

**THE DEMYSTIFICATION OF THE MYSTICAL SYMBIOSIS:
FACTIONALISM AMONG THE DESCENDANTS OF RÛMÎ AT THE
TURN OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY**

by
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TURN OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY**

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ABSTRACT

THE DEMYSTIFICATION OF THE MYSTICAL SYMBIOSIS: FACTIONALISM AMONG THE DESCENDANTS OF RÛMÎ AT THE TURN OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

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Keywords: The Mevlevî Order, factionalism, Veled Çelebi, ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi,
Second Constitutional Period

This study delves into the intra-*tarîqa* schism that erupted in 1910 following the dismissal of ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi and the subsequent appointment of Veled Çelebi as the *pōst-niṣān* of the Konya Mevlânâ Lodge. This factional rivalry, which has so far only been addressed descriptively in the available literature, warrants an in-depth analysis within its proper historical context. The central government’s appointment of Veled Çelebi was the end product of a prolonged and cumulative process in the nineteenth century, during which the intricate interplay between the state apparatus and Sufi orders underwent a crucial reorientation. This transformative process ultimately reconfigured the prevailing power dynamics, decisively shifting the balance in favor of the increasingly centralized and bureaucratized Ottoman administrative structure. In other words, the modern state formation deteriorated the traditional mystical autonomy. Nevertheless, the appointment procedure did not operate smoothly. Unprecedented complications brought the state apparatus to the brink of a perilous societal crisis in Konya. The supposedly arbitrary decision to replace ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi with Veled Çelebi was protested first by those occupying eminent positions within the Mevlevî order. It then escalated into a relatively large-scale popular anti-government demonstration staged by various social segments inclusive of artisans, merchants, scholars (*‘ulemā*), and the gentry (*eṣrāf*). It is particularly noteworthy that this discordant faction framed its discursive strategy in the orbit of the libertarian principles promised by the proclamation of the Second Constitutional Monarchy. Thus, this study prioritizes a bottom-up perspective over a state-centered approach, which often obscures individual agency.

ÖZET

MİSTİK SİMBİYOZUN BÜYÜBOZUMU: YİRMİNCİ ASRIN DÖNÜŞÜNDE MEVLEVÎ ÇELEBİLERİ ARASINDA HİZİP ÇATIŞMASI

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Tez Danışmanı: Doç. Dr. SELÇUK AKŞİN SOMEL

Anahtar Kelimeler: Mevlevîlik, hizipçilik, Veled Çelebi, ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi, II.
Meşrûtiyet Dönemi

Bu çalışma, 1910 yılında ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi’nin azledilerek yerine Veled Çelebi’nin Konya Mevlevî Âsitânesi’ne post-nişîn olarak atanmasıyla patlak veren tarikat-içi bölünmeyi ele almaktadır. Mevcut literatürde şimdiki dek yalnızca betimleyici bir çerçevede ele alınan bu hizip mücadelesi, tarihsel bağlamına uygun biçimde derinlikli bir analizi gerektirmektedir. Veled Çelebi’nin merkezî hükûmet tarafından yapılan ataması, 19. asır boyunca devlet aygıtı ve tarikatlar arasındaki girift etkileşimin köklü bir dönüşüm geçirdiği kümülatif ve uzun soluklu bir sürecin nihaî çıktısıydı. Bu dönüştürücü süreç, cari iktidar dinamiklerini yeniden şekillendirerek dengeyi giderek merkezîleşen ve bürokratikleşen Osmanlı idari yapısı lehine değiştirmiştir. Başka bir deyişle, modern devlet inşası geleneksel mistik özerkliği aşındırmıştır. Bununla birlikte, atama prosedürü pürüzsüz işlememişti. Eşi görülmemiş zorluklar, devlet aygıtını Konya’da tehlikeli bir toplumsal krizle karşı karşıya getirdi. Veled Çelebi’nin keyfi addedilen atama kararı, evvelâ Mevlevî hiyerarşisinde seçkin mevkileri işgal eden kimseler tarafından protesto edildi. Müteakiben esnaf, tüccar, ulema ve eşraf gibi çeşitli toplumsal kesimlerin katıldığı, büyük ölçekli hükûmet-karşıtı bir halk gösterisine evrildi. Bu muhalif hizbin söylemsel stratejisini İkinci Meşrutiyet’in ilanı ile vaat edilen hürriyet-perver ilkelerin yörüngesine oturtması bilhassa dikkat çekicidir. Dolayısıyla bu çalışma, bireysel fâilliği sıkça gizleyen devlet-merkezli bir yaklaşım yerine “aşağıdan yukarıya” bir bakış açısını incelemektedir.

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I am deeply indebted to my friends at Sabancı University, who enriched my academic life beyond measure. Among them, I must single out Fırat Köklü, with whom I shared a twenty-square-meter dorm room and from whom I received nothing but pure and unwavering friendship. I am equally grateful to the fellow members of our “Historians’ Gang”—Sarp Kalay, Anıl Küçüktaka, and Fatih Zeybek—whose companionship in courses and spirited debates was a source of joy that words cannot capture. A special note of appreciation goes to Ph.D. İsa Uğurlu and Ph.D. Ardit Gjeli, who transformed Sabancı University’s secluded, ivory-tower-like campus into a haven of warmth and camaraderie with their countless tea gatherings and conversations that carried the nights.

Before closing the chapter on Sabancı University, I must also pay tribute to my journey at Istanbul University. At the outset of this new path, Ph.D. Ahmet Tekin welcomed me not only into his home but also into the vast generosity of his heart. His steady encouragement at every stage of writing this thesis proved invaluable. Without him, this study might never have reached completion.

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There is one person whose name must not go unmentioned, for he inspired this study at its very inception: Doctor Abdullah Uysal. The seeds of this thesis were sown in the course of our delightful conversations; in every sense, he stands as the spiritual architect of these pages. I must also acknowledge, with deepest love and reverence, my mother, father, and brother, whose staunch support has sustained me through life's most trying moments. Without the strength of their presence, even a single breath would have been impossible.

Last but not least, I am delighted to offer my boundless love and gratitude to my beloved wife, my *Rosa Mystica*, Jale Nur Turgut Yolcu, who never hesitated to share with me the unbearable lightness of existence since our early youth. Her luminous smile and the radiance in her eyes, shared from across the table night after night, infused me with the courage and serenity to see this thesis through to its final form.

Without doubt, the responsibility of any shortcomings that remain in this thesis rests entirely upon my shoulders.

To Doctor Abdullah Uysal
“Efendimsin cihânda i‘tibârım varsa sendendir”

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the waning decades of the Ottoman Empire, the Mevlevî order, historically revered for its cultural prestige and spiritual magnetism, became a site of acute contestation, not solely between the state apparatus and the Sufi elite but also within the Çelebi lineage itself. This thesis undertakes a multilayered examination of the Mevlevî order's political entanglements and internal fissures in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with a particular focus on the surge of factionalism among the descendants of Rûmî during the Second Constitutional Period. By prying open this seemingly arcane intra-*tariqa* rivalry, I aim to introduce a counterweight to conventional, statist narratives that continue to dominate the historiography of Ottoman Sufism—narratives which often portray Sufi orders as passive instruments of state hegemony or, conversely, as uniform agents of resistance.

Virtually all contributors to the available literature appear to have come out of Abdûlbâki Gölpınarlı's overcoat. His monumental work, *Mevlânâ'dan Sonra Mevlevîlik*, continues to serve as the foundational point of reference in the field. To cite a few representative examples, Mehmet Önder's *Mevlânâ ve Mevlevîlik*, İrfan Gündüz's *Osmanlılarda Devlet-Tekke Münâsebetleri*, Mustafa Kara's *Tekkeler ve Zaviyeler: Din, Hayat, Sanat Açısından*, Hüseyin Top's *Mevlevî Usûl ve Âdâbı*, and Ahmet Cahit Haksever's *Modernleşme Sürecinde Mevlevîler ve Jön Türkler* all constitute, in one way or another, appendices to Gölpınarlı's legacy. In addition, Sezai Küçük's Ph.D. dissertation, *XIX. Asırda Mevlevîlik ve Mevlevîler*, completed in a faculty of theology, provides researchers of late Ottoman Mevlevism with a substantial reservoir of empirical data. Meanwhile, Serdar Ösen's Ph.D. dissertation, *19. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Devlet ve Toplum Hayatında Mevlevîlik*, stands out as a monograph constructed through meticulous engagement with the Ottoman archives and exhibits a strong commitment to historical methodology. The present thesis enters into dialogue with this corpus, while simultaneously offering a critical intervention, particularly by seeking to move beyond latent a priori assumptions and essentialist perspectives. It is, in this regard, a deliberate effort to reevaluate and expand upon prevailing narratives within the historiography of the Mevlevî order.

Rather than positioning the Mevlevî order as a mere appendage of the Ottoman polity, this study foregrounds the political agency, strategic maneuvering, and self-fashioning of Mevlevî actors operating within—and at times against—the shifting tectonics of imperial governance. In doing so, I argue that the internal dynamics of the Mevlevî order, particularly the rivalries among its Çelebi figures, cannot be understood in isolation from the broader structural transformations of the Ottoman state during its final century. The Çelebis were not timeless custodians of a mystical legacy but active political actors embedded in the web of patronage, legitimacy, and institutional competition that defined the late imperial order.

At the heart of this inquiry lies a methodological and epistemological commitment: to write a theoretically informed social history that remains grounded in the rich empirical terrain of the Ottoman archives. This thesis is animated by a set of analytical questions: How did the Mevlevîs navigate their place within the Ottoman state's evolving regime of power? What explains the intensification of factional rivalries at a moment of constitutionalist reform? And how might we theorize the internal politics of a Sufi order without reducing it to a mere reflection of the state's ideological configurations?

To address these questions, I draw on a constellation of theoretical frameworks that are intended to reinforce the intertextuality of this thesis. For instance, from Michel Foucault, I inherit a sensitivity to the dispersed modalities of power and the irreducibility of political rationality to the state apparatus alone. Power, in this view, is not exclusively sovereign but relational, circulating through rituals, discourses, and institutional practices. Friedrich Nietzsche's Apollonian-Dionysian dialectic provides a metaphorical prism through which to interpret the tension between normativity and ecstatic rupture within the Mevlevî tradition—a tension that resurfaces in the political schisms of the early twentieth century. Finally, Pierre Bourdieu's notion of symbolic capital undergirds my analysis of prestige, reputation, and honor within the Mevlevî hierarchy and in relation to the Ottoman ruling elite. These theoretical strands are not deployed as rigid frameworks but rather as conceptual instruments that illuminate the historical textures of the case at hand.

This thesis adopts a primarily genealogical and archival method. Rather than attempting an exhaustive survey of Ottoman Sufism, I have pursued a close, historically contingent reading of a specific episode in Mevlevî history: the dismissal of 'Abdülhalîm Çelebi (d. 1925) and the contested rise of Veled Çelebi (d. 1953) in the first quarter of the twentieth century. My research is anchored in an extensive body of primary sources, including Ottoman imperial correspondence, petitions, administrative decrees, and periodical press articles, most of which remain unexamined in the existing secondary literature. The evidentiary bedrock of this study thus allows

for an interpretive intervention that is both historically grounded and theoretically ambitious.

The structure of the thesis unfolds over three chapters. Chapter 2 offers a *longue durée* historicization of the Mevlevî order's relationship with the Ottoman state, tracing the evolution of the Çelebîship and the variegated forms of political engagement pursued by successive generations of the Mevlevî leadership. Here, I dismantle the static dichotomies of collaboration versus resistance, and instead propose a dialectical understanding of state-*tarîqa* interaction, one marked by negotiation, patronage, and intermittent friction. Chapter 3 turns to the transformations wrought by the long nineteenth century, particularly the Ottoman state's modernizing thrust and the bureaucratization of Sufi orders. It is in this context that the symbolic and administrative status of the Mevlevî order was both elevated and constrained. The Mevlevîs were simultaneously granted imperial recognition and subjected to the rationalized instruments of state surveillance. I conceptualize this paradox through the twin lenses of symbolic power and state hegemony. Chapter 4, the centerpiece of this thesis, presents a micro-historical analysis of the factional struggle between 'Abdülhalîm Çelebi and Veled Çelebi, situating this contest within the broader constellation of post-Hamidian politics, intra-Mevlevî rivalries, and the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) patronage networks. This chapter not only reconstructs the archival narrative in meticulous detail but also reflects on the theoretical stakes of spiritual succession, symbolic economy, and bureaucratic entanglement.

What emerges from this study is a vision of the Mevlevî order as a profoundly political institution whose spiritual authority was constantly negotiated, contested, and rearticulated in response to shifting regimes of power. Far from being a monolithic community unified by a single charismatic leader, the Mevlevîs appear as a fragmented and heterogeneous collectivity, riddled with ideological ambiguities, sectarian tensions, and competing sub-lineages. Their story is not one of straightforward co-optation by the state apparatus, but of strategic adaptation, internal contestation, and institutional recalibration. In this regard, the Konya Mevlânâ Lodge offers a particularly rich case study for interrogating the broader processes of religious transformation, bureaucratization, and symbolic power in the twilight of the Ottoman Empire.

By bringing together archival specificity and theoretical reflection, this thesis contributes to the growing body of scholarship that attempts to de-center "the state" as the default analytical category and foreground the dispersed agencies that animate its historical formations. It also makes an intervention into the historiography of Ottoman Sufism by recasting the Çelebis not as relics of a bygone mysticism, but as political actors in their own right, negotiating the thresholds between sacred

legitimacy and administrative authority. In sum, this is a study of political mysticism and mystical politics, of sacred descent and bureaucratic ascent, of charismatic inheritance and factional rupture. It is, above all, an invitation to rethink the grammar of Ottoman political theology through the lens of a Sufi order that, for better or worse, refused to stay silent.

2. HISTORICIZING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STATE APPARATUS AND THE MEVLEVÎ ORDER

*Şeb-i lâhûtda manzûme-i ecrâm gibi
Lafz-ı “Bîşnev”le doğan debdebe-i ma’nâyız
Yahyâ Kemâl Beyatlı*

The state-*tarîqa* relations in the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire are so elaborate, complex, and multidimensional as to erode the thick boundaries of the romantic, context-resistant, and unilateral paradigm often encountered in Turkish academic literature.¹ Quite contrary to popular belief, there was not a supra-temporal symbiosis between Sufi circles and the state apparatus, which gradually evolved into a modern centralized Leviathan by restraining the effectiveness of centrifugal elements. Rather, in accordance with the peculiar conditions and arrangements of the period under study, confrontations with the central government would be character-

1. Mustafa Kara has produced pioneering studies on Sufi culture in its various aspects. However, his totalist view of Islam as an indivisible civilization where all its elements seamlessly converge in harmony points to a somewhat romantic line of thought. From his perspective, the state and Sufism appear to embody the material and spiritual dimensions of a singular, unified ideal. Furthermore, he is not reluctant to argue that due to the favorable impression that the dervish lodges have made on the imperial elite, they have always operated with state support and enjoyed a certain degree of independence and immunity in the Ottoman Empire. See Mustafa Kara, *Din, Hayat, Sanat Açısından Tekkeler ve Zaviyeler* (İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2019), 242. Even in a relatively recent master’s thesis on the Assembly of Sheikhs (*Meclis-i Meşâyih*), this cliché narrative has been reserved a special place in the very first paragraph [the following translation and emphases are mine]: “*Since its foundation*, the Ottoman state placed great importance on Sufi orders and sheikhs, leveraging their religious, political, and social influence. In acknowledgment of the significant roles and positive contributions of dervishes during its formative period, the Ottoman state tolerated, protected, and supported Sufi orders and dervish lodges *in every respect*.” Mine Durmuş, “Meclis-i Meşâyih’in Kuruluşu ve Sultan II. Abdülhamid Dönemi Faaliyetleri” (Master Thesis, İstanbul, Marmara Üniversitesi, 2016), 1. A comparable interpretation, rooted in the ahistorical claim that Sufi orders were incessantly endorsed by the Ottoman state, has been articulated in a Ph.D. dissertation from the Faculty of Theology: İsmail Kaya, “Osmanlılarda Devlet-Dini Gruplar İlişkisinde Bir Model Olarak Meclis-i Meşâyih” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Ankara, Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt Üniversitesi, 2020), 4. Notwithstanding his seminal Ph.D. dissertation on the nineteenth-century Mevlevî order, Sezai Küçük reiterates the same assumption, contending that the Mevlevî order was persistently beholden to the Ottoman state throughout its formative period and subsequent expansion. See Sezai Küçük, “Ortak Kader: Osmanlı’nın Son Yılları ve Mevlevilik,” in *Uluslararası Mevlânâ Sempozyumu Bildirileri*, vol. 2 (İstanbul: Motto Project, 2010), 716.

ized by frictions, contestations, and negotiations triggered by conflicts of interest. Regrettably, such historical moments in which Sufis performed as active subjects have hardly entered the analytical frame of orthodox historiography. However, if the state-*tarīqa* dynamics, which have never been immune to cyclical changes at all, are scrutinized without ignoring the political agency of Sufis in contact with the state, the flaws of the state-centered approach that presents the state as an ontologically given substance (and thus every element on its periphery as an accident) will be overcome to a great extent.² Furthermore, such a perspective will render it possible to reveal that the technologies of power were not constantly applied to society through top-down measures but were rather confronted with antagonistic reflexes.³

Nevertheless, given the drawbacks of portraying the nineteenth-century Ottoman microcosm as an isolated and self-contained entity in which major ruptures and breakthroughs germane to the state-*tarīqa* interplay took place, it is essential to take a synoptic glance at the peculiarities of the historical trajectory that laid the groundwork, in varying degrees and forms, for this arguably *long* period. In other words, this chapter will be devoted to the *longue durée* analysis of the Mevlevî order in engagement with the Ottoman policy-making machinery that was proven not to be monopolized by the ruling dynasty from the late sixteenth century onward. The piecemeal transformations, be they subtle or overt, in the overall imperial structure and the social texture not only exerted a corrosive effect on existing patterns of interaction but also paved the way for new modes of relationality. Sufi orders were also subject to this ever-changing developmental line of the imperial *modus operandi*. Therefore, rather than clinging to conceptual archetypes that epitomize the main contours of the state-*tarīqa* relations irrespective of time and space, it would be more reasonable to pinpoint the projections of an in-flux relationality with a special emphasis on the historical context proper.

Specific to the Mevlevî order, its history, which was almost the same length as the lifespan of the Ottoman Empire, is replete with specimens compatible with the theoretical framework roughly outlined above. It is almost impossible to ascribe an *a*

2. Despite his praiseworthy conviction that the state-*tarīqa* relations did not follow a linear path but rather exhibited a highly dynamic trajectory with ups and downs, İrfan Gündüz's political imagination relegates Sufi orders to the status of mere objects in their interactions with the state. The state is depicted as the sole agent, while Sufi orders are portrayed as useful instruments that it often manipulated to consolidate its sovereignty. In moments of conflict, the state prioritized maintaining control over Sufi institutions as a means of ensuring its own survival (*beķā'*). See İrfan Gündüz, *Osmanlılarda Devlet-Tekke Münâsebetleri* (İstanbul: İbn Haldun Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2019), 12.

3. Bahadır Yolcu, "Bir Ben-Anlatısının Arkeolojisi: Yenikapı Mevlevîhânesi Postnişini Osmân Selâhaddîn Dede'nin Sultan II. Abdülhamîd'den 'Afv-ı Hümâyûn Niyaz Eden Mektubu," *Zemin*, no. 5 (2023): 215.

priori status invulnerable to the spatio-temporal contingencies to the Mevlevî order vis-à-vis the state apparatus, for the latter did not maintain the same configuration all along the stream of time.⁴ To put it another way, there was no default position for the Mevlevîs in their unstable relationship with the Ottoman government. The boundaries between the two were porous and fuzzy. By and large, reductionist generalizations seem to have been employed to ossify this rather fluid interrelation. For instance, the Mevlevî order, just like the other usual suspects of the Sunni community, was often described as the faithful proponent of the Ottoman elite, and vice versa.⁵ This chapter will not aim to substantiate otherwise but will argue that the form of relationship between the two sides was dialectical and far more complicated than imagined. Various instances in its long-drawn-out history bear testimony to this multi-faceted phenomenon that defies analysis hinged upon gross oversimplifications.

That being said, it is indispensable to note at the outset that the scope of this chapter will be confined to the Mevlevî order's deep entrenchment in politics as dictated by the main problematics of this study. There will be no all-inclusive chronological narrative *par excellence* since it would be futile to recapitulate the available literature on the Mevlevî order's earlier history with a myriad of minute details from its cultural capital to theology. Instead, I will foreground the maneuvers made in vociferous moments of confrontation between the state apparatus and the Mevlevî order, and the ways in which the shifts in power structures impinged upon the Mevlevîs. This largely narrowed-down approach will permit us not only to follow the traces of the Mevlevîs' political agency in a retrospective manner, but also to make diachronic comparisons while being mindful of the pitfalls of anachronism.

4. Contemporary historiography frequently characterizes the Mevlevî order as possessing an enduringly compliant disposition. The question-begging assumption is that the Mevlevî order has perpetually embodied a demeanor of serenity and obedience, with its appeal to the Ottoman elite stemming from this inherent conformity. Bruce McGowan projects the provenance of this quietist attitude back to Rûmî, highlighting how this "habitual quietism" became manifest in his impartial treatment of the Mongols and his disapproving stance toward the politically engaged *Ahî* brotherhood and their Turcoman (pastoral nomad) allies. Nevertheless, as McGowan unwittingly acknowledges between the lines of his paper and is scrutinized in more depth by others, Rûmî can scarcely be depicted as a quietist Sufi master. Bruce McGowan, "On Mevlevi Organization," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 40 (2012): 299–300. For alternative studies on Rûmî's involvement in politics, see Andrew Peacock, "Sufis and the Seljuk Court in Mongol Anatolia: Politics and Patronage in the Works of Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî and Sultân Walad," in *The Seljuks of Anatolia: Court and Society in the Medieval Middle East*, ed. Andrew Peacock and Sara Nur Yıldız (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015), 206–26. Feridun Emecen, "Saruhanoğulları ve Mevlevilik," in *Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi Hâtıra Kitabı* (İstanbul: İstanbul Fetih Cemiyeti Yayınları, 1995), 281–97.

5. Halil İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300-1600*, trans. Norman Itzkowitz and Colin Imber (New Rochelle: Aristide D. Caratzas, 1989), 201. Nejat Göyünç simplistically contends that the diffusion of the Mevlevî order in Ottoman geography through the great support from the ruling class was due to "the order's humanitarian attitude based on love." Nejat Göyünç, "Osmanlı Devleti'nde Mevleviler," *Bellefen* LV, no. 213 (1991): 358.

2.1 Early Mevlevî Sources

There is no harm in commencing with the fundamentals. The Mevlevî order's early sources consist mainly of hagiographies due to the lack of official records, except for the foundation charters (*vakfiye*) of pious endowments. The first work in this genre is *Risâle-i Sipehsâlâr be Menâkıb-ı Hudâvendigâr* by Ferîdûn bin Ahmed-i Sipehsâlâr (d. 1312[?]).⁶ This treatise was penned under the instruction of and copied by Sultan Veled (d. 1312), the son and successor of Mevlânâ Celâleddîn-i Rûmî (d. 1273), eponym of the Mevlevî order.⁷ Sultan Veled's *İbtidâ-nâme* in the form of mathnawî, a literary genre based on rhyming couplets in accord with a specific meter, served as the major source for *Risâle-i Sipehsâlâr*.⁸ The second is *Menâkıbü'l-ârifîn* by Ahmed Eflâkî (d. 1360).⁹ This work was composed by the order of Ulu 'Ârif Çelebi (d. 1320), the son and successor of Sultan Veled and was followed by an abbreviated version titled *Sevâkıbü'l-menâkıb* by 'Abdülvehhâb es-Sâbûnî el-Hemedânî (d. 1547).¹⁰

Needless to say, this trio of reference sources is rife with a plethora of obstacles to the factual data or, to use the Rankean precept, *wie es eigentlich gewesen* (what actually happened).¹¹ In voicing that, I do not intend to underestimate the immense

6. Ferîdûn bin Ahmed-i Sipehsâlâr, *Mevlânâ ve Etrafındakiler: Risâle*, trans. Tahsin Yazıcı, Tercüman 1001 Temel Eser 103 (İstanbul: Tercüman Gazetesi, 1977). The death date of Sipehsâlâr is a matter of contention. Sahîh Ahmed Dede (d. 1813), the author of *Mecmû'atu't-Tevârîhi'l-Mevleviyye*, records it as 1306 (H. 706), whereas Abdülbâki Gölpınarlı places it between 1284-1312 (H. 683-712). Franklin Lewis suggests it to be around 1295. Sahîh Ahmed Dede, *Mevlevîlerin Tarihi: Mecmû'atu't-Tevârîhi'l-Mevleviyye*, ed. Cem Zorlu (İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2003), 148. Abdülbâki Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ Celâleddîn: Hayatı, Felsefesi, Eserleri, Eserlerinden Seçmeler* (İstanbul: İnkılâp Kitabevi, 1952), 32. Franklin Lewis, *Rumi: Past and Present, East and West; The Life, Teaching, and Poetry of Jalâl al-Dîn Rumi* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2000), 244. For a concise biographical account of Sipehsâlâr, see Nuri Şimşekler, "Sipehsâlâr, Ferîdûn," in *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 2009), 37:260.

7. Muhittin Celâl Duru, *Tarihî Simalardan: Mevlevî* (İstanbul: Kader Basımevi, 1952), 100.

8. As Gölpınarlı asserts, *İbtidâ-nâme* is the oldest and most reliable source of information about Rûmî's vita and devotees. The work is originally titled *Mesnevî-i Veledî* (and later *Veled-nâme*). Since it starts with the word "ibtidâ" (beginning) and is the first mathnawî of Sultan Veled, it turned out to be known as such. Sultan Veled, *İbtidâ-nâme*, trans. Abdülbâki Gölpınarlı (Ankara: Güven Matbaası, 1976), XV.

9. Ahmed Eflâkî, *Ariflerin Menkıbeleri*, trans. Tahsin Yazıcı, 2 vols. (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1986-7). For its English translation, see Aḥmad Aflākī, *The Feats of the Knowers of God: Manāqeb al-ârefîn*, trans. John O'Kane (Leiden: Brill, 2002). Clément Huart translated *Menâkıbü'l-ârifîn* into French and published it with explanatory notes. Clément Huart, *Les Saints Des Dervishes Tourners: Récits Traduit Du Persan et Annotés*, 2 vols. (Paris: Éditions Ernest Leroux, 1918-22). Information about Eflâkî's life is limited to indirect anecdotes found in his work. See Tahsin Yazıcı, "Ahmed Eflâkî," in *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 1989), 2:62.

10. Duru, *Tarihî Simalardan: Mevlevî*, 101-3.

11. Leopold von Ranke, "Preface: Histories of the Latin and Germanic Nations from 1494-1514," in *The Varieties of History: From Voltaire to the Present*, ed. Fritz Stern (London: MacMillan & Co. Ltd., 1970), 57.

significance of these late medieval and early modern texts from an obsolete positivist perspective. Considering the contributions of the cultural turn in historiography, these texts might be perfectly made the objects of narrative-oriented scholarly pursuits inspired mostly by post-structuralist debates that hurled the stone of criticism at the obsession with objectivity.¹² On the other hand, it is by all means self-evident that hagiographies often sketch a highly idealized or reverential portrayal of saintly figures' vitae and deeds, thereby obfuscating historical reality. Furthermore, hagiographies cater to various religious or ideological agendas, molding the representation of saints/Sufis to fit particular theological or doctrinal viewpoints. This can lead to biases and cherry-picking of information, potentially distorting the true complexity of the vitae and teachings of the individuals being depicted. Last but not least, hagiographies may neglect or downplay aspects of a saint's vita that do not align with the desired narrative such as personal flaws or worldly concerns. Therefore, this highly selective nature of remembrance and backward-looking portrayal undoubtedly circumscribes a more nuanced and balanced understanding of venerated figures.

Other early modern biographical compilations regarding Rûmî's lineage and sheikhs of various Mevlevî lodges built and proliferated in due course, namely *Sefîne-i Nefîse-i Mevlevîyân* by Sâkîb Dede (d. 1735) and *Tezkire-i Şu'arâ-yı Mevlevîyye* by Esrâr Dede (d. 1797), were also susceptible to this textual criticism. The former is somewhat an addendum (*zeyl*) to *Menâkıbü'l-'ârifîn*, albeit in its extended scope, until Sâkîb Dede's own period.¹³ The latter, as its title is self-explanatory, is constituted by a comprehensive selection of poetries accompanied by the credentials of Mevlevî poets (*tercüme-i hâl*).¹⁴ Notwithstanding the literary and cultural value of these sources, their apocryphal content that failed to convey historical facts did not go unnoticed by Abdülbâki Gölpınarlı. He amply demonstrates how both *Sefîne* and *Tezkire* fall short of factual credibility.¹⁵ It is unattainable to wring the truth out

12. It suffices to remind Lawrence Stone's renowned paper on the revival of narrative as opposed to the hegemony of analytical, structural, and quantitative studies. Lawrence Stone, "The Revival of Narrative: Reflections on a New Old History," *Past & Present*, no. 85 (November 1979): 3–24. Hayden White's "Metahistory," a theoretical framework that treats the historical text as "a verbal structure in the form of a narrative prose discourse" also serves as an alternative way of interpretation. Hayden White, *Metahistory* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973).

13. Sâkîb Mustafa Dede, *Sefîne-i Nefîse-i Mevlevîyân* (Mısır: Matbaa-ı Vehbiyye, 1283 [1867]). For its annotated transliteration, see Fatih Odunkıran, "Mevlevî Tezkiresi: Sefîne-i Nefîse-i Mevlevîyân (İnceleme-Metin)" (Ph.D. Dissertation, İstanbul, İstanbul Üniversitesi, 2020).

14. Esrâr Dede, *Tezkire-i Şu'arâ-yı Mevlevîyye*, ed. İlhan Genç (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Başkanlığı Yayınları, 2000).

15. Abdülbâki Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ'dan Sonra Mevlevîlik* (İstanbul: İnkılâp Kitabevi, 1953), 16 and passim. As a cautionary remark, one should not lean toward a wholesale rejection regarding the entire corpus as to the Mevlevîs' early history. The degree of reliability varies from one source to another. To illustrate, compared to *Risâle-i Sipehsâlâr*, a relatively sober account that did not leave much room for supernatural content, the mythical aspects take center stage in *Menâkıbü'l-*

of them unless a comparative method and source-criticism are applied. Yet, since the aforementioned sources are the sole ones accessible, it is not viable to entirely relinquish them.

Having said that, as is to be expected from these early sources, Rûmî is invariably represented as a receptacle of divine unveiling within a thick fog of mystification. His spiritual authority is reinforced through a genealogical link to the first rightly guided caliph, Ebû Bekir (d. 634).¹⁶ However, Franklin Lewis, in his close- and cross-examination of the early sources, reveals that this ancestral linkage is fabricated by the disciples of Bahâeddîn Veled (d. 1231), Rûmî's father. It is likely due to deliberate perplexity surrounding his paternal great-grandmother, who was the daughter of Ebû Bekir es-Serahsî, a distinguished jurist who passed away in 1090.¹⁷ The inclusion of es-Serahsî in his lineage must have further solidified the prevalent recognition of Rûmî as an embodiment of jurisprudential (and thus exoteric [*zâhirî*]) erudition. As per traditional Mevlevî consensus, Bahâeddîn Veled was bestowed with the esteemed title of *sultânul-'ulamâ*.¹⁸ Therefore, through the combination of esoteric (*bâṭnî*) and exoteric sciences, Rûmî's jurisdiction was emphasized to have encompassed both metaphysical and profane realms. Contrary to numerous prominent Sufi figures from the medieval who took pride in being "illiterate" (*ümmî*), the Mevlevî culture prioritized a robust association with scholarly education from its inception.¹⁹ Rûmî himself was first a religious scholar and then a Sufi master.²⁰

Since Rûmî's biography is not within the scope of this thesis, we may now fix our

'arifî since it broadly lends its credence to miraculous incidents between Şems-i Tebrîzî and Rûmî.

16. Ferîdûn bin Ahmed-i Sipehsâlâr, *Risâle*, 17–18. Ahmed Eflâkî, *Ariflerin Menkubeleri*, 1986, 1:91.

17. Lewis, *Rumi*, 91. References to this alleged lineage also appear in certain manuscripts of Sultan Veled's *İbtidâ-nâme*. However, Gölpınarlı, confirming that this genealogical chain is a figment, surmises that a subsequent copyist might have inserted these remarks by drawing on Sipehsâlâr and Eflâkî. For Gölpınarlı's commentary on the relevant passage in *İbtidâ-nâme*, see Sultan Veled, *İbtidâ-nâme*, 237. Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ Celâleddîn*, 35–40. Another genealogy in circulation spiritually linked Rûmî with 'Ali, the Prophet's son-in-law, and the third rightly guided caliph. This is not peculiar to Mevlevîs but is a tradition visible in almost every Sufi order as a channel for the transmission of prophetic wisdom and gnostic science. For a documentation of this 'Alid genealogy, see Ahmed Eflâkî, *Ariflerin Menkubeleri*, 2:252. Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ'dan Sonra Mevlevîlik*, 199–204.

18. According to Eflâkî, three hundred jurists saw in a dream one Friday night that this title had been conferred to Bahâeddîn Veled by Prophet Muhammad. Ahmed Eflâkî, *Ariflerin Menkubeleri*, 1986, 1:92.

19. Hüseyin Yılmaz, *Caliphate Redefined: The Mystical Turn in Ottoman Political Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 120.

20. In addition to the aforementioned sources pertinent to Rûmî's vita, the following studies on his biography and oeuvre can be consulted for further elaboration: Bediüzzaman Fîrûzanfer, *Mevlânâ Celâleddîn*, trans. Feridun Nafiz Uzluk (İstanbul: MEB Yayınları, 1963). Reynold A. Nicholson, *Rûmî: Poet and Mystic* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1950). Annemarie Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun: A Study of the Works of Jalâleddîn Rumi* (London: East-West Publications, 1980). William Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Love: The Spiritual Teachings of Rumi* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983).

gaze upon the intersections with politics in the early history of the Mevlevî order. As another specimen of the praxis of inventing traditions rampant in hagiographies, Eflâkî attributes a political nobility to Rûmî's pedigree, declaring Bahâeddîn Veled's mother to be a princess of the Khwarazmian dynasty.²¹ This is beyond doubt a myth to be debunked. Lewis attests that this lineage lacks chronological authenticity, yet it was widely embraced in late medieval hagiography. The tendency to associate religious lineage with political prestige was a recurring trope in Iranian hagiographic literature, and thus ought to be viewed with a strong dose of skepticism.²² On the other hand, the reason why Bahâeddîn Veled and his family departed from Balkh was seemingly conflicts with the ruling authority with whom they were claimed to possess familial bonds.²³ According to Eflâkî, he did not hesitate to outspokenly criticize the Sultan and those who belonged to his inner conclave like Fahreddîn er-Râzî (d. 1210), an eminent Muslim polymath whose fields of expertise included exegesis (*tefsîr*), theology (*kelâm*), philosophy, jurisprudence (*fık̄h*), and natural sciences. After labeling them as "illicit innovators" (*bid'atçılar*), Bahâeddîn Veled ignited the hatred of scholars and was forced to leave the city.²⁴ Leaving aside the typical exaggeration of hagiographies, modern researchers lay heavy stress on the fact that Bahâeddîn Veled, along with many others, escaped the advancing Mongol armies that were devastating Khorasan and drawing closer to his hometown.²⁵ Considering the Mongol conquest of Balkh in 1221, shortly after Bahâeddîn Veled's departure (the exact departure date is a matter of contention though), this argument is more sound relative to the one predicated upon political discontent. Still, even though the fictitious ingredients of hagiographies are deconstructed by analytical methods, what is particularly noteworthy in these imagined representations is the proximity of Rûmî's lineage to the political power and their audacity to raise dissenting voices against it.

21. Appearing in his Vizier's dream, the Prophet instructed 'Alâeddîn Muhammed Kwarazmshah to arrange the marriage between his daughter and Celâleddîn Hüseyin Hatibî. Ahmed Eflâkî, *Ariflerin Menkibeleri*, 1986, 1:92.

22. Lewis, *Rumi*, 91.

23. Claud Field, *Mystics and Saints of Islam* (London: Francis Griffiths, 1910), 148.

24. Ahmed Eflâkî, *Ariflerin Menkibeleri*, 1986, 1:93. The animosity appears to have arisen from antagonistic orientations toward the interpretation of sacred texts. Fahreddîn er-Râzî and those in the same vein were the applicants of diverse instruments of Greek philosophy to Islamic ontology. Bahâeddîn Veled, on the contrary, opposed such scholarly pursuits and was consequently sidelined for failing to garner support. For an alternative version of the story, see Ferîdûn bin Ahmed-i Sipehsâlâr, *Risâle*, 20.

25. Nicholson, *Rûmî: Poet and Mystic*, 18. Lewis, *Rumi*, 55–64.

2.2 Entangled Spheres of Politics and Spirituality in the Making of the Mevlevî Order

The transient itinerancy that had begun with the exodus from Balkh ended in Konya after traversing the Baghdad and Hijaz routes. Bahâeddîn Veled's search for a haven of asylum bore fruit thanks to the patronage provided by 'Alâeddîn Keykûbâd (r. 1220-1237).²⁶ To state the obvious, Konya is where the young Celâleddîn evolved into Mevlânâ (an Arabic appellation literally translated as "our lord") in the aftermath of his acquaintance with Şems-i Tebrîzî (d. 1247[?]).²⁷ However, during his spiritual quest for divine love and transcendent unity (*vahdet*), Rûmî did not establish a *tarîqa* despite attracting a prodigious number of adherents around him. Following the provisional leaderships of Hüsâmeddîn Çelebi (d. 1284) and Sheikh Kerîmüddîn (d. 1292),²⁸ it was Sultan Veled who laid the foundation of the Mevlevî order *per se* by first securing charitable bequests (*waqfs*) and then anchoring them to the purview of the office of Çelebîship.²⁹ Maintaining the legacy bequeathed by his father, Ulu 'Ârif Çelebi was distinguished for the consummation of this institutionalization process of the Mevlevî order.³⁰ The consolidation and dissemination of the Mevlevî identity with its rules of conduct and rituals through the opening of Mevlevî lodges in various locations in Anatolia were the direct outcomes of their constitutive enterprises.³¹

However, the social base upon which the Mevlevî order was built was less inclusive than imagined. The extent to which it found wide coverage, especially among the

26. Ahmed Eflâkî, *Ariflerin Menkıbeleri*, 1986, 1:96–102. Ferîdûn bin Ahmed-i Sipehsâlâr, *Risâle*, 22–23.

27. Although there are various speculations about the *madhab* (school of thought within Islamic jurisprudence) to which he belonged and the extent of his scholarly knowledge, the available literature seems to have arrived at a consensus that Şems-i Tebrîzî was a *rînd* ("one whose exterior is liable to censure, but who at heart is sound") and *kalender*-type (a sobriquet influenced by an unorthodox and loosely organized group of wandering dervishes prone to self-blame and voluntary exposure to condemnation [*melâmet*]) personality with a very strong Sufi attraction. Fuad Köprülü, *Türk Edebiyatında İlk Mutasavvıflar* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1976), 219–21. William Chittick, *Me and Rumi: The Autobiography of Shams-i Tabrizi* (Louisville: Fons Vitae, 2004), XI-XXV.

28. The term Mevlevî is first encountered on the tombstone of Sheikh Kerîmüddîn, who was buried in the same shrine as Rûmî. Duru, *Tarihî Simalardan: Mevlevî*, 108.

29. Hülya Küçük, "Sultân Walad's Role in the Foundation of the Mevlevi Sufi Order," *Mawlana Rumi Review* 3 (2012): 46.

30. Sezai Küçük, "XIX. Asırda Mevlevîlik ve Mevlevîler" (Ph.D. Dissertation, İstanbul, Marmara Üniversitesi, 2000), 26. Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ'dan Sonra Mevlevîlik*, 77.

31. Asaf Hâlet Çelebi (d. 1958), one of the most distinguished poets of the early Republican period who merged Eastern literary repertoire with a modern Western style, expressed the formation of the Mevlevî order with a somewhat poetic vocabulary: "Rûmî inspired (*ilhâm*) the Mevleviyye; Hüsâmeddîn Çelebi vivified (*ihyâ*) it; Sultan Veled founded it; and Ulu 'Ârif Çelebi cemented (*te'kid*) it." Asaf Hâlet Çelebi, *Mevlânâ ve Mevlevîlik* (İstanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2020), 142.

rural communities in Anatolia, should be regarded with a vigilant skepticism. According to Fuad Köprülü, the Mevlevî order was, in fact, an urban phenomenon that appealed to “the high aristocracy and middle- and upper-bourgeoisie,” opposed the heterodox Sufi coterie from its inception, and sought to sustain the well-established social and political status quo.³² Although Köprülü resorts to a sort of conceptual stretching in exploiting the terms “high-aristocracy” and “bourgeoisie,” his effort to problematize the Mevlevî order’s performance to galvanize grass-root support deserves merit.

The early Mevlevî sources commonly espoused a strong affinity with the Seljuk rule.³³ The affiliation with the Seljuks held significance beyond merely situating the Mevlevî dynasty within broader narratives of Islamic history. This historical connection also invoked the narratives pertaining to the Islamization of Rûm, wherein both dynasties claimed to have purported a notable role. The propagation of Islam through military conquest, termed *gazâ*, was an integral part of both Seljuk and Ottoman political ideologies.³⁴ In the same vein, other Sufi orders, particularly Bektashis, identified themselves as faithful companions in these sanctified campaigns.³⁵

Inspired by Edward Said’s conception of a somewhat humanistic form of “secular criticism,” I take Islam neither at face value nor as a “totalizing and reified concept” in parallel with blanket assumptions glossing over nuances and complexities.³⁶ A specific variant of Islam, namely Sunni (orthodox) Islam, is here singled out, even though it is not a monolithic block in itself. Left aside the entire variations in its multi-layered fabric, it is the accustomed category into which the Mevlevî order falls. Characteristics at odds with the Sunni structure are either conveniently ignored or grudgingly tolerated. In Ahmet Yaşar Ocak’s parlance, Rûmî was a *syncretist* who harmoniously reconciled different Sufi ideas into an entirely new system, which

32. Fuad Köprülü, *Osmanlı Devleti’nin Kuruluşu* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1991), 95. Claude Cahen also shares the same opinion. Claude Cahen, “Baba Ishaq, Baba İlyas, Hadjji Bektash et Quelques Autres,” *Turcica* 1 (1969): 53.

33. Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, “Türkiye Tarihinde Merkezi İktidar ve Mevleviler (XIII-XVIII. Yüzyıllar) Meselesine Kısa Bir Bakış,” *Selçuk Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi* II, no. 2 (1996): 19.

34. For an in-depth reassessment of the *gazâ*’ debate, see Linda Darling, “Reformulating the Gazi Narrative: When Was the Ottoman State a Gazi State?,” *Turcica* 43 (2011): 13–53.

35. Cemal Kafadar puts emphasis on the Bektashi self-description as intermediaries of heavenly grace onto the Ottoman regime. Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 30. Ömer Lütfi Barkan designated the involvement of ‘missionary’ and ‘colonizer’ dervish communities as “spiritual conquests” preceding the territorial expansion. Ömer Lütfi Barkan, “Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Bir İskân ve Kolonizasyon Metodu Olarak Vakıflar ve Temlikler: İstîlâ Devirlerinin Kolonizatör Türk Dervişleri ve Zâviyeler,” *Vakıflar Dergisi* II (1942): 283.

36. Edward Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 29.

mirrored the following tripartite composition: Necmüddîn-i Kübrâ's (d. 1221) school of Sufism, which is human-centered, partially ascetic (*zühdi*), and based on Sunni principles; Ibn Arabî's (d. 1240) school of the unity of being (*vaḥdet-i vücūd*), which he formulated as an impeccable metaphysical and mystical understanding; and the Kalenderî Sufism, which derives from the *Melâmetiyye* of Khorasan, is based on an enthusiastic divine love and ecstasy, complementing asceticism.³⁷ The first component ostensibly compatible with the dominant Sunni ethos is regularly put into prominence, rather than the last two, which respectively evoke the Neoplatonist philosophical position and the mystical teachings of pre-Islamic Iran.

The Sunni orientation was aligned with the theo-political choices that the Seljuk state promoted. Remaining faithful to the traditions of the Great Seljuk Empire,³⁸ the Anatolian Seljuks preserved Sunnism and handsomely contributed to the diffusion of madrasas and *tariqas* through which a resilient Sunni milieu was created especially in urban locales.³⁹ The Turkic principalities established after the Mongol invasion and the Ottoman Empire retained this cultural heritage.

It would be unduly credulous to suppose that the Mevlevî order flourished with a purely spiritual consciousness that entailed adherence only to the esoteric realm at the disposal of a select few and complete detachment from worldly affairs. It was quite the inverse. Much like Rûmî himself,⁴⁰ his descendants also partook in the compelling processes of negotiation and bargaining with various power hubs and interest groups to establish a durable socio-economic infrastructure on which the order's identity could blossom. To put it bluntly, given the chaotic atmosphere in post-Mongol Anatolia exacerbated by the political fragmentation and the disorderly social setting,⁴¹ it sounds fairly reasonable to envisage that the formation of theo-political relations was broadly determined by patronage networks.

Ulu 'Ârif Çelebi's frequent contacts with the principalities situated in Western Anatolia such as Menteşe, Aydın, Germiyan, Karesi and Saruhan yield illuminating insights into this matter.⁴² Paul Wittek interprets these Mevlevî visits as removing the

37. Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Türk Sûfiliğine Bakışlar* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1996), 142.

38. For a revisionist study challenging the Great Seljuk 'myth' that renders the Seljuk rulers to be the upholders of Sunni Islam, see Omid Safi, *The Politics of Knowledge in Premodern Islam: Negotiating Ideology and Religious Inquiry* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 1–42.

39. Osman Turan, *Selçuklular Tarihi ve Türk-İslâm Medeniyeti* (İstanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat, 2008), 312–15. Köprülü, *Osmanlı Devleti'nin Kuruluşu*, 94–102.

40. Through the careful analysis of Rûmî's letters, Peacock brings to light his heavy dependence on the ruling elite for protection, financial backing, and employment. Yet, it was never a zero-sum game. The elite stratum in return won the spiritual blessings of a staunch ally deemed to be a source of legitimation. Peacock, "Sufis and the Seljuk Court in Mongol Anatolia," 210–16.

41. Claude Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey: A General Survey of the Material and Spiritual Culture and History c. 1071-1330*, trans. J. Jones-Williams (New York: Taplinger, 1968), 269–314.

42. Ahmed Eflâkî, *Ariflerin Menkıbeleri*, 1987, 2:179 and passim. Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ'dan Sonra*

ruling families who gained fame in the conquests from the influence of ‘abominable’ (implying heterodoxy) Turcoman *Babas* and winning them over to the Mevlânâ dynasty.⁴³ What is here tacitly asserted is the Mevlevî order’s strategic position in the Sunni cluster. Yet, this subtext does not refer to a black-and-white situation but is rather reminiscent of a canvas reflecting a remarkably blurred image due to Ulu ‘Ârif Çelebi’s *sui generis* character that does not fit the formal Sunni normativity. He was extremely fond of wine and gained widespread notoriety for his habitual misconduct at odds with well-entrenched moral codes. Wine here does not stand for a literary metaphor commonly utilized in mystical poetries on the ecstatic experience of union with the divine. A number of cases where Ulu ‘Ârif Çelebi either captivated his audience with wine consumption or was denigrated consequently were enumerated by Eflâkî who insistently put forward the esoteric meaning of his penchant for wine.⁴⁴ According to Gölpınarlı, he had a flavor of Şems-i Tebrîzî and therefore belonged to the coterie of spiritual *rinds*, who exceeded the mundane restraints of those with intelligence by uprooting the world of appearances, that is, the empirical plane of being.⁴⁵

Adding up to Wittek’s interpretation, Feridun Emecen views the Mevlevîs’ activism in this regard as part and parcel of the Karaman principality’s project to outstrip the other principalities in the struggle to lay claim to the sovereignty over Anatolia.⁴⁶ Not only does this dubious assumption not draw its inspiration from a historically verified source, but it also condemns this not-yet-institutionalized Mevlevî mobility to a more passive and subordinate position by construing it as a remotely controlled missionary activity. I am rather in favor of bringing the cognizant and calculated Mevlevî praxis to the fore because the Mevlevî order was not wholly subordinate to the Karaman principality but became embroiled in several heated confrontations with the ruling elite in Konya over the neutral stance against the Mongols.⁴⁷ The Mevlevî order’s maneuver flexibilities in a decentralized political configuration, which vacillated in the spasms of social instability, urge us to cast our analytical net more widely to better conceive their versatile agenda. Frankly speaking, they were at the center of potential alliance-making struggles, thereby exerting a gravitational force in the orbit of which were various powerholders. Hence, Ulu ‘Ârif Çelebi’s direct contacts with the *Beys* of the other self-governing polities in Anatolia are indicative not only of an expansionist policy to stimulate local involvement in the

Mevlevîlik, 73–75.

43. Paul Wittek, *Menteşe Beyliği: 13-15’inci Asırda Garbî Küçük Asya Tarihine Ait Tetkik*, trans. Orhan Şaik Gökyay (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1944), 60.

44. Ahmed Eflâkî, *Ariflerin Menkıbeleri*, 1987, 2:190–97.

45. Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ’dan Sonra Mevlevîlik*, 76–77.

46. Emecen, “Saruhanoğulları ve Mevlevîlik,” 284.

47. Ahmed Eflâkî, *Ariflerin Menkıbeleri*, 1987, 2:216.

Mevlevî order but also of an attempt to diversify the portfolio of patrons. This initiative must have helped to break the monopoly of the Konya-centered Karaman principality as the sole guarantor.

2.3 Oscillating between the Apollonian and the Dionysian: A Dialectic of Mevlevî Piety

As slightly touched upon above, the prevailing description of the burgeoning Mevlevî organization as an entity enmeshed deeply and inextricably into the very fabric of Sunnism cannot escape careful questioning. The obstinate emphasis on the Sunni bond seems to operate within the confines of an epistemic regime⁴⁸ that has permeated relevant historiography. Much ink has been spilled on the Mevlevî order's Sunni basis, and thus its docile and innoxious position in the established political order. According to İnalçık's binary classification, the Mevlevî order, like the Halvetî and Naqshbandi orders, was closely aligned with the Sunni image of the state apparatus due to its institutional organization, standardized rites, and waqf revenues, which were predominantly financed by state representatives. At the opposite pole of the spectrum were the wandering dervishes with an intense *Melâmî* orientation such as the *Kalenderîs*, *Haydarîs*, and *Hamzavîs*. Their distinctive features included secrecy, esotericism, political dissent, and a non-Sunni set of attitudes and behaviors with Shiite overtones.⁴⁹ The former, backed by the upper echelons of society,⁵⁰ constituted one of the fundamental pillars of the established order, whereas the latter were marginalized and subjected to state violence due to their perceived threat to the status quo. In light of the qualitative discrepancies inherent to this dichotomy, Ocak designates the former as "conformist Sufism" due to its compliance with the political authority, and the latter as "non-conformist Sufism," which at times assumed a militant character.⁵¹

48. The term "epistemic regime" refers to the set of norms, practices, and rules that govern the production, validation, and dissemination of knowledge within a specific domain or community. In other words, an epistemic regime determines the definition of legitimate knowledge, the processes by which it is produced, and the power structures that regulate its circulation and consumption. The term is indeed a derivative of Foucault's episteme, which establishes a correlation between the "conditions of possibility" within the *space* of knowledge and a given temporal context. See Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (London: Routledge, 2002), XXIV. The relation of an epistemic regime to historiography is discernible in the formation and conventionalization of historiographical trends.

49. İnalçık, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300-1600*, 190–91.

50. Feridun Emecen, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Kuruluş ve Yükseliş Tarihi (1300-1600)* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2016), 129.

51. Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Osmanlı Sufiliğine Bakışlar* (İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2010), 76.

This bilateral analysis may genuinely offer insight into a historically verifiable phenomenon that unveils the partitioned composition of the Sufi populace. It serves to elucidate that the Sufi institution was not a wholly separate and insulated entity within its totality, but rather one that was profoundly affected by intra-religion schisms. However, as is the case with all dichotomies, it is plagued by interpretative hurdles such as reductionism, exclusion of nuances, and oversimplification of complexities. The lines of demarcation between the two opposing categories were not clear-cut, as had been assumed, but were rather blurred. If we are to zoom in on the particularities of the Mevlevî order classified among the conformist group, the structural errors of the above dichotomous picture become detectable.

To claim through the lens of an essentialist perspective that the Mevlevî order maintained a consistent spiritual theology and ethics from its inception to its demise, thereby creating a uniform tradition within the Sunni framework, would be to advance a narrative that is hardly substantiated by empirical evidence.⁵² On the contrary, the Mevlevî order nurtured a heterogeneous cultural capital that facilitated the incorporation of non-Sunni mystical inclinations (*neşve*). In bold outline, the Mevlevî order seems to have harbored two contradictory modes of spirituality. The initial approach aimed at channeling Rûmî's ecstatic piety into an array of prudent practices abiding by social norms and legal standards. Those adhering to this conformist vein were collectively referred to as "the branch of Veled" (*Veledî*), after Sultan Veled, who was widely recognized as the pioneer of this particular form of spirituality.⁵³ The second, however, was borne of an unwavering commitment to refrain from imposing any restrictions on ecstatic spiritual experiences. Due to their being associated with the anomalous reputation of Şems-i Tebrîzî, these antinomian dissidents attained the designation of "the branch of Şems" (*Şemsî*).⁵⁴

In an early sixteenth-century hagiography by Vâhidî, entitled *Menâkıb-ı Hâce-i Cihân ve Netice-i Cân*, a group of vagabond dervishes called the *Şems-i Tebrîzîs* was mentioned. They shaved their beards, moustaches, and eyebrows, wore black

52. Ahmet T. Karamustafa posits that the primary rationale for conceiving of the Mevlevî order as *sharia*-bound can be attributed to the retrospective projection of a relatively strong affinity between the Ottoman court and several Mevlevî sheikhs in late Ottoman history. Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends: Dervish Groups in the Islamic Later Middle Period 1200-1550* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1994), 82.

53. Sharing a similar line of thought with Gölpınarlı, Victoria Holbrook underlines Sultan Veled's discreet, balanced, and rational accommodation to the exigencies of his time as an organizer who turned a passionate spiritual fervor into an orderly and manageable system. Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ'dan Sonra Mevlevîlik*, 35. Victoria Rowe Holbrook, "Diverse Tastes in the Spiritual Life: Textual Play in the Diffusion of Rumi's Order," in *The Heritage of Sufism: The Legacy of Medieval Persian Sufism (1150-1500)*, ed. Leonard Lewisohn, vol. II (Oxford: Oneworld, 2003), 102.

54. Notwithstanding the objections raised by some Mevlevîs, Gölpınarlı argues that this duality has been an intrinsic aspect of the Mevlevî identity. Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ'dan Sonra Mevlevîlik*, 208.

and white woolen clothes, placed a truncated felt cap on their heads, consumed wine, and were noted for their flamboyant and atypical devotional practices with the incessant chanting of divine names and prayers.⁵⁵ Upon inquiry as to their affiliation, they responded that they were servants of ‘Alî and devotees (*efgende*) of Hasan and Hüseyin.⁵⁶ Vâhidî vehemently denounced them, as he had done with other Sufi communities such as the Kalenderîs, Abdâlân-ı Rûm, Haydarîs, Câmîs, and Bektashîs, whom he believed to have been imbued with Shiite-*Bâtınî* tenets. In contrast, he eulogized the Mevlevîs, whom he saw as a completely distinct group from the Şems-i Tebrîzîs due to the concordance of their spiritual mysteries (*esrâr-ı ma‘nevî*) with the sharia and Sunna.⁵⁷ According to Ahmet T. Karamustafa, the Şems-i Tebrîzîs, segregated by Vâhidî from the Mevlevîs, “were none other than the followers of Şems within the Mevlevîyye.”⁵⁸ In so arguing, Karamustafa concurs with Gölpınarlı that the Şemsiyye was a trend immanent to the Mevlevî order.⁵⁹ Moreover, both emphasize that this spiritual dualism was not a quality exclusive to the sixteenth-century Mevlevî order, but rather a defining attribute of it well into the twentieth century. The subsequent chapters of this study will provide further evidence to support this argument, demonstrating the continued existence of the Şemsî branch during the late Ottoman period.

If we are to remember Ulu ‘Ârif Çelebi’s affection for wine and his socially unconventional and flagrant behaviors that even Eflâkî could not overlook, it is plausible to postulate that the Şemsî vein was hard-wired into the Mevlevî order as of its early phases. What is more, the early sixteenth century, when Vâhidî penned his account, seems to have marked the pinnacle of the outward manifestation of unrestrained ecstatic exposure, notably among Mevlevî figures such as Yûsuf Sîneçâk (d. 1546), Dîvâne Mehmed Çelebi (d. after 1544), and Şâhidî İbrâhîm Dede (d. 1550), the latter’s disciple, whose *Gülşen-i Esrâr* is an invaluable source for Dîvâne Mehmed Çelebi’s vita.⁶⁰ They were notoriously indifferent to and in outright contravention of the sharia. They adopted the practice of shaving their heads and faces, displayed a starkly Kalenderî-like character,⁶¹ indulged in wine and weed, and performed so-

55. Vâhidî, *Hâce-i Cihân ve Netîce-i Cân*, eds. Turgut Karabey, Bülent Şığva, and Yusuf Babür (Ankara: Akçağ Yayınları, 2015), 229.

56. Vâhidî, 234.

57. Vâhidî, 235–69.

58. Karamustafa, *God’s Unruly Friends*, 82.

59. Going one step further, Gölpınarlı posits that Alevite tendencies were observable among the Mevlevîs, particularly those representing the Şemsî branch. He devotes an entire subchapter to this topic. Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ’dan Sonra Mevlevîlik*, 224–43.

60. For a critical textual analysis of *Gülşen-i Esrâr* and its Persian facsimile, see Nuri Şimşekler, “Şâhidî İbrâhîm Dede’nin *Gülşen-i Esrâr*’ı (Tenkitli Metin-Tahlil)” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Konya, Selçuk Üniversitesi, 1998).

61. Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Marjinal Sûfîlik: Kalenderîler (XIV-XVII. Yüzyıllar)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1999), 197.

cially reprehensible outbursts.⁶² Therefore, the concurrence of Vâhidî's hagiography and these unorthodox Mevlevîs must have been more than a historically contingent phenomenon, but a heavily thought-provoking temporal overlap. Briefly put, as opposed to the simplistic categorization of the mainstream literature, it is largely, if not thoroughly, speculative and misleading to describe the Mevlevî order as firmly glued to the Sunni cluster. Its polymorphic structure resists stereotypical depictions of any kind.

One potential interpretation of this duality reflective of the incohesive variations of the Mevlevî tradition can be formulated through the prism of the Apollonian-Dionysian opposition proposed by Friedrich Nietzsche in his early work *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872). In this seminal text, Nietzsche delves into the intrinsic tension between two opposing forces that shaped Greek art and culture, as well as the human condition. Named after the Greek god Apollo, the Apollonian represents order, reason, harmony, moderation, and individual identity. Apollo, the god of the sun, light, clarity, dream, and prophecy embodies rationality, self-control, and the aspiration for form and structure. The Apollonian mode of existence enables humans to construct a “dreamlike” world, a refuge from the cruelty and vicissitudes of reality, through the application of reason and restraint. In contrast, the Dionysian, named after Dionysus, the Greek god of wine, fertility, intoxication, and ecstatic revelry, represents chaos, passion, instinct, and the dissolution of boundaries. Dionysus embodies excess, irrationality, mysticism, and the erasure of individual identity in the overwhelming experience of collective euphoria. The Dionysian impulse is tied to raw, unbridled forces of nature, instinctual drives, and an immersion in life's most primal aspects—pain, joy, ecstasy, and suffering.⁶³ Nevertheless, these two impulses, though oppositional, were in a relationship of complementarity. It is the fluctuating equilibrium of their combination that gives rise to the supreme form of art found in Greek tragedy. If either were left unchecked by the other, each would be prone to drifting toward extremity.⁶⁴

Needless to say, the Veledî branch corresponds to the Apollonian, and the Şemsî branch to the Dionysian. More importantly perhaps, the political implications of the Apollonian-Dionysian dichotomy can contribute to a deeper apprehension of the relationship between the Mevlevî order and the state apparatus. The Apollonian principle can be seen as a metaphor for governmental structures that prioritize order, stability, and surveillance, yet concomitantly suppress dissenting, irrational, or destabilizing elements. On the other hand, the Dionysian principle can be linked

62. Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ'dan Sonra Mevlevîlik*, 114–27.

63. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. Douglas Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), XVI.

64. Nietzsche, XIX.

to movements that challenge established orders, defy rigid societal boundaries, and embrace the chaotic and unpredictable components of human experience. The various phases of Ottoman history have demonstrated that the Apollonian proclivity prevailing over the Dionysian impulse in the Mevlevî order has been conducive to the processes of adjustment and accommodation to the state apparatus.

2.4 Where Mysticism Meets the State: The Early Modern Mevlevî Order as a Power Hub

Prior to the fifteenth century, there is a paucity of documented evidence concerning the Mevlevî order's contact with the Ottoman state. The expansionist undertakings of Ulu 'Ârif Çelebi, who paid visits to several Anatolian principalities and cultivated a strong rapport with the Mongol rule, did not extend to the budding Ottoman polity.⁶⁵ Moreover, Sahîh Ahmed Dede's *Mecmû'atu't-Tevârîhi'l-Mevlevîyye* alludes to Sultan Veled girding (*taklîd-i seyf*) Osman I (d. 1324) with a sword, which has led to the assumption that the privilege of girding Ottoman sultans was henceforth entrusted to the Çelebis.⁶⁶ However, this is merely a myth manufactured and diffused in the later Ottoman periods.⁶⁷

One of the late sixteenth-century chronicles, *Tâcü't-tevârîh* by Hoca Sâdeddîn Efendi (d. 1599), attests to the efforts of Süleyman Pasha (d. 1357[?]), the son of Orhan (r. 1324-1362), to garner the endorsement and prayers of the Mevlevîs on his campaigns for the conquest of Rumelia.⁶⁸ Rare examples of this kind indicate that the Mevlevîs were known to the early Ottomans, yet the degree of communication was comparatively less efficacious than that observed between the Mevlevîs and other principalities. One of the earliest recorded instances of the Ottoman government's engagement with the Mevlevî order occurred during the reign of Murad II (r. 1421-1444 and 1446-1451). Notwithstanding the lack of clarity surrounding the date of its construction, he built a well-designed and large-scale Mevlevî lodge in Edirne

65. Mehmet Önder, *Mevlânâ ve Mevlevîlik* (İstanbul: Aksoy Yayıncılık, 1998), 176–77.

66. Betül Saylan, "Mevlânâ Âilesi ve Mevlevîlik'te Çelebilik Makâmı: *Sefîne-i Nefîse-i Mevlevîyân Örneği*" (Ph.D. Dissertation, İstanbul, Marmara Üniversitesi, 2013), 347–48.

67. This myth was so pervasive that it was also cited by foreign observers. For instance, Charles Eliot (d. 1931) quotes an alternative version that Rûmî was dispatched by 'Alâeddîn Keykûbâd (d. 1237) to confer a sword of honor upon Osman I. See Charles Eliot, *Turkey in Europe* (London: Edward Arnold, 1908), 183. A cursory examination of the death dates of these figures would have sufficed to uncover the utter lack of veracity in this fictional account. Further information and discussion on the invention of this myth will be provided in Chapter 3.

68. Haşim Şahin, *Dervişler, Fakihler, Gaziler: Erken Osmanlı Döneminde Dinî Zümreler (1300-1400)* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2020), 210.

as part of his eponymous complex (*külliye*).⁶⁹ Although the precise reason remains unclear, he evinced a great sympathy for the Mevlevî order.⁷⁰ According to Ocak, it was in fact an output of the early Ottoman state's deliberate policy of latitudinarianism and inclusivity towards the majority of Sufi orders, which was employed with the intention of legitimizing its authority as it gradually proceeded to assume control of the Anatolian principalities.⁷¹

The passe-partout explanation of the piecemeal incorporation of the Mevlevî order into Ottoman politics hinges upon the growing Safavid propaganda in Anatolia.⁷² In defiance of the *Bâtinite*-Shiite infiltrations by means of Turcoman tribes, some of which would be labeled heretical *Kızılbaş* later on,⁷³ the Ottoman *raison d'état* adopted an increasingly rigid and dogmatic Sunni creed as the key element of its official ideology.⁷⁴ This political maneuver waging war against heresy of any kind precipitated a somewhat systematic persecution of unorthodox Sufi coteries. For instance, the leading representatives of the Bayrâmî-Melâmî order, İsmâil Ma'sûkî (d. 1539) and Hamza Bâlî (d. 1573), were sentenced to death to safeguard the Sunni creed, the former by the fatwa of Grand Mufti Çivizâde Mehmed Efendi (d. 1587) and the latter by the fatwa of Grand Mufti Ebussuûd Efendi (d. 1574).⁷⁵

In this stifling atmosphere, the Mevlevî order was instrumentalized to reinforce the Sunni front. One might argue that the Apollonian proclivity within the Mevlevî order was at work in this process of integration into the overarching imperial project

69. Süheyl Ünver, "Edirne Mevlevîhânesi Tarihine Giriş," in *Edirne: Serhattaki Paytaht*, ed. Emin Nedret İşli and M. Sabri Koz (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1998), 623. Aziz Nazmi Şakir found out in the land registry records that the Mevlevî lodge in Edirne had been designated as "the old Mevlevî lodge" (*zâviye-i Mevlânâ-hâne-i köhne*). Based on this specific denomination, he left a question mark as to whether a "new" lodge was also built. However, there is no trace of a second Mevlevî lodge in the available sources. Aziz Nazmi Şakir, "Edirne ve Civarında Osmanlı Kültür ve Bilim Muhitinin Oluşumu" (Ph.D. Dissertation, İstanbul, İstanbul Üniversitesi, 2004), 146.

70. Franz Babinger, *Mehmed the Conquerer and His Time*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 413.

71. Ocak, "Türkiye Tarihinde Merkezi İktidar ve Mevleviler," 21.

72. Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ'dan Sonra Mevlevîlik*, 269. İnalçık, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300-1600*, 191. Göyünç, "Osmanlı Devleti'nde Mevleviler," 352.

73. Nilgün Dalkesen, "15. ve 16. Yüzyıllarda Safevi Propagandası ve Etkileri" (Master Thesis, Ankara, Hacettepe Üniversitesi, 1999), 69–75.

74. Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Zındıklar ve Mülhidler (15-17. Yüzyıllar)* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2013), 109. For a study, which construes the formation of Kızılbaş communities as a collective movement in opposition to the Ottoman central authority within the context of a transformation in the center-periphery relations, see Fariba Zarinebaf-Shahr, "Qizilbash, 'Heresy,' and Rebellion in Ottoman Anatolia during the Sixteenth Century," *Anatolia Moderna* 7 (1997): 1–15. A revisionist study, however, brings forward the concern for geo-political and financial legitimacy in explicating the Ottoman state's policies against the Kızılbaş, rather than the role of religious antagonism and confessional identities. See Ayşe Baltacıoğlu-Bramer, "The Formation of Kızılbaş Communities in Anatolia and Ottoman Responses, 1450s-1630s," *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 20, no. 1/2 (2014): 21–47.

75. Emecen, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Kuruluş ve Yükseliş Tarihi (1300-1600)*, 275.

antithetical to the absolute other in disguise of *Bâtınî*-Shiite encroachments. From the reign of Bayezid II (r. 1481-1512) onwards, the Ottoman sultans and members of the ruling elite attempted to elevate the Mevlevî order, especially the Çelebi lineage, to a higher status through generous grants and charitable contributions such as the donation of revenue-bearing endowments and the covering of the maintenance and repair costs of the lodges.⁷⁶ For instance, the first full-fledged Mevlevî lodge in Constantinople was established in Galata in 1491, when İskender Pasha, a statesman during Bayezid II's reign, donated a portion of his hunting estate.⁷⁷ In addition, Husrev Çelebi (d. 1561), the incumbent of the office of Çelebiship during the reigns of Bayezid II, Selim I (r. 1512-1520), and Süleyman the Lawgiver (r. 1520-1566), enjoyed a *modus vivendi* in an uncensored opulence, akin to that of a local magnate, thanks to the wealth amassed through the pious endowments bestowed upon the Konya Mevlânâ Lodge.⁷⁸

In Gölpınarlı's parlance, the sixteenth century witnessed the transition of the Mevlevî order from rural to urban locales, and thus its absorption into itself, remaining within the sphere of influence of the upper strata of society.⁷⁹ Gölpınarlı's critique of the Mevlevî order's possessing an urban and elitist image is most likely related to the regression of the Dionysian/Şemsî impulse. Although he does not employ the same terminology, he arguably implies that the mounting influence of Apollonian dynamics via political and financial patronage rigidified the inclusive Mevlevî culture, confining it significantly to confessional boundaries. However, what stands out as a curious case is the contemporaneity of the politically fortunate upsurge of the Mevlevî order under the auspices of the ruling elite and the overtly anti-Sunni activities of those from the Şemsî branch such as Dîvâne Mehmed Çelebi and Yûsuf Sîneçâk. It is an extremely demanding task to explicate the tolerance towards the representatives of the Şemsî vein by the state apparatus at a particular historical juncture when the Hurûfîs, proponents of a syncretic mysticism with Kabbalistic repercussions that attributed occult meanings to letters,⁸⁰ as well as the Kalenderîs and Bayrâmî-Melâmîs, were persecuted as heretics.⁸¹ The most viable answer to

76. For a detailed list of the imperial donations to the Konya Mevlânâ Lodge, spanning from the early sixteenth century to the late nineteenth century, see Bârihüdâ Tanrıkorur, "Türkiye Mevlevîhânelerinin Mimarî Özellikleri," vol. II (Ph.D. Dissertation, Konya, Selçuk Üniversitesi, 2000), 14–19. For the religio-political analysis of a Friday mosque adjacent to the shrine of Rûmî, commissioned by Süleyman the Lawgiver as a memorial monument, see Gülru Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 63–64.

77. Baha Tanman, "Galata Mevlevîhânesi," in *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 1996), 13:317.

78. Hüseyin Top, *Mevlevî Usûl ve Âdâbı* (İstanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat, 2016), 293.

79. Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ'dan Sonra Mevlevîlik*, 247.

80. For further information, see Fatih Usluer, *Hurufîlik* (İstanbul: Kabaîcî Yayınları, 2009), 107–82.

81. Some sixteenth-century mühimme registers reveal that the Hurûfîs were subjected to frequent

this historical multiformity is that the Şemsî vein did not turn into an anti-state popular movement, nor did it forge ties with Iran. This relative neutrality vis-à-vis the politics of the time must have helped eschew state violence.

To borrow terminology from Antonio Gramsci, the evolution of the Mevlevî order into an “organic” social institution, coupled with its waxing susceptibility to the political “hegemony” of the state apparatus, attained its apogee in the seventeenth century.⁸² Gölpınarlı calls the seventeenth-century Mevlevî order a “state institution,” insinuating that the preponderant class vested it with a substantial degree of privilege.⁸³ Nevertheless, it would be a colossal mistake to consider this political rapprochement as a mono-directional investment by the ruling elite, driven by a reverence for Rûmî’s saintly memory. One might, of course, ponder over the potential role of Apollonian dynamics within the Mevlevî order in the further improvement of relations with the Ottoman government. Yet, on top of that, as a well-established dynasty with a vast network of connections and clients throughout the imperial geography, the Mevlevî order represented a power hub, and thus an undeniable ally. Albeit its unfortunate low reception and reverberation so far, Suraiya Faroqhi’s analysis on three major Sufi orders—namely the Mevlevîs, Bektashis, and Bayrâmîs—run by dynastic rules justifiably emphasized that these mystical organizations cannot be evaluated only within their spiritual devotions but also through their economic and administrative operations and far-reaching networks.⁸⁴ In this regard, the Mevlevî order, the Çelebi family in particular, should not be reduced to a mere passive community at the discretion of the state apparatus. Instead, it can be construed as a party to a partnership due to its considerable financial resources and well-organized administrative structure.

In so arguing, I am in broad agreement with the recent theoretical contributions of revisionist historiography concerning the transformation of the early modern Ottoman Empire. The Mevlevî order’s growing reputation did not unfold in a vacuum but was rather the offshoot of an imperial setting on the verge of change. Hence, it is imperative to contextualize this phenomenon by coming to grips with historically specific social relations intertwined with economic fluctuations. First and foremost, the turn of the seventeenth century has been conventionally identified with a crisis

persecution in various cities and towns, particularly in the Balkans. Many of those who were identified as heretics were executed and their bodies burned. Ocak, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Zındıklar ve Mülhidler (15-17. Yüzyıllar)*, 155.

82. For explanatory notes about the Gramscian terminology, see Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, eds., *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (New York: International Publishers, 1992), XVII-XCVI.

83. Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ’dan Sonra Mevlevîlik*, 248.

84. Suraiya Faroqhi, “XVI-XVIII. Yüzyıllarda Orta Anadolu’da Şeyh Aileleri,” in *Türkiye İktisat Tarihi Semineri: Metinler/Tartışmalar*, ed. Osman Okyar and H. Ünal Nalbantoğlu (Ankara: Hacettepe Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1975), 197–229.

that was documented all over the Ottoman Empire. The soaring crisis was aggravated by a confluence of demographic, economic, social, and political factors. Above all, the so-called masterful socio-political fine-tuning, which found expression in the “circle of equity” (*dā’ire-i ‘adliye*),⁸⁵ had been disrupted as the sultan’s undisputed patrimonial authority diminished.⁸⁶ The breakdown of the *tīmār* and *devşirme* systems resulted in the fact that the lines of division separating societal groups such as the *‘askerī* (ruling) class and the *re‘āyā* (the tax-paying subjects) were diluted.⁸⁷

Furthermore, the expansion of the Janissary Corps induced the *kapıkulus* to prevail over the Ottoman capital and the central government.⁸⁸ Coalitions and rival factions decided state affairs as the primary arbiters of political power. Most notably, this ‘transitional period’ was marked by the commercialization of agriculture and the gradual privatization of the ‘ancien régime’ or fiscal economy.⁸⁹ In Rifa’at Abou-El-Haj’s terms, it was “a change in the mode of production from the feudal one, primarily based on the *tīmār* mode of production, to one based on production for the market.”⁹⁰ This transition altered the balance of powers between the center and the provinces as the power concentrated in the center became fractured and dispersed. Out of a highly competitive environment, a new elite made up of the Janissaries, urban and rural notables, the ulama, and the central grandees cropped up.

Still, despite the deterioration of the sultanic authority and the conversion of the imperial capital into a theater of alliances and partnerships, the Ottoman administrative center continued to be the nexus of all the contractual relations by means of its redistributive policies. In his book *The Second Ottoman Empire*, Baki Tezcan describes this reconstructed imperial layout, which was premised upon a more unified currency and legal system, a more market-oriented economy, and a relatively

85. Kınalızâde’s (d. 1572) *opus magnum* entitled *Ahlāk-ı ‘Alāī* constituted a cornerstone for generations, with the idea of the “circle of equity” or the societal division into four distinct classes shaping, or at least featuring in, nearly every Ottoman political advisory treatise written from the mid-sixteenth century onwards. Marinos Sariyannis, *A History of Ottoman Political Thought up to the Early Nineteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 74.

86. As Selânikî (d. 1600), a contemporary chronicler, poured into words, “The reâyâ no longer obeyed the sovereign’s commands; the soldiers turned against the sultan. There was no respect for the authorities... The old order and harmony departed.” İnalçık, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300-1600*, 46.

87. Norman Itzkowitz, *Ottoman Empire and Islamic Tradition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1972), 89.

88. Halil İnalçık, “Military and Fiscal Transformation in the Ottoman Empire, 1600-1700,” *Archivum Ottomanicum* 6 (1980): 289.

89. Ariel Salzmann, “An Ancien Régime Revisited: ‘Privatization’ and Political Economy in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Empire,” *Politics and Society* 21, no. 4 (1993): 394.

90. Rifa’at Abou-El-Haj, “Power and Social Order: The Uses of the Kanun,” in *The Ottoman City and Its Parts*, ed. Rifa’at Abou-El-Haj, Irene A. Bierman, and Donald Preziosi (New York: Aristide D. Caratzas, 1991), 80.

limited government, as “a spider web with the monarch at the center but not on top of anyone else.”⁹¹ This metaphor conveys a refined approach to imperial governance, where central authority is redefined not as an instrument of domination but rather as a matrix of interdependent ties.

In this broader context, Aslihan Gürbüzeli’s recent contribution merits mention for its portrayal of the Mevlevî order as a local magnate with a considerable magnitude of socio-political leverage, which grew into an ally receptive to lending endorsement to multiple contenders for power in early modern Ottoman politics.⁹² She situates the Mevlevî order within the widening public sphere of the seventeenth-century Ottoman Empire, which allowed for alternative sovereignties of military, bureaucratic, and ulama households alongside the House of Osman,⁹³ thereby rendering the political stage much more pluralistic. In a volatile political climate where the absolutism of the Ottoman government was shattered, the Çelebis embarked upon promoting their image as “kingmakers and partners in the Ottoman order” beyond the confines of Mevlevî circles.⁹⁴ The Mevlevîs’ vast waqf holdings (*evkâf-ı Celâliye*) constituted the nucleus of their power throughout the Ottoman territories, with Konya as the central stronghold.⁹⁵ The waqf property networks functioned as a conduit for the economic interconnectivity between the Mevlevî lodges and the adjacent towns and villages, positioning the Çelebis as key intermediaries between these localities and the governing authorities.

The evkâf-ı Celâliye, which fell within the category of *evkâf-ı müstesnâ*⁹⁶ that were overseen by their own trustees independently of external intervention (e.g. that of the Chief Black Eunuch [*Dārü’s-sa’āde Ağası*] in charge of the superintendency for

91. Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 193.

92. Aslihan Gürbüzeli, *Taming the Messiah: The Formation of an Ottoman Political Public Sphere, 1600–1700* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2023), 97.

93. For the rise of military households and their increasing cooperation with local elites, see Metin Kunt, *The Sultan’s Servants: The Transformation of Ottoman Provincial Government, 1550–1650* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 57–93. For a specific case study on the rise of Grand Mufti Feyzullah Efendi’s (d. 1703) household amassing extraordinary wealth and power, see Michael Nizri, *Ottoman High Politics and the Ulema Household* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

94. Gürbüzeli, *Taming the Messiah*, 111.

95. For comparative analyses of the financial performance of the Konya Mevlânâ Lodge with a particular focus on its income-generating waqf holdings and expenditures from the late sixteenth through the first half of the seventeenth centuries, see Suraiya Faroqhi, “Agricultural Crisis and the Art of Flute-Playing: The Worldly Affairs of the Mevlevî Dervishes (1595–1652),” *Turcica* 20 (1988): 43–70. Kayhan Orbay, “Financial Development of the Waqfs in Konya and the Agricultural Economy in the Central Anatolia (Late Sixteenth–Early Seventeenth Centuries),” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 55, no. 1 (2012): 94–108.

96. For the tripartite legal classification of awqaf in the Hanafite jurisprudence as *evkâf-ı mazbûta*, *evkâf-ı müllhaka*, and *evkâf-ı müstesnâ*, see Ahmet Akgündüz, *İslâm Hukukunda ve Osmanlı Tattikatında Vakıf Müessesesi* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1998), 286–88.

imperial waqfs), was a combination of both charitable (*hayrî*) and familial (*zürri*) types of waqf.⁹⁷ That is to say, a specified portion of the revenue generated was allocated to philanthropic causes, whilst another portion was reserved for ensuring the Çelebi family's sustenance. Occupying the position of trusteeship of the pious endowments attached to the Konya Mevlânâ Lodge, the Çelebis also received generous salaries from the Imperial Treasury.⁹⁸

The Çelebis' financial resilience was further bolstered by sizeable contributions from the Ottoman government, including substantial cash disbursements and tax exemptions.⁹⁹ Court registers document the continuous influx of migrants to the *Türbe-i Celâliye* neighborhood, named in honor of Rûmî's shrine, due to its tax-exempt status.¹⁰⁰ Likewise, cadastral survey (*tahrîr*) registers indicate that, in exchange for exemption from taxes like *'avârîz* (a levy imposed on the public in times of emergency), the neighborhood residents offered a range of services to the lodge, its mosque, and other communal facilities.¹⁰¹ Additionally, apart from its formal possessions, the Konya Mevlânâ Lodge did not abstain from harnessing its social and symbolic capital to procure the usufruct of lands that were not officially registered under its proprietorship. To put it differently, the financial ledgers submitted by the Mevlânâ Lodge to inspectors only gave an incomplete picture of its actual wealth. For instance, although the Ottoman tax registers from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries enumerate a multitude of revenue-generating gardens and vineyards (*bağ*) at the disposal of the Konya Mevlânâ Lodge, the financial records of the seventeenth-century Mevlânâ Lodge make little to no mention of this source of revenue.¹⁰² Local authorities, like preachers and judges, occasionally sought to challenge these privileges; however, due to the overwhelming influence wielded by the Çelebi family in the region, they often lacked the capacity to revoke the Mevlevîs' economic prerogatives.¹⁰³

97. For an overview of the waqf terminology, see Ömer Hilmi Efendi, *İthâfû'l-Ahlâf Fî Ahkâmî'l-Evkâf* (Ankara: Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü, 1977).

98. As documented in an account register of 1690, the salary of the Çelebi Efendi outstripped that of the second highest-paid individual, who happened to be the Mesnevî reciter (Mesnevî-hân Efendi), by a factor of more than three. Yusuf Oğuzoğlu, "Mevlâna Vakfının ve Zaviyesi'nin 17. Yüzyıldaki Durumu," in *Mevlâna: Yirmi Altı Bilim Adamının Mevlâna Üzerine Araştırmaları*, ed. Feyzi Halıcı (Konya: Ülkü Basımevi, 1983), 74.

99. For the sums provided directly by the Ottoman administration, see Faroqhi, "Agricultural Crisis and the Art of Flute-Playing," 65.

100. Oğuzoğlu, "Mevlâna Vakfının ve Zaviyesi'nin 17. Yüzyıldaki Durumu," 72.

101. "Mahalle-i mezbûre sâkinleri kadimden 'avârîz ve sâ'ir tekâliften mu'âflar olub hâlâ dahi hângâh ve câmi'-i şerîf-i hazret-i müşârünileyhe ve su yollarına ve kârizlerine hizmet eylemeleri üzere defter-i cedîde kâmekân mu'âf ve müselleme kayd olunmağın." See Oğuzoğlu, 73.

102. Faroqhi, "Agricultural Crisis and the Art of Flute-Playing," 52.

103. Gürbüz, *Taming the Messiah*, 117.

2.5 Beneath the Robes of Reverence: Interventionist Policies Against the Mevlevî Order

On the other hand, the state apparatus' positive treatment of the Mevlevî order did not invariably guarantee a cordial relationship. Quite paradoxically, the seventeenth century, in which the Mevlevî order ascended to become a "state institution" according to Gölpınarlı, was in fact a tumultuous period replete with a series of prohibitions, oppressive measures, and violent onslaughts that wreaked havoc on not only the Mevlevîs but also other Sufi circles like the Halvetîs. The puritanical Kadızadeli movement, which sought to revive the religio-legal and moral standards of the golden age (*'aşr-ı sa'âdet*) of Prophet Muhammad and represented an allergy against illicit innovations (*bid'a*), managed to resonate in the imperial palace, thereby provoking the Ottoman central administration to instigate anti-Sufi restrictions.¹⁰⁴ "If the Sufis were not tamed, the Kadızadeli argued, the entire community would be plunged into unbelief."¹⁰⁵ Their discursive strategies were based on the Quranic principle of "enjoining right and forbidding wrong" (*al-amru bi-l-ma'rûfi wa-n-nahyu 'ani-l-munkari*), which served as a legitimate means of denouncing Sufi practices such as *zîkr-i cehrî* (vocal invocation of divine names), *devrân* (musical audition accompanied by a rhythmic circular movement), and *semâ'* (whirling ritual) as well as the consumption of coffee, tobacco, and opium.¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, the Kadızadeli movement did not hold sway for the entirety of the century but instead traversed an unstable trajectory, displaying fluctuations in both scope and intensity. The movement exerted its greatest impact across three distinct phases, the first

104. The peculiarities of this far-reaching movement have been thoroughly studied within the context of historically specific socio-economic dynamics. Consequently, a substantial corpus of scholarly research has already been accumulated on this subject. A representative sample of the pertinent literature is provided below: Necati Öztürk, "Islamic Orthodoxy among the Ottomans in the Seventeenth Century with Special Reference to the Qadizadeh Movement" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Edinburgh, University of Edinburgh, 1981). Madeline Zilfi, *Politics of Piety: The Ottoman Ulema in the Postclassical Age (1600-1800)* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1988), 129–81. Marinos Sariyannis, "The Kadızadeli Movement as a Social and Political Phenomenon: The Rise of a 'Mercantile Ethic'?", in *Political Initiatives 'from the Bottom up' in the Ottoman Empire*, Halcyon Days in Crete VII, 9-11 Jan. 2009, ed. A. Anastasopoulos (Rethymno: Crete University Press, 2012), 263–89. Baki Tezcan, "The Portrait of the Preacher as a Young Man: Two Autobiographical Letters by Kadızade Mehmed from the Early Seventeenth Century," in *Political Thought and Practice in the Ottoman Empire: Halcyon Days in Crete IX – A Symposium Held in Rethymno, 9-11 January 2015*, ed. Marinos Sariyannis (Rethymno: Crete University Press, 2019), 187–249. In my recently published paper, I have set out to address an omission in the available literature by arguing that the Sufi community did not react against the Kadızadeli incursions as a monolithic block due to intra-Sufi discords, neither were the lines of division between the Kadızadeli and Sufis clearly delineated. Bahadır Yolcu, "The Composite Sufi Front vis-à-vis the Puritanical Kadızadeli Movement in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire," *Zemin*, no. 5 (2023): 160–78.

105. Madeline Zilfi, "The Kadızadeli: Discordant Revivalism in Seventeenth Century Istanbul," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 45, no. 4 (1986): 254.

106. Zilfi, *Politics of Piety*, 136–37.

spearheaded by Kadızâde Mehmed (d. 1635), followed by Üstüvânî Mehmed Efendi (d. 1661), with Vânî Mehmed Efendi (d. 1685) leading the final.¹⁰⁷ During the third phase under the aegis of Vânî Efendi, a Bektashi shrine in Edirne was burned to the ground.¹⁰⁸ Further, Karabaş-ı Velî (d. 1686) and Niyâzî-i Mısırî (d. 1694), two prominent Halvetî sheikhs, who had founded two sub-branches, were banished from Istanbul.¹⁰⁹ The religious policies promoted by Vânî Efendi incited a wave of condemnatory rhetoric and physical abuse directed towards the dervish lodges, ultimately culminating in an imperial prohibition on *semâ'* that was enacted in 1666. This prohibition endured for 18 years until 1684.¹¹⁰ In the subsequent Mevlevî accounts, it was referred to as “the wicked prohibition” (*yasâğ-ı bed*), which denotes the Hijri equivalent (1077) of the beginning year of the prohibition according to the abjad numerals, an alphanumeric system where each of the 28 letters of the Arabic alphabet is assigned a corresponding numerical value.¹¹¹ The prohibition embodied a previously unparalleled instance of direct governmental intervention in Sufi mores both in public and private spheres.

However, the Mevlevî order was compelled to grapple with the interventionist measures of the Ottoman government at a much earlier date. Despite his initial affinity with the Mevlevî order, which led him to sponsor the enlargement of the Konya Mevlânâ Lodge through the restoration of the dervish cells, Murâd III (r. 1574-1595) became the first sultan to intervene in the intra-*tarîqa* autonomy of the Mevlevî order by deposing Ferruh Çelebi (d. 1601[?]), who, like his father and predecessor, Husrev Çelebi, enjoyed an extravagant and prosperous life.¹¹² This was also the first occasion when the disputes and factional rivalries within the Çelebi family were thrust into the limelight.¹¹³ To elucidate, the official complaints that necessitated governmental intervention did not originate from an outsider religious group that harbored grievances against the Mevlevî order, but from Ferruh Çelebi's own blood

107. For a small section from Üstüvânî's *Risâle* on the disavowal of the must-be-forbidden Sufi practices, see Mustafa Kara, *Metinlerle Osmanlılarda Tasavvuf ve Tarikatlar* (İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2021), 178–80.

108. Marc David Baer, *Honored by the Glory of Islam: Conversion and Conquest in Ottoman Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 114.

109. Cemal Kurnaz and Mustafa Tatcı, “Karabaş-ı Velî (ö. 1097/1686),” *Tasavvuf: İlmî ve Akademik Araştırma Dergisi* 2, no. 6 (2001): 40. Niyâzî-i Mısırî, who arguably bore most the brunt of the Kadızadeli encroachments, was an outspoken dissident. He even took the bold step of proposing that the Ottoman dynasty be supplanted by the Crimean khans. Derin Terzioğlu, “Sufi and Dissident in the Ottoman Empire: Niyâzî-i Mısırî” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Cambridge, Harvard University, 1999), 346.

110. The Mevlevîs ascribe sanctity to the number 18 and call it *nezr-i Mevlânâ* (Mevlânâ's gift). The primary reason for this consecration is the fact that Rûmî himself wrote down the first 18 couplets of the *Mesnevî*. See Top, *Mevlevî Usûl ve Âdâbı*, 182. Çelebi, *Mevlânâ ve Mevlevîlik*, 105.

111. Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ'dan Sonra Mevlevîlik*, 167.

112. Saylan, “Mevlânâ Âilesi ve Mevlevîlik'te Çelebilik Makâmı: *Sefîne-i Nefîse-i Mevleviyân* Örneği,” 351.

113. Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ'dan Sonra Mevlevîlik*, 156.

relatives. A rival faction, purportedly concerned about the equitable distribution of ever-increasing waqf revenues, seems to have breached the sacred covenant (*bey'at*) that they were obliged to uphold with their oath-bound leader and succeeded in removing him from office.¹¹⁴ Ferruh Çelebi was exiled to Istanbul and was away from his spiritual office for what may be regarded as an exceptionally symbolic length of time, 18 years.¹¹⁵ However, the precise temporal alignment between this exile and his tenure as “the Çelebi Efendi” remains uncertain. This is because no historical source mentions the name of another Çelebi Efendi between him and Bostan Çelebi (d. 1630), who succeeded him as the *pōst-niṣhān* of the Konya Mevlânâ Lodge upon his death.

In contrast to the preceding period, Bostan Çelebi’s tenure ushered in a process of revival and proliferation, during which new Mevlevî lodges were established in Istanbul. Among these were the Yenikapı Lodge (1597[?]), the Beşiktaş Lodge (1622), and the Kasımpaşa Lodge (circa 1625).¹¹⁶ The Mevlevî network experienced a resurgence across the provinces as well. Bostan Çelebi dispatched his disciples to various locations such as Damascus, Gelibolu, and Bursa, with the objective of planting the seeds of new Mevlevî lodges.¹¹⁷ These expansionist enterprises were undoubtedly the progeny of his intimate connections with the imperial elite and ruling dynasty in Istanbul as the supply of resources through the transfer of property and the financial injection was provided by them.¹¹⁸ Albeit not exclusively reserved for the Mevlevîs, Ahmed I’s (r. 1603-1617) benevolence toward Sufis was a harbinger of the onset of an opportune episode of imperial patronage for the Mevlevî order. Last but not least, the number of Bostan Çelebi’s disciples and sympathizers from different strata of society was exceedingly large and his spiritual charisma and fame had eclipsed that of his predecessors.¹¹⁹ Much-celebrated Mevlevî figures such as İsmâ’îl Rusûhî Ankaravî (d. 1631), whose sobriquet was the Respected Commentator of *Mesnevî* (*Hażret-i Şāriḥ-i Mesnevî*), were among his disciples.¹²⁰

Quite reminiscent of a vicious cycle, the ascendance of Ebûbekir Çelebi (d. 1638)

114. Gölpınarlı, 156.

115. Önder, *Mevlânâ ve Mevlevîlik*, 188. Top, *Mevlevî Usûl ve Âdâbı*, 294.

116. Duru, *Tarihî Simalardan: Mevlevî*, 118.

117. Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ’dan Sonra Mevlevîlik*, 158.

118. Gürbüz, *Taming the Messiah*, 132.

119. Önder, *Mevlânâ ve Mevlevîlik*, 190. Top, *Mevlevî Usûl ve Âdâbı*, 296.

120. İsmâ’îl Rusûhî Ankaravî was a prolific and passionate Mevlevî sheikh, who produced a substantial corpus of apologetic treatises in response to trenchant criticisms levied against *Mesnevî*, the Mevlevî variant of Islam, and the Mevlevî rituals like *semâ’*. His commentary on *Mesnevî*, inclusive of the controversial Book Seven, whose authenticity was and still is the subject of fierce debate, was an endeavor to reconcile Rûmî’s emotive religiosity, steered towards divine love, with Ibn Arabî’s theoretical doctrine of the unity of being. For further information, see Eliza Tasbihi, “The Mevlevî Sufi Shaykh İsmâ’îl Rusûkhî Anqarawî (d. 1631) and His Commentary on Rûmî’s Mathnawî,” *Mawlana Rumi Review* 6 (2015): 163–82.

to the office of Çelebîship upon the death of Bostan Çelebi signaled a dramatic reversal characterized by a series of challenging negativities such as governmental intervention, exile, and internal turmoil within the Mevlevî order. Ebûbekir Çelebi's tenure coincided with the reign of Murâd IV (r. 1623-1640), upon whom Kadızâde Mehmed was able to exercise undue influence. The escalating tension between the Sultan and the Çelebi Efendi eventually propelled the latter's deposition. One of the speculated reasons for this deposition was the Çelebi's refusal to comply with the Sultan's command to have Rûmî's grave opened in order to ascertain whether his body had decomposed. According to an alternative account by the first official court chronicler (*vak'a-nüvîs*), Na'imâ (d. 1716), the Çelebi had embezzled the poll tax revenues of the nearby Suğla village that had been endowed to the Konya Mevlânâ Lodge.¹²¹ However, the fundamental reason seems to have been the Çelebi Efendi's profound social prestige and dignity, which radiated even to the local functionaries, judges, and notables.

Despite his initial inclination to do so, the Sultan opted against ordering the execution of the Çelebi Efendi, having been persuaded otherwise by Grand Mufti Zekeriyâyâde Yahyâ Efendi (d. 1644).¹²² Consequently, Ebûbekir Çelebi faced exile in Istanbul in 1637. Notwithstanding these misfortunes on the part of the Mevlevîs, the Sultan's involvement in their internal affairs continued unabated. He went on to appoint 'Ârif Çelebi (d. 1642), a maternal-line descendant, as the succeeding overseer of the Konya Mevlânâ Lodge. In accordance with the long-established Mevlevî hereditary transmission, only those from the paternal Çelebi line (*zükûr*) were deemed eligible to serve as the Çelebi Efendi. Conversely, those from the maternal Çelebi line (*inâs*) were restricted to occupying inferior positions, such as the Afyon Karahisar Lodge, where 'Ârif Çelebi was stationed prior to being summoned by Murâd IV to Konya.¹²³ 'Ârif Çelebi represents the sole *inâs* Çelebi who has ever held the office of Çelebîship in Konya.¹²⁴ In their accounts, Mevlevî biographers have conveyed a tone of disapproval regarding this disruption, which they viewed as

121. Na'imâ, *Târih-i Na'imâ*, ed. Mehmet İpşirli, vol. 2 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2007), 868–69. See also Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ'dan Sonra Mevlevîlik*, 163–64.

122. For a detailed account of Grand Mufti Zekeriyâyâde Yahya Efendi, who stood in stark opposition to the intensifying puritanical Kadızadeli movement and strove to alleviate the mounting distress on Sufi orders, see Terzioğlu, "Sufi and Dissident," 229–30.

123. Ayşegül Mete, "Mevlevîlikte Merkezîyetçilik: Çelebilik Makamı ve Tevcihâtı," *Tasavvuf: İlmî ve Akademik Araştırma Dergisi* XXIV, no. 48 (2021): 32–33.

124. It is crucial to draw attention to this phenomenon, as there are conflicting arguments in the available literature surrounding the pedigree of Veled Çelebi (d. 1953), some of which represent him as belonging to the *inâs* line. During his tenure between 1910 and 1919, Veled Çelebi was most likely confronted with numerous instances where he was compelled to substantiate his claim of belonging to the *zükûr* line. In response, he produced his own *silsile-nâme*, with the intention of refuting the unwarranted allegations. Further information will be provided in Chapter 4.

a deviation from the well-entrenched customary regime for succession.¹²⁵

‘Ârif Çelebi was succeeded by Ferruh Çelebi’s grandson, Hüseyin Çelebi (d. 1666), whose tenure was beset by a pervasive spirit of disharmony and factional rivalry among members of the Çelebi family, which manifested in various forms of internal conflict and competition. Thus, the effective governance of the Mevlevî order as a whole was at risk, as the existing leadership was no longer unchallenged. Of particular note was the prevalence of inheritance disputes, often driven by concerns related to livelihood. The contentious matters that seemed to be irreconcilable were given a political dimension, resulting in the Ottoman government receiving an array of complaints that prompted its intervention.¹²⁶ In this context, it is striking that a contingent of the Çelebi family arrived in Istanbul with the avowed motive of removing Hüseyin Çelebi from his office and ensuring the appointment of their preferred candidate, Derviş Çelebi. Despite the appeal being rejected, the Ottoman government did not acquiesce to their departure with empty-handed and designated Derviş Çelebi as the new incumbent of the Galata Mevlevî Lodge.¹²⁷

This case is, by all means, worthy of reflection from a variety of perspectives. Above all, as in the case of Ferruh Çelebi, a dissident faction, discontented with the extant administrative and financial management of the Mevlevî order, organized collectively and sparked a movement aimed at overturning the status quo. Furthermore, they politicized an intra-*tariqa* conflict by calling for the intervention of the state apparatus. However, the stance adopted by political decision-makers was to refrain from taking sides in the polarization within the Çelebi family by offering a modest compensation to the opposition wing even if it did not fully align with their demands. Besides, the appointment to the Galata Mevlevî Lodge by an imperial decree is of particular significance insofar as it reveals the limits of the centralization pertinent to the Mevlevî order. It can be reasonably concluded, therefore, that the Çelebi Efendi did not operate as an authoritarian figure at the helm of a vast Mevlevî network, overseeing appointments and dismissals of any kind. Despite the symbolic and spiritual subordination of the Mevlevî lodges dispersed throughout the Ottoman geography to the Çelebi Efendi, he largely functioned in an advisory capacity with regard to the appointment and dismissal procedures in these lodges. In other words, the Mevlevî lodges retained a degree of autonomy, and the administrative transitions were not handled through top-down decisions, but rather through bottom-up processes. Still, the right for intervention on the part of the Konya Mevlânâ Lodge was consistently reserved in cases where no resolution for

125. Gürbüz, *Taming the Messiah*, 120.

126. Duru, *Tarihî Simalardan: Mevlevî*, 120.

127. Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ’dan Sonra Mevlevîlik*, 165.

succession had been achieved within other lodges.¹²⁸

In close temporal proximity, an incident is reported to have occurred in which the widespread influence and power of the Çelebis unsettled the Ottoman central authority. The purported participation of the Çelebis in the upheaval spearheaded by Abaza Hasan Pasha (d. 1659) ostensibly demonstrated their aptitude for exercising political agency in alignment with anti-establishment forces. For an extended duration, stories were circulated in Istanbul suggesting that Hüseyin Çelebi had endorsed Abaza Hasan Pasha by ceremonially adorning him with the Mevlevî novice hat (*'arâkıyye*). According to Sâkıb Dede's *Sefîne*, upon the revelation that the allegations were mere rumors, the Çelebi Efendi was left to pursue his endeavors unimpaired.¹²⁹ On the other hand, a vivid anecdote from Ferâizîzâde Mehmed Said's (d. 1835) *Târîh-i Gülşen-i Ma'ârif* encourages a reconsideration of the nature of the relationship between the Mevlevîs and Abaza Hasan Pasha. It recounts that an Ottoman inspector dispatched to Konya suspected the Mevlevî dervishes of involvement in the upheaval. İsmâ'îl Pasha, the official in charge, detained eight individuals clad in Mevlevî attire. To verify their authenticity, he demanded that they prove their affiliation: one recited *Meşnevî*, another played the *ney* (reed-flute), and two performed the *semâ'* ritual. However, the remaining four failed to display any Mevlevî practices, leading the inspector to conclude that they were members of Abaza Pasha's entourage masquerading as dervishes.¹³⁰

Before closing down this chapter, it is worthwhile to cite one final incident that pitted the state apparatus and the Mevlevî order against each other at the dawn of the eighteenth century. Despite ascending to the office of Çelebiship immediately following the cessation of "the wicked prohibition," Kara Bostan Çelebi's (d. 1705[?]) tenure was fraught with challenges arising from disputes over the revenues of the evkâf-ı Celâliye. Among the contenders who drew the Ottoman government's attention to Konya by submitting petitions pointing out the grievances caused by the conferral of certain financial privileges upon the Mevlevî order were high-ranking Konya ulama. In consequence of the growing frequency of complaints, Kara Bostan Çelebi was banished to Cyprus, and some endowment revenues and scholarly posts were revoked from the Mevlevîs. Unsurprisingly, the subsequent tenure of his son Sadreddîn Çelebi (d. 1711) was yet another period marked by heightened factionalism within the Çelebi family.¹³¹

128. Mete, "Mevlevîlikte Merkeziyetçilik," 39.

129. Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ'dan Sonra Mevlevîlik*, 165.

130. Ferâizîzâde Mehmed Said, *Târîh-i Gülşen-i Ma'ârif*, vol. I (İstanbul: Dârü't-Tibâati'l-Âmire, 1252), 884.

131. Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ'dan Sonra Mevlevîlik*, 169.

2.6 Conclusion

When viewed in its entirety, the task assigned to this chapter was to contextualize the checkered relationship between the state apparatus and the Mevlevî order, a structurally atypical Sufi order that grew into an exceptional specimen of a dynastically-run social organization wielding extensive financial and political power. By conducting a genealogical analysis of this specific relationship through the lens of historicizing, I intended to set forth that the appointment of Veled Çelebi to replace ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi in 1910 was not an isolated phenomenon, but part of a series of occasionally recurring events rooted in the past.

In response to the particular political dynamics of various historical periods, the Mevlevîs’ agency did not adhere to a linear trail. Nor were the governing bodies of the Ottoman state the static sacrosanct entities resistant to change across the span of ages. At first, the Mevlevîs set out to enrich their political portfolio by forging alliances with a multitude of polities, a strategy that was necessitated by the highly fragmented political landscape of Anatolia during the period of the principalities. Their constitutive attempts were never tension-free as evidenced by the unpleasant confrontation with the Karaman principality due to their almost conciliatory attitude towards the Mongol rule. Albeit not significantly linked in the nascent stages of the Ottoman state, following its incorporation into the broader project of fortifying the Sunni front against Safavid Iran, the Mevlevî order emerged as a locus of power that thrived on the generously transferred resources of the Ottoman political economy. Nevertheless, as the patrimonial and autocratic structure of the Ottoman Empire began to disintegrate, centrifugal forces gained prominence in the political scene; therefore, the Çelebi dynasty, as a local magnate, acquired a strong negotiating power vis-à-vis the ruling elite. This was also suggestive of the dialectics of the early modern history of the Mevlevî order: simultaneously being both an ally and contender to imperial sovereignty. To address the elephant in the room, the formation of a somewhat financial autonomy through revenue-bearing waqf resources was the primary catalyst for factional rivalries that fueled this bifurcation. In some instances, the state apparatus intervened without any external stimulus, while in other instances it was prompted to intervene at the instigation of intra-*tariqa* interest groups.

In addition, it was equally important to underline the non-homogeneous identity of the Mevlevî order and its embodiment of an intrinsic duality. The persistence of this duality until the early twentieth century precludes the conceptualization of the Mevlevî order in its totality as a mere constituent of the Sunni milieu. Its resistance

to being confined within a fixed confessional category is undoubtedly one of the unique characteristics of the Mevlevî order. This perplexing ambiguity, compounded by alienation from the core pillars of political ideology, necessitates a multi-layered interpretation of the Mevlevîs' relationship with the state apparatus.

3. THE MYSTICAL AUTONOMY VIS-À-VIS THE MODERN STATE FORMATION

*Müceddid olduđu Sultân Selâm'in dîn ü dünyâyâ
Nümâyândır bu nev-pûşîdesinden kabır-i Monlâ'ya*
Gâlib Dede

The appointment of Veled Çelebi by the central government was the end product of a prolonged and cumulative process in the nineteenth century, during which the intricate interplay between the state apparatus and Sufi orders underwent a crucial reorientation. This transformative process ultimately reconfigured the hitherto existing interrelationship, shifting the balance of power decisively in favor of the increasingly centralized and bureaucratized administrative structure of the Ottoman state. In other words, the modern state formation, which enabled the Ottoman government to cast its watchful gaze upon every corner of the imperial geography in the nineteenth century, played a pivotal role in reshaping the historically established relationship with Sufi orders.

I hereby draw on Weberian terminology to conceptualize the Ottoman Empire's experience of modern statehood spanning the late eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries. Max Weber defines the modern state as a political organization that holds "the *monopoly* of the *legitimate* use of physical force" within a defined territorial boundary.¹³² This legitimacy, sanctioned by societal recognition, distinguishes the state from other competitive entities, such as centrifugal power-holders possessing private militias. At the heart of its encompassing structure is the principle of rational-legal authority, based on impersonal rules and administration rather than traditional customs or charismatic leadership.¹³³ It is further characterized by a professionalized 'monocratic' bureaucracy, entrusted with implementing laws and policies to ensure effective and systematic governance.¹³⁴ At least on paper, its

132. Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 54–56.

133. Weber, 217–20.

134. Weber, 223.

concentrated governmental machinery consolidates power, facilitating the efficient coordination of resources, the enforcement of laws, and the maintenance of social order. In a nutshell, Weber’s framework captures the transition from pre-modern governance, embedded in personal or traditional authority, to a rationalized, institutionalized and depersonalized system of rule that is typical of modern political systems.

Moreover, I subscribe wholeheartedly to Gianfranco Poggi’s assertion that the modern derivative of state-building is an artificially engineered operation rather than a spontaneously evolved organic formation through accretion.¹³⁵ That being said, I intend to further build on his insights to shed light on the singularizing nature of the modern state. The attainment of unitary internal sovereignty is the *sine qua non* for the nineteenth-century state apparatus. To borrow David Easton’s conceptualization, all social activities pertaining to the “authoritative allocation of values”¹³⁶ at the level of the public sphere are entrusted to a singular decision-making authority—the state itself—irrespective of the complexity or internal differentiation of these activities. Neither individuals nor corporate bodies may partake in governing functions, except in their capacity as organs, agents, or delegates of the state.¹³⁷

Given the Ottoman state’s moves toward administrative and financial centralization throughout the *long* nineteenth century, there might only be little doubt regarding the applicability of this theoretical framework to the Ottoman context. However, this analytically-informed abstraction of the enhanced scope and functionality of the state apparatus inevitably introduces a significant limitation of state-centrism: the portrayal of the state as a self-contained, transcendent entity, detached from the relational dynamics and power struggles among competing interest groups. This fallacy, which can be described as a form of ‘reification’¹³⁸ of the state apparatus,

135. Gianfranco Poggi, *The Development of the Modern State* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1978), 95.

136. David Easton’s definition of politics is the “authoritative allocation of values,” through which a political system exercises authority to determine, distribute, and regulate values in diverse forms, such as material resources, rights, laws, and social norms. It is ‘authoritative’ because the governmental mechanism is granted the legitimate power to enforce decisions. Analytically speaking, demands serve as inputs to the political system, while decisions are its outputs. The real crux of this abstraction lies in the embeddedness of the political system in an environment that subjects it to potential influences. For a concise summary, see David Easton, *A Systems Analysis of Political Life* (New York: Wiley, 1965), 17–33.

137. Poggi, *The Development of the Modern State*, 93.

138. I rely on Gajo Petrović’s interpretation of reification: “The act (or result of the act) of transforming human properties, relations and actions into properties, relations and actions of man-produced things which have become independent (and which are imagined as originally independent) of man and govern his life.” Tom Bottomore, ed., *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 463–65. For a detailed analysis and discussion on reification, see Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge: The MIT Press,

obscures the mediation of property relations and overlooks the phenomenon of surplus extraction being monopolized by a much narrower elite through centralizing measures. Instead of taking the state apparatus for granted, I view it as a fluid conglomeration of political-economic relations, continuously moulded by a multiplicity of stakeholders within its surrounding environment. Therefore, I will once again prioritize human agency in reconstructing the transformation of the state-*tarīqa* relations in the late Ottoman period, when the Mevlevîs did not falter in adapting to the exigencies of the *zeitgeist*.

This chapter will focus on the institutional reconfiguration that laid the legal and political infrastructure for state intervention driven by the factionalism among the Çelebis in 1910, the gradual erosion of the intra-*tarīqa* autonomy, and the Mevlevîs' integration into the evolving socio-political landscape. In doing so, it will devote scrupulous attention to the strategies devised by those belonging to an ingrained mystical tradition in order to co-opt with, react against, or manipulate the new normativity that had played into the state's hands. Notwithstanding critical junctures such as the abolition of the Janissary Corps, the establishment of the *Evkâf-ı Hümâyûn Nezâreti* (the Superintendency/Ministry of Imperial Endowments) in 1826, and later the *Meclis-i Meşâyih* (the Assembly of Sheikhs) in 1866—which resulted in the incremental expansion of the state's zone of influence over Sufi orders—the Mevlevîs appear to have opportunely forged close-knit associations with the state, thereby extracting the utmost utility.

3.1 Opponents and Proponents of the Selimian Reformation in the Mevlevî Order

The available literature on the Ottoman Empire's modernization often depicts Selim III (r. 1789-1807) as an astute and forward-thinking reformer, formulating strategies to revitalize the empire's faltering institutions even prior to ascending the throne.¹³⁹ Frequently celebrated as a pioneer of Western-inspired reforms through the New Order (*Nizâm-ı Cedîd*),¹⁴⁰ a wide-ranging reform project that was not confined to

1972), 83–110.

139. Enver Ziya Karal, *Selîm III'ün Hatt-ı Hümayunları* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1942), 7. Kemal Beydilli, interpreting Selim III within the historical context of his own period, regards him as a figure of the Age of Enlightenment and refers to him as “an enlightened monarch.” See Kemal Beydilli, “III. Selim: Aydınlanmış Hükümdar,” in *Nizâm-ı Kadîm'den Nizâm-ı Cedîd'e III. Selîm ve Dönemi*, ed. Seyfi Kenan (İstanbul: İSAM, 2010), 27–57.

140. The term *Nizâm-ı Cedîd* was not coined by Selim III. It originally denoted a set of regulations distinct from the early Ottoman legal codes and traditional customs, commonly known as *kânûn-ı kadîm* or *nizâm-ı kadîm*. A notable example of this is Grand Vizier Köprülüzâde Fazıl Mustafa

the military organization,¹⁴¹ Selim III has been portrayed as falling short in his efforts to dismantle the empire's corrupt structures. Nevertheless, his vision and initiatives have been credited with leaving a lasting legacy, shaping the reformist policies of subsequent rulers, particularly Mahmud II (r. 1808-1839).¹⁴²

The reformist ethos of the Selimian era was not exclusively inspired by Western (primarily French) advancements but was also deeply intertwined with the contemporary revivalist Sufi orders. Kahraman Şakul insightfully addressed the rise of Islamic orthodoxy in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, arguing that it arose as a reaction to both the Russian expansion and the mounting pressure from European powers.¹⁴³ A key indication of the 'internal' source of nourishment for the so-called reformists within the Islamic revivalist camp lies in their affiliation with the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi order. Butrus Abu-Manneh was the first to stress the robust connection between the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidis and the Ottoman ruling elite, asserting that particularly following Selim III's ascension to the throne, there was a notable propensity towards a more assertive promotion of orthodox Sunni Islam in the imperial capital.¹⁴⁴ The reign of Selim III also coincided with the dissemination of the Hâlidî branch of the Naqshbandi order, founded by Hâlid el-Bağdâdî (d. 1827). For instance, Sheikh Burusevî/Kerkükî Mehmed Emin Efendi (d. 1813), a deputy (*halîfe*) of Hâlid el-Bağdâdî and representative of the third wave of Naqshbandi influence in Istanbul, succeeded in gaining access to broader elite circles of both the ulama and the high-ranking statesmen.¹⁴⁵

However, Selim III's aesthetic tastes, forged by his passionate interests in poetry and music, must have guided him in blending his personality with the Mevlevî culture, thus paving the way for the fortunate upsurge of the Mevlevî order. Alongside his regal status, Selim III was a remarkably gifted artist, particularly in his musical aptitude. He was a prolific composer, producing a substantial corpus of works encompassing both religious and non-religious instrumental and vocal compositions.

Pasha (d. 1691), who labeled the fiscal measures that he enacted to enhance the tax revenues as *nizâm-ı cedîd*, setting them apart from the traditional practices referred to as *nizâm-ı kadîm*. See Kemal Beydilli, "Nizâm-ı Cedîd," in *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 2007), 33:175.

141. Carter V. Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire: The Sublime Porte, 1789-1922* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 113.

142. Stanford Shaw, *Between Old and New: The Ottoman Empire under Sultan Selim III, 1789-1807* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 180.

143. Kahraman Şakul, "Nizâm-ı Cedid Düşüncesinde Batılılaşma ve İslami Modernleşme," *Dîvân* 19 (2005): 140.

144. Butrus Abu-Manneh, *Studies on Islam and the Ottoman Empire in the 19th Century (1826-1876)* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2011), 7.

145. Aysel Yıldız, *Crisis and Rebellion in the Ottoman Empire: The Downfall of a Sultan in the Age of Revolution* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2017), 141.

Notably, he composed fifteen *maḳāms*,¹⁴⁶ hitherto absent from the extant repertoire of classical Turkish music. In addition to his musical accomplishments as a composer, Selim III was also proficient in the *tanbūr* (a long-necked, fretted, plucked lute) and the *ney* (reed-flute). The Mevlevî *Āyîn-i Şerîf*, composed in his own invention, the *Sûz-i dil-ārâ* maḳām, stands as a unique exemplar of his profound musical genius.¹⁴⁷ Selim III's contributions to the domain of music are multifaceted, but a particularly salient aspect pertains to the organization of musical notation systems. It was under his patronage that ‘Abdülbâki Nâsır Dede (d. 1821), the sheikh of the Yenikapı Mevlevî Lodge, developed a musical score, thereby ensuring the preservation of numerous compositions that would have otherwise been lost through oral transmission.¹⁴⁸

In the late eighteenth century, it is implausible to posit that the Mevlevî order as a whole formed a cohesive entity in terms of their spiritual temperament or their relationship with contemporary politics. Several factors must have contributed to this lack of cohesion. These might include the personalities and reputations of the sheikhs leading the Mevlevî lodges, the ways by which they were appointed, the extent of their reliance on the Çelebi Efendi in Konya, the management of waqf resources available to the Mevlevî lodges, the prevailing political climate, and the interactions of the Mevlevîs with other Sufi orders and the state apparatus. In periods of political turbulence, social change, and new orientations, differentiation of this sort is more likely to be expected to become more pronounced. In fact, this was the case during the reign of Selim III, when the New Order was in the making to empower the central authority to pull the strings. The majority of prominent figures from the Mevlevî lodges in Istanbul, most importantly those from the Yenikapı and Galata lodges, which had achieved a degree of independence from the Konya Mevlânâ Lodge,¹⁴⁹ were supportive of Selim III's reform efforts. Gâlib Dede (d. 1799), the

146. The *maḳām* is a fundamental concept in classical Turkish (as well as Eastern) music for constructing melodies, encompassing the arrangement of tonal relationships, range, initial and reciting tones, as well as the final cadence. Additionally, it provides a general framework for melodic contours and patterns. The closest parallel in Western music is the medieval notion of mode. Karl L. Signell, *Makam: Modal Practice in Turkish Art Music* (Washington: Asian Music Publications, 1977), 16.

147. Cem Dilçin, “Şeyh Gâlib’in Mevlevîhânelerinin Tamirine İlişkin Şiirleri,” *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 14 (1994): 31.

148. Dilçin, 32. For a comprehensive analysis of the musical manuscripts of ‘Abdülbâki Nâsır Dede, see Cem Behar, *Kadîm ile Cedîd Arasında: III. Selim Döneminde Bir Mevlevî Şeyhi ‘Abdülbâki Nâsır Dede’nin Musiki Yazmaları* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2022).

149. Specifically in the case of the Yenikapı Mevlevî Lodge, from the appointment of Seyyid Ebûbekir Dede (d. 1775) as the *pōst-nişîn* in 1746 until the official closure of the dervish lodges in 1925, the lodge was run exclusively by his descendants for approximately 180 years. Çelebi Efendi's role was simply to approve the appointment of a pre-designated successor upon the death of the incumbent. For an in-depth analysis of the family of Seyyid Ebûbekir Dede, see Mustafa Erdoğan, “İstanbul’da Kütahyalı Bir Şeyh Ailesi: Seyyid Ebubekir Dede ve Ahfâdı,” *İstanbul Araştırmaları* 7 (1998): 125–69.

illustrious author of the literary masterpiece *Hüsn ü ‘Aşk (Beauty and Love)*¹⁵⁰ and the sheikh of the Galata Mevlevî Lodge, was a faithful companion of Selim III, who became a regular visitor to the Galata Lodge. After his appointment to the Galata Mevlevî Lodge in June 1791, Gâlib Dede wrote a long ode to Selim III, in which he asked for the restoration of the lodge.¹⁵¹ The Mevlevî sympathizer Sultan did not refuse this request and the repairs, which began in February 1792, were completed in July of that year. Furthermore, in 1793, a fountain was built in the lodge courtyard and the *semâ‘-hâne*, where the whirling ritual took place, was overhauled.¹⁵² Selim III also gave Gâlib Dede the exclusive right to appoint all the officials in charge of reciting the *Meşnevî* and allocated new funds to help maintain the Mevlevî waqfs.¹⁵³ As if in accordance with the principle of *quid pro quo*, Gâlib Dede became the most ardent advocate of reform efforts under the umbrella of the New Order. He frequently employed terms such as *nev* (new), *tecdîd* (renewal), *intizâm* (orderliness), *nizâm* (order), *rûh-i nev* (new spirit), *kânûn-ı nev* (new law), *nizâm-ı nev* (new order), *hüsn-i nizâm* (beauty of order), *tertîb-i devlet* ([re-]organization of the state), and *nev-‘asker-i müretteb* (new orderly army) which implicitly relate to reforms, carry distinct connotations within the political terminology of the era, and serve as markers of ideological alignment.¹⁵⁴ Much like the prominent role that he attributed to himself in the realm of poetry, he explicitly referred to Selim III as a *müceddid* (renovator/renewer) in several instances. The couplet cited as an epigraph for this chapter is one such example, wherein he bestows the title of *müceddid* upon the Sultan in recognition of his act of renewing the cover on Rûmî’s tomb in Konya.

Selim III’s overt investment and partisanship in the Mevlevî order appear not only to have served the purpose of promoting the New Order and ensuring its favorable reception among the public but also to signal strategic foresight. It was deemed to be a calculated maneuver against the Janissary Corps, which had turned out to be a decentralizing force functioning as a form of checks and balances. By fostering the Mevlevî order, Selim III likely sought to establish a counterweight to the Janissaries, whose socio-cultural identity was intertwined with the Bektashi order. The leaning towards the orthodox front against a supposedly deviant group that was thought to

150. For an extraordinarily nuanced study of *Beauty and Love*, see Victoria Rowe Holbrook, *The Unreadable Shores of Love: Turkish Modernity and Mystic Romance* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994).

151. Sema Arıkan, ed., *III. Selim’in Sır Kâtibi Ahmed Efendi Tarafından Tutulan Rûznâme* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1993), 63.

152. Beşir Ayvazoğlu, *Kuğunun Son Şarkısı* (İstanbul: Kapı Yayınları, 2015), 67.

153. Yasemin Bozoğlu-Erdinç, “The Relationship between the Mevlevî Order and the Ottoman State in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries” (Master Thesis, İstanbul, Boğaziçi University, 2002), 100. Also see George W. Gawrych, “Şeyh Galib and Selim III: Mevlevism and Nizam-ı Cedid,” *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 4, no. 1 (1987): 107.

154. Behar, *Kadîm üle Cedîd Arasında*, 173–74. Dilçin, “Şeyh Gâlib’in Mevlevîhânelerinin Tamirine İlişkin Şiirleri,” 36–38.

have strayed from mainstream religious doctrine seamlessly fits the *realpolitik* of the Selimian era. In Cevdet Pasha's (d. 1895) parlance,

The Janissaries belonged to the Bektashi order, [but] in those days the New Order was gaining momentum. Due to the necessity of the gradual (*refte refte*) abolishment of the phenomenon of the Janissaries, it was not unusual at that time for one of the sublime orders (*turuk-ı 'aliyye*) to thrive at the expense of the Bektashi order. Since the Mevlevî order was in conformity with the idea of the New Order, it shone brightly.¹⁵⁵

However, striking opposition and resistance to the New Order, championed by El-Hâc Mehmed Çelebi (d. 1815), the *pōst-niṣān* of the Konya Mevlânâ Lodge, significantly complicates the overall picture. At a time when the Mevlevîs were being lavishly funded, honored, and nurtured by the state apparatus, the dissent exhibited by the order's main executive body was symptomatic of its evolution into a major power-broker, akin to a local magnate, as elaborated in the previous chapter. In the first place, the attainment of Çelebship by El-Hâc Mehmed Çelebi was rooted in a highly curious political mise-en-scène. In May 1785, the governor of Karaman apprised the Grand Mufti of the demise of Ebû Bekir Çelebi sans progeny (*bilâ-veled*) and of the appointment of a candidate from Rûmî's line as stipulated by the order's unbroken tradition.¹⁵⁶ Obviously, the emphasis on the absence of a male heir from the deceased Çelebi Efendi's own sub-lineage evokes the notion of a royal household, wherein the right to rule was transmitted from father to son. This phenomenon further implies that a single Çelebi among the vast populace of the Çelebis could rise to the position of *primus inter pares*, thereby monopolizing Rûmî's spiritual office for his own particular sub-lineage. The propensity to homogenize power in defiance of numerous competing claimants can be regarded as a latent driver of factionalism, revealing the paradox inherent in the pursuit of singularity within a terrain of plurality.

While one might expect the issue of succession to be resolved through intra-*tarîqa* reconciliation, the reality has proven to be quite the opposite. The large number of disputing candidates for the leadership upon the death of Ebû Bekir Çelebi points once more to the never-ending endurance of factionalism, given the Çelebi family's failure to set up an electoral assembly, which would assign a new leader as a reflection of the collective will of the stakeholders. Aspiring candidates eager to capitalize on

155. Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *Târîh-i Cevdet*, vol. VI (İstanbul: Tasvîr-i Efkar Matbaası, 1286), 166. This perspective is shared by Gölpınarlı. See Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ'dan Sonra Mevlevîlik*, 271.

156. "muktezâ-yı tarîkleri üzere yine sülâle-i Mevlânâ'dan birisi intihâb ve makâm-ı meşihate ta'yîn olunacağı" BOA. AE.SABH.I. 5/461 (n.d.)

the power vacuum flocked to the imperial capital, each unequivocally asserting their claim to the position. The advisory council, composed of the Judge of Istanbul, the Chief Military Judges of Rumelia and Anatolia (*şadreyin-i muhteremeyn*), and the Grand Mufti, with Grand Vizier Şâhin ‘Ali Pasha (d. 1789) presiding, chose El-Hâc Mehmed Çelebi over the other three candidates on the grounds of his maturity, piety, and merit. His appointment was sealed by the imperial edict. Among the reasons for the elimination of other candidates were lack of consciousness, the execution (*siyâseten katl*) of one’s brothers, and multiple exiles. The presence of such serious legal offenses in these Çelebis’ records is suggestive of their conspicuous activities at odds with the local authorities. The negative public visibility of the Çelebis, hence, reasserts the necessity to break the well-entrenched myths about Rûmî’s lineage, which have canonically portrayed them as redeemed and pure as in the epithet *sülâle-i tâhire*. What is more, it was decided by the council to banish one of the candidates, the Mesnevî-hân (*Mesnevî*-reciter) Efendi, to Manisa due to his ill-reputation and suspicion of harassing the appointed Çelebi Efendi in the near future.¹⁵⁷

At the inception of his Çelebship, El-Hâc Mehmed Çelebi was treated with the same utmost reverence and financial support as his predecessors. For instance, according to an archival document containing the final decision marked with a *buyuruldu* dated August 26, 1789, the trusteeship of a village called Gözler in the Sincanlı district (*kazâ*), which had become vacant (*mahlûl*) following the death of Ebû Bekir Çelebi, was reassigned to El-Hâc Mehmed Çelebi at his request.¹⁵⁸ However, after a while, he became embroiled in a major dispute with the local population regarding the allocation of tax payments for the expenditures of the *menzil*.¹⁵⁹ According to a document dated July 11, 1797, although the waqfs affiliated with the Tomb of Mevlânâ had been exempted from the *‘avârız-ı dîvâniye* and *tekâlîf-i ‘örfiye* (extraordinary levies) by an imperial decree, the increase in taxes and the ensuing quarrel between the people of Konya and the Çelebi Efendi led to a division of the

157. “mûmâ-ileyhimden Mesnevî-hân Efendi’nin şimdi böylece Konya’ya ‘azîmetine ruhsat verilmek lâzım gelse şeyh olan zâta bir dürlü râhat vermeyüb meşîhatına ve umûruna mûmâna’at edeceği zâhir olmağla” BOA. AE.SABH.I. 16/1378 (n.d.).

158. BOA. C.EV. 348/17654, 4 Zi’l-âhicce 1203 (August 26, 1789).

159. Christoph K. Neumann, “19’uncu Yüzyıla Girerken Konya Mevlevî Asitanesi ile Devlet Arasındaki İlişkiler,” *Selçuk Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi* II, no. 2 (1996): 175–76. The Ottoman Empire, due to its vast geographical area spanning Africa, Asia, and Europe, constructed primary thoroughfares in Anatolia and Rumelia, with an abundance of secondary (*tâlî*) routes providing essential connections. These roads were meticulously laid out to ensure efficient delivery and dissemination of orders and other communications, with strategic halting places (*menzilhânes*) positioned at various intervals in accordance with the conditions of the topography. The *menzils* were also instrumental in the provision of accommodation and supplies for the army during the campaign season. For further information, see Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *Osmanlılarda Ulaşım ve Haberleşme (Menziller)* (İstanbul: İlgi Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 2014).

tax burden into six parts. One-sixth was to be paid by the evkâf-ı Celâliye, while the remaining amount was to be borne by householder subjects (*hâne-keş re'âyâ*) and others previously exempt from taxation. While the evkâf-ı Celâliye's one-sixth share continued to be paid, certain *aşhâb-ı garaż* (malicious individuals) in Konya spread rumors that the evkâf-ı Celâliye was exempt from all taxes and sought to have it subjected to full taxation. During this quarrel, when the *menzil* of Konya became nonoperational, El-Hâc Mehmed Çelebi Efendi was asked to contribute 3,000 *guruş* for its expenses. However, he refused to pay this sum, became displeased with the people of Konya, and relocated to Karahisâr-ı Sâhib, leaving his son Hüseyin Çelebi in charge of his affairs in Konya.¹⁶⁰

In another related document, to resolve the aforementioned tax dispute, it was concluded that local usurpers (*müteğallibe*)—particularly Murtazâ Ođlu—should be barred from interfering in the province's affairs, and that the private steward of the governor of Konya should be dispatched to Karahisâr-ı Sâhib to invite the Çelebi Efendi back to Konya. Pursuant to the preferred language of the document, one of the Sultan's highest aspirations was to fulfill the necessity of respect and reverence for Rûmî's impeccable lineage.¹⁶¹ As can be inferred, in a provincial conflict of this sort, the state apparatus under Selim III opted to prioritize the interests of the Mevlevî order. What is even more striking in this case, however, is that the tax administration responsibilities delegated to local authorities were not perfectly shielded from interference and manipulation by loci of power at the provincial level, against which the Çelebi Efendi was obliged to take action in response. The discord among the various segments of the Konya community and the Çelebi Efendi escalated to such a degree in the subsequent years that a group of mischievous individuals plotted to murder him and his adherents.¹⁶²

The parameters of alliance and antagonism within the triangle comprising the people of Konya, the Çelebi Efendi, and the state apparatus dramatically changed with the onset of the year 1804, as the former two united in opposition to the latter through a concerted act of resistance.¹⁶³ The primary catalyst for the upheaval was the directive issued to Kadî 'Abdurrahman Pasha (d. 1808), the governor of Karaman, to enlist troops on behalf of the New Order army. When he embarked on his conscription mission in Konya, Candarođlu Ebûbekir Agha, a prominent figure from among the local notables of Konya, the Janissaries in Konya, and the Çelebi

160. BOA. C.EV. 347/17612, 6 Muğarrem 1212 (July 11, 1797).

161. "Mevlânâ Celâleddîn-i Rûmî kuddise sırrıhu'l-'azîz hazretlerinin dâ'ire-i fâhire ve sülâle-i tâhireleri hakkında îfâ-yı vâcibe-i ri'âyet ü hürmet aksâ-yı makâsıd-ı pâdişâhâneleri olduđuna binâ'en" BOA. HAT. 1434/58945 (n.d.)

162. Neumann, "19'uncu Yüzyıla Girerken Konya Mevlevî Asitanesi," 168.

163. Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ'dan Sonra Mevlevîlik*, 171–73.

Efendi formed an alliance to impede his progress.¹⁶⁴ On January 12, 1804, separate official letters were dispatched to both ‘Abdurrahman Pasha and the Çelebi Efendi. The detailed letter addressed to the Pasha instructed him to station his forces in the nearby village of Kavak, identified the Janissaries as the principal instigators of the rebellion, and mentioned a communication sent from the Grand Mufti due to the involvement of the Mufti of Konya.¹⁶⁵ Additionally, it emphasized the necessity of ensuring the Çelebi Efendi’s clandestine and secure departure from Konya, urged for a peaceful resolution of the unrest, and recommended the use of force only as a last resort.¹⁶⁶ The letter addressed to the Çelebi Efendi exhorted him, in deference to his noble lineage, to distance himself from the unrest. Given the circulation of rumors that his endorsement fueled resistance to ‘Abdurrahman Pasha’s entry into the city, an imperial decree was issued commanding his temporary relocation to Karahisâr-ı Sâhib or Kütahya to mitigate suspicion and restore order.¹⁶⁷ Another document reveals that a footman (*çûha-dâr*) named Hasan Agha was tasked with discreetly delivering the order for the Çelebi Efendi’s departure from Konya. To obscure his true mission, Hasan Agha was dispatched under the guise of a fee (*bedeliye*) collector.¹⁶⁸

Law and order in Konya could not be restored overnight. Rather than departing from Konya, the Çelebi Efendi chose to remain and actively sought to tarnish the Pasha’s reputation, thereby intensifying the conflict in a bid to sustain the resistance. However, the Tarîkatçı Dede, a senior figure in the Mevlevî hierarchy, and several others who had traveled to Istanbul to deliver the complaint authored by the Çelebi Efendi were reprimanded, arrested, and subsequently exiled, all after being subjected to beatings with logs.¹⁶⁹ Whereupon, another letter was sent to the Çelebi Efendi, reminding him of the Quranic principle of obedience to the *ulu’l-emr* (literally translated as “those in authority”) and advising him against associating with rebels.¹⁷⁰ Undoubtedly, the fact that these letters, all conveying the same message to the Çelebi Efendi, remained unanswered¹⁷¹ is the greatest evidence of the concentration of power in his hands. Meanwhile, a bandit (*eşkıyâ’*) named Deli İsmail, invited by the people of Konya, launched an attack on ‘Abdurrahman Pasha’s army

164. İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, “Nizam-ı Cedid Ricalinden Kadı Abdurrahman Pasa,” *Bellekten* XXXV, no. 138 (1971): 254.

165. For the letter addressed to the Mufti of Konya advising him not to commit misconduct against the Pasha but to endeavor to resolve the crisis, see BOA. HAT. 217/11908, 29 Ramazân 1218 (January 12, 1804).

166. BOA. HAT. 217/11957, 29 Ramazân 1218 (January 12, 1804).

167. BOA. HAT. 215/11835, 29 Ramazân 1218 (January 12, 1804).

168. BOA. HAT. 217/11908, 29 Ramazân 1218 (January 12, 1804).

169. BOA. HAT. 214/11767, 9 Zi’l-ka’de 1218 (February 20, 1804).

170. BOA. HAT. 215/11796, 9 Zi’l-ka’de 1218 (February 20, 1804).

171. For another letter requesting the Çelebi Efendi to leave Konya, see BOA. HAT. 218/11978, 2 Zi’l-âhicce 1218 (March 14, 1804).

with his militia but was repelled.¹⁷² Eventually, the edict sent to ‘Abdurrahman Pasha on March 20, 1804, declared that if the Çelebi Efendi refuses to comply with the order to leave Konya, the city could be forcefully entered with reinforcements led by Cebbarzâde Süleyman Bey. The most eye-catching detail in this document is the mention of the Çelebi Efendi’s potential exile to Cyprus as a worst-case scenario, a provision that was subsequently crossed out, indicating its rejection.¹⁷³ Confronted with this ostensibly insurmountable military menace, the tumult in Konya swiftly subsided. Selim III was greatly relieved that the crisis had been settled without the use of violence and proclaimed that there was no longer a requirement for the Çelebi Efendi to depart from Konya, and as such, he should not face any persecution.¹⁷⁴

It is challenging to explicate how the Çelebi Efendi survived this domestic conflict unscathed. While the notion that Selim III’s profound affinity for the Mevlevî order could serve as a rationale is frequently proffered,¹⁷⁵ I remain skeptical about the explanatory capacity of emotionally charged personal bonds to adequately account for a crisis of such magnitude that engulfed the imperial administration and military forces. Whilst I harbor some reservations against his ‘aristocratic’ characterization of the Rûmî lineage, I am rather inclined to prioritize Christoph Neumann’s emphasis on the unshakable local power of the Çelebi family at the dawn of the nineteenth century.¹⁷⁶ El-Hâc Mehmed Çelebi’s insistence and determination to remain in Konya clearly testify to his negotiating power, which must have enabled him to exercise authority over those within his sphere of influence. Furthermore, the absence of any discernible resistance from other Mevlevî lodges, despite the ongoing strife led by the center of the order, reflects both the Çelebi Efendi’s restricted control over his own representatives and the heterogeneity within the Mevlevî order. In sum, the Çelebi Efendi’s ability to weather this turbulent episode intact throws light on the resilience of entrenched local power that he inherited from his predecessors, whereas the lack of wider Mevlevî dissent illustrates the structural fragmentation of the order—a complexity that defies simplistic interpretations rooted solely in imperial favor or emotional allegiance.

172. BOA. HAT. 218/12010, 2 Zi’l-ħicce 1218 (March 14, 1804).

173. BOA. HAT. 217/11953, 8 Zi’l-ħicce 1218 (March 20, 1804).

174. “Benim vezîrim, bu sûretle olduđuna haz eyledim. Çelebi Efendi’nin ihrâcı artık iktizâ eylemez. Te’kîd olmasım.” BOA. HAT. 39/1950, 16 Muħarrem 1219 (April 27, 1804).

175. Serdar Ösen, “19. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Devlet ve Toplum Hayatında Mevlevîlik” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Kayseri, Erciyes Üniversitesi, 2011), 60. Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ’dan Sonra Mevlevîlik*, 174. Behar, *Kadîm ile Cedîd Arasında*, 177.

176. Neumann, “19’uncu Yüzyıla Girerken Konya Mevlevî Asitanesi,” 179.

3.2 The Bureaucratization of the Sufi Community

The strategic maneuver of the central government against the Janissaries, who managed to build the linchpin of a political front capable of opposing and even replacing the ruling order, persisted during the reign of Mahmud II, a period chiefly marked by the intensification of authoritarianism through the enforcement of autocratic policies in the aftermath of the gradual elimination of the provincial notables.¹⁷⁷ The culmination of this negative stance was, without a doubt, the abolition of the Janissary Corps in 1826.¹⁷⁸ The dramatic downfall of the Janissaries, later known as the “Auspicious Event” (*Vak‘a-yı Hayriyye*), constituted a significant watershed in the broader history of Ottoman reform. The Sultan orchestrated a major crackdown, not only on the Janissary Corps but also on the Bektashi order. Having obtained a fatwa (legal opinion) accusing the Bektashis of heresy, the Ottoman government enacted stringent measures against the Bektashi lodges inclusive of the *hāngāh* (central convent) of Hacı Bektâş-ı Velî (d. 1271[?]).¹⁷⁹ Many were demolished, repurposed as mosques, or transferred to the control of Naqshbandi sheikhs known for their strict commitment to the essential tenets of the Sunna.¹⁸⁰ Additionally, following the purge of the outlawed Bektashis, their moral authority over the army, along with the official privileges and entitlements that had previously been held by them, was passed on to the Mevlevîs.¹⁸¹

A pivotal element of this campaign was the appropriation of lands that had been endowed to the Bektashi order over centuries of its alliance with the Ottoman dynasty.¹⁸² The seizure of the Bektashis’ landed waqfs by the state apparatus was

177. For a concise review of Mahmud II’s reforms, see Şükrü Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 60–64.

178. Mahmud II’s early reign was plagued by relentless political harassment from the Janissaries, leaving him psychologically traumatized and filled with resentment. Despite their defeat in 1826, he remained unconvinced that the threat that they posed had been fully eradicated. Consequently, the Sultan pressed his ministers and officials to remain alert to any indications of Janissary plots after the so-called Auspicious Event of 1826. For a detailed study on Mahmud II’s anxiety about a potential Janissary countermove after 1826, see Mehmet Mert Sunar, “Chasing Janissary Ghosts: Sultan Mahmud II’s Paranoia about a Janissary Uprising after the Abolition of the Janissary Corps,” *Cihannüma: Tarih ve Coğrafya Araştırmaları Dergisi* VIII, no. 1 (2022): 145–68.

179. Seyfettin Erşahin, “Westernization, Mahmud II, and the Islamic Virtue Tradition,” *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 23, no. 2 (2006): 40. Es‘ad Efendi (d. 1848), the eye-witness and the official chronicler, narrates in a highly biased manner how the Bektashi order deviated from Sunni orthodoxy. Sahnâflar Şeyhizâde Es‘ad Efendi, *Üss-i Zafer*, ed. Mehmet Arslan (İstanbul: İbn Haldun Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2023), 222–28.

180. Gündüz, *Osmanlılarda Devlet-Tekke Münâsebetleri*, 152.

181. Kara, *Tekkele ve Zaviyeler*, 160–61.

182. For a recent revisionist study on the confiscation of Bektashi properties, see Hasan Fatih Öyük, “Revisiting the 1826 Bektaşî Purge: Political-Economy of Confiscating Endowment Lands,” *Kadim* 7 (2024): 71–91.

legally rationalized based on the argument that acquiring state-owned lands (*arâzî-i mîrîye*) through a *temlik* grant (or *tahsis*, the assignment of a state-owned land by the sovereign to someone as a *mülk* [freehold]) and converting them into waqf was inherently invalid.¹⁸³ The designation of the *mîrî* lands as private property or waqf was fundamentally untenable. Since the *temlik* grant was unsound, the waqf itself was likewise rendered invalid. Furthermore, even if the *temlik* had been valid; since it was granted to heretics, alluded to as the *ehl-i bid‘a* (followers of illicit innovations), the resulting waqf was deemed invalid and could therefore be legally nullified.¹⁸⁴ As a cautionary remark, it is worthwhile to approach this reasoning presented in *Üss-i Zafer*—a propaganda work targeting the Janissaries and the Bektashis—with a modicum of doubt. Since the law was, and still is, nothing more than the institutionalization of existing social property relations, the legitimacy-making of this sort was merely a variant of the practice of tailoring the rules to suit the sovereign’s needs.

The revenue generated from the confiscated Bektashi waqfs was assumed by the *Manşûre* treasury and allocated to the newly established *Manşûre* army under Mahmud II. Evidence of the Sultan’s primary focus on funding his new military force can be observed in the foundation edict of the Ministry of Imperial Endowments. The opening lines of this edict, which announced that the imperial waqfs would be managed by an institution independent of the *Darbhâne* (the Imperial Mint) with the former *Nişancı* el-Hâc Yûsuf Efendi as its head, were devoted to detailing the expenditures of the rapidly expanding ‘*Aşâkir-i Manşûre-i Muhammediye*.¹⁸⁵

The establishment of the Ministry of Imperial Endowments in tandem with the abolition of the Janissary Corps was far more than a mere stroke of historical coincidence. Following the eradication of the Janissary Corps, a constant pain in the ‘imperial’ neck, the Sultan not only dismantled a formidable oppositional force but also found renewed confidence to penetrate the domain of waqfs, previously overseen by the state’s dignitaries. Mahmud II likely viewed the establishment of the Ministry of Imperial Endowments as a means to curtail the overarching influence of

183. The *mîrî* lands that were premeditatedly alienated by the sovereign in the form of *temlik* with the purpose of turning them into waqf were designated as the *vakf-ı irşâdî* and put under the category of *evkâf-ı gayri sahiha* (unsound waqfs). See Ömer Hilmi Efendi, *İthâfü’l-Ahlâf Fî Ahkâmi’l-Evkâf*, 39.

184. Sahhâflar Şeyhizâde Es‘ad Efendi, *Üss-i Zafer*, 235.

185. “Bi-hamdillâhi ta‘âlâ tertîb ve tanzîmine muvaffak olunup bir taraftan tevfir ve teksîrine bakılmakda olan ‘Asâkir-i Mansûre-i Muhammediyye’nin masârifâtı mukâbili karşuluk îrâd tedârik olunmadıkça ne derece ‘usret çekileceği zâhir ve derkâr olduğuna binâen [...] evkâf dahi Darbhâne’den ayrılıp başkaca idâre olunmak üzere “Evkâf-ı Hümâyûn Nezâreti” unvanıyla nişancı-ı sâbık el-Hâc Yûsuf Efendi’ye...” BOA. HAT. 290/17362 (1242/1826). For this imperial edict’s transliteration, see Seyit Ali Kahraman, *Evkâf-ı Hümâyûn Nezâreti* (İstanbul: Kitabevi Yayınları, 2006), 108–9.

the ulama, another alternative power base, as its expansion paralleled the strengthening of his absolutist ambitions.¹⁸⁶ The ulama had enjoyed a relatively high degree of economic autonomy vis-à-vis the Ottoman government, thanks to the revenue-generating waqf assets, which were at their disposal and amounted to huge sums.¹⁸⁷ Therefore, the Sultan tackled two objectives at once: he not only made the ulama more dependent on the central authority but also appropriated an important source of revenue within his grasp.

The Ministry of Imperial Endowments came to occupy a paramount role as the institutional embodiment of the Ottoman state's control over waqf property. Functioning as the quintessential centralizing agent of the Ottoman waqf administration, it cultivated an exclusive sphere of state coercion through its unyielding grip on taxation and legislation, thereby reinforcing the government's hegemony in the realm of waqf affairs. However, this strategic concentration ultimately proved to be a double-edged sword in the long run. As the economic output generated by waqf assets was channeled into the alleviation of financial deficits prevalent in a multitude of bureaucratic branches, scant attention was devoted to the vital task of tending to the physical rehabilitation and preservation of waqf properties as well as addressing the fundamental requisites of social coteries, notably Sufis, whose livelihoods were intricately interwoven with the very fabric of these waqfs.¹⁸⁸

The Ottoman government's policy of exercising direct control over Bektashi properties was in due course extended to encompass the waqf revenues of all Sufi orders throughout the empire. An official decree was issued in 1840, stipulating that these revenues would no longer be administered independently but would instead be subject to tax (tithe) collection by government-appointed agents.¹⁸⁹ Additionally, one of the core objectives of the Tanzimat project was to halt unapproved governmental expenditure on the sustenance of Sufi lodges, thereby turning the dervish community into a state-dependent cohort of individuals receiving regular salaries.¹⁹⁰

186. Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), 93. Ali Akyıldız, *Osmanlı Bürokrasisi ve Modernleşme* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2012), 54.

187. For principal state functionaries, local magnates, and the ulama, the waqf system was a tool to buttress and justify their investments towards "dynastization". One remarkable specimen was Grand Mufti Feyzullah Efendi's (d. 1703) efforts to conserve his patrimony through the operationalization of waqfs granted by the sultan as *temlik*. Nizri, *Ottoman High Politics and the Ulema Household*, 191.

188. John R. Barnes, *An Introduction to Religious Foundations in the Ottoman Empire* (Leiden: Brill, 1987), 73–86. Nazif Öztürk, *Türk Yenileşme Tarihi Çerçevesinde Vakıf Müessesesi* (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 1995), 68–75. Murat Çizakça, *A History of Philanthropic Foundations* (İstanbul: Boğaziçi University Press, 2000), 82–86. Akgündüz, *İslâm Hukukunda ve Osmanlı Tatbikatında Vakıf Müessesesi*, 282–86.

189. Barnes, *An Introduction to Religious Foundations in the Ottoman Empire*, 92.

190. Muharrem Varol, "Bektaşiliğin İlgası Sonrasında Osmanlı Devleti'nin Tarikat Politikaları (1826-1866)" (Ph.D. Dissertation, İstanbul, Marmara Üniversitesi, 2011), 94–116.

Brian Silverstein lays heavy stress upon the mechanisms introduced in the nineteenth century to broaden “the optic and practice of governmentality” through which Sufi orders would be incorporated into both the new regime of knowledge and the refurbished technologies of power.¹⁹¹ In other words, Sufi orders would be beholden to a systematic process of instilling discipline through the implementation of rationalized procedures, thereby becoming a bureaucratic extension of the restructured political ideology. To give a concrete illustration, by the imperial decrees issued in 1812 and 1836, it was made attainable for the *Bāb-ı Meşihat* (the Office of the Grand Mufti) as an accredited representative of the state apparatus to intervene in the internal affairs of Sufi orders. The former was prompted by a petition from the Sa’dî order that unmasked the abuse of the Sa’dî lodges by unqualified (*nā-ehil*) individuals. In the decree of 1812 that specifically addressed Muhammed Emîn Efendi (d. 1836), the *pōst-niṣn* of the ‘Abdüsselâm Lodge in Istanbul,¹⁹² as the main interlocutor, the Ottoman government proclaimed three major regulations designed to be uniformly applied to all Sufi orders. First, whenever possible, the lodge where the eponym (the *Pīr*, founder, or patron saint) of the order is interred should be recognized as the central lodge (*āsitāne*) to which all other lodges of the same order are affiliated. The sheikh of this central lodge is held responsible for the management and organization of all associated lodges. Second, contrary to the conventional practice that authorized the incumbent sheikh to appoint his own successor, sheikh positions left vacant due to the death or departure of their previous holders should be filled through appointments made by the central lodge, with the opinion of the Grand Mufti taken into consideration. This verdict is of particular significance since it empowered the state apparatus to wield its influence over Sufi orders through the delegated authority of the Grand Mufti, a key component of the broader bureaucratic web. To put it another way, it was a major step towards the formal bureaucratization of Sufi orders. Lastly, the appointment of sheikhs should be based on the candidates’ competence, with rigorous measures in place to prevent the selection of unqualified candidates through corrupt practices, such as bribery or the offering of gifts.¹⁹³ As

191. Brian Silverstein, *Islam and Modernity in Turkey* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 67.

192. Despite not being the oldest and most senior lodge of the order in Istanbul (that distinction belonging to the Lâgarî Lodge in Eyüp-Taşlıburun), the Abdüsselâm Lodge has been acknowledged as the Sa’dî central lodge. Baha Tanman, “Abdüsselâm Tekkesi,” in *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 1988), 1:303.

193. BOA. C.EV. 238/11874, Evâhîr-i Cumâde’l-âhîre 1227 (July 1812). What is surprisingly noteworthy is the inclusion of a fourth verdict, by Mustafa Kara and those who have directly quoted him like Brian Silverstein, Sezai Küçük, and Serdar Ösen, which stressed the transfer of the supervision of lodge waqfs to the Ministry of Imperial Endowments. Given that the Ministry was established in 1826, it is impossible for such a verdict to be included in an imperial decree dated 1812. The flagrant mistake made by Kara and his followers can be traced in multiple stages. It is likely that Kara’s inclusion of a fourth verdict in this imperial decree stems from a misreading of İrfan Gündüz’s 1983 work entitled *Osmanlılarda Devlet-Tekke Münâsebetleri*, as Gündüz outlines the decisions derived from this decree in three consecutive articles. He then proceeds directly to the

demonstrated in the register numbered 6290/1 among the *Kepeci Tasnifi* registers in the Ottoman Archive, the practice of central lodge continued until the final quarter of the nineteenth century. An examination of the status of 252 dervish lodges in Istanbul between 1283/1866 and 1297/1882 revealed that they were under the auspices of 35 central lodges.¹⁹⁴

The decree of 1836, likewise, attempted to subject Sufi orders to more stringent supervision and administrative control, aligning with a broader political project to render an increasing array of micro-level social practices and institutions more visible and systematically calculable. Central to this effort was the requirement that these orders be officially registered, thereby embedding them within the legal and regulatory framework of the state apparatus. According to the decree, members of each order were instructed to don attire specific to their respective affiliation, thereby reinforcing visible markers of identity and organizational distinction. Additionally, every dervish was required to carry identity documentation authenticated by the seal and signature of their sheikh to ensure traceability and accountability. The conferment of *icāzet-nāme*, signifying authoritative knowledge of a particular order's traditions, was to be restricted to qualified individuals, with decisions subject to the collective judgment of multiple sheikhs rather than a single authority. In the appointment of sheikhs, careful consideration was prescribed to ascertain that the candidate belonged to the order specified in the relevant waqf deeds, while the practice of assigning multiple sheikh positions to a single individual was explicitly prohibited. Furthermore, the decree forbade the public display of lodge properties, including banners, flags, and musical instruments, even for traditional ceremonies associated with pilgrimages to Mecca. Most importantly perhaps, individuals who participated solely in the *zīkr-i cehrī* and the *devrān*, without engaging in canonical worship or core ritual recitations like *ṣalāt-ı şerīfe* (vocal invocation of God's bene-

establishment of the Ministry of Imperial Endowments, highlighting the expanding scope of state intervention. After expressing his views on the various functions of this institution, he introduces article 4, where he explains that lodge waqfs were no longer managed by independent trustees but were instead placed under direct state control. Finally, he goes on to introduce article 5, which discusses the degeneration of the Bektashi order due to Shiite infiltration. As can be clearly gauged, articles 4 and 5 are entirely devoted to post-1826 developments and have nothing to do with the 1812 decree. Kara, probably overlooking article 5, included only the first four articles in his 1985 paper entitled "Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Tasavvuf ve Tarikatlar." This mistake has not been corrected in the book that I cited earlier, *Metinlerle Osmanlılarda Tasavvuf ve Tarikatlar*, which is a compilation that includes reprinted versions of the relevant sections from his 1985 paper. Silverstein, in turn, quoting Kara directly, translates these four articles, unperturbed by the historical inconsistency. Due to citing Kara without critique, Sezai Küçük and Serdar Ösen, too, fall into the same trap in their doctoral dissertations. It is quite disappointing to encounter such a methodological flaw, arising from a failure to examine the primary source of research, in the works of professional scholars. See Silverstein, *Islam and Modernity in Turkey*, 73. Kara, *Metinlerle Osmanlılarda Tasavvuf ve Tarikatlar*, 242. Küçük, "XIX. Asırda Mevlevîlik ve Mevlevîler," 302. Ösen, "19. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Devlet ve Toplum Hayatında Mevlevîlik," 72.

194. BOA. KK.d. 6290/1. See also Gündüz, *Osmanlılarda Devlet-Tekke Münâsebetleri*, 197.

diction on Prophet Muhammad), were to be excluded from the order's activities, reflecting a commitment to preserving the spiritual rigor and the doctrinal integrity of Sufi practices.¹⁹⁵

Foucauldian concepts such as biopolitics and the panoptic nature of state mechanisms provide a cogent lens through which to interpret the wider ramifications of the 1836 decree. In the first place, the requirement for dervishes to wear distinct garb and carry identity papers authenticated by their sheikhs exemplifies a strategy of making individuals legible to governmental structures. Such measures resonate with the notion of panoptic surveillance and the creation of a population that is classified, monitored, and regulated.¹⁹⁶ By codifying external markers of affiliation, the state apparatus could extend its gaze into the social fabric, rendering even spiritual communities discernible and manageable within an overarching system of bureaucratic control. Moreover, the regulation that multiple sheikhs must approve the conferral of *icāzet-nāme* represents a disciplinary technique, where knowledge production and the credentialing of spiritual authority are subject to diffuse oversight rather than localized, charismatic power. This shift diminishes the autonomy of individual sheikhs and integrates Sufi orders into a network of power-knowledge relations.¹⁹⁷ Foucault's concept of docile bodies—subjects moulded through regimes of control—becomes manifest in the state's prohibition on participation by those seeking only the performative aspects of the Sufi path.¹⁹⁸ By excluding those uninterested in core ritual obligations, the decree enforces a regime of normative spiritual practice, fostering a disciplined religious subjectivity aligned with state-sanctioned orthodoxy. The prohibition on the public display of lodge items underscores the idea of spatial enclosure and control over ritual objects as instruments of symbolic power. Limiting the mobility of ceremonial paraphernalia signals an attempt to contain spiritual authority within prescribed institutional boundaries, further reinforcing the state's regulatory grip. In sum, the decree is the output of a state-driven project that seeks to codify, regulate, and discipline Sufi communities to enhance legibility, ensure conformity, and extend sovereign control into the domain of faith. Through these measures, Sufi orders were transformed from autonomous spiritual entities into

195. BOA. C.EV. 335/18014, 29 Şafer 1252 (June 15, 1836).

196. "With the emergence of political economy, with the introduction of the restrictive principle in governmental practice itself, an important substitution, or doubling rather, is carried out, since the subjects of right on which political sovereignty is exercised appear as a population that a government must manage." Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978-79*, ed. Michel Senellart (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 22.

197. "Knowledge and power are integrated with one another, and there is no point in dreaming of a time when knowledge will cease to depend on power." Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 52.

198. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 135–69.

components of a bureaucratically managed and ideologically oriented social order.

However, these radical steps towards the legislative formalization of Sufi orders by the *raison d'état* should not be hastily viewed as purely top-down interventions. The imperial decrees were not only a typical modern state reflex to control the public sphere, of which Sufis were a part, but also a response to complaints from within the Sufi coterie. From the late eighteenth century onwards, the problem of “cradle sheikhs” or *evlādiyyet* (the appointment of a son, upon the death of a *pōst-niṣān*, regardless of his youth or lack of knowledge and credentials) was the primary topic of heated debates among Sufis.¹⁹⁹ This hereditary transmission of leadership within Sufi lodges, often without regard to the recipient’s qualifications or spiritual maturity, was criticized for leading to the decline or corruption of Sufi institutions. It was reflective of concerns about nepotism and the weakening of spiritual authority due to the prioritization of lineage over merit.²⁰⁰ Hence, it might be inferred from this bottom-up aspect that the Sufi masters in need of fixing issues at variance with the long-established mystical tradition were prone to negotiate reform proposals.

On the other hand, the wide-ranging structural and institutional reform program inaugurated by Mahmud II, who was determined to eliminate all stumbling blocks such as the Janissary Corps, the provincial notables, and the ulama, inevitably provoked antagonism and alienation among the Muslim population. The reportedly draconian and unjust innovations incited the Muslims to call Mahmud II “the Infidel Sultan” even though he was devoted to stoking religious zeal.²⁰¹ Nevertheless, the Mevlevîs did not seem to be affected by the popular outrage; instead, they tightened their adherence to the Sultan, thereby delivering the much-needed legitimate underpinning. Mahmud II’s cordial affiliation with the Mevlevîs could be traced through the medium of a contemporary source, the *Defter-i Dervîṣân* (the diaries of the Yenikapı Mevlevî Lodge). As Abdülbâki Nâsır Dede narrated, the Sultan frequented the Mevlevî lodges in Istanbul for certain occasions such as the recitation of the Quran and the ceremony of whirling, and granted gifts and donations. He also had the Yenikapı Mevlevî Lodge and Rûmî’s shrine in Konya repaired.²⁰² Furthermore, although it still remains a mystery, some contemporary sources, as

199. For a *Celvetî* lodge where the practice of cradle sheikhship was observed to have continued for more than a century and a half, see Salih Çift, “İstanbul’un Tasavvuf Hayatını Besleyen Bursa Merkezli Bir Celvetî Dergâhı: Selâmî Ali Efendi Tekkesi,” *Uludağ Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 16, no. 1 (2007): 153–70.

200. In 1913, it was also Sufis who proposed to solve the problems of the cradle sheikhship by establishing an instructive institution called the *Medresetü'l-Meşâyih*. Kara, *Metinlerle Osmanlılarda Tasavvuf ve Tarikatlar*, 294.

201. Frederick E Anscombe, “Islam and the Age of Ottoman Reform,” *Past & Present*, no. 208 (2010): 188.

202. Bayram Ali Kaya and Sezai Küçük, eds., *Defter-i Dervîṣân: Yenikapı Mevlevîhânesi Günlükleri* (İstanbul: Zeytinburnu Belediyesi Kültür Yayınları, 2011), 147, 303, 345.

reported by Frederick Hasluck, implied that Mahmud II was girded with the sword by a Mevlevî sheikh.²⁰³ The main reason for the wide circulation of this assumption must have been the pervasive dissemination of the unsubstantiated legend that the girding ceremony was the exclusive prerogative of the Mevlevîs all along. According to contemporary chronicles by Câbî Ömer Efendi²⁰⁴ (d. 1814[?]) and Şânîzâde Mehmed Atâullah Efendi²⁰⁵ (d. 1826), Mahmud II was girded by then Nakîbü'l-eşrâf Dürrîzâde 'Abdullah Efendi (d. 1828), who would subsequently become the Grand Mufti, although they report slightly different dates for the girding ceremony.

A vivid anecdote narrated by İhtifalci Mehmed Ziyâ (d. 1930), a disciple of Mehmed Celâleddîn Dede (d. 1908), the son and successor of 'Osmân Selâhaddîn Dede (d. 1887), contains candid dialogues indicative of Mahmud II's professed intimacy with the Mevlevîs:

One snowy and stormy day, Sultan Mahmud, accompanied by Prince Abdülmecid and Prince Abdülaziz, paid a visit to the Yenikapı Mevlevî Lodge. As Sheikh 'Osmân, in accordance with the time-honored custom, rushed out with incense burners to greet them, Sultan Mahmud remarked with a dervish-like tone, "Sheikh Efendi, it is your heart that brought us here in this weather. If it had been left to these two (gesturing toward the princes), they would not have come." Years later, after ascending the throne, Sultan Abdülmecid returned to the lodge on another snowy day. As Sheikh 'Osmân greeted him once more, the Sultan echoed his father's words, saying, "Sheikh Efendi, my father once said, 'If it were up to them, they would not come.' So, tell me—did I manage to come after all?"²⁰⁶

It is unsurprising to encounter this anecdote, which illustrates the esteem that Mahmud II and his successors accorded to the Mevlevî order, in the oeuvre of an author who was himself a Mevlevî devotee. Mehmed Ziyâ recounts similar stories, having received them orally within the Mevlevî circle to which he belonged. Due to its relatively contemporary nature, this oeuvre has often been cited by scholars without

203. Hasluck postulates that the Mevlevîs cultivated a greater propensity towards tolerance and enlightenment than the ulama party, which always upheld the legal superiority of Muslims intimidated by Mahmud II. That is why the Sultan assisted and allied with them. Frederick W. Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1929), 613–22.

204. Câbî Ömer Efendi, *Câbî Târîhi (Târîh-i Sultân Selîm-i Sâlis ve Mahmûd-ı Sâni)*, ed. Mehmet Ali Beyhan, vol. I (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2003), 191.

205. Şânîzâde Mehmed Atâullah Efendi, *Şânîzâde Târîhi*, ed. Ziya Yılmaz, vol. I (İstanbul: Çamlıca Yayınları, 2008), 47–48.

206. Mehmed Ziyâ, *Merâkiz-i Mühimme-i Mevleviyye'den Yenikapı Mevlevîhânesi* (Dârü'l-hilâfeti'l-'aliyye, 1329), 182. For the transliterated publication of this work, see Mehmet Ziya, *Yenikapı Mevlevîhanesi*, ed. Yavuz Senemoğlu, Tercüman 1001 Temel Eser 86 (İstanbul: Tercüman Gazetesi, 1970).

source-criticism.²⁰⁷ However, a simple comparison of the birth and death dates of the key figures in the account raises serious doubts about its plausibility. ‘Osmân Selâhaddîn Dede, to whom Mahmud II is presented to have been devoted, was born in March 1, 1820,²⁰⁸ while the Sultan died in June 28, 1839. Even assuming that the visit occurred in 1839, it strains credulity to suggest that Mahmud II could have developed a profound attachment to a sheikh who would have been only 19 years old at the time. Therefore, while indulging in this highly romanticized narrative, shrouded in a mist that blurs the boundaries between reality and fantasy, one cannot help but analytically assess the rather marginal likelihood of this visit within the broader realm of possibilities.

The Tanzimat era, inaugurated by the Gülhane Edict in 1839, whose tenets were firmly grounded in Muslim thought and political understanding, as highlighted by Butrus Abu Manneh,²⁰⁹ somewhat inhibited the radicalism of Mahmud II. However, the implementation of state-driven control-intensive policies remained persistent. The Sublime Porte (*Bâb-ı ‘Âlî*) halted the escalating tensions against the Bektashi and Melâmî orders, and to a certain extent rehabilitated their lodges.²¹⁰ Yet, through the medium of the *Meclis-i Vâlâ*, the imperial legislative and decision-taking council that was also responsible for providing financial assistance and supplies to the dervish lodges, the Ottoman government maintained a vigilant audit of their activities.²¹¹

The pinnacle of the formal bureaucratization of Sufi orders was the establishment of the *Meclis-i Meşâyih* (the Assembly of Sheikhs) in November 15, 1866.²¹² This institution, which organized the dervish lodges within the empire into a hierarchical structure under a central supervisory authority, was directly affiliated with the *Bâb-ı Meşihat*. The relegation of the Sufi community to the shadow of the ulama cadres was a decisive blow to the mystical autonomy.²¹³ According to a petition penned by Grand Mufti Mehmed Refik Efendi (d. 1871), the establishment of the Assembly

207. Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ’dan Sonra Mevlevîlik*, 271. Küçük, “XIX. Asırda Mevlevîlik ve Mevlevîler,” 308.

208. Hüseyin Vassaf, *Sefîne-i Evliyâ*, ed. Mehmet Akkuş and Ali Yılmaz, vol. 5 (İstanbul: Kitabevi Yayınları, 2006), 240.

209. Butrus Abu-Manneh, “The Islamic Roots of the Gülhane Rescript,” *Die Welt Des Islams* 34 (November 1994): 173–203.

210. For an in-depth study on the restoration of the Bektashi order especially with the arrival of the Tanzimat period, see Özkan Karabulut, “The Rehabilitation of the Bektashi Order (1826-1876)” (Master Thesis, İstanbul, Sabancı University, 2017).

211. İlber Ortaylı, “The Policy of the Sublime-Porte towards Naqshbandîs and Other Tariqas during the Tanzimat Period,” in *Naqshbandîs in Western and Central Asia*, ed. Elisabeth Özdalga (İstanbul: Swedish Research Institute, 1997), 71.

212. BOA. İ.MVL. 563/25320-4, 7 Receb 1283 (November 15, 1866).

213. İlhami Yurdakul, *Osmanlı İlmîye Merkez Teşkilâtı’nda Reform (1826-1876)* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2008), 208–14.

had actually commenced two years prior; however, it did not achieve full functionality and a comprehensive organizational structure until 1866.²¹⁴ Another significant point of ambiguity concerning the Assembly pertains to the identity of its first executive chief. According to Bilgin Aydın, the much-celebrated and widely revered ‘Osmân Selâhaddîn Dede, the *pōst-niṣīn* of the Yenikapı Mevlevî Lodge, assumed the position. This appointment, endorsed by Sultan Abdülaziz (r. 1861-1876)—himself a Mevlevî sympathizer and an accomplished reed-flute player—represented a deliberate continuation of the policy initiated by Mahmud II to replace the Bektaşis with the Mevlevîs.²¹⁵ Feyzullah Efendi (d. 1867), the Hâlidî sheikh of the Murad Molla Lodge, was also claimed to be the first executive chief.²¹⁶ However, as Muharrem Varol rightfully pointed out, the foundational documents of the Assembly neither specify an executive chief nor indicate a hierarchical structure among the select seven members, who were collectively referred to as the *ṣuleḫā-yı meṣāyih* (virtuous sheikhs).²¹⁷ That being said, notwithstanding the oddity of its absence in the yearbooks (*sāl-nāme*) of 1283/1866 and 1284/1867, the Assembly of Sheikhs was mentioned in the *‘ilmiyye* section in the yearbook dated 1285/1868, where ‘Osmân Selâhaddîn Dede was described as the executive chief.²¹⁸ Therefore, while the claim that Sheikh ‘Osmân held this privileged role in 1866, before the creation of the position for an executive chief, is inaccurate, it would not be misleading to assert that, insofar as available archival evidence can be trusted, he was indeed ‘technically’ the first executive chief to whom this title was formally attributed after the position was established.

The establishment of the Assembly represented a revolutionary departure from the deep-seated convention concerning the succession of sheikhdom. What had once been an internal affair handled independently by Sufi orders was now irrevocably subsumed under state authority, with the government enforcing its surveillance through explicitly defined precepts.²¹⁹ The initial provisions of the Assembly’s founding charter were intended to regulate the complexities and the multiple contin-

214. BOA. İ.MVL. 563/25320-2, 27 Cumāde’l-āḫire 1283 (November 6, 1866).

215. Bilgin Aydın, “Osmanlı Devleti’nde Tekkeler Reformu ve Meclis-i Meṣāyih’in Şeyhülislâmlık’a Bağlı Olarak Kuruluşu, Faaliyetleri ve Arşivi,” *İstanbul Araştırmaları* 7 (1998): 95.

216. Gündüz, *Osmanlılarda Devlet-Tekke Münâsebetleri*, 209.

217. Muharrem Varol, “Osmanlı Devleti’nin Tarikatları Denetleme Siyaseti ve Meclis-i Meṣāyih’in Bilinen Ancak Bulunamayan İki Nizamnâmesi,” *Türk Kültürü İncelemeleri Dergisi* 23 (2010): 44. The seven members in question were as follows: Sheikh Feyzullah Efendi of the Murad Molla Lodge, Sheikh ‘Osmân Efendi of the Yenikapı Mevlevî Lodge, Sheikh Şerâfeddîn Efendi of the Kâdirî Lodge, Sheikh Nüreddîn Efendi of the Merkez Efendi Lodge, Sheikh ‘Atâ Efendi of the Südlüce Lodge, Sheikh Hoca Mustafâ Efendi of the Eyyübî Lodge, and Sheikh Muhyiddîn Efendi of the Nasûhî Lodge. Thus, the Assembly was composed of the sheikhs from the Naqshbandi, Mevlevî, Kâdirî, Halvetî, Sa’dî, and Sünbülî orders. See BOA. İ.MVL. 563/25320-1.

218. Varol, 45.

219. Kara, *Tekkeler ve Zaviyeler*, 232–41.

gencies of succession. Specific articles were designated for the dervish lodges where sheikhs were childless, where the sheikhdom was jointly held, or where multiple children vied for succession. Each scenario was addressed with tailored regulations, emphasizing that the Assembly would play a decisive role in evaluating the competence and merit of prospective successors. Furthermore, the Assembly was obligated to collaborate with the Ministry of Imperial Endowments in the appointment process, as the administration of waqf revenues and the tutelage for the spiritual development of Sufi disciples would be entrusted to a sheikh who was expected to demonstrate proficiency in both the *ẓāhir* (external/material) and *bāṭin* (internal/spiritual) realms. The dress code prescribed in the 1836 decree was reaffirmed, underscoring the prohibition of imposters who donned the attire of sheikhs without holding the position.

The Assembly was also vested with somewhat judicial responsibilities, particularly in identifying breaches of the sharia and *tarīqa* etiquette within the dervish lodges. However, the Office of the Grand Mufti was ultimately positioned as the supreme authority, superseding this vaguely judicial function. Additionally, the Assembly was charged with verifying the genealogical and spiritual pedigrees of Sufis arriving in Istanbul to claim a vacant post. This practice is symptomatic of the modern state's typical strategy of integrating social communities into its heteronomous regime through meticulous record-keeping. Given the fluid, decentralized, and obscure nature of Sufi networking, the unrecorded Sufis could be seen as potential fomenters of resistance, intentionally or unintentionally subverting the homogenizing tendencies of imperial governance.

One of the most striking elements of the charter is its dedicated article concerning the Mevlevî order. Unlike other Sufi orders, it was explicitly stated that all intra-*tarīqa* practices of the Mevlevîs required the approval of the Çelebi Efendi, who resided in the Konya Mevlânâ Lodge. Therefore, the Mevlevîs were granted immunity from the new regulations (*uṣûl-ı cedīd*) introduced with the establishment of the Assembly. While the Assembly retained the authority to intervene in legal cases involving Mevlevî dervishes, the execution of any potential disciplinary measures was contingent upon the consultation of the Çelebi Efendi.²²⁰ Needless to say, this specific article not only confirms the continued, albeit limited, autonomy of the Mevlevîs but also reflects their reinforced alliance with the state apparatus.

Whereas some of the Hâlidîs became embroiled in some protest movements and plots like the *Ḳuleli Vak'ası* of 1859²²¹ because of observing deviations from the sharia

220. For the transliterated version of the founding charter, see Varol, "Osmanlı Devleti'nin Tarikatları Denetleme Siyaseti," 60–63.

221. The *Ḳuleli Vak'ası* was a failed conspiracy against the rule of Sultan Abdülmecid in 1859. For

in Tanzimat reforms,²²² the Mevlevîs sided with the Ottoman government, thereby adeptly leveraging this allegiance to secure and further amplify their own prosperity and influence. Briefly put, the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century saw the unfolding of the Mevlevîs' heyday in terms of their positive reception by the imperial court and the Sublime Porte. The primary role anticipated from the urban, well-educated, and culturally sophisticated Mevlevî party appears to have been to furnish a legitimizing basis for the execution of reformist breakthroughs. They played their part and put their stamp upon the functioning of the state apparatus by forging a circle of sympathizers made up of courtiers and high-ranking officials. Metaphorically speaking, while the modern Ottoman bureaucracy was swinging over Sufi orders like the sword of Damocles, the Mevlevîs won the day.

3.3 The Hamidian Regime: The Unfortunate Turn of Historical Contingency

The available literature on Abdülhamid II's (r. 1876-1909) orientation towards Sufi orders is somewhat in agreement on the Sultan's ambitious project to fortify the crumbling empire from within by exploiting the social prestige and gravity of the Sufi masters with diverse backgrounds.²²³ Spencer Trimingham places a special emphasis upon the Sultan's well-calculated and remarkably instrumental future projection aimed at the ideal of the unification of Islam (*ittihād-ı İslām*) by stressing the potentiality of Sufi orders to "transcend all boundaries of political loyalties within Islam."²²⁴ The intimate and frequent contacts with the Sufi leaders, therefore, turned out to be a practical means of propaganda for the diffusion of the Sultan's official ideology. In Selim Deringil's terms, the functionality of Sufism in "galvanizing grass-root support and reinforcing legitimacy" inasmuch as controlled by the central

the earliest study on this case, see Uluğ İğdemir, *Kuleli Vak'ası Hakkında Bir Araştırma* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1937).

222. Rüya Kılıç, "Osmanlı Devleti'nde Yönetim-Nakşibendi İlişkinine Farklı Bir Bakış: Hâlidî Sürgünleri," *Tasavvuf: İlmî ve Akademik Araştırma Dergisi* VII, no. 17 (2006): 113.

223. Gündüz, *Osmanlılarda Devlet-Tekke Münâsebetleri*, 218. Kara, *Metinlerle Osmanlılarda Tasavvuf ve Tarikatlar*, 271. Küçük, "XIX. Asırda Mevlevîlik ve Mevlevîler," 322. Cezmi Eraslan, *II. Abdülhamid ve İslam Birliği: Osmanlı Devleti'nin İslam Siyaseti, 1856-1908* (İstanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat, 2019), 210–11. Hür Mahmut Yücer, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Tasavvuf (19. Yüzyıl)* (İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2021), 713. "Sultan Abdülhamid was anxious to conciliate, not alienate, the *tarîqa* leaders. He declined to use armed force against religious notables and was generally reluctant to pursue radical measures that might offend them." Gökhan Çetinsaya, "The Caliph and the Shaykhs: Abdülhamid II's Policy towards the Qadiriyya of Mosul," in *Ottoman Reform and Muslim Regeneration: Studies in Honor of Butrus Abu-Manneh*, ed. Itzhak Weismann and Fruma Zachs (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005), 105.

224. Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 126.

authority was an invaluable weapon.²²⁵ Among the most eminent Sufi protagonists in proximity to the Hamidian regime were the Şâzelî-Medenî sheikh, Muhammed Zâfir Efendi²²⁶ (d. 1903) of North African descent, and the Rifâ'î sheikh, Ebu'l-Hudâ es-Sayyâdî²²⁷ (d. 1909) born in Aleppo. The fact that both authoritative figures were of Arab origin appears to align with the Sultan's broader political strategy of unifying his Muslim subjects across the Middle East and North Africa by buttressing his image as the undisputed divine Caliph. Both sheikhs, located in the vicinity of the Yıldız Palace as an outward manifestation of the Sultan's obsession with surveillance, penned treatises propagating for Abdülhamid II's caliphate, thereby providing a legitimate groundwork for his absolutist reign.²²⁸

Nevertheless, this over-exploited, one-dimensional representation stems from a state-centered perspective tied to the person of the Sultan, who was in pursuit of pragmatic remedies to navigate the perils posed by global imperialist agendas. It is thus deprived of the potency to unravel the complex interplay between the state apparatus and Sufi orders within the context of domestic politics. As İsmail Kara points out, Abdülhamid II's communication with other Sufi orders rooted in the core geography of the Ottoman Empire was weak, occasionally detached, and recurrently quite problematic.²²⁹ Perhaps the zenith and the most crystallized variant of this

225. Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1999), 65.

226. According to Hüseyin Vassaf (d. 1929), a renowned biographer of the Sufi sheikhs at the turn of the twentieth century, the Sultan became a disciple of Sheikh Muhammed Zâfir during his principedom. According to Ayşe Osmanoğlu (d. 1960), the daughter of Abdülhamid II, however, the Sultan pledged spiritual fealty to Sheikh Hamza Zâfir (d. 1904), Sheikh Muhammed Zâfir's brother. A letter allegedly written by the Sultan in 1912 to another Şâzelî sheikh Mahmûd Ebu's-Şâmât (d. 1922) was later presented as evidence of his discipleship. Since no other documentary evidence exists, it is prudent to approach Osmanoğlu's narrative with critical distance, particularly considering that she was only ten years old in 1903 when Sheikh Zâfir passed away. What is more, it was revealed by Tufan Buzpınar that the aforementioned letter utilized even by prominent scholars like Kemal Karpat is fake. Hüseyin Vassaf, *Sefîne-i Evliyâ*, ed. Mehmet Akkuş and Ali Yılmaz, vol. 1 (İstanbul: Kitabevi Yayınları, 2006), 308. Ayşe Osmanoğlu, *Babam Sultan Abdülhamid* (İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2019), 28. Kemal Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 194–95. Tufan Buzpınar, *Hilafet ve Saltanat: II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Halîfelik ve Araplar* (İstanbul: Alfa, 2016), 173–78.

227. For various analyses of the Rifâ'î sheikh, see Butrus Abu-Manneh, "Abdülhamid II and Shaikh Abulhuda Al-Sayyadi," *Middle Eastern Studies* 15, no. 2 (1979): 131–53. Thomas Eich, "The Forgotten Salafi: Abû'l-Hudâ As-Sayyâdî," *Die Welt Des Islams* 43, no. 1 (2003): 61–87. Muharrem Varol, "Rasputinleştirilen Bir Şeyh: Ebû'l-Huda Sayyadî," in *Tarihimizden Portreler: Osmanlı Kimliği*, ed. Zekeriya Kurşun and Haydar Çoruh (İstanbul: Ortadoğu ve Afrika Araştırmacıları Derneği, 2013), 57–81.

228. The treatises penned by Sheikh Zâfir Efendi involving praise and sublimation of Abdülhamid II's caliphate were *El-Envarü'l-Kudsîyye fi tenzihî turukî'l-kavmi'l-aliyye and En-Nuru's-satî' ve'l-Bürhanü'l-katî'*. Buzpınar, *Hilafet ve Saltanat*, 187. For the two treatises namely *Da'îr-Resâd li Sebîli'l-İttihad ve'l-İnkıyâd* and *En-Nefhatü'n-Nebeviyye fi Hidmeti'l-Hilâfeti'l-Hamidîyyeti'l-Osmaniyye* penned by Ebu'l-Hudâ es-Sayyâdî particularly for the legitimation of the caliphate, see İsmail Kara, ed., *Hilafet Risaleleri*, vol. I (İstanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2021), 161–251.

229. İsmail Kara, *Müslüman Kalarak Avrupalı Olmak* (İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2019), 174.

anomaly is particularly the Istanbulite Mevlevîs' failure to be hard-wired into the Hamidian regime, which was eventually followed by their partial incorporation into the dissident flank represented by the Young Turks at the time. Falling out of the imperial grace was an unfortunate turn for the Mevlevîs, who previously managed to display the necessary flexibility to adjust to the changing conditions.

İhtifalci Mehmed Ziyâ attributes the transformation of the Yenikapı Mevlevî Lodge into a prominent hub of intellectual and political engagement to the exceptional erudition, profound wisdom, moral integrity, and astute political acumen of 'Osmân Selâhaddîn Dede. The lodge had become a favored gathering venue for high-profile statesmen, including Keçecizâde Fu'âd Pasha (d. 1869), Mehmed Emîn Âlî Pasha (d. 1871), Yûsuf Kâmil Pasha (d. 1876), Mustafâ Fâzıl Pasha (d. 1875), Grand Mufti Sa'deddîn Efendi (d. 1866), and Midhat Pasha (d. 1884).²³⁰ Sheikh 'Osmân's reputation for sagacity and influence was so extensive that his recommendations or endorsements were often considered in official appointments.²³¹ While still a prince, Abdülhamid II, seemingly influenced by Sheikh 'Osmân's esteemed social standing, prestige, and gravitas, met with him through the mediation of Midhat Pasha and ascended the throne with his backing.²³² Apparently, the destinies of Midhat Pasha—later exiled due to his purported complicity in the assassination of Sultan Abdülaziz—and Sheikh 'Osmân, along with the broader Mevlevî community, were inextricably linked.²³³

The default position of the Mevlevîs as the patronized *tarîqa* was gradually broken down. In 1878, Sheikh 'Osmân was replaced by Rûşen Efendi (d. 1891), the Celvetî sheikh, as the chief executive of the Assembly of Sheikhs.²³⁴ The Yenikapı Mevlevî Lodge was subjected to rigorous inspection, with numerous reports from informants (*journals*) submitted to the *Yıldız* Palace, one of which branded Sheikh 'Osmân as

230. Mehmed Ziyâ, *Merâkiz-i Mühimme-i Mevleviyye'den Yenikapı Mevlevîhânesi*, 180.

231. For special feedback delivered to Sheikh 'Osmân about the appointment of a teacher to the *Fâtih Nâmûne Mektebi*, see BOA. MF.İBT. 10/113, 29 Cumâde'l-ülâ 1294 (June 11, 1877)

232. According to Mehmed Ziyâ, negotiations between Abdülhamid II and Sheikh 'Osmân occurred multiple times and in various locations. A written pledge promising the proclamation of the constitution was even delivered by the prospective Sultan. During Abdülhamid II's enthronement ceremony, when the fatwa announcing the deposition of Murad V (r. 1876) was delayed, Sheikh 'Osmân took the initiative and asked, "Is not the assembly and consensus of the ummah (*ictimâ'-i ümmet*) itself a fatwa?" Following this, the crowd paid homage to Abdülhamid II. Mehmed Ziyâ, *Merâkiz-i Mühimme-i Mevleviyye'den Yenikapı Mevlevîhânesi*, 183–84.

233. Mehmed Ziyâ, 188. Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ'dan Sonra Mevlevîlik*, 272.

234. BOA. Y.PRK.AZJ. 2/7, 19 Cumâde'l-âhîre 1295 (June 20, 1878). This petition of gratitude, submitted by the members of the Assembly of Sheikhs and other distinguished sheikhs for Rûşen Efendi's appointment, indirectly reflects their satisfaction with 'Osmân Selâhaddîn Dede's dismissal when interpreted in the reverse sense. Mustafa Kara, on the other hand, drawing upon the 'ilmiyye yearbook of 1297 (1880), situates Rûşen Efendi's appointment to this position in 1880. His lack of access to an earlier document must have led him to this misconception. Kara, *Tekkeler ve Zaviyeler*, 238.

the “source of evil.”²³⁵ Similarly, the Konya Mevlânâ Lodge endured massive pressure from provincial governors assigned to the region, such as ‘Alî Sürûrî Pasha (d. 1890) and Ferîd Pasha (d. 1914).²³⁶ As Abdülhamit Kırmızı observes, the underlying cause of the tension between a sheikh of significant stature, who held the highest position within the Mevlevî order, and Abdülhamid II’s appointed governors emanated from the affiliation of the heir apparent, Mehmed Reşâd Efendi (r. 1909-1918), with the Mevlevî order.²³⁷ In line with this, İsmail Kara underlines that the Sultan, possessing a hysterically suspicious disposition, was justified in his own way both to repress Sufi orders, which wielded a wider sphere of influence, compared to the ulama, due to their physical and incorporeal affinity with the public masses, and to be wary of the members of the royal family, who formed close-knit associations with them.²³⁸ Although this skeptical and vigilant posture fitted the autocratic mindset of the Sultan particularly in eliminating the constitutionalists, it proved to be counter-productive, generating anti-conformist individualities flocking to the dissident front. As the political tides shifted, the Mevlevîs turned against the Hamidian regime. According to Bilgin Aydın, the Mevlevîs’ implacable animosity toward Abdülhamid II largely arose from the loss of their previously privileged status and impact upon the imperial administration, which they had maintained until the latter part of the century.²³⁹

Notwithstanding the progressive deterioration of relations with the state apparatus, the Mevlevîs insisted on to some extent keeping up with the status quo, albeit to no avail. Following his dismissal from official positions and the suspension of *Mesnevî* lectures at the palace, Sheikh ‘Osmân composed a lengthy personal letter to the Sultan, seeking imperial pardon (*‘afv-ı hümâyûn*). The language employed by the sheikh was characterized by its romanticism and sophistication, showcasing a vast repertoire of rhetorical devices, including panegyrics and expressions of veneration, as well as self-abasement—a stylistic feature commonly found in Sufi literature. The sheikh asserts that certain individuals within the Sultan’s inner circle compete and conspire against him, distorting the pure affection and loyalty that he holds for the

235. BOA. Y.EE. 75/15, 3 Cumâde’l-ülâ 1295 (May 5, 1878). “Re’y-i bendegânem Şeyh ‘Osmân mazanne-i su’ ve menba’-ı su’ olmak i’tikâdındayım.”

236. Abdülhamit Kırmızı, *Avlonyalı Ferîd Paşa* (İstanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2014), 136–37.

237. Abdülhamit Kırmızı, *Abdülhamid’in Valileri: Osmanlı Vilayet İdaresi, 1895-1908* (İstanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2008), 194. Tahsin Pasha (d. 1930), the First Secretary (*Mâbeyn-i Hümâyûn Ser-kâtibi*) to Abdülhamid II, recounts in his memoirs that the Sultan harbored concerns that Mehmed Reşâd Efendi, with the support of the Çelebi Efendi in Konya, could rally a substantial Mevlevî community around him and potentially spearhead an anti-regime movement. Tahsin Paşa, *Abdülhamit ve Yıldız Hatıraları* (İstanbul: Muallim Ahmet Halit Kitaphanesi, 1931), 67.

238. İsmail Kara, *İslâmçıların Siyasî Görüşleri* (İstanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 1994), 76.

239. Bilgin Aydın, “Osmanlı Siyasî Tarihinde Mevlevîler ve Sultan II. Abdülhamid ile İlişkilerine Dair Yeni Belgeler,” in *Osmanlı*, ed. Güler Eren, vol. 2 (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 1999), 391.

Sultan through baseless rumors, suspicions, and slander spread by mischief-makers. Consequently, the sheikh claims to have succumbed to a debilitating illness that was slowly destroying him.²⁴⁰ Due to health concerns, he was unable to attend the ninth anniversary of Abdülhamid II's accession to the throne and instead delegated his son, Kemâleddîn Efendi, to represent him at the ceremony.²⁴¹ In fact, the letter can be construed as a palpable demonstration that the political affairs of the Mevlevîs had been taken off the rails as an outcome of their defeat against rival factions and interest groups, who pointed the finger at them by leveling ill-founded accusations. Whereas the twilight merged into the Yenikapı Mevlevî Lodge, the gloomy air induced by the despotism (*istibdād*) of Abdülhamid II did not drag the Mevlevîs into a total subordination, passivity, or conformity. Instead, they demonstrated a defiant political agency, resisting the Hamidian regime's objectifying dynamics.

The lodge remained under close surveillance and was periodically investigated by police and intelligence agents (*hafiyeye*) during the tenure of Mehmed Celâleddîn Dede, who succeeded 'Osmân Selâhaddîn Dede following his death in 1887.²⁴² Sheikh Celâleddîn was no less a political figure than his father.²⁴³ The opposition to Abdülhamid II resonated in his social milieu. This antithetical orientation was not merely

240. BOA. Y.EE. 14/130, 15 Şevvâl 1302 (July 28, 1885). "...'uzmâ-yı makarbân-ı bârgâh-ı 'adâlet-penâh-ı hazret-i hilâfet-penâhîlerinden ba'zıları hakk-ı dervîşânemde rekâbete kıyâm ve ba'zılarının dahi hakk-ı kemterânemde muhâset-i mec'ûleleri fâsîd olarak kurb-ı şâhânelerinden ezlâk-ı dervîşâneme ihtimamlarını vehâmet encâmı ifhâm [...] hakk-ı bendegânemde mübârek ve mes'ûd kalb-i selâmet-i edeb-i şâhânelerine şüphe ilkâ edilmiş olduğu sâmi'â-yı bendegânemi zahmedâr ve dil-i 'ubeydânemi mecrûh ve bîmâr edüb dereke-yi helâke resîd ve hûş u 'aklüm târümâr olmak derecesine varmış..." For the complete transliteration of this letter, see Yolcu, "Bir Ben-Anlatısının Arkeolojisi," 220–25.

241. BOA. Y.EE. 14/43, 21 Zî'l-ka'de 1302 (September 1, 1885).

242. BOA. Y.PRK.ZB. 7/87, 13 Mârt 1307 (March 25, 1891). BOA. Y.PRK.ZB. 9/72, 23 Kânûn-ı sâni 1307 (February 4, 1892).

243. Despite the absence of any explicit mention in the main Mevlevî sources—such as the *Defter-i Dervîşân*, Mehmed Ziyâ's *Merâkiz-i Mühîmme-i Mevlevîyye'den Yenikapı Mevlevîhânesi*, Tâhirî'l-Mevlevî's concise biography of Sheikh Celâleddîn, Hüseyin Vassâf's *Sefîne-i Evliyâ*, İbnü'l-Emîn Mahmûd Kemal İnal's *Son Asır Türk Şairleri*, and Gölpınarlı's *Mevlânâ'dan Sonra Mevlevîlik*—Nuri Özcan's article on Mehmed Celâleddîn Dede in the *Encyclopedia of Islam* and Bayram Ali Kaya's book *Tekke Kapısı*, on the Yenikapı Mevlevî Lodge, present rather surprising information. Both claim—albeit without corroboration from historical documents—that Sheikh Celâleddîn served as the chief executive of the Assembly of Sheikhs between 1884 and 1885. Neither text gives reference to a specific primary source for this unwarranted assertion. However, it can be traced through archival records that Rüşen Efendi, who assumed the position in 1878, held it until his death in 1891. In my opinion, the most astonishing aspect of this fantasy-making is the imagined representation of Sheikh Celâleddîn as the head of the Assembly of Sheikhs even before his becoming the *pōst-nişîm* of the Yenikapı Mevlevî Lodge. To assume that a person, who had not yet even held the sheikhdom of a dervish lodge was put in charge of the entire Sufi community, is naïve to say the least. It is pretty bewildering that such fabricated information is accepted and perpetuated without the slightest questioning. Nuri Özcan, "Mehmed Celâleddin Dede," in *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: TDV Yayınları, 2003), 28:447. Bayram Ali Kaya, *Tekke Kapısı: Yenikapı Mevlevîhânesi'nin İnsanları* (İstanbul: Zeytinburnu Belediyesi Kültür Yayınları, 2012), 223.

the by-product of unilateral motivations. It rather converged with the efforts of the anti-regime movement chasing to establish a solid and sufficiently comprehensive social base where the role of religious elements was deemed crucial. The Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) organs published in Paris were read, discussed, and distributed in the lodge and Sheikh Celâleddîn through the mediation of Nâ'ilî Efendi (d. 1908), the Bedevî sheikh and a member of the CUP branch in Istanbul, was even invited to cooperate in the coup d'état aimed at the enthronement of Mehmed Reşâd Efendi.²⁴⁴ This has proven, as claimed by Mehmed Ziyâ, the Mevlevîs' "genuine devotion" to liberty.²⁴⁵ The logistics of the transfer of the heir apparent from Beşiktaş to *intra muros* İstanbul, were deliberated within the Yenikapı Mevlevî Lodge. However, Sheikh Celâleddîn declined to participate, emphasizing the potentially catastrophic drawbacks of such a significant undertaking.²⁴⁶ It is hardly unexpected that a plan favoring Mehmed Reşâd Efendi, a devoted disciple of 'Osman Selâhaddîn Dede,²⁴⁷ was brought to Sheikh Celâleddîn for consultation. A compilation of "daily incidents" derived from intelligence reports was even assembled concerning Mehmed Reşâd Efendi, who maintained occasional correspondence with Sheikh Celâleddîn.²⁴⁸

Moreover, the circle of coercion of the Hamidian regime was not confined to the Yenikapı Mevlevî Lodge. Veled Çelebi was interrogated because of the inclusion of concepts like *hutbe* (religious sermon, which is also connotative of the ascendancy to the throne) and *reşâd* (literal meaning of which is to walk on the rightful path) in one of his poems published in the *Mektep* journal in 1895.²⁴⁹ The publication of Tâhirü'l-Mevlevî's (d. 1951) newspaper, *Resimli Gazete*, was suspended immediately after its first issue on October 26, 1899, due to an intelligence report implying the makeup of a committee for the unification of the Mevlevîs.²⁵⁰ Sheikh Celâleddîn was also questioned, as it was deemed likely that this newspaper was subject to the administration and opinions of Sheikh Celâleddîn, to whom Tâhirü'l-Mevlevî was devoted as a disciple.²⁵¹ Tâhirü'l-Mevlevî appears to have been a radically out-

244. Şükrü Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 54.

245. Mehmed Ziyâ, *Merâkiz-i Mühimme-i Mevlevîyye'den Yenikapı Mevlevîhânesi*, 230.

246. Mehmed Ziyâ, 231.

247. Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ'dan Sonra Mevlevîlik*, 273.

248. Ahmet Cahit Haksever, *Modernleşme Sürecinde Mevlevîler ve Jön Türkler* (İstanbul: H Yayınları, 2009), 88.

249. Veled Çelebi İzbudak, *Tekke'den Meclis'e: Sıra Dışı Bir Çelebi'nin Anıları*, ed. Yakup Şafak and Yusuf Öz (İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2009), 75–78.

250. Tâhirü'l-Mevlevî, *Yenikapı Mevlevîhânesi Postnişîni Şeyh Celâleddîn Efendi*, ed. Safi Arpaguş (İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Vakfı Yayınları, 2013), 5–6.

251. BOA. Y.EE. 149/75, 20 Cumâde'l-âhire 1317 (October 26, 1899). See also Tâhirü'l-Mevlevî, *Matbuat Âlemindeki Hayatım ve İstiklâl Mahkemesi Hatıraları*, ed. Nurcan Boşdurmaz (İstanbul: Büyüyenay Yayınları, 2012), 25.

spoken and candid individual in his book dedicated to the memory of his beloved sheikh Celâleddîn Dede. He outcries with an inflammatory tone of voice that Sheikh Celâleddîn passed away being burned by the sparks of cruelty and animosity arising from the despotism.²⁵² He curses “soothsayer and trickster” (*seḥḥār-ı mekkār*)²⁵³ Ebu’l-Hudâ es-Sayyâdî because of striving to remove the family in charge of the sheikhdom in the Yenikapı Mevlevî Lodge for nearly one hundred and fifty years and describes the Mevlevîs, much like Mehmed Ziyâ, as “liberty-lovers” (*‘âşık-ı âzâdegî*).²⁵⁴

Although their socio-political significance and influence were relatively marginal, certain Mevlevî lodges located in peripheral regions cultivated connections with the Young Turks, thereby attracting the government’s undivided attention. For instance, in İzmir, a Mevlevî sheikh, also known as Reşâd Efendi, facilitated organizational meetings with the Young Turks, led by Refik Nevzâd (d. 1960), as part of efforts to set up a local branch there. However, these clandestine activities were uncovered, resulting in their arrest and subsequent exile.²⁵⁵ Another example of a hint of the bond with the Young Turks is Şefik Dede (d. 1931), the sheikh of the Mevlevî Lodge in Tripoli (present-day Lebanon), who allied with the CUP and turned the lodge into a shelter for exiles.²⁵⁶ In addition, Hüseyin Ârif Efendi (d. 1940), the son of Sheikh Şemsî Dede (d. 1886) of the Hanya Mevlevî Lodge, was taken into custody because of being connected to the CUP; his residence was searched and several of his books were seized.²⁵⁷ Last but not least, Mehmed Ziyâ recounts that during his tenure as director at the Bursa High School (*i’dâdî*), they used to read the journals published in Paris in the assemblies convened under the presidency of Mehmed Şemseddîn Dede (d. 1930), the sheikh of the Bursa Mevlevî Lodge.²⁵⁸

In the meantime, perhaps the most formidable figure to be subdued resided in Konya. ‘Abdülvâhid Çelebi (d. 1907), who assumed the position of *pōst-nişîn* in July 22, 1888,²⁵⁹ was undoubtedly a significant concern from the vantage point of the Hamidian regime. His non-conformist, autonomous, and idiosyncratic nature

252. Tâhirü’l-Mevlevî, *Yenikapı Mevlevîhânesi Postnişîni Şeyh Celâleddîn Efendi*, 10.

253. Portraying the Rifâ’î sheikh with such negative terminology was common among some contemporaries, especially after the re-declaration of the constitution in 1908, which precipitated the downfall of Abdülhamid II’s ‘advisors’ and partisans. See Varol, “Rasputinleştirilen Bir Şeyh,” 80.

254. Tâhirü’l-Mevlevî, *Yenikapı Mevlevîhânesi Postnişîni Şeyh Celâleddîn Efendi*, 29.

255. Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*, 55.

256. Küçük, “XIX. Asırda Mevlevîlik ve Mevlevîler,” 283.

257. İsmail Kara, “Hanya Mevlevîhânesi: Şeyh Ailesi-Müştemilâtı-Vakfiyesi,” *İslâm Araştırmaları Dergisi* 1 (1997): 122.

258. Mehmed Ziyâ, *Merâkiz-i Mühimme-i Mevlevîyye’den Yenikapı Mevlevîhânesi*, 230.

259. BOA. İ.DH. 1090/85493, 13 Zi’l-ka’de 1305 (July 22, 1888). On August 26, 1888, he was granted a *berât*, the imperial title of privilege that sealed his appointment. BOA. İ.DH. 1094/85781-2, 18 Zi’l-ḥicce 1305 (August 26, 1888).

led to meticulous surveillance and eventual suppression. Governor Ferîd Pasha, during his tenure in Konya from 1898 to 1902, consistently reported the Çelebi Efendi's activities to the palace, thereby bolstering his own standing—a factor that contributed to his subsequent appointment as the Grand Vizier.²⁶⁰

Prior to his sheikhdom in the Konya Mevlânâ Lodge, 'Abdülvâhid Çelebi, while serving as the sheikh of the Manisa Mevlevî Lodge, was involved in a highly controversial legal case. In 1877, 'Abdülvâhid Çelebi had inflicted injury upon Yâver, the servant of his elder brother and the former Çelebi Efendi, Sadreddîn Çelebi (d. 1881), during an altercation. Despite the absence of a formal complaint, he was sentenced to three years of shovel penalty. In December 14, 1882, a petition was submitted by Mustafâ Safvet Çelebi (d. 1888), the *pōst-niṣīn* of the Konya Mevlânâ Lodge, requesting a pardon for 'Abdülvâhid Çelebi.²⁶¹ Subsequent inquiry by the Ministry of Justice confirmed the occurrence of the 1877 incident and the deferred 1882 sentencing.²⁶² 'Abdülvâhid Çelebi himself made an impassioned personal plea for clemency, underlining the dearth of an initial complaint and attributing the delayed prosecution to malicious individuals.²⁶³ The case resurfaced six years after the incident, following 'Abdülvahid Çelebi's appointment to the sheikhdom of the Manisa Mevlevî Lodge, suggesting potential internal disputes within the Mevlevî order. Ultimately, in July 3, 1883, the Sultan granted his pardon.²⁶⁴

In the early stages of his Çelebship, a multitude of grievances were filed against 'Abdülvâhid Çelebi, citing his encroachment on local governance and his malfeasance in matters pertaining to waqfs. In a petition dated May 3, 1890, several local headmen raised multiple complaints regarding the exploitation of evkâf-ı Celâliye lands, noting that, under 'Abdülvâhid Çelebi's directives, waqf trustees harassed the owners of approximately 2,000 houses and 200 shops by demanding exorbitant rents and manipulating officials, which led to biased judicial outcomes and public harm. Moreover, the trustees had unlawfully seized land and communal pastures in the Konya plain, improperly certified an unverified endowment deed, and employed coercive practices in registering additional properties. The petitioners further alleged that those affiliated with the Mevlevî sheikhs were beneficiaries of military service exemptions, a discriminatory treatment that adversely affected public sentiment. The petition concluded with a call for corrective measures to deal with these abuses.²⁶⁵ Following the submission of this petition to the Konya governorship, Governor 'Alî

260. Kırmızı, *Avlonyalı Ferid Paşa*, 136–37.

261. BOA. İ.DH. 888/70700-4, 3 Şafer 1300 (December 14, 1882).

262. BOA. İ.DH. 888/70700-5, 20 Kânûn-ı evvel 1298 (January 1, 1883).

263. BOA. İ.DH. 888/70700-3, 25 Receb 1300 (June 1, 1883).

264. BOA. İ.DH. 888/70700-7, 27 Şa'bân 1300 (July 3, 1883).

265. BOA. Y.PRK.AZJ. 16/75-1, 21 Nisân 1306 (May 3, 1890).

Sürûrî Pasha addressed the *Mâbeyn-i Hümayyûn* (Imperial Chancellery) on May 5, 1890. In his letter, he asserted that any Sufi sheikh's interference in state affairs was unacceptable. Due to the Çelebi Efendi's apparent ingratitude for the tolerance extended by the Sultan, Sürûrî Pasha argued for a significant curtailment of his duties and proposed dismantling the illusory authority that he claimed to possess, thereby calling for measures to contain the disorder stemming from his misconduct.²⁶⁶

The most striking of the complaints received by the *Yıldız* Palace about 'Abdülvâhid Çelebi was the Bektashi propaganda, which was a red flag for the Hamidian regime. In a letter dated August 17, 1891, bearing the seal of the Governor of Konya, Esseyid Hasan Hilmi, it was reported that during Muharram, the month of mourning for the Alevites, the Bektashis, and the Shiites, 'Abdülvâhid Çelebi and his disciples wore black caps, fasted, and recited the *Hadîkatü's-su'adâ*, the prose work of the illustrious sixteenth-century poet, Fuzûlî (d. 1556), about the incident of Karbala. These private practices of the Çelebi Efendi were attended by members of the riffraff (*eclâf*) as well as three travelers who starkly exhibited Persian characteristics in appearance and language. The governor also noted that even those occupying the higher echelons of the Mevlevî hierarchy, such as the Türbedâr Dede, did not find these demeanors appropriate for the Mevlevî order. In an effort to rectify this situation, which was deemed unseemly due to its resemblance to Bektashi customs, the governor promptly expelled the three Persian-looking individuals from Konya.²⁶⁷ However, a misreading of the document by Cem Kara has led to the erroneous assertion that it was the Çelebi Efendi who was expelled, rather than the three individuals in question.²⁶⁸

According to Gölpınarlı, 'Abdülvâhid Çelebi, a representative of the Şemsî branch entailing a passionate love for the *ehl-i beyt* (the Prophet's family) and for Alevite sympathies, was truly a Bektashi Baba, even though he concealed it in a letter to *Yâver-i Ekrem* (Chief Adjutant to the Sultan) Derviş Pasha (d. 1896). He received a Bektashi *hîlâfet-nâme* from both Rûhî Bey Baba (d. 1900) and Mehmed 'Alî Hilmi Dede (d. 1907).²⁶⁹ 'Abdülvâhid Çelebi, Hasan Nazîf Dede (d. 1860), the sheikh of the Beşiktaş/Bahâriye Mevlevî Lodge, and his son and successor Hüseyin Fahreddîn Dede (d. 1911), whose father-in-law was 'Osmân Selâhaddîn Dede, were "the most involved among the Mevlevîs in Alevism."²⁷⁰ Under Hüseyin Fahreddîn Dede in particular, the Bahâriye Mevlevî Lodge proved to be a center of the *rind*

266. BOA. Y.PRK.AZJ. 16/75-2, 15 Ramazân 1307 (May 5, 1890).

267. BOA. Y.PRK.UM. 22/80, 11 Muḥarrem 1309 (August 17, 1891).

268. Cem Kara, *Sınırları Aşan Dervişler: Bektaşîliğin Kültürel İlişkileri (1826-1925)*, trans. Emre Adıyaman (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2023), 123.

269. Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ'dan Sonra Mevlevîlik*, 239.

270. Gölpınarlı, 229.

variant of the Mevlevî order.²⁷¹ The *rind*, the inspired libertine, inculcated an antinomian attitude toward conventional modes of piety personified by the *zâhid*, the pious ascetic. Specific to the Mevlevî order, the long-standing legacy of the Şemsî/Dionysian branch was incarnated by the *rind* temperament.

In addition to the Konya governors and low-ranking local officials, the ulama—consisting of madrasa professors in Konya, the majority of whom were members of the Naqshbandi order—had also engaged in hostilities against the Çelebi Efendi.²⁷² In 1899, thirty-seven of them complained about the Çelebi Efendi to the *Bâb-ı Meşihat* because of his deeds in defiance of the sharia. The allegations levied against the Çelebi Efendi were as follows: he appropriated the so-called girding privilege, a mere fabrication; he openly displayed his Alevite inclinations by denigrating the companions of Prophet Muhammad (*aşhâb-ı güzîn*); he was implicated in the engagement in the prostitution trade; he meddled in the province’s political affairs, pursuing covert machinations; and, lastly, he sought to resurrect a Bektashi lodge in Konya.²⁷³ Thereupon, the Ministry of Internal Affairs (*Dâhiliye Nezâreti*) sent a highly trusted bureaucrat named Fu’âd to Konya to investigate ‘Abdülvâhid Çelebi.²⁷⁴ Although Fu’âd Bey’s report confirmed the incriminatory statements on a large scale, he was ostensibly instructed to terminate the enmity with Governor Ferîd Pasha by acting as a mediator rather than causing harm or humiliation to the Çelebi Efendi.²⁷⁵ What is particularly noteworthy in this context is the adeptness of both the governor and local ulama in crafting a discursive strategy that was explicitly tailored to provoke the government’s anxieties regarding the Bektashi order.

Another episode that pitted the Çelebi Efendi against the state apparatus occurred due to his attempt in 1898 to depose ‘Alî Eşref Dede, the sheikh of the Selânik Mevlevî Lodge for approximately thirty years, due to his mismanagement of waqf assets. Having received the removal decision, ‘Alî Eşref Dede, who was previously awarded an imperial honor of the third rank (*üçüncü dereceden nişân-ı ‘âlî-i ‘Osmanî*) by virtue of his military service,²⁷⁶ directly resorted to Abdülhamid II to sustain his office.²⁷⁷ The decision was overturned by the Sultan’s decree, but the Çelebi Efendi dared not to enforce the imperial decree in the first place by showing

271. Roderick Grierson, “From Beşiktaş to Bahâriye: The Life and Times of Hüseyin Fahreddin El-Mevlevî,” *Mawlana Rumi Review* 4 (2013): 147.

272. Kırmızı, *Avlonyalı Ferid Paşa*, 145.

273. BOA. Y.PRK.DH. 10/98-8, 5 Zî’l-ıhicce 1316 (April 16, 1899).

274. BOA. Y.PRK.DH. 10/98-1, 14 Zî’l-ıhicce 1316 (April 25, 1899).

275. BOA. Y.PRK.DH. 10/98-3, 10 Zî’l-ıhicce 1316 (April 21, 1899).

276. BOA. İ.DH. 1082/84910, 29 Mâys 1304 (June 10, 1888).

277. Serdar Ösen, “Selanik Mevlevîhânesi Şeyhi Eşref Dede’nin Azli Meselesi ve Sultan II. Abdülhamid’in Tutumu,” *International Journal of History Studies* VI, no. 4 (2014): 145.

resistance because Hakkı Dede, the substitute for ‘Alî Eşref Dede, was a more suitable candidate to rely on. Celâleddîn Dede of the Yenikapı Mevlevî Lodge played an intermediary role in this process and embarked upon persuading the Çelebi Efendi to return ‘Alî Eşref Dede, who had strong connections in the imperial capital, to his former office.²⁷⁸ The Çelebi Efendi was ultimately forced to throw up the sponge and ‘Alî Eşref Dede reclaimed his office. In light of the governmental intervention in intra-*tarîqa* matters, as codified with the formation of the Assembly of Sheikhs in 1866, the involvement of the state apparatus in this conflict does not stand as particularly surprising. What is rather thought-provoking is the cooperation of the sheikh of a lodge with the state apparatus against the sheikh of the *Āsītāne* thanks to his network of patronage in the imperial capital. Such an action likely disrupted the functioning of the Mevlevî hierarchy and strengthened the position of the Ottoman government. Therefore, the Sultan did not bypass the chance to curb the reach of the Çelebi Efendi within his own order. Besides, allegations of irregularity and corruption in other Mevlevî lodges facilitated the optimum usage of means of pressure against the Çelebi Efendi.²⁷⁹

Against all odds, Abdülhamid II did not appear to have canonically disapproved of the Mevlevîs whose activisms had never resembled the harmony of an orchestra. He never cut off the in-kind aids or the flow of money to the Mevlevî lodges; on the contrary, he continued to fund their necessary reparations and restorations in various locales such as Kütahya, Afyonkarahisar, Kilis, and Bursa.²⁸⁰ In particular, the construction of the Bahâriye Mevlevî Lodge—following the demolition of the Beşiktaş Lodge—was maintained by handsome donations from Abdülhamid II. Setting aside the moral and ideological dimensions, the state-directed financial support for these dervish lodges, whose endowments were already under stringent control, can, in *realpolitik* terms, be understood as a strategy to secure their loyalty. For instance, Hüseyin Fahreddîn Dede was not enthusiastic to promote the reformist trend that championed a constitutional monarchy,²⁸¹ despite his unorthodox Alevite tendencies.

Additionally, there were other Mevlevî sheikhs, who managed to enjoy a stable and healthy relationship with the *Yıldız* Palace. One among them, namely ‘Alî Efendi (d. 1906),²⁸² the sheikh of the Kasımpaşa Mevlevî Lodge, was nominated as the

278. Ösen, 146.

279. Aydın, “Osmanlı Siyasî Tarihinde Mevlevîler,” 392.

280. Küçük, “XIX. Asırda Mevlevîlik ve Mevlevîler,” 332.

281. Grierson, “From Beşiktaş to Bahâriye,” 146.

282. Based on the date of the document regarding the salary to be paid to Mehmed Şemseddîn Dede following his appointment to the Kasımpaşa Mevlevî Lodge, it can be concluded that his father ‘Alî Efendi died in 1906. BOA. İ.EV. 40/30, 24 Reb’u’l-âhîr 1324 (June 17, 1906). For a copy of the official *berât*, see BOA. EV.BRT. 316/10, 21 Receb 1324 (September 10, 1906).

new executive chief of the Assembly of Sheikhs by Grand Mufti Mehmed Cemâleddîn Efendi (d. 1917) upon the death of Sheikh Rûşen Efendi and the recommendation was confirmed by an imperial decree.²⁸³ In a nutshell, coercion was predominantly directed towards those who were suspected of constituting potential loci of power. In other words, the primary line of cleavage separating the desirable Mevlevîs from the undesirable ones was their level of obedience and loyalty to the Sultan.

3.4 Conclusion

The nineteenth century was a period of great transition, during which the state apparatus deployed a series of control-intensive policies and regulations geared towards dominance over the public sphere. The Ottoman government was not immune to this global trend but rather was highly agile and flexible in its adaptive capacity to engage in the process of modern state-building. As mechanisms of surveillance and control reshaped the social texture, the pre-modern shell of Sufi culture was dismantled; the traditional autonomy of Sufi orders in regulating intra-*tariqa* practices was significantly curtailed; and the watchful eye of the state apparatus intruded into all private domains of Sufism. The establishment of the Ministry of Imperial Endowments placed considerable financial duress on Sufi orders, whose survival was heavily reliant on waqf-generated resources. The imperial decrees of 1812 and 1836 regulated not only forms of worship within the confines of the dervish lodges but also the ways in which the social visibility of Sufi devotees would be administered. Finally, the Assembly of Sheikhs officially formalized the bureaucratization of the Sufi community under the auspices of the Office of the Grand Mufti.

The Mevlevî order, on the other hand, consciously served as a supporting pillar in the creation of state hegemony through its close ties with the ruling elite. The inclusion of a specific article for the Mevlevîs in the founding charter of the Assembly of Sheikhs indicates both the institutionalization of the Çelebi Efendi's spiritual authority and the strong instrumental position of the Mevlevî order in terms of imperial politics. Therefore, the first three quarters of the nineteenth century symbolize the halcyon days for the Mevlevîs, who evolved into one of the organic bodies of the state apparatus.

The advent of the Hamidian regime brought an end to the height of the Mevlevîs' glory. The fact that the heir-apparent was an adherent of the Mevlevî order instilled profound anxiety in Abdülhamid II, leading the Mevlevî lodges in Istanbul to become

283. BOA. Y.MTV. 56/61, 28 Rebî'u'l-âhîr 1309 (December 1, 1891).

a focal point of intelligence reports. Surveillance intensified to the extent that even the wedding of Celâleddîn Dede's son and successor, 'Abdûlbâki Dede (d. 1935), was framed as an anti-government conspiracy.²⁸⁴ Moreover, 'Abdûlvâhid Çelebi's unconventional personality, which jeopardized the regime's ideological bedrock steeped in Sunni orthodoxy, further exacerbated state repression. That being said, the Hamidian regime and the Mevlevîs did not make diametrically opposed images, nor was there a stark polarization. This was largely due to the fact that the Mevlevîs were not a uniform community under the binding rule of a singular, charismatic, and omnipotent spiritual leader. Instead, they comprised individuals who either endorsed the regime, remained neutral and disengaged, or vehemently opposed the Sultan's despotic measures. However, none confined themselves solely to the mystical realm as passive recipients of divine revelation; rather, they delved into the sphere of politics, making subtle calculations to secure favorable outcomes. Hence, Abdülhamid II did not carry out quixotic attacks on non-existent enemies. He activated the means of coercion to forestall the potential perils posed by those who did not abide by his autocratic vision.

284. Mehmed Ziyâ, *Merâkiz-i Mühimme-i Mevlevîyye'den Yenikapu Mevlevîhânesi*, 225.

4. THE SURGE OF FACTIONALISM IN THE KONYA MEVLÂNÂ LODGE DURING THE SECOND CONSTITUTIONAL PERIOD

*Kalmadı beyninde ashâb-ı tarîkin ihtilâf,
Ehl-i Hakk'ı birbirine toplayıp berkittiler.*
Neyzen Tevfik

In consonance with the traditional scholarship represented by Tarık Zafer Tunaya,²⁸⁵ Ernest Ramsaur,²⁸⁶ and Şerif Mardin,²⁸⁷ Feroz Ahmad portrays the CUP as a derivative of the reform-minded movement burgeoning in the nineteenth century, especially driven by the Young Ottomans.²⁸⁸ The fulcrum of their political mentality was the universal claims that emanated from the Enlightenment. The Young Turks envisioned themselves as the heirs of *les philosophes*, who laid the intellectual groundwork of the 1789 Revolution by casting the light of reason, emancipation, and progress.²⁸⁹ Therefore, the logic of the Enlightenment was espoused to be the tonic of every socio-political ailment in the Ottoman Empire and was operationalized *en route* to the transformation of the Empire into a state-of-the-art country. However, the ideological discourse on paper that sounded like music to the ears of each social segment thrilled by the promises of the Revolution was shelved as the new constitutional regime became increasingly authoritarian.²⁹⁰ In other words,

285. Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasî Partiler 1859-1952* (İstanbul: Doğan Kardeş Matbaası, 1952).

286. Ernest Edmondson Ramsaur, *The Young Turks: Prelude to the Revolution of 1908* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957).

287. Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962).

288. Feroz Ahmad, *The Young Turks: The Committee of Union and Progress in Turkish Politics 1908-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 16.

289. Erdal Kaynar, "The Logic of Enlightenment and the Realities of Revolution: Young Turks After the Young Turk Revolution," in *The Young Turk Revolution and The Ottoman Empire*, ed. François Georgeon and Noémi Lévy-Aksu (London: I.B. Tauris, 2020), 43-45.

290. "Whatever liberal affinities the CUP leaders harbored prior to and immediately following the revolution quickly gave way to authoritarian tendencies." Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*, 153.

the abstract universe of ideas was antithetical to the concrete realm of praxis. A political atmosphere cropped up in which a cult of loyalty and allegiance held sway rather than a merit-based order.

It should not be an undue oversimplification to interpret the appointment of Veled Çelebi in conjunction with this authoritarian transformation that signified the CUP's tightened grip on power. As discussed earlier, the nineteenth-century state-driven maneuvers had already buttressed the means of surveillance, harnessing, and disciplining germane to Sufi orders. As the draconian measures akin to Jacobinism were translated into action, a further dimension was added to the social engineering project run by the CUP. Until then, no late Ottoman sultan had ventured to dismiss or affront a Çelebi Efendi occupying the head office of the Mevlevî order, as the descendants of Rûmî were accorded a level of reverence comparable to that extended to the descendants of the Prophet. Although the reign of Abdülhamid II was shrouded in the shadows of autocracy and hardened by the iron clasp of repression, even he refrained from severing the thread of 'Abdülvâhid Çelebi's office—a figure whose unorthodox spirit and defiant nature made him a thorn in the Sultan's side and a flickering flame watched warily from the halls of power. In this light, the dismissal of 'Abdülhalîm Çelebi was a rare rupture—one that not only ignited the embers of factional discord within the Mevlevî order but also laid bare the far-reaching hand of state interventionism, forged in the crucible of the pragmatic imperatives of nineteenth-century modern state formation.

This chapter will attempt to contextualize this particular outbreak of factionalism that transpired within the Konya Mevlânâ Lodge. The subject in question has heretofore been addressed only superficially in the existing literature but never thoroughly critiqued and analyzed.²⁹¹ Drawing upon previously overlooked archival sources, this chapter opens up with a comprehensive examination of 'Abdülhalîm Çelebi's tenure, which commenced in 1907. It then proceeds to explore, in detail, the political and institutional dynamics that ultimately led to his dismissal in 1910. The chapter further reconstructs a multi-layered account of the internal rivalries that characterized Veled Çelebi's leadership until 1919. Finally, it investigates the germinating tensions between the Konya Mevlânâ Lodge and other Mevlevî lodges during Veled Çelebi's administration.

However, what is most striking is not that the CUP has taken the initiative independently of all the variables of the political equation, but rather that a dissident

291. Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ'dan Sonra Mevlevîlik*, 177–78. Duru, *Tarihî Simalardan: Mevlevî*, 122. Önder, *Mevlânâ ve Mevlevîlik*, 204–6. Top, *Mevlevî Usûl ve Âdâbı*, 314. Haksever, *Modernleşme Sürecinde Mevlevîler ve Jön Türkler*, 128–29. Kara, *Metinlerle Osmanlılarda Tasavvuf ve Tarikatlar*, 271.

faction within the Mevlevî order has, through a bottom-up activism, achieved the impeachment of their spiritual leader to whom they owed sacred allegiance. In other words, the political, administrative, and even legal justifications for ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi’s eventual removal from office were not merely imposed from above, but rather emerged through the articulation of an oppositional subjectivity—one that, through the concerted agency of multiple signatories, succeeded in inscribing itself within the gaze of sovereign power. Whilst the equitable distribution of waqf revenues appears to have been a determining factor,²⁹² this thesis introduces, for the first time, a more fundamental driving force: it was in fact a somewhat constitutionalist uprising against an intra-*tarîqa* royalty that came to define the final century of the Mevlevî order. Following the passing of El-Hâc Mehmed Çelebi in 1815, the Konya Mevlânâ Lodge was overseen by his sub-lineage through his son, Sa’îd Hemdem Çelebi (d. 1859), who was the grandfather of ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi.²⁹³ Nevertheless, in defiance of the principle of hereditary succession, Veled Çelebi was proposed as a candidate by the electoral committee of the dissident faction and was subsequently endorsed and appointed by key elements of the Ottoman administrative apparatus, including the *‘ilmîyye* bureaucracy. Rather than conceiving of the Çelebis as members of a monolithic dynastic authority, they are better understood as competitive actors embedded within distinct genealogical sub-lineages. Therefore, the movement that precipitated Veled Çelebi’s appointment may be interpreted as a liberatory gesture—an effort to dismantle the hegemonic hold of ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi’s paternal line, which had long monopolized the leadership of the Mevlevî order.

4.1 ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi’s Early Tenure

Born in 1874, ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi received his primary education in Manisa due to his father ‘Abdülvâhid Çelebi’s occupation as the sheikh of the Manisa Mevlevî Lodge. Following his father’s appointment as the *pōst-niṣān* of the Konya Mevlânâ Lodge in July 22, 1888,²⁹⁴ he was designated as the sheikh of the Manisa Mevlevî Lodge at the remarkably young age of fourteen.²⁹⁵ The consideration of the appointment to the Manisa Mevlevî Lodge as a preliminary step toward candidacy

292. Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ’dan Sonra Mevlevîlik*, 264–66.

293. Gölpınarlı, 153. Sa’îd Hemdem Çelebi’s sons successively inherited his position: Sadreddîn Çelebi (d. 1881), Fahreddîn Çelebi (d. 1882), Safvet Çelebi (d. 1888), and finally ‘Abdülvâhid Çelebi (d. 1907).

294. BOA. BEO. 3156/236643-4 (n.d.).

295. Ahmed Güner Sayar, *Osmanlıdan Cumhuriyete Portre Denemeleri* (İstanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat, 2000), 26.

for the sheikhdom of the Konya Mevlânâ Lodge—in imitation of early Ottoman succession practices—is particularly noteworthy, as it reflects the elevated role of spiritual authority that the Mevlevî order ascribed to itself during the late Ottoman period.²⁹⁶

That being said, the ascent of ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi to the helm of the Konya Mevlânâ Lodge in 1907 unfolded under disputed conditions, exposing the deeper structural tensions that had long shaped the order’s lineage politics. On September 26, 1907, upon receiving news of ‘Abdülvâhid Çelebi’s death during the night in Konya, ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi, without awaiting his father’s funeral proceedings, dispatched a telegram to the chief secretary of the *Yıldız* Palace, formally requesting his appointment as the *pōst-niṣîn* of the Konya Mevlânâ Lodge.²⁹⁷ Furthermore, according to a document drafted by the Grand Vizierate to be forwarded to the Office of the Grand Mufti, members of ‘Abdülvâhid Çelebi’s family, too, requested, on the same day, that ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi be appointed to the Konya Mevlânâ Lodge and that his brother, Murtazâ Çelebi, be assigned to the position in Manisa that ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi would be vacated. It was specifically stressed by the Grand Vizierate that the request was in conformity with the long-established methods and customs (*usûl-i kadîmeye ve te’âmüle de muvâfık*).²⁹⁸ What was the potential reason behind such an accelerated pace? The demise of ‘Abdülvâhid Çelebi appears to have functioned as a catalyst, awakening resentments that had long remained dormant beneath the surface. On September 29, an alternative group of the Çelebis submitted a petition to the *Yıldız* Palace through the medium of Ebu’l-Hudâ es-Sayyâdî, who had secured the trust of Abdülhamid II and consequently incurred the enmity of numerous others. The petition requested the appointment of ‘Âmil Çelebi (d. 1922), the current sheikh of the Aleppo Mevlevî Lodge, to the vacant position in Konya.²⁹⁹ It is no coincidence that ‘Âmil Çelebi, a highly controversial figure, rose to prominence as a prospective candidate during this pivotal moment. His involvement would prove crucial in securing the appointment of Veled Çelebi in 1910, and he would later be reinstated as the sheikh of the Aleppo Mevlevî Lodge, a position that he would lose under the administration of ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi.³⁰⁰ The repercussions of this reappointment, which sparked significant unrest, will be explored in detail in the subsequent pages.

However, the ‘Âmil Çelebi faction must have likely not yet cultivated a sufficiently

296. Emecen, “Saruhanogulları ve Mevlevilik,” 295. Küçük, “XIX. Asırda Mevlevilik ve Mevleviler,” 183.

297. BOA. Y.PRK.AZJ. 53/19-1, 18 Şa‘bân 1325 (September 26, 1907).

298. BOA. BEO. 3156/236643-1, 19 Şa‘bân 1325 (September 27, 1907).

299. BOA. Y.PRK.AZJ. 53/19-2, 16 Eylül 1323 (September 29, 1907).

300. Sezai Küçük, “Halep Mevlevîhânesi,” *İLAM Araştırma Dergisi* III, no. 2 (1998): 86.

strong network of contacts and alliances, as evidenced by the fact that their request was not accorded due consideration by the Hamidian regime. Following the favorable assessment of Grand Mufti Mehmed Cemâleddîn Efendi, ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi’s appointment was sealed with an imperial decree on September 30, 1907.³⁰¹ Approximately two weeks later, he was granted with an imperial *mecîdî* honor of the first rank.³⁰² The unwavering stance adopted by the state apparatus during this transitional phase not only demonstrated the profound influence wielded by the family of ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi in the imperial capital but also facilitated the ephemeral containment of the gradually mounting opposition within the Mevlevî order, insofar as the prevailing political regime retained its hold on power.

This ostensibly seamless succession, nevertheless, did not signify the unmediated transmission of the privileges once vested in ‘Abdülvâhid Çelebi to his son and successor. A major field of struggle emerged, necessitating the reissuance of all contracts, waqf trusteeships, promissory notes pertaining to outstanding debts, and stipend allocations drawn from the central treasury—previously registered under the name of ‘Abdülvâhid Çelebi—in favor of ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi. Thus, a series of attempts were launched that required navigating the complex functioning of the Ottoman fiscal bureaucracy. First, concerned that his siblings might fall into destitution following the cessation of their stipends upon their father’s death, ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi petitioned for the allocation of a monthly stipend of two hundred piasters (*jurûş*) for each of them. He also requested that his own stipend, previously fixed at five hundred and thirty-nine piasters and tied to his father’s office, be increased to one thousand six hundred piasters. A notable aspect of his petition is the revelation that, after the proper enumeration of his father’s estates (*metrûkât*) in accordance with the sharia, no liquid assets were identified; instead, a substantial debt burden exceeding two hundred and fifty thousand piasters was uncovered.³⁰³ This request, conveyed from the Governorate of Konya to the Grand Vizierate, was subsequently ratified by an imperial decree dated December 23, 1907.³⁰⁴ The presence of Ferîd Pasha, who had once capitalized on ‘Abdülvâhid Çelebi’s allegedly suspicious activities by constantly reporting him to the *Yıldız* Palace, as the Grand Vizier, and his involvement in the decision to provide financial support to the late Çelebi Efendi’s family, appears as a striking irony of history, if not a twist of fate.

However, the approval of the stipend allocation by the Sultan did not ensure the smooth execution of the payment process. Upon being informed that the monthly allocation of two hundred piasters for each of ‘Abdülvâhid Çelebi’s children would

301. BOA. Y.MTV. 302/153, 22 Şa‘bân 1325 (September 30, 1907).

302. BOA. İ.TAL. 434/45, 8 Ramazân 1325 (October 15, 1907).

303. BOA. İ.ML. 79/44-2, 18 Şevvâl 1325 (November 24, 1907).

304. BOA. İ.ML. 79/44-5, 18 Zî‘l-ka‘de 1325 (December 23, 1907).

be processed through the category of the “needy arrangement” (*muḥtācīn tertībi*) and thus granted on a temporary basis, ‘Abdülhalīm Çelebi submitted an additional petition, requesting that the aforementioned stipends be made contingent upon the recipients’ lifetime.³⁰⁵ Moreover, since ‘Abdülhalīm Çelebi had not yet received a penny from his own stipend for almost half a year, an official correspondence from the Grand Vizierate to the Ministry of Imperial Endowments instructed that the stipend, previously allocated to ‘Abdülvâhid Çelebi, be disbursed to ‘Abdülhalīm Çelebi, effective from the date of his appointment.³⁰⁶ A document written by the Minister of Finance reveals that the main reason behind the delay in payments was the deficit in the fiscal budget. It was specifically noted that the required sum of one thousand sixty-one piasters, necessary to raise the previous stipend of five hundred thirty-nine piasters to one thousand six hundred piasters, was unavailable within the existing budget. Consequently, the proposed increase could only be accommodated by expanding the fiscal budget through an adjustment.³⁰⁷ This is of particular significance, as it illustrates the additional strain placed on Ottoman finances—already grappling with systemic crises—by the economic privileges extended to the descendants of Rûmî.

From the standpoint of a strictly rationalist paradigm of modern fiscal governance, such seemingly ‘wasteful’ expenditures—undermining the coherence and sustainability of the existing budget—may appear profoundly irrational. However, to borrow Pierre Bourdieu’s terminology, the stipend payment functions as a transfer not of mere funds but of symbolic capital—where the state apparatus, even in moments of financial strain, must perform its allegiance to a sacred genealogy.³⁰⁸ The descendants of Rûmî, as spiritual aristocracy, command a form of transcendental credit which the Ottoman government honors not out of financial rationality, but to maintain its own moral legitimacy in the eyes of the wider Islamic public. Additionally, there is a metaphysical dimension in this gesture of reverence that implies the sacralization of the state. The Sultan, by supporting the Çelebi family through fiscal means, partakes in spiritual economy in anticipation of conserving cosmic order and divine favor. In a performative act of “symbolic power,”³⁰⁹ the Sultan, therefore,

305. BOA. BEO. 3275/245570-2, 13 Şafer 1326 (March 17, 1908).

306. BOA. BEO. 3276/245678, 20 Şafer 1326 (March 24, 1908).

307. BOA. BEO. 3293/246941-2, 11 Rebî’u’l-evvel 1326 (April 13, 1908).

308. For a careful deliberation of symbolic capital, see Pierre Bourdieu, *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 47–52.

309. “Symbolic power—as a power of constituting the given through utterances, of making people see and believe, of confirming or transforming the vision of the world and, thereby, action on the world and thus the world itself, an almost magical power which enables one to obtain the equivalent of what is obtained through force (whether physical or economic), by virtue of the specific effect of mobilization—is a power that can be exercised only if it is recognized, that is, misrecognized as arbitrary. This means that symbolic power does not reside in ‘symbolic systems’ in the form of an ‘illocutionary force’ but that it is defined in and through a given relation between those who

happens to be the ultimate arbiter not only of material welfare but also of spiritual continuity. In other words, the paradox of financially burdensome stipends to the descendants of Rûmî is indicative of the Sultan's Body Politic's overriding his Body Natural.³¹⁰

Unsurprisingly, the stipend payment from the Ministry of Finance was not the sole type that was bestowed upon the Çelebi family as an expression of reverence and esteem. An official document authored by the Minister of Imperial Endowments, Turhan Përmeti Pasha (d. 1927), reveals another request for the monthly stipend of one thousand nine hundred piasters—originally allocated to Safvet Çelebi from the revenues of the Mahmud II endowments and subsequently transferred to his brother 'Abdülvâhid Çelebi by an imperial decree upon Safvet's death—to now be reassigned to 'Abdülhalîm Çelebi.³¹¹ On January 11, 1908, following deliberations in the Council of State (*Şûrâ-yı Devlet*), a positive decision on the payment of the desired sum was reached, and the matter was referred to the Grand Vizierate for further action.³¹² The imperial decree in favor was issued two months later on March 20.³¹³ Nevertheless, the discovery, a week later, of a clerical error—one of the many human contingencies that might further entangle the workings of the fiscal bureaucracy—necessitated a revision of the previously determined amount to be paid. According to another document penned by Turhan Përmeti Pasha, the stipend amount, which was originally set at one thousand one hundred and ninety-five piasters, had been mistakenly recorded as one thousand nine hundred.³¹⁴ Consequently, a correction was required to restore the figure to its accurate value. One cannot resist but wonder how many similar numerical inaccuracies might have led to financial losses for the Ottoman central treasury.

Another vivid example of a reassignment attesting that the Çelebi family's relationship with revenue-generating waqf resources stretched beyond the evkâf-ı Celâliye was the trusteeship of the fountain (*şādırvân*) endowed by Sultan Selim I (r. 1512-1520) in Konya. On the grounds that it was customary (*müte'âmil*) to assign the

exercise power and those who submit to it, i.e. in the very structure of the field in which belief is produced and reproduced." Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson (Oxford: Polity Press, 1991), 170.

310. As elaborated in-depth in *The King's Two Bodies* by Ernst Kantorowicz, in late medieval and early modern political theology, the Body Natural referred to the king's physical, mortal body—subject to illness, aging, and death—while the Body Politic or the king's superbodily symbolized his immortal, abstract role as the sovereign embodiment of the state, encompassing dynastic continuity, unity, and legal authority beyond the lifespan of any individual ruler. See Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957).

311. BOA. ŞD. 185/38, 27 Şevvâl 1325 (December 3, 1907).

312. BOA. İ.EV. 47/18-1, 7 Zi'l-hicce 1325 (January 11, 1908).

313. BOA. İ.EV. 47/18-2, 16 Şafer 1326 (March 20, 1908).

314. BOA. BEO. 3296/247183-2, 23 Şafer 1326 (March 27, 1908).

trusteeship of this endowment to the sheikhs of the Konya Mevlânâ Lodge, Turhan Përmeti Pasha referred the matter of appointing ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi as the trustee with a monthly stipend of one thousand piasters to the Council of State for deliberation.³¹⁵ While the imperial decree formally confirming the appointment has yet to be located, the available evidence strongly suggests that ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi was likewise appointed to this position. Briefly put, by petitioning for the reinstatement of grants and privileges historically conferred upon his lineage, ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi effectively sought to complete his own portfolio of institutional and endowment-based revenues.

Although ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi had been officially appointed on the final day of September 1907, it appears that the *berât-ı ‘ālî* (the official title of privilege) bearing the Sultan’s *ḥatt-ı hümayûn* (royal calligraphy) was not issued until nearly six months later. The date of Turhan Përmeti Pasha’s correspondence to the Grand Vizierate on this matter is recorded as March 20, 1908.³¹⁶ The principal reason that this procedure was overseen by the Ministry of Imperial Endowments rather than by the Assembly of Sheikhs or the Office of the Grand Mufti lies in the fact that the appointment was intimately tied to the trusteeship of the evkâf-ı Celâliye, thus falling under the purview of the Ministry’s administrative jurisdiction. A document penned by Grand Vizier Ferîd Pasha two days later indicates that the Sultan’s permission had been secured for the inscription of the royal calligraphy on ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi’s *berât-ı ‘ālî*.³¹⁷ However, it remains somewhat uncertain whether the document was ever formally issued or delivered at that time because immediately following Sultan Mehmed V Reşâd’s accession to the throne, official correspondence was exchanged between the Ministry of Imperial Endowments and the Grand Vizierate to have ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi’s *berât-ı ‘ālî* adorned with the royal calligraphy and delivered to him.³¹⁸ Ultimately, the imperial decree ratifying ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi’s *berât-ı ‘ālî* was issued on June 26, 1909.³¹⁹ Even if, with a historian’s naivety, one might question whether the renewal of the *berât-ı ‘ālî* was prompted by the coronation of a new sultan, there is no indication in any of the 1909 documents that such a renewal was demanded. Consequently, the most plausible explanation is that the dispatch of the *berât-ı ‘ālî* was delayed for over a year. The precise reasons for this delay, however, remain, at present, impossible to ascertain.

Given the oppression that they suffered under the Hamidian regime, relief had flooded through the Mevlevîs together with the proclamation of the Second Con-

315. BOA. ŞD. 187/4, 2 Şafer 1326 (March 6, 1908).

316. BOA. Y.A.RES. 154/52-2, 16 Şafer 1326 (March 20, 1908).

317. BOA. Y.A.RES. 154/52-1, 18 Şafer 1326 (March 22, 1908).

318. BOA. BEO. 3543/265660, 14 Rebî’u’l-âḫir 1327 (May 5, 1909).

319. BOA. İ.EV. 50/1-2, 7 Cumâde’l-âḫire 1327 (June 26, 1909).

stitution and later the enthronement of Sultan Mehmed V Reşâd. For instance, the Yenikapı Mevlevî Lodge, which had been severely damaged by a huge conflagration in 1906 during which its well-stocked library with precious pieces utterly vanished,³²⁰ underwent a major restoration handled by Architect Kemâleddîn Bey (d. 1927).³²¹ The Mevlevîs were re-given certain privileges that had been previously revoked during the reign of Abdülhamid II.³²² Therefore, the lingering wounds of unpleasant memories were gradually healed. What is more, the suppression of the 31 March Incident³²³ was warmly welcomed by ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi, who sent a telegram filled with expressions of praise and glorification to the Action Army led by Mahmûd Şevket Pasha (d. 1913) and the Chamber of Deputies (*Meclis-i Meb‘ûsân*):

Your strength and sense of justice have astonished the entire civilized world. The *millet*, in its entirety, stands united in gratitude and satisfaction with your deeds. Abdülhamid II, aided by his treacherous clique, exploited religion for his own ends. In his attempt to restore tyranny (*istibdâd*), he acted in defiance of the sharia and betrayed its principles. Therefore, he is no longer worthy to bear the sacred sword of our exalted Prophet. We respectfully propose that this sword of justice be taken from him and bestowed upon hands more deserving. Know that we stand with you, resolutely and as one.³²⁴

The girding ceremony conducted following the enthronement of Mehmed V Reşâd became a stage upon which the Mevlevîs asserted their enduring political relevance, strategically reaffirming their proximity to the imperial center through ritual performance. On May 10, 1909, in the interior of the Tomb of Ebû Eyyûb el-Ensârî (d. 674), ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi officiated the traditional girding ceremony by fastening the sword of ‘Ömer (d. 644), the second rightly guided caliph, onto Sultan Reşâd’s waist. The illustrated journal *Musavver Muhît* published a pencil drawing depicting this moment (see Appendix). Interestingly, however, the 35-year-old ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi was portrayed as an elderly man with an unusually long beard, while Sultan Reşâd, who was 65 years old at the time, was represented with noticeably more

320. According to contemporary observers Mehmed Ziyâ and Tâhirü’l-Mevlevî, this massive conflagration causing dramatic losses exacerbated the illness of Mehmed Celâleddîn Dede, who passed away in 1908, shortly before the Second Constitution. Mehmed Ziyâ, *Merâkiz-i Mühimme-i Mevleviyye’den Yenikapı Mevlevihânesi*, 258–64. Tâhirü’l-Mevlevî, *Yenikapı Mevlevihânesi Postnişîni Şeyh Celâleddîn Efendi*, 8–9.

321. BOA. MB.İ. 141/39, 17 Reb‘u’l-evvel 1328 (March 29, 1910). BOA. HH.İ. 202/11, 18 Reb‘u’l-evvel 1328 (March 30, 1910).

322. Haksever, *Modernleşme Sürecinde Mevlevîler ve Jön Türkler*, 110.

323. For pioneering case studies on the 31 March Incident that ultimately resulted in the deposition of Abdülhamid II, see İsmail Hami Danişmend, *31 Mart Vak‘ası* (İstanbul: İstanbul Kitabevi, 1961). Sina Akşin, *31 Mart Olayı* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi S.B.F. Yayınları, 1970).

324. *Servet-i Fünûn*, no: 281, 20 Nisân 1325 (May 3, 1909).

youthful features.³²⁵ According to *Yeni Gazete*, another periodical of the time, ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi was accompanied by several prominent Mevlevî sheikhs: Celâleddîn Çelebi (d. 1918), the sheikh of the Karahisâr-ı Sâhib Mevlevî Lodge; ‘Abdülbâkî Dede³²⁶ (d. 1935), the sheikh of the Yenikapı Mevlevî Lodge; Hüseyin Fahreddîn Dede, the sheikh of the Bahâriye Mevlevî Lodge; Şemseddîn Dede (d. 1909), the sheikh of the Kasımpaşa Mevlevî Lodge; Ahmed Celâleddîn Dede (d. 1946), the sheikh of the Üsküdar Mevlevî Lodge; and lastly Veled Çelebi, who was then serving as the deputy sheikh of the Galata Mevlevî Lodge.³²⁷ In his memoirs, Veled Çelebi recounts that, following the proclamation of the Second Constitution, he was appointed by ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi as the deputy sheikh of the Galata Mevlevî Lodge, in place of the ailing ‘Atâullah Dede (d. 1910), whose advanced age had left him in frail health. He further notes that he was formally installed as the principal sheikh a year later. Curiously, however, he makes no mention whatsoever of the girding ceremony.³²⁸

Rather than immediately returning to Konya, ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi appears to have prolonged his sojourn in Istanbul for a considerable duration. Accompanied by a delegation including the *Ertuğrul* Committee and the Deputy of Konya, ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi paid a visit to the Privy Chamber of the Sacred Relics (*Hırka-ı Sa‘âdet Dâ‘iresi*) and the Imperial Treasury at the onset of June 1909.³²⁹ During his stay, he was accommodated within the *Topkapı* Palace, with all associated expenses borne by the Imperial Treasury.³³⁰ In the midst of his arrangements to leave for Konya in early August, ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi was granted with a *nişân-ı ‘âlî-i ‘Osmânî* of the first rank upon the formal request by Grand Mufti Pîrîzâde Mehmed Sâhib Efendi (d. 1910).³³¹

Notwithstanding the esteem and accolades bestowed upon him in the imperial cap-

325. *Musavver Muhît*, no: 26 (4), 30 Nîsân 1325 (May 13, 1909).

326. For the petition submitted by ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi to the *Yıldız* Palace seeking authorization to appoint ‘Abdülbâkî Dede as the sheikh of the Yenikapı Mevlevî Lodge following the death of his father and predecessor Mehmed Celâleddîn Dede, see BOA. Y.PRK.MŞ. 8/93, 2 Temmüz 1324 (July 15, 1908).

327. *Yeni Gazete*, no: 261, 21 Rebî‘u’l-âhîr 1327 (May 11, 1909). For a detailed description of the entire girding ceremony of Sultan Reşâd, see Mehmed Zeki Pakalın, *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü*, vol. II (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1993), 263. Halid Ziya Uşaklıgil, who served as the chief clerk (*ser-kâtib*) to Sultan Reşâd until 1912, was among the witnesses of the ceremony; however, he expressed a principled disapproval of the event. Halid Ziya Uşaklıgil, *Saray ve Ötesi*, ed. Nur Özmel-Akın (İstanbul: Özgür Yayınları, 2012), 417. Another witness, Chief Chamberlain (*Baş-mâbeynci*) Lütfî Simâvî (d. 1933), emphatically noted that this privilege was not exclusive to the Çelebis. Lütfî Simâvî, *Sultan Reşad ve Sultan Vahideddin Dönemlerinde Sarayda Gördüklerim*, ed. Fatih Akyüz and Fatih Tetik (İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2022), 27.

328. İzbudak, *Tekke’den Meclis’e: Sıra Dışı Bir Çelebi’nin Anıları*, 111.

329. BOA. TS.MA.E. 376/15, 21 Mâys 1325 (June 3, 1909).

330. BOA. TS.MA.E. 1095/12-2, 24 Hâzîrân 1325 (July 7, 1909).

331. BOA. İ.TAL. 461/60-2, 21 Receb 1327 (August 8, 1909).

ital, ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi experienced a year marked more by turbulence than tranquility until his dismissal in June 1910. As elucidated in an official document dated February 17, 1910, issued by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and addressed to both the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of War (*Harbiye Nezâreti*), a bundle of problems concurrently erupted, the repercussions of which proved to have redounded to his detriment. First, the Ministry of Finance was asked to investigate the thirty thousand acres of endowed land along the Beğşehir route, which ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi claimed and appropriated as part of the evkâf-ı Celâliye, and to provide information regarding the cessation of the Çelebi Efendi’s stipend of five thousand piasters during the readjustment of general stipends (*ma‘âşât-ı ‘umûmiyye*). Second, the Ministry of War was requested to furnish a response regarding a petition sent from Konya under the signature of a complainant named Muhammed Zeki, which argued that exempting individuals from the noble lineage of Rûmî, as well as the dervishes (*dedegân*) residing in the cells (*hücre-nişîn*) of the Konya Mevlânâ Lodge, from military service was contrary to the principles of constitutionalism (*kavâ‘id-i meşrûtiyet*) and equality.³³² Although I have not been able to ascertain with precision the source of this stipend of five thousand piasters, the fact that the Ministry of Finance was notified of it permits a strong inference that ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi’s earlier stipend paid from the central treasury was revised upwards following Mehmed V Reşâd’s accession to the throne.

In the response from the Ministry of Finance, it was stated that no delegation had been dispatched from the central treasury to Konya to conduct an investigation into the aforementioned lands. It was further reported that the stipend of the Çelebi Efendi, which had previously been suspended, had now resumed. Particularly noteworthy is the information that the stipend was included in the “exception” (*istisnâ*) list submitted to the Chamber of Deputies. Accordingly, should the Chamber reject it, the stipend would naturally cease to be disbursed; conversely, if approved, the payments would continue.³³³ Besides, in the response received from the Ministry of War, it was conveyed that, in accordance with the requirements of constitutional governance, the universal application of military service to all individuals was deemed necessary. It was further noted that this principle was explicitly stated in one of the articles of the new conscription law, which was drafted by the Chamber of Deputies.³³⁴ This infringement on one of the traditional prerogatives of the descendants of Rûmî appears to have eluded even the intervention of the Sultan, who was himself a Mevlevî devotee.

332. BOA. DH.MUİ. 67/52-1, 4 Şubât 1325 (February 17, 1910).

333. BOA. DH.MUİ. 67/52-3, 11 Şubât 1325 (February 24, 1910).

334. BOA. DH.MUİ. 67/52-5, 18 Şubât 1325 (March 3, 1910).

Last but not least, whilst contending with the regulations introduced by the newly established order and disputes over endowed lands, ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi was simultaneously submitting applications for the necessary repairs to Rûmî’s tomb.³³⁵ Upon the inquiry from the Grand Vizierate, the Minister of Imperial Endowments, Şerîf ‘Ali Haydar Pasha (d. 1935), replied that the relevant repairs had previously been undertaken by the Ministry of Finance and thus fell within its sphere of responsibility.³³⁶ However, it is understood from the imperial decree issued in response to Veled Çelebi’s application that the repairs could not be carried out during ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi’s tenure, and that the need for restoration had, by then, extended to the entire complex.³³⁷

4.2 The Outbreak of Factionalism and the Downfall of ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi

The available literature, the preponderance of which is inspired by Gölpınarlı, seems to arrive at a consensus on the nature of Veled Çelebi’s appointment: Veled Çelebi, as a prolific Turkist writer producing myriad works to convey the significance of the Turkish language,³³⁸ had forged an alliance with the CUP, which in return yielded a favorable result on his behalf.³³⁹ This argument holds a measure of credibility, as Veled Çelebi recounts in his memoirs that, while still working as a civil servant in Istanbul, he was actively engaged in one of the city’s branches of the CUP. There, alongside figures such as Nâ’ilî Efendi, who served as a distributor (*muvezzî*) of secret documents and banned newspapers, he attended clandestine meetings in venues inaccessible to informants and perused CUP publications printed in Paris.³⁴⁰

However, despite its factual accuracy, the explanatory power of this line of argument in accounting for ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi’s dismissal remains relatively limited since it fails to mention a legitimate rationale for the forfeiture of his office. In the biographical account of Hüseyin Vassaf, ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi’s misconduct incompatible with

335. BOA. BEO. 3712/278400-2, 17 Şafer 1328 (February 28, 1910).

336. BOA. BEO. 3717/278734-2, 24 Şafer 1328 (March 7, 1910).

337. BOA. İMBH. 3/25-3, 28 Receb 1328 (August 5, 1910).

338. For a comprehensive compendium of Veled Çelebi’s works, see Nevin Korucuoğlu, *Veled Çelebi İzbudak* (Ankara: T.C. Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1994), 69–155.

339. Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ’dan Sonra Mevlevîlik*, 177–78. Duru, *Tarihî Simalardan: Mevlevî*, 122. Önder, *Mevlânâ ve Mevlevîlik*, 204–6. Top, *Mevlevî Usûl ve Âdâbı*, 314. Gündüz, *Osmanlılarda Devlet-Tekke Münâsebetleri*, 213–14. Haksever, *Modernleşme Sürecinde Mevlevîler ve Jön Türkler*, 112. Sayar, *Osmanlıdan Cumhuriyete Portre Denemeleri*, 31–32.

340. İzbudak, *Tekke’den Meclis’e: Sıra Dışı Bir Çelebi’nin Anıları*, 107.

his much-esteemed office are specified as the underlying reason for his dismissal.³⁴¹ Yet, Hüseyin Vassaf omits any reference to Veled Çelebi's close association with the CUP, instead offering a tendentious portrayal conspicuously devoid of critical commentary. Nor does he share any concrete information regarding the particulars of instances of misconduct. Gölpınarlı, in contrast, asserts that the dismissal of 'Abdülhalîm Çelebi was precipitated by unsubstantiated rumors and defamations stemming from his personal affairs.³⁴² It is a cognitively demanding task to wring the truth out of the two diametrically opposed accounts. Consulting the memoir of Veled Çelebi further contributes to muddying the already clouded picture. The inherently selective character of recollection in personal narratives crafted to project one's persona retrospectively onto the canvas of history does not elude the reader's investigative gaze. Indeed, what might be termed "the politics of memory" pervades Veled Çelebi's memoir. He is content to highlight the sympathy and respect that he received from high-ranking CUP officials, while strategically eschewing any substantive mention of his formal activities within the organization or the extent of his involvement both prior to and immediately following the 1908 revolution. He does not neglect to absolve himself, insisting that he was never implicated in any intrigue against others. Rather, what he brings to the fore is his frequent communication with the courtiers, particularly with Sultan Reşâd.³⁴³

Taking these partial narratives into consideration, the argument that Veled Çelebi's appointment took place due to his affiliation with the CUP does not lure us into a false comprehension. For he would be dismissed in 1919 along with the downfall of the CUP and 'Abdülhalîm Çelebi would reclaim his former office,³⁴⁴ building up the most overt causality with regard to Veled Çelebi's political allegiance to the CUP appears to rest on more than speculative grounds. What still remains a perplexing question is the legal justification for the dismissal of 'Abdülhalîm Çelebi, who, as illustrated above, did not hesitate to demonstrate a swift alignment with the CUP and to laud the Action Army. Mere political sympathy may not have sufficed; rather, the degree of proximity to the center of political power must have been a critical variable in this complex equation. In other words, it was likely for the CUP to promote a person with proven loyalty among themselves.

That being said, the appointment procedure cannot be totally envisioned as a top-down measure since it was first provoked by a collective initiative crystallized in a petition. On June 10, 1910, twenty-six of the Çelebis, several trustees of various

341. Hüseyin Vassaf, *Sefîne-i Evliyâ*, 2006, 5:255.

342. Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ'dan Sonra Mevlevîlik*, 177.

343. İzbudak, *Tekke'den Meclis'e: Sıra Dışı Bir Çelebi'nin Anıları*, 115–24.

344. For Veled Çelebi's dismissal due to his 'Unionist' identity, see BOA. DH.KMS. 51/1/2-2, 27 Mârt 1335 (March 27, 1919).

pious endowments, and a member of the ulama penned a petition addressed to the Sultan for the replacement of ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi.³⁴⁵ The most serious of the accusations was that the Çelebi Efendi had acquired the sacred office of Rûmî not out of devotion to its spiritual duties, but rather as a means to accumulate wealth, display grandeur, tyrannize other Çelebis and dervishes, and lead a life of indulgence in Istanbul. Contrary to established custom, he had, they claimed, left all matters of the Mevlevî path in the hands of outsiders. The revenues generated from the endowed properties were allegedly appropriated largely for his personal use and extravagantly spent in Istanbul on pursuits considered illegitimate by the petitioners. The petition further accused him of scandalous behavior, both in Konya and Istanbul, to such a degree that the dignity of the Mevlevî rites and the honor of the sacred office of Rûmî had been gravely compromised. By monopolizing the income of the waqf for himself, they stated, many members of the order were left in a state of destitution, suffering from hunger and deprivation. The petitioners emphasized that the Çelebi Efendi was entirely unqualified for his position, unfamiliar with the responsibilities of the path, and negligent in fulfilling his duties. His prolonged absence had led to disorder and mismanagement. Due to the lack of discipline and leadership, a number of unruly and ignorant dervishes had begun to engage in behavior unbecoming of the Mevlevî tradition, provoking widespread public disapproval. If left unaddressed, the petitioners claimed, this situation would soon result in the complete erasure of the Mevlevî order’s dignity, prestige, and distinctiveness.

The petition continues by noting that the assembled complainants had convened at the sacred tomb of their spiritual ancestor and collectively vowed never to recognize the Çelebi Efendi as their leader again, as all prior efforts at reform had proven futile. Out of deference to the recipient of the petition, the signatories refrained from enumerating his disgraceful actions in detail, although they asserted that many of these were already widely known. They requested a formal inquiry into his conduct from individuals familiar with him in both Konya and Istanbul. Most importantly perhaps, the petitioners pointed out that, in accordance with imperial custom, the appointment and dismissal of the Çelebis rested solely with the sovereign authority of the Sultan. Referring to past precedents, they formally requested the dismissal of ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi and, in his place, the appointment of Veled Çelebi, described as a qualified, pious, and knowledgeable descendant. The petition concludes with an appeal to the spiritual authority of the addressee, affirming confidence that the Sultan, well known among Mevlevî devotees for his knowledge and insight, would not tolerate the continuation of what they defined as a sorrowful and shameful state of affairs. On June 18, a nearly identical petition, bearing the signatures of eighteen

345. BOA. İİLM. 9/6-2, 1 Cumâde'l-âhire 1328 (June 10, 1910).

of the Çelebis and featuring only minimal revisions, was submitted to the Grand Vizierate.³⁴⁶

This petition by a group of the dissident Çelebis may be read not merely as an internal complaint, but as an emblematic instance of a constitutionalist challenge to dynastic privilege within the Mevlevî order. Its tone and content reveal a striking departure from the traditional reverence expected toward the Çelebi Efendi occupying the spiritually sacrosanct office of Rûmî. By denouncing ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi’s alleged moral lapses, fiscal misconduct, and absentee leadership, the petitioners effectively reframe the office not as a hereditary entitlement, but as a moral and administrative trust—one subject to communal accountability. Their invocation of the broader spiritual community’s deprivation and dishonor, alongside a call for the appointment of a qualified, pious, and capable figure, signals an attempt to reinterpret authority within the Mevlevî hierarchy. Thus, this act may be understood as a localized, spiritually coded echo of the broader constitutionalist ethos of the Second Constitutional Period, translating the language of legitimacy, reform, and meritocracy into the context of Sufi governance.

In accordance with the bureaucratic hierarchy, the investigation of the charges against ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi was first delegated to the chief executive of the Assembly of Sheikhs, Hasîrîzâde Elif Efendi (d. 1927).³⁴⁷ In his response, Hasîrîzâde Elif Efendi acknowledged that the complaints against ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi had become widely circulated and substantiated, rendering his continued incumbency untenable, while endorsing Veled Çelebi as a figure of learning, piety, and public esteem suitable for the position.³⁴⁸ Afterwards, Grand Mufti Hüseyin Hüsnü Efendi (d. 1911), who confirmed the decision of the Assembly of Sheikhs, forwarded the matter to the Grand Vizierate for final approval.³⁴⁹ On June 26, the imperial decree was issued, formally announcing the appointment of Veled Çelebi to the position.³⁵⁰ As reported by *Yeni Gazete*³⁵¹ and *Tanîn*,³⁵² the following day, Veled Çelebi was admitted to an audience with Sultan Reşâd, during which he voiced his gratitude.

Prior to the issuance of the imperial decree, ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi, having been informed of this oppositional attempt to depose him, stated in a telegram addressed to the Grand Vizierate that this conspiracy was the result of the incitement by certain malicious individuals (*ğaraż-kārān*) who, seizing every opportunity, sought

346. BOA. İ.İLM. 9/6-5, 5 Hâzîrân 1326 (June 18, 1910).

347. Nihat Azamat, “Elif Efendi, Hasîrîzâde,” in *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 1995), 11:37–38.

348. BOA. İ.İLM. 9/6-3, 7 Cumâde'l-âhîre 1328 (June 16, 1910).

349. BOA. İ.İLM. 9/6-4, 14 Cumâde'l-âhîre 1328 (June 23, 1910).

350. BOA. İ.İLM. 9/6-6, 17 Cumâde'l-âhîre 1328 (June 26, 1910).

351. *Yeni Gazete*, no: 662, 15 Hâzîrân 1326 1326 (June 28, 1910).

352. *Tanîn*, no: 655, 15 Hâzîrân 1326 1326 (June 28, 1910).

to undermine his own household. Accordingly, he requested that, in this cherished era of constitutionalism (*devr-i dil-ārā-yı meşrūtiyet*), wherein everyone's rights are safeguarded, his own lawful rights be protected from any infringement.³⁵³ However, this eleventh-hour intervention proved to be futile.

The dissident faction led by 'Âmil Çelebi demonstrated clear impatience regarding the appointment decision, as evidenced by the telegram that they sent to the Office of the Grand Mufti on the eve of the imperial decree's announcement. In this telegram, they expressed their dissatisfaction with the lack of response to their earlier petitions and indicated an inability to remain in a state of patience.³⁵⁴ The assertive and demanding tone of this telegram is indicative of a sense of political empowerment that likely stemmed from a close alignment with the ruling CUP. Rather than approaching the state apparatus with customary deference, the petitioners articulated their demands as matters of urgency and entitlement, a posture that would have been unthinkable without the assurance of political backing.

On the other hand, the adherents of 'Abdülhalîm Çelebi, who had become aware of the developments unfolding against the existing status quo, expressed their profound disbelief that such an unjust and unwarranted treatment—one that would not have been condoned even during the autocratic Hamidian regime—could be sanctioned in this auspicious era of constitutionalism. They declared that unless a material basis was presented or substantiated through evidence, and unless it was legitimized by the principles of the sharia and secular legality, this course of action could not be reconciled with the imperatives of the constitutional order. They further reiterated that the entire community of brethren (*ihvān*), sympathizers (*muḥibbān*), and dervishes held an exceptional sense of gratitude and contentment toward 'Abdülhalîm Çelebi. Among the signatories were the high-ranking functionaries within the Mevlevî hierarchy such as *Ser-tarıķ* (the vice chief of the order, the deputy of the Çelebi Efendi) Ahmed 'Âdil Çelebi, *Ser-tabbāḥ* (the chief cook) Nizâmeddîn Çelebi, *Türbe-dār-ı* (the tomb keeper) Rûmî Osman Çelebi, *Türbe-dār-ı* Şems Rıza Çelebi, *Türbe-dār-ı Âteş-bâz-ı Velî* Ya'kûb Çelebi, and *Ser-neyzen* (the chief reed-flute player) Muhammed Çelebi.³⁵⁵ Another group of fifty-two signatories also sent a similar telegram of support prior to the announcement of the imperial decree, asserting that 'Abdülhalîm Çelebi's rights should not be violated.³⁵⁶ However, their last-ditch efforts were to no avail.

Subsequent to the arrival of news regarding the supposedly arbitrary decision to

353. BOA. BEO. 3767/282497-2, 11 Ḥazîrân 1326 (June 24, 1910).

354. BOA. BEO. 3156/236643-6, 12 Ḥazîrân 1326 (June 25, 1910).

355. BOA. BEO. 3156/236643-7, 12 Ḥazîrân 1326 (June 25, 1910).

356. BOA. BEO. 3156/236643-11, 12 Ḥazîrân 1326 (June 25, 1910).

dismiss ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi, a deluge of petitions from Konya began to inundate nearly every department of the state apparatus. The emerging wave of protest was not only composed of the Mevlevîs. It rapidly turned into a relatively large-scale popular anti-government demonstration staged by various social segments inclusive of artisans (*eşnâf*), merchants (*tüccâr*), the ulama, and the gentry (*eşrâf*). In telegrams sent to the Ministry of the Interior,³⁵⁷ the Ministry of War³⁵⁸ and the Ministry of Imperial Endowments,³⁵⁹ the protesters built their discursive strategy in the orbit of the libertarian principles promised by constitutionalism:

We protest with all our being the [illicit] treatment meted out as a result of the intrigues of ‘Âmil Çelebi, the former sheikh of Aleppo, and we respectfully declare that, unless a legitimate judicial ruling is presented for [‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi’s] removal, we shall not accept his successor, Veled Çelebi, whose past conduct has already become the subject of widespread gossip in our province. A cabinet grounded in the principles of justice and truth must, above all, uphold the procedures of constitutional governance. The people of our province are in turmoil and do not view this treatment as consistent with the constitutional order.

In a telegram addressed directly to Sultan Reşâd, the prominent figures of the Mevlevî order and local notables, using more tempered language, again requested the reversal of the decision,³⁶⁰ whereas in another telegram, apparently authored by younger and less experienced dervishes, a forceful demand was made for the reinstatement of ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi, accompanied by a threat to abandon the Konya Mevlânâ Lodge, should their appeal be denied.³⁶¹

One of the most striking aspects reflecting both the heterogeneous composition and the large size of the faction supporting ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi is the fact that members of the non-Muslim population were not reluctant to offer favorable testimony on his behalf. In a telegram bearing the signatures of Bishop Antonious on behalf of the Greek Catholics, Deputy Despot Ohannes on behalf of the Armenians, Deputy Metropolitan Papa Nikola on behalf of the Greeks, as well as representatives of the French *Assomption* School, Konya’s Latin Catholics, and Protestants, it was noted that ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi’s exemplary moral conduct and pious lifestyle had made him extraordinarily beloved by all. The petitioners insisted on the immediate cessation of the inequitable treatment to which he had been exposed and called for his

357. BOA. DH.MUİ. 108/1/10-2, 13 Hâzîrân 1326 (June 26, 1910).

358. BOA. DH.MUİ. 108/1/10-3, 13 Hâzîrân 1326 (June 26, 1910).

359. BOA. BEO. 3770/282737-2, 13 Hâzîrân 1326 (June 26, 1910).

360. BOA. BEO. 3770/282704-2, 13 Hâzîrân 1326 (June 26, 1910).

361. BOA. BEO. 3770/282704-3, 14 Hâzîrân 1326 (June 27, 1910).

reinstatement to office.³⁶² Obviously, the support extended to ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi by local non-Muslim leaders suggests that his influence transcended confessional boundaries and that his dismissal was perceived not merely as an internal Mevlevî matter, but as a broader disruption of Konya’s intercommunal harmony.

Evidence of a step taken by ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi to diversify his discursive strategies is his declaration in a telegram addressed directly to the Sultan that he was, in fact, bereft of ambition for the worldly purposes. As he argued, his sorrow did not stem solely from separation from the office of sheikhdom, but from being deprived of the imperial favor that resided at the very heart of his existence. He regarded himself as deserving and worthy of the boundless compassion and mercy of the Sultan, as a member of the loyal lineage that had, for over seven hundred years, offered prayers for the imperial household and entrusted its fate to divine justice. However, he did not neglect to mention his desire to continue serving in the sacred presence of the saintly founder of the Mevlevî order, fulfilling his duties with the same devotion. Reiterating his conviction that he had not deserved the treatment to which he had been subjected, he once again petitioned for compassion and clemency.³⁶³

According to a document reflecting the scale and intensity of the protest that erupted in Konya, a crowd of five thousand people congregated at the government offices to denounce what they considered to be an unlawful treatment, declaring that, unless ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi was returned to his position, they themselves would carry out this task based on the sacred entitlement of national sovereignty (*hâkimiyet-i milliye*).³⁶⁴ Hence, the aspiration to furnish the insurgent collective movement with a legitimate basis was further cemented by means of another conceptualization in sync with the prevailing spirit of the age.

Since such petitioning would amount to functioning as a manifesto in opposition to governmental executions, Minister of the Interior Tal’at Bey (d. 1921) stipulated that, should there be any statements or actions observed that could serve this purpose, legal proceedings be immediately initiated against the instigators (*müşevvikler*). Furthermore, he asked to be promptly informed of the amount of military force required to ensure public order, if such a measure were deemed essential. In response, it was reported that the telegrams sent from Konya were composed indiscriminately at the behest and arrangement of the former Çelebi Efendi’s supporters, and that following the recent instructions and admonitions from the Sublime Porte, the signatories had expressed remorse (*nedâmet*) and offered apologies. Accordingly, it was concluded that the deployment of military force was not

362. BOA. BEO. 3770/282704-5, 14 Hâzîrân 1326 (June 27, 1910).

363. BOA. BEO. 3770/282704-7, 13 Hâzîrân 1326 (June 26, 1910).

364. BOA. BEO. 3770/282704-8, 14 Hâzîrân 1326 (June 27, 1910).

warranted.³⁶⁵

The sequence of communications reveals a clear dynamic of state intimidation and strategic containment in response to the mass protest in Konya. Faced with what was perceived as a challenge to governmental authority, the state apparatus swiftly reasserted central control by signaling the possibility of legal prosecution and military intervention. This veiled coercion appears to have been effective as the government's deterrent posture succeeded in neutralizing dissent without the need for direct confrontation. In this context, the protest movement's rapid demobilization underscores both the limits of provincial autonomy in the Second Constitutional Period and the CUP's capacity to suppress intra-communal opposition through a calibrated blend of statist legalism and latent force.

Truly, the telegrams of gratitude sent in response to Veled Çelebi's appointment illustrate a profoundly polarized Konya, with the population virtually bifurcated into two solid camps during the crisis. While some of these telegrams were endorsed by a considerable number of the Çelebis,³⁶⁶ others bore the signatures of affiliates of merchants, the ulama, the gentry, and even the mayor (*re'îs-i belediye*) and municipal council members.³⁶⁷ Briefly put, the microcosm of factionalism over the Mevlevî leadership seems to have served as a contested site where the larger tensions in Konya were expressed.

After the propaganda machine against Veled Çelebi had been relatively quelled, the state apparatus turned its primary attention to ensuring his safe arrival in Konya, as he continued to receive threatening letters, presumably from the ardent supporters of 'Abdülhalîm Çelebi, while still in Istanbul.³⁶⁸ Given that 'Abdülhalîm Çelebi's presence in Konya was perceived as a potential jeopardy to Veled Çelebi's security, it was deemed appropriate for him to be relocated to Manisa in order to dispel the prevailing unrest and silence adverse rumors.³⁶⁹ Moreover, in order to forestall any potential objection upon his arrival in Konya, Veled Çelebi's *berât-ı 'ālî* bearing the royal calligraphy was hastily issued before his departure from Istanbul.³⁷⁰

The day before his scheduled departure, Veled Çelebi, accompanied by Hüseyin Fahreddîn Dede, was admitted to the imperial palace to bid farewell and was presented with a jeweled (*muraşsa'*) gold watch by the Sultan.³⁷¹ On Wednesday, July 13, he was assigned a special carriage on the mail train departing from the

365. BOA. DH.ŞFR. 663/90, 16 Hâzîrân 1326 (June 29, 1910).

366. BOA. BEO. 3770/282704-6, 13 Hâzîrân 1326 (June 26, 1910).

367. BOA. BEO. 3770/282704-16, 15 Hâzîrân 1326 (June 28, 1910).

368. BOA. BEO. 3776/283166, 23 Hâzîrân 1326 (July 6, 1910).

369. BOA. DH.ŞFR. 663/77, 27 Hâzîrân 1326 (July 10, 1910).

370. BOA. İ.EV. 51/13-3, 27 Hâzîrân 1326 (July 10, 1910).

371. *Yeni Gazete*, no: 677, 30 Hâzîrân 1326 (July 13, 1910).

Haydarpaşa train station *en route* to Konya. As a precautionary measure, it was arranged that Veled Çelebi would disembark at the Pınarbaşı train station, approximately two hours from the city, rest there for a day, and proceed to Konya on Friday morning in a specially dispatched vehicle.³⁷² His near-daily reports to the Sublime Porte throughout the journey point to the gravity with which the entire situation was regarded. Upon his arrival, he reported in his letter to the Grand Vizierate that from Eskişehir onward, thousands of people lined the route to express profound affection and devotion toward him. At the Konya train station, an official welcoming ceremony was held by provincial authorities and local residents. Amidst the emotional cries of the poor and devout, he managed to reach the sacred shrines of Şems-i Tebrîzî and Rûmî, where prayers were repeatedly recited for the well-being of the Sultan.³⁷³

4.3 Veled Çelebi's Turbulent Tenure

Although Veled Çelebi ascended to the head office of the Mevlevî order under the auspices of Sultan Reşâd and the CUP, his tenure was not characterized by triumph, but rather was a storm-laden chapter tinged with deep disillusionment. In his memoirs, Veled Çelebi recounts that, despite receiving extraordinary compliments from the state apparatus, none of his applications, particularly those related to endowment affairs, were given due consideration. He attributes this neglect primarily to the CUP's indifference toward the revival of the dervish lodges and the entire Sufi institution. Up until his dismissal, he further notes, he had grown weary of the constant official complaints and the intrigues orchestrated by other Çelebis, who sought to claim a portion of the already meager revenues of the evkâf-ı Celâliye for their own sustenance.³⁷⁴

Soon after his arrival in Konya, Veled Çelebi was bestowed with the *nişân-ı 'Os-mânî* of the second rank. What is noteworthy is not that he was duly given this honor, but that Hasîrîzâde Elif Efendi was simultaneously re-awarded (*müceddeden*) the imperial *meçîdî* honor of the third rank in the same imperial decree.³⁷⁵ It is improbable that Elif Efendi, whose testimony had been instrumental in bolstering Veled Çelebi's position, received an imperial distinction at the same time by sheer coincidence. It was rather a deliberate act of political choreography by the state

372. BOA. BEO. 3779/283410-2, 29 Hâzîrân 1326 (July 12, 1910).

373. BOA. BEO. 3781/283515-2, 2 Temmûz 1326 (July 15, 1910).

374. İzbudak, *Tekke'den Meclis'e: Sıra Dışı Bir Çelebi'nin Anıları*, 122–23.

375. BOA. İ.TAL. 466/34, 28 Receb 1328 (August 5, 1910).

apparatus, which symbolically rewarded loyalty and collaboration.

Seeking to maintain robust ties and communication with both the imperial palace and the Sublime Porte, Veled Çelebi strategically leveraged religious commemorations as opportunities. For example, he dispatched a formal letter of congratulation to the Grand Vizier on the occasion of the Night of Ascension (*Mi'râc Kândîli*), which fell on the night of August 3, 1910.³⁷⁶ At first glance, such congratulatory gestures by the head of the Mevlevî order might appear purely ceremonial; however, the presence of 'Âmil Çelebi at the imperial palace on the same night lends credence to the notion that these acts of communication were deeply embedded in the dynamics of *realpolitik*.³⁷⁷ Besides, this report in *Yeni Gazete* sheds light on the growing breadth of 'Âmil Çelebi's network of influence and affiliations.

However, the ascendancy of Veled Çelebi and the proponent faction led by 'Âmil Çelebi proved to be but a fleeting glimmer, a short-lived episode in the ever-turning wheel of power. The first stirrings of opposition that would haunt Veled Çelebi's tenure arose before the second month of his rule had waned. In the wake of the information disseminated concerning the congregation of a coterie of five Mevlevîs, under the leadership of Dervish 'Osmân and Dervish 'Abdullah, with Ahmed Rızâ Bey (d. 1930), the president of the Chamber of Deputies, during his sojourn to Konya, both the Konya Mevlânâ Lodge and the Governorate of Konya undertook expeditious measures. The magnitude and solemnity of the incident were vividly articulated by Veled Çelebi:

My predecessor was dismissed by the command of the sharia and the Caliph's decree, and I, a humble servant, was appointed to the venerable lodge of Rûmî. Despite this decree, five dervishes who, in defiance, have acted rebelliously and even joined forces with certain individuals to file complaints, were banished (*seyyâh vermek*) by me, according to the custom of the path. However, they have refused to vacate the region and, contrary to the principles and etiquette of the order, have taken residence in the house of my predecessor, thereby emboldening certain circles to act against me. If I am unable to enforce upon these dervishes the rulings of the path as every sheikh has traditionally done, the integrity of the order will be lost and the sheikhdom will be annihilated. I therefore earnestly request that the Governorate [of Konya] be strictly instructed to ensure the full execution of the authority of the order, which is already sanctioned by an imperial decree.³⁷⁸

376. BOA. BEO. 3789/284167-2, 26 Receb 1328 (August 3, 1910).

377. *Yeni Gazete*, no: 697, 21 Temmûz 1326 (August 3, 1910).

378. BOA. BEO. 3795/284614-2, 5 Ağustos 1326 (August 18, 1910).

In a petition addressed to the Grand Vizierate and signed foremost by *Ser-ṭarīk* Ahmed ‘Âdil Çelebi, senior figures within the Konya Mevlânâ Lodge contended that a small ungrateful group of dervishes, misguided by close relatives of ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi, had instigated inappropriate agitation against Veled Çelebi. The signatories asserted that, owing to his moral virtues and spiritual refinement, Veled Çelebi was uniquely positioned to serve the interests of both the Mevlevî path and Konya.³⁷⁹ Additionally, in his report on the incident, the Governor of Konya, ‘Ârifî Pasha (d. 1915) stated that the rebel group was found to have ties with those who had previously sent threatening letters to Veled Çelebi, prompting the initiation of police investigations. In light of Veled Çelebi’s apprehensions regarding a potential assassination attempt, the suspected dervishes who had been expelled from the Konya Mevlânâ Lodge were relocated to the Kütahya Mevlevî Lodge. The report also noted that a separate petition submitted by twenty-eight of the Çelebis from the maternal line (*inâs*), who sought to exploit the current situation in order to claim shares from the evkâf-ı Celâliye, should not be taken into consideration.³⁸⁰

This incident reveals a complex and multilayered socio-political drama that invites interpretation on several fronts. The audacity exhibited by a group of dervishes in directly appealing to Ahmed Rızâ Bey, a prominent figure within the CUP, to demand the reinstatement of ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi, underscores the precariousness of Veled Çelebi’s authority in the nascent stages of his leadership. Yet, the ultimate failure of the attempt in question suggests that the prevailing political winds still blew in favor of Veled Çelebi. On the other hand, Veled Çelebi’s decision to appeal to the state apparatus, demanding prompt and stringent action, demonstrates the boundaries of his spiritual authority within the Mevlevî order itself. This appeal must be regarded not as a mere tactical maneuver, but rather as a manifestation of an underlying crisis of legitimacy.

Equally revealing is the conduct of *Ser-ṭarīk* Ahmed ‘Âdil Çelebi, formerly a close associate of ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi and second in command within the hierarchy of the order. Notwithstanding the political transition, he retained his position and, remarkably soon after, began offering public commendations for Veled Çelebi. This points to the permeability and fluidity between opposing factions, challenging the assumption of monolithic blocs. Personal pragmatism and shifting loyalties shaped the internal dynamics of the order. Finally, the emergence of a group of the Çelebis from the maternal line, driven purely by economic motives and seeking shares from the evkâf-ı Celâliye, highlights another layer of contention. Whether they were acting independently or were covertly incentivized by ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi to sabotage

379. BOA. BEO 3794/284500-2, 4 Ağustos 1326 (August 17, 1910).

380. BOA. BEO 3794/284500-5, 7 Ağustos 1326 (August 20, 1910).

his rival remains uncertain. What is clear, however, is that this group embodied a broader pattern of intra-*tarīqa* competition—one increasingly entangled with the politics of inheritance, livelihood, and institutional control.

Efforts to secure Veled Çelebi's dismissal were not limited to solely establishing lines of communication with politically powerful figures or, so to speak, forming a pro-‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi lobby in Istanbul. In their efforts to destabilize Veled Çelebi's administration, his opponents structured their campaign in terms of ostensibly rational and tangible grievances, thereby avoiding the appearance of acting on mere personal ambition or abstract discontent. For instance, in a petition that was sent to the Grand Vizierate and that bore the signatures of thirty-one Çelebis, it was claimed that Veled Çelebi, being unfamiliar with administrative affairs, was unable to properly manage the sacred office of Rûmî and instead delegated the reins of authority to various others, thereby causing harm to the waqf. In order to prevent the continued erosion of the waqf's legal rights, it was requested, by way of a plea for compassion, that Veled Çelebi be appointed to another position more suited to his current capacity, and that ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi, who had long suffered unjustly, be graciously reinstated to his former position. The petition also called attention to the deplorable state of ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi's family and requested that their suffering be alleviated through an act of benevolence and imperial favor.³⁸¹ A group of fifteen individuals, comprising members of the ulama, the gentry, and merchants, lent their endorsement to this petition of the opposing Çelebis in a telegram sent to Istanbul.³⁸² Moreover, a salient feature of the case under scrutiny is the emotional tenor of another petition submitted by ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi's mother and sisters, in which they pleaded for his reinstatement. Strikingly, their petition makes no mention whatsoever of Veled Çelebi. Framing themselves as victims of ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi's misfortune, the female members of the family appealed to the compassion of the state, portraying their household as broken and in need of protection. The appeal strongly emphasized that official intervention would not only restore their dignity but also provide much-needed relief to the orphans under their care.³⁸³

Aware of the discordant voices undermining his administration, Veled Çelebi composed a letter articulating the unfolding events from his own perspective. In this letter, he elaborated on his consistent approach of acting with humility and a conciliatory intent, despite persistent provocations from his opponents. He portrayed them as morally degraded individuals resistant to religious discipline and motivated by mundane interests. When his efforts at reconciliation failed, he argued, they

381. BOA. BEO. 3770/282737-4, 23 Mârt 1327 (April 5, 1911).

382. BOA. BEO. 3770/282737-5, 24 Mârt 1327 (April 6, 1911).

383. BOA. BEO. 3770/282737-6, 27 Mâyıs 1327 (June 9, 1911).

resorted to the dissemination of misleading information to official channels. He stressed the imperative for disciplinary measures within the order to prevent further discord and appealed for state support in countering these disruptive elements.³⁸⁴

Veled Çelebi's insistent recourse to state intervention offers a telling commentary on a fundamental tension at the heart of his leadership. Rather than relying solely on the traditional moral and spiritual sway expected of a Çelebi Efendi, he consistently turned to bureaucratic power to assert control and suppress internal dissent. This pattern not only illustrates a gradual disintegration of autonomous spiritual governance but also signals an underlying fragility in his position. More pointedly, Veled Çelebi's appeals reflect an implicit admission of vulnerability. His characterization of the opponent Çelebis as morally bankrupt and resistant to piety suggests that his leadership was not universally recognized or respected within the order. The fact that he was unable or unwilling to enforce discipline without official backing hints at limitations in his spiritual or personal influence. This may stem from the contested nature of his appointment, the fragmentation within the Mevlevî ranks, or his own lack of institutional charisma. On the other hand, this reliance on the state apparatus is not simply a sign of weakness. It also speaks to a broader strategy of legitimacy: by aligning himself with the political authority, Veled Çelebi aimed to reinforce his status not just as a spiritual leader, but as a state-sanctioned actor. In doing so, he positioned his rivals not merely as internal dissenters, but as opponents of political order and religious orthodoxy—a maneuver that reveals both political acumen and the blurred boundaries between religious authority and state power during the Second Constitutional Period.

The loss of the sheikhdom entailed not only the forfeiture of spiritual authority but also the concomitant fiscal privileges. In an effort to mitigate the economic hardship that followed his dismissal, 'Abdülhalîm Çelebi petitioned the Grand Vizierate³⁸⁵ and the Sultan himself³⁸⁶ at various intervals, requesting the re-payment of his stipend. These appeals, however, went unanswered for a sustained stretch of time. At long last, according to the Cabinet (*Meclis-i Vükelâ*) decision dated May 12, 1912, 'Abdülhalîm Çelebi was allocated a monthly stipend of five thousand piasters from the *'ilmiyye* budget.³⁸⁷ The emphasis that was placed during the Cabinet meeting on the notion that “given the dignity of the position, it is not befitting the honor of the Ottoman government for him to remain in a state of distress and misery” is particularly noteworthy as it mirrors that his family's sustenance was still seen as the state's special responsibility. Although the relevant decision document did

384. BOA. BEO. 3770/282737-7, 5 Hâzîrân 1327 (June 18, 1911).

385. BOA. BEO. 3876/290632, 17 Mârt 1327 (March 30, 1911).

386. BOA. İ.MBH. 7/59-2, 5 Teşrîn-i Sâni 1327 (November 18, 1911).

387. BOA. MV. 164/58-3, 29 Nisân 1328 (May 12, 1912).

not bear the signature of Mustafa Hayri Efendi (d. 1921), the Minister of Imperial Endowments, Grand Vizier Mehmed Sa'îd Pasha (d. 1914) ordered the inscription of the stipend statement.³⁸⁸

Quite interestingly, as Grand Mufti Mehmed Cemâleddîn Efendi noted in his correspondence to the Grand Vizierate dated December 12, 1912, the stipend decision taken by the Cabinet had not been executed.³⁸⁹ In the same document, the Grand Mufti also pointed out that appointing 'Abdülhalîm Çelebi to a position within the scholarly bureaucracy (*dâ'ire-i 'ilmiyye*) would not be possible due to his lack of knowledge in matters of Islamic law (*umûr-ı şer'îyye*). Therefore, an alternative option to the cancellation of the stipend payment had also been shelved. The concurrence of the decision and its subsequent non-implementation with the period of political and military turmoil beginning with the Italo-Turkish War and extending through the Balkan Wars is likely the most plausible explanation for 'Abdülhalîm Çelebi's failure to receive his stipend.

Nevertheless, one indication that 'Abdülhalîm Çelebi was not entirely overwhelmed by the political turbulence of the moment is his calculated attempt to engage with the shifting dynamics of *realpolitik*. On January 10, 1913, he addressed a letter to Kâmil Pasha of Cyprus (d. 1913), recently appointed Grand Vizier for the fourth time, in which he interpreted the latter's reappointment as a sign of divine providence. The timing of his appraisal, which coincided with a period of relative weakness within the CUP,³⁹⁰ serves to demonstrate his underlying anti-CUP sentiments. Seizing the opportunity, he once again petitioned for reinstatement to his former office, requesting an inquiry into the circumstances of his dismissal and the restoration of what he described as his usurped rights (*hakk-ı mağşûb*).³⁹¹ Ironically, he could not have foreseen that merely two weeks after submitting this letter, the Storming of the Sublime Porte (the coup d'état) would erupt, compelling Kâmil Pasha to resign from office—a twist of fate that rendered his appeal futile almost as soon as it was made. Therefore, with the Ottoman government firmly under the exclusive control of the triumvirate of Enver, Tal'at, and Cemâl, 'Abdülhalîm Çelebi's prospects were, in all likelihood, entirely extinguished.

Having said that, we may now turn to an assessment of Veled Çelebi's capacity to exercise authority over the Mevlevî lodges, nominally under his jurisdiction, by

388. BOA. BEO. 4040/302993-4, 5 Mâys 1328 (May 18, 1912).

389. BOA. BEO. 4017/301218-2, 29 Teşrîn-i Sâni 1328 (December 12, 1912).

390. For a thorough examination from the vantage point of the emerging dissidence embodied by the Freedom and Accord Party during the unstable period spanning from the dissolution of the Chamber of Deputies in January 1912 to the coup d'état of 1913, see Ali Birinci, *Hürriyet ve İtilâf Fırkası* (İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 1990), 101–200.

391. BOA. BEO. 4017/301218-3, 28 Kânûn-ı Evvel 1328 (January 10, 1913).

examining episodes of unrest that emerged within them. The most consequential of these was the crisis that engulfed the Aleppo Mevlevî Lodge. According to a document dated March 30, 1911, sent from the Grand Vizierate to the Office of the Grand Mufti, ‘Âmil Çelebi, previously dismissed amid complaints during the tenure of ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi, was reappointed by Veled Çelebi to the Aleppo Mevlevî Lodge.³⁹² As Sezai Küçük specified, among the grounds cited for ‘Âmil Çelebi’s previous dismissal were allegations of embezzling revenues from certain endowed properties of the Aleppo Mevlevî Lodge through their sale, as well as neglecting other waqf lands, resulting in their significant depreciation.³⁹³

This reappointment, however, met with resistance from the incumbent sheikh of the lodge, Sa‘deddîn Efendi, who refused to vacate his position. The matter escalated to the level of the Ottoman central government when Veled Çelebi formally requested state intervention to enforce Sa‘deddîn Efendi’s removal. Notably, this vociferous incident garnered scrupulous attention from the Istanbul press. According to a report in *Tanîn* newspaper, Veled Çelebi along with a number of signatories initially proposed ‘Âmil Çelebi’s appointment to the Senate (*Meclis-i A‘yân*) on the basis of his moral standing; however, the prevailing view favored assigning him to a suitable Mevlevî lodge, given his lack of prior service within the *‘ilmiyye* bureaucracy. At the end of the report, it was noted that an imperial decree was issued confirming his appointment to the Aleppo Mevlevî Lodge.³⁹⁴

Nevertheless, a highly sarcastic and cynical article titled “Such Things Can No Longer Be Tolerated” was published in *Hakikat* newspaper in response to this recent incident. The article relayed that ‘Âmil Çelebi, who had become the sheikh of the Aleppo Mevlevî Lodge due to his affiliation with the Sayyâdî household, was removed from Aleppo following the proclamation of the Second Constitution, as a result of the CUP’s intervention. The deliberate emphasis on his connection to the Sayyâdîs is a noteworthy detail, as it helps explain how ‘Âmil Çelebi had been able to submit a petition for his own appointment as the *pōst-niṣîn* of the Konya Mevlânâ Lodge in 1907 through the mediation of Ebu’l-Hudâ es-Sayyâdî. Thus, this reference effectively completes a missing piece of the historical puzzle. Furthermore, the article opens up a specific parenthesis regarding the notion that this was in fact ‘Âmil Çelebi’s reward offered as a reciprocal gesture in return for his meritorious services (*hidemât-ı mebrûre*) that he rendered during Veled Çelebi’s appointment. It draws attention to the fact that Veled Çelebi’s initial recommendation for ‘Âmil Çelebi’s appointment to the Senate held no real political significance, underlining

392. BOA. BEO. 3875/290578, 17 Mârt 1327 (March 30, 1911).

393. Küçük, “Halep Mevlevîhânesi,” 86–87.

394. *Tanîn*, no: 921, 14 Mârt 1327 (March 27, 1911).

that petitions of this sort essentially function as a means of placing the matter straight onto the highest desks of power. Perhaps the most eye-catching detail in the article is that the news of ‘Âmil Çelebi’s appointment by an imperial decree had not been conveyed through official state channels but rather was communicated directly to Sa‘deddîn Efendi by Veled Çelebi himself, acting on his own initiative. This was described as a remarkably bold move, creating the impression that the Çelebi Efendi was acting as if he were the Sultan’s proxy. The article concludes by noting that, in response to this procedural irregularity, Sa‘deddîn Efendi had begun to make the necessary formal appeals.³⁹⁵ The fundamental question posed pertained to the issuance of such an imperial decree. Was there any possibility that it was complete fabrication?

Another article, published in *Tasvîr-i Efkâr*, took the tone of caustic critique to even greater heights, delivering a scathing account of ‘Âmil Çelebi’s alleged mismanagement and moral bankruptcy during his tenure at the Aleppo Mevlevî Lodge. The author, evidently driven by personal grievance—claiming his own brother had been swindled by ‘Âmil Çelebi in a land transaction—painted a portrait of a man deeply entangled in corruption. Echoing claims previously aired in *Hakikat*, the article asserted that ‘Âmil Çelebi maintained intimate ties with the Sayyâdî household and illicitly appropriated the lodge’s endowment revenues. However, with the proclamation of the Second Constitution, the article recounts, ‘Âmil Çelebi, like his Sayyâdî affiliates, fled Aleppo in haste, fearing popular retribution from an outraged citizenry. After retreating to Konya, he managed to secure appointments first to the Kütahya Mevlevî Lodge, and later to the one in Antalya. Yet, even there, his reputation preceded him; public resistance in Antalya, fueled by persistent rumors, compelled him to abandon his office and once again set his ambitions on the Aleppo Mevlevî Lodge. Perhaps the most explosive claim of the article is that although a number of Mevlevî sheikhs in Istanbul allegedly supported his reappointment, no imperial decree was ever issued to legitimize it. The author closes with a triumphant declaration: as long as the Constitutional regime endures, ‘Âmil Çelebi shall never set foot in Aleppo again. Lastly, in the brief note titled “Enmity”, appended directly beneath this article, it is reported that ‘Âmil Çelebi and the Çelebi Efendi, both of whom were naturally quite aggrieved by the exposure of the schemes (*çevrilen fırıldaklar*) surrounding the Aleppo Mevlevî sheikhdom, attempted retaliatory actions against the editorial board of the journal.³⁹⁶

Truly, ‘Âmil Çelebi failed to achieve his objective for two years. Yet, he remained steadfast in his pursuit. A ciphered telegram dated October 6, 1913, sent from

395. *Hakikat*, no: 47, 20 Mârt 1327 (April 2, 1911).

396. *Tasvîr-i Efkâr*, no: 551, 22 Mârt 1327 (April 4, 1911).

Aleppo to the Ministry of the Interior, reported that private telegrams had circulated among certain locals announcing the reappointment of ‘Âmil Çelebi, previously dismissed in disgrace, as the sheikh of the Aleppo Mevlevî Lodge. The telegram urged authorities in Istanbul to consider the content of prior appeals sent to the Sublime Porte, the Office of the Grand Mufti, the Assembly of Sheikhs, and the Chamber of Deputies, as well as earlier telegrams by former governor Hüseyin Kâzım Bey (d. 1934), to fully grasp the devastating consequences of such a decision. It was emphasized that ‘Âmil Çelebi, known for serious misconduct and devoid of moral integrity, was being reinstated without any justifiable cause, an act that would only serve to disturb public order. The mere rumor of his return had already provoked widespread indignation. The telegram concluded by strongly urging that, if Sa‘deddîn Efendi must be removed, a suitable alternative be appointed—under no circumstances should ‘Âmil Çelebi be reinstated.³⁹⁷

It appears that the warnings issued to the Ottoman government were heeded, effectively closing the chapter on ‘Âmil Çelebi’s ambitions in Aleppo. While he persistently sought reappointment to the Aleppo Mevlevî Lodge, he was not entirely without an official post. In the list of active Mevlevî lodges included in Veled Çelebi’s *Menâkıb*, dated 1912, ‘Âmil Çelebi was recorded as the sheikh of the Kastamonu Mevlevî Lodge.³⁹⁸ This title was also attributed to him in connection with the Mevlevî Battalion that participated in the First World War. It can therefore be inferred that, during this period, he was compelled to settle for his existing position. Even if a *de jure* appointment to Aleppo had been issued, he was never able to assume *de facto* control of the lodge again.

Another instance demonstrating Veled Çelebi’s limited authority over the Mevlevî lodges under his administration is the chaos that broke out following his intervention in the Antalya Mevlevî Lodge. At the very beginning of 1913, following the appointment of Sa‘îd Hemdem Dede as the sheikh of the Antalya Mevlevî Lodge, the incumbent sheikh, Hüsâmeddîn Dede, contested the decision and refused to vacate and relinquish control of the lodge. In response, Sa‘îd Hemdem Dede submitted a petition to the Teke Sub-Province (*livâ’*), requesting the enforcement of his appointment and the removal of the current occupant. He further appealed to the Teke Sub-Province Pious Endowments Commission (*Evkâf Komisyonu*) and the Police Commissioner’s Office for an investigation into the matter.³⁹⁹ This tension gave rise to a veritable petition war, in which both parties endeavored to legitimize

397. BOA. TŞR.HL. 1/58, 28 Eylül 1329 (October 6, 1913).

398. Yakup Şafak, “Veled Çelebi’nin Menâkıbına Göre 1912’de Faal Olan Mevlevîhâneler ve Şeyhleri,” in *Sanat Tarihi Araştırmaları: Prof. Dr. Haşim Karpuz’a Armağan*, ed. Mustafa Denktaş and Osman Eravşar (Konya: Kivılcım Kitabevi, 2007), 343.

399. BOA. DH. İD. 84/19-21, 31 Qânûn-ı Evvel 1328 (January 13, 1913).

their respective positions by furnishing various documents as evidence in an attempt to secure a more convincing legal and moral standing.

According to a petition dated January 16, 1913, submitted by Hüsâmeddîn Dede, the first unlawful interference in the Antalya Mevlevî lodge, whose administration and trusteeship had been held by his family line for generations (*eben-‘an-cedd*), occurred when the Çelebi Efendi attempted to appoint ‘Âmil Çelebi to this position. Following appeals to the Sublime Porte, the Office of the Grand Mufti, and the Council of State, the matter was reviewed by the *Meclis-i Tedkîkât-ı Şer‘iyye* (Council for the Review of Religious Affairs), which ultimately blocked the appointment of ‘Âmil Çelebi. Although Hüsâmeddîn Dede had already been recognized through an Islamic legal ruling as the legitimate trustee, the Çelebi Efendi’s renewed attempt to appoint yet another individual as sheikh was, in Hüsâmeddîn Dede’s view, a direct violation of his lawful rights. One particularly significant detail in this petition is Hüsâmeddîn Dede’s emphasis that the structure currently referred to as a Mevlevî lodge had, until recently, been nothing more than a mosque (*mescid*).⁴⁰⁰ On the basis of this claim, he would later underscore the central role played by his lineage in transforming the structure into a functioning Mevlevî lodge, asserting that this process had occurred independently of any contribution or involvement by the Çelebi Efendi.

Following the petition submitted by Sa‘îd Hemdem Dede, the Teke Sub-Province requested that he provide the relevant endowment and property records concerning the Mevlevî lodge. In the documents that he submitted, it was explicitly stated that the trusteeship (*tevlîyet*) of the endowment was registered under Hüsâmeddîn Dede’s father and predecessor, Şemseddîn Dede. What is particularly striking, however, is the official confirmation that no record pertaining to the Antalya Mevlevî Lodge or its endowments could be found in the archives of the *Defter-i Hâkânî Nezâreti* (Imperial Land Registry Office).⁴⁰¹ This absence of documentation constitutes compelling evidence, corroborating Hüsâmeddîn Dede’s own assertions, that the Antalya Lodge had only recently acquired its formal status as a Mevlevî lodge.

In response to these developments, Veled Çelebi penned a petition to the Grand Mufti in a notably assertive and demanding tone. Dissatisfied with the investigation initiated by the Teke Sub-Province, he expressed his deep frustration with the Governor of Konya’s non-interventionist stance, lamenting that his “clear and undeniable right” had been violated while the government, in his view, stood idly by. More importantly perhaps, Veled Çelebi claimed that the Director of Correspondence (*Tahrîrât Müdüri*) at the Governorate of Konya had told him, “You hold no

400. BOA. DH. İD. 84/19-20, 3 Kânûn-ı Sâni 1328 (January 16, 1913).

401. BOA. DH. İD. 84/19-19, 26 Kânûn-ı Sâni 1328 (February 8, 1913).

official position. Had this belonged to the Patriarchate, we would have seized [the occupant] by the arm and thrown him out.” That is to say, Veled Çelebi laid finger at the painful irony of the state showing greater regard for the legal rights of the Patriarchate than for the legacy of his own sacred lineage.⁴⁰² In essence, Veled Çelebi’s petition reveals a deep discontent with the legal and bureaucratic process underway at the local level. Expecting his decision to be executed unquestioningly under the auspices of state authority, he rejected the legitimacy of the ongoing investigation and called instead for direct and extra-judicial intervention by the Ottoman central government.

This call appears to have borne fruit. According to the decision of the Assembly of Sheikhs dated March 4, 1913, the authority to appoint and dismiss sheikhs of Mevlevî lodges, by virtue of the imperial privilege granted to the Çelebi Efendi, rested entirely under his jurisdiction. Consequently, it was affirmed that decisions made by him regarding such appointments must be executed by the pertinent state functionaries without contest.⁴⁰³ On the very day this decision was issued, Hüsâmeddîn Dede submitted a petition to the Governorate of Konya, expanding on his objection to his dismissal, which he claimed lacked any concrete legal basis. In his petition, he undertook a detailed examination of the endowment and property records related to the lodge, seeking to affirm beyond doubt his family’s legitimate trusteeship.⁴⁰⁴ However, the state apparatus ultimately chose not to uphold the legal standing of a relatively minor Mevlevî sheikh. Instead, it opted to comply with the demands of the Çelebi Efendi, who held hierarchical authority over Hüsâmeddîn Dede. In an official communiqué dated March 10, Grand Mufti Mehmed Es’ad Efendi (d. 1918) requested from the Ministry of the Interior to issue the necessary orders to local authorities for the enforcement of the Çelebi Efendi’s appointment decision, thereby prioritizing his prerogatives over any local legal contestation.⁴⁰⁵

In an effort to steer the process in their favor, supporters of Sa’îd Hemdem Dede simultaneously intensified their initiatives. In a petition signed by a dervish named Celâleddîn, it was claimed that Hüsâmeddîn Dede had been dismissed due to his alleged misappropriation of the endowment of the Antalya Mevlevî Lodge. The petitioner further accused him of acting with near-barbarity by refusing to hand over the lodge to the newly appointed sheikh. Dervish Celâleddîn also asserted that the officials in Konya were intimidated by the “sparks” (*şerâre*) that Hüsâmeddîn Dede might ignite, implying a fear of unrest or retaliation. He expressed astonishment at the government’s inertia, describing it as deeply perplexing and lamentable, espe-

402. BOA. DH. İD. 84/19-2, 5 Şubâţ 1328 (February 18, 1913).

403. BOA. DH. İD. 84/19-3, 19 Şubâţ 1328 (March 4, 1913).

404. BOA. DH. İD. 84/19-22, 19 Şubâţ 1328 (March 4, 1913).

405. BOA. DH. İD. 84/19-4, 25 Şubâţ 1328 (March 10, 1913).

cially in light of what he saw as blatant defiance against the appointed authority.⁴⁰⁶

The Ottoman government, in fact, did not remain unresponsive to these developments; on the contrary, it endorsed the decision for the eviction and instructed that it be enforced. A ruling by the Council of State dated March 24 emphasized that the dispute should be resolved in favor of Sa'îd Hemdem Dede.⁴⁰⁷ Merely two days later, Hüsâmeddîn Dede submitted a petition to the Governorate of Konya, asserting that albeit his legal claim to the trusteeship was firmly established, the Çelebi Efendi's top-down intervention evoked the authoritarianism of the Hamidian regime (*devr-i istibdâdî taklîd*).⁴⁰⁸ On the same day, the Governor of Konya requested a formal explanation from the Director of Correspondence, Dimitraki Efendi, in response to allegations that he had humiliated Veled Çelebi. In his reply, Dimitraki Efendi claimed that a misunderstanding had arisen from rhetorical questions posed by Veled Çelebi during their exchange. For instance, when Veled Çelebi asked, "If a metropolitan is dismissed by the Patriarchate but refuses to leave the metropolitan's house (*metropolithâne*), what is to be done?" Dimitraki Efendi had responded, "If the metropolitan's house belongs to the community and congregation, the government must be consulted and action must be taken in accordance with the Patriarchate's regulations." In return, the Çelebi Efendi implied that whereas institutions of other religious communities were governed by clear legal codes (*nizâmnâme*), the absence of such a codified regulation for the Mevlevî order had led to such complications.⁴⁰⁹ This suggestion reflects a conspicuously vocal demand within the broader phenomenon of the bureaucratization of the Sufi community, a legacy extending into the twentieth century. By drawing attention to the lack of a legal code, Veled Çelebi tacitly conveyed his desire to abolish the already diminished autonomy of Sufi orders altogether and to envision a Sufi community operating entirely within the framework of the state apparatus.

One day after the interrogation of Dimitraki Efendi, the Governor of Konya, 'Ali Rızâ Bey (d. 1928), submitted an official memorandum to the Ministry of the Interior, in which he provided a comprehensive summary of the escalating tensions and expressed his reservations regarding the enforcement of the decree ordering the forcible eviction of Hüsâmeddîn Dede.⁴¹⁰ In other words, the governor subtly indicated that he found Hüsâmeddîn Dede's legal arguments more compelling, thereby demonstrating a degree of bureaucratic resistance to implementing the directive issued by his administrative superiors. This act holds exceptional significance, as it

406. BOA. DH. İD. 84/19-23, 9 Mârt 1329 (March 22, 1913).

407. BOA. DH. İD. 84/19-24, 11 Mârt 1329 (March 24, 1913).

408. BOA. DH. İD. 84/19-25, 13 Mârt 1329 (March 26, 1913).

409. BOA. DH. İD. 84/19-5, 13 Mârt 1329 (March 26, 1913).

410. BOA. DH. İD. 84/19-26, 14 Mârt 1329 (March 27, 1913).

provides tangible evidence of the governor's moral alignment with the legal struggle of a disadvantaged individual. His hesitation to execute the eviction order indicates not only a bureaucratic anomaly but also an instance of principled dissent within the Ottoman administrative hierarchy.

The governor's stance appears to have significantly delayed the implementation of the eviction order. On June 28, 1913, Sa'îd Hemdem Dede submitted a formal complaint to the Ministry of the Interior, stating that the failure to evict Hüsâmeddîn Dede had impeded the restoration of the Mevlevî lodge's endowments and left the resident dervishes in a state of hunger.⁴¹¹ Shortly thereafter, Veled Çelebi also addressed the same ministry, reiterating his demand for immediate intervention. He accused Hüsâmeddîn Dede of deliberately stalling the process through a campaign of defamatory propaganda and emphasized the urgency of his removal.⁴¹² Nonetheless, these repeated appeals appear to have remained unresolved for nearly a year.

On December 28, 1913, Minister of the Interior Tal'at Bey issued a directive to the provincial authorities; however, the outcome that Sa'îd Hemdem Dede had anticipated would not materialize for another six months.⁴¹³ It was only on July 6, 1914, that a definitive order was finally dispatched to the Governorate of Konya, explicitly demanding the eviction of Hüsâmeddîn Dede.⁴¹⁴ In short, the fact that the sheikh of a Mevlevî lodge was able to resist the Çelebi Efendi's decision for over a year and a half constitutes yet another remarkable example of his inability to assert uniform authority over those nominally under his jurisdiction. It further elucidates the shrinking boundaries of the Çelebis' power in the twilight of the empire.

In his memoirs, Veled Çelebi frequently laments that many of his initiatives were left unrealized, attributing this stagnation to the CUP, which, in his view, sought to placate him with mere decorations and honors in lieu of genuine support.⁴¹⁵ Indeed, on July 13, 1913, he was awarded the imperial *mecîdî* honor of the first rank,⁴¹⁶ yet another token gesture in a series of ceremonial recognitions. It would not be an exaggeration to argue that, up until the outbreak of the First World War, the trajectory of Veled Çelebi's leadership was marked by volatility, punctuated more by personal frustrations and institutional setbacks than by triumphs. Therefore, this last chapter should be wrapped up by 1914, as the proclamation of the sacred mobilization redirected the Ottoman Empire's dwindling resources toward the singular goal of wartime survival. Following this critical juncture, the factional strife

411. BOA. DH. İD. 84/19-27, 15 Hâzîrân 1329 (June 28, 1913).

412. BOA. DH. İD. 84/19-11, 30 Hâzîrân 1329 (July 13, 1913).

413. BOA. DH. İD. 84/19-12, 15 Kânûn-ı Evvel 1329 (December 28, 1913).

414. BOA. DH. İD. 84/19-29, 23 Hâzîrân 1330 (July 6, 1914).

415. İzbudak, *Tekke'den Meclis'e: Sıra Dışı Bir Çelebi'nin Anıları*, 122.

416. BOA. İ.TAL. 484/9, 30 Hâzîrân 1329 (July 13, 1913).

among the descendants of Rûmî appears to have been quietly swept under the rug. And yet, before turning the final page, one cannot forgo mention of the role that the Mevlevîs played in that great conflagration.

As Nuri Köstüklü elaborates on in his archival-rich book, preparations for the Battalion of the Mevlevî Volunteers commenced in December 1914, culminating in their departure from Istanbul for the Palestinian Front on February 13, 1915.⁴¹⁷ The battalion was led by Veled Çelebi himself, with his deputy being ‘Abdülbâki Dede, the sheikh of the Yenikapı Mevlevî Lodge. As Neyzen Tevfik (d. 1953), the Turkish poet and gifted reed-flute player distinguished by his satire, wryly noted in the epigraph to this chapter, sectarian rifts among the brethren of the path (*aşhâb-ı tarîk*) had seemingly dissolved, and the adherents of the Truth (*ehl-i Hakk*) were united and invigorated under a single banner. Representatives from nearly every Mevlevî lodge across Anatolia joined the ranks of this battalion.⁴¹⁸ By late March, they had reached Damascus, and with its numbers exceeding one thousand, the battalion was elevated to the status of a regiment.⁴¹⁹ However, its members did not engage in direct combat. Rather, they assumed a vital role in sustaining morale behind the front lines, offering spiritual fortitude to the weary soldiers.⁴²⁰ In his memoirs, Cemâl Pasha praised Veled Çelebi and his dervishes for their patriotism, noting their exceptional service to the army.⁴²¹ In contrast, Gölpınarlı, viewing the initiative as a calculated maneuver orchestrated by the CUP, interpreted it with unmistakable cynicism as a somewhat charade.⁴²² Following the Ottoman retreat and the military debacle in Syria, the Mevlevî Regiment was officially disbanded in late September 1918.⁴²³

In the wake of the catastrophic devastation wrought by the First World War and the subsequent collapse of the CUP, ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi swiftly embarked on efforts to reclaim the position that he believed had been unjustly stripped from him.⁴²⁴ A petition submitted to the Grand Vizierate, bearing the signatures of thirty-six Çelebis among his loyal supporters, leveled harsh accusations against Veled Çelebi. Citing his overt affiliation with the CUP and holding him accountable for the grievous losses associated with the ill-fated Mevlevî Battalion, the petitioners urged that ‘Ab-

417. Nuri Köstüklü, *Vatan Savunmasında Mevlevîhaneler: Balkan Savaşlarından Millî Mücadele’ye* (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 2010), 65–78.

418. Köstüklü, 90–92.

419. Köstüklü, 97.

420. İzbudak, *Tekke’den Meclis’e: Sıra Dışı Bir Çelebi’nin Anıları*, 124. Enver Behnan Şapolyo, *Mezhepler ve Tarikatlar Tarihi* (İstanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi, 1964), 104.

421. Djemal Pasha, *Memories of a Turkish Statesman, 1913-1919* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1922), 140.

422. Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ’dan Sonra Mevlevîlik*, 273.

423. Köstüklü, *Vatan Savunmasında Mevlevîhaneler*, 114.

424. BOA. BEO. 4548/341092-1, 29 Kânûn-ı Evvel 1334 (December 29, 1918).

dülhalîm Çelebi be reinstated as the *pōst-niṣîr*.⁴²⁵ Given the climate of the time, in which Unionist sympathies were increasingly equated with treachery against the state, such a dramatic repudiation of the previous regime and its affiliates was hardly unexpected. In the end, Veled Çelebi, now politically compromised, was removed from his office, and on the first day of June 1919, ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi was formally restored to his former position.⁴²⁶

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to illuminate the multifaceted dynamics underlying the factional strife that escalated among the descendants of Rûmî in the first quarter of the twentieth century. By doing so, it has posited the necessity of a multilayered interpretive approach. Despite ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi’s public display of loyalty to the regime, which included ceremoniously girding Sultan Reşâd with the sword and enthusiastically cheering the arrival of the Action Army, he was nonetheless dismissed from his position, ostensibly on the grounds of rumors provoked by his flamboyant public presence. He was replaced by Veled Çelebi, who had, during the Hamidian regime, participated in clandestine CUP meetings in Istanbul. The fact that ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi did not pose any overt threat to the newly founded constitutional order makes it difficult to explain his dismissal purely in terms of *realpolitik*. We are therefore compelled to turn our gaze elsewhere in search of a more compelling rationale.

One plausible explanation lies in the emergence of a dissident faction within the Mevlevî order, whose collective effort from below initiated the process of his removal. ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi’s paternal lineage had held the helm of the Konya Mevlânâ Lodge for over a century, hinting at the formation of an intra-*tarîqa* dynasty. The campaign mounted by Veled Çelebi’s supporters against this entrenched line of spiritual authority seems, in sync with the spirit of the age, to reflect a constitutionalist ethos. Moreover, when one considers ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi’s familiarity, much like that of his father ‘Abdülvâhid Çelebi, with Bektashi and Alevite affinities, one is tempted to ask whether this internal opposition might be read as an Apollonian revolt against Dionysian hegemony within the Mevlevî order. Yet this question must remain suspended in ambiguity, for none of the complaints lodged against him invoke the heterodoxy charges once hurled at his father. This conspicuous absence is

425. BOA. BEO. 4548/341092-3, 11 Şubât (February 11, 1919).

426. BOA. BEO. 4578/343335-2, 2 Ramazân 1337 (June 1, 1919).

almost certainly tied to the relative tolerance extended to Bektashi and even Melâmî sympathies under the CUP regime—an ideological latitude quite unlike the strictures of the Hamidian era. Thus, it seems likely that any accusation of heresy would have been discredited as politically ineffective from the outset.

On the other hand, this chapter has demonstrated, through numerous archival instances, that despite the backing of the state apparatus, Veled Çelebi's tenure was marred by erratic setbacks and persistent instability. The ever-shifting power dynamics in Istanbul, compounded by political turbulence and a relentless series of military campaigns beginning with the Italo-Turkish War, rendered many of Veled Çelebi's ambitious undertakings ineffectual. His attempts to consolidate authority over other Mevlevî lodges met with determined resistance, offering compelling evidence of the gradual erosion of both the influence and autonomy once vested in the office of the Çelebiship. Last but not least, perhaps most telling is Veled Çelebi's decision to reward 'Âmil Çelebi, a figure whose leadership paved the way for the eventual dissolution of the Aleppo Mevlevî Lodge. Rather than signifying an authoritarian "one-man rule," this gesture unveils a subtler dynamic: an indebtedness to those key actors who had propelled him into the sacrosanct office of Rûmî. In the final analysis, the study postulates that his administration was not one of unchallenged dominance but rather one beholden to the demands of a loyal faction, thereby tethering his leadership to the pressures and expectations of intra-*tarîqa* allegiance.

5. CONCLUSION

This thesis has sought to excavate the dense entanglements between the Mevlevî order and the late Ottoman state by tracing the fissures, contestations, and recalibrations that emerged within the ranks of Rûmî's descendants at a moment of dramatic political volatility. In doing so, it has not merely revisited a series of episodic power struggles internal to the Mevlevî hierarchy, but has rather situated these struggles within the broader epistemic, political, and bureaucratic transformations that marked the transition from imperial absolutism to constitutional governance in the early twentieth-century Ottoman Empire. The factionalism that unfolded between 'Abdülhalîm Çelebi and Veled Çelebi serves as both a lens and a laboratory through which to rethink the modalities of Sufi agency, state power, and the discursive production of legitimacy in a rapidly modernizing Islamic empire.

The overarching historiographical intervention made here is a rejection of what might be termed the “statist dogma”—the deeply entrenched historiographical tendency to reduce the role of Sufi orders, particularly the Mevlevîs, to passive receptacles of state patronage or mere appendages of imperial ideology. Instead, drawing on the insights of Michel Foucault, Friedrich Nietzsche, Antonio Gramsci, and Pierre Bourdieu, this study has privileged a genealogical, power-sensitive, and agency-centered approach. The state is not treated here as a fixed metaphysical given, but as a contingent, contested, and socially embedded apparatus of power, continuously reconstituted through both material practices and symbolic struggles. In turn, the Mevlevî order is construed not as a monolithic or static institution but as a nexus of social forces wherein agents maneuvered for recognition, prestige, and symbolic capital under changing historical conditions.

At the core of this inquiry lies an attempt to understand how particular Çelebis, equipped with varying degrees of charisma, lineage, and strategic alliances, positioned themselves vis-à-vis both the Ottoman state and rival claimants within the order. The notion of “symbolic capital,” as elaborated by Bourdieu, has proven especially fruitful in making sense of the ways in which different Çelebis leveraged

their genealogical proximity to Rûmî, their rhetorical performances of piety, and their embeddedness in elite social networks to accrue legitimacy. It was not merely theological erudition or mystical charisma that sustained one's position in the upper echelons of the order, but rather the ability to translate cultural, familial, and political capital into enduring forms of institutional authority.

Gramsci's notion of the "state apparatus" has likewise illuminated the ways in which state power functioned not solely through coercion but through a complex web of ideological institutions, legal procedures, and administrative mechanisms. Indeed, the Mevlevî order's entanglement with state power during the Second Constitutional Period—whether through the allocation of stipends, the bestowal of imperial honors, or the orchestration of ceremonial spectacles such as the sword-girding rituals—reveals the pervasiveness of what Gramsci called "integral state," wherein civil and political society become mutually reinforcing. On the other hand, the Ottoman government's direct and indirect interventions in intra-Mevlevî conflicts, far from being anomalous, were symptomatic of its broader strategy to regulate and instrumentalize religious capital in the service of political consolidation.

The second chapter of this study provided a *longue durée* perspective by historicizing the evolution of state-*tarîqa* relations in the Ottoman Empire, meticulously highlighting both the continuities and disjunctures in the state's approach to the Mevlevî order. Contrary to the grain of earlier romanticized or reductionist accounts, this chapter underscored the variegated nature of state-Mevlevî interactions, revealing episodes of conflict, mutual accommodation, and strategic alliance. The chapter traced how the Mevlevî order managed to position itself as an elite and semi-official body within the Ottoman religious field, often benefitting from state patronage while simultaneously maintaining internal operations and modes of governance.

Chapter 3 situated the Mevlevî order within the matrix of nineteenth-century Ottoman transformations—including centralization, bureaucratization, and modernization—all of which exerted significant pressure on Sufi networks. This chapter unpacked how the Tanzimat reforms, and later the Hamidian reconfiguration of the state apparatus, redefined the status, functions, and fiscal infrastructures of religious institutions. It also traced the subtle yet profound impact of modern statecraft on Sufi orders: the administrative centralization of waqfs, the proliferation of inspection regimes, and the gradual erosion of the informal autonomies enjoyed by Sufi orders. The chapter's principal contribution was to show how these reforms inaugurated new regimes of visibility, accountability, and legitimacy, compelling Sufi orders to readjust their institutional conduct.

The final and most analytically rich chapter turned to the case study of factionalism

among the Çelebis in the first quarter of the twentieth century. Here, the tension between ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi and Veled Çelebi was not treated as a mere episode of personal rivalry, but as a paradigmatic struggle over the redefinition of spiritual authority under modern conditions. ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi, despite his initial support for the constitutional regime and his symbolic gestures toward military-political legitimacy (such as praising the Action Army), was dismissed under opaque and ostensibly arbitrary circumstances. The appointment of Veled Çelebi, whose previous affiliations with the CUP were discreet but politically significant, marked a shift in the composition of state-*tarîqa* alliances.

This transfer of power cannot be fully explained by formal legal considerations or bureaucratic regularities. Rather, it must be understood as the culmination of multiple, intersecting dynamics: (1) the agency of a rival faction within the Mevlevî hierarchy that mobilized a collective petitioning campaign against ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi; (2) the CUP’s ideological preference for a more “constitutionalist” or “modern” spiritual figure aligned with its vision of Ottoman progress; and (3) the increasing tendency of the state apparatus to intervene in religious/spiritual leadership appointments as part of its broader strategy of centralizing symbolic authority. In this sense, the intra-Mevlevî conflict offers a compelling microcosm of the political economy of sanctity in late imperial governance.

The archival data examined throughout this thesis, ranging from petitions and imperial decrees to financial records and correspondence, underscore the entanglement of moral discourse, economic interest, and institutional politics in shaping the contours of the Mevlevî leadership. Particularly revealing were the strategies employed by both factions to mobilize not only spiritual capital but also bureaucratic and social networks, including governors, ministers, and even non-Muslim notables. The fact that both ‘Abdülhalîm Çelebi and Veled Çelebi were able to secure imperial honors during their respective careers further complicates any simplistic reading of their relationship as a zero-sum contest of legitimacy.

Equally instructive were the examples of resistance that undermined Veled Çelebi’s authority even after his official appointment. His repeated failure to enforce decisions across the network of Mevlevî lodges, as seen in the protracted disputes in Aleppo and Antalya, not only testifies to the limits of his power but also reveals the residual forms of local autonomy and intra-Sufi dissent that persisted despite the centralizing imperatives of the CUP regime. In some cases, such as the standoff with Hüsâmeddîn Dede, state authorities hesitated or outright refused to enforce Veled Çelebi’s appointments, thereby exposing the fragility of the Çelebi Efendi’s authority when decoupled from grassroots acceptance.

Moreover, the spectacle of the Mevlevî Battalion that was sent to the Palestinian front during the First World War illustrates the final attempt by Veled Çelebi to reposition the order as an instrument of national unity and military morale. While praised by figures like Cemâl Pasha, this episode also attracted criticism and sarcasm in the Mevlevî order itself. Here again, the Mevlevî order oscillates between performative loyalty and political subordination, underscoring the instability of its symbolic role in an empire on the brink of collapse.

In the final analysis, the thesis contributes to an emergent body of literature that seeks to re-theorize Sufi orders not as residual relics of a pre-modern past but as dynamic actors embedded in the political, economic, and symbolic structures of modernity. It invites scholars to think beyond binary oppositions between “spiritual” and “political,” “center” and “periphery,” or “tradition” and “modernity.” Instead, it urges a more nuanced appreciation of how power circulates through religious institutions—not merely as an imposition from above, but as a negotiation, a struggle, and sometimes a betrayal among the actors within.

In short, the story of the descendants of Rûmî at the dawn of the twentieth century is not simply a parochial episode in Ottoman religious history. It is a narrative replete with theoretical resonance—a case study in the constitution of authority, the fragility of legitimacy, and the performative dimensions of sanctity under the rubric of modern statehood. It is a tale of spiritual heirs entangled in the mechanics of bureaucracy, of divine genealogy filtered through the sieve of paperwork, and of charisma caught in the web of modern sovereignty. Such stories, and the archives that preserve them, deserve to be read with the seriousness and theoretical imagination that they demand.

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APPENDIX A

Figure A.1 The Girding Ceremony of Mehmed V Reşâd in the interior of the Tomb of Ebû Eyyûb el-Ensarî

Musavver Muhât, no: 26 (4), 30 Nîsân 1325 (May 13, 1909).

