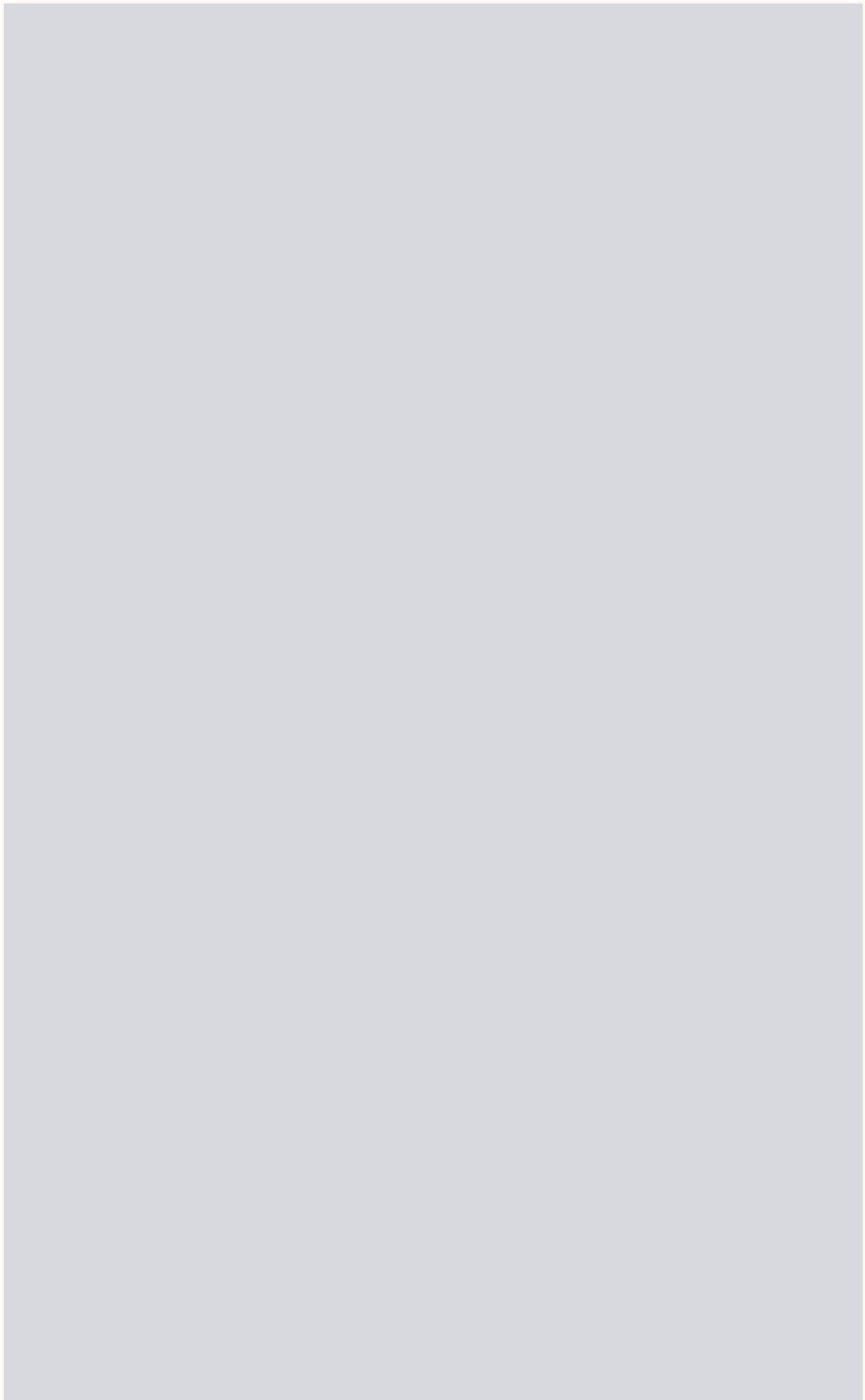
(Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Bakar_of_Johor#/media/File:CLange.jpg)

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CHAPTER SIX

MALAYSIA AND INDONESIA IN YILDIZ PHOTO ALBUMS

Orhan M. Çolak¹

The majority of the Yıldız Photograph Albums were formed in Yıldız Palace during the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II, who used photography to collect and disseminate information. The original collection, which is also known as the Sultan Abdülhamid II Archive, is located today in the Istanbul University Rare Works Library (İÜNEK), while the negative copies are in the Library and Archive of the Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA).

Valuable not only for Türkiye but also for world photography, this important collection can be considered as the official photographic archive of the Ottoman Empire. The collection consists of 38,599 visual materials kept in 963 albums. Of these, 911 albums contain 36,565 photographs and 52 albums contain 2,034 engravings. About 1.000 photographs were later coloured by hand.

The number of photographs dating from the reign of Sultan Abdülaziz is 300 and of photographs from the reign of Sultan Reşad is approximately 3,000. These photographs were taken by 263 photographers/photography houses between the years 1862-1917. They are related to 1,460 settlement places in 62 countries, ranging from the USA to Japan, with a particular focus on Istanbul and Ottoman lands.²

Looking at the history of photography in the Malaysia and Indonesia region, which is the subject of the present article, it is seen that in August 1839, when photography was announced in France as the invention of Louis-Jacques-Mandé

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2 Hidayet Y. Nuhoglu-Orhan M. Çolak, "Osmanlı'ya Fotoğrafın Girişi (Introduction of Photography to the Ottoman Empire)", *Sultan II. Abdülhamid Arşivi İstanbul Fotoğrafları (Photographs of Istanbul from the Archives of Sultan Abdülhamid II)*, edited by Adnan Genç-Orhan M. Çolak, Metropolitan Municipality of Istanbul (İBB) Culture Co.-IRCICA Publications, Istanbul 2008, 44-46.

Daguerre (1787-1851), the area was under Dutch colonial rule; therefore, photography was introduced to and spread in the region by Westerners.

In 1840, the Dutch Ministry of Colonies realised that the ancient monuments and natural history of the region could be recorded photographically and appointed a medical officer, Jurriaan Munnich (1817-1865), for this purpose. Later, the region was photographed by many Western photographers, especially those commissioned by the Dutch colonial administration. These included the German Adolph Schaefer (1820-1853), who established the first portrait studio in Batavia (Jakarta), the Belgian-born Isadore van Kinsbergen (1821-1905), and two Englishmen, Walter Bentley Woodbury (1834-1885) and James Page (1833-1865), who founded the Woodbury & Page studio.

While government sponsorship of photography was dominant in the 1840s, the growing popularity of studio portraits in the 1850s created a market for a larger number of travelling photographers to visit the region. In early 1853, the travelling photographers L. Saurman and later C. Duben visited Batavia. Antoine Francois Lecouteux was the first photographer to produce photographs on glass and paper in Batavia and worked in collaboration with Isadore van Kinsbergen.

The French traveller Count Ludovic de Beauvoir, together with the Duke of Penhièvre, grandson of the French King Louis Philippe, travelled to Australia, Indonesia, Siam, China, Japan and the United States from 1865 to 1867. They visited Java for a week in early December 1866 and Beauvoir collected locally taken photographs, including Isadore van Kinsbergen's portraits of the princes of Java and Bali. The photographs were later published by Beauvoir in three volumes in 1867 under the title *Travels around the world: Australia, Java, Siam, Canton, Beijing, Yeddo, San Francisco*. The book was met with great interest in Europe and increased curiosity about the region.³

The Woodbury & Page studio, founded in 1857 and of which more information will be provided later, remained important until the end of the century. By the end of the 1870s, studios were established in all major towns and cities and even in smaller places. However, by the end of the century, the firm of "Woodbury & Page" had begun to decline and larger, more active firms such as "Charls & van Es", founded in the 1880s with branches in Surabaya and Batavia, became popular.

In the last decade of the 19th century, local photographers also became active, a trend that continued into the 20th century. One of the few local photographers was

3 <http://www.photo-web.com.au/gael/docs/Hoffotograaf.htm> Accessed on 14.2.2022. The second volume of the book, describing Java, Siam and Canton, was translated into Turkish by Sultan Abdülhamid II under the title *Seyahatname-i Cava, Siyam ve Kanton (A Voyage Round the World: Java, Siam, Canton)* (649 pages, without illustrations), See İÜNEK, TY. 5442.

Kassian Cephas (1845-1912), who also worked as a photographer for the Sultan of Yogyakarta. Among non-European photographers, the Chinese, mainly from Singapore and Hong Kong, were probably the largest group. One of the most successful was Tan Tjie Lan in Batavia. Other important groups were the Japanese, such as Mazaraki in Medan, and Armenians, such as Onnes Kurkdjian (1851-1903), who had a studio in Surabaya.

There are 129 photographs of Malaysia and Indonesia in the Yıldız Collection, probably taken by the photographers mentioned above. The first group of these are photographs of the Muslim rulers of the region.

Photograph no. 779-86/7 of Abu Bakar Khan, the Ruler of Johor (1833-1895), was taken by Abdullah Frères, who served as Sultan Abdülhamid II's Chief Photographer, during Abu Bakar Khan's visit to Istanbul in 1893. During this visit, Abu Bakar Khan was honoured with the *murassa Osmanî* medal, his companion Mohamed Alsagoff with the First Class *Osmanî*, and his commander, doctor and clerk were honoured with orders of various ranks.⁴



Image 1: A photograph of Sultan Abu Bakar of Johor taken by Abdullah Frères during his visit to Istanbul in 1893.

(Source: Istanbul University Rare Works Library, Yıldız Collection, 779-86-7)

Among the 5 photographs⁵ in the album numbered 779-24, photographs numbered 19 and 21 belong to Abu Bakar Khan, the Ruler of Johor. Photograph number 20 is of Sultan Abdul Samad of Selangor (1804-1898), photograph number 22 is of Sultan Mohamed Sulaiman of Kutai (1838-1899), and photograph number 23 is of Sultan Mohamed Saifuddin II of Sambas (1866-1924). In photograph number 21, since Abu Bakar Khan is recorded as deceased, we can estimate the date of this photograph as around 1895.



Image 2: Sultan Abdul Samad of Selangor.

(Source: Istanbul University Rare Works Library, Yıldız Collection, 779-24-20)

Photographs numbered 779-56/17, 18, 20, 21 are of the centre and countryside of Penang, Malaysia. The photographs were copied by Colonel Hüseyin Hüsameddin Bey, one of the military photographers working at the Hamidiye Etfal (Children's) Hospital Photograph Studio. His signature, "Hüsameddin", can be clearly seen, particularly in photograph number 18.

5
 These 5 photos were copied by Colonel Hüseyin Hüsameddin Bey who was one of Abdulhamid's military photographers. Orhan M. Çolak, "Sultan II. Abdülhamid'in Fotoğrafçılarından Albay Hüseyin Hüsameddin Bey (1857-1904)", *Milli Saraylar*, 18 (2019): 43-44.

The second group of photographs in the Yıldız Collection were selected from albums concerning mainly this region. Among these, the albums no. 91344, 91440 and 91534 are mostly about Indonesia and Malaysia.

Album numbered 91344 and titled “Java Natives” contains 64 photographs. Of these, 55 photographs are of the cities of Java: Surakarta, Batavia (Jakarta), Semarang, Yogyakarta, Bandung, Bali, Borneo, Celebes, Sumatra, Krakatau, Ternate, Ambon, Aceh and Kutaraja (Banda Aceh). The remaining 9 photographs depict New Guinea (91344/12-13), Timor (91344/22) and Siam (Thailand) (91344/53-55, 60-62).



Image 3: Photograph of Pakubuwono IX, Sultan of Surakarta taken by Woodbury & Page
(Source: Istanbul University Rare Works Library, Yıldız Collection, 91344-27)

Most of the photographs in the album are of socio-cultural significance, showing sultans, nobles, civilians, and professional groups of the region, as well as musicians, instrument-players, opium addicts, fruit, the method of cooking rice, cloth weaving, palanquin, forests, and cane houses. These photographs do not reflect the lives of the islanders exactly but are a record of how European photographers aimed to portray them.

The majority of the photographs in this album are portraits, including important figures such as the sultans of Surakarta (Sultan Pakubuwono IX, 91344/1, 6 and

27), Kutai (Sultan Mohamed Sulaiman's youth, 91344/29), Ternate (Zainal Abidin Monoarfa, Raja of Gorontalo, 91344/7), the princes of Bali (91344/32) and the prince of Pontianak (91344/2). The style of the photographs suggest that they were taken during the reign of Abdülaziz and the captions of the album are in Ottoman Turkish. For example, under the photograph of the Sultan of Surakarta, it is written in Ottoman Turkish: "The Sultan of the place called Surakarta in Java".

A comparison of the photographs of this album with online digital collections reveals that half of them were taken by Woodbury & Page, whose studio was based in Batavia.⁶

A Woodbury & Page photograph (91344/46) of the three daughters of Hamengkubuwono VI (1855-1877), Sultan of Yogyakarta, was also used in the Dutch Travlogue of *Mabeynci* (Chamberlain) Ali Cevad Bey, who went to present an order of honour to King William III of the Netherlands.⁷

Woodbury & Page were two photographers born in England, living in Australia, who set out to establish a photographic studio in Batavia. Opening their studio in 1857, Walter Bentley Woodbury (1834-1885) and James Page (1833-1865) developed a studio in Java that lasted until the early 20th century and became one of the most important studios of the Dutch colonial period in Indonesia. The firm's distinctive richly toned, detailed prints survive today as the main archive of Jakarta and 19th-century colonial Indonesia.⁸ Woodbury also made many inventions in various aspects of photography, the best known being the Woodbury-type photomechanical process.⁹

Album number 91440 titled "Tribes in Sumatra and Borneo" contains 32 photographs of Aceh and Sumatra. This album, subtitled in French and Ottoman Turkish, contains images of the cities of Deli and Olele in Aceh and Labuan in Sumatra, as well as group photographs of the people. The photographs of modern buildings, hospitals, bridges, roads and railways in the album show the deceptively modern face of the Dutch administration, the colonial state of the region, while the tobacco

6
A search of Europeana, Leiden University's digital collections and The Memory database (containing paintings, drawings, photographs, sculptures, ceramics, stamps, posters and newspaper clippings from over a hundred museums, archives and libraries in the Netherlands) reveals that 31 photographs, including 3, 7, 8, 14-16, 19, 20, 25, 27, 28, 30-32, 34, 35, 37, 40-42, 45-47, 50, 51, 53, 57-60, 63, of album 91344 were taken by Woodbury & Page, europeana.eu/en/collections/topic/48-photography, <https://geheugen.delpher.nl/en>, <https://digitalcollections.universiteitleiden.nl/>

7 Ali Cevad, *Felemenk Seyahatnamesi (Dutch Travlogue)*, İÜNEK TY. 5092, page: XXII. *Mabeynci* (Chamberlain) Ali Cevad Bey (Abdülhamid II's last Chamberlain Chief Clerk, 1856-1930) travelled to the Hague in November-December 1883 with Ferik Süleyman Pasha, the head of the Naval Council, to present Sultan Abdülhamid II's Order of Distinction to King William III of the Netherlands, and described his interview with the king and his trip in this work. Behind the work are photographs of the King, the Queen, The Hague, Amsterdam and Rotterdam, plans of The Hague and Amsterdam, and a map of the Netherlands. There are also drawings of cities and people from Batavia, Aceh, Sumatra, Borneo, Timor, New Guinea.

8 <http://www.photo-web.com.au/gael/docs/WoodburyWalter.htm> Accessed on 14.02.2022.

9 Elliott, Alan F., "Woodbury, Walter Bentley," *Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Photography*, ed. John Hannavy (New York: Taylor & Francis Group, 2008), 1509-1510.

fields and gold mines show the real face. The photographs of the tombs of Aceh sultans are interesting.



Image 4. Tombs of Aceh Sultans

(Source: Istanbul University Rare Works Library, Yıldız Collection, 91440-26)

No. 91440/21 of Sultan Sulaiman Badrul Alam Shah II of Riau-Lingga (d. 1883) and his entourage was also taken by the Woodbury & Page studio in 1867. The caption on the photograph is written in Ottoman Turkish: “*Felemenk’e tabi’ Açe memleketinde Müslüman (Malay) kabilesi prenslerinden birinin maiyetiyle beraber çıkarttığı resmidir* (This is the picture of one of the princes of the Muslim (Malay) tribe in Aceh, a Dutch subject, with his entourage).”



Image 5: Photograph of Sultan Badrul Alam Shah of Riau-Lingga and his entourage taken by Woodbury & Page

(Source: Istanbul University Rare Works Library, Yıldız Collection, 91440-21)

Album numbered 91534 and titled “*Maurice Grünberg’s Travels and the Bhoodha and Brama Tempel Ruins in Java*” was prepared by Istanbul-born East India researcher and Orientalist Maurice Grünberg. Apart from this album, we have no other information or source about Grünberg and his travels. There are 32 photographs in the album, including a photograph of him wearing a fez at the beginning of the album, 3 maps of his travels in New Guinea, the Philippines, Borneo, Sumatra and Java, and a list of photographs in English.¹⁰ Most of the photographs are of the Prambanan and Borobudur Temples in Yogyakarta in Central Java. There are also photographs of the palace and gardens of Yogyakarta. The only photograph outside Yogyakarta is of the Mangkunegaran Palace in Surakarta.¹¹ The statues and reliefs of Borobudur Temple were also photographed by Adolph Schaefer in 1845 and Isadore van Kinsbergen in late 1860.



Image 6: Orientalist Maurice Grünberg’s photograph in his personal album
(Source: Istanbul University Rare Works Library, Yıldız Collection, 91534-1.)

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- 10 The numbers registered in İÜNEK do not match the subtitle list in the album. However, the original numbers under the photos are compatible with the list. Photos must be renumbered according to the original listing and the numbers below them.
- 11 https://collectie.wereldculturen.nl/?query=search=*TM-60005055#/query/5ffb9c0a-24ff-4b43-ba65-3973b101d49b [Accessed 15.2.2022]. As can be seen, this photograph was not taken by Maurice Grünberg, but is from the Tropenmuseum Collection in Amsterdam, Netherlands. Grünberg collected the photographs, prepared an album and presented it to the Sultan. In the Yıldız Collection, one can find such albums presented for a specific benefit, rank or decoration.

The method by which these photographs arrived at the Yıldız Palace is unknown, however, as mentioned above, these photographs may have come in the form of mutual gifts during the visits and delegations travelling back and forth between the Ottoman-Netherlands, Ottoman-Java and Johor or other sultanates. In addition, there was always a flow of information and visual material from the region to Istanbul, as evidenced by the consigning of Malay books and treatises¹² from the Batavian Consulate to the *Kütüphane-i Umumi* (the Public Library) (1885) and the sending of a photograph of Abdurrahman, a Naqshi Shaykh buried in Surakarta, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs¹³ (1905).

In conclusion, most of the photographs of Malaysia and Indonesia in the Yıldız Photograph Album are socio-cultural photographs that introduce the region, such as the sultans, nobles, civilians, various professional groups, new buildings and railways, fruit and rice fields in rural areas, and traditional houses. At the same time, these photographs are historical records illustrating the political life of the rulers in the region, the traditional lives of the civilian population and their conditions.

Sultan Abdülhamid II did not only rely on the written information and documents presented to him in the conduct of state affairs, but also attached great importance to photographs as a source of information. Since the Sultan had a cautious character and spent most of his 33-year reign within the confines of Yıldız Palace, he relied heavily on photographs to understand his country and the world, and these visual records influenced his decision-making in state administration. For example, he followed the Ottoman-Greek War of 1897 almost daily through photographs. Colonel Hüseyin Hüsameddin Bey and his team, whom he assigned to take photographs at the front, played a major role in this.

In addition, Sultan Abdülhamid directed the public opinion through these photographs published in the Ottoman press, particularly in the newspapers *Malumat* and *Servet-i Fünun*, and aimed to promote the Ottoman Empire abroad, specifically with the albums he sent to the United States and England.

The albums and photographs of Indonesia and Malaysia, which are the subject of this article, must have been influential in his recognition of his distant co-religionists and his decisions about these places.

12 These are the two volumes of the state of the city of Batavia in Javanese and *Umeray-ı Hamse Hikayesi* (the story of *Umeray-ı Hamse*) in Malay, BOA, MEMKT. 85-97. The *Umeray-ı Hamse Hikayesi* has been identified as *Hikayat Pandawa Lima* (*The story of Pandawa Lima*) in Malay. İsmail Hakkı Kadı-A.C.S. Peacock, *Ottoman-Southeast Asian Relations 1* (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 470.

13 BOA, HR.TH. 325-14.

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RESEARCH WORKS SERIES

Despite the great distance, there have always been commercial, religious, political, and cultural relations between the former Ottoman geography and the Southeast Asian region through the Indian Ocean. Research and studies on these relations and the connections between the two worlds have been increasing in recent times. The proliferation of our sources of information in this field and the increasing mutual contacts between the worlds have also contributed to this process.

The studies carried out so far have revealed the fact that more specific research can be conducted in various fields in the context of Ottoman-Southeast Asian relations by using different sources of information. The existing research on the relations and interactions between these two different Muslim geographies has also been reviewed in the light of archival records, newspapers and journals written in Ottoman Turkish, and new publications have been produced accordingly.

This book aims to show the current situation and where we stand in the field of research on the Ottoman-Southeast Asian Relations through references to those studies. It is hoped that this study will guide future studies, encourage young researchers in this field and contribute to the modern relations between our country and the countries of the region through our ancient past.

