The Missing Link in the History of Quranic Commentary:
The Ottoman Period and the Quranic Commentary of Ebussuud/Abū al-Suʿūd al-ʿImādī (d. 1574 CE) Irshād al-ʿaql al-salīm ilā maẓāyā al-Kitāb al-Karīm

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations
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ABSTRACT

Ottoman legacy of Quranic commentary is highly understudied, if not entirely neglected, in the Muslim and Western scholarship alike. The current study is two-pronged in orientation: in part one, we have striven to explore the current situation in the history and historiography of Quranic commentary and attempted to underline and identify some of the misconceptions and clichés with which the current research is imbued. This first part is complemented, in separate appendix, with a historical study of a verifiable output of Quranic commentaries authored by Ottoman scholars and/or composed during the Ottoman era and under their suzerainty. We have also surveyed Ottoman exegetical attempts and medieval studies undertaken by the Ottomans
and associated with the history and historiography of Muslim exegetical studies, all for the purpose of presenting some identifiable features of Ottoman exegetical mindset.

The second part of this study focuses on a particular Quranic commentary that was authored by an eminent Ottoman scholar and man of state, namely the *Irshād al-‘āql al-salīm ilā mazāyā al-Kitāb al-Karīm* [Guiding the sound mind to the distinguishing features of the Noble Book] of Ebussuud/Abū al-Su‘ūd al-‘Imādī (d. 1574). Our primary goal is to present a case study of a famous Ottoman exegetical work and pave the way for further studies of other Ottoman exegetical outputs in order to contribute to forming a comprehensive view on the Ottoman trajectory of Quranic commentary. Ebussuud’s commentary led us to determine the exegetical artery of knowledge to which the Ottomans viewed themselves heir. Though the Ottoman efforts in Quranic exegesis can broadly be categorized as reason and linguistic-based efforts, the presence of tradition-based approaches cannot be dismissed as negligible. The study of *Irshād* thus allows us to analyze a sample of how the tradition and reason-based approaches can be synthesized. Dynastic presence and political orientations are also more glaringly manifested in Ottoman scholarly and exegetical efforts. *Irshād* is also significant in terms of assessing the history of variant Quranic readings and represents a post-classical exegetical work by virtue of which we are better able to demonstrate how the field was still being contested between the exegetes and the specialists in Quranic readings. Ebussuud’s Quranic commentary furthermore is a study of previous exegetical corpus and it provides exceptional research tools for us to evaluate and assess other exegetical works. *Irshād* is a work of verification that aimed to determine concise exegetical implications of a given Quranic expression and winnow out innumerable propositions with which the previous exegetical corpus is teemed.
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Notes on transliteration and translation

This study has followed the transliteration system introduced by the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (IJMES). Owing to complications borne out by a text that involves three different Muslim languages, Ottoman Turkish, Arabic, and Persian, consistency has been observed as much as possible: whereas terms of Arabic origin in Ottoman Turkish have been rendered in both transliterations in their first instance of mentioning, the Ottoman Turkish proper names are at times rendered in Ottoman Turkish transliteration only. Ṭā ṭarbiṭa has been rendered –t when the word is used in construct phrase (*iḍāfa*). Words and expressions that are cited from Ottoman Turkish sources along with the titles of these works are mainly rendered in Ottoman Turkish transliteration. Case marking vowels, mostly of Arabic poetry and Quranic verses, are given in parentheses. Citations from works by Ottoman scholars in Arabic are also rendered in Arabic transliteration. Hijrī dates, where indicated, are mentioned first and separated by a forward slash and followed by Milādī/Gregorian Calendar date.
The Quranic commentary heritage of the Ottomans has largely remained an uncharted territory for the Western scholarship. A number of monographs and survey articles that have lately been produced especially by the Turkish scholarship are unfortunately replete with clichés and uncritical, non-analytical, and descriptive assessments that have ironically set a barrier to any attempt for a ground breaking effort to outline the features of many neglected exegetical works produced during the Ottoman era and/or in the Ottoman realm. In the following study we have striven to point to some of the obstacles that have blinded the informed research in the history of Quranic exegesis.

This work is divided into two parts: the first part studies the phenomenon of Ottoman tafsīr heritage; and the second part examines in considerable detail the Quranic commentary of one of the most renowned Ottoman scholars and, as it were, man of state, namely Ebussuud Efendi/Abū al-Suʿūd al-ʾImādī (d. 1574), the famous shaykh al-Islām of Sulaymān the Magnificent (r. 1520-1566).

In the first chapter we have attempted to examine the theses for the history and development of the genre of tafsīr and inquired about the potential reasons for the historical gap within an otherwise continuous attempt of Muslim scholarship in interpreting the Qurʾān. We have pointed to some of the fallacies that imbued our modern studies of tafsīr scholarship in the East and the West alike. Our examination paid considerably closer attention to the phenomenon of gloss/hāshiya writing and misconceptions that have surrounded it, and also demonstrated that, at least for the genre of Quranic commentary during the Ottoman period, independently authored works statistically seem to outnumber the complete hāshiyas produced on previously authored
works. We hope to have contributed to a number of fledgling attempts that set out to clarify the functions and features of gloss-type writing within the broader Muslim scholarship.

The second chapter reviews the modern surveys that have seemingly examined the number of Quranic commentaries produced in the Ottoman realm, and attempted to tease out the common features and characteristics of Ottoman undertakings in the discipline of *tafsīr*. We have critically assessed these studies and pointed to some of the methodological misconceptions that informed their compositions. A number of media through which the enterprise of Quranic commentary was undertaken during the Ottoman period are presented throughout this chapter. A survey of the development of the institution of knowledge tradition and the transfer of knowledge is presented in order to broadly outline the backdrop on which the Ottoman scholarly mindset might have drawn. Some of the histories of *tafsīr* that are produced by Ottoman scholars are introduced in this chapter in order to examine how the Ottoman scholars viewed development and history of *tafsīr*. The chapter ends with the Quranic commentary sessions conducted in the imperial presence and points out how the Qur’ān and its interpretive attempts were appropriated to serve political goals.

The third chapter, with which the second part of our study begins, deals with the biographical account of Ebussuud’s life drawing on the rather meager source material that is available. Since Ebussuud’s biography has already been studied by a number of well-written previous researches, we have focused out attention to the features that were overlooked in them.

Chapter four introduces *Irshād*, Ebussuud’s Quranic commentary, and examines the circumstances that might have led to its compositions, how it was received in the broader Muslim community in general and how it was the outcome of an imperial project. Though the
fact that it may have been imperially instigated had been intimated by other researchers, we have introduced newer as well as more solid references attesting to this fact. We have also broadly outlined the structure and characteristics of *Irshād*, and presented the culmination of our close reading of the entire text for the purpose of demonstrating the sources on which it may have more relatively drawn.

In chapter five, our study focuses on the specific topic of variant readings and on how Ebussuud handled them in his commentary. Those who had previously attempted to selectively study this feature of *Irshād* seem to have ignored to relate it to the broader history of variant readings and therefore we have striven to integrate exegetical efforts to an otherwise perceived to be independent field of study, namely the discipline of variant readings of Qur’ān.

We have devoted chapter six to specific commentarial instances throughout *Irshād* for the purpose of extracting a methodological approach that Ebussuud adopted. Theoretical and practical approaches have informed our presentation in this chapter. The specific commentarial instances are studied in comparison to a number of previously authored and well-known exegetical works in order to present an engaging discussion about where Ebussuud’s Quranic commentary should be situated within the whole genre.

We hope that his study contributes to the field of Quranic commentary studies and opens new trajectories and better perspectives for the many unstudied *tafsīr* works produced between the post-classical and pre-modern Muslim history.
Part I: Ottoman legacy of Quranic commentary

Chapter 1

Introduction: The missing link: what of the Ottomans?¹

The present study aims at filling a gap in modern studies on Quranic exegesis and its history by providing introductory remarks on an inconceivably neglected period in its history.² The exegetical heritage that we will survey in this study is that of a civilization to which a large section of the modern day Muslim world is heir, and which spanned over six centuries; the period whose study is here undertaken is that of the Ottoman Empire. As my account will shortly reveal, any attempt at exhausting the exegetical material produced during the Ottoman era will, at this stage, be rather pretentious, and the following remarks will only offer new insights and bio-bibliographical account of the vast Quranic commentary/tafsīr literature produced during this period. Furthermore, it will hopefully draw attention to new trajectories in the field of tafsīr studies in Western Muslim scholarship. The first part of this survey will consist of a general evaluation of tafsīr histories with the aim of situating the Ottoman era within it, or its absence therein, and an assessment of tafsīr endeavours undertaken by Ottoman scholars. The second part of this research will undertake, as its case study, inarguably one of the most famous scholars of the Ottoman period, Ebussuud Efendi/Abū al-Su‘ūd al-‘Imādī (d. 1574) and his tafsīr (Quranic commentary) Irshād al-‘aql al-salīm ilā mazāyā al-Kitāb al-Karīm.

¹ The rubric of “the Missing Link”, the partial title of this entire survey as well, is probably first used by Ibn ‘Āshūr as “al-ḥalaqa al-maqūda” and was similarly adopted by Cünderioglu in his seminal article “Çağdaş tefsir tarihi tasavvuru’nun kayıp halkası: “Osmanlı tefsir mirası”.
² Quranic exegesis, Quranic commentary, and tafsīr are the terms I use throughout this survey interchangeably. Though the term tafsīr designates the genre of composition in Arabic, the Arabic usage allows for its application to the individual compositions of Quranic commentary. Thus the Quranic commentaries of eminent Muslim exegetes are widely also known, for example, as Tafsīr al-Ṭabarî, Tafsīr al-Zamakhsharî, and/or Tafsīr Abī al-Su‘ūd and so forth despite the fact that they all had their exclusive and distinct titles, some of which did not include the term tafsīr.
Modern studies on Quranic exegetical tradition are overwhelmingly informed by either the classical/medieval pre-al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505) period or the post-19th century modern period. With the exception of Goldziher’s seminal monograph, some modern studies on the history of Quranic exegesis do make reference to exegetical works produced during the Ottoman era or by an Ottoman scholar; however, invariably only one of them deserves their attention: Ebussuud, and his *tafsīr*. No historian delves into whether the Ottoman era constitutes a new/different phase in the trajectory of the whole Muslim exegetical enterprise, or if the exegetical works produced by the scholars of the Ottoman realm have any shared characteristics with Arab or Persian exegetical heritage, or even if the exegetical heritage of the Ottomans has and/or should have any bearing for our understanding of the genre of *tafsīr* in general. It has to be asserted outright, however, that the literature is so vast, and much of it is still in manuscript form, that the modern scholarship is overwhelmingly unaware of how much of it awaits discovery. This is the reason that Amīn al-Khūlī rejected the idea of attempting to write a *tafsīr* history until various trends and the larger portion of the whole *tafsīr* heritage have been discovered, unedited works that have been identified in manuscript forms have been reclaimed, and the works that are listed in bio-bibliographical sources that have so far been unaccounted for in the libraries have been located.\(^3\) Al-Khūlī also drew our attention to the fact that, in the vast amount of literature produced in the field of *tafsīr*, even Goldziher’s work lacks comprehensiveness, notwithstanding the fact that it may have encompassed several foundational milestones.\(^4\) Al-Khūlī’s remarks could not be more applicable to anything other than the *tafsīr* heritage produced by Ottoman scholars; much less the *tafsīr* works of the non-Arabic speakers of Muslim peripheries.


\(^4\) Idem, p. 216.
The vastness of this literature has also recently been expressed by Professor Saleh, according to whom:

The number of Quranic commentaries is not only impossible to count, since many are still unedited, but also most of these commentaries are voluminous, running to thousands of pages. In contemplating *tafsīr*, one stands before a sea of writing that has been expanding for the last millennium and a half.⁵

Considering this vastness, one may safely state that at the present stage it is futile to attempt to produce an exhaustive history of *tafsīr*. This is especially true when we consider that a considerable output of this literature, that which was produced during the Ottoman era and that which was produced by the Ottomans remain understudied, if not entirely neglected. This historical lacuna in the history and historiography of the Muslim genre of *tafsīr* stems to a considerable degree from historical blindness and shortsightedness in some of the encyclopedic and journal articles attempting to analyze the history and characteristics of Quranic exegesis as a genre of Muslim literature. These analyses are largely informed by narrow and limited periodic considerations to methodological categorizations, and at times, to sectarian orientations. What is, however, the common characteristic of all these analyses is the noticeable historical gap represented in the post-15ᵗʰ and the pre-19ᵗʰ century period.

Rippin, for instance, attempts to delineate the historical development of the genre of *tafsīr* into four periods: formative, classical, mature, and contemporary.⁶ According to this periodization, the formative period, owing to several historical uncertainties, cannot at this time be ascertained. It may, however, have more firmly started with Muqāṭīl b. Sulaymān (d.

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150/767), and ended with al-Ṭabarî (d. 311/923) who, according to Rippin, is credited with ushering in the classical period, during which several of al-Ṭabarî’s contemporaries competed with him in carrying over the heritage of the formative period to consequent generations of exegetes. The mature period begins with al-Tha’labî (d. 427/1035), whom, by comparison Saleh considers to be the major rival to al-Ṭabarî and the collector of what was not carried over by the latter from the formative period and should therefore be deemed to belong to the classical period, and extends about five centuries, to be sealed off by al-Suyūṭî’s (d. 1505) *al-Durr al-maṭanthur*. The contemporary period is ushered in with Muḥammad ʿAbduh (d. 1905) and Rashīd Riḍā’s (d. 1935) *Tafsīr al-manār*. The implication is clear that “nothing” from the time of al-Suyūṭî to the time of M. ʿAbduh was produced, or, as it were, nothing noticeable was authored.

In another encyclopedic entry, where one would hope to find a better understanding and a holistic approach to a literature spanning over a millennium, the history of *tafsīr* is dealt with according to the historical phases it underwent; however, the phases were limited to pre-al-Ṭabarî and post-al-Ṭabarî periods. According to the author of this encyclopedic entry, even though the post-al-Ṭabarî period witnessed the production of equally important *tafsīr* works to that of al-Ṭabarî, such as *Al-Kashshāf* of al-Zamakhsharî (d. 538/1144) and *Mafāṭīh al-ghayb* of al-Rāzî (d. 606/1209), al-Ṭabarî’s was the first and the last comprehensive *tafsīr* work. The author does not fail to mention, albeit in passing, that due to the spread of Islam across different settings in the world, Turks, Turkic people (of Turkistān), Caucasians, Indian Muslims, Malaysians, Indonesians, Africans and Andalusians have produced numerous *tafsīr* works, but, in the view of the author of this encyclopedic article, they amounted to nothing. It may not be directly iterated, but the inference is clear: al-Ṭabarî put the seal to exegetical endeavors and

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8 *DİA* [*Diyanet Islam Ansiklopedisi*], s.v. “tafsir.”
what followed him was no more than a little variance in methodology and content. Methodologically, the entry continues, the *tafsīrs* of the classical era, spanning about a millennium, are categorized into *al-dirāya* (rational and positive knowledge) and *al-riwāya*-based (tradition-based) works. This dichotomy, as has been assessed by many modern scholars, is not very helpful, because the overwhelming majority of the *tafsīrs* can be listed under both categories. Furthermore, the categorization of *tafsīrs* into *al-riwāya/al-dirāya*-based works is the *salafī* guise to perpetuate the “mutated opposition” to any form of *tafsīr* other than that based on *al-riwāya*. No particular mention of *tafsīrs* produced by the Ottomans deserves the attention of the author, save for Ebussuud’s *tafsīr*, hinted at as one of the *tafsīrs* under the category of *al-dirāya* *tafsīrs* of the classical era.

A somewhat more comprehensive analysis of *tafsīr* genre authored by Claude Gilliot in the Encyclopedia of Qurʾān treats the history of the genre in three stages: early and/or formative; an intermediary phase represented in the rise of grammatical and linguistic sciences and their integration into Qur’anic exegesis; and classical period. Usher ed in by the great exegete al-Ṭabarī, the classical period extends, once again and inconceivably, about a millennium, during the last third of which, largely corresponding to the post-al-Suyūṭī (d. 1505) era, nothing worthy of mention was produced. Even though Gilliot treats the classical period with considerably more detail than other authors, he implicitly reiterates the cliché that after al-Suyūṭī no major *tafsīr* work was produced until the modern era. His treatment of the classical era, furthermore, in which he categorized the *tafsīr* works of this period into sectarian schools, is reminiscent of the sectarian analyses of Goldziher. In a subsection devoted to mystical exegesis, Gilliot does

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11 *Encyclopedia of the Qurʾān*, s.v., “Exegesis of the Qurʾān: Classical and Medieval.”
mention an “Ottoman period” during which three noteworthy Quranic commentaries made it into his list.

There exist, and continue to be produced, several modern histories of tafsīr works, mainly in Arabic, English, Turkish, and most probably in the languages of other Muslim communities as well. In the background of these histories lies the fact that the sources used in these modern studies are exclusively edition of works that have so far been made available in print to the wider readership. If we consider the fact that only a certain number of tafsīr works have so far been edited and printed, the limits that these modern studies are conditioned with can better be realized. Notwithstanding the fact that the history of editions themselves is an eventful milestone in the history of tafsīr, Professor Saleh observes, most histories in the western academia draw upon these editions that are selectively produced by the ‘āsh’arī, and salaﬁ camps. The corollary to this phenomenon is that the modern research on the history of tafsīr is based on edited works, which in turn are determined by particular doctrinal camps. The salaﬁ trend represented in arguably the most comprehensive history of tafsīr by al-Dhahabī, as the most conspicuous example, aimed to revive the Ibn Taymiyyah hermeneutical doctrine and “to reposition the Qur’ān commentaries of al-Ṭabarî, Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1372), and (less so) al-Baghawī (d. 516/1122) as the center of the tafsīr enterprise,” “displacing the al-Bayḍāwī, al-

12 Saleh, “Preliminary Remarks”, p. 1. ‘Ash’arī-ism is one of the two main theological schools of Sunni Islam, the other being al-Māturīdī-ism, both of which are widely acknowledged to be the only classical and medieval schools of theology. While the former is widely received to be of text and tradition-oriented school of theology, the latter is viewed as a school of theology that is reason-oriented. Salaﬁ-ism, by contrast, is relatively a new theological school that mainly subscribes to the doctrines of Muḥammad b. Ṭurṭūs (d. 210/828), and attempts to enlist eminent historical figures in the likes of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 855 CE), Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 1328 CE), and other medieval Muslim scholars, for the purpose of substantiating their doctrinal assertions. Salaﬁs feverishly strive to revive a form of Muslim understanding that, in their estimation, more truly represents the teachings of the Prophet and his Companions, the pure generations (al-salaf al-ṣaḥīḥ) as they termed them. They have on the other hand ardently and zealously been striving to get the salaﬁ school of theology incorporated into classical heritage of Islamic thought.
Zamakhsharī, and al-Rāzī triad” which traditionally had stood at the center of madrasa curriculum for almost eight centuries.13

The predicaments that a scholar of tafsīr and its history faces are too many to count. But there are probably three acute ones that need some elaborating on at this point. On the one hand there is the problem of insufficient studies on the historiography of tafsīr. We in the West do not even possess a single critical and/or analytical monograph on the historiography of tafsīr. With the exception of Saleh’s two recent articles on the historiography of tafsīr written in the Arab world14, Cündiğlu’s seminal article in Turkish on the Ottoman tafsīr heritage15, and Mustafa Karagöz’ monograph, in Turkish again, on the historiography of tafsīr and its problems16, we do not have a critical/analytical study of the extant, classical and/or modern, tafsīr histories. Rubbing salt into the wound is the fact that the last two are completely unknown to the Western scholarship. Some of the problems raised by Cündiğlu on the extant tafsīr histories can broadly be summed up as the lack of historical continuity and historical integrity, the religious/sectarian outlook, the indifference to a large portion of written heritage, namely the hāshiyas (which will be tackled separately soon), and the absence of Ottoman heritage on tafsīr.17 The two salient

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13 Ibid., p. 10.
17 hāshiyas, and further down and throughout, sharḥ, taliqa, tahlīl, etc. are technical terms designating a wide range of Muslim scholarly output of the classical and medieval era. They commonly represent the literary works that are composed on previously and independently produced compositions on various Islamic disciplines encompassing subjects ranging from poetry and belles-letters to various sub-fields of linguistics, jurisprudence, legal theory, ḥadīth, theology, scriptural exegesis and so forth. Until recently, these types of Muslim writing were deemed to be stale compositions that merely repeat and reproduce the ideas contained within works which had independently been authored by masters of Muslim thought of a bygone glorious age. They were thus a priori viewed to offer nothing in addition to what the independently authored works had already offered, and were consequently left to oblivion. The nascent and fledgling attempts, in the east and the west alike, to revise the scholarly stance vis-à-vis these gloss-type Muslim compositions are promising and more specialized studies on each of these types of writing need to be conducted. We, here and throughout, especially when we deal with them collectively as a distinct category of
features of Saleh’s observations are the attempt of the salafī camp to refashion and reshape Islamic religious thought through tafsīr history and to reposition particular tafsīr works in its center at the expense of those that traditionally had been considered the pivotal works of the field; and the lack and/or the scarcity of paying attention to and taking stock of non-published tafsīr works, which, as a corollary, leads to the unawareness on the part of the tafsīr historians, in the East and the West alike, about how the selective study of certain works engenders predetermined outcomes. The history of tafsīr in the extant Arabic works is informed by the tafsīr works that are made available in print by the very salafī camp itself.

The fact that we in the West are less than interested in what goes on in Muslim academia of our modern day is another predicament of Western scholarship. We tend to be so indifferent to the secondary literature of Muslim scholarship, as was mentioned by Saleh, not only in Arabic but in other languages as well. What little interest may arise gets limited to the secondary literature written in Arabic which, in turn, has largely turned a blind eye to what is produced in the non-Arab Muslim peripheries. What about the peripheries/non-Arab speaking Muslim world? Not only do we marginalize ourselves by being indifferent to the secondary Muslim scholarship, but we also fail to see how the extant Arabic histories of tafsīr marginalize the secondary literature produced in the non-Arabic speaking Muslim world. As a matter of fact we also fail to see how the modern histories of tafsīr have marginalized the entire period of
Ottomans in the history of Islamic religious thought. This lacuna in the history of \textit{tafsīr} and the \textit{mufassirs}/exegetes is best elaborated on by Dūcane Cündioğlu, whose seminal article,\textsuperscript{19} in our estimation, was the catalyst to a recent surge of interest in the intellectual heritage of the Ottomans, particularly in the field of \textit{tafsīr} studies, in Turkey.

The historical oversight that we suffer from in our modern studies largely stems from the fact that we underestimate the value of traditional \textit{tafsīr} histories, namely the \textit{tabaqāt}-type literature, especially the ones that have been written late in Muslim history. Since school/sect-oriented \textit{tafsīr} studies will inevitably exclude some works of a given sect or a school, not to mention the fact that all members of a given school or sect have not written their \textit{tafsīr} works in an identical manner\textsuperscript{20}, historical gaps will arise and works will be lost. Comparing the most widely circulated \textit{tafsīr} histories, Cerrahoğlu’s \textit{Tefsir tarihi}, Al-Dhahabī’s \textit{al-Tafsīr wa’l-mufassirūn}, and Goldziher’s \textit{Schools of Quranic Commentators (Die Richtungen der islamischen koranaauslegung)}, Cündioğlu critically questions the absence of several \textit{mufassirs} belonging to the 16\textsuperscript{th}-19\textsuperscript{th} centuries.\textsuperscript{21}

Why is the Ottoman \textit{tafsīr} scholarship missing in the extant \textit{tafsīr} histories? I would like to assess this phenomenon by broadly presenting the critical outlines of the current assessment on the history of \textit{tafsīr} in the following remarks.

\textsuperscript{19} Cündioğlu, “Çağdaş tefsir tarihi” 1-26; We here would like to note the fact that the recent and noticeable increase in the attempts of discovering the Turkish/Turkic heritage of \textit{tafsīr} especially in modern Turkish scholarship temporally coincides with the first publication of Cündioğlu’s article; Cündioğlu is not a member of Turkish academia, but a figure that is widely recognized for his inestimable remarks, observations, and analyses on various topics of intellectual heritage, eastern and western alike.

\textsuperscript{20} Cündioğlu, “Çağdaş tefsir tarihi” p. 20.

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 20.
First of all, Goldziher expressly stated, in the very first three paragraphs of his *Die Richtungen*, his departing point, in the fashion of classical *bara‘at istihlāl*\(^\text{22}\) as follows:

The Swiss reformed theologian Peter Werenfels (1627-1703) said with reference to the Bible: “People are searching this holy book to find support for their ideology, and everybody does find what he is looking for.” This might equally be applied to the Koran.

Each intellectual school emerging in the history of Islam endeavoured to find its vindication in the holy document by proving its own conformity with Islam, viz. identifying itself with the message of the Prophet. Only such a practice assured a lasting place in the theological system.

The following investigation purports to demonstrate in detail in which way and how successfully the various religious schools of early Islam pursued this goal.\(^\text{23}\)

Modern scholarship, especially in the West, generally recognizes Goldziher’s works to be authoritative, and for that reason we do not wish to discredit this work of his on the schools of Quranic exegesis. Nonetheless, we should also be allowed to critically assess the value of his work for the field of *tafsīr* history. As is explicitly apparent in his introductory remarks, Goldziher did not intend to write a history of *tafsīr* so much as the history of sectarian wars through the Qur’ān and/or Quranic exegesis. We may not disagree with Goldziher in his theses that the field of exegesis was one of the main avenues through which various sects wanted to vindicate their sectarian claims; however, the proof of such a theses can be demonstrated at the

\(^{\text{22}}\) A very important rhetorical tool that the classical and medieval Muslim scholarship utilized for the purpose of insinuating their departing point and teleological aspects of their compositions; it can loosely be translated as “the excellent beginning”.

cost of excluding innumerable *tafsīr* works written through the Umayyad and Abbāsid eras, much less the Ottoman era that dominated the Muslim world for over six centuries. Moreover, a very essential artery in the field of *tafsīr*, namely linguistic/literary *tafsīrs*, were not, and could not have been, the subject of Goldziher’s work and they had to be excluded. As will be shown shortly, the sub-genre of linguistics-oriented *tafsīr* can very well be categorized as an independent and separate historical phenomenon in the development of the genre and its exclusion from its history is very problematic. The author’s main purpose was to reduce *tafsīr* to the attempts of several sectarian groupings vindicating their own ideological claims. These attempts, Goldziher asserts, were, in turn, the “breeding ground” for a tendentious interpretation that soon went beyond mere explanation. Scriptural interpretation engendered sectarian tendencies, and sectarian tendencies engendered further interpretation. Be that as it may, Goldziher’s work is more of an *al-milal wa’n-nihāl* work in *tafsīr* than a *tafsīr* history, not without significant value for any *tafsīr* scholar, however.24

*Al-Dhahabī*’s *al-Tafsīr wa al-mufassirūn*, on the other hand, as Cündioğlu asserts, though more comprehensive in content than the work of Goldziher, is not only a bibliographically expanded version of Goldziher’s work but also a religiously-oriented response to it.25 A quick comparison of the contents of both works reveals the similarities of the framework of both monographs. Both works treat the genre of *tafsīr* as literature within which competing sects have endeavored to claim the field. While Goldziher depicted the whole literature as being the primary weapon used in sectarian wars, *Al-Dhahabī* attempted to announce the victor and the right side. Aside from the fact that both authors failed to make mention of the Ottoman era, these histories

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24 *Al-Mīlal wa al-nīhal* is the title of al-Shahristānī’s (d. 1153 CE) *magnum opus* which accounts for the history of sects in Muslim history, the title of which I here use generically.

greatly succeed in delineating merely the points of difference, and, as Cündioğlu somehow taunted, in “overlooking the chronological continuity, the holistic framework, overlapping features and converging lines in the whole genre.”

The groundwork for al-Dhahabī’s structural framework, Cündiğlu asserts, had already been set by Ignaz Goldziher. Goldziher’s work was first translated partially into Arabic by ’Alī Hasan ’Abd al-Qādir in 1944 and was available to al-Dhahabī when he submitted his dissertation, out of which his magnum opus, al-Tafṣīr wa al-mufassirūn, grew. What al-Dhahabī had to do was only to expand on Goldziher’s groundwork, add to it a few more tafṣīr works, and imprint it with a religious and/or salafī outlook. Not only do both authors ignore the considerably huge tafṣīr enterprise undertaken by the Ottomans, they also overlook the tafṣīr works produced by the Turkish scholars of the post-Ottoman/modern era, and thus the modern tafṣīr trends get limited to the efforts of al-Afghānī, 'Abduh, and al-Marāghī. Cündiğlu’s observations once again capture this point in the following:

How about the Ottoman tafṣīr heritage? Chronological/historical continuity of the tafṣīr tradition, and its historical integrity? The author (Goldziher) did not have such concerns, and starting with the rubrics he used, he broke off the whole tafṣīr literature into small pieces and delved exaggeratingly into the points of conflict rather than the points of convergence and agreement. To sum it up, the missing link in the history of tafṣīr was first registered in this work and the tradition of writing tafṣīr history based on sectarian differences was thus established. The Muslim tafṣīr historians were henceforth charged

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26 Ibid., p. 18.
27 Ibid., 23.
with the task of deepening and expanding on the fissures of the road map produced by Goldziher.\(^{29}\)

The effect of this framework set by Goldziher and expanded upon by al-Dhahabī has also left its imprint on the post-1950 Turkish scholars of modern day Turkey. Cündioğlu elaborately drew our attention to how one of the most widely circulated \textit{tafsīr} history works in modern Turkey’s academia, \textit{Tefsir tarihi} by İsmail Cerrahoğlu, is the Turkish version of al-Dhahabī’s work, with the exception that the former succeeds to mention more \textit{tafsīr} works in number.\(^{30}\) Nevertheless, the caveat must be noted that Cerrahoğlu’s work distinguished itself from his predecessors by including, though partially and only the early period of, the linguistic \textit{tafsīr} endeavors.\(^{31}\) What is more disappointing in Cerrahoğlu’s work, Cündioğlu sighs, is the fact that not only did the author overlook the Ottoman era alone, but the 20\textsuperscript{th} century Turkish scholars of \textit{tafsīr} are also left to oblivion. Comparing Cerrahoğlu to al-Dhahabī, Cündioğlu’s remarks run:

Nothing is more normal than introducing \textit{tafsīr} works of scholars such as ‘Abduh, Rashīd Riḍā, and Maragḥī by an Egyptian \textit{tafsīr} historian who grew up and was trained in the same homeland as those. In a similar vein, however, we believe that Cerrahoğlu, who was trained and penned his work in Turkey, ought to have distinguished himself in some aspects by introducing in his work the \textit{mufassirs} (exegetes) of his own history and homeland as well.\(^ {32}\)


\(^{30}\) Ibid., 20.

\(^{31}\) See İsmail Cerrahoğlu’s \textit{Tefsir tarihi}, 4\textsuperscript{th} ed. Fecr Yayınları 42 (Ankara: Fecr Yayınları, 2009), pp. 209-233 where the outputs of linguistic attempts in the history of \textit{tafsīr} belonging only to the 9\textsuperscript{th} and 10\textsuperscript{th} Muslim centuries are broadly presented.

\(^{32}\) Ibid., 22-23
Nationalistic sentiments aside, Cündioğlu’s remarks are on target. While al-Dhahabī, if we were to charitably assess his objectives, may somehow be excused for not having been aware of the *tafsīr* works produced by the Ottomans, Cerrahoğlu ought not to be offered the same excuse.

A pseudo-holistic framework of *tafsīr* history informed by Goldziher and expanded upon it by al-Dhahabī has limited the vision of modern researchers to such clichés describing the *tafsīr* literature as traditional, repetitive, sectarian, modern, and so forth. Scholars of the west are mired into the unending discussion about the origins, and the scholars of the east are busy sifting through the vast literature in order to bring out the religiously acceptable works.

When we examine the overall picture of monographs on the history of *tafsīr*, we realize that two features stand out: first is the *tabaqat*-type *tafsīr* history; and second, the school/sect-based *tafsīr* history. The former is the outstanding characteristic of the pre-modern attempts, among the representatives of which can be counted al-Suyūṭī’s *Tabaqāt al-mufassirūn*, and Aḥmad al-Dāwūdī’s (d. 945/1538) *Tabaqāt al-mufassirūn*, and less commonly known Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Adīnawī/al-Adnawī/al-Adnawī’s (fl. 11th/16th c.) *Tabaqāt al-mufassirūn*. This type of history, moreover, continued to be produced during the 20th century in Ottoman lands in modern Turkey, which is represented in the works of a hitherto unknown scholars to western academia, namely Cevdet Bey of Bergama (d. 1926) and Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen (d. 1971). The fact that the *tabaqāt*-type *tafsīr* history has been viewed as descriptive and analytically lacking notwithstanding, it has been underappreciated in terms of its comprehensiveness and being a bibliographical reference with which a modern scholar of *tafsīr* should not dispense. It is undoubtedly one of the best bio-bibliographical records of *tafsīr* literature. The significance of this type of *tafsīr* history, especially with respect to the ones produced in the 20th century and onward, is manifested in the questions of why many *tafsīr* works, the ones produced during the
Ottoman period in particular, did not deserve any mentioning in the school/sect-oriented \textit{tafsīr} histories.

The second type of \textit{tafsīr} history, the school/sect-oriented, is a welcome effort for the modern researcher in its attempt to capture, analytically and critically, the features and characteristics of the genre. However, this approach is also replete with several weaknesses, some of which have been delineated by Saleh in his aforementioned articles and some others will be broadly outlined below.

The most salient characteristic of school/sect-based \textit{tafsīr} historiographies is their lacking in chronological integrity. Saleh pointed to this feature of the genre as “a continuous Muslim engagement with the meaning of the Qurʾān.”

Chronological integrity is a term used by Cündioğlu to portray the uninterrupted and continuous attempt of the Muslims in understanding the Qurʾān, and an understanding of the genre as a single chain (genealogical is the term used by Saleh) of literature whose rings are closely tied to each other. Not only the history of \textit{tafsīr} and its literature during the Ottoman period, Cündioğlu asserts, but the whole heritage of Islamic religious thought and literature during the Ottoman period has been overlooked and left to oblivion. We now know that the Ottoman setting was not the only missing link in the integral chain of \textit{tafsīr} literature spanning over a millennium, but there were other \textit{tafsīr} works that were produced in “the peripheries” of the Muslim world, Tunisia for example in Ibn ʿĀshūr’s estimation, which were not considered worthy of taking their place within the history of the genre. If one were to consider the statistical result reached by Muhammed Abay on the

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\begin{itemize}
\item Saleh, “Preliminary Remarks”, p. 18.
\item Cündioğlu, “ Çağdaş tefsir tarihi,” p. 2.
\item Cündioğlu, “ Çağdaş tefsir tarihi,” p. 2.
\end{itemize}
}
and about 70 of which are complete *tafsīrs* of the Qurʾān, and more than 200 of which are *ḥāshiyyaṣ* on previous *tafsīrs* and their summaries, one is better equipped to assess the comprehensiveness, or its lack thereof, of al-Dhahabī’s work.  

Cündioğlu pointed to two structural weaknesses on al-Dhahabī’s work: first is the lack of historical integrity; and second is the disentanglement of the whole genre into parts, some of which are religiously acceptable and/or some of which unacceptable.  

Al-Dhahabī’s work, in these two respects, is not an historical/analytical study of the history of *tafsīr*, but rather a work geared towards advancing a *salafī* religious thought by reshuffling the status of some *tafsīrs* and repositioning them in the history of Muslim literature. He also disregards the interwoven nature of *tafsīr*, overlapping trajectories within the genre, and overlooks the connected points of agreements.

For example, having placed the so-called Muʿtazilite al-Zamakhsharī under the rubric of *al-tafsīr biʿl-raʿy al-madhmūm* (*al-tafsīr* based on denounced reason) namely, according to him, the category of Quranic commentary to be denounced and deemed religiously unacceptable, al-Dhahabi formally ostracizes this individual whose Quranic commentary was at the centre of Sunni curriculum for many centuries. In another example, al-Dhahabī leaves his religious imprint in his assessment of al-Shawkānī by categorizing him under the rubric of *zaydī tafsīr*. Thus, in al-Dhahabī’s work, one encounters not the history of *tafsīr* in its chronological integrity

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42 Zaydism/Zaydiyya is a sub-grouping within the broader Shiʿite sect and it arose out of the failed revolt of Zayd (d. 740 CE), a descendant of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib; see for further detail, *EP*, s.v. “Zaydiyya”.

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and/or holistic framework, but rather stands before a history of competing sects through the genre of tafsīr. It is truly another al-milal wa'l-nihal work on tafsīr.\textsuperscript{43}

Cündiöğlu, in his “missing link” article, predicates the absence of Ottomans not only in the tafsīr heritage of Muslims, but in the whole Muslim intellectual history, on the Orientalist (his term) mentality.\textsuperscript{44} Nationalistic and sentimental nature of Cündiöğlu’s assessments notwithstanding, the fact that the intellectual, religious, and literary history of the Ottoman Empire is probably the most understudied aspect in the field of Ottoman studies is a widely accepted premise in the field of Ottoman studies. As part of the western colonial propaganda, the Ottomans should not, cannot, and ought not to have contributed anything to the intellectual heritage of Muslim history, and this was achieved in the Orientalist scholarship by deleting Ottomans from the history of Muslim thought.

Also, among the reasons for the absence of Ottoman mufassirs from the modern tafsīr histories is the fact that most of the modern tafsīr histories drew on published/edited works to the exclusion of manuscript works.\textsuperscript{45} We would like to reiterate the fact that the process of selecting which works of classical and medieval heritage ought to be given priority for editing and publishing has significant bearing on how the understanding of history and intellectual thought is informed. Take for example the tafsīr of Ibn Kathīr: it is the most widely circulated Quranic commentary today not only amongst the Muslim public but in the Muslim scholarly circles as well; but was a tafsīr work that had been almost unheard of and/or relatively the least circulated work of tafsīr especially in the madrasa setting prior to the 20\textsuperscript{th} century.

\textsuperscript{43} Cündiöğlu, “Çağdaş tefsir tarihi,” 18.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 13-16.
\textsuperscript{45} Karagöz, Tefsir tarihi yazımı, p. 152.
The latest bibliographical records indicate that the *tafsîr* literature, especially those penned by the Ottomans, in manuscript form are far more numerous than the ones that have so far been edited. Muslim *tafsîr* historians do mention Ottoman *mufassirs* but, invariably, Ebussuud is the only one that mostly deserves their attention. Notwithstanding the fact that al-Dhahabî in particular made use of several manuscript works in his *magnum opus*, this reality reinforces our thesis about overlooking, intentionally or otherwise, innumerable manuscript works in the modern histories of *tafsîr*. Ebussuud’s *tafsîr* made it into those histories only because it was one of the earliest *tafsîr* works that were printed towards the end of the 19th century, and disregarding it would probably serve to manifestly expose the *salafî* camp in their attempt of informing a *tafsîr* history oriented towards establishing their doctrinal biases.

The lack of sufficient research in the history of *tafsîr* during the Ottoman era is reflected in the paradoxical remarks of the most widely circulating *tafsîr* history of Cerrahoğlu in Turkey; according to him:

The scholarly enterprise in the Ottoman Empire enjoyed a wide coverage and the number of those who engaged in the *tafsîr* of Qur’ân was innumerous. Nonetheless, the ones that wrote complete *tafsîr* works were not many. Ottoman ‘*ulemâ* produced mostly *hâshiya* and *ta’lîqas* to the previously and independently written works. Ebussuud is the figurehead of those who have written complete *tafsîrs.*

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46 Muhammed Abay, “Osmanlı döneminde yazılan tefsir,” p. 256. The author gives the bibliographic record of 583 *tafsîr* works, 67 of which are complete *tafsîr* works.


Another possible reason for the absence of Ottoman *tafsīr* heritage from the modern *tafsīr* histories is the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in the not so distant in the past, when the foundations of modern *tafsīr* histories were being laid. We already mentioned how al-Dhahabī’s work is so similar to that of Goldziher’s in structure and framework. In addition to that, the operating presumption of the Muslim mindset held the conviction that the Muslim world had not been making any progress in any field of knowledge, and in the various walks of life for that matter, during the few centuries prior to the 19th-20th century which ended with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in the 20th century. The traumatic events that resulted in the Ottoman Empire’s collapse led Muslim intellectuals to attribute their current setback to Ottomans and find salvation in reclaiming their glorious past in the early period of Islam.\(^{51}\) The Muslim mentality, it was similarly held, had been corrupted through the ages, of which Ottomans represented the latest and the final stage, and, in order to rise up and have a hand in history, Muslims had to go back to the “original” Islam. They could not blame the religion, but they could very well pin it on the presumption that they lived a wrong history, which, as a corollary, translated that they ought to disassociate themselves from it. *Tafsīr* scholarship was, if not the only, one of the main disciplines that has been affected by this mentality, and *tafsīr* historians, especially al-Dhahabī, have similarly been influenced by this mindset.

Perhaps the most important reason for the absence of Ottoman religious literature in general and Ottoman *tafsīr* heritage in particular from the history of Muslim religious thought and history of *tafsīr* is the ongoing operative presumption that after al-Ghazālī (d. 1111), Muslims did not produce anything original, and their literature has been plagued with *sharḥ*, *ḥāshiya*, and *ta’liqa*-style writing that is replete with repetitive material and that adds nothing

new to the original author’s ideas. We would like to dig a little deeper in order to analyze this presumption and attempt to show how it is in discord with the bibliographical record and with the approach to ḥāshiya literature.

Ottoman *tafsīr* heritage has been the subject of several new survey articles and monographs in recent modern Turkish scholarship. Bibliographical information provided by these surveys demonstrates that the Ottoman *tafsīr* heritage does not exclusively consist of *sharḥs*, ḥāshiya*s and *taʾlīqa*s written on previous *tafsīr* works. The late Ziya Demir, for example, in his monograph that grew out of his 1994 dissertation on *Osmanlı müfessirleri ve tefsir çalışmaları (kuruluştan X/XVI. asrın sonuna kadar)* [Ottoman muḥaffirīs and their *tafsīr* Works (from its [Ottoman Empire’s] foundation to the end of 10/16th century), was able to situate, after his extensive research in the library records, at least 10 complete *tafsīr* works, in addition to 34 incomplete or partial *tafsīr* works.52 A more comprehensive survey whose scope went beyond the 16th century was conducted by Muhammed Abay who, having scoured the Ottoman biographical literature and the database of ISAM, İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi [Islamic Research Center] and having verified the results of his findings with the available printed works and those in manuscript forms in library catalogues, was able to situate 583 *tafsīr* works authored by 403 scholars, 67 of which are complete *tafsīrs*.53 Considering the fact that the life span of the Ottoman Empire was a little over six centuries, this bibliographic result translates into more than one *tafsīr* work for each decade. Surveying Ottoman *tafsīr* ḥāshiya*s in another article,

Muhammed Abay presents the number of ḥāshiya and taʿlīqa-type partial and complete tafsīr works as 541, close to half of which were written during the 16th and 17th centuries.\(^{54}\)

With the preceding bibliographical data, it becomes clear that Ottoman ulamā did not only write ḥāshiya on previous works to the exclusion of independent tafsīrs; however, the number of ḥāshiya, when the partial ones as well as the complete ones are taken into consideration, was considerably higher than independent works.

Does the abundance of ḥāshiya-type works reflect negatively on the scholarly production of Ottoman ‛ulamā? Whereas to the modern scholarship it may seem a downside, we are hard-pressed to find a single medieval historian of tafsīr that would agree to that effect. This impression of the ḥāshiya-type literature stems from a lack of understanding of the history of scholarly writing in Muslim intellectual history. Compared to the output of early-medieval scholarship, an era that largely corresponds to the 8th-12th centuries, Muslim scholarship of the late-medieval ages witnessed the rise and spread of a different type of literary production represented in the sharh/ḥāshiya style. This claim is probably advanced best in the words of Fazlur Rahman:

A major development that “adversely” (the emphasis is mine) affected the quality of learning in the later medieval centuries of Islam was the replacement of the original texts of theology, philosophy, jurisprudence, and such, as materials for higher instruction with commentaries and supercommentaries. The process of studying commentaries resulted in the preoccupation with hair-splitting detail to the exclusion of the basic problems of the subject. … with the habit of writing commentaries for their own sake and the steady

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dwindling of original thought, the Muslim world witnessed the rise of a type of scholar who was truly encyclopedic in the scope of his learning but had little new to say on anything ... \(^{55}\)

While Fazlur Rahman’s observation about the rise and spread of commentaries and supercommentaries during this period is largely on target, the claim that independently authored works disappeared does not reflect the historical truth. In a more specialized study on Ottoman \(tāfsīr\) heritage until the end of the 16\(^{th}\) century, the same impression was imprinted by Demir on the overall picture of Ottoman \(mufāssirs\) who, according to the author, were under the influence of \(hāshiya\)-type scholarship which “lacks originality and is replete with repetitive material”. \(^{56}\) But the bibliographical record of the works of \(tāfsīrs\) written by the Ottomans during the first three hundred years of their reign stands in contradistinction to the same author’s claim. A simple browsing of the content of his monograph reveals that there were at least ten extant and complete, and 34 extant but partial \(tāfsīr\) works, as well as six complete and 22 partial \(hāshiya\)s by the turn of the 16\(^{th}\) century. \(^{57}\) Demir’s list is limited to the end of 16\(^{th}\) century and it has accounted only for six complete \(hāshiya\)s which can be supplemented by a seventh in Abay’s study. Compared to the number of independently authored complete \(tāfsīr\) works composed by Ottoman scholars, ten in Demir’s survey, 18 in another study of Abay’s \(^{58}\), and close to 20 in our own research, the number of complete \(hāshiya\)s in the genre of \(tāfsīr\), seven, pales in comparison.

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\(^{56}\) Demir, \textit{Osmanlı müfessirleri}, p. 504.


To have something new to say, being innovative, shunning repetition, and complacency with the heritage of the past are, according to Cündioğlu, shiny concepts born out of the modern mentality, and elegant terms today that may not have been imputed the same value during the middle and late middle ages. Did the scholars of that time understand the same thing from innovation, change, improvement, progress, etc. as we do today? \(^{59}\) Cündioğlu also asserts that not only is projecting our modern mentality and context to the medieval mentality and context an historical fallacy, but it is also the major predicament in the way of historical contextualization of the literature of a particular period in history, and the primary obstacle in the way of benefitting from the extant heritage. His assessment on the *sharḥ/hāshiya* tradition is noteworthy in its entirety:

Assessing the *hashiya*-type literature as an abhorred technique of writing and deeming it unoriginal and replete with repetitions is not only incorrect, but it is also an indicator of ideological fanaticism that belittles the techniques of a civilization for the acquisition, transfer, and perpetuation of knowledge; for the *sharḥ/hāshiya* tradition developed through an efficient writing technique that played a tremendous role in cultivation and improvement of the scholarly heritage of Islamic knowledge, in the discussion of this heritage through successive generations, and its enrichment and solid transfer to succeeding generations. \(^{60}\)

The emergence of *hāshiya* literature during a period in history which Cündioğlu terms as the period of stabilization and consolidation is noteworthy. \(^{61}\) Inferred from his remark is the fact that there had been already an established tradition and/or a series of traditions that needed to be

\(^{60}\) Cündioğlu, “ Çağdaş tefsir tarihi,” p. 7-8.
\(^{61}\) Ibid., 8.
stabilized, consolidated, enriched, transferred, perpetuated and finally systematized. *Sharḥ-*

ḥāshiya writing had specific purposes, among which the primary one probably was “not so much

the formation of new knowledge tradition as the enrichment and perpetuation of a knowledge

foundation that had already been formed.”

A group of western researchers recently acknowledged that modern research on the

history of Muslim literature has fallen prey to the premise formulated by the Orientalist paradigm

which created the illusion around the tradition of ḥāshiya writing, which relatively marked the

12th-19th centuries, as no more than stale and prosaic expositions teemed with repetitive

teachings of older masters. Asad Q. Ahmad and Margaret Larkin, in their introductory remarks

to a collection of articles on various ḥāshiya writing traditions, observed that this premise of

Orientalist paradigm has led generations of scholars to neglect these works, since “they were

seen *a priori* to offer nothing new and innovative”. The period that was targeted by this

Orientalist paradigm incidentally and largely encompasses the period during which the Turks,

first the Saljūkids and then the Ottomans, held prominence in the overwhelmingly large part

of the Muslim world, and the premise that the intellectual torpor and stagnancy were engendered by

them was easily inferred. Such colonial meta-narrative could not have better bolstering for the

purpose of undermining the moral legitimacy of reigning Ottomans over a region that needed to

be divided up into smaller nation-states.

Attributing the “theological backwardness of Muslims to the ostracizing of philosophy

from within the Muslim intellectual history”, Ernst Renan trumpeted how Turks, after the 1200s,

would soon establish their hegemony over the Muslim world and promulgate their ineptitude in

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62 Ibid., 9.
philosophy and knowledge.\textsuperscript{64} The rise of the West to dominance and the trauma it engendered on the Muslim world led the former to frame the past of the latter as a stagnant bygone age and proposed to it an idealized yet-to-come future. Hence the past, the post-12\textsuperscript{th} century, was easily negated and the Islamicate was expected to spring back to the pre-12\textsuperscript{th} century to pick up on where they had left off. This was a conscious project of purging the Muslim historical mindset of a particular era of its history and then of creating a historical blindness that readily and willingly found reception within the traumatic Muslim mindset. İsmail Kara’s remarks on this notion of purging history are noteworthy:

The notion of purging history did not come about as a mere fantasy or an intellectual attempt. It was brought about not only by the unending military defeats dealt to the Muslim world and by several other negative and complex factors, but also by the changes that the conceptualization of “sciences and arts” incurred. Since Muslims could not bill the political, social, and psychological malaise and defeats that they had been incurring to their religion \textit{per se}, they preferred to pin it on the history and began to believe that they lived a “wrong” history, and/or the history they lived was teemed with mumbo jumbo and superstitious traditions (\textit{khurāfāt}). Thus, no wonder Tevfik Fikret (d. 1915), the (late/early “modern”) famous Ottoman poet and man of letters, viewed history (his history) as an effete book (\textit{kitāb-i köhne}) and a graveyard of thoughts.\textsuperscript{65}

The fact that the rise of \textit{şarh/haşiya} compositions broadly and at least chronologically corresponds to a historical period during which, 11\textsuperscript{th}/12\textsuperscript{th} centuries to 19\textsuperscript{th}/20\textsuperscript{th} centuries, Turks, especially with the annexation of central Muslim lands of the former Mamluk setting into their

\textsuperscript{64} Cited by Cündioğlu in “Çağdaş Tefsir Tarihi”, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{65} İsmail Kara, \textit{Din ile modernleşme arasında çağdaş Türk düşüncesinin meseleleri}, (İstanbul, Dergah Yayınları, 2003), p. 94.
realm in during the early 16th century, were predominantly the governing leaders of the greater Muslim geography, led some scholars to believe that at least a chronological link between that type of composition and Turks could inadvertently be established. As a corollary, overlooking the entire literature of *şarḥ/hāshiya* would result in purging the Muslim history not only of the intellectual legacy of Turks in general and Ottomans in particular but also purging the overall Muslim intellectual thought of a significant portion of heritage that is largely produced in the form of *şarḥs/hāshiyas*. While we may not agree with the author that the rise of these types of compositions cannot go beyond being coincidentally chronological with the rise of Turks within the greater Muslim geography, his remarks on the attempts to purge Muslim intellectual heritage of *şarḥ/hāshiya*-type literature are on target. Whether the attempted purge is systematic or an innocuous oversight is a question that goes beyond the scope of this study.

Modern research on the post 12-13th century Muslim intellectual history, encompassing every field, is obsessed with romanticizing the pre-12-13th centuries during which Muslim intellectual history had continually and relatively been progressing. While some researchers closed the book on post 12-13th centuries of Muslim intellectual history only because that era was allegedly and overwhelmingly imbued with gloss and annotation, others, in addition to the same pretext, also propounded that nothing new and/or innovative was contributed. We would have loved to know if the authors of these works, glosses and annotated works, were aware of such a phenomenon or if they believed that these works were written and composed in vain. This type of reasoning yields no research and at the same time obfuscates any attempt to understand why those authors did what they did. Saleh’s comparative research on the four *hāshiyas* written on the Quranic commentary of al-Zamakhsharī has yielded inestimable results on the reception

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Such attempts are much needed for works that are deemed canons, and/or textbooks. Judgmental approaches to historical literature as being repetitive disable us to see why and how they were composed. It also underestimates the significance of the theoretical concept of consensus, a foundational premise of Muslim epistemological theory, technically known as *ijmā’*. Repetition and/or reiteration of a given concept in different periods of history by different scholarly figures begets and reinforces consensus. If a given thought, idea, or interpretation of a given Quranic verse has been framed in a particular way from the very beginning of hermeneutical attempts to date, or to a particular point in history for that matter, in a particular understanding, it translates into the endorsement of that particular interpretation through the doctrine of consensus/*ijmā’*, which in turn reinforces the authoritative nature of the said interpretation. We are not to judge the value of an unchanged old age thought over a new one or vice versa, but what we would like to accentuate here is a mode of establishing authority in Muslim thought. Invariably repeated notions throughout the ages are tantamount to their being authoritative, and/or authoritative in the mindset of those who would choose to project them as authoritative. This can be glaringly exemplified in the words of Al-Suyūṭī on the *tafsīr* of Q. 1:7 (*ghayr al-maghḍūb alayhim wa lā al-ḍāllūn* [neither/not those who have incurred Your wrath, nor those who have gone astray]):

I have seen in the *tafsīr* of this verse around ten [different] views despite the fact that the Prophet himself interpreted it to refer to the Jews (*al-maghḍūb alayhim*) and Christians (*al-ḍāllūn*). The same interpretation was transmitted from the Companions, their

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successors, and their successors to the degree that Ibn Abī Ḥātim said: I know of no difference on this among the mufassirs.\(^{68}\)

This mode of thought and the mode of establishing authority allowed al-Suyūṭī to repudiate “new” interpretations on the presumed and/or inferred account that they contradict the previously established consensus. According to this mode of thought, the interpretation of al-
maghḍūb alayhim with the Jews and al-ḍāllīn with the Christians is the only authoritatively established interpretation, and that any mufassir attempting to offer an interpretation of this particular verse must only “repeat” the same old interpretation. Repetition is the accepted norm in such cases, and novelty is anathema.

By failing to see the significance of repetition we also fail to see the continuity, stability, and the lasting effect it yields. That a given text or part of it continues to be interpreted in a particular way and it stabilizes and lasts is no small matter.

Furthermore, by composing literary works, autonomous and/or otherwise, an author engraves his thought in writing and registers his name on the historical list of scholars.\(^{69}\) If the genre on which the author composed his work, the genre of tafsīr in this case, is a highly esteemed field for a large number of people, the value of this composition, and the value of the author for that matter, doubly increases. The authorship of a tafsīr work, regardless of its contents, is singly worth mentioning in the biography of a scholar in the biographical dictionaries. Ebussuud, for example, devoted his entire life to jurisprudence and also practiced judicial authority for the greater part of his career, but to his biographers he was known as the

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\(^{69}\) The modern scholarship seems to have coined the terms “autonomous and/or independent” to refer to literary works that are composed independently of another work and also for the purpose of distinguishing them from the ḥāshiya sharh ta'īqa-type compositions that are composed dependently and as another layer of composition on a previously authored work. We here complied with this scholarly convention and avoided the use of “original” which somehow obfuscates the fact that many of the ḥāshiya sharh ta'īqa-type literature is not devoid of originality in terms of their intellectual contents.
sultan of mufassirs and it was only his tafsīr that they deemed significant to mention, some primarily and some others excusively. Considering the fact that an Ottoman madrasa student could begin studying tafsīr only after he had mastered all the sciences, it would mean that a composer of a tafsīr work from among the Ottoman scholars could only be the one who mastered all the knowledge of religious sciences and bolster his authoritative position. Thus, composing a tafsīr work was conventionally the preserve of highly advanced scholars.

We may not definitely know what new and innovative mean to a modern researcher, but we should definitely question if these terms meant the same thing for medieval authors. There is a very thin line between what a given text says and what an interpreter makes it say. We fail to view the significance of the new and/or the lack of it in a particular period of history by projecting our own ideals to a bygone age. The new is in how generations of exegetes composed their works, how their works relate to other and similar works in the same field, and how they formulated their ideas in their own settings in a particular period of history and geography. The new is why a given author chose to “repeat” a particular thought. The new is in how and why some works became canonized in educational circles. The new is in how, why, when and where some works were constantly and invariably preferred over other works.

Sharḥ and hāshiya tradition has had several other functions; the primary function, perhaps, was that of consolidating and/or stabilizing a knowledge base that was to constitute the cornerstone in a given field of knowledge. Another function was to establish the authoritative nature of a given heritage of knowledge from amongst the several competing hermeneutical approaches to the teachings of the founding fathers of Islamic disciplines. As is known to the

specialists in the field, most of the Islamic disciplines of knowledge grew out of a historical progress that spanned sometime from the 8th century through the 11th or 12th centuries, while a few others continued their process of growth up to 14th and 15th centuries.

During the formative period of Islamic disciplines, various knowledge trends and traditions contested against each other in a given field by way of producing their own texts by individual masters. Recent scholarship has shown the importance of commentarial activity, mainly materialized in _sharḥ_ and _ḥāshiya_-style compositions, in establishing and preserving the authority of those texts at the expense of others and the schools with which they were associated.\(^7\)

The schools of Islamic law or the schools of Muslim Jurisprudence, for example, sprang up around the early 9th century and did not become established until into the late 11th century. Some modern researchers who have surveyed the history of Muslim Jurisprudence pointed out that while, in the very early period, the schools of Islamic law were known by their geographical designations such as Kufans, Madinans, Syrians, etc., later on towards the end of 8th and throughout the 9th centuries, individual masters grew out of these early geographical schools in the likes of Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 767), Mālik (d. 795), al-Shāfiʿī (d. 820), and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 855), and others within the Sunnī world. The disciples and the followers of these masters transformed the regional schools of law into personal schools named after their respective eponymous founders, which later on were reduced to four main Sunnī schools of law. The masters of Muslim Jurisprudence were not limited to the aforementioned four in the Sunnī tradition; however, others, the number of which was roughly rounded up as some 500 personal

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schools of law by Schacht, were to die out beginning from the early 9th until the end of 14th century. An eminent scholar of law was freely able to exercise independent reasoning (ijtihād) and propose his own observations in a given juridical matter, and members of the Muslim community did not feel restrained to subscribe to the views of a particular scholar of law until probably the end of 12th century. G. Makdisi, for example, has demonstrated that while the 14th century was probably the date by which the political authority, the Mamluk Sultan Baybars in this case, appointed only four qādīs, each for the extant four schools of law, in the cities of Fustāṭ and Cairo, the Caliph Nāṣir (r. 1180-1225) in Baghādād had already limited the number of qādīs to four schools, and his successor al-Mustanṣir (r. 1225-1242) limited the schools of law being taught in the madrasa Mustanṣirīyya to the same four schools. However, Makdisi continues, the Muslim community, more than a century earlier, had already limited the schools of law to four by embracing only them and leaving the others to die out. The historical reasons behind the demise of died-out law schools can partially be traced within the diachronic developments of literary compositions in the Muslim genre of jurisprudence.

Of the reasons that led to the emergence of these four schools of law and the disappearance of others, the most important one seems to be the fact that the former had their subscribers propagate and spread the teachings of their eponymous founders’ teachings by way of intensified literary activity represented in primary texts and sharīḥs and ḥāshiyas that grew out of them. The teachings of Abū Ḥānīfa, the eponymous founder of the Ḣanafī school, for example, were transmitted through his two primary disciples Abū Yūsuf and Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī. The latter is credited to have collected in literary compositions the main

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72 EI², s.v. fiqh.
propositions of especially Abū Ḥanīfa juxtaposed with Abū Yusuf’s and his own discussions around various topics of Muslim jurisprudence. Al-Shaybānī’s literary compositions constituted the canons within the Ḥanafi school of law and out of them grew a body of further literature in the form *sharḥs* and *hāshiyyas* that interpreted their contents, weighed one against another, and strove to establish which ones were to be deemed authoritative. Dealing with the establishment of Ḥanafi school of law, C. Melchert points to the significant growth at the beginning of the 9\textsuperscript{th} century of a commentary literature that should be considered a primary catalyst for the basis of a school. His reasoning runs:

It was not yet the classical Ḥanafi school, though, until, among other things, a body of jurisprudents began to treat the works of Abū Ḥanīfa and his two disciples as the basis of a school. In the first place, this meant transmitting it to students. It also meant writing commentaries on it. To write a commentary was to acknowledge that some writings had incomparably more weight than anything coming after.\footnote{Christopher Melchert, *The Formation of Sunni Schools of Law, 9\textsuperscript{th}-10\textsuperscript{th} centuries CE*, (Leiden: Brill, 1997), p. 60.}

Neither Abū Ḥanīfa nor his disciples had systematically established a school of law. It was the later disciples and subscribers to their teachings, that by writing commentaries and glosses (*sharḥs* and *hāshiyyas*) on the two primary works of al-Shaybānī’s (d. 805) *al-Jāmi’ al-ṣāghīr* and *al-Jāmi’ al-kabīr*, secured the establishment of the Ḥanafi school of law. Based on Kātib Çelevi’s *Kashf al-Zunūn* and Sezgin’s *Geschichte des arabischen schrifttums*, C. Melchert lists the names and authors of commentaries on al-Shaybānī’s two works during the four centuries after his death: There were 34 commentaries on *al-Jāmi’ al-ṣaghīr,* and 28 commentaries on *al-Jāmi’ al-kabīr.*\footnote{Ibid., 60-65.} What is more interesting was that, despite the fact that
there were also hadith collections supposed to have been used by Abū Ḥanifa, which were concomitantly put into writing, commentators overlooked them and focused their commentarial activities on the two works of al-Shaybānī.\textsuperscript{76} The fact that there were four more books that al-Shaybānī wrote, which did not enjoy as wide a commentarial activity as the aforementioned two, should clearly indicate that the commentarial endeavors had a particular goal which can loosely be articulated as the function of establishing which knowledge heritage was to be deemed authoritative. The trajectory of composing commentaries and supercommentaries determined the authoritative nature of a given work over others. However, later generations of scholars did take all of al-Shaybānī’s writings into consideration along with their commentaries, and tried to systematize teachings of the school for the madrasa curriculum. Al-Qudūrī, (d. 1037) whose scholarly lineage can be traced back to al-Karkhī (d. 952), an earlier commentator on al-Shaybānī’s works, composed al-Mukhtaṣar as a textbook for the incipient legal curricula in Iraq and Syria.\textsuperscript{77}

As the usherer of the classical period, after the end of the ancient period in the historical development of the Ḥanafī school according to Ya’akov Meron, al-Qudūrī may be considered the jurist who collected the juridical tradition of the ancient period of the Ḥanafī school, refined and summed it up in a more organized and systematic way in his al-Mukhtaṣar, also known in the Ḥanafī circles as “al-Kitāb/the Book.”\textsuperscript{78} Al-Qudūrī of Ḥanafī school of law, in this sense, can be regarded as al-Ṭabarī (d. 923) of Quranic exegesis. Al-Qudūrī was not the only one collecting the tradition of the ancient period and carrying it over to the classical period; there were other competing lines of collecting activities in the figures of al-Sarakhsī (d. 1097), al-Samarqandī (d.

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., 66-67.
\textsuperscript{77} Wheeler, “Identity in the Margins”, p. 185.
\textsuperscript{78} Ya’akov Meron, “The Development of Legal Thought in Hanafi Texts” Studia Islamica, no. 30 (1969), 73-118. p. 90.
Comparatively, just as there was a group of scholars that competed with each other in formalizing the teachings of Ḥanafī school, there was also a group of scholars competing with each other, the likes of al-Ṭabarī, al-Tha’labi (d. 1035), and al-Wāḥidī (d. 1075), in the field of tafsīr. Commentarial activities that followed, determined which one of those competing traditions was going to win the day. Among the commentaries on al-Kitāb of al-Qudūrī, al-Marghīnānī’s (d. 1197) al-Hidāya took its hold within the madrasa curricula, and further commentaries and supercommentaries on it would flourish especially during the Ottoman period. While the DİA article asserts that there were 60 sharḥs and ḥāshiya on al-Hidāya, a recent compendium on the commentary and the supercommentary heritage of the Muslim scholarship lists some 130 commentaries and 10 super commentaries on the same work. Sharḥ and ḥāshiya-style compositions served the purpose of establishing authoritative texts and canons in a given discipline.

Let us now consider, for another example, the relationship between the literary works Dalā’il al-‘i’jāz and Asrār al-balāgha, Nihāyat al-‘ījāz, al-Mīfīḥ, and Talkhīš al-Mīfīḥ, produced by ’Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī (d. 1078), Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāżī (d. 1210), and Abū Ya’qūb Yūsuf al-Sakkākī (d. 1229), and Muḥāmmad b. ’Abd al-Raḥmān al-Qazwīnī (d. 1336), respectively of the discipline of al-balāgha (the rhetorical sciences). The far superior acceptance that Talkhīš received up to the end of 19th century, in contradistinction to its predecessors, is manifested in the commentaries and the supercommentaries produced on it. While the works of al-Jurjānī, who traditionally has been credited to have founded the discipline of al-balāgha, and the Nihāyat al-‘ījāz of al-Rāżī, who attempted to systematize the former’s conceptual framework,

79 Ibid., 79-80.
received no known commentaries, the Mīfāḥ was the basis of 25 commentaries. As for the Talkhīṣ, not only did it receive 30 commentaries, but it also was the basis for 16 abridgements and over 100 supercommentaries.  

‘Ilm al-balāgha, the study of rhetoric/eloquence, was probably inaugurated rather late, with respect to other disciplines, by ‘Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī’s two works Dalā’il and Asrār. It was not an independent discipline until al-Jurjānī planted the seeds on it with his two famous aforementioned works. Until then, it was, rather, a scattered group of linguistic terms appropriated by various disciplines.

As a tripartite discipline, consisting of ‘ilm al-bayān, ‘ilm al-ma’ānī, and ‘ilm al-badī’, ‘ilm al-balāgha was not established independently until al-Qazwīnī’s Talkhīṣ; but its seeds were planted by al-Jurjānī three centuries earlier. Literal and figurative speech, and linguistic excellences were not unknown to previous scholars, but these were acquired through various other disciplines and were not made into a separate/independent field of study. Al-Jurjānī was probably the first scholar who treated al-balāgha as a discipline by itself, despite the fact that his main interest was the subject of Quranic inimitability. Al-Rāzī, on the other hand, regarded al-Jurjānī’s work as so disorganized that he took upon himself the task of facilitating the transmission of al-Jurjānī’s ideas to “the students” in an organized and intelligible form. Al-Sakkāki, a century earlier than al-Qazwīnī, follows the footsteps of al-Jurjānī and al-Rāzī in their discussion of style and figurative usage, but he also broadens the subject by including within it the topics of grammar and morphology, as well as other topics that are closely related to his four

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82 Ibid., 101.
main fields. It was al-Qazwīnī, however, that gave ʿilm al-balāgha its final shape. Al-Sakkākī wrote his book as a book on adab (literary style) of Arabic expression and treated nine disciplines in his magnum opus, Miftāḥ al-ʿulūm, two of which are ʿilm al-maʿānī and ʿilm al-bayān. But al-Qazwīnī, who gave his work the title of “Talkhīṣ al-Miftāḥ, reduced the subject proper of ʿilm al-balāgha to three; al′maʾānī, al-bayān, and al-badīʾ. Al-Jurjānī had said nothing about ʿilm al-badīʾ; al-Rāzī had incorporated it into his work, and al-Sakkākī had incorporated it into ʿilm al-bayān.

The period between al-Jurjānī and al-Qazwīnī may very well be considered as the formative period of the discipline of ʿilm al-balāgha. The succeeding generation of scholars was left with the task of consolidating this discipline through commentaries and supercommentaries they produced on the foundations set by those four scholars. Al-Sakkākī’s work was made the textbook of madrasa curriculum between 1300s and 1500s, and in the case of Ottoman madrasas, there were also madrasas ranked as Miftāḥ madrasas, after the famous work of al-Sakkākī. It also engendered 25 commentaries, not on the whole work, but on the third section of it where al-Sakkākī dealt with rhetorical topics.

The fact that later authors chose to write commentaries on al-Sakkākī’s work, and not on al-Jurjānī’s or al-Rāzī’s, is noteworthy. Commentary, supercommentary and other techniques of writing were not haphazardly or randomly undertaken enterprises; not everything was commented or supercommented on, and not everyone could undertake such ventures. Sharḥ/ḥāshiya writing was not so much a way of inventing a new knowledge tradition as a way

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85 Ibid., 112.
of consolidating, enriching and perpetuating an already established knowledge tradition.\(^8^8\) A salient characteristic of this gloss-type composition that we need to note here is that the texts upon and around which innumerous commentaries, supercommentaries, abridgements, treatises, versifications, etc. were produced are the texts that were considered the staple of *madrasa* curriculum. This fact implies a systematic approach for the producing of extra textual material by Muslim scholars, and cannot merely be described as lifeless, moribund, repetitive, unoriginal, etc. Once again, Cündioğlu captures the same notion in the following:

*Sharḥ* and *hāshiya* are very serious authorial endeavors that aim at, for pedagogical reasons, improving a “textbook” to a higher level and adapting it to the commentator’s or the *muhashshi*’s (the author of a *hāshiya*) own time. It cannot be reduced to intellectual torpor, personal whims, or a moribund knowledge tradition; on the contrary, it indicates that values such as knowledge, culture, and enlightenment, as well as civilization, can only be built upon a foundation and a heritage. … Stability and continuity are just as important as innovation and creativity; just as there are building scholars during the formative period of a given civilization, there must also be scholars who, in the succeeding periods of stability and consolidation, should consolidate and improve upon what was built during the formative period. The call for new Abū Ḥanīfâs, Ibn Rushdîs, and al-Ghazâlîs is not only insensible whining, but it should also translate into a similar hypothetical call for new Descartes, Kants, and Spinozas. However, instead, just as there are Kantians, Spinozans, and Hegelians in the West, there are similarly Sakkâkians, Taftazânians, and Jurjânians within the Muslim scholarship.\(^8^9\)

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\(^8^8\) Cündioğlu, “Çağdaş tefsir tarihi”, p. 9.
\(^8^9\) Cündioğlu, “Çağdaş tefsir tarihi”, p. 9-10.
Despite its potentially misleading title, al-Qazwīnī’s Talkhīṣ was no mere summary of al-Sakkākī’s Miftāh as the famous Egyptian scholar Bahā al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 772/1372) would argue; and it, along with its commentary al-Idāh by the same author, spawned its own tradition of sharḥs (commentaries) and ḥāshiyaṣ (supercommentaries). What should be noted about these commentaries and supercommentaries, however, is that they do not dwell so much on how al-Qazwīnī reduced the scope of rhetorical topics in the Miftāh or how he rearranged them, but on the rejections and objections al-Qazwīnī directed against al-Sakkākī. Al-Qazwīnī used al-Idāh, his own commentary on his own Talkhīṣ, to expand on many of his objections to al-Sakkākī, and incorporated many of al-Jurjānī’s ideas which Miftāh overlooked.⁹⁰

We also see the commentary and supercommentary tradition as a theater where scholarly rivalries manifested themselves most scathingly. The rivalry acted out through the commentaries and supercommentaries on either Miftāh or Talkhīṣ by al-Taftazānī (d. 1390) and al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī (d. 1413) lent a certain spark and vitality to the study of rhetoric which is otherwise an abstruse and dry discipline.⁹¹ The same rivalry, on the other hand, bred extremely critical and analytical debates even in the very minute details of not only the subject proper of the discipline of rhetoric, but also the method and style with which they are presented to the audience. While the focus of attention was evenly split between the works of al-Sakkākī and al-Qazwīnī early on, by the turn of the 15th century, Muslim scholars were more interested in the commentaries and supercommentaries written by al-Taftazānī and al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī on the earlier texts of al-Sakkākī and al-Qazwīnī.⁹²

⁹¹ Symth, “Controversy”, p. 596.
⁹² Symth, “Controversy”, 596; and, for a brief summary on the content of this rivalry and its ramifications on the succeeding generations of scholars, see Shuruq Naguib, “Guiding the Sound Mind: Ebu’s-Su’ūd’s Tafsīr and
William Smyth, who in two of his articles on the topic, studied the diachronic growth of literature on the discipline of rhetoric through the works of al-Jurjānī, al-Rāzī, al-Sakkākī, al-Qazwīnī, and the hundreds of commentaries and supercommentaries produced on the last two authors’ works in particular, demonstrated the vitality, the vibrancy, the dynamism, the exuberance of debate and criticism borne out by the *sharḥ* and *ḥāshiya* tradition on the otherwise abstruse and dry discipline of *al-balāgha*.

Another significant function of *sharḥ* and *ḥāshiya* writing was probably the premise of protectionism in the form of shaping understanding. Protectionism translated into two distinct forms: protecting the main text from being understood wrongly; and protecting the readership against the pitfalls of a given text, both in the views of the author of a given *sharḥ/hāshiya* composition. *Futūḥ al-ghayb*, the *ḥāshiya* of Sharaf al-Dīn al-Ṭībī (d. 1342), one of the earliest, on *al-Kashshāf* of al-Zamakhsharī, for an example of *ḥāshiya* composition which aimed at or was conceived as protecting the readership against the doctrinally unacceptable theological comments of the latter, in the estimation of the early 20th century *tafsīr* historian Cevdet Bey, was the *sine qua non* for anyone desiring to study the commentary of al-Zamakhsharī; it was even religiously impermissible, according to a traditionally held conviction, to study the latter without the presence of the former.93 Protectionism in the form of shaping understanding has also been framed, in the wording of İsmail Kara, as a way of establishing the sound and correct understanding of a given independently authored text. Kara viewed the commentarial activities on scriptural texts, Islamic or otherwise, as no more than a technical variance of commentarial

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Commentarial compositions by the adherents of a given scripture can broadly be categorized as the protectionist endeavors aimed at informing a particular understanding. Studying the early supercommentaries on *al-Kashshāf*, Saleh demonstrated how al-Subkī’s (d. 1370) understanding of it, in at least two instances of theological/pietistic concern, was informed by Ibn al-Munayyir’s (d. 1284) *ḥāshiya*, a supercommentary considered to be the first to attack and refute al-Zamakhshāri’s *al-Kashshāf*. Furthermore, the commentary of al-Anqarawī/el-Anḳaravī (d. 1631) on the *Mathnawī* of Rūmī (d. 1273) is considered to have been triggered by the attacks directed against it by the Qāḏīzādalīs during the 17th century in Istanbul. Qāḏīzādalīs constituted the movement of a group of public preachers subscribing to the teachings of Qāḏīzādalī Meḥmed Efendi (d. 1635) who, in turn, was considered to have been influenced by the school of Ibn Taymiyyan thought. They directed a number of attacks, as part of their overall attacks on all sorts of Sufism, on the *Mathnawī* upon which al-Anqarawī took it upon himself to compose his own commentary, despite the fact that there had been at least two other commentaries, partly as a response to the Qāḏīzādalīs’ attacks. As a matter of fact, for some succeeding generations, the commentary of al-Anqarawī was the only valid and permissible conduit through which one ought to study *al-Mathnawī*. The fact that the 19th century head of the sufi Naqshībandī order in Istanbul, Hoca Ḫūsāmeddīn/Ḫūsām al-Dīn Efendi (d. 1864) granted ’Osmān Ṣalāḥaddīn Dede the licence to teach (*icāzetnāme/iḻazatnāma*) the *Mathnawī* only according to how it was presented by al-Anqarawī, tells us how this commentary played a very critical role at informing the understanding of *al-Mathnawī*.

96 Semih Ceyhan, “İsmail Ankaravî ve Mesnevî şerhi” (Unpublished PhD diss. Uludağ Üniversitesi, 2005). For a background account on al-Anqarawī and the Qāḏīzādalīs, see pp 114-130; and for the authorial objectives for the composition of the commentary, see pp. 293-299.
97 İ. Kara, *İlim bilmez tarih hatırlamaz*, p. 38.
To sum it up, commentarial compositions represented in the *sharḥ, hāshiya*, and *ta‘līqa*-style writings in Muslim scholarship can not and should not merely be dismissed as dry, repetitive, cliché-ridden, unoriginal, and insignificant. If we dismiss them as such, not only will we end up turning a blind eye to a significant scholarly output of the late medieval Muslim heritage, but we will also end up depriving ourself of understanding significant features and characteristics of Muslim scholarship.
Chapter 2

Quranic Commentary during the Ottoman Era

2.1. A general outlook

Any research aiming to undertake the study of the exegetical literature of a period spanning some six hundred years is replete with a number of complications. Furthermore, if the period under study covers a historical period prior to the rise of nation-states, these complications doubly increase. First and foremost is the problem of who is who, and/or where is where. The problem is exacerbated with the fact that the term “Ottoman” did not designate a single ethnic denomination, nor did it refer to a single geographical setting within which particular nations today exist. Another complication lies in the fact that Quranic commentary during the period under study here is not, as mostly was the case prior to this era, limited to the whole Qur’ān, nor is it limited to commentaries in Arabic, the primary medium of scholarship in Islamic literature to which only Persian had, for only a few centuries, come second. But the most conspicuous complication a researcher is to encounter is the apparent widespread dominance of a new type of literature, namely the ḥāshiya-style writing, through which innumerous Quranic scholars exercised their exegetical skills.

None of the aforementioned complications are to be dismissed bluntly and deemed unworthy of studying. They all constitute an interesting topic of research, and therefore a few points of defining the limits of our study should be clarified.

This study aims to bring to attention a most neglected part of tafsīr history in the history of Muslim literature in general and tafsīr literature in particular. The historical period that this research attempts to tackle within the history of tafsīr literature is the period between the 14th and
20th centuries, the one that corresponds to an era during which the greater part of the Muslim world was under the suzerainty of Ottoman dynasty.

Without delving into the task of attempting to identify what defines “Ottoman”, it should be stated from the beginning that this research covers the *tafsīr* literature written by scholars who thrived and flourished under the suzerainty of Ottoman dynasty, regardless of their ethnic stock or their linguistic denominations. Even though most of the figures that will be mentioned in this survey seem to belong to the Turkic stock, there were others, who ethnically ethnically belonged to various other stocks, thrived under a system of learning administered by the Ottoman learning institution of *madrasa*, and interacted with and/or were employed by the Ottoman governing apparatus or Ottoman scholarly institutions. There were similarly others who composed or started to compose their Qur'ānic commentaries elsewhere but later decided to migrate to and settle in the lands ruled by the Ottomans where they completed and dedicated them to the members of the Ottoman dynastic establishment.

Ethnic designation is a criterion that is unhelpful in delineating a historical period prior to the rise of nation-states, but continues to drive the historiography of the Middle East and Ottoman scholars in informing our modern understanding of the region and culture. Even the Ottoman governing apparatus, including the sole suzerain of the dynasty, the sultans themselves, can hardly be ethnically identified. It is widely known in the field of Ottoman studies that beginning with the second ruler, Orhān/Orkhān (r. 1324/26-1362), most of the Ottoman sultans maternally belonged to a non-Turkic ethnic stock. And most of the higher echelons of the ruling elite were the product of *devşirme/dawshirma*, also similarly known as *ghulām* system in Arabic, a system that warranted the collection of mostly Christian youth of newly conquered Balkan and European lands who were brought up in Anatolian farms and then in the Ottoman palace schools
to fill the high ranks of the governing elite and exclusively serve the figure of the sultan himself. With the conquest of Balkan and European lands earlier and the conquest of Arab lands and the northern African coastal line later, the Ottoman domain came to include several ethnic denominations ranging from Kurds and Arabs in the east and the southeast, Slavs and Greeks in the west, to the Barbars of North Africa in the south.

Consider for example Ḥaći/Ḥājj Paşa/Pasha al-Aydınī (d. 1424): even though he was born in Konya, the lands of the then Қaramānid/Qaramānid principality before its final annexation by Meḥmed II the Conqueror (r. 1444-1446 and 1451-1481), he went to study in Egypt, and after his studies remained and worked as a medical doctor in the hospital of al-Malik al-Manṣūr in Egypt. With the invitation of ʻĪsā Bey of Aydın principality in Anatolia, Ḥaći Paşa came back to Anatolia and settled in Ayasuluk in Aydın principality and composed his medical *Sharḥ Ṭawāliʿ al-anwār wa shifāʾ al-aqsām* and dedicated it to ʻĪsā Bey, the prince of Aydın. Political uncertainties in the principality of Aydın led him to move back to his hometown Konya, where he must have been disappointed by the lack of interest shown in him by the Qaramānids; but then in 1421 he moved back to Birgi, a small town of Aydın principality, but now under the Ottoman suzerainty, where he composed his Quranic commentary and dedicated it to Murād II (r. 1421-1444 and 1446-1451).1 Another example is Musannifek/Muṣannifāk (d. 1470), who was born in Khorasān, studied in Harāt, and came to Anatolia sometime around 1445. He started teaching in Anatolian Konya, then under the suzerainty of Qaramānid principality. He later entered the Ottoman court and dedicated his *Kitāb al-shifāʾ fī tafsīr kalām Allāh al-munzal min al-samāʿ* to Meḥmed II.2 Or, Molla Gürānī/Gūrānī for that matter (d. 1487), who was born in 1410 in Şehrizor/Shahrizūr, in modern day northern Iraq, studied in Baghdād, Damascus, and

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1 DİA, s.v. “Hacı Paşa”
2 DİA, s.v. “Musannifek”
Egypt, was recruited and appointed by Murād II as a müderris/mudarris in Bursa and a tutor to his son Meḥmed II the Conqueror. He would later become the Każasker/Qāḍī al-‘askar, the chief judge of the military, in Rumili, the European lands under the Ottoman suzerainty, and, after that he became the shaykh al-Islām, the head of religious/’ilmīyya institutions of the state. He was most likely of Kurdish ethnic stock, and he did not study in any of the Ottoman madrasas; however, on account of his professional posts and the intimate relationship he had with the Ottoman governmental apparatus, Molla Gürānī is a critical figure in Ottoman religious literature in general, and Ottoman tafsīr heritage in particular.\(^3\) Ebussuud/Abū al-Su’ūd is another example, the figure of our case study in this research, whose ethnic belonging is disputed in the sources as being either Turkic or Kurdish. However, he is inarguably the most outstanding religious figure of Ottoman history and a scholar who, according to the sources, was solely trained in Ottoman lands and institutions. He became the highest figure of religious authority in the Ottoman realm for a period of some thirty years, carried out several reforms in the Ottoman educational system, tried to balance the secular law of the state and religious law, and, most importantly, composed a complete Quranic commentary that was to rival the Quranic commentaries of al-Zamaksharī and al-Baydāwī. Also İsmā’īl Ḥakkı Bursevî/İsmâ’îl Ḥaqqî Bursawî (d. 1725), a rather late Ottoman figure, who originally hailed from Aydos in present day Bulgaria, moved and settled in Ottoman Bursa, thence the nisba Bursawī, and composed his Quranic commentary in 1705 in Bursa where he died.\(^4\)

The affiliation of a given scholar to a particular polity during medieval times is informed by the patronage they sought and were able to acquire, and/or by the educational positions they were offered in any part of the greater Muslim geography. Therefore, our criterion to determine a


\(^4\) DİA, s.v. “İsmâ’il Hakkı Bursevî”
Ottoman scholar as Ottoman was one of the following factors: settlement in lands under the Ottoman suzerainty, patronage they acquired from the ruling elite, and/or teaching positions they held at Ottoman learning institutions.

Ottoman *tafsîr* heritage is an uncharted territory for western scholarship of Quranic studies, and a fledgling enterprise within the Turkish scholarship of both Ottoman studies and Islamic studies. Largely owing, in our opinion, to the seminal article of Dücane Cündioğlu on Ottoman *tafsîr* heritage and two bibliographical graduate studies authored by Ziya Demir and Muhammed Abay respectively, a number of articles and bio-bibliographical monographs as well as topical studies have for the last two decades been produced by the scholarship of Turkey’s Divinity Schools (İlahiyat Fakülteleri) and by the Ottoman history scholarship of various other Turkish universities; however, the majority of these studies unfortunately lack the critical and/or analytical perimeters of western scholarship. Several articles, MA theses, and doctoral dissertations on individual *tafsîrs* of the Ottoman era that have been produced by graduates and professors of divinity schools (İlahiyat Fakülteleri) in Turkey are rather descriptive, and there is little critical and analytical methodology beyond bio-bibliographical information. Nevertheless, these studies, in a way, facilitate the process of identifying extant manuscripts and individual Ottoman scholars who undertook the enterprise of *tafsîr* writing, and, on the other hand, they give us a broad idea about the sources on which the Ottoman *tafsîr* scholarship might have drawn. Since many of the *tafsîr* histories are, to a great degree, devoid of bio-bibliographical information on the *tafsîr* works written between the 14th and 20th centuries in the realm dominated by the Ottomans, we have provided an annotated bio-bibliographical account and list of these *tafsîr* works in an appendix at the end of this study.

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5 For a list of these studies see, Mustafa Öztürk, *Osmanlı tefsir mirası*, (Ankara: Ankara Okulu Yayınları, 2012), p. 8-11.
It needs to be stated from the outset that tafsīr writing style varied greatly among the Ottomans, and it ranged from the ad seriatim commentary of the entire Qur’ān, particular sūras of it, as well as individual verses within a particular sūra, to hāshiya style writing on various previous tafsīr works with particular focus on the commentaries of al-Zamakhshārī and al-Bayḍāwī. On the other hand, even though tafsīr writing was, to a great degree, undertaken in Arabic, the language of learning in madrasas, tafsīrs written in old Anatolian and Ottoman Turkish, as well as Persian, along with translations of previous tafsīr works into the Old Anatolian and Ottoman Turkish were also a characteristic of this period of tafsīr scholarship.

There have been a number of bio-bibliographical studies of Ottoman tafsīr heritage, and although they are promising, much more detailed and verified surveys of library records await future researchers in order to more soundly assess the literary output of the Ottomans in the field of Quranic scholarship.

Based on what we have been able to ascertain, the earliest attempt to draw attention to a phenomenon called “Ottoman tafsīr movement” was undertaken by Sakıp Yıldız in 1987. He recorded in his preliminary remarks the overlooked amount of tafsīr works that have been penned by Turks in general and Ottomans in particular. Yıldız listed 14 mufassirs (exegetes) without making distinction between their compositions of hāshiya, complete tafsīr works, and/or tafsīr works on individual Quranic chapters, not to mention the fact that he also included the likes of Sa’d al-Dīn al-Taftazānī (d. 1391) and al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī (1413) in his list, both of whom are eminent figures of Persian and Central Asian heritage.

Two important ground breaking attempts came in the early 1990s. Muhammed Abay was probably the first researcher who conducted a bio-bibliographical survey of Ottoman mufassirs

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6 Yıldız, “Osmanlı tefsir hareketine toplu bakış” Uludağ Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi, sayı 2, cilt 2 (1987), 1-8
Broadly outlining the general characteristics of Ottoman *tafsīr* and the sources it drew on in his introductory remarks, Abay’s survey covered the period of entire Ottoman history, 1299-1923, and listed 18 extant complete *tafsīr* works, 17 non-extant complete *tafsīrs*, 110 *hāshiyalat’īlaqa*-style writing without distinguishing between the ones that are composed on an entire *tafsīr* work or parts of it. He also listed 15 translations, but without again differentiating between the translations of entire *tafsīr* works or parts of them, as well as 137 *tafsīrs* written on individual chapters of the Qurʾān or particular verses of certain chapters.

The second ground breaking attempt was undertaken by Ziya Demir in his monograph that grew out of his doctoral dissertation of 1994 and which was published posthumously in 2007 by his children. Demir limited his survey to three centuries, from the beginning of the 14th century to the end of the 16th, and in a thorough and very detailed manner he tried to account for the *tafsīr* works produced by the Ottomans during this period. Starting with the assessment of Ottoman *tafsīr* heritage and its general outlook in the first part of his book, Demir, in a cataloguing style, gave the list and record of 10 complete *tafsīr* works that were produced during the said period, 34 *tafsīr* works on individual chapters of the Qurʾān, 6 complete and 32 incomplete and/or partial *hāshiyas*, 5 complete translations of entire Quranic commentaries, and several other partial translations.

Abay published a more refined and numerically more comprehensive research in an article of 1999, listing 583 works produced by 403 authors. 67 of these works, corresponding to 11%, are held to be complete *tafsīrs*, 273 of them, corresponding to 47%, are listed as *tafsīrs* on

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7 Abay, “Osmanlı dönemi müfessirleri”
8 Demir, *Osmanlı müfessirleri*.
scattered and individual Quranic verses, 228, corresponding to 39 %, are ḥāshiya, ta’līq, or mukhtasar-type writings, and finally 15 of them, or 3 %, are categorized as translations.\textsuperscript{10}

Another distinct monograph on Ottoman tafsīr heritage was authored in 2012 by Mustafa Öztürk, professor of tafsīr studies then at the Divinity school of Çukurova University in Mediterranean Turkey. Öztürk tackles the Ottoman tafsīr heritage by dividing the time period into classical and modern eras. The modern era is supposedly ushered in with the introduction of a number of reforms in 1839 through decrees issued by the sultan, a period known in Ottoman history as the era of Tanzımâat. Not only does the author not provide any reason about why and how this classification could have affected the genre of tafsīr writing, but he also admits that tafsīr endeavors did not differ at all during either period.\textsuperscript{11} On the other hand, Öztürk provides a list of complete tafsīr works composed during the Ottoman era that is more or less commensurate with previously conducted studies. His monograph, however, covers also the works that are related to the history of Qurʾān, the history of tafsīr, and the literature pertaining to the genres of the sciences of Qurʾān, ‘ulūm al-Qurʾān, and the theoretical principles of Quranic commentary, uşūl al-tafsīr.

Lastly, another monograph devoted to Ottoman Mufassirs was authored by İshak Doğan who, in a rather perfunctory manner, drew on the extant biographical literature and provided a list of 193 mufassirs, without corroborating his data with library records and/or without questioning the authenticity of the information he superficially culled from his sources.\textsuperscript{12}

There are a few similar articles produced especially by modern Turkish scholarship and extremely few articles in western scholarship on this topic. We will briefly evaluate all of these modern surveys in an analytical and critical manner and also present our own assessment on the

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\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., 256-57
\textsuperscript{11} Mustafa Öztürk, Osmanlı tefsir mirası, p. 115.
\textsuperscript{12} İshak Doğan, Osmanlı müfessirleri, (İstanbul: İz Yayın, 2011).
topic. Our own observation of these bio-bibliographical accounts led us to determine that the bibliographical information on Ottoman tafsīr heritage is nowhere near complete and further research is direly needed. Nevertheless, it is not entirely futile or impossible to verify a number of tafsīr works belonging to the Ottoman era. In appendix A, a preliminary list of complete tafsīr works composed between the 14th and 20th centuries in the Ottoman realm is provided. This list does not claim to have exhausted all such works. It is an outcome of rigorous investigation into bibliographical data and library records, and the list comprises only the complete works, or works that should be presumed complete but parts of which have yet to be accounted for in libraries, and that are extant either in MS form or published form. I have indicated, along with each work, their library records, edited publications, and also the graduate studies undertaken on some of them.
2.2. Sources of Ottoman Tafsīr heritage and review of modern research

To speak of sources for any given tafsīr work would require us to speak of not only the previous tafsīr works that are extant and in print today, but also the ones that are still in manuscript form, and the ones that were available to a given author but are non-extant to us, as well as the educational setting, teachers, and institutions through which an author acquired his knowledge. Since the overwhelming majority of medieval and classical authors do not provide us with a list of the sources they drew on, the modern researcher has to bear the burden of tracking the name of every individual historical figure that an author, if one is lucky enough, mentions by name. At other times, the researcher feels compelled to track down, in instances where an author does not mention the name of the historical figures they draw on, the genealogy of a particular exegetical interpretation by comparing and close reading of multitude of sources. The tedium and effort such processes bear is not hidden to qualified researchers. And if we take on the task of determining the sources of a mass literature and tens of volumes of several individual works, the tedious and arduous nature of research doubles. By no means do we claim that this research has exhaustively examined all these works, and it is inarguably beyond the scope of a single research. Therefore we have limited the scope of this section to the secondary literature, mostly written in Modern Turkish scholarship that surveyed only some of the tafsīr works which were deemed to belong to the Ottoman realm and era. Our objective is to evaluate these secondary sources, criticize them where we deem necessary, point to discrepancies and fallacies, and at the same time present new trajectories about a much neglected period of history that would otherwise remain as a quagmire of clichés and platitudes. Nevertheless, we will also incorporate some of the critical information found in the primary sources that these modern researches relied on, and we will also offer our own insights and deductions from them.
Modern surveys on Ottoman *tafsīr* heritage and its characteristics are replete with bromides and platitudes that create the illusion of providing a good picture of scholarly heritage spanning some six hundred years, and encompassing volumes of commentaries most of which are still in manuscript form.

Sakıp Yıldız, inarguably the first modern researcher who broke the ground on the phenomenon of Quranic commentary heritage authored during the reign of the Ottoman dynasty, argued that the genre of *tafsīr*, before the rise of Ottomans, had already adopted its sources, delineated its structural and methodological contents, and the Muslim scholarship had already given in to the habit of producing commentaries (*sharḥs*) and supercommentaries (*ḥāshiya*) on previously composed and established works. The proclivity to engage in *sharḥ* and *ḥāshiya* writing pervaded also the Ottoman scholarship on Quranic commentary and it became the vogue for the understanding of scholarship. The Quranic commentaries of al-Zamakhsharī and al-Bayḍāwī were chosen as the primary sources for Ottoman *tafsīr* endeavors. These two commentaries, the author claims, had their particular-sectarian agendas: for the former it was to disseminate Muʿtazilite doctrines through the medium of *tafsīr* which had a much larger and wider audience than any other genre; and for the latter it was to criticize such Muʿtazilite views through the same medium and defend Sunnism. Therefore the “objective” from *tafsīr* had been narrowed down and limited to:

- Philological analyses and meaning-oriented commentaries;
- Focusing on the defense of sectarian views in doctrinal and judicial matters;
- Writing commentaries drawing on traditions, without caring about the verity of those traditions;
- Studying previously formulated ideas instead of focusing on current issues, and building scholarship on polemical issues;

In a nutshell, nothing new, and/or no sweeping or original work was produced during the Ottoman period, but the task was to appropriate the old, maintain and preserve it, and pass it onto the future generations.\(^\text{13}\)

The unstated and ambiguous approach of the author of this article aside, we are unable to determine what, at least in his estimation, the intimated “objective” of \(\textit{tafsīr}\) is. The descriptive explanations of this author fail to present any analyses as to how and why the genre of \(\textit{tafsīr}\) developed the way he claimed it did, or how and why it was preserved and passed onto next generations the way he claimed it was.

His survey was based on 13 \(\textit{tafsīr}\) works, complete and/or partial, that were composed up to the end of the reign of Sultan Bayezīd II (r. 1481-1512), a period of some 150 years during which, the author propounds, three distinct schools of thought were prevalent in Anatolian lands:

1. Esoteric \(\textit{tafsīr}\) school that originated in Ibn al-`Arabī (d. 1240) and was transmitted from him into Anatolia through his pupil Şadr al-Dīn al-Qonawī/Sadreddin Konevi (d. 1274);

2. A school of \(\textit{tafsīr}\) that was influenced by the teachings and writings of al-Taftazānī (d. 1389) and al-Jurjānī (d. 1413) through their travels into Anatolian lands. We cannot determine how this school of \(\textit{tafsīr}\) can systematically be labeled, for the author provides none. But for the sake of practical reasons it would not be inappropriate to brand it as the Eastern school of \(\textit{tafsīr}\);

3. A school of \(\textit{tafsīr}\) that was represented by a number of \(\textit{mufassirs}\) of the time. Again, the author does not provide any sort of model here, and we are confounded about what to make of it. Towards the end of the article, we have somehow a better idea about the author’s mindset. He asserts that every newly written Quranic commentary is expected to bring out a new and

\(^{13}\) Sakıp Yıldız, “Osmanlı tefsir hareketine toplu bakış” p. 6-8.
different aspect from the Qur’ān in a way that would guide Muslim community in this world in everyday life.\textsuperscript{14}

Following in Yıldız’ footsteps, M. Abay repeated the notion that Ottoman Qur’ān commentators confined themselves to the heritage they inherited and contented themselves with it. He only added that even though commentators like Ibn Kamāl/Kemâlâpaşazâde (d. 1536) and Ebussuud/Abu al-Su’ūd (d. 1574) skillfully composed works in which previously discussed old topics were more elaborately consolidated, they failed to break new grounds in the genre of \textit{tafsīr}.\textsuperscript{15} Abay offers us a somewhat different model on the schools of \textit{tafsīr} that Ottoman scholars are said to have adopted:

1. \textit{Taşawwuf}/\textit{sufi} \textit{tafsīr} that had three distinct trajectories: one was philosophical \textit{taşawwuf} that drew on the unity of being doctrine of Ibn al-’Arabī (d. 1240) and was spearheaded by the likes of Şadr al-Dīn al-Qonawī and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Rūmī (d. 1274); the second trajectory was \textit{ishārī/işârî} \textit{tafsīr} that focused on the interpretations manifest only to sufîs (\textit{sülûk ehli}) and was informed by the doctrines of Kamāl al-Dīn al-Kāshānī (d. 1330); and the third trajectory was the hagiographic and edificatory anecdotes of previous sufî masters that enriched the contents of the genre of \textit{tafsīr} and gave it some practicality. The author nevertheless admits in the end that all Sufî \textit{tafsīrs} are imbued with all these trajectories!

2. \textit{Hāshiya}-ism. The author does not offer us any insight about this school beyond providing the names of some famous \textit{hāshiya}s on several Quranic commentaries composed by the Ottomans.

3. \textit{Tafsīrs} in \textit{dirāya} style that encompassed all sorts of topics, some in detailed and encyclopedic size and some others are short and abridged (\textit{wajīz/veciz}) size. No further

\textsuperscript{14} Historicity and/or universality of the Quranic text and its teachings are fairly new topics especially in Turkish scholarship, and it is obvious that the author tends to hold the universality of Qur’ān and its content.  
\textsuperscript{15} Muhammet Abay, “Osmanlı döneminde”, p. 254.
explanation is propounded by the author, except the names of a few tafsīr works that, according to him, fit the description of this school.\textsuperscript{16} Towards the end of his survey, before his bio-bibliographical list, the author realizes the scarcity of analytical studies on the tafsīrs of Ottoman period and hopes for a more sound assessment of this heritage.\textsuperscript{17}

Hidayet Aydar also surveyed Ottoman tafsīr undertakings and stated that Ottoman Qur’ān commentators were overwhelmingly influenced by the commentaries of al-Zamakhsharī, al-Bayḍāwī, and al-Rāzī (d. 1209), and produced innumerable abridgements, marginal notes (ta’līqāt), commentaries (šarḥī), and supercommentaries (ḥāšiyās) on them. Ottoman tafsīr endeavors were marked with this type of authorship, Aydar continues, perhaps because they felt overwhelmed by the superiority of these commentaries and, instead of composing original and autonomous works, opted for gloss-type writing.\textsuperscript{18}

Ziya Demir, who conducted a comprehensive survey on Ottoman tafsīr tradition up to the end of 16\textsuperscript{th} century, concluded that the tafsīr literature written during and under the Ottoman reign mostly drew on previous works whose salient characteristics can broadly be generalized as ishārī/esoteric and riwāya/dirāya-based tafsīrs.\textsuperscript{19} While the author mentions al-Qushayrī (d. 1073) and Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 1240) as the leading figures of influence on Ottoman era tafsīr works that can be characterized as ishārī/esoteric tafsīrs, he mentions al-Zamakhsharī, al-Rāzī (d. 1209), and al-Bayḍāwī as the main sources for dirāya-based Ottoman tafsīr endeavors.\textsuperscript{20} One needs to bear in mind that all of these works are relatively late works and there had been a mass amount of tafsīr works on which these late tafsīr works drew. Other researchers were able, in

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{abay} M. Abay, “Osmanlı döneminde”, p. 254-55.
\bibitem{heid} Ibid., p. 256.
\bibitem{demir} Demir, \textit{Osmanlı müfessirleri}, p. 89.
\bibitem{demir2} Demir, \textit{Osmanlı müfessirleri}, p. 91-92.
\end{thebibliography}
addition to the aforementioned, to determine the influences of other figures, such as Abū al-Layth al-Samarqandī (d. 983), al-Baghawī (d. 1122), al-Wāhidī (d. 1075), and al-Qurṭubī (d. 1273) on some of the *tafsīr* works produced by Ottoman exegetes.\(^{21}\)

A more systematic and/or holistic approach was advanced by Mustafa Öztürk, who, in his monograph dedicated to Ottoman *tafsīr* heritage, broadly outlined two main categories that characterized Ottoman *tafsīr* endeavors. One of these categories is expositional (*beyani/bayānī*) epistemology that relied on Arabic linguistics and legal theory (*fikh* *usūli*/*usūl al-fiqh*), and the other one is the Gnostic (*ирфаний*/*ирфан*ī) epistemology that draws on inspiration (*ilhām/ilhām*) and unveiling (*keşf/kashf*) coupled with a touch of theoretical/speculative (*nazari/nazarī*) dimension.\(^{22}\) *Bayānī* epistemology, furthermore, according to Öztürk, is comprised of, as traditionally classified, *riwāya* and *dirāya*-labeled *tafsīr* works\(^{23}\), and the main exegetical works that the Ottomans drew on in this class are the commentaries of al-Baghawī, al-Zamakhsharī, al-Rāzī, and al-Bayḍāwī.\(^{24}\) The author unfortunately can only provide *'Uyūn al-Tafāsīr* of Shihāb al-Dīn al-Sīwāsī (fl. 14th-15th centuries) who, the author adds, relied on the commentaries of Abū al-Layth al-Samarqandī, al-Baghawī, al-Zamakhsharī, and partly on al-Rāzī, al-Qurṭubī, and al-Bayḍāwī.\(^{25}\) It is noteworthy to mention, in this context, that Bahattin Dartma conducted an independent survey on al-Sīwāsī’s commentary and, in addition to the abovementioned sources for his work, also listed several linguists such as Khalīl b. Aḥmad (d. 785), Sībawayh (d. 796), al-Farrā’ (d. 822), al-Akhfash (d. 923), and several Companions and *tābi‘ūn* (the Successors)

\(^{21}\) Mustafa Öztürk, *Osmanlı tefsir mirası*, p. 18.
\(^{22}\) Ibid., p. 18-19
\(^{23}\) The author does problematize, in this context, how any single work can be classified either as *riwāya* or *dirāya* *tafsīr* s only.
\(^{24}\) Ibid., p. 18.
\(^{25}\) Ibid., p. 18.
figures as the sources for his exegetical explanations. Dartma also distinguished al-Zamakhsharī as the most significant source for al-Sīwāsī’s work.

Öztürk’s second category of *tafsīr* works produced by the Ottomans, that of Gnostic epistemology, drew on *Laṭāʾif al-īshārāt* of al-Qushayrī (d. 1073), *al-Taʾwilāt al-Najmiyya*, also known as *Bahṛ al-haqq āʾiq*, of Najm al-Dīn al-Dāya (d. 1256), *al-Taʾwilāt al-Kāshānīya* of ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī (d. 1355), and *Iʿjāz al-bayān*, on the first chapter of Qurʾān, of Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qonawī (d. 1274). The influences of theoretical Gnosticism (*nazari irfan*), on the other hand Öztürk continues, can largely be attributed to the teachings of Ibn al-ʿArabī, whose works were commentated on by the early founders of Ottoman *madrasa* institution. The effects of this theoretical epistemology can be gleaned in the *tafsīr* works such as *ʿAyn al-aʾyān*, commentary on the first chapter of the Qurʾān, of Molla Fanārī (d. 1430), *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān* of Qūṭ al-Dīn al-Iznikī (d. 1418) and *Rūḥ al-bayān* of İsmāʿīl Haqqī al-Bursawī/Ismail Hakkı Bursevi (d. 1725). Öztürk also suggested that syncretism was an essential characteristic of Ottoman *tafsīr* tradition. He presents Molla Fanārī’s *ʿAyn al-aʾyān* as the earliest example of works that are imbued with syncretism. Fanārī, Öztürk asserts, syncretized revelatory, rational, and Gnostic epistemology in his Quranic commentary. He adopted the same methodology of syncretism in his *Taʿlīqa ʿalā awāʾil al-Kashshāf*.

It is extremely challenging to extract an analytical model from these modern surveys. There are several more studies that have been produced by modern Turkish scholarship on the topic, but they collectively do not offer anything beyond what the aforementioned studies have

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27 Dartma, *İlk Osmanlı müfessirlerinden*, p. 57.  
28 M. Öztürk, *Osmanlı tefsir mirası*, p. 25.  
29 Ibid., p. 25.  
propounded. Before proceeding further on other modern secondary surveys on Ottoman *tafsīr* heritage, an assessment of the preceding is in order.

The modern research on Ottoman exegetical heritage is barely in its infancy. We do not even possess a complete bio-bibliographical record of this heritage. Some bibliographical surveys, such as that of Ziya Demir and M. Abay are noteworthy; however, further research is much needed. Furthermore, the known works of Ottoman exegetical heritage are hardly studied analytically and critically. Two monographs, one on Ebussuud’s commentary and the other on Molla Gürâni’s, are dated, descriptive, and significantly lack in analytical and critical approach. There are several MA and PhD studies on some other commentaries or parts of those commentaries, but they barely go beyond describing the works themselves. Most of these surveys are conducted in Turkish, and perhaps a few in Arabic, and are teemed with repetitive and descriptive remarks that symbolize a romanticizing mentality.31

The first fallacy that the modern scholarship committed was to confine the exegetical endeavors of Ottomans to *madrasa* curriculum. Almost all of these surveys focus on institutionalized *tafsīr* that was the realm of *madrasa*. However, what has primarily been overlooked is the fact that institutionalized *tafsīr* had to observe practical limits, and the encyclopedic *tafsīrs*, which overwhelmingly amounted to a high number of volumes in size, cannot practically be incorporated into a teaching curriculum. Furthermore, it cannot have meant that the students were banned from individually resorting to books outside the curriculum, and they may have very well exposed themselves to a variety of other works. We do actually possess some records of such instances where the teaching and learning also continued outside the *madrasa* curriculum. Kāṭib Chalabî/Katib Çelebi (also known Ḥājjī Khalîfâ/Hacî Halife) tells us

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31 For a list of these surveys, see, Mustafa Öztürk, *Osmanlı tefsir mirası*, p. 8-12; Sakîp Yıldız’ PhD dissertation “L’Exégète ture İsmâ’il Hakki Burûsawî, sa vie, ses oeuvres et la méthode dans son Tafsîr Rûh al-Bayân” (Paris, Sorbonne University, 1972) was unavailable to us during this research.
that he attended the lessons of Lâme Muṣṭafâ Efendi who taught the commentary of al-Bayḍāwī not in a madrasa setting, but in a private one. Chalabî also tells us that he had several students to whom he taught some disciplines. We do not know him as a madrasa teacher, and his wording in his autobiography indicates that he conducted his lessons at his private quarters. 32 Ğâshkûprîzâda, in his autobiography, tells us which books he studied with whom. An interesting feature of his account is the fact that he only mentions the names of individual scholars through whom he acquired his knowledge. Some of these figures are his immediate relatives and, most likely, it was not a madrasa setting where his learning experience materialized with those teachers. 33 Ebussuud Efendi, as will be shown in his biographical account, studied some books with his father, and reasonably, it was not a madrasa setting where Ebussuud studied with his father. The 17th-18th century shaykh al-Islām/şehyülislâm Fayḑ Âllâh/Feyzullah Efendi (d. 1703) also tells us in his autobiography about the disciplines he studied with his father and maternal uncle, and it is not likely that he studied those disciplines with his immediate relatives in a madrasa setting. 34

Furthermore, institutionalized curricula have to be limited to only a few numbers of works that are expected to fulfill the requirement of a textbook. For Ottoman madrasas the textbook material that was chosen for the discipline of tafsîr was also limited in number due to practical reasons. These textbooks were primarily, but not limited to, the commentaries of al-Zamakhsharî and al-Bayḍâwî. Even though al-Kawâkib al-sab’a of the 18th century, one of the earliest semi-documentary source for the Ottoman madrasa curriculum, mentions that in Istanbul

it was mostly the commentary of al-Baydawī that was in high demand within the madrasa setting, it also enunciates that the students were exposed to three levels of tafsīr works: beginner (wajīz/iqtisār), intermediate (wasīṭ), and advanced/encyclopedic (basīṭ).35 We may not yet have any specific information what books these levels of studying tafsīr comprised, but we can safely presume that the students were exposed to a variety of tafsīr works in addition to a given textbook that they may have been assigned during their studies in madrasas. In order to have a better picture about what the curriculum of tafsīr consisted of, we here present some of the literary and documentary evidence which somehow clarify the topic further.

According to al-Toqādī (d. 1689), who composed a theoretical work for an ideal madrasa curriculum, the commentaries of Ḥusayn al-Wā‘izī al-Kāshīfī (d. 1505), whose commentary al-Mawāhib al-‘aliyya was also translated into Ottoman Turkish by some six translators36 and Madārik [al-Tanzīl], the Quranic commentary of al-Nasafī, were also among the tafsīr works that the author urged the students of the madrasa to seek and study. As will soon be mentioned, Ṭashkuprızāda, during his student years, studied al-Kashshāf on al-Naba‘, chapter 78 of the Qur‘ān, and, during his teaching years, taught “parts” of al-Baydawī’s commentary. According to Ismā‘īl Ḥaqqī Bursawī’s autobiography, the celebrated 18th century Quranic commentator, he studied one third of al-Baydawī’s commentary in addition to al-Kāshīfī’s incomplete commentary Jawāhir al-tafsīr.37 Abdullāh al-Akhīsqawī/Ahıska‘ī (d. 1803) recounts in his autobiography that he studied Tafsīr al-Jalālayn, and taught the Quranic commentary of al-Baydawī.38

35 Cevat İzgi, Osmanlı medreselerinde ilim, 2 volumes, (İstanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 1997), v. 1, p. 74.
37 İzgi, Osmanlı medreselerinde ilim, p. 102-103.
38 Ibid., p. 103-104.
Madrasa curriculum was only limited to madrasa-style works and parts of tafsīrs that are much more voluminous in size, and it aimed to expose the students to the genre of tafsīr. With these works, the students would be able to expand on various other works in the genre. This is explicitly stated in another theoretical madrasa curriculum work attributed to Nabī Efendizāde (d. 1786) who, in his versed composition, addressed his student readership as follows: “rely and acknowledge Qāḍī Bayḍāwī and al-Kashṣāf; [for] if you understand them, all other commentaries will [easily] be acquired.”

Madrasa curriculum included and was chosen from among the works that were suitable for the students who, in their early madrasa years, had studied propaedeutic disciplines encompassing philological tools, logical instruments, and rhetorical intricacies, all of which, as it were, equipped them with the necessary tools that facilitated for them the handling of difficult-to-read texts, at the top of which came the commentaries of the likes of al-Zamakhsharī and al-Bayḍāwī. These two are Quranic commentaries that address a scholarly audience. They are not written in an easy-to-read prosaic manner. The innumerous glosses that have been written on these commentaries bear witness to their difficulties. Therefore, the primary objective of choosing these two commentaries for the curriculum must have been the practical reasoning that if one masters the handling of these two tafsīrs, most of the other tafsīrs would be considered a task less challenging. And for this reason as well, the madrasa curriculum cannot provide us a comprehensive framework for the tafsīr sources that were of influence on the Ottoman exegetical endeavors. The sources are to be looked for in the individual tafsīr works, one of which, the tafsīr of Ebussuud, will be dealt with in detail in the next chapter. A PhD study conducted on

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39 İzgi, Osmanlı medreselerinde ilim, p. 96.
40 Though some of the glosses written on al-Kashṣāf may have been instigated by the urge to cleanse it of Mu’tazilite-like theology, this impetus can only go to a certain limit and the difficulty factor is too imprinted in it to overlook.
Ashrafzāda ‘Izz al-Dīn/Esrefzade Izzetīn’s Anīs al-jinān/Enisü’l-cinān revealed that there were at least twenty tafsīr and/or tafsīr-related sources on which it drew. Molla Gürani’s tafsīr also included a much varied number of sources. Our own research on the tafsīr of Ebusud Efendi that will be presented in the next chapter also revealed that though he was believed to have relied on the commentaries of al-Zamakhsharī, al-Baydāwī, and al-Rāzī, his sources comprise a much larger and varied number of works. These findings clearly indicate that though al-Zamakhsharī’s and al-Baydāwī’s Quranic commentaries were the main textbooks for the discipline of tafsīr in Ottoman madrasas, they were not the only sources for a given Ottoman exegetical composition.

Another cliché that has often been repeated on Ottoman exegetical tradition is that it brought nothing new into the genre, and merely preserved and replicated what had been covered in previous tafsīr works. Again, it needs to be reiterated that, to our knowledge and assessment, no analytical and critical study on any tafsīr work written in the Ottoman realm has been achieved. In fact, this discourse is probably one of the very reasons for which modern researchers have been discouraged from studying Ottoman Quranic commentary heritage.

Before offering our own assessment on these clichés, we first need to establish the historical background of the socio-political and cultural setting of the first few centuries of the Ottoman dynasty, namely the formative period of the dynasty which spanned the entire 14th century, interrupted by the defeat dealt to Bayezid I (r. 1389-1402) by Timur/Tamerlane in 1402, and which firmly established itself as an empire by the conquest of Constantinople at the hands of Mehmmed II in 1453.

Muslim scholarship prior to the Ottomans had thrived under several different dynasties through the institution of patronage which provided the underpinning requirement of scholarly endeavors in any given field. Ottomans claimed to be the heir to previous Muslim history not
only in dynastic terms, but scholarly and cultural terms as well. However, they first needed to establish and consolidate their dynastic power, and, at the same time, prepare the ground for the purpose of appropriating the Islamic scholarly and cultural heritage. The period up to the conquest of Istanbul in 1453 can therefore be viewed as the transition period. This period required the Ottomans to breed a generation of scholars educated in the well-established centers of Muslim education in the eastern/Persian and central/Arabic lands. These scholars that travelled to other Muslim educational centers, and others that were lured and recruited through imperial patronage into Ottoman lands and Ottoman learning institutions, were invested with the duty of transferring the cultural and scholarly heritage of the Muslim world into Ottoman lands and, at the same time, they staffed the newly established education centers in various parts of the Ottoman realm. The Saljūqid/Selçuklu dynasty of Anatolia had barely been able to consolidate its power between the 12th and 13th centuries and failed to sustain its hold on power following their defeat to the Mongols at Kösedag/Sivas in 1243.

The Anatolian lands, at the northwestern borders of which the fledgling Ottoman dynasty was flourishing around the first half of the 14th century, were occupied by the small and regional principalities that were the remnants of moribund Saljūkid dynasty, and the safe haven for the constant flow of immigrants that were on the run from the unending Mongol expansion. People dwelling in these Anatolian lands were overwhelmingly nomadic tribes with an oral culture. There was no significant centre of learning in these lands prior to the 15th century. 1331 is the widely accepted date when the first Ottoman madrasa was founded in Iznik by the second sultan Orhān (r. 1324/26-1362). As the conquests of new major settlement centers were achieved, the conquering sultans marked their imprint on these new cities by founding newer centers of learning, namely the madrasas. Bursa was the first capital city for the Ottomans and almost all
sultans vied to leave their mark in that city by founding their own *madrasas*. Orhān, Murād I (r. 1362-1389), Bāyezīd I (r. 1389-1402), and Meḥmed I (r. 1412-1421) all founded *madrasas* in Bursa.\(^{41}\)

According to Gelibolulu Muṣṭafâ ’Alî (d. 1600), the 16\(^{th}\) century chronicler, Bāyezīd I (r. 1389-1402) was probably the first sultan who attempted to regulate the organization of the early *madrasas*. He first staffed these *madrasas* with scholars who had acquired their educational career in the far centers of learning which were mainly in Persian/Central Asian and Arab lands of Syria and Egypt.\(^{42}\) The period from the beginning of the 14\(^{th}\) century up to the conquest of Istanbul was a period of formation, war, conquest, turmoil, interregnum and consolidation. It was only during the reign of Murād II (r. 1421-1444 and 1446-1451) that we begin to find accounts of scholarly figures pivoting to Ottoman lands where new educational grounds had begun taking roots.

Perhaps the earliest such account is found in the figure of Ibn al-Jazarī, Abū al-Khayr Muḥammad b. Muḥammad (d. 1429), one of the most celebrated scholars of Quranic reading and recitation during medieval times and whose authority and works are still widely recognized and circulated within the modern day Muslim educational centers. According to the author’s autobiographical account, he came and settled in Ottoman Bursa in 1383 with the inducement of Bāyezīd I.\(^{43}\) He began a teaching career in Quranic recitation in Bursa *madrasas*.\(^{44}\) He had been involved, back in Cairo, in a dispute with one Qutlubeg, probably the finance minister administering the financial management of religious foundations, was found guilty of

\(^{41}\) Cahîd Baltacı, *XV.-XVI. asırlarda Osmanlı Medreseleri: teşkilat-tarih*, (İstanbul: İrfan Matbaası, 1976), p. 15.
\(^{42}\) Ibid., p. 15.
\(^{44}\) DİA, s.v. “İbnü‘l-Cezerî”
malfeasance, his properties were confiscated, and thus he first left for Alexandria, then moved to Antioch, and then to Bursa. It is not improbable to presume that, after he had already established himself as a solid scholar and his fame had reached other Muslim realms, he was either invited by the sultan himself, as was intimated by the author himself in one of his autobiographical accounts, or he himself strongly believed that he would find protection and patronage in the Ottoman court. He would not have done it unless the Ottoman court had already been showing keenness and interest in drawing newer scholars into its realm.

Another such account is found in most of the biographical sources on Molla Yagān (d. 1473-74) and Molla Gürānī (d. 1488). Having met the latter on his way to pilgrimage in Cairo, the former, the second or the third shaykh al-Islām, urged him to return with him to Anatolia where he said he would introduce him to sultan Murād II. It is unclear if Molla Yagān was commissioned by the sultan himself to travel, with the ruse of pilgrimage, through the main learning centers of Syria and Egypt and lure the discontented ‘ulamā’, recruit and bring them back to the Ottoman lands where they could be promised protection and patronage, but the high probability cannot be overlooked. Other surveys on Murād II have demonstrated that he launched a systematic program of recruitment from around the known learning centers of Muslim world in his time. Several scholars are recorded to have come to Ottoman realm, either to settle or just for a short scholarly visit, during Murād II’s time. Some of these scholars mentioned in İnalcık’s entry on Murād II are Molla Gürānī, ’Alā al-Dīn al-Ţūsī, Sharaf al-Dīn al-Qirīmī, Saydī Aḥmad Qirīmī, ’Alā al-Dīn al-Samarqandī, Saydī ’Alī ’Arabī, and ’Ajam Sinān. İnalcık also noted that

47 DİA, s.v. “Murād II”.

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most of these scholars were the students of al-Jurjānī and al-Taftazānī, a side note that may have significant implications on what scholarly heritage was of influence on the Ottoman mindset.

Meḥmed II the Conqueror, Murād II’s son, was also very intimately associated with the educational and learning activities in his realm. He is the founder of the famous medāris-i saḥn, the famous eight madrasas built around the Fatih Mosque, and the promulgator of high learning. Feeling sorry for not having ’ulamā in his lands at the same level and rank as those in the Persian and Arab lands, he strove to attract and bring those scholars into his own realm.48

The celebrated mathematician and astronomer ’Alī Qushchī/Ali Kuşçu (d. 1474) was another scholar who, upon the death of his patron Ulugh Beg/Ulu Bey (d. 1449), found protection and patronage in the Aqqoyunlu court but was later lured into Ottoman court by Meḥmed II; he was also appointed as the mudarrris of astronomy and mathematics in Ayasofya/Hagia Sofia madrasa. He is also reported to have taken active part in the organization of Meḥmed II’s madrasas.49

Muṣannifak (d. 1470), who was born in Harāt or the region of Khorasān in Eastern Iran, first came into Anatolia in 1438 and found patronage at the Qaramānid court in Konya; later, probably after the Ottomans proved more able and promising for the future, he was recruited by Maḥmūd Pāsha, the grand vizier of Meḥmed II, and moved to the Ottoman court.50

Many students who studied in early Ottoman madrasas and the few madrasas that had been founded by the Saljūqids and several other principalities in Anatolia could only achieve

48 DİA, s.v. “Meḥmed II”
49 DİA, s.v. “Ali Kuşçu”
limited learning in these madrasas. Thus, they sought higher and more advanced learning in Syria, Egypt, and the Eastern lands.\textsuperscript{51}

Between the period spanning the early 14\textsuperscript{th} century to near the end of the 15\textsuperscript{th} century, Ottoman sultans engaged in an intensified activity of building educational centers and madrasas in various parts of their realm, and, at the same time during this period, seized every opportunity to transfer and establish Muslim scholarly heritage in their realm and consolidate it as an alternative Muslim learning center that was ready to compete with the learning centers of Persia, Central Asia, Syria, and Egypt.

Names of other notable scholars that came to the Ottoman realm during the 14\textsuperscript{th} and 15\textsuperscript{th} centuries from other centers of learning in the Muslim world abound.\textsuperscript{52} With this semi-systematic program of establishing newer and more advanced learning centers throughout the Ottoman lands, of transferring the Muslim scholarly heritage through the recruitment of ‘ulamā from the other Muslim educational centers, and staffing their madrasas with these notable figures, Ottomans were able to increase the level of learning in the own learning institutions. This gradually negated the need for the new generation of future scholars to travel outside the Ottoman realm for the purpose of acquiring higher and more advanced learning. Therefore, it is not surprising to find the likes of Kamālpashāzāda/Kemalpaşazade (d. 1534) and Ebussuud (d. 1574), inarguably the two most celebrated scholarly figures of the 16\textsuperscript{th} century, or even the entire Ottoman history for that matter, sufficing themselves with the study and learning in Ottoman learning centers. Examples of other scholarly figures who studied only in Ottoman madrasas from the beginning of 16\textsuperscript{th} century onward abound.\textsuperscript{53}

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., p. 54-55.
\textsuperscript{53} Atçıl, “The Formation”, p. 57.
By attracting the discontented and allegedly wronged scholars of other realms, the Ottomans did not only strive to vie with non-Ottoman learning centers of the Muslim world, but also aimed to consolidate their moral claims to the moral heirship of the Muslim world and at the same time undermine the moral legitimacy of rival dynasties from whose lands the new scholars were transferred into the Ottoman realm.

This brief and general account of what Ottomans tried to do, namely transferring the high-level scholars and scholarly heritage into their realm during the first few centuries of the formative period, was nothing new and other Muslim dynasties had followed a similar course of action.\(^{54}\)

With the preceding we can safely determine that the 14\(^{th}\) and 15\(^{th}\) centuries are to be considered the period during which the groundwork for the scholarly traditions needed to be laid down and established. For this reason, we have been practically unable to locate an independent and complete tafsīr work composed during the 14\(^{th}\) century. Only with the beginning of 15\(^{th}\) century are we able to encounter a number of independent and complete exegetical works that began to emerge in Ottoman setting. The relative inadequacy of learning, compared to that in other Muslim settings, did not allow the scholars of this time and realm to produce complete and independent works in the genre of tafsīr.

The transfer of Muslim scholarly heritage was undertaken with another endeavor that went hand in hand with the recruitment of 'ulamā. This endeavor was to transfer and transform the material to be used in the learning centers into a style that would facilitate its absorption by the students. In the field of tafsīr this was done through the activity of composing hāshiyās on two main Quranic commentaries, al-Kashshāf and Anwār al-Tanzīl, which were in wide circulation within all Muslim learning centers. The tradition of writing glosses on these two

\(^{54}\) Ibid., p. 39-41.
commentaries had already taken root within the Muslim scholarship prior to the rise of Ottomans. According to bibliographical surveys, it was al-Tabarsī (d. 1153) that first composed a gloss/ḥāshiya on al-Kashshāf.\textsuperscript{55} And, with the beginning of 13\textsuperscript{th} century, supercommentaries and other type of glosses on it began to proliferate around the Muslim world.\textsuperscript{56}

Thus we find in the Ottoman realm, in the field of Quranic commentaries, either complete ḥāshiya\textsubscript{as} on the commentary of al-Bayḍāwī, or partial ḥāshiya\textsubscript{as} on the commentary of al-Zamakhsharī. Demir, in his comprehensive bio-bibliographical survey of exegetical endeavors of the Ottomans, was able to ascertain six complete ḥāshiya\textsubscript{as} on Anwār al-Tanzīl. These are the ḥāshiya\textsubscript{as} of Ibn Tamjīd (d. 1451 or 1485 ?), Rūshanī Dada ′Umar/Rūşenī Dede ′Ömer (d. 1486 ?), Saʿdī Chalabī (d. 1538), Shaykhzāda Qojawī/Şeyhzâde (d. 1544), Molla ′Iwaḍ/İvaž (d. 1585), and Samsūnzâda (d. 1589).\textsuperscript{57} Demir’s list is limited to the end of 16\textsuperscript{th} century, and Abay’s survey, considered a supplement to Demir’s study, gives us the ḥāshiya of al-Qonawī (d. 1780) as well.\textsuperscript{58} Compared to the number of independent complete tafsīrs, close to twenty have been discovered so far, the number of complete ḥāshiya\textsubscript{as} is very little. What is surprising is that no complete ḥāshiya on the commentary of al-Zamakhsharī by any Ottoman author has been ascertained. Partial ḥāshiya\textsubscript{as} that have been composed by Ottoman scholars are numbered 22 in Demir’s survey, and a number of these ḥāshiya\textsubscript{as} are on the Quranic commentary of al-Zamakhsharī.\textsuperscript{59} Demir’s survey on the complete ḥāshiya\textsubscript{as} on the commentary of al-Bayḍāwī

\textsuperscript{55} al-Ḥabashi, Jāmiʿ al-shurūṭ wa-ḥawāshī, v. 3, p. 1454-55. There is no catalogue record of this work and it perhaps still awaits discovery.

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., esp. for the ḥāshiya\textsubscript{as} composed on al-Kashshāf of al-Zamakhsharī, p. 1455 and onward.

\textsuperscript{57} Demir, Osmanlı mufessirleri, pp. 321-346.

\textsuperscript{58} Abay, “Osmanlı döneminde tefsir hasiyeleri” p. 190.

\textsuperscript{59} Demir, Osmanlı mufessirleri, p. 347-446

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revealed that one of the main purposes of these compositions was to serve as a facilitating tool for the handling of the main text for the students of madrasa.⁶⁰

The preceding account should suffice to demonstrate that the number of independent and complete tafsīr works produced by Ottomans were more in number than the complete hāshiya produced by them, and it should also allow us to conclude, as was also determined by Abay, that the hāshiya-style composition was not as widespread as had been presumed.⁶¹ The fact that writing hāshiya, especially on parts of the commentaries of al-Zamakhsharī and al-Bayḍāwī, should not only indicate which parts of these commentaries were deemed significant enough to compose hāshiya on, but also should allow us to determine that these were propaedeutic compositions that aimed to accompany the curriculum textbooks for the purpose of facilitating the handling of these difficult texts. It will soon be seen, as in the autobiography of Ğāshkuprizāda, that the students must have studied in the genre of tafsīr a number of various tafsīr works, among which the most prominent ones were deemed to be the commentaries of al-Zamakhsharī and al-Bayḍāwī. Cevdet Bey, whose tafsırs and mufassirs/Tefsırlar ve müfessırlar is dealt with in more detail at the section devoted to Ottomans on the history and historiography of tafsīr, noted in his entry on Ibn Tamjid that he benefited greatly from the his hāshiya during his teaching years.⁶² Furthermore, the biographies and autobiographers of various authors indicate only these two tafsırs not for the intention of conveying that these texts were the only texts in the field of tafsīr that the scholars studied, but for another reason: if a scholar masters one of these two tafsırs, he will be considered qualified to handle any other text in the genre. The fact that most of these partial hāshiya were on al-Fātiha, the first chapter of Qur’ān, beginnings

⁶⁰ See Demir’s observations and conclusion at the end of each entry devoted to these complete hāshiya, pp. 324; 329; 334; 343; 345.
⁶² Cevdet Bey, Tefsir usûlü ve tarihi, p. 141-42.
of *al-Baqara*, the second chapter of Qur’ān, *al-’An’ām*, chapter 6, or the *cuz’ Naba’*, the last thirtieth of the Qur’ān, and also the fact that most of the composers of these ḥāṣhiyas were *madrasa* professors should only bolster our conclusion, and also the conclusion expressed by Abay, that they were helping tools for the students of *madrasa*.^{63}

Modern surveys conducted on the earliest translations into the Old Anatolian and Ottoman Turkish of Quranic commentaries written in Arabic, or the mostly interlinear translations of the entire Qur’ān or parts of it, led some modern scholars to propound theses about the sources and traditions that informed the Ottoman exegetical endeavors. If any attempt to translate the Quranic text can also be viewed as an interpretive endeavor, we must then briefly talk about pre-Ottoman Turkic undertakings on the translation and commentary-like translations of the Quranic text, and therefore lay the ground for the 14th-16th century translations and commentated translations produced in the Anatolian setting.

Based on at least six extant and different copies of Quranic translations into Old and distinct Turkic dialects produced between the 12th and 16th centuries, modern scholars identified a tradition that they labeled as “the Eastern Turkic tradition”.^{64} Eleazar Birnbaum determined that these translations are essentially of two types: Interlinear translations; and commentated translations which comprised commentary-like explanations and added stories pertinent to the translated portion of the Arabic text.^{65} These Turkic translations were modeled on the earlier Persian translations which, in turn, had drawn on an abridged version of the translation of al-Ṭabarī’s (d. 923) Quranic commentary into Persian by a translation committee commissioned on

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the order of Samanid ruler Manṣūr b Nūḥ (r. 961-976). Some modern studies on the extant copies of these translations asserted that they must have drawn on much earlier copies that have not survived, but no definite conclusion can be reached. All these researchers noted that though these translations were mostly based on earlier Persian translations of Arabic originals, direct translations of the Arabic text were not infrequent. It is therefore difficult to determine the degree of influence these earlier Persian translations had on the Turkic translations. Another question that has not been investigated in these studies is the possible influences, or the lack thereof, that the commentary of al-Ṭabarī might have had on these Turkic translations. If the Turkic translations were, according to those who predicated them on a non-extant 11th century Turkic translation, somehow based on earlier Persian translations, or, according to Togan, on the abridged Persian translation of al-Ṭabarī’s commentary during the 10th century, one cannot disregard the potential influences that the commentary of al-Ṭabarī might have had on them; however, no study has covered this aspect on the topic.

No record of newer Turkic translations of the Qur’ān or the commentary of the Qur’ān has been detected during the Saljūkid dynasty, and it seems that the Saljūkids of Anatolia continued the tradition of the Greater Saljūkid dynasty of Persian lands in preferring Arabic and Persian over their vernacular language as the language of arts and sciences. There were, however, a few translations that were limited to a various number of individual chapters of the Qur’ān, and the translations of entire Quranic commentaries into Old Anatolian Turkish would

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67 Togan dated them back to as early as the 10th century; Eckmann, and Abdülkadir İnan, in his Kur’ân-ı Kerim’in Türkçe tercemeleri üzerine bir inceleme, p. 3-5, dated them back to a non-extant original of 11th century.
69 For a number of such partial translations see, Hidayet Aydar, “Dini ilimler: Osmanlılarda tefsir çalısmaları” p. 547.
only emerge with the rise of Ottomans and/or during the interregnum, the brief period of Anatolian principalities.

The earliest such translation was probably that of the Quranic commentary attributed to Abū al-Layth al-Samarqandī (d. 983). There now circulates in bookstores and libraries a print version of a Quranic commentary titled *Bahār al-*'ulūm and ascribed to Abū al-Layth. However, some modern studies raised doubts about whether *Bahār al-*'ulūm did actually belong to Abū al-Layth or to another al-Samarqandī, 'Alā al-Dīn (d. 1456) who migrated to and settled in Anatolia during the 15th century where he composed an incomplete Quranic commentary up to chapter 57, or 58:5 of the Qur’ān.70 Our preliminary comparative study of *Bahār al-*'ulūm and one of the translations of Abū al-Layth’s commentary into Old Anatolian Turkish revealed that there are several differences between the two works. Ahmed-i Dā’ī (d. ca. 1421-27), one of the known translators of Abū al-Layth’s commentary, indicates that the latter’s commentary was titled *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-*'azīm wa kulamīh al-qadīm and not *Bahār al-*'ulūm.71 Dā’ī’s translation includes several insertions and variant traditions that are not found in *Bahār al-*'ulūm. For example, Dā’ī devotes three pages interpreting the *ta’wīdh* (*a’ūdh bi’llāh min al-shaytān al-rajīm*, a formulaic prayer intended to dispel the evils that may be engendered by Devil, evil spirits, etc.) which cannot be found in *Bahār al-*'ulūm.72 The earliest recorded ascription of *al-*'ulūm to Abū al-Layth is found in al-Dhahabī’s *al-Tafsīr wa al-mufassirūn*. And the introductory remarks of the author in *Bahār al-*'ulūm on the excellence of pursuing the science of Quranic commentary is not found in Dā’ī’s translation.73 Sakıp Yıldız noted that al-Dhahabī, the 20th century historian of Quranic commentaries, was probably confused about the two al-

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70 Sakıp Yıldız, *Fatih’in hocası*, p. 139.
71 MS Fatih 631, p. 2.
72 Ibid., p. 6-12.
Samarqandīs and wrongly attributed *Bahṛ al-ʿulūm* to Abū al-Layth.\(^{74}\) It appears from the information al-Dhahabī provides and the facsimile copy of the cover page of the manuscript that is printed within the print edition of *Bahṛ al-ʿulūm*, that al-Dhahabī relied solely on the information that the catalogers of al-Azhar Library printed on the cover page of the manuscript.\(^{75}\) Therefore, it is clear that the error created by the cataloguers of al-Azhar Library was replicated by al-Dhahabī. Al-Dāwūdī, the medieval historian/bio-bibliographer of the Quranic commentators, attributed a *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿazīm* in 4 volumes to Abū al-Layth.\(^{76}\) .Helper Khalīfa (Kātib Chalabī) also mentioned *Bahṛ al-ʿulūm* as the work of Ṭalāl al-Dīn al-Samarqandī.\(^{77}\) And lastly, the *Rūḥ al-bayān*, the multi-volume Quranic commentary of al-Bursawī, cited the two personalities and their tafsīr works separately.\(^{78}\) These discrepancies between the Quranic commentary attested today to belong to Abū al-Layth, and the old Anatolian Turkish translation of it authored by Aḥmed-i Dāʿī, are hard to overcome and further and more detailed study is needed.

This translation of Abū al-Layth’s commentary is reported to have been authored by three near contemporary early Ottoman scholars: Aḥmed-i Dāʿī (d. 1427?), Mūsā Iznikī (d. 1435 ?), and Ibn ʿArabshāh (d. 1450). No modern survey has been able to determine what the title of Ibn ʿArabshāh’s translation was, but most of the manuscript copies of Mūsā Iznikī’s translation were titled *Anfas al-jawāhir/Enfesüʾl-cevâhir*, along with a very few copies that bear the title of *Tercüme-i Ebīʾl-Leys es-Semerkandī/Tarjumat Abī al-Layth al-Samarqandī*. The recording of some of these copies as *Tercüme-i Ebīʾl-Leys* must have been the error of library catalogers. Ziya

\(^{74}\) Sakıp Yıldız, *Fatih’in hocası*, p. 139.


\(^{78}\) DİA, s.v. “Rūḥ al-bayān”.

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Demir was able to identify that the available copies of the translation of Abu al-Layth’s commentary were wrongly catalogued as the translations of Mūsā Iznikī, and also ascertained that what Iznikī translated was actually the *Lubāb al-ta’wil fī maʻānī al-Tanzīl*, the Quranic commentary of al-Khāzin al-Baghdādī (d. 1340), and was titled *Enfesü’l-cevāhir/Anfas al-jawāhir*. Demir also studied the copies attributed to Ibn ‘Arabshāh and determined that, despite small differences, they are largely similar to Ahmed-i Dā‘ī’s translation, which reinforces the high probability that the library cataloguers made a mistake with the name of the author. We do not have any information on who the dedicatee was of the translation attributed to Ibn ‘Arabshāh, but Susan Gunasti, in her recent survey on the topic, mentioned a more detailed study on him and determined that what was attributed to Ibn ‘Arabshāh was actually the authorship of Mūsā Iznikī.

Modern research on this topic is mired in ambiguities and more detailed studies are needed. While it is not so important, for the purpose of our study, to determine the authorship of these translations, we would like to point out that it is not at all improbable for more than one author to undertake the translation of Abū al-Layth’s commentary. The era, early 15th century, during which these translations were produced was a period of chaos and turmoil in Anatolia where several principalities vied for supremacy. Patronage of religious scholars and scholarly heritage was one of the main propagandistic tools that the heads of these principalities could appropriate in order to bolster support and prestige among their followers. Similarly, scholars needed to produce compositions in order to receive patronage.

80 Ibid., 476.
81 Susan Gunasti, “Political Patronage and the Writing of Qur’ān Commentaries Among the Ottoman Turks” *Journal of Islamic Studies* (2013), 1-23, p. 5.
A waqf/endowment seal dated 1453 on *Enfesü’l cevâhir* is preserved in the Umur Paşa (d. 1461) Library in Bursa.\(^82\) Umur Bey was a military commander during Meḥmed I’s reign and one of the viziers during Murād II’s reign. Interestingly enough, the translation of Aḥmed-i Dâ’î’s that we have studied indicated that it was dedicated to Umur Pashā.\(^83\) It is not unlikely that Umur Pashā, who was a military commander during Meḥmed I’s reign and a vizier during Murād II’s reign, commissioned Mūsā Iznikī and Aḥmed-i Dâ’î for the translation of two different Quranic commentaries, the former with the translation of al-Khāzin’s Quranic commentary, and the latter with the translation of Abū al-Layth’s Quranic commentary.

Another commentary-like translation of the Qur’ān written in medieval Anatolian Turkish was titled *Cevâhirü’l-ı-şadāf Jawâhir al-aşdāf*. The author of this translation is unknown, but the modern studies were able to determine the date of its composition as early as the 15\(^{th}\) century, roughly during and/or around the same time of interregnum (1402-1412).\(^84\) Topaloğlu inferred from the introduction of this translation that it was dedicated to prince Isfendiyâr of Candaroğullari/Banû (the sons of) Jandār Principality (fl. ca. 1291-1461), or his son Ibrâhîm who would succeed his father upon his death. No study has been able to determine the provenance of *Cevâhirü’l-ı-şadāf*, but Topaloğlu argued, based on the innumerous manuscript copies and the fact that it was much shorter and more concise than the translation of Abū al-Layth’s commentary, that it was more widely used and in circulation than the latter.\(^85\)

Based on the preceding accounts we cannot exclude the possibility that a single work could have been commissioned for translation to various authors by different princes who, at the time, were vying for supremacy in Anatolian lands and projecting themselves not only as

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82 DİA, s.v. “Umur Bey Kütüphanesi”  
83 MS Fatih 631, p. 6, lines 206-217  
85 Ibid., p. 64.
protectors of inhabitants in their lands, but also as the promulgators and preservers of scholarly religious heritage to their subject people as well as the subject people of other principalities. Or different princes commissioned different authors to have different *tafsir* works, or other literary works, translated. A recent study demonstrated, in the example of Muşannifak, that some authors would compose a work and dedicate it to their patron with whom they sought protection and refuge, but upon the failure of that patron prince, the author would then seek the patronage of another prince, rewrite his work, and rededicate it to his new patron. Muşannifak first composed his commentary on the introductory verses of the *Mathnawī* of Rumi, and dedicated it to prince Ibrāhīm of the Qaramānid principality. When Meḥmed II conquered the Qaramānid lands, Muşannifak moved to Ottoman court, composed a *tafsir* work and not only did he dedicate it to Meḥmed II, his new patron, but he went on a tirade against the Qaramānids whose lands he now viewed as “a heap of ruins and a perch for owls”.  

Based on the translations of Abū al-Layth’s commentary, Abdülkadir İnan asserted that the translation and commentary of Qur’ān in Anatolia was imported from Central Asia. We are not certain what this tradition can more concisely be termed—Central Asian tradition? Eastern tradition? Unfortunately, no further elaboration on this tradition is offered by İnan.

Susan Gunasti, in a recent article on the writing of Qur’ān commentaries among the Ottoman Turks, argued that *tafsir* endeavors of the Ottomans were dominated during at least the 15th century by a “Samaqandī tradition”, but in later centuries these endeavors were overtaken by the “madrasa exegetical tradition” which initially favoured the al-Zamakhsharī tradition but later quickly gave way to al-Bayḍāwī tradition. It is not clear, however, what defines the “Samarqandī tradition”, the exegete Abū al-Layth or the geographical region? She attempted to

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86 Başkan, “Siyasi Mekan Değişikliğinin” p. 119-121
87 İnan, *Kur’ân-ı Kerîm’în Türkçe tercemeleri*, p. 16
support her assertion, albeit rather anachronistically, by presenting the example of ‛Alī Qushchī (d. 1474) who was also educated in Samarqand and then migrated to Ottoman realm, and even contributed to the organization of Meḥmed II’s newly established madrasas. She also presented the example of ‛Alā al-Dīn al-Samarqandī (d. 1456), another Samarqandī exegete who migrated to and settled into Anatolia and composed a near-complete tafsīr of the Qur’an. This sort of nascent scholarly interest in the west on the Ottoman tafsīr scholarship is much welcome, however, we need to note our own reservations about Gunasti’s findings. First of all, ‛Alī Qushchī was an astronomer and a mathematician, and the translations of Abū al-Layth’s commentary had already taken place in Anatolia at least half a century before Qushchī’s arrival there. Secondly, though Qushchī was born, raised, and educated in Samarqand, one of his most famous teachers was one Kāzīzāde-i Rūmī/Qādīzāda of al-Rūm (d. 1440?) who had been educated in Anatolia and travelled to the region of Samarqand and studied there with al-Jurjānī. We should seriously question if Qushchī was of some influence on Ottoman mindset, or he himself had already been influenced by an Ottoman mindset. Upon the death of Ulugh Beg, Qushchī’s patron in Samarqand, in 1449, Qushchī first found patronage with Abū Sa‘īd, the Timurid sultan, and then with Uzun Ḥasan, the Aqqoyunlu ruler, and moved to Aqqoyunlu court in Tabrīz. In the wake of his mission as an emissary of Uzun Ḥasan to the court of Meḥmed II, Qushchī decided to migrate to Istanbul and settled there in 1472. And it is not difficult to infer that Qushchī was lured into Ottoman realm by the invitation of Meḥmed II. Moreover, biographical dictionaries and some chronicles indicate that Qushchī was one of the members of the commission that was invested with organizing the curriculum of Meḥmed II’s newly founded

89 Gunasti, “Political Patronage”, p. 3-4.
90 The Anatolina lands were then referred to as the land of the Rūm/the Romans
91 DIA, s.v. “Kadızade-i Rumi”
madrasas in Istanbul, but the traces of “Samarqandī exegetical tradition” are nowhere to be found in that curriculum. Furthermore, nowhere in the biographical accounts of any Ottoman scholar or in a chronicle can we find that an exegesis written in the “Samarqandi tradition” was a sought after work.

Secondly, it is true that Samarqand and surrounding regions of Eastern Iran and Central Asia were a place of attraction for those in Anatolia who wanted a more advanced study opportunity, especially before the turn of 16th century. But as was shown earlier, Syria and Egypt were no less attractive to them and in fact some have travelled to both regions.

It is also true that there was another al-Samarqandī, ʿAlā al-Dīn ʿAlī b. Yaḥyā, (d. 1456) who migrated and settled in Anatolia and composed a near complete tafsīr there. But there were also Hacī Paṣa al-Aydīnī (d. 1424) of western Anatolia, Molla Gūrānī (d. 1488) of north western ʿIrāq, Husām al-Dīn al-Bidlīsī (d. 1494) of south eastern Anatolia, and Niʿmat Allāh al-Nakhchuwānī (d. 1514 ?) of Azarbajān who all composed complete Quranic commentaries in Anatolia during the same period. Therefore we cannot conceive how the early Ottoman tafsīr endeavors were informed by a rather vague “Samarqandī Tradition”.

The strong desire to have al-Samarqandī’s commentary translated, though the translation activities were not limited exclusively to this particular commentary, can more reasonably be explained with political exigencies than what it may have to do with the genre of tafsīr proper. We do not yet possess any satisfactorily detailed study about the content of these translations, that of Abū al-Layth’s or the Cevâhirü’l-esdâf of an unknown author, but we can with some certainty determine that these attempts were politically driven during a time period when several princes vied for dominance. Abū al-Layth was probably the best figure for any prince whose support base mostly identified with a lineage and a heritage that descended from a region,
namely Central Asia, to which the majority of Anatolian settlers originally belonged. On the other hand, the institution of political patronage was a phenomenon that permeated all sorts of literary compositions. This is how scholars secured protection and refuge with the sultans and this is how sultans established their moral legitimacy. In order to assess if a given composition, Quranic commentary or otherwise, belonged to a particular tradition, we need to establish what that tradition involves and support such claims with more internal evidence from within these compositions.

Another misconception in the modern Turkish scholarship of the Ottoman *tafsir* tradition was its reliance on dated and descriptive early monographs on two important Ottoman exegetes. Probably the earliest monograph on an Ottoman *tafsir* work was the study of Abdullah Aydemir on Ebussuud and his Quranic commentary that was published in 1968.93 Aydemir’s survey led him to conclude that al-Zamakhsharī, al-Bayḍāwī, and al-Rāzī were Ebussuud’s sources. However, as will shortly be seen, our own research on the commentary of Ebussuud reveals a much bigger and varied repertoire of sources. Twenty years later, in 1988, Sakıp Yıldız composed his monograph on another Ottoman Qur’ān commentator, Molla Gūrānī and his commentary *Ghāyat al-amānī*, and his survey led him to determine the sources al-Gūrānī used as al-Zamakhsharī, al-Rāzī, al-Bayḍāwī, and, infrequently, al-Ṭabarī, al-Nasafī (d. 1310), al-Wāḥidī, al-Qushayrī, along with several *hāshiya* /glosses on *al-Kashshāf*.94 Most of the secondary literature and graduate surveys written on the sources of Ottoman *tafsir* tradition rely on these two monographs, and, based on these two monographs, most of these researchers reach the inconceivable and incomplete thesis that al-Zamakhsharī, al-Bayḍāwī, and al-Rāzī were the “only” sources of Ottoman exegetical endeavors. New studies have been rather slowly

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94 Yıldız, *Fatih’in hocası*, p. 151-164.
identifying newer sources, but they also inconceivably keep repeating the notion that a limited number of madrasa textbooks were the underpinning sources of the Ottoman exegetical endeavors.

It seems to be unanimously accepted that the commentaries of al-Zamakhsharī and al-Baydāwī were, if not the only and exclusively used ones as will be seen shortly, certainly the primary and invariable textbooks for the discipline of tafsīr in the advanced Ottoman madrasa curriculum. Ironically, however, this fact engendered a misconception that led many a modern researcher astray and caused them to believe that these two commentaries were the “only” sources for all the Ottoman tafsīr writing of successive generations. But it ought to not necessarily mean that they were the only and exclusive sources for tafsīr writing for the Ottomans. It then becomes imperative that the curriculum of Ottoman madrasa is studied in a little more detail, and, on the other hand, it is equally necessary to identify the settings and media through which the commentary of Qur'ān was engaged in the Ottoman realm.
2.3. *Tafsīr outside the madrasa*

The *madrasa* was not the only setting for *tafsīr* endeavors and *tafsīr* was not the privileged realm of *madrasa* institution. In addition to the *madrasa* setting, there were also mosques and sufī lodges where a number of scholars exercised their exegetical skills and provided opportunities for a public who frequented these places to connect with scripture and scriptural interpretation. Some of these exegetical undertakings have materialized into writing and M. Öztürk categorized them as *majālis/mecālis*-type compositions.\(^95\)

One of the leading figures within Ottoman *tafsīr* tradition whose entire Quranic commentary was the subject of public sermons and/or the product of public preaching was İsmā’īl Ḥaqqī Bursawī (d. 1725). Most of the modern surveys seem to miss the fact that Bursawī’s commentary has two separate exordiums and it should be studied in two distinct parts. The first is the comparatively lengthy introduction at the very beginning of the work; the other is at the beginning of his commentary on Qur’ān 2:267. The reason is that the author had already started composing his *tafsīr* when he had been living in the Balkans and had reached Q. 4:78 when he became interrupted due to ministerial duties. He later became the chief preacher of Bursa mosque and started conducting his sermons in the form of Quranic commentary, most likely independent and separately of what he had previously written up to 4:78. When he reached Q. 2:267 in his sermons, he decided to put them in writing and add to it an abridged and/or revised version of what he had written up to 2:267.\(^96\) He himself states in his short second introduction in Arabic:

“since I had been burdened with the duty of preaching and counseling [the public] and become more of a public preacher (*iḥtamamtu fī bāb al-mawʾīzah*) I had been collecting

\(^{95}\) Öztürk, *Osmanlı tefsir mirası*, p. 35.

\(^{96}\) DİA, s.v. “Rûhu’l-Beyān”
from among various tafsir works what would facilitate the obscurities and untie the knots of Quranic verses for my audience with the aim of speaking in a way that my listeners would understand and, at the same time, would not get bored.”

He had also been adding, he continued, what he saw fit for the purpose of “exhortation and warning” (al-targhib wa al-tarhib) until he reached Q. 2:267. He follows: “Therefore I made this verse [2:267] a new and separate beginning, so that what I will be writing from now onward will be separately added to what I had written before”.

We may not be able to determine whether he resumed writing his tafsir onward from 2:267 and read it out to his audience, or he had someone else, a student of his perhaps, copy his oral sermons and reviewed it himself at a later date; however, we can with some certainty conclude that it was addressed to a mostly non-educated Ottoman public.

Another such exegete, our early biographical and modern sources note, was Muḥy al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Niksārī (d. 1495). Ṭashqoprizāda mentioned him as an expert and adept mufassir who was gainfully employed at the Ayasofya/Hagia Sofia and Fatih mosques as a preacher on Fridays. He apparently engaged in the tafsir of Qur’an during his sermons, which Sultan Bāyezīd himself attended and was impressed by, and completed the tafsir of the entire Qur’ān. We do not know if he had a particular tafsir work of his or someone else’s that he covered during his sermons. M. Öztürk and Hasan Gökbulut claimed that he taught and preached the commentary of al-Bayḍāwī; however we have been unable to corroborate this data in the sources on which they claimed to have drawn.

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97 İslâmî Haqqî al-Bursawî, Rûh al-bayân, 10 vols. (Dar Sa’ådat [Istanbul], Ma’b’aa ’Uthmâniyya, 1330/1912), v. 1, p. 429.
98 Ṭashkoprizâda, al-Shaqâ ‘iq, p. 166
99 Öztürk, Osmanlı tefsir mirası, p. 34; DIA, s.v. “Niksârî”; The earliest primary source in this context is al-Shaqâ ‘iq and it does not explicitly state that it was the commentary of al-Bayḍâwî that al-Niksârî preached in his sermons. Ṭashkoprizâda indicates, however, that the author recorded excellent remarks on the gloss of al-Qâdi’î’s [al-
Similarly, M. Abay noted that Eşrefzade/Ashrafzādan Aḥmad ʿIzz al-Dīn (d. 1740) lectured his Quranic commentary Anīs al-jīnān/Enīsü’l-cīnān at Ulucami (Bursa) mosque, Emir Sultan mosque, as well as during his preaching at the Ashrafzāda sufi lodge. Abay acquired this information from the introductory remarks of Najīb al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Qādir/Necibüddin Abdülkadir (d. 1788), Ashrafzāda’s son and the author of Zubdat al-bayān fī tafsīr al-Qurʾān/Zübdetü’l-beyān fī tefsīri’l-Qurʾān, another Quranic commentary that is considered by modern researchers to be the abridgement (mukhtāsar) of Anīs al-jīnān.

Another such composition is the collected sermons of ‘Azīz Maḥmūd Hūdāyī/’Azīz Maḥmūd Hüdāyī (d. 1628). He is the famous founder of Jalwatī Sufi order and is said to have conducted tafsīr lessons on selected Quranic verses, notes of which were later compiled, probably by his disciples, in the order of Quranic chapters into a single volume. The source of this information was unavailable to us, but Abay, drawing on the same source as Öztürk’s, described this work as being only the commentary on al-Fātiha, chapter 1 of the Qurʾān, and al-Ikhlāṣ, chapter 112 of the Qurʾān, and provided the location of this work in MS copy in Beşir Ağa 1291.

These instances indicate that tafsīr endeavors of the Ottomans were not limited to madrasa setting and constitute examples for a widespread phenomenon within the Ottoman realm that can be depicted as the vernacularization of tafsīr. A hermeneutic approach of these figures and the audience they addressed are worthwhile aspects of comparative research between the works that were used in madrasa setting and the works that were used in a public setting.

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100 Abay, “Osmanlı döneminde”, p. 250.
101 A MS copy of this work is available at Bursa Eski Eserler Ktp. Genel 994.
102 See, DİA, s.v. “İzzettin Efendi, Eşrefzade”
103 Öztürk, Osmanlı tefsir mirası, p. 35.
2.4. *Tafsīr in madrasa setting*

Most of the modern surveys that deal with the discipline of *tafsīr* in Ottoman *madrasas* collect their information from secondary sources which, in turn, ultimately rely on what must be considered a fairly dated monograph of İsmail Hakkı Uzunçaşılı’s *Osmanlı devletinde ilmiye teşkilatı*. Uzunçaşılı acquired his information through the chronicles of Gelibolu Muştafa ’Alî (d. 1600) who claimed to have predicated his accounts on a law book (*kânûnname*) issued by sultan Meḥmed II himself.¹⁰⁵ Gelibolu ’Alî recounts how this law book organized the newly established *madrasas* and integrated the old system into ranks on top of which were placed the *Dāhil ellili medāris*. These *madrasas* were the institutions whose buildings and foundations were commissioned by the sultans and their immediate family members. Within these *madrasas*, along with various other subjects, the Quranic commentaries of al-Zamakhsharî and al-Bayḍawî were to be taught.¹⁰⁶ Even though Gelibolu ’Alî also asserts that the organization of *madrasa* as outlined in the said law book had been partly in practice (*ertîb-i sâbi̇k*) since the time of Bâyezîd I (r. 1389-1402), we have no way of ascertaining what was and/or was not changed in Meḥmed II’s reign, nor can we assess how the discipline of *tafsīr* in previous *madrasas* was organized.¹⁰⁷

The original copy of this law book has not survived, and the earliest extant copy attested to have reproduced it, Uzunçaşılı holds, dates back to the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. The reproduced copy of this law book, catalogued in Halis Efendi 206 and İstanbul Üniversitesi Ktp. TY 3239, seeks to rehabilitate the irregularities in the practice of previously set regulations and reinforces that before the graduates became potential appointees in various posts “the distinguished teachers (*şüyûh-i müderrisîn*) [must] teach the acknowledged books (*kutub-i mu’teberât*) of *şerîh-i ‘Aḍîd*.

¹⁰⁷ ’Alî, *Kûnh*, p. 73.
al-Hidāye, and al-Keshshāf and other books of their choosing”.

The said law book was also reproduced in Telḥīsū’l-beyān fī ḵavānīn-i Āl-i ’Osmān/Taḵhīs al-bayān fī qawānīn Āl ’Uṯmān of the 17th century encyclopedist Hezarfen Hüseyin Efendi (d. 1691-92). Translations of Telḥīsū’l-beyān into Italian, French, and German towards the end of 17th century have been ascertained in European libraries.

We have neither documentary evidence nor an early literary source/chronicle to tell us who organized the curriculum. Was it the sultan himself, a particular official, a scholar, or a commission that comprised various figures? Surprisingly, one fairly late Ottoman author, about whom very little is known, Hüseyin Ayvansarāyi/Aywansarāyi (d. 1781) asserted that it was a commission of ‘ulamā comprised of Molla Hüsrev/Khusraw (d. 1480), ’Alī Kuşçu/Qushchī (d. 1474), and sultan Meḥmed II’s premier, Şadr-i a’zam (Sadrazam)/al-Şadr al-a’zam. Maḥmūd Paşa.

When citing this information, Unan does not mention anything other than Aywansarāyi’s Ḥadīqat al-jawāmī’/Ḥadīkatū’l-cevāmī’, a work he composed on the mosques of Istanbul during his time, and the information he conveys on madrasas of Meḥmed II must be in the section where he talks about the Fatih (Meḥmed II) mosque. We do not know if Aywansarāyi drew on a waqf document for the information he provides, but Unan’s wording insinuates it to be a mere assertion, and thus, he rejects it to reflect the reality.

To sum up, Gelibolulu, in his chronicles, mentions that al-Kashshāf of al-Zamakhsharī and Anwār al-Tanzīl of al-Bayราวī were the textbooks for the discipline of tafsīr within the high level madrasas of Meḥmed II’s time, but the law book of early 16th century mentions that it was

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109 DİA, s. v. “Hüseyin Efendi, Hezarfen”.
111 This original source was not available to us during this research.
It would have considerable significance for the potential shifting inclinations in Ottoman madrasa mindset if we were able to determine whether the study of al-Kashshāf and Anwār al-Tanzīl was conducted in tandem, or there was a shift of preference from the former to the latter; and if there was, when and/or how? But the evidence we so far have does not allow us to make any sort of such assessments. If we consider the authenticity of the law book which dates back to the beginning of 16th century to be true we can fairly safely assume that al-Kashshāf was, if not the only, at least the ultimate Quranic commentary that a madrasa graduate was supposed to have studied and mastered. It does not necessarily mean that a student cannot have read or been exposed to other tafsīr works prior to that stage in their madrasa career, because neither Gelibolulu 'Alī nor the law book reflect the real curriculum in its entirety in a systematic manner. Furthermore, we cannot determine what “the other books of their choosing (ihtiyār itdüklerü kitāblar)”, in Gelibolulu 'Alī’s wording, may have involved.

Many of the modern studies on Ottoman madrasa curriculum cited classical sources that allegedly attested to have provided reliable information on the topic. It is imperative that we analyze these sources and the reliability of the information they contain.

One such classical work, the earliest in chronology, is the Nazm al-‘ulūm of Ishāq b. Hasan al-Toqādī (d. 1689). This work is in Ottoman Turkish and is also known under the rubric of Manzûme-i tertîb‘i ‘ulûm.113

112 The apparent discrepancy arising from the fact that Gelibolulu ‘Alī, if we were to believe his own account, also drew on the same textbook for the information he provides on the textbooks for the discipline of tafsīr in Ottoman madrasas is not easy to overcome. We can offer several equally probable explanations: it was probably al-Kashshāf that was deemed to be the ultimate textbook which the advanced madrasa students of the dâhilî ellîîi medreses were to study since the time of Bâyezîd I (r. 1389-1402), and the Anwār of al-Baydâwī was considered a tafsīr primer that addressed lower level madrasa students; or the early 16th century copy reproduced copy of the lawbook that had been amended and revised by the time ‘Alī composed his universal history and it is this revised copy that ‘Alī drew on.

113 Born in al-Zanjān, a settlement in southern Azarbayjān, Ishāq b. Hasan studied in Cairo and moved with his family and settled in Tokat. He probably sought imperial patronage in Istanbul to no avail, thence his happiness at the deposition of Meḥmed IV (r. 1648-1687). He was probably also offended at the unfair treatment his teacher
Having depicted the discipline of tafsīr as the chief of all sciences, Toqādī viewed Anwār al-Tanzīl, the Quranic commentary of al-Bayḍāwī, on top of all tafsīrs, and also recommended Husayn al-Wā′izī’s tafsīr and [al-Nasafī’s] Müdārik [sic] as well as [al-Rāzī’s tafsīr-i] Kabīr. He also states that whoever wanted to engage in tafsīr was required to have mastered 18 disciplines. While internal evidence in this rhymed work indicates that it is a book of advice (naṣīḥatnāma) addressed to the author’s son Faḍlallāh/Fażłullāh, it is unclear how modern researchers took it to reflect the actual madrasa curriculum of, at the very least, the author’s time, much less the curriculum of earlier madrasas. Nevertheless, it can be considered a source reflecting the mindset of a 17th century Ottoman scholar about the tafsīr works that are deemed important for recommendation.

Another literary source dating back to 1715 is the Tartīb al-‘ulūm, in Arabic, of Sachāqlīzāda/Saçaklızade Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr al-Mar’āshī (d. 1732). The author composed this work to present an ideal theoretical framework for madrasa education system. He assesses the broad outlook of the educational system of his time and criticizes it as being too immersed in details (with commentaries, glosses, and glosses of glosses) without first ingraining in the students the principal concepts of what they are seeking. Sachāqlīzāda tells in several sections what should and/or should not be studied, what books should be chosen as textbooks, and how a student should go about studying them. In a section devoted to tafsīr, the author admits that even though tafsīr did not depend on the knowledge of jurisprudence (fiqh) and creedal

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Mehtmed Vani had been subjected to by the deposed sultan. He appeals to the good will of Mehtmed IV’s successor in some of his poetry; see, Ömer Özyilmaz, Osmani medreselerinin eğitim programları, (Ankara: T.C. Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2002), p. 21.

115 Ibid, p. 137; Almost invariably all the modern surveys present the likes of this work, and the ones that follow it, as primary sources reflecting the madrasa curriculum.
117 Ibid., p. 72-75.
118 Ibid., p.74-75.
doctrines/speculative theology (‘ilm al-kalām), it must however be studied after them, because tafsīr draws on the entire sciences of religion and some sciences of philology. He then criticizes how, both in teaching and learning, unqualified people engage in tafsīr without objection by anyone, and how some of those who could not even fathom the examples of al-Zamakhsharī venture to study and/or teach the tafsīr of al-Bayḍāwī. He continues by saying that reliance on some particular tafsīr works must be given priority. These include the tafsīr works that primarily rely on the traditions of the Prophet, the Companions, and their Successors such as the Tafsīr zād al-masīr of al-imām al-Jawzī (d. 1200). And in others the ancillary philological sciences should be prioritized, even if these sciences were contradictory to the traditions. He reasons that what is based on individual accounts cannot match the certitude the commentaries of al-Zamakhsharī and al-Bayḍāwī present. The author’s expression is seemingly unclear, but if understood to mean that traditions are accepted only as far as they are not contradicted by philological sciences, the ambiguity becomes clarified. He also highly praises al-Zamakhsharī’s al-Kashshāf and alerts his readers, based on warnings against al-Kashshāf by some circles, that it ought to be studied only by those who are able to discern al-Zamakhsharī’s Mu’tazilīte doctrines and protect themselves against them. He then goes on to talk about al-Bayḍāwī’s commentary and views it as an abridgement of al-Kashshāf with some amendments and additions, for which reasons, he states, later generations preferred it over al-Kashshāf. However, he also issues his own warning against Anwār al-Tanzīl based on his conviction that it was imbued with too much philosophy, much of which, he continues, contradicts the Sharī’ā. For this reason, he follows, only those who are able to discern these heretical philosophical schemes ought to be allowed to study it. Sachāqlizāda furthermore

119 Ibid., p. 148-149.
120 Ibid., p. 149.
121 Ibid., p. 149.
asserted that someone who is unable to discern between philosophical doctrines and Muslim creedal doctrines may very easily take the former for the latter; “woe unto him!”\textsuperscript{122} He must be assuming that no matter how Mu’tazilite al-Zamakhsharî was, he was still considered Muslim; on the other hand, philosophers were not Muslims to begin with, and adopting their doctrines would amount to apostasy and infidelity (\textit{kufr}). The author also composed, separately, a tractate in which he criticized and attempted to refute al-Baydawi’s philosophical schemes.\textsuperscript{123} He finally recommended the students of \textit{tafsîr} to master a \textit{tafsîr} work that grammatically analyzes the Qur’an, in addition to \textit{al-Itqân} of al-Suyûtî (d. 1505), and the \textit{tafsîr} of al-Tabarî (d. 923).

It is difficult to tease out a systematic framework of the \textit{madrasa} curriculum from Sachaqlizâda’s theoretical \textit{Tartîb al-‘ulûm} during the author’s time; however, it is clear that al-Zamakhsharî’s and al-Baydawi’s commentaries were the two prominent, if not the only, \textit{tafsîr} works that were in circulation in the \textit{madrasa} setting of the author’s time. We should not either overlook the fact that this tractate is not a documentary source, as was inconceivably presented otherwise by some modern researchers, reflecting an actual \textit{madrasa} curriculum, but a theoretical composition reflecting the author’s own mindset. Nevertheless, what should also be noted here is the fact that this type of theoretical tractates reflects the personal inclinations of their authors and their attempts to shape the learning path of a given student more than they reflect an actual situation.

We finally encounter a documentary source in an imperial edict issued by sultan Sulaymân (r. 1520-1566) and dated 1565. Catalogued as Topkapı Sarayı Arşivi, TSA, E/2803/1; this document lists 39 works in 55 volumes that are prescribed to constitute the curriculum of

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\item 122 Ahmad, “\textit{Tartîb al-‘ulûm}”, p. 150.
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imperial madrasas.\textsuperscript{124} This imperial edict lists 12 \textit{tafsīr} works five of which are \textit{ḥāshiya}s. The comprehensive aspect of the section of this list that comprises the \textit{tafsīr} works is elaborated on by Ahmed and Filipovic.\textsuperscript{125} These works are \textit{al-Kashshāf} of al-Zamakhsharī, the \textit{ḥāshiya}s, on \textit{al-Kashshāf}, of Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shirāzī (d. 1311), Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftazānī (d. 1389), al-Chārāpārdī/Jārābardī (d. 1346), and al-Ṭībī (d. 1342); the \textit{Anwār al-Tanzīl}, the Quranic commentary of al-Bayḍāwī (d. 1315), and the \textit{ḥāshiya} of Ḥamza al-Qaramānī/Ḵaramānī (d. 1468) on it; \textit{al-Durr al-manthūr} of al-Suyūṭī (d. 1505); \textit{al-Jāmiʿ fi ṣaḥāḥ al-Qurʾān} of al-Qurṭubī (d. 1273); \textit{al-Taysīr fī al-tafsīr} of al-Nasafī (d. 1142); \textit{Taʿwīlāt al-Qurʾān} of al-Kāshānī (d. 1329); and \textit{Anwār al-Ḥaqāʾiq} of Abū al-Thanāʾ Maḥmūd al-Asfahānī (d. 1349).\textsuperscript{126} Of the twelve works listed, eight, according to the authors’ assessment, derive in some form or another from \textit{al-Kashshāf} of al-Zamakhsharī, a fact that points to the centrality of this work in the study of \textit{tafsīr} in these madrasas. Rational and philological aspect of \textit{tafsīr} in the works of al-Zamakhsharī and al-Bayḍāwī and the \textit{ḥāshiya}s that were based on them, the traditional aspect of al-Suyūṭī’s commentary, the legal aspect of al-Qurṭubī’s work, and the sufī aspect of al-Kāshānī’s \textit{tafsīr} all indicate the comprehensiveness of this curriculum in the discipline of \textit{tafsīr}. Though it is not difficult to determine that the students cannot practically be required to study all these works \textit{in toto}, they were meant to get exposed to all sorts of \textit{tafsīr} works in the genre. The date of the document should suffice to clearly indicate that Ebussuud, who at that time was the head of the ʿilmīyya apparatus, was the mastermind behind this project. Note should also be made that the list does not make any sectarian distinction between various \textit{tafsīr} works, some of which are and have been categorized in some modern \textit{tafsīr} histories in sectarian terms, and

\textsuperscript{125} Ibid., p. 207-212
\textsuperscript{126} Ibid., p. 196-199.
neither does it differentiate between *tafsīrs* that are traditionally categorized as either *riwāya* and/or *dirāya*-based, nor does it dismiss *tafsīrs* that are written in the form of *ḥāshiya*.

We come across another documentary source, though rather late, in a report, *al-Kawākib al-sab’al-Kevākib-i seb’a*, issued by a commission headed by the *Raʿīs al-Kuttāb/Reisü’l-küttab* Mustafa Efendi within the Sublime Port in Istanbul.127 This report was produced at the request of the French government through its ambassador, Marquis Villeneuve, who was stationed in Istanbul during the years of 1728-1741.128 At the end of the section dealing with the disciplines in *madrasa* curriculum, the report mentions the subjects and the conduct of learning *tafsīr*, and depicts it as the zenith of one’s learning process. According to this section in the report, an advanced student at last begins studying *tafsīr*, the ultimate aim and the most sublime goal of any student, during which, as with many other disciplines of study, the student is first introduced to a *tafsīr* work that is double the size of the Qur’ān such as *al-Wajīz* of al-Wāḥidī (d. 1075), then another that is three times the size of the Qur’ān such as *al-Wasīṭ* of al-Wāḥidī, and finally any other Quranic commentary (*tafsīr*) that is larger in size than the preceding two; the first class of *tafsīr* works are categorized within the rank of *iqtişär*, the second in the rank of *iqtişād*, and the last in the rank of *istiqṣā‘*. Here the author of the report mentions that while he was writing this section of the report he could also count 360 more *tafsīr* works in addition to the *ḥāshiyas* that the students studied. Furthermore, he adds, it is mostly the commentary of al-Bayḍāwī that circulates in and around Istanbul within *madrasa* circles.129

We need to make note of a significant aspect of this report. There is a prologue in which the author outlines the purpose for which this report was prepared. The author, probably the

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127 It was the title of a high official in the *Dīwān* of the imperial court prior to the reform (*tanzimat*) era; and after the *tanzimat* it became the office of what is today known as the foreign ministry.
129 İzgi, *Osmanlı medreselerinde ilim*, p. 74; İzgi reproduced a partial translation of this document in his monograph see, p. 70-76.

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Ra’īs al-Kuttāb Muṣṭafā Efendi himself, states that because he had been observing how non-Muslims, especially those in the Christian European countries, owing to their [geographical and cultural] distance from Muslim countries, were not able to benefit from the books composed in Arabic, and consequently branded the Muslim scholars who, the author asserts, have left no stone unturned in pursuit of knowledge, with lack of knowledge. He continues that he also observed how non-Muslims have been impressed by their own views and thoughts. For all these reasons, the author follows, he had been feeling compelled to compose a tractate by virtue of which he would elaborate on the Muslim fields of knowledge and various Muslim sciences, the subject proper of the disciplines, their objectives and benefits, and how they are learned and taught in Muslim educational institutions. He finally expresses his hope that, with this tractate, the misgivings that had been brewing in Christendom about Muslims could be rectified.  

From the preceding, it is not difficult to assess this report as a campaign report that aimed to depict the Ottoman madrasa system of the time as a bed of roses in an ideal world. The section of the report that concerns us, tafsīr, indicates that the study of tafsīr was undertaken in three steps: beginner, intermediate, and advanced. Each of these levels categorizes tafsīr works according to their lengths. This is very dissimilar to the traditional categorization of tafsīr works as al-riwāya, that which is based on tradition, and al-dirāya, that which is based on positive/rational knowledge. In fact this classification is very close and/or similar to the madrasa-style and encyclopedic tafsīrs classification advanced by Saleh. Notwithstanding the fact that Saleh’s evaluation was content-oriented, we cannot make such an assessment on Ottoman tafsīr tradition unless we have more specific information on the particular tafsīr works that were covered as textbook in the three categories outlined in this report. The practical

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130 İzgi, Osmanlı medreselerinde ilim, p. 69-70.
131 Walid Saleh, The Formation, p. 16-17.
The purpose of this classification in the report should not keep us from overlooking the fact that no distinction is made on the sectarian/doctrinal tendencies of a given *tafsīr* work. *Al-Wāhidī*’s three famous works, *al-Wajīz*, *al-Wasīṭ*, and *al-Basīṭ* are only given as samples, and therefore we cannot judge outright that these were the subject of study in the discipline of *tafsīr*. However, according to this report, it is clear that the single *tafsīr* work that was invariably the subject of study, within the *madrasas* of Istanbul in particular, was *al-Bayḍāwī*’s commentary; where the mentioning of *al-Kashshāf* is the critical question to which this report does not provide an answer. Whether it was already discarded at that time, and the commentary of *al-Bayḍāwī* occupied the central place in *tafsīr* studies, is a question more focused studies should be able to tackle.

The author’s count of about 360 *tafsīr*, not including the *hāshiya*s, should not be taken literally. There might have been more, or even less for true practical reasons, but that they all were the subject of study in Ottoman *madrasas* is highly dubious. Rather, it is a number that is iterated for the purpose of conveying a sense of perfection and impeccability with which the Ottoman *madrasa* education system was allegedly imbued.\(^\text{132}\)

Other compositions such as *Tartīb al-‘ulūm* of Ibrāhīm Haqqī of Erzurum/Erzurumlu Ibrāhīm Hakkī (d. 1780) and *Qaṣīda fī al-kutub al-mashhūra fī al-‘ulūm* of Nabī Afandizāda al-‘Ushshāqī/Nebī Efendizāde el-‘Uşşākī (Uşaklı Nebi Efendizade) (d. 1786), which are also cited in several modern studies as sources for *madrasa* curriculum, are also theoretical and didactic rhymed works that exhort students in the sciences of religion and in the books that the students ought to study. Again, *al-Bayḍāwī* in the former, and *al-Burhān* of *al-Zarkashī* (d. 1392), *al-

\(^{132}\)The significance of numerology in religious and pietistic attempts can never be overstated. The number 360 symbolizes perfection and comprehensiveness, and it encircles all the angles of a given point just as the total value of all the angles of a given point in space is 360 degrees.
Itqān of al-Suyūṭī (d. 1505), and al-Bayḍāwī’s and al-Zamakhsharī’s Quranic commentaries in the latter are singled out.\(^{133}\)

There are other potential sources that we can resort to for the tafsīr works which were of significance for the Ottoman 'ulamā. These are the biographical accounts found in the biographical dictionaries of individual scholars and the autobiographical works produced by some scholars themselves. We need to exercise extreme caution as to whether or not a given scholar studied, taught, or composed a commentary or a ḥāshiya on a given work, for we know that this type of sources tend to aggrandize their individual figures whose biographies they convey and have no qualms about padding their résumés. Nevertheless, these sources are no less significant in terms of shedding light on what was considered important and noteworthy in the mindset of their composers.

The earliest Ottoman biographer whose work has reached us is Tāshkuprīzāda of the 16th century. He mentions biographies of the scholarly class within the Ottoman realm beginning with the reign of 'Uthmān/'Osmān (r. 1299/1301-1324/26), the eponymous founder of the dynasty. He accounts that early 'ulamā travelled to the lands of Syria, Egypt, and the eastern lands (bilād al-'ajam) in pursuit of knowledge and for the purpose of acquiring the sciences of ḥadīth, tafsīr, and usūl (foundational/theoretical disciplines), but offers no specific information as to what literature these scholars studied. Our interest in this section is only limited to the parts in these biographies which relate to tafsīr works that the scholars composed, studied and/or taught.

Perhaps the earliest detailed and pertinent information in Tāshkuprīzāda’s al-Shaqa’iq is the biography of Jamāl al-Dīn al-Aqsarāyī (d. 1388), who, our biographer tells us, wrote a

\(^{133}\) Izgi, Osmanlı medreselerinde ilim, p. 84-96.
Another scholar who is mentioned to have authored a gloss on *al-Kashsháf*, or more correctly on the *ḥāshiya* of al-Taftazáni (d. 1389) on *al-Kashsháf*, is one Burhán al-Dín Haydar b. Maḥmūd of the reign of Meḥmed I (r. 1412-1421).  

Another scholar who is mentioned to have authored a gloss on *al-Kashsháf*, or more correctly on the *ḥāshiya* of al-Jurjáni (d. 1413) on *al-Kashsháf*, is one 'Alā al-Dín al-Ṭūsī who wrote an additional *ḥāshiya* on the *ḥāshiya* of al-Jurjáni (d. 1413) on *al-Kashsháf*.  

The first time Ṭāshkuprīzāda mentions a scholar who composed a *ḥāshiya* on al-Bayḍāwī’s *Anwār al-Tanzīl* is Ibn Tamjīd (d. 1451?), who also separately composed a *ḥāshiya* on al-Zamakhsharī’s *al-Kashsháf*, of the reign of Murād II.  

Al-Sayyid al-‘Ajami (d. 1430), of the same period, is said to have copied down *al-Kashsháf* in a beautiful script.  

The famous Molla Hüsrev/Khusraw (d. 1480) of the reign of Meḥmed II (r. 1451-1489) is said to have authored a *ḥāshiya* on the beginning parts of al-Bayḍāwī’s commentary, and another *ḥāshiya* on *al-‘An’ām*, chapter 6 of the Qur’ān, of the commentary of al-Zamakhsharī.  

Shams al-Dín Aḥmad b. Musā al-Khayāli (d. 1470) is known to have copied down al-Bayḍāwī’s commentary and added his own comments on the margins. Most of the remainder of the scholars mentioned by Ṭāshkuprīzāda wrote a complete and/or partial *ḥāshiya* either on *al-Kashsháf* or *Anwār al-Tanzīl* or on the previously composed *ḥāshiyas* of these two works.

A few autobiographical sources may also give us an idea about the *tafsīr* literature that was deemed essential for an Ottoman scholar. The earliest such record is that of Ṭāshkuprīzāda

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134 Ṭāshkuprīzāda, *al-Shaqa’iq*, p. 15. Demir was able to locate two partial *ḥāshiyas* attested to be composed by al-Aqsarāyī, but determined that these two compositions were *ḥāshiyas* not on al-Jurjáni’s *ḥāshiya* on *al-Kashsháf*, but on the *ḥāshiya* of Qūṭ al-Dín al-Razī’s *ṭafsīr* on the commentary of *al-Kashsháf*, see Demir, *Osmanlı müfessirleri*, p. 354-360.  
135 Ibid., p. 37.  
136 Ibid., p. 62.  
137 Ibid., p. 62.  
138 Ibid., p. 62.  
139 Ibid., p. 72.  
140 Demir, *Osmanlı müfessirleri*, p. 380  
141 Ṭāshkuprīzāda, *al-Shaqa’iq*, p. 87.  
142 Ṭāshkuprīzāda, *al-Shaqa’iq*, p. 90 and onward.
himself, whose educational journey allows us to gain a glimpse into the curriculum which an
Ottoman scholar followed during the 16th century. He tells us that not only did he study the
chapter al-Naba’, chapter 78 of the Qur’an, of al-Kashshāf with Muḥy al-Dīn al-Qojawī (d. 1543-44), but he was also licensed, open-endedly, in tafsīr and ḥadīth by various scholars. When he became a teacher at various madrasas, he taught parts of al-Zamakhsharī’s and al-Bayḍāwī’s commentaries.

An unknown author of the 17th century briefly mentions the subjects and the books he studied within a tractate he composed on astronomy. The single tafsīr work that he says he studied is that of al-Bayḍāwī. The late 17th/18th century Shaykh al-Islām Feyżullāh/Fayḍ Allāh Efendi (d. 1703) recounts that he studied both al-Kashshāf and Anwār al-Tanzīl along with several of their ḥāshiya's. The famous bibliophile Kāṭib Chalabī, also known as Ḥājj Khalīfa, tells us how he attended Lame Muṣṭafā Efendi’s lessons on al-Bayḍāwī’s commentary in 1638. Autobiographies of later scholars, those of the 18th and 19th centuries, also indicate that al-Bayḍāwī’s commentary prominently and al-Zamakhsharī’s commentary infrequently along with some other unnamed Quranic commentaries, were the choice of study.

The preceding theoretical educational tractates and partial biographical and autobiographical data allow us to determine safely that al-Kashshāf and Anwār al-Tanzīl were the most prominent, if not the only, tafsīr works that circulated within the Ottoman madrasa setting. We can clearly infer that the commentary of al-Zamakhsharī was more favored than that of al-Bayḍāwī at least sometime until the 16th century, and then, for a century or so, they both

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143 Also known as Shaykhzāda/Şeyhzâde, he is the famous author of a ḥāshiya on Anwār al-Tanzīl; see, DİA, s.v. “Şeyhzâde”; also for his ḥāshiya see, Demir, Osmanlı müfessirleri, p. 330-35.
145 Ibid., p. 329-30.
146 Izgi, Osmanlî medreselerinde ilim, p. 99.
147 Ibid., p. 102.
149 Izgi, Osmanlî medreselerinde ilim, p. 102-108.
enjoyed central significance in the discipline of *tafsīr*, but the commentary of al-Bayḍāwī ultimately won over that of al-Zamakhsharī probably sometime during the 17th century or at the beginning of 18th century. However, we should not overlook the possibility that these two particular works were specially mentioned in these sources on account of the fact that they were considered the bridge through which the students of *tafsīr* were able to handle other *tafsīr* works. Ability to handle these two *tafsīr* works or having studied them was probably considered a resume-padding feature of biographical and autobiographical sources, and it therefore does not necessarily mean that they were the only *tafsīr* material to which a *tafsīr* scholar must have limited himself. Our preliminary findings should in no way disregard the possibility that other *tafsīr* works were also of interest to some individuals; however, more detailed research on this particular topic requires further evidence that has so far been unavailable.
2.5. Ottomans on the history and historiography of *tafsīr*

In this section we would like to examine the discovered works of the Ottoman realm and era that deal with the history and historiography of *tafsīr*, and also some of the *tafsīr*-related themes that have been theoretically approached by Ottoman scholars.

Even though Kātib Chalabī makes note of a *Tabaqāt al-mufassirīn* by Abū Saʿīd Sunʿullāh Efendi (d. 1572), this work has not reached us and/or has not been discovered yet, and therefore its existence cannot at this time be verified. The first such work that deals with the history of *tafsīr* and anything related to it written by an Ottoman scholar is perhaps the sections devoted to Quranic commentary in *Miftāḥ al-saʿāda*, the encyclopedic compendium on Muslim knowledge heritage by Ṭāshkuprīzāda. There are two separate sections on *tafsīr* and *al-mufassir*; the first is under the heading of ‘ilm tafsīr al-Qurʾān; and the second concerns the requirements that a *mufassir* is expected to meet, along with several other sections that deal with the required knowledge of *tafsīr*-related topics.\(^{150}\)

Ṭāshkuprīzāda follows very closely the track that al-Suyūṭī, in his *al-Itqān*, followed in that they both mention the companions of the Prophet as the first *mufassirs*.\(^{151}\) Invariable similarity, even in wording, between Ṭāshkuprīzāda and al-Suyūṭī on the trusted and untrusted transmission lines going back to Ibn ʿAbbās leaves us with no doubt that the former used the latter as his main source. Ṭāshkuprīzāda tries to differentiate himself by adding some extra biographical information on some of the Companions whom al-Suyūṭī only mentions by name. The author does the same with the generation that succeeded the Companions, and follows it

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with introducing al-Tabarî (d. 923) whom he highly praises.\textsuperscript{152} He also mentions, unlike al-Suyūṭī, a generation of \textit{mufassirs} that were semi-contemporaneous with al-Tabarî. These figures that Ţâshkupřizāda mentions are exclusively the scholars that introduced philological tools into Quranic commentary.\textsuperscript{153} What is of significant detail in Ţâshkupřizāda’s work is the fact that he mentions the grammatical endeavors in the field of \textit{tafsīr} to have taken place before the era when foreign elements (\textit{al-dakhīl}) began to be interpolated into \textit{tafsīr} writing. We can appreciate the significance of this little detail if we realize that al-Suyūṭī claimed the interpolation of foreign elements to have happened right after the age of al-Ṭabarî and included the works of grammarians within those that he deemed as foreign interpolations. That Ţâshkupřizāde must have wanted to rehabilitate the grammatical efforts in \textit{tafsīr} writing is rather telling and cannot and/or should not easily be overlooked. Historical studies of a given genre aim to inform our understanding of how that genre historically developed. By incorporating grammatical endeavors into \textit{tafsīr} writing into an era that, according to al-Suyūṭī (d. 1505), corresponds to the interpolations of foreign elements, the traditional camp, of which al-Suyūṭī can easily be viewed as one of its prominent figures, attempted to discredit them. Ţâshkupřizāda, on the other hand, tried to reposition the status of grammatical efforts in \textit{tafsīr} writing as another contender in the efforts of delineating the formative features of the genre during a period when several authors claimed to represent the legacy of earlier/first generations of Muslim community. Owing to Ibn Taymiyya’s theoretical premises on the foundations of the art of \textit{tafsīr}, tradition-based Quranic commentaries, or the entire Muslim knowledge for that matter, had become the only accepted norm within the central Muslim educational centers of Egypt and Syria. Though Ibn Taymiyya did not himself write a \textit{tafsīr} work, his student Ibn Kathīr composed a commentary that

\textsuperscript{152} Ţâshkupřizāda, \textit{Mišiḥ}. p. 298.
\textsuperscript{153} Ibid., p. 299-302.
overwhelmingly drew on tradition and implicitly ostracized any other material that comprised the sources of many a *tafsīr* work. The Mamluk attempts of purging *tafsīr* of anything other than tradition-based knowledge culminated in the multi-volume Quranic commentary, *al-Durr al-manthūr*, of al-Ṣuyūṭī who reinforced the same notion and elsewhere framed the development of the history of *tafsīr* in a manner that would deem anything other than the tradition-based knowledge as foreign. But Ẓāshkuprizāda captures this discrepancy in the historical development of the genre and reincorporates grammatical sciences into the formative period of it.

From this point onward Ẓāshkuprizāda evaluates some of the post-Ṭabarī *tafsīr* works in an analytical manner and it should shed some light on the mindset of a 16th century Ottoman scholar about how he wants to project the *tafsīr* literature to his readership. We do not find this sort of analytical assessment earlier elsewhere. The author first assesses what is known as the esoteric (*bātinī, sūfī, mystical*) *tafsīr* and outright rejects it if it is in clear contradiction to exoteric (*ẓāhirī*) *tafsīr*; otherwise it is deemed acceptable.\(^{154}\) He then propounds a theoretical outline on how one should go about undertaking the *tafsīr* of Qur’an:

A *mufassir* should first handle lexicography, morphology, syntax, rhetorical devices in a given verse followed by the intended meaning of it. Then the historical accounts about the occasions of revelation drawing on sound traditions, and formulation of regulatory codes (*ahkām*) followed lastly by potential esoteric meaning should be the steps to be undertaken by any *mufassir*.\(^{155}\)

The author then lists 15 disciplines/arts that every *mufassir* must be equipped with, and then divides, in a didactic manner, *tafsīr* into three classes and sub-classes that concern what is or is not acceptable. He categorizes *tafsīr* works not according to sectarian schools, but based on

\(^{154}\) Ẓāshkuprizāda, *Miftāḥ*, p. 305-308.

\(^{155}\) Ibid., p. 308.
their lengths into abridged/short (wajīz), medium-length (wasīṭ), and long (basīṭ). Then he offers a number of tafsīrs for each category along with biographical data and hagiographical anecdotes on their composers.\textsuperscript{156} It is rather difficult to assess if the author had any criterion for the tafsīr works he selectively chose to mention; however, it is noteworthy to mention here that al-Zamakhsharī is the only mufassir whose sectarian affiliation is mentioned. No other tafsīr author is mentioned to have any sectarian leaning. Ğashkuprızāda, as it were, silently condones all these commentaries except that of al-Zamakhsharī. But since the commentary of al-Zamakhsharī, despite being branded as Muʿtazilite, had already consolidated its place even among the Sunnī educational tafsīr circles, the author must have felt compelled to mention him within these selected works of Quranic commentaries. In order to rehabilitate this situation, Ğashkuprızāda needed to include among his list only two ġashiyas; incidentally both are on al-Kashshāf, one by al-Ţībī (d. 1343) and the other by Ibn al-Munayyir (d. 1284), both of whom are considered very staunch defenders of Sunnī orthodoxy against the Muʿtazilite contents of al-Kashshāf.

In the 17th century, Aḩmad b. Muḥammad al-Adnawī/Adirnawī/Edirnevi/Edrenevi composed a tābaqāt-style history of tafsīr/mufassirs.\textsuperscript{157} The author differs from his predecessors, al-Dāwūdī and al-Suyūṭī, in that he lists his individual mafassirs chronologically beginning with the time of Companions to 1070/1659-60. He mentions a total number of 644 mufassirs.\textsuperscript{158}

Another important work that was composed on the history and historiography of tafsīr is the Tefsirler-müfessirler/Tafsirs-mufassirs, in Ottoman Turkish, of Cevdet Bey. Born in 1872 and died in 1926, Cevdet Bey published a series of articles in Ottoman Turkish, starting in June/July 1923 and ending in March 1924 in the Mahfel journal under the title of Tefsirler-

\textsuperscript{156} Ibid., p. 310-327.
\textsuperscript{158} Karagöz, Tefsir yazımı ve problemleri, p. 57-58.
müfessirler in which he covered topics related to the sciences of Qur’ān (‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān) and the Quranic commentaries followed by a tabaqāt-type chronological list of select Qur’ān commentators until the beginning of 20th century. We were only able to acquire the greater part of the original publication which ends with the third tabaqā (layer/generation of exegetes). These articles, in their entirety, were collected into a book by a student association of Dār al-fünūn, currently Istanbul University, and published posthumously in 1927, and this book was recently adapted into modern Turkish and edited by Mustafa Özel under the title of Tefsir usûlü ve tarihi.

Having listed the arts a mufassir is required to be equipped with (17 disciplines), the author then divides tafsîr into two groups: tradition-based tafsîr (tefsîr-i nakli), and philology-based tafsîr which, however the author notes, should not be viewed separately and independently of the former. Tradition-based tafsîr consists of, and is limited to, the knowledge of abrogating and abrogated (nāsikh-mansūkh) verses and occasions of revelation (asbâb-i nuzûl). The author is driven by the heavy weight of the impact of western advance, for he criticizes only the traditions known as isrâ ’ilîyyât and the ones that are proven to contradict the findings of modern sciences.

In a separate section devoted to dirāya-based tafsîr, another term he used interchangeably with philology-based tafsîr, the author lists ten steps to which such tafsîrs should conform. These steps are: intertextual references, sound prophetic traditions, occasions of revelation, and traditions that can be traced back to the Companions, philological (lexical, morphological, syntactical, etymological, rhetorical) analyses, and contextual occasions.

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160 See, Cevdet Bey, Tefsîr usûlû ve tarihi, ed. by Mustafa Özel.
161 The author uses the philology-based and dirâya-based terminology interchangeably throughout; see, Cevdet Bey, “Tefsirler-müfessirler” in Mahfîl, no. 49.
Opinions attributed to the Companions have to be verified in their transmissions, and if a number of opposing views are available from a number of Companions, the view of Ibn ’Abbās is preferred over all others.\textsuperscript{162} He does not have an independent section on tradition-based \textit{tafsīr}, because he holds it to be dependent of \textit{dirāya}-based \textit{tafsīr}: “it should be known that \textit{dirāya}-based \textit{tafsīr} is not independent of \textit{riwāya}-based one; on the contrary, the interpretation and meaning in \textit{riwāya}-based \textit{tafsīr} is given through \textit{dirāya}”.\textsuperscript{163}

The rest of the book is devoted to a \textit{tabaqāt}-type chronological list of 98 \textit{mufassirs} from the time of Companions to the end of 19\textsuperscript{th} century in 13 \textit{tabaqas}. It is difficult to determine the mindset of the author and his selection criteria, but we find him mention two separate layers/generations of authors to have collected the oral traditions of the Companions and their Successors. He lists, within the third layer during the 9\textsuperscript{th} century, al-Farrā’ (d. 822), Muḥammad b. al-Mustanīr (d. 821), both of whom are mentioned neither by al-Suyūṭī nor by al-Dahabi but by al-Dāwūḍī, and others that are recorded to have composed \textit{tafsīrs} that overwhelmingly presented linguistic analyses of the Qur‘ān.\textsuperscript{164} And in the fourth layer, he mentions, along with al-Ṭabarī, al-Zajjāj (d. 923), al-Māturīdī (d. 944), Abū al-Layth al-Samarqandī (d. 995), and others as scholars who, the author continues, collected and organized the exegetical corpus of earlier generations. According to this author then, al-Ṭabarī was not the only exegete to have collected the exegetical corpus of earlier generations, and the linguistic-oriented \textit{tafsīr} works did not dispense with the earlier corpus of exegetical heritage. Cevdet Bey also mentions to have personally benefited from a copy of al-Farrā’s work that was within the collection of Vehbi Efendi in Süleymaniye Library.\textsuperscript{165}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[	extsuperscript{162}] Cevdet Bey, \textit{“Tefsirler-müfessirler” Mahfıl}, no. 56-63.
\item[	extsuperscript{163}] Cevdet Bey, \textit{“Tefsirler-müfessirler” Mahfıl}, no. 56.
\item[	extsuperscript{164}] Al-Dāwūḍī, \textit{Tabaqāt al-mufassirīn}, v. 2, p. 368.
\item[	extsuperscript{165}] Cevdet Bey, \textit{Tefsir usūlü ve tarihi}, p. 108-111.
\end{footnotes}
example of those who are said to have collected the oral tradition of previous generations. Even though the author had elsewhere mentioned al-Tha‘ālibī [sic] along with al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāqidī [sic] and al-Baghawī, as one of those who collected the oral tradition of the first three centuries, he does not list him in the third, fourth, or fifth layers.\(^{166}\)

Also mentioned in the fourth layer is al-Qaffāl al-Kabīr, Muḥammad b. ’Alī (d. 947). Both al-Farrā’ and al-Qaffāl al-Kabīr are said to have had Muʿtazilīte leanings, and it is therefore noteworthy that our author has no qualms about choosing to list them. Al-Qaffāl al-Kabīr is significant in that al-Ṣuyūṭī, and his followers al-Dāwūdī and our author, relate through biographical sources that his name is widely encountered in various tafsīr works and he is a very frequently used source in al-Rāzī’s commentary.\(^{167}\)

The author also lists the Shi‘īte (Rāfiḍī) Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir al-Sharīf al-Raḍī (d. 460-1067) [sic].\(^{168}\) He must more correctly be Muḥammad b. Husayn b. Mūsā known as al-Sharīf al-Raḍī (d. 1015). Our author mentions an anecdote that is also mentioned in al-‘Asqalānī’s Lisān al-mīzān in the entry devoted to the latter, namely Muḥammad b. Ḥusayn b. Mūsā (d. 1015).\(^{169}\) It is our conclusion that the author had the former confused with the latter. Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī is mentioned neither by al-Ṣuyūṭī nor by al-Dāwūdī, and al-‘Asqalānī does not tell us anything about his scholarly output either. Our author mentions him to have authored a tafsīr work titled Ma‘ānī al-Qur‘ān which is corroborated in al-Khaṭṭāb al-Baghdādī’s Tārīkh Baghdad where it is

\(^{166}\) It must be a print error, or a student error to have al-Tha’labī (d. 1035 CE) the exegete mixed up with al-Tha‘ālibī (d. 1470 CE); otherwise it would be inconceivable to mention this figure along with al-Ṭabarī (d. 923) and al-Baghawī. Similarly, al-Wāqidī (d. 823) must be mixed up with al-Wāḥīdī (d. 1075), for the former is only known as a historian and is not known as an author of any Quranic commentary; See, Mahfīl, no. 48-49.


\(^{168}\) Çevdet Bey, Tefsîr usûlû ve tarihi, p. 112.


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depicted as “unequalled”. Cevdet Bey’s wording insinuates that he has seen/read it, but no extant copy has been discovered yet.

Al-Zamakhshārī, the genius in the author’s wording, is given the lengthiest entry in the author’s entire list. He does not heed some of those who attempted to rehabilitate al-Zamakhshārī into Sunnī line/orthodoxy towards the end of his life and compared him to “a beautiful garden full of beautiful flowers coupled with poisonous vermin; therefore, one should not get absorbed at the beauty of those flowers at the expense of being stung by vermin.”

The author does not seem to have any particular geographical inclinations either. He aims to be as geographically comprehensive as possible. We find within his list commentaries composed by scholars from the eastern/Persian and Central Asian lands, such as al-Nasafī (d. 1142), al-Māwardī (d. 1058), al-Sulamī (d. 1021); and scholars from the Andalusian lands such as al-Qurṭubī (d. 1272), Ibn ʿAṭīyya (d. 1151), Ibn Barrajān (d. 1220), Abū Ḥayyān (d. 1344); and as for the Syrian and Egyptian lands, despite the fact that Ibn Taymiyya and al-Suyūṭī are frequently mentioned sources in his composition, one is hard-pressed to find the mentioning of any major mufassir from those settings other than Ibn Kathīr (d. 1372).

Another interesting feature of this composition is that the author incorporated within it several hāšiyas, mainly on al-Kashshāf and Anwār al-Tanzīl. This should indicate that hāšiyas were just as important as independent tafsīr works. One such interesting hāšiya is that of al-Chārpardī/al-Jābardī b. al-Ḥasan (d. 1346) about which the author talks in highly

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171 Cevdet Bey, Tefsir usulü ve tarihi, p. 118-125.
172 Ibid., p. 120-21.
173 Ibid., p. 132.
174 Ibid., see entries 62, 66, 68, 71, 81, 89.
Another ḥāshiya on al-Kashshāf that the author mentions is that of al-Taftazānī (d. 1389), who, the author asserts, along with al-Jurjānī (d. 1413) were the “Eastern fountains of knowledge (‘irfān)”. Considering the fact that the works of these two scholars, especially the ones that relate to theology and philological sciences, were the primary textbooks of Ottoman madrasa curriculum, one can safely conclude that the eastern heritage of knowledge had more influence on the Ottoman mindset than did the central Arab lands. In his entry on al-Taftazānī, our author seeks to attribute the bitter row between these two scholars, al-Taftazānī and al-Jurjānī, to the cunning machinations of Timur, and thus attempts to rehabilitate their images to his readership.

In addition to at least two Indian mufassirs that our author lists, he also lists four tafsīr works, including partial commentaries and ḥāshiya, written by Ottoman scholars between the 15th and 19th centuries.

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175 This work is still in MS form and some catalogue records indicate that it awaits discovery; see DIA, s.v. “Çaperdi” where the author of the entry provides the following catalogue records on a 10 volume ḥāshiya on al-Kashshāf: Süleymaniye Ktp. Fatih, nr. 358, 572, 573; Laleli nr. 328; Hacı Mahmud Efendi nr. E65/3; Damad İbrahim Paşa nr. 162-163; Serez nr. 327.

176 Cevdet Bey, Tefsir usulü ve tarihi, p.135-140.

177 For a brief discussion of this row and its ramifications on the succeeding generations of scholars, see Shuruq Naguib, “Guiding the Sound Mind”, p. 24-29.

178 See entries nos. 72 and 88.
2.6. *Huzur Dersleri*/The imperial sessions

There was another medium where *tafsīr* materialized, and since the time period, the setting, and the participants in this medium are significant enough to be covered in this survey, we would like to offer our own research and assessment of such undertaking of *tafsīr*. The late-medieval Ottoman sultans held regular sessions of *tafsīr* at the imperial court during the month of Ramaḍān with the participation of notable scholars as lecturers and discussants. These sessions are known as *Huzūr Dersleri*/*Ḫudūr Darses*, lessons in the Royal/Imperial Presence. *Huzūr Dersleri*, originally named *Ḫuzūr-i Humāyūn dersleri*, began as early as 1723-24 by the grand vizier Damād Ibrāhīm Pasha of the reign of Aḥmad III (r. 1703-30) and royally endorsed and systematized by Sultan Muṣṭafā III (r. 1757-74) in 1759, and lasted until 1341/1924.¹⁷⁹

There had sporadically and non-officially been lessons at the Imperial court prior to this period, but these were unsystematized callings of individual sultans.¹⁸⁰ The participants of *Ḫuzūr Dersleri* consisted of a lecturer (*muqarrir/muḵarrir*), a varied number of discussants (*mukhāṭabūn/muhāṭabūn*), the sultan himself, and listeners or any other individual that the sultan may have personally invited. Both the lecturers and the discussants were determined and appointed by the Sultan with the recommendation of *shaykh al-Islām*. These lessons were only held during the month of Ramaḍān at eight to ten sessions at the end of which all participants were presented with royal gifts. Initially there seems to be no systematic program for the parts of Qur’an to be chosen for study, but beginning in 1786 the Quranic order of suras began to be observed.¹⁸¹ The specific Quranic commentary that was chosen for discussion was the commentary of al-Bayḍāwi. Determining who had the prerogative for choosing the verses to be

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¹⁸⁰ Ibid, p. 309; DİA, s.v. “Huzur Dersleri”

discussed during these lessons should also allow us to formulate an idea about the aim and objective of these lessons. When these lessons were first held in 1759, Qur’ān 4:135 was the choice of discussion; the verse reads: “O you who believe! Be you staunch in justice, witnesses for Allah, even though it be against yourselves or your parents or your kindred, whether a rich man or a poor man, for Allah is nearer unto both. So follow not passion lest you lapse, and if you lapse or fall away, then lo! Allah is ever informed of what you do.” On the orders of the sultan, the Quranic verses that were related to jihād and conquest which would invigorate the zeal for war were also chosen for discussion in the following years. The fact that the verse, Qur’ān 4:135, chosen the first year for discussion is covered in the commentary of al-Bayḍāwī in only half a page should indicate that these lessons must have been undertaken in an extremely detailed and slow manner. The record (takrīr) of some of these sessions has survived and is extant in the libraries of Istanbul.

Most of the modern studies on Ḥuzūr Dersleri indicate that the discussions were carried out in an absolutely free atmosphere where the participants could express their views freely; however, the instances in which some discussants were subjected to punitive treatments on account of breaching the scholarly etiquette are not infrequent. The quality of these sessions has been depicted as being of edificatory nature, and should not be considered to have contributed to scholarly engagements in the discipline of tafsīr. Halit Ziya Uşaklıgil (1866-1945), a late Ottoman litterateur, belle-letterist and famous novelist, went on a tirade about how

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182 DİA, s.v. “Huzur Dersleri”
184 See DİA for the catalogue records in the bibliography the author of the entry provided.
these study sessions were replete with myths and legendary tales, and characterized them as being rather detrimental to the glory of religion and its holy scripture.\textsuperscript{187}

In order to better assess the nature of these Imperial sessions in \textit{tafsīr} we need to take into account the socio-political context. The Ottoman Empire had already receded to a period of decline by the time the \textit{Huğur Dersleri} were launched.\textsuperscript{188} A conspicuous characteristic, especially of the contents of the early sessions, was that the Quranic verses that highlighted the concepts of justice, \textit{jihād} and conquest were the topics of discussion. The ramifications of this fact are as follows: the significance of justice in the eye of the public as implemented by the ruling authority cannot be overstated. The governing class led by the sultan attributed the period of decline to political malaise and pervading disregard for the concepts of war and conquest. Did the governing class believe it to be so, or did the subject people hold such convictions, and therefore the rulers wanted to propitiate to the concerns of their subjects? Either way, these study sessions must have provided a channel for the rulers through which they would be able to appease their subjects, and, at the same time, attempt to reinvigorate in them the moribund zeal for holy war.\textsuperscript{189} Furthermore, these study sessions were initiated at the backdrop of increasing voices here and there against the ailing torpidity of Ottoman power.

\textit{Huğur Dersleri} were also the interest of research in western scholarship. Madeline C. Zilfi depicted these imperial court sessions as another face of the Ottoman sultans recasting themselves as the “scholar-master” of their realm.\textsuperscript{190} According to Zilfi, with \textit{Huğur Dersleri} the Ottomans were able to reinforce their dynastic legitimacy through scholarly and religious patronage, and, at the same time, they bolstered a direct access to potential support base in the

\textsuperscript{187} Çavuşoğlu, “Osmanlı geleneğinde”, p. 52.
\textsuperscript{188} Ibid., p. 46.
\textsuperscript{189} Ibid., p. 46-47.
public through scholarly establishment within the Empire. Dynastic legitimacy is a constant feature of Ottoman history. Though heavily invested with a sacred/Islamic identity throughout their history, the Ottoman sultans were rather practical when it suited their needs and did not refrain or shy away from claiming legitimacy to rule on non-religious grounds.

Colin Imber elaborately demonstrated the Ottoman dynastic claims, which comprised of many strands, in his seminal article “The Ottoman Dynastic Myth”, in which he outlined how numerous strands of dynastic legitimacy accounts were developed “separately to meet the requirements of a particular time” or to appeal to “different sections of the population”. Throughout the 14th and 15th centuries, the Ottomans predicated their legitimacy on being the bearers of the flag of gazā/ghazw, namely holy war against the infidels, and as the leading groups of unlettered warriors and mercenaries into the infidel Christian lands of Byzantium. Divine approval was another strand that the Ottomans called for to establish their right to rule. The dream that 'Osmān had, or according to some accounts his father Ertuğrul allgedly had, and that which heralded the rise of Ottomans to power, was interpreted as a divine intervention in the course of history whereby God bestowed Muslim leadership on the hands of Ottomans.

During the 15th century, however, the Ottomans also needed to establish their sole legitimacy upon their kinsmen represented in various principalities throughout the Anatolian peninsula. With the help of the chroniclers, a new strand of legitimacy account was created. It comprised a series of stories, the kernel of which alluded to 'Alā al-Dīn, the legendary ruler of the Saljūkid ruler of Anatolia, conferring on Ertuğrul and/or his son 'Osmān, the founding

191 Ibid., 184.
193 Ibid., p. 12
194 Ibid., p. 22; According to this dream account, a moon rose from the bosom of a holy man who was then hosting Osman in his dwelling, and entered the bosom of Osman; then a tree sprouted from Osman’s navel. The tree then covered the whole world and gave shade to mountains whence flowed waters and springs to people everywhere. Osman’s host interpreted this with heralding that Osman would become a great ruler, and married his daughter to Osman whose offspring from this marriage ruled the Ottoman Empire for centuries.
fathers of Ottoman dynasty, the right to rule over the Saljūqid territory; thus the rival principalities that sprang up after the demise of the Saljūqid dynasty were projected as having no legitimacy to rule and were considered usurpers in Muslim lands. A parallel to this new strand was invented; a genealogical link tying the Ottoman rulers to their great legendary ancestor Oghuz/Oğuz Hān, who in turn was the legendary descendent of Japheth, the son of Noah. This new genealogical strand intimated that the Ottomans originally belonged to a dynastic lineage, whereas the rulers of other Turkic principalities were merely upstarts. The genealogical claim would only go so far as to counter their kinsmen, and the rise of the Safavids in Persian lands necessitated that the Ottomans would come up with a new strand of legitimization. Thus with the help of religious scholars, the Ottoman rulers developed an image of the Safavids as infidels against whom the holy war was the greatest of holy wars. At the same time, with the conquest of the remainder of Muslim lands that had hitherto remained under Mamluk rule, the Ottomans were able to propagate their rule as the true representative of Orthodox Islam, the servitors of the lands of Makka and Madina, and the upholders of true religion against the Safavid infidels.

The most salient feature of the Ottoman state was that the sultan was a charismatic leader. This charisma needed to materialize in some form, and the gāzī-warrior face of the sultan was the prominent feature that was propagated in the very beginning of the dynasty. However, by the end of the 17th century and most certainly during the 18th century, defeat and retreat became routine in battlefields and the sultans had receded from their actual participation in leading the battles. Ottoman mindset tried to redraw the gāzī-warrior image of the sultans through ceremonial endeavors and military parades in major cities of the Empire and through reviewing troops afar from the battlefields. Thus a new image needed to be revived and bolstered at the

195 Ibid., p. 14-15
196 Ibid., p. 16-18.
same time. Ottoman sultans could also display their charisma in the form of scholar-master, and Ḥuẓūr Dersleri was the best venue to project that image.\textsuperscript{198} The serious intent of these sessions was to reinforce the sultan’s connection to the sacred.\textsuperscript{199} The presenting of gifts, from the sultan’s own hand, session after session, year after year, to hundreds of mid-level ‘ulamā was a ritual of incorporation symbolically merging palace with the institution of madrasa. The intended purpose of incorporating the ‘ulamā with the palace was to have a reliable base through which the interests of the madrasa and the palace were identified. Ḥuẓūr Dersleri extended the religious piety of madrasa into the dynastic palace and imbued it with a sacrality with which the madrasa was held by the subject people.

\textit{Ḥuẓūr Dersleri} were preceded by \textit{binis merâsimi} (\textit{binis-i humâyûn/binis-i saIâtanat}), formal-imperial cavalcade which was traditionally known to mark a significant and serious event.\textsuperscript{200} The lack of \textit{binis merâsimi} meant the lack of \textit{Ḥuẓūr Dersleri}. The public was made aware of a given \textit{binis merâsimi} by artillery fire and by public announcements.\textsuperscript{201} The choice of places at which these sessions were conducted also suggests an underlying effort to publicize \textit{Ḥuẓūr Dersleri}. The records indicate that while various parts of Topkapı Palace, the primary residence of the sultans, were places where these sessions were undertaken until early 1200s AH, other places/palaces outside the Topkapı Palace were chosen more frequently until the very end of these sessions with the demise of the Empire in 1341/1924.\textsuperscript{202} Therefore, another purpose of \textit{Ḥuẓūr Dersleri}, as was also stated by Zilfî, was public and political, or else, the regular and

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{198} Zilfî, “A Medrese for the Palace”, p. 184.
\textsuperscript{199} Ibid., p. 188.
\textsuperscript{200} Kara, “Islam geleneğinde”, p. 334.
\textsuperscript{201} Ibid., p. 333-334.
\textsuperscript{202} Kara, “Islam geleneğinde”, p. 325.
\end{flushright}
ordinary Qur’ān lessons conducted privately by the sultans in their private quarters would have sufficed.\textsuperscript{203}

The participants in these sessions were also of significance. These were mainly the dissatisfied and poorly paid group of the members of religious/scholarly establishment. The payment that these participants received either as transfers or gifts was to compensate for their losses in an over-crowded ‘ilmiyya apparatus where they could not move up in its ladder and reimburse them for their disadvantaged positions vis-à-vis the higher ranking and higher paid ‘ulamā. It was a way of propitiating them for their frustrations.\textsuperscript{204}

\textsuperscript{203} Zilfi, “A Medrese for the Palace”, p. 188.
\textsuperscript{204} Ibid., p. 190.
PART II: Ebussuud and his Quranic commentary

Chapter 3

The biography of Ebussuud

3.1: The sources

Before we delve into the biographical account of Ebussuud’s life, we need to say a few words about the sources available for the biographical information on the Ottoman ʿulamā at large.

The most widely known and the basic source upon which all the later sources drew for the ʿulamā of the early period up to the mid-16th century is al-Shaqāʾiq al-nuʾmāniyya fi ʿulamā al-dawlat al-ʿuthmāniyya composed in Arabic by Molla al-Mawla ʿIṣām al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Muṣṭafā b. Khalīl, famously known as Taşköprüzade (Taşkhuprizāda) (d. 968/1561), and widely available in print as well as in manuscript form. Having died in the middle of Ebussuud’s period in the office of shaykh al-Islām/şeyhülislām, Taşkhuprizāde did not write about him; however, since his biographical work encompasses almost all of the ʿulamās that preceded Ebussuud’s life span he proves relevant for the biography of Ebussuud in terms of connecting the latter to his teachers and to the scholarly lineage to which he might have belonged.

For the biography of Ebussuud, we are equipped with a few basic/early and contemporary sources, as well as several late biographical notices which drew on them. The contemporary sources comprise the two supplements (dhayls) on Taşkhuprizāda’s magnum opus al-Shaqāʾiq: First is al-ʿIqd al-manẓūm fi ḏikr afāḏil al-Rūm by Molla ʿAlī b. Bāli, also known as Maṇq (1292/1584) and the second is Ḥadāʾiḵuʾl-haḵāʾiḵ fi tekmi iletiʿs-šekāʾiḵ, a supplement in Ottoman Turkish to Majdī’s translation of al-Shaqāʾiq, by ʿAṭāʾullāh b. Yaḥyā b. Pīr ʿAlī b. Naṣūḥ, also known as Atayi/ʿAṭāʾī, or Nevʾizāde ʿAṭāʾī, (1583-1635). Another contemporary

1 For the proper vocalization of the Arabic consonants m-n-q, see Repp, The Müfti of Istanbul, p. 7, ft. 13.
source is *Katā’ib a’lām al-akhbār min fuquhā’ mahdhab al-Nu’mān al mukhtār* by Molla Maḥmūd b. Sūleymān al-Kafawī (of Kaffa/Caffa, d. 990/1582), and the fourth one is the chronicles of *Kūnḫū’l-ahbār/Kunh al-akhbār* by Muṣṭafā ’Alī (of Gallipoli) (d. 1008/1600). Most of the later biographers seem to have drawn to a great extent on these early sources, and the biographical information they present on the figure of our study does not vary to any noticeable degree. Mention must also be made of the universal history of Nişancı (chancellor or the imperial secretary) Meḥmed Paşa (d. 979/1571) where a brief and laudatory one page account of Ebussuud’s pseudo-biography is provided. The significance of Nişancı Meḥmed Paşa’s account probably lies in his note that, despite the fact that Ebussuud is credited with having composed several works ranging from poetry, jurisprudence, fetvās/fatwās (religious responsa), to collections of liturgical prayers, his signal success and achievement is his *tafsīr* which, according to Nişancı Meḥmed Paşa, he wrote with “lights of interpretation” (*envār-i te’wil*), and the like of which had never been written by any Ottoman scholar. Even though Ebussuud is famous for his juridical personality within the modern scholarship, Nişancı’s remark, as well as the remarks of his biographers which will be presented shortly, draws our attention to the fact that Ebussuud owed his fame not to his juridical works, but to his Quranic commentary that to date has failed to draw the attention of modern western scholarship of Muslim exegetical studies.

We have no certain way of ascertaining which of the aforementioned contemporaries wrote before another, and/or who drew upon whom, and what or who their sources were. Nişancı was most likely a personal friend of Ebussuud and the lavish praise he showers on him must be considered in light of the fact that he was writing about a prominent state figure who would

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undoubtedly read his book.³ 'Ali’s Kūnhū’l-ahbār, on the other hand, lacks any excessive adulation for Ebussuud and, therefore, renders the information he provides somehow more credible. Manq ‘Ali’s al-’Iqd, written in Arabic, is an invaluable source and an indispensable supplement to that of Tāshkuprızāde for the period of 1560-1574. Not only does he provide a lengthy account on Ebussuud, but also a copy of the graduation license in its entirety issued by Ebussuud to one of his students. ‘Atā’ī, who provides an account of Manq ‘Ali’s life, must definitely have drawn on him as one of his sources. We do not know what or who Manq ‘Ali’s sources were, but considering the fact that he was a member of the ‟ilmiyal/scholarly apparatus of the state, and the fact that he included in his work those who lived during his life and with whom he was acquainted, we may safely presume that he knew most of his entries personally.⁴

Arguably, the most important supplement to Tāshkuprızāda’s work is ‘Atā’ī’s Ḥadā’īk, written in florid style Ottoman Turkish in 1044/1634 and first printed in Istanbul in 1268/1852, which continues from the point al-Shaqa‘iq leaves off, down into the reign of Murad IV (r. 1623-1640).⁵ The significance attached to this work may be found in the detailed and specific information it provides on the biographies of scholars it covers.⁶ Unlike Nişancı’s work, the elegant style used in this work befitting the lavish praise, for example, ‘Atā’ī showers on Ebussuud in particular, and his other subjects in general, does not diminish the value of the work in its wealth of material. However, some of his extravagant remarks may lead to misunderstandings about factual data, and therefore, caution must be exercised. Since ‘Atā’ī’s

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⁵ For a number of other supplements, see Atçıl, “The Formation” p. 11.
life span is relatively late compared to the other early sources mentioned above, he must have had access to them and he must have somehow drawn on them. Aside from the aforementioned sources of Nişancı, Muştafa ‘Alî, and Manq ’Alî that ’Atā’î must have had access to, he must also have had other sources owing to his genealogical and pedagogical background. 7 His mother was the aforementioned Nişancı’s daughter, a genealogical link that must have provided him with a wealth of specific information, and one of his teachers was the son-in-law of Ma’lûlza/Me˘hmed, one of Ebussuud’s assistants during his tenure as shaykh al-Islam and who, also later, married one of Ebussuud’s daughters; a pedagogical link that must have equipped him with the information and motive for presenting Ebussuud in a fluid and detailed fashion. 8

The edificatory nature of the abovementioned biographical dictionaries is undeniably present and one must exercise caution in taking the information in them at face value. Therefore the use of documentary evidence, however scarce it may be, where possible, is made in reconstructing the historical account of Ebussuud’s life.

8 Ibid., p. 8.
3.2. Ebussuud’s life and career

Based on the controversy reflected in the early and the late sources on Ebussuud’s birth, we cannot establish the exact date of his birth. While al-Kafawī mentions a broader “the turn of the tenth (Hijrī) century” for Ebussuud’s birth date, Manq ’Alī establishes it to be 898/1492; yet, according to ’Atā’ī he was born in 17 Ṣafār 896/30 December 1490. To these may be added the birth date given by a later source, Devha-yi mešāyih-i kibār of Mustaṣṭīmezāde/Mustaṣṭīmezāda (d. 1202/1787), who determines it to be 19 Ṣafār 897/01 January 1491. On the other hand, al-Dhababī, the tafsīr historian, without referencing any source, gives Ebussuud’s birth date as 893/1487, an account that cannot be corroborated by any source available. Most of the late researchers tend to prefer ’Atā’ī’s account to be more accurate, however without any substantial evidence. Nonetheless, ’Atā’ī’s account may be corroborated by the fact that he alone, Repp elaborates, gives a more exact date among the other early sources and mentions that Ebussuud was entering his 87th year, in Islamic calendar, when he died in 982/1574.

Our sources give us varying information on his place of birth, as well as his place of origin. According to ’Atā’ī and preferred by some late researchers, he was born in the Müderris/Mudarris village near Istanbul, an account partly corroborated by Manq ’Alī who stated that he was born “in a village near Istanbul” in an estate belonging to one of the awqāf (religious foundations) appropriated for the convent built for his father by sultan Bāyezīd II (r.

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9 Manq ’Alī, al-’Iqd, p. 440.
10 Al-Dhababī, al-Tafsīr wa’l-mufassirūn, v. 1, p. 245.
13 ’Atā’ī, Hadā’i’i, p. 183.
14 DIA, İA, s.v. “Ebüüssuüd Efendi”; Imber, Ebu’-su’-uda, p. 10.
1481-1512). Baysun, on the other hand, based on a vakfiyye/waqfiyya (an endowment deed) that was in private hands, states that he was born in İskilip, a small town/village that used to be in the environs of 16th century Amasya and is now in modern day Çorum in Turkey. His father Muhyiddin Mehemmed/Muhammed, based on the nisba (the name designating a person’s geographical origin) he was given by Tâshkuprizâda as well, was a native of İskilip where, during the appointment of prince Bâyezîd II as the Sanjak beg (governor) of Amasya, he earned the friendship of the prince who, upon becoming sultan in 1481, invited him to Istanbul. The author of the biographical article in DİA states that since Ebussuud was born 9 years after Bâyezîd ascended the throne in 1481 he cannot have been born in İskilip; however, no reference is provided. Şemseddin Sâmi, in his Kâmûsu’l-a’lám, probably having drawn on an earlier source or having related the nisba name al-’imâdî to the town of ‘Imâdiyya, a town located at 150 km south of Lake Van and 80 km north of Mosol around a castle built by ‘Imâd al-Dîn Zengî and named after him, implied that Ebussuud was of Kurdish origin based on his assertion that his father hailed from the village of ‘Imâdiyya in Kurdistân. New research, however, disproves the validity of this assertion: There can be no relationship between this town and Ebussuud based on his nisba name, because his farthest ancestor was known as ahlâtî/akhlâtî, not al-’imâdî. Ebussuud’s farthest known ancestor is Necîbû’d-dîn/Najîb al-Dîn Mûsâ al-akhlâtî who flourished during the early 13th century in Akhlât to the southwest of lake Van, migrated to Amasya where he was a mudarris/müderris until his death in 1300. The nisba name al-’imâdî, which was given to Ebussuud’s father and which is probably what led Şemseddin Sâmi to assert

16 İA, s.v. “Ebûssuûd Efendi”
17 Tâshkuprizâda, al-Shaqa’iq, p. 206.
18 DİA, s.v. “Ebûssuûd Efendi”
19 Idem.
20 Şemseeddin Samî, Kâmûsu’l-a’lâm, 6 volumes, (Constantinople [Istanbul]: Imprimerie Mihran, 1889), v. 1, p. 722.
that he was of Kurdish origin, is also related to one of the villages of İskilip. The village of Direklibel, one of the villages of İskilip, İ. H. Uzunçarşılı noted, was given the name of *al-‘imād* as the result of the residents of this village being infatuated with the high culture of Arabic.\(^{22}\) The terms are somehow related in that *direk* is the equivalent of *al-‘imād* in Arabic. According to Baysun, the author of the entry on Ebussuud in *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Mûstaţţîmzađe was the first who stated that *al-‘imād* was Direklibel; an idea that was rejected by Baysun without explanation.\(^{23}\) What also reinforces the view that he hailed from İskilip is the fact that, aside from Istanbul, Ebussuud established several *hayrāts* (public charity works) under his name in İskilip.\(^{24}\)

His father, Molla Muḥyiddîn Mehmed b. Muṣṭafâ became a sufi *şeyhl/shaykh* after he was a student of the famous Central Asian mathematician and astronomer ’Alî Қuşçu/Qushchî (d. 1474) whose niece he married.\(^{25}\) Molla Muḥyiddîn also received religious education from Müeyyedzađe/Mu’ayyadzâda ‘Abdu’r-raḥmân, a protégé of the then prince Bâyezîd II and through whom Molla Muḥyiddîn made the acquaintance of the future sultan. Upon his miraculous foreseeing that Bâyezîd II was going to ascend the throne, Molla Muḥyiddîn earned the love and friendship of the future sultan, who, having become the sultan, invited Molla Muḥyiddîn to Istanbul and built for him a a *zāviya*/sufi lodge which was frequented by great men of state.\(^{26}\) Ebussuud’s father came to be known as the sultan’s *shaykh*, and the men of state and the other men of religious establishment held him in awe and reverence. This biographical account of Ebussuud’s father presents to us the perfect background for the upbringing Ebussuud

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23 *İA*, s.v. “Ebüssuûd Efendi”
24 Abdullah Aydemir, *Büyük Türk bilgini*, p. 3.
received. He was born into a milieu of high standing men of power, and he received the essential part of his education from his father, who successfully combined the positive sciences he received from 'Alī Qushchī with the sufi path of knowledge he received from his şeyh and father. According to Repp, only Müstakīmzāde, a rather late source, mentioned that upon Molla Muḥyiddīn’s death in 1514, Ebussuud was offered the headship of his father’s zāviye but refused it. We do not know if this anecdote was concocted in anticipation of possible future observations that Ebussuud was to be viewed by some as being taken by the material aspects of the worldly life vis-à-vis the spiritual gain he would have been offered had he taken the sufi path: as a matter of fact, at least two biographers, one early and one late, did not hesitate to remark that Ebussuud was too enamored with worldly gain and was too much inclined to the men of state and power. Since the earlier sources do not mention such an important occasion, such accounts were probably meant to enhance and/or rehabilitate the relatively tainted status and standing of Ebussuud, and they should probably be received with caution, especially if we consider the fact that Ebussuud had not even attained the age of 30 by the time his father died.

Ebussuud is portrayed in a setting that is crowded with learning and piety linked to the great men of state and the Sultan of the realm himself. This same impression is augmented in the account of his marriage. He married Zeynep Hatun, the daughter of one of his teachers, the military judge of Anatolia Seyyidī [Karamānī ?] Efendi. This information is also supported in the vakfiyye 571, where the name of his wife is recorded as Zeynep Hatun who gave birth to four sons, Aḥmed, Meḥmed, Maḥmūd, and Muṣṭafā, and three daughters, Haṭīce, Raḥīme, and

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27 Repp, The Müfti, p. 222 (Repp does not provide specific bibliographical information on this citation!).
28 See ft. 69 below for the early record; and for the late source, see Cevdet Bey, Tefsir Usâlû ve Tarihi, p. 156.
Demir mentioned that in another vakfiyye, vakfiyye 633, Ahmed’s mother is recorded as Fahru’n-nisâ’/Fakhr al-nisâ’, and concluded that Ebussuud might have had a second wife. However, since no other source makes any reference to a second wife, it is more prudent to interpret Fahru’n-nisâ’ as a title for Zeynep Hatun rather than the name of another person. His sons Ahmed, Mehmed, and Mahmûd, and his daughters Hatice and Kerîme died during Ebussuud’s lifetime.

Our biographical sources do not tell us anything about the institutional path that a given scholar had to follow or the madrasas one attended. Rather, we are provided with the names of the teachers from whom one acquired his knowledge, and, if we are lucky, with the names of the books one studied. This phenomenon should indicate the fact that what was learned and from whom it was learned was more important than the institutions one attended. Both ‘Aṭâ’ī and Kafawî tell us that he received his primary education, what ‘Aṭâ’ī calls, in muqaddimât-i ‘ilmîyye from his father to whom, Kafawî adds, he remained a suckling in al-sharî’a, al-ṭarîqa, and al-ḥaqîqa. These biographers mention two other teachers who are also mentioned by Ebussuud in the graduation certificate (icâzetnâme/ijazatnâma) issued by himself to ‘Abdu’r-rahmân b. Şeyhzâde/Shaykhzâda, one of his students, and quoted in Manq ‘Alî in its entirety. While ‘Aṭâ’ī mentions the two with their titles as Šadru l-ifâde (the title accorded to the chief military judge of the European land of the domain) Müeyyedzâde Efendi and Anâtolî sadrî (a title accorded to the chief military judge of the Anatolian lands) Seyyidî Efendi, al-Kafawî points to them as al-Mawlâ ibn al-Mu’ayyad/Molla Müeyyedzâde and al-Mawlâ Sayyidî/Molla Seyyidî,

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31 Demir, Şeyhulislam, p. 24.
34 ‘Aṭâ’ī, Ḥadâ’iḥq, p. 183; al-Kafawî, Katâ‘iḥb, p. 264b.
respectively. There was probably one Müeyyedzade and it did not cause any confusion as to who he is notwithstanding, Molla Seyyid’s identification proved controversial for later researchers. R. C. Repp, drawing on Ebussuud’s own icāzetnāme, elaborately identified this Molla as Muḥyiddin Seyyidī el-Ḵocevī/al-Qojawi, not as Molla Seyyidī Karamānī as was wrongly identified by other researchers.

We do not have a detailed account of the curriculum Ebussuud might have followed; however, his student ’Abdu’r-rahmān Şeyhzade related from him that he studied with his father ḥāšiyat al-Tajrīd, sharḥ al-Miftāh, and sharḥ al-Mawaqi’f, all by al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī. Biographical accounts give us no further detail; however, in the copy of the icāzetnāme issued by Ebussuud to ‘Abdu’r-rahmān Şeyhzade, he broadly allows his student to teach the “great works of tafsīr” authored by the masters of tafsīr scholars. Al-Kafawī, the biographer of Ḥanafī scholars, relates to us a personal memoir during his student years at the Şahm (the eight madrasas/colleges built by the Mehmed II) that one of his teachers, ‘Abdūl-kerīmzade, who studied with Ebussuud at the said colleges, accounted for the teaching he received from Ebussuud as follows:

“I studied al-Hidāya and al-Talwīh with him, listened to his commentaries on al-Kashshāf in tafsīr and al-Bukhārī in al-ḥadīth. I received from him the foundations and the branches of jurisprudence and Quranic exegesis, and benefitted from him in various

37 The gloss authored by al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī on the famous work al-Tajrīd fi ʿilm al-maṭbuat by Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 1274).
38 Miftāh al-ʿulūm, famously know as al-Miftāh by Yūsuf b. Abī Bakr al-Sakkākī (d. 1229), is a grammatical/linguistic work that was the basis of innumerous commentaries and supercommentaries in the centuries following; al-Jurjānī wrote a commentary on it as well.
39 Mawāqīf fi ʿilm al-kalām is the theological magnum opus of Āḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī (d. 1355).
42 This person must be the same figure who was licenced by Ebussuud, namely ’Abdu’r-rahmān Şeyhzade, and the variance in name may be attributed to the copyist’s mistake.
sciences of linguistics and various sub-disciplines of rhetoric (al-ma'ānī, al-bayān, al-badī’, al-khawāṣṣ, al-mazāyā, al-qāṣā’id, al-khūṭāb wa'l-inshā’).43

Though the biographical sources fail to mention the tafsīr works that Ebussuud studied and/or with whom he might have studied them, we may safely infer from the preceding accounts that he studied, mastered, and taught what considered to be the major works in tafsīr.44

Before accounting for the career path that Ebussuud followed, we need to give an outline of the ‘ilmiyye apparatus that was operative prior to the 17th century within the Ottoman state.45

The learned hierarchy became fully elaborated only early in the 18th century but the seeds of its organization had been planted by Meḥmed II (r. 1451-1481) in his kānūnname/qānūnna (the law book). Exceptional circumstances notwithstanding, the system established by Meḥmed II remained operative at least through the 16th century, a fact that can broadly be corroborated by the career paths of Ottoman scholars accounted for in the biographical sources.

Once a madrasa student completed his studies, he became mülāzim/mulāzim and the institution was known as mülāzem/mulāzama. The term designated the madrasa graduate expecting a teaching appointment in a madrasa or a judgeship in a town, or, also, someone who already served a stipulated term in a given madrasa or town and anticipated to be appointed to another, usually a higher one in rank. Mülāzem literally meant attendance, in this case attendance upon the każasker/Qadī al-‘askar, the chief military judge, who represented the sultan in the learned hierarchy and who was invested with the task of appointing mülāzims. No madrasa graduate automatically attained to the status of mülāzim upon graduation, but it depended on a

44 One cannot help ask what the “major works of tafsīr” were? We do not possess factual data about the entire curriculum of madrasa programs; however, historical evidence suggests that the Quranic commentaries of al-Zamakhshārī and al-Baydāwī were the staples of advanced curriculum in the field of tafsīr.
45 The following account is largely based on the two seminal and widely referenced studies and surveys of Repp’s The Mufti of Istanbul, pp. 27-73, and İsmail H. Uzuņçarşılı’s Osmanlı devletinin ilmiye teşkilâtı, pp. 45-67 and 83-161.
patronage of a high-ranking member of the learned hierarchy. Prior to Ebussuud’s regulating the office of mülāzemet, the process of nominating madrasa graduates for mülāzemet probably transpired in a rather disorganized manner or it had long fallen into manipulative misuses. A mülāzim, candidate for office, needed to register with the office of każasker corresponding to the part of the empire, Anatolian or European, in which he wished to be appointed either as a müderris (teacher) in madrasa or a judge in a small town. The high-ranking judgeships were institutionalized as mevlevīyet/mawlawiyya (the holder of this rank was called Molla/Mawlā) and comprised the two military judgeships of European and Anatolian lands, and the judgeships of the central cities of Ottoman realm, first Istanbul, Bursa, and Edirne, and with the conquest of Arab lands, Cairo, Damascus, Aleppo, Baghdad, Mecca, Madīna. Ascendance to the office of Mevlevīyet was possible only through professorship in one of the high-ranking madrasa and the career path of the town judgeship was theoretically a relative dead end; however, internal crossing of career lines was possible, exceptions notwithstanding, mostly from professorship to judge which was somehow encouraged as well.46

The career path outlined above applied only to those madrasa graduates who desired to advance in the learned apparatus of the government, but it was not the only and/or single career path to which a madrasa graduate could aspire. The latter also had the option of seeking a career path in the bureaucratic apparatus (the kalemīye/al-qalamiyya) of the government, an example of which is found in the figure of Celâlzāde Muṣṭafā.47

While still studying under his father, the news of Ebussuud’s scholarly skills reached Sultan Bāyezīd II (r. 1481-1512) that according to ’Aṭā‘î, the latter rewarded him with the daily

46 See, for example, Repp’s account on Molla Bostān, initially a town judge, who, with the intercession of Każaskers and the imperial decree, was allowed to rejoin the professorship stream and then attain to the post of chief military judge in the end.
stipend of, what ’Aṭā’ī terms, “30 akçe (asper) çelebi ’ulūfesi” and honored him to kiss his hands in his own right.48 While ’Aṭā’ī does not tell us about his source on this anecdote, earlier sources, Manq’Alī and al-Kafawī, lack this auspicious event.

Having earned his mülazemet from the kaẓasker of Anatolia Molla Seyyidī, Ebussuud’s first appointment offer as a müderris, in one of the provincial madrasas away from Istanbul, with the daily salary of 25 akçes came in 922/1516 from Kamālpashāzāda, who had just become the military judge of Anatolia earlier that year.49 While it is not clear if Kamālpashāzāda wanted to drive Ebussuud away from Istanbul or he was simply enforcing an established tradition of appointing a first-time mülâzim to a 25-akçe a day madrasa, which happened to be in this case away from Istanbul, accepting Kamālpashāzāda’s offer would probably have meant a relative loss of income and prestige, and Ebussuud was probably going to turn it down. However, if we were to believe ’Aṭā’ī’s account about the rewarding of sultan who already established Ebussuud’s rank as 30 akçes daily scholar, Ebussuud should not have been so happy with Kamālpashāzāda’s offer, and before outright turning it down, the müderris of İnégol/İshak Paşa madrasa Bursevî Şems Çelebi died and Ebussuud was transferred instead as the müderris there with the daily salary of 30 akçes.50 Our sources do not provide any details on how Ebussuud was able to circumvent Kamālpashāzāda’s appointment, which might have very well angered the latter; nevertheless, since Ebussuud had earlier been honored by sultan Bāyezīd II and continued to receive his stipend during his successor Selim II (r. 1512-1520), it is not unlikely that he appealed to the new sultan directly and secured a higher position through him. This patronage relationship between Ebussuud and the sultan may be reinforced by the account provided by al-Kafawī who identified Ebussuud’s first appointment as being actualized directly by sultan Selim

48 Ibid., p. 275.
50 ’Aṭā’ī, Zeyl-İ Şakâ’iḳ Ḥadâ’iḳ, p. 184; Manq ’Alī, al-’IQD, p. 440.
Hān to the İnegöl madrasa with the daily salary of 30 akçes.\textsuperscript{51} Abdullah Demir asserts that Ebussuud was dismissed from this post in 1520 and this was the only dismissal he ever had; however no source is provided and we cannot make of what the reasons and circumstances behind this dismissal were.\textsuperscript{52}

After the waiting period of ten months, he was appointed in 927/1521, according to ‘Atā’ī and Manq ‘Alī, to Davud Paşa madrasa in Istanbul with the daily salary of 40 akçes replacing Aşçizâde Hasan Çelebi.\textsuperscript{53} We do not know what mūlāzims did during the interval period between appointments, and our sources do not offer any further detail. His next appointment was a point of controversy for our early biographers: while Manq ‘Alī states that he was given ‘Alī Paşa madrasa in Istanbul with fifty akçes daily salary, ‘Atā’ī identifies the next appointment as the müderris of Maḥmüd Paşa madrasa with the salary of fifty akçes daily in Istanbul in 928/1521-22 in place of Sa’dî Çelebi.\textsuperscript{54} Repp preferred ‘Atā’ī’s version, partly because of “the specific nature of information” provided by him, and partly because of the fact that Maḥmüd Paşa madrasa is also mentioned in other sources as one of the madrasas in which Ebussuud taught.\textsuperscript{55} Our sources do not tell us how Ebussuud was able to secure a higher rank post within a few months, but we may presume that he might have resorted to his patronage relationship with the new sultan, Süleyman I (r. 1520-1566), who had ascended to the throne recently. His next appointment came in 931/1525 to the madrasa in Gegīvīze/Geğbüze/Gigvīze (Gebze)\textsuperscript{56}, a small town to the east of Istanbul.\textsuperscript{57} Why

\textsuperscript{51} Al-Kafawī, \textit{Katā’ib}, 265ba.
\textsuperscript{52} Demir, \textit{Şeyhülislam Ebussuud Efendi}, p. 33.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., p. 440; p. 184.
\textsuperscript{55} Repp, \textit{The Mufti}, p. 276.
\textsuperscript{56} Nuri Albayrak vocalized it as “Geğbüze” in his \textit{Osmanlı yer adları sözlüğü}, (Istanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal TarihVakfı, 2001), p. 59; Baltacı locates Mustafa Paşa madrasa in Gebze, see Cahid Baltacı, \textit{XV.-XVI Asırlar osmanlı medreseleri}, p. 520.
\textsuperscript{57} ‘Atā’ī, \textit{Hada’ık}, p. 184
Ebussuud would want a post away from Istanbul at this stage can probably be explained as follows: With Bayezīd II’s abdication of the throne in 1512, the death of his father in 1514, and the death of one of his teachers, Müeyyedzade in 1516, Ebussuud must have realized that he had been running out of patrons. His other teacher, Muhyi’-d-dīn el-Ḵoceanī, though still alive, was out of office as well. Muṣṭafā Paşa was only a second vezīr and his madrasa cannot have been higher in rank than the one Ebussuud served in his last appointment. But in the long term, Muṣṭafā Paşa was probably one of the links, if not the only one, through whom Ebussuud could attach himself to the court of Süleymān and he accepted this new appointment which would otherwise be considered a demotion.

His subsequent appointments as müderris are given briefly as Sultān/Sultanīyya madrasa in Bursa in 932/1525-1526, and Mufti madrasa at the imperial Şāhn madrasas in Istanbul in 934/1527-28.\(^{58}\) Al-Kafawī quoted his teacher ’Abdulkemerzade (d. 975/1568), who was a student of Ebussuud during his tenure at the Şāhn\(^{59}\), that Ebussuud remained there for exactly five years.\(^{60}\)

The date when Ebussuud received the rank of mevleviyet is not provided in any of our sources; however, in order to become a judge of imperial cities or a professor in one of the imperial colleges the said rank had to have been attained, and Ebussuud must have been accorded that rank recently, probably when he was transferred to Maḥmud Paşa madrasa in Istanbul with fifty akçe daily salary, and the path before him to the higher administrative positions within the ’ilmıyye had been paved. His last appointment to the prestigious şaḥn madrasa and the considerably long term he stayed there must have given him direct access to the

\(^{58}\) ’Atāʿī, Zeyl-i Şakâ’īk/Hadā‘iq, p. 184.
\(^{59}\) Also known şaḥn-i semān, these were the eight madrasas built by Meḥmed II around the mosque named after him, his nickname Fatih/the Conqueror, in Istanbul.
\(^{60}\) Al-Kafawī, Katā‘ib, 265a;
sources of power and patronage and ample opportunity to advance himself in the administrative branch of the ılmıyye apparatus. His personality in this respect is reflected in the observation Manq 'Alī made of him: “He (Ebussuud) was of some sort of flattery nature towards people, and he was excessively inclined towards the men of state and power.” He seems to have skillfully seized the opportunities, and, in Șevvāl/Shawwāl 939/March-April 1533, received the judgeship of Bursa in place of Așṯāzāde Hasan Çelebi. After six months, in Rebī’ II 940/October-November 1533, he succeeded Sa’dī Efendi as the judge of Istanbul. He served as the judge of Istanbul for four years and after that, in 944/1537, succeeded Fenârızāde Muḥyī’-d-dīn Çelebi, after the latter’s dismissal from his post, as the kažasker (military judge) of Rūmili (the European lands of the Empire). However, this last succession must have taken place not in Rebī’ I, as was asserted by ʿAṭāʾī, but on 15 Rebī’ II as was verified by Repp through documentary evidence. A marginal note in ʿAṭāʾī, also noted by Imber, recounts how the two kažaskers of Anatolia and Rūmili questioned the Sultan for having killed the grand vezīr Ibrāhīm Paşa the previous year, and how this insolent (küstāh) question so angered the sultan that he dismissed both of them from their offices and appointed Ebussuud as the military judge of Rūmili. This incident should definitely mark one of the auspicious events that characterize Ebussuud’s career (Ebussuud literally means “the father of auspiciousness”). It furthermore demonstrates how arbitrary patronage could very easily translate into whimsical dismissal and/or elevation of a given servant/subject of the sultan.

During his tenure as the military judge of Rūmili, Ebussuud is credited with initiating a series of administrative reforms and regulations in the ılmıyye apparatus that marked his period

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64 ʿAṭāʾī, Zeyl-i Şakā ’ik/Ḥadāʾ iq, p. 186; C. Imber, Ebu’s-su’ūd, p. 12.
65 Imber, Ebu’s-su’ūd, p. 12.
in office. Prior to these reforms, the candidacy of a madrasa graduate for office (mülâzemet) was a disorganized process which finally resulted, 'Aṭāʾī recounts, in some students complaining about Çivīzāde, the then incumbent kazasker Anatolia, that the latter was preventing them, who were apparently not Çivīzāde’s protégés, from becoming candidates for office. Directly charged with the task of looking into the matter by sultan Sulaymān himself, Ebussuud put the process into some sort of order by which every high ranking 'ilmiyye official would be afforded the right to grant certain number of mülâzemets at fixed intervals, and the mülâzims were to be registered under the kazaskers in separate registers (rūznāme/rūznâmche). Even though this regulation might seem to have served the state to control the quality and the quantity of future office holders in the learned hierarchy, it did not affect the principle of patronage between a mülâzim and those high-ranking scholars who were granted the right to nominate whomever they saw fit, and the right to issue mülâzemets remained the privilege enjoyed only by the high ranking office holders of the 'ilmiyye apparatus and a few other men of state.

After eight years of serving as the Rūmili kazasker, Ebussuud became the muftī of Istanbul, which later came to be known as the office of shayk al-Islām, replacing Muhyi’d-dīn Efendi (d. 954/1547-48), in Şā‘bān 952/October 1545, and most likely on the twenty second day of the said month, and remained in his post for thirty years until his death on the fifth day of Jumāda I 982/23 August 1574. All the 'ulamā and the vüzerā/vezīrs were present in his funeral prayer which took place in the Fatih Mosque and was led by muḥaṣṣī Sinān Efendi. He was buried in the courtyard of a maktab he had built in the environs of Eyüp.

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66 This regulation to invest the graduates of madrasas with mülâzemet was by no means the only way to receive posts; for other sorts of investiture, see Repp, The Müfti, p. 53-54.
68 Ibid., p. 184; Repp, The Müfti, p. 278.
69 'Aṭāʾī, Hadā 'īk, p. 185.
70 A quarter in the city of Istanbul named after the famous companion of the Prophet, who, according to Muslim belief, had come to participate in an attempt to conquer Constantinople but fell martyr in 656 H., and whose tomb
Probably at least prior to the reign of Sulaymān (r. 1520-1566), the highest prestigious office within the 'ilmiyye apparatus was the office of każasker, in particular the każasker of Rūmili, and the office of muftī was lower in rank. But with the term of Ebussuud in the office of muftī of Istanbul, the latter became known as the office of şeyhülislam/shayk al-Islām, and the rank of this office stood at the top of the entire 'ilmiyye apparatus as was evidenced in the salary and perquisites the holder of this office began receiving.\(^71\)

Ebususuud marked his name within the Ottoman Empire during his 30-year long tenure as the shaykh al-Islām, the most prestigious office an 'ilmiyya member aspired to attain. After Kamālpashāzāda’s tenure as şeyhülislam (1525-1534), both 'Aṭā’ī and Manq ’Alī recount, “the office was troubled and passed from hand to hand,\(^72\) and its roof was left unsupported until its reigns were delivered to Ebussuud and its keys were handed over to him who put things back in order and solidified its foundations…..”\(^73\) The basic task of the shayk al-Islām was to issue fetvas/fatwās, religious responsa, answering religious/legal questions. Ebussuud seems to have systematized the issuing of fetvās in ways that provided efficiency and speed, which in turn resulted in the increasing number of religious questions the office received. While Manq ’Alī related that Ebussuud would write answers on as many as thousand slips of paper in a day, ‘Aṭā’ī, transmitting from 'Aşık Çelebi, recounts that Ebussuud twice, when the number of questions the office received was so formidable, began issuing answers after the dawn prayer and went on until the performance of afternoon prayer, during which time he answered one thousand four hundred and twelve questions on one occasion and one thousand four hundred and thirteen questions on one occasion and one thousand four hundred and thirteen

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\(^72\) Of Ebussuud’s three immediate predecessors in the same office, Çivızāde was dismissed after having served for three years, and Kâdiri Çelebi resigned after having served for only a year, and Fenārizāde Muḥy’ī’d-dīn similarly resigned after two years of serving: see Repp, The Müfti, p. 240-272.
\(^73\) ’Aṭā’ī, Ḥadā’iḳ, p. 184; Manq ’Alī, al-Iqd, p. 441.

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questions on another. This anecdote was the evidence for Ṭāṭāʾī that Ebussuud was supported by divine power.\textsuperscript{74}

The systematization of fetvā issuance required that Ebussuud hire clerks, trained in law and the art of legal formulation, who facilitated his work. After Ebussuud’s time, the system was so well established that it was basically the clerks that ensured the maintenance and continuity of legal fetvās, and once the questions were received, it fell to the clerks to frame them in a way that the mūfti would sometimes simply say yes or no.\textsuperscript{75} Ebussuud, however, had the ability and competence in issuing fetvās not only in simple Turkish, which probably aimed at educating the Sultan’s subjects\textsuperscript{76}, but also in high literary style of both Arabic and Persian, several samples of which are preserved by the early biographers.

Becoming the military judge of Rūmilī first and the şeyhülislam of the realm after that, Ebussuud no longer needed any patron other than the sultan himself who revered him greatly not only as a friend but also as a holy person whose intimacy and presence he constantly sought as a divine blessing. Sultan Sulaymān (r. 1520-1566) and Ebussuud were very intimate friends, to the extent that the latter accompanied the former even in military campaigns, laid the foundation of the great Süleymâniye mosque in 1550 and composed the laudatory inscription over its portal.\textsuperscript{77} Imber noted that the patronage Ebussuud enjoyed through his office and his intimacy with the sultan led him to exert his powers to the advantage of his family and protégés. Ahmed, Ebussuud’s eldest son, for example, was given as his first post the professorship of Kāsim Paşa

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{74} Manq Ṭāli, \textit{al-Iqd}, p. 441; Ṭāṭāʾī, \textit{Hadāʾik}, p. 185.
\item \textsuperscript{76} Imber, \textit{Ebu’s-su’ūd}, p. 15.
\item \textsuperscript{77} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 15.
\end{itemize}
madrasa with the unusually high salary of fifty akçes per day, and his brother Şemsü’d-din Aḥmed was appointed to the Rüstem Paşa madrasa with the daily salary of fifty akçes. Similarly, his grandsons were also given high rank posts, “in honor of their grandfather” and “contrary to the customary practice”. Notwithstanding the factual information provided in the biographies of Ebussuud’s immediate relatives advancing to high posts rather rapidly, the cause of this anomaly must probably be sought not only in mere patronage relations and, as a corollary, in family favoritism, but also in the broader system of the government appointment system that was operative especially since the centralization attempts initiated by Meḥmed II the Conqueror. It was already a customary practice that the sons of high ranking ṣulamā enjoyed the privilege of being granted, as their first appointments, the professorships of thirty, forty, and fifty akçe madrasas. As an earlier historical example, the progeny of Molla Fenārī (d. 1431), the first shaykh al-Islām, were the first privileged class of people who were granted the forty akçe madrasas as their first appointments. This privilege was later extended to the progeny of other ṣulamā, as well as the progeny of the sultan’s teachers, owing to the individual efforts of Hayru’d-din Efendi, Sultan Sulaymān’s teacher, who was the figure behind a law issued by Sulaymān allowing sons of certain dignitaries to start their professorships at the higher ranking madrasas than would do the regular mülāzims. This practice of privileging the sons of high ranking ilmiyye officials was later to include a broader number of people such as the sons of vezīrs, kazaskers, and the judges of Istanbul, Edirne, and the Bursa as well. Thus, the system of privileging the progeny of high ranking officials of the state was the outcome of the centralized

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78 Imber seemingly related also from an early biographical source that Meḥmed, another son of Ebussuud’s, had been granted mülāzemet at the age of 12, but he cites no source, and our own research in the early sources yielded no such result.

79 Imber, Ebu’s-su‘ūd, p. 15-16; See also, for Meḥmed, Manq ’Alī, al-Iqd, p. 365, for Ebussuud’s grandson ’Abdü’l-kerim, see Manq ’Alī, al-Iqd, p. 439; and for his third son Muṣṭafā, see ’Aṭa’I, Ḥadā’ik, p. 428-429.

80 ’Aṭa’I, Ḥadā’ik, p. 32;

81 İ. H. Uzuncaşılı, Osmanlı develetinin ilmiye teşkilâtı, p. 71; p. 148.

82 Ibid, p. 72.
system of government that was inaugurated by Meḥmed II and all the successive sultans continually sought to solidify it.

There were three foundational branches of the state: the army (\textit{seyfiyye/sayfiyya}), the bureaucracy (\textit{kalemiyye/qalamiyya}), and the scholars (\textit{'ilmiyye/‘ilmiyya}). Filling in the cadres of these branches was predicated not so much on the principles of merit and competency as the principle of fidelity. Meḥmed II began the custom of appointing slaves, who tended to be more loyal to the sultan than did their predecessors, to high positions in the administration of the government, and the same practice, over the course of time, incrementally was being implemented in the ‘\textit{ilmiyye}’ branch as well. The fame that a given scholar obtained within the ‘\textit{ilmiyye}, or within any other branch of the government for that matter, was proportionate with and the result of the post they occupied.\textsuperscript{83} The ‘\textit{ilmiyye}, before everything else, constituted a class of people that guaranteed the proper functioning of a branch of government. The sultan, on the other hand, had to fill the key offices of the government with slaves and non-slave loyal people who would protect and defend the perpetuation of his dynastic entity. The ‘\textit{ulama}, especially the high ranking ones, were also charged with the task of facilitating this process of providing loyal functionaries within the ‘\textit{ilmiyye}, for the fidelity of the subject people, the implementation of educational policies, the local and legal administration of the state, and the legalization of controversial issues were all predicated on the religious opinions issued by them. Obtaining a reference from one of these ‘\textit{ulamâ or being their candidate for office was an indispensable tool for any person to prove their loyalty and fidelity in the eyes of the sultan, and Ebussuud was no different than the ones that preceded or succeeded him, and the system of

patronage was nothing new and of which Ebussuud exclusively took advantage. Not only did the system of patronage provide jumping steps for a few privileged/loyal clients, but it also provided support and solidification for the positions the patrons enjoyed in their posts.

Ebussuud’s command of Ottoman Turkish, Arabic, and Persian, in prose and poetry alike, is attested to in several instances. In his fetvās for example, he would provide the answer in Ottoman Turkish if the question was presented in it and in Arabic and/or Persian if the question was presented in either of these languages; and either in prose or poetry alike. We can perhaps dispense here with presenting samples attesting to his command of Ottoman Turkish, and samples attesting to his mastery in Arabic and Persian prose; however, a sample in Arabic and another in Persian, both in poetry, should suffice to demonstrate the truth of this historical fact. A question, probably by an Alavite/Kızılbaş who sought a religious fetvā for the rehabilitation of Alavite/Kızılbaş image in public, presented in the form Arabic poetry runs:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Naḥnu unās(un) qad ghadā da’bunā} \\
\text{Ḥubb(u) ’Aliyy(i) Ibn(i) Abī Ṭālib(i)} \\
\text{Yu’ibunā al-nās(u) ’alā ḥubbih(i)} \\
\text{Fa la’nat(u) Allāh(i) ’alā al-’ā ’ib(i)\textsuperscript{86}}
\end{align*}
\]

Ebussuud’s response would not only indicate his command of Arabic but also his witticism in the rhymed lines which run:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Mā ’aybukum hādhā, wa lākinnahū} \\
\text{Bughd alladhī luqqib(a) bi al-ṣāḥib(i)}
\end{align*}
\]

\textsuperscript{84} Ibid., p. 28.  
\textsuperscript{85} These are sectarian terms designating the Anatolian sub-sects of the Shi‘ites.  
\textsuperscript{86} Which can be translated as: We are a people whose main affair is the love of ’Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. The people calumniate us for loving him. And may the curse of God be upon the calumniators. For this religious question and the answer that follows, see Ibn al-’Imād, \textit{Shadharāt al-dhahab}, v. 10, p. 585-86.
Wa qavlukum fīh(i) wa fī bintih(i)

Fa la’nat(u) Allāh(i) ’alā al-kādhib(i)\(^{87}\)

The most famous one among several of his poems is perhaps *al-Qašīda al-mīmiyya* (the Ode of *mīm*) with which he challenged (*mu’āraḍa*) Abū ’Alā al-Ma’arrī (d. 1057), one of the legends of classical Arabic poetry, in more than ninety lines.\(^{88}\) The first source which mentions Ebussuud to have challenged al-Ma’arrī in this ode is Manq ‘Alī and all other medieval sources and modern studies on Ebussuud tend to reiterate this claim. No author, however, provides any specific information about al-Ma’arrī’s original, and also owing to the fact that we have failed to ascertain which ode of al-Ma’arrī Ebussuud challenged, we are at this stage unable to propose analyses between the two odes. Nonetheless, if we take Manq ‘Alī’s assertion to reflect the truth, we need to point to the fact that al-Ma’arrī is one of the number of figures who did not subscribe to the doctrine of the inimitability of Qur’ān and even attempted to produce literary works aiming to match the beauty and excellence of Quranic speech in some of their works.\(^{89}\) The ramifications of the assertion that Ebussuud matched, if not surpassed, al-Ma’arrī’s mastery in Arabic poetry and expression are manifold: First and foremost, Ebussuud attempted to match and surpass a legend of Arabic poetry who claimed to match the beauty and excellence of the Qur’ān;

\(^{87}\) It can be rendered in meaning as follows

Your taint is not (in) that, but it
Is (in) your calumniating the one nicknamed with *al-şāhib*
And also (in) your evil tongue on him and his daughter
Thus, may the curse of God be upon the liar.

Al-şāhib literally means the close companion and it is a nickname Qurantically bestowed on Abū Bakr (Q. 9:40) who, along with his daughter ’Ā’ishah, has been heavily attacked and smeared by the Shi’ites for depriving ‘Alī of his alleged right to succeed the Prophet immediately upon his death in caliphate.

\(^{88}\) *Mu’āraḍa* is a sub-genre of belles-letters and poetry in Arabic in which an author composes a work in prose or poetry, both are generically termed as *naẓīra* (equivalent, comparable, matching), for the purpose of matching, if not surpassing, the beauty and excellence of another composed by another or an earlier author. See, *DIA*, s.v. “Naẓīra”; Ebussuud’s *al-Qašīda al-mīmiyya* was so famous that it engendered, according to Kātib Chalabī, at least three commentaries; see Kātib Chalabī, *Kashf*, v. 2, p. 1347.

\(^{89}\) For al-Ma’arrī and some other figures who might have attempted to imitate the Qur’ān, see Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, v. 2, pp. 363-65.
Ebussuud’s inferred message is clear: al-Ma’arrī’s poetry can be matched and/or surpassed whereas the Quranic speech cannot. Secondly, he also conveys another message to his wider Muslim readership: appreciating and fathoming the beauty and fine aspects of Arabic speech, of which the Qur’ān in his estimation as evidenced in his exordium to his Quranic commentary is non-pareil, is not exclusively the purview of native Arabs, and non-Arabs as well can appropriate it, produce excellent works in it, and interpret it. It is perhaps also this very reason that Ebussuud chose to model his Quranic commentary primarily on the Quranic commentaries of al-Zamakhsharī and al-Baydāwī, the two literary excellences in Quranic commentary by the admission of overwhelming majority of Muslims scholars, Sunnis and non-Sunnis alike.

Although at this time we are unable to present a comparative study of the odes of both authors, we would like to offer here parts of Ebussuud’s ode in transliteration for those who are able to appreciate the fine aspects of Arabic poetry. Süleyman Ateş collected a number of manuscript copies of this ode along with some medieval commentaries on it and published it in its entirety in a separate article on Ebussuud Efendi.

\begin{verbatim}
A ba’da Sulaymā maṭlab(un) wa marām(u) * wa ghayr(u) hawāh law’a(tun) wa gharām(u)  
Wa fawqa ḥimāh maljia’(un) wa mathāba(tun) * wa dīnā dhirāha mawqif(un) wa maqām(u)  
Wa hayhāta an yuthnā ilā ghayr(i) bābihā * ‘inān(u) al-maṭāyā aw yushadd(a) ḥizām(u)  
Hiya al-ghāyat(u) al-quṣwā fa in fāta nayluhā * fa kull(u) munā al-dunyā ’alayy(a) ḥarām(u)  
Salā al-nafs(u) ’anhā wa ḫumnā annat bi na’yihā * sulūww(a) raḍī’(in) qad ’arāh(u) al-fīṭām(u)
\end{verbatim}
Sulaymā is the diminutive form of salmā which in turn is the feminine form of aslam (perfect, free of defects). Though salmā is also a female proper name, Ebussuud does not insinuate any person in particular in this ode. He uses the term parabolically to represent the worldly life (al-dunyā, also lexically a feminine word) which may appear to be, or which may have appeared to him, flawless and free of defects. Thus he renders it in diminuitive form in order to convey some sense of satire. In the rest of the poem he bemoans how the temptations of this worldly life turned out ephemeral and delusive. It is our conviction that he authored this ode at the very end of his life evidenced in some further lines where he inunciates that old age and decriptute had taken over him and is no longer willing to give in to this worldly life’s whims, wiles, and conceits; he is no longer taken by its beauties nor is he anymore careless of anything else other than the pursuit of its temptations. He also talks about how the age had also

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90 Cited by Süleyman Ateş, “Ebu’suûd Efendi” Istanbul Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi sayı 1 (1999), pp. 47-54. Though translation of poetry into another language can be rather challenging, we can offer the following:

Is there a quest and longing for other than little Salmā * is there yearning and devotion to other than her love
Is there protection other than under her haven and refuge * is there an abode or sanctuary but under her crest
Woe (unto the notion of) launching other than to her door * to horse forth and setting out
She is the ultimate goal; and if that cannot be achieved * may all the other worldly wishes/desires be ḥarām to me
The heart has (finally) found solace (by losing hope of reunion?) and become content with her distance * just as a suckling (loses hope) by being weaned
And just as a lover who has been watered his maturity by the time * and has turned out harbouring no passion (any more)
And it (the heart also) has awoken from the best of its temptations after it *had been immersed in it and broke off with the cup and the drinking bowl
I have erased from the slate of my heart the engravings of fame * so that it (my heart) has become as if it had never been touched by a pen/engraved at all.
degenerated and become corrupted, glorious days ended and the realm had been pervaded by darkness. Thus, in light of Ebussuud’s own and abundant admission in various parts of this ode, those who thought of him as someone who was too much taken by worldly achievements were probably not much off target.

We have previously mentioned how Manq ’Alī thought of Ebussuud as someone of flattery nature who was too easily taken by currying favor with the men of state and by the urge to pleasing people (most probably the elite among them). Though hesitantly, Cevdet Bey attributed the fact that his Quranic commentary did not gain as much fame as did that of al-Bayḍāwī in Anatolia partly to the fact that he was held to be too enamoured with worldly gain.91 One of his excessive flatteries, in Persian, is presented here as a sample for his non-Ottoman Turkish poetical writings. The following lines are authored by Ebussuud in his response to one of the letters that his intimate friend, sultan Sulaymān, wrote:

\[
\text{ Hàqqà, naẓar-i shâh-i cihân Hàqqbîn est * ra’yash sanad-i shar’ va ’imād-i dîn est}
\]

\[
\text{Nazd-i ’uqalà īn masal dîrîn est * her kâr ki khusrav ba konad shîrîn est.}^{92}
\]

The moral and political entropy of the bygone days of the empire would later be taken up by late Ottoman intellectuals who would spare no poignant criticism and scathingly jibe some of the figures who had otherwise been held in high esteem. Thus, we find Namık Kemal (d. 1888), a late Ottoman modernist, intellectual, and a prolific writer, drawing a stark comparison between the Ottoman scholars of different eras. He recorded in his Evrâk-ı perîşân (wretched records)

91 Cevdet Bey, Tefsir usûlü, p. 156. Though Cevdet Bey does not specifically cite any particular medieval figure who might have held such convictions about Ebussuud, the fact that he was viewed so an easily be inferred.
92 ’Atā’, Zeyl-ı Şakâ’îk, p. 188; its translation can be rendered as:
Verily, the sultan of the world sees the truth * his view is the pillar of both law (shar’) and religion
According to those who possess [sound] reason, this saying is of time immemorial * “whatever the sultan (khusrav) does is sweet.
that while men of religion such as Zenbilli 'Alī Cemalî Efendi (d. 1545-46), the shaykh al-Islām of Selīm I (r. 1512-1520), would enter the presence of sultan and say “Wa Allāh lā yuḥibb al-zālimīn” (Q. 3:57), the generations of scholars that came after the likes of 'Alī Cemalî would instead say “Her kār ki khusrav ba konad shīrīn est”.

It is too clear to infer whom Namık Kemal refers to and whom he also describes as mere flatterer of power holders.

We have previously mentioned that upon his father’s death, Ebussuud was allegedly offered the headship of his father’s zāviye to become a sufi master, and that he turned it down. We have also mentioned that the source of this information was Müstaḵîmzâde (d. 1787-88), a rather late biographer of Ottoman shaykh al-Islāms. In light of two separate dreams Ebussuud is alleged to have had, we can now raise more serious doubts about the efforts of Ottoman sources in rehabilitating the image of Ebussuud to their audience. While only one of these two dream accounts, the one that is short narration, is mentioned by 'Aṭā‘î, neither of them is mentioned by either 'Aṭā‘î or al-Kafawî, the two earliest biographers of Ebussuud. The first dream account that 'Aṭā‘î relates from Ebussuud through unknown transmitters state that one week prior to Ebussuud’s becoming the kažasker of Rūmilī, the latter one day finds himself in the Meḥmed (Fatih) Mosque where a prayer mat is prepared for him in the miḥrāb, the place where the imām leading the congregational prayer stands. He thus leads as imām in congregation the 'Aṣr prayer (the late afternoon prayer) along with four more raka‘āt of Sunna prayer, completing it in eight raka‘āt. After serving for eight years as the kažasker of Rūmilī, Ebussuud would interpret this dream as the harbinger of his appointment for the military judgeship of Rūmilī, which, prior to his appointment to the office of shaykh al-Islām or perhaps more correctly prior to completing

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93 Cited in Süleyman Ateş, “Ebu’ssuûd Efendi”, p. 71; The translation of the can be rendered as: “And God does not love the wrong-doers”.
94 A rak’a, singular of raka‘āt, consists of a bow and and two prostrations; the ‘Aṣr prayer consists of eight raka‘āts, four obligatory and four supererogatory.
his Quranic commentary, was the highest ranking office within the 'ilmiyye apparatus of the government. He would furthermore muse: “if only I had performed the 'Ishā’ prayer”.

In the second dream account, Ebussuud recounts that while he was still a madrasa student he saw in his dream that one day he went to Zeyrek Mosque which was crowded with people. He continues “I wondered what the crowd was for and found out that the Prophet Muḥammad was having audience with the people. I respectfully withdrew to a corner where on the line in front of me stood Kamālpashāzāda. The Prophet sat down in the mihrāb and the Companions stood up around him in reverence. There was before the Prophet someone whom, by his outlook, I took to be an Arab. I was amazed: who would such a person be; someone that sits knee to knee with the Prophet while all the Companions are standing! I started listening in: the Prophet spoke in Arabic but the other person in Persian. The Prophet addressed him: O mawlānā Jāmī/Cāmī, I am speaking in Arabic with you, so speak with me in Arabic as well. I thus knew it was Molla Cāmī who said to the Prophet: “O Messenger of God, I had apologized to you; has my apology been accepted?” The Prophet asked why he had apologized and Cāmī replied: “I composed an ode in your praise where I said “I cannot fathom his secret, he is an Arab whereas I am an 'Ajam (a non-Arab, primarily of Persian stock), how can I love him, he is a Qurayshī whereas I am a Ḥabashi’”. The Prophet replied: “be concerned not, it is all right for you to speak in Persian.” Pointing to Kamālpashāzāda, the Prophet asked him if he knew him, and Cāmī replied no; the Prophet then said: “he is Kamālpashāzāda, the mufīṭ of the Muslim community (al-umma).” Then the Prophet asked him the same question, this time pointing to me,

95 The later night prayer that consists of, including also all the supererogatory raka‘āt, 13 raka‘āt; for this dream account see, 'Aṭā‘ī, Zeyl-i Şakā‘ iki, p. 184.
96 Probably ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jāmī (d. 1492), also know as Molla Cāmī in Ottoman circles, the famous Persian mystical poet and scholar.
97 Ḥabashi designates the modern day Ethiopian geography and it is unclear why he would say that he was a Ḥabashi; al-Jāmī is known to have hailed from eastern Iran; on the other hand, the probability that this person is another Jāmī cannot be excluded.
and Cāmī answered no again, and the Prophet said: “He is Ebussuud b. Yavsī\textsuperscript{98}, he will also become the \textit{muftī’}. I had this dream and after 30 years, I was invested with the office of \textit{fetvā}.\textsuperscript{99}

We may not be able to verify if the originator of these dream accounts is Ebussuud or someone else, but the message that was to be conveyed through them can not be mistaken. Ebussuud’s image in the estimation of a number of scholars, excluding the ones whose accounts might have very well been swept under the rug, was rather tainted and it needed rehabilitating. His pursuit of governmental posts and his intimate association with the men of state was projected as a divinely ordained and sanctioned decree.

\textsuperscript{98} Yavsī was the nickname given to Ebussuud’s father by Bāyezīd II; and it designates the acarids, most likely a tick, due to the sultan’s conviction that he would stick to the pursuit of knowledge just as a tick would stick to a person’s skin. See, \textit{DİA,} s.v. “Şeyh Yavsī”.

\textsuperscript{99} Cited by Ateş, “Ebu’ssuûd Efendi”, p. 41-42, who references it to the late Ottoman periodical \textit{Beyānu’l-hakk}. We have been able to verify the original source of this dream account in the same periodical as Haṭṭāṭ Vaḥdeti Efendi ḥafîd-i Su’ûd, who probably was one of the distant descendants of Ebussuud. See, \textit{Beyānu’l-hakk}, v. 2, no. 42 (1327 AH), p. 932-33.
3.3. Ebussuud’s select literary oeuvre

Despite his life-long engagement with professional service, Ebussuud seems to have authored many literary works ranging from jurisprudence (fiqh), Quranic exegesis (tafsīr), theology (kalām), and other literary works of religious nature. Owing to his professional career, Ebussuud is known as a celebrated jurist who brought the ḵānūn/qānūn, the administrative/secular law of the Ottoman Empire, into harmony with sharī‘a, the religious law, and, therefore, most of his works are jurisprudence related. Even though he did not write a compendium of jurisprudence that would cover all or most of the jurisprudential subjects, his fetvās encompass rather a broad array of subjects, and when he was asked about why he would not collect the most important juridical problems and write a book on them, he simply answered that he felt shame before Ibn al-Bazzāz (d. 1414), the great Crimean jurist, and his book al-Fatāwā al-Bazzāziyya. This would probably indicate either his incompetency in jurisprudence or the fact that he did not have anything to add to what was already contained in al-Bazzāziyya. A great number of his works are in the form of ḥāshiya/supercommentaries which must have grown out of his own teachings. However, in the estimation of his biographers, Imber notes, he was more famous with his commentary on the Qurʾān, entitled “Guiding the sound mind to the distinguishing features of the Noble Book (Irshād al-ʿaql al-salīm ilā mazāyā al-Kitāb al-Karīm)”. There are a number of bio-bibliographical studies on Ebussuud and his works, and probably the most prominent as well as the most scholarly one, is the list provided by Brockelmann who listed a total of 19 works by him. The other important modern survey on Ebussuud’s works, that of Nihal Atsız, surveyed Istanbul libraries and located 22 of his works in

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100 EI², s.v. “Abu’l-Su’ud, Muhammad b. Muḥyī’l-Dīn Muḥ. B. al-’Imād Mustafā al-’Imādī”
101 Imber, Ebu’s-su’ūd, p. 20.
manuscript form, many of which are not listed in Brockelmann.\textsuperscript{103} Atsiz was able to locate 266 copies of Ebussuud’s Quranic commentary in Istanbul libraries, 98 copies of his *fetvās* and provided a number of samples from them in transcribed form, legal edicts represented in his *fetvās* and *ma’rūžāt*/*ma’rūdāt* (collection of legal opinions submitted to the sultan for approval and enforcement), along with transcribed samples, his personal correspondence and personal poetry with transcribed samples, his personal collection of ritual prayers, treatises, etc.\textsuperscript{104} Since most of the works attested to be authored by Ebussuud remain unedited and in manuscript form, a categorized list of them is provided as follows with a brief description where available.

A. Quranic exegesis:

1. *Irshad al-‘aql al-salīm ilā mazāya al-Kitāb al-Karīm* [Guiding the Sound Mind to the Distinguishing Features/Characteristics of the Noble Qur’ān]: Innumerable manuscripts of this work can be found in several libraries of Islamic countries, and different printed editions of it can readily be found in Islamic bookstores. Since this Quranic commentary is the proper subject of our study, we will deal with it in more detail separately.

2. *Ma’āqid al-ṭarāfa fī awwal sūrat al-Fāṭh min al-Kashshāf* (Hāshiya ‘ala al-Kashshāf) [Points of Intricacies in the Beginnings of *sūrat al-Fāṭh from al-Kashshāf*]: A supercommentary of the 110\textsuperscript{th} chapter of the Qur’ān on the famous Quranic commentary of al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144) that, according to ‘Atā’ī, Ebussuud composed on a military campaign during which he accompanied the sultan to Hungary in 948/1541 while he was the kazasker of Rūmilī.\textsuperscript{105} Five manuscript copies of this work in Istanbul libraries are listed in Atsiz’ survey.\textsuperscript{106}

\textsuperscript{103} Atsiz, *İstanbul kütüphanelerine göre*, p. 7-61.
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., p. 7-61.
\textsuperscript{106} Atsiz, *İstanbul kütüphaneleri*, p. 58.


B. Compositions on Jurisprudence:  

1. *Ḥashiya ṣālā al-Hidāya*: His supercommentary on the “Book of Sale (Kitāb al-buyū‘)” not of the famous Ḥanafī work *al-Hidāya* by al-Marghīnānī (d. 593/1197), but on al-Bābartī’s (d. 786/1384) commentary *al-‘Īnāya* on *al-Hidāya*. Since *al-Hidāya* formed part of the madrasa curriculum, Ebussuud must have composed this work during his professorship at the *Ṣaḥn*. Abdullah Demir provides the catalog record of several copies of this work in Istanbul libraries.  

2. *Tahāfut al-amjād fī awwal kitab al-jihād*: Another supercommentary on the “Book of *Jihād*” of al-Bābartī’s commentary on *al-Hidāya*. Atsız lists several copies of this work in manuscript form in Istanbul libraries.  

3. *Ghamazāt al-malīḥ fī awwal mabāḥith qaṣr al-‘âmm min al-Talwīḥ* [The Winks of the Witty on the Section of Narrowing down the General from *al-Talwīḥ*]: His partial commentary on al-Taftazānī’s (d. 792/1390) *al-Talwīḥ* which in turn was a commentary on al-Maḥbūbī’s (d. 747/1346) *al-Tanqīḥ* on the theory of jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*). A manuscript copy of this
work is given by Demir as Hacı Mahmud Efendi no. 792, and another by Atsız as Bağdatlı Vehbi 2035.\textsuperscript{115}

4. *Thawāqib al-anza[r fī awā’il al-Manār* [Penetrating Looks into the Beginnings of *al-Manār*]: Another commentary by Ebussuud on the beginnings of *Manār al-anwār*, the famous Ḥanafī work of Jurisprudential theory by al-Nasafi (d. 710/1310). Atsız noted only a single copy of this work in Bağdatlı Vehbi 2035.\textsuperscript{116}

5. *Fetvās*: Forming the greater bulk of Ebussuud’s literary output, *fetvās* combine the ones that turned into *kanūns* and the ones that addressed individual questioners, which exist in several manuscript collections in Istanbul libraries. Aside from being the subject of a separate study, the history of these collections remains clouded with ambiguities. Certainly Ebussuud himself did not compile these *fetvās*. Imber noted that it was a task that fell on his clerks and those who succeeded them. It was probably his protégé, Buzânzâde Mehmed [sic] (d. 983/1575), and his *fetvā* clerk, Velî Yegān (d. 998/1589-90), who compiled them for the first time during Ebussuud’s tenure.\textsuperscript{117} Another compilation which combined the previous one was made after his death, and all the subsequent compilations must have drawn on these early collections.\textsuperscript{118} While Brockelmann noted only four of these collections,\textsuperscript{119} Atsız was able to locate 98 manuscript collections of these *fetvās*, several of which are a few hundred pages long.\textsuperscript{120} A modern compendium of Ebussuud’s *fetvās* was composed by Ertuğrul Düzdağ in which the author claimed to have culled 1001 of Ebussuud’s *fetvās* from over 15000 he studied, and presented

\textsuperscript{115} Demir, *Şeyhülislam*, p. 42; Atsız, *İstanbul kütüphaneleri*, p. 60.
\textsuperscript{116} Atsız, *İstanbul kütüphaneleri*, p. 60.
\textsuperscript{117} A. Demir noted several manuscript copies of this collection in his *Şeyhülislam*, p. 45-46.
\textsuperscript{120} Atsız, *İstanbul kütüphaneleri*, p. 28-33.
them in transliterated form in his book. A. Demir listed numerous collections and their manuscript records in Istanbul libraries.

C. Treatises:

1. *Risāla fī waqf al-nuqūd wa al-manqūl* [A Treatise on Cash and Movable Trusts]: Probably the most important of his treatises owing to the controversy it engendered in his contemporary circles. Çivizâde Meḥmed, the military judge of Rūmilī, declared illegal the establishment of charitable trusts with the endowment of cash or movables, and Ebussuud defended its legality. Meḥmed Birgivī issued a counter treatise, entitled, *Al-sayf al-ṣārim fī 'adam jaważ waqf al-manqūl wa al-darāhim*, in which he defended Çivizâde’s position, but Ebussuud won the day and a *kānūn* predicated on his fetvā was issued by a sultanic decree. Cash-endowed trusts were not a new problem and its legality was first tackled by previous ‘ulamā. It was probably Kamālpashāzāda (d. 1534) who wrote the first treatise arguing for the legality of such trusts. Prior to Çivizâde’s objections, most of the preceding *shaykh al-Islāms* had endorsed the legality of such trusts and personally endowed trusts with cash as well. Al-Kafawī, in his biographical entry on Çivizâde, depicted him as being a zealous adherent of orthodoxy who remained too strict in certain issues, opposed the majority and consensus of the ‘ulamā, not only in cash trusts, but in the legality of ritual ablution over footwear (*al-khuff*) as well, and furthermore, declared the great sufi *shaykhs* such as Ibn al-ʿArabī, and Rūmī guilty of disbelief. Furthermore, it was Ebussuud, during his tenure as *każasker* and Çivizâde’s tenure as *shaykh al-Islām*, who

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123 *DİA*, s.v. “Ebussuud Efendi”; Brockelmann noted different titles on the same topic, such as *Risāla fī masā’il al-wuqūf* and *Fatwā fī sighhat waqfiyyat al-darāhim wa al-danānīr*, see *GAL/S*, v. 2, p. 580.
124 *DİA*, s.v. “Ebussuud Efendi”.
complained to the imperial council (dīvān) that certain of the latter’s fetvās were contrary to religious law, all of which in the end led to his dismissal from the office of shayk al-Islām. It must have been this grudge that Çivizāde had against Ebussuud which led the former to attempt to discredit the latter by drawing him into controverses.

2. *Risāla fi al-maṣḥ ᣧ al-khuffayn* [A Treatise on Ritual Ablution/Rubbing on Footwear]: Another controversy engendered, again by Çivizāde on the illegality of performing ritual ablution while wearing footwear (al-khuff). Repp, quoting from the contemporary source of Luṭfī Paşa (d. 970/1563) entitled *Tevārīḥ-i Āl-i ‘Uthmān*, recounted that in the year 948/1541-42 when sultan Sulaymān heard about shaykh al-Islām Çivizāde’s declaring ablution over footwear as illegal, ordered his vezīrs to assemble the ‘ulamā in order to refute Çivizāde’s fetvā, which they thereupon did. Çivizāde revived the controversy once again during Ebussuud’s tenure as shaykh al-Islām and the latter composed this rebuttal treatise.

Ebusuuud’s works are not limited to the preceding literary works and many of the works ascribed to him are listed in the recent study of Abdullah Demir, entitled *Şeyhülislam Ebusuuud Efendi: Devlet-i Aliyyenin Büyük Hukukçusu*, and the encyclopedic entries of Baysun in İA and Akgündüz in DİA. His *Risāla fi al-ad’īya al-ma’thūra*, also known as *Majmū’a-yi da’avāt/Du’ānāme*, is a collection of ritual/liturgical prayers, drawn from traditions and meant to be learned by heart, in Arabic along with their translation in simple vernacular Ottoman Turkish. Several manuscript copies are available in Istanbul libraries and the edited versions of it are readily found. Also worth mentioning among his works is his poetry: His competency in

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composing poetry in Turkish, Arabic, and Persian was a subject of pride for his biographers in whose estimation Ebussuud represented the ideal Muslim scholar of his time. Surprisingly, J. Schacht, alone within the western scholarship, mentioned the poetical aspect of Ebussuud, though only in passing. The most famous of his poem is probably the *al-qaṣīda al-mīmīya*, which, along with many of his poems, was cited by Manq ’Alī, and it attracted many commentaries by several commentators. \(^{131}\) He is also said to have argued for the worthiness of Ḥāfīz’s fame among Ottoman circles by defending his poetry, which consequently resulted in Goethe’s composing a poetical line in Ebussuud’s praise. A *fetvā* issued by Ebussuud responds to the question of two individuals one of whom argued for the religious inadmissibility of reading Ḥāfīz’s *Dīvān* due to the fact that Ḥāfīz and his *Dīvān* came to be known as *lisān al-ghayb* (the speech of the unseen) and *tarjumān al-asrār* (the speaker/translator of the hidden). Ebussuud’s *fetvā* indicated that “Ḥāfīz’s poems (writings/maqālāt) overwhelmingly contain words of truth engendered by excellent wisdom and exquisite gems; however, there may, in between the lines, exaggerations/embellishments (*mūzehrafāṭ/muzakhrafāṭ*) that transgress the confines of Noble *Sharī‘a*, and the sound taste requires one to discern between them so that he should not take the venom of a snake for an antidote and, while staying away from the means that would culminate in painful taste, he should not deprive himself of the means that would culminate in sweet taste.” Goethe, in his *Westöstlicher Divan*, reproduced Ebussuud’s *fetvā* in verse form and in his own wording at the end of which he noted “Goethe thanks”. Not only did he thank Ebussuud for arguing for Ḥāfīz’s worth, but he also recorded in a number of lines his own views on Ḥāfīz where he further argued that little transgressions are what makes one a true

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poet and that the snake venom and the antidote are not two distinct things for Hāfīz; the latter does not heal and the former does not kill.\textsuperscript{132}

The biographical account of Ebussuud and his literary oeuvre has been the subject of several recent studies, both in Modern Turkey and recent western scholarship, and, owing to the fact that his biography is well-covered in these studies, we have chosen to give only a broad outline of its features, and would like to refer the reader to those modern studies.\textsuperscript{133}

\textsuperscript{132} For the \textit{fetvā} question, its response, both in Ottoman Turkish transliteration, and Goethe’s reproduction of the \textit{fetvā} in verse and his own lines of poetry thanking Ebussuud, both in modern Turkish translation, Abdulkadir Dağlar, “Yûnus ve Hâfiz ile Goethe ve Nüzhet Erman dörtgeninde Ebussuûd Efendi” \textit{Uluslararası sosyal araştırmalar dergisi} [\textit{The Journal of International Social Research}], v. 8, issue 41 (December 2015): 144-153, pp. 146-47.

\textsuperscript{133} Repp’s account in his \textit{The Müfti of Istanbul} is extremely detailed and can at the same time be supplemented by Imber’s \textit{Ebu’s-su’ūd} and Abdullah Demir’s \textit{Şeyhülislam Ebussuud Efendi}; as for his scholarly output, the latter, along with Nihal Atsız, \textit{İstanbul Kütüphanelerine Göre Ebussuud Bibliyografisi} can be considered exhaustive sources.
Chapter 4

Ebussuud’s Quranic commentary

4.1. The Prologue/Exordium of Ebussuud’s Quranic commentary Irshād al-’aql al-salīm ilā mazāyā al-Kitāb al-Karīm

We are fortunate that Ebussuud provides his introductory remarks in his Quranic commentary. Though it is rather short and teemed with adulatory notes on the Qur’ān and his dedicatee Sulaymān the Magnificent, a few words on the history of tafsīr literature and the nature of the Qur’ān allow us to gain some insights into his mindset that informed his Quranic commentary Irshād.

Ebussuud presented his personal view on the history of the genre of tafsīr in this prologue. He categorized the exegetes prior to his time into two distinct groups: early exegetes (al-mutaqaddimūn) and late exegetes (al-muta’akhkhirūn). According to the author, the former sufficed themselves with laying the groundwork of facilitating the meaning and understanding of the Qur’ān, setting up its structure, explaining its intentions and objectives, and arranging the regulatory formulations contained within it, all in accordance with how it reached them from the Prophet. The latter exegetes, al-muta’akhkhirūn, on the other hand, were more careful examiners and more attentive to detail, and sought to unveil the Qur’ān’s distinguishing features and disclose its lofty secrets so that people could witness the proof of its inimitability and superiority over any other holy book. Ebussuud singled out two compositions from among the ones that had been composed by the late exegetes: al-Kashshāf of al-Zamakhsharī and Anwār al-Tanzīl of al-Bayḍāwi.
Although Ebussuud in his exordium viewed these two as the most privileged and advanced in what Shuruq Naguib termed the subgenre of *tafsīr*, namely the rhetorical interpretation of the Qur’ān,¹ the preferential significance for Ebussuud of *al-Kashshāf* over *Anwār al-Tanzīl* is attested to in the treatment he devoted to it during his professional and educational career. Al-Kafawī, the 16th century contemporary of Ebussud and the author of *Katā’ib*, the biographical dictionary of Ḥanafi scholars, recounts that his teacher ʿAbd al-Karīmzāda, one of Ebussuud’s students, studied *al-Kashshāf* with him, in addition to other major classical works in other disciplines, during the latter’s professorship in the Eight *Madrasas* (*Ṣaḥn-t Semān/Thamān*) in Istanbul before he began his career as a judge.² ʿAlī b. Bālī/ManqʿAlī also relates that Ḥasan Beg, a servant of the grand vizier Rustam Pasha, studied *al-Kashshāf* on the chapter of Victory/*Sūrat al-Fatḥ* (Q. 48) with Ebussuud who, ʿAlī follows, also composed a ṣaḥiḥiya on the said chapter of *al-Kashshāf* during his chief-military judgeship of Rumili.³ The signal importance of al-Zamakhsharī’s Quranic commentary over the commentary of al-Bayḍāwī for Ebussuud, and for the Ottoman exegetical scholarship for that matter, can also be ascertained in the syllabus issued by the Sultan and drafted by the scholars-bureaucrats of the office of *shaykh al-Islām* at the head of which stood Ebussuud.⁴ Of the 12 *tafsīr* works that were stipulated to constitute the curriculum for the study of *tafsīr* at the Imperial madrasas, not only was *al-Kashshāf* privileged with occupying the first place in the list, but also four other *al-Kashshāf* related works, namely the ṣaḥiḥiyas/supercommentaries on it, were deemed to comprise the textbooks for the study of *tafsīr*. When compared with only the commentary of al-Bayḍāwī along with only one supercommentary on it, the significance of *al-Kashshāf* over the

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¹ Naguib, “Guiding the Sound Mind” p. 10.
³ ManqʿʿAlī, *al-ʾIqd*, p. 444.
commentary of al-Bayḍāwī for Ebussuud, and for the Ottoman scholars for that matter, is no small matter to be overlooked. Ahmed and Filipovic, the researchers who brought to daylight this document of utmost significance for the study of Ottoman madrasa curriculum, furthermore noted that of the eleven tafsīr works, other than al-Kashshāf, “eight derive, in one form or another, from it [al-Kashshāf], and even the remaining three are chronologically subsequent to it.”

Why these two tafsīrs? Why al-Kashshāf in particular? Can it only be explained with the importance and primacy of linguistic studies in the Ottoman madrasa setting?

We first need to seek an answer about why these two tafsīr works dominated especially the madrasa curriculum, and then further question why al-Kashshāf, despite its widely-perceived unorthodox theological contents, was more favored than the Quranic commentary of al-Bayḍāwī. Part of the answer can readily be found within the literary output in general categorized as glosses and commentaries and supercommentaries, notes, observations—şarḥs, ḥāshiyas, taʿlīqāts, etc. On his assessment of commentary and gloss literature on the independently authored fiqh/legal works, Eyüp Said Kaya proposed that the fact that only a certain portion of the entire fiqh literature commentated upon determined the conduit through which fiqh ought to develop and the texts that ought to prevail within the genre. For the genre of tafsīr, the commentaries of al-Zamakhsharī and al-Bayḍāwī were inarguably the only two tafsīr works that engendered the highest number of glosses/ḥāshiyās which consequently resulted in the fact that the genre of tafsīr, especially within the madrasa setting, ought to develop primarily through these two texts, and, thus their authoritative primacy became uncontested. The second reason can probably be found in the fact that these two commentaries are primarily, but not exclusively, linguistic analyses of the Quranic text, and in the fact that the significance of linguistic aptitude

6 DİA, s.v. “Şerh; fıkıh”
for interaction with the Quranic text had already been established. Al-Kāfiyajī/El-Kafiyecci (d. 1474), and Ṭāshkuprīzāda after him, listed 15 disciplines that a *mufassir* had to have acquired well. While seven of these disciplines, lexicology, syntax, morphology, derivation, and the three sub-disciplines of rhetoric, *al-ma‘ānī*, *al-bayān*, and *al-bādī’*, are direct branches of philological sciences, the other three of them, *qirā‘a*, *usūl al-fiqh*, and *uṣūl al-Dīn*, are also indirectly related to them.\(^7\) The significance of linguistics for the discipline of *tafsīr* was not a late development in the genre. Cerrahoğlu listed at least 22 pre-Ṭabarī works of literature that are grouped under the rubrics of *"i‘rāb al-Qur‘ān*, “*gharīb al-Qur‘ān*”, and “*ma‘ānī al-Qur‘ān*”, and that are extant and overwhelmingly imbued with philological analyses of the Qur‘ān.\(^8\) The medium of Divine address was speech/logos and it had materialized in the language of Arabs during the 7th century. The medium/text and the setting/context needed to be captured, ascertained, and verified. That is also the reason that most of the linguistic analyses of the Qur‘ān resort to pre-Islamic/Jāhiliyya poetry in order to capture the meaning and usage of a particular expression during the time and the setting of Qur‘ān’s first existence, namely the early 7th century in the belief and estimation of Muslim religious scholarship.\(^9\)

Shuruq Naguib offered a number of explanations for the popularity of these two *tafsīr* works, but some are more pertinent to why learning and excelling in Arabic linguistics were deemed extremely significant for a *madrasa* student than the significance of these two commentaries *per se* for the Ottomans. She argued that a student’s career opportunities depended quite significantly on their excellence in propaedeutic sciences which mainly comprised

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\(^9\) The origins and the provenance of the Qur‘ān as we have it today have been highly contested by a group of western scholars that are generally characterized as skeptics.
linguistic sciences of Arabic. Excellence in those sciences would pave the way for advancement
to college professorships and/or judgeships, the highest bureaucratic careers to which *madrasa*
graduates could aspire.\footnote{Naguib, “Guiding the Sound Mind”, p. 14-15.} While her reasoning is not incorrect, we need to voice our reservation
that excellence in those sciences did not depend on, and cannot solely have depended on, those
two *tafsīr* works. Students who were allowed to study these commentaries had already been
deemed advanced enough in linguistic sciences. We do not agree either with her assertion that
the rising interest in literary and rhetorical studies in the Ottoman *madrasa* milieu was a result of
infatuation, on the part of Ottoman scholars, with the high culture and prestige of professors and
judges in a way that is very similar to the more secularly oriented study of *adab* for the
Umayyads and the Abbasids.\footnote{Ibid., p. 15.} Rather, we believe that the rising interest in *Anwār al-Tanzīl* and
especially *al-Kashshāf* was the result of religious concerns which stimulated efforts to strengthen
and bolster the doctrine of the miraculous nature of Qurʿān, namely *al-iʿjāz*, a notion that was
also advanced by Naguib.\footnote{Ibid., p. 15.}

Classical primary sources abound with traditional accounts testifying to the fact that the
direct interlocutors of the Qurʿān were innately able to appreciate the verbal power and beauty of
it.\footnote{See for example the story of Walīd b. al-Mughīra in A. Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad: A Translation of
Iṣḥāq’s Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), p. 121.} Several verses in the Qurʿān openly challenge its interlocutors, who prided themselves in
being the masters of Arabic speech, to produce anything like it. There is no historical evidence
attesting to the fact that any contemporary of Muḥammad was able to call him on his challenge.
The inimitability of the Qurʿān was probably the most conspicuous claim with which the early
Muslim community, at least since the early days of Abbasid caliphate, attempted to prove the
truth of their religion against the newly conquered non-Muslim subjects with whom they began living side by side. The doctrine of the inimitability of Qur’ān was an upshot of a broader platform upon which earlier generations of Muslim scholars attempted to prove the truth of their religion to non-Muslims with whom they had just been interacting, especially in the centers of Umayyad Dynasty and the newly established cities of Kūfa and Baṣra. Not only did they enter into polemics concerning the non-Muslims’ religious issues, but they also needed to defend and demonstrate the truth of their own religion. Probably the number one issue that they needed to demonstrate was the truth of Muḥammad’s prophethood and the divine nature of the Qur’ān. The strongest proof that they could adopt was the Qur’ān itself in the sense that it was itself the very miracle which attested to the truth of Muḥammad’s prophethood. Owing to the free-thinking atmosphere towards the end of the Umayyad dynasty, some individuals, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, began claiming that the Qur’ān was not a miracle nor was it inimitable. According to a historical account, al-Ja’d b. Dirham, a tutor of the last Umayyad caliph Marwān b. Muḥammad (r. 744-750), was probably one of the first prominent Muslims who openly voiced that the eloquence of the Qur’ān was not inimitable, a development that is attributed to the nascent environment towards the end of Umayyad reign which allowed free-thinking more openly. Literary compositions expounding the inimitable nature of the Qur’ān began coming out by the second half of the 9th century until they culminated in al-Kashshāf which, for the first

time, ad seriatim analyzed the Qur’an’s stylistic and structural excellence for the sole purpose of demonstrating that it was inimitable.\(^{15}\)

Al-Ḥimṣī studied the historical development of the doctrine of \textit{i’jāz} and determined that probably the first systematic proposition about what \textit{i’jāz} involved and how it materialized was advanced by a number of early Mu’tazilite scholars among whom, al-Ḥimṣī added, were al-Naẓẓām (d. 846) and al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 869). The Mu’tazilite formulations instigated first the theologians/al-muṭakallimūn, and then the exegetes/al-mufassirūn, and finally the men of letters/al-udābā’ to weigh in on what \textit{i’jāz} involved and how it materialized.\(^{16}\) There are two main theories that concern what \textit{i’jāz} meant: the first one is related to the linguistic features of the Qur’an which comprised its eloquence, unprecedented structure and arrangement of its verbal expression (\textit{al-naẓm al-badī’}), and the excellent meaning its verbal expression conveyed (\textit{al-ma’ānī al-rā’i’a}); the second one is related to the contents of the Qur’an, that it comprised the news and stories of the unseen (\textit{al-ghayb}), either in the past or in the future.\(^{17}\) The way \textit{i’jāz} materialized revolved around two main propositions: the first one, mainly held by some Mu’tazilites, is the doctrine of \textit{ṣarfa} (deterrence) which meant that God rendered the Qur’an inimitable by depriving its opponents of their ability to challenge it; and the second one propounded that the quality of inimitability was inherent in the text of the Qur’an and it meant that even though it was composed of words and speech in which its contemporary interlocutors were masters, it was rendered unsurpassable in its style by God.\(^{18}\) The notion of \textit{ṣarfa} is understood to mean that the Qur’an is not innately inimitable, but rather it was made inimitable


\(^{17}\) Ibid., p. 43.

because God deterred anyone from attempting to produce anything like it. The Quranic verses that challenged its opponents to produce anything like it are Q. 2:23-24; 10:38; 11:13; 17:88; and 52:33-34. Muslim scholars have been debating about the aforementioned two aspects of the doctrine of *i'jāz*, and probably the earliest account debunking the notions that it should involve the prophecy of unseen past/future events was advanced by al-Khaṭṭābī (d. 998) who argued that some of the above verses, specifically 2:23 which runs: “and if you are in doubt about that which we have sent down upon our servant (Muḥāmmad), then produce a sūra like it…”, challenged its interlocutors without specifying content, and that it should similarly not involve the notion of *ṣarfa* based on verse 17:88 that runs: “… if mankind and jinn became together for the purpose of producing the like of this Qur‘ān, they could not produce the like of it, even if they were in each other’s assistance” and which stipulates that even if all humans and jinns got together and aided one another, they would still be unable to produce anything like it.¹⁹ Though the rationale behind this last argument was probably predicated on the notion that the Qur‘ān was beyond the human realm, the same verse can very well also be taken to reinforce the doctrine of *ṣarfa*. The rationale then should probably run that even if the humans and jinns became together in one another’s aide it is not beyond the realm of Divine power to deter them.

Though the inimitability doctrine was being expanded upon by theologians, exegetes, and litterateurs alike, the notion that it exclusively involved the stylistic and structural excellence and superiority of the Quranic speech paved the way for the development of the literary discipline of Arabic linguistics, *al-balāgha*. Nascent attempts of literary undertakings culminated in the systematic presentation of ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī’s *Dalā‘il al-İjāz* (the proofs of inimitability),

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a title which clearly indicates that the discipline of *al-balāgha* was engendered by the doctrine of inimitability, and *Asrār al-Balāgha.*

Notwithstanding the fact that some of the predecessors of al-Zamakhsharī did delve into the doctrine of *i’jāz* in their Quranic commentaries, he is considered to have epitomized these efforts to incorporate and apply the theories of stylistic and structural excellence into the discipline of *tafsīr*. Al-Zamakhsharī’s apparent and/or perceived success in his efforts is manifested in the unprecedented number of glosses produced by innumerable authors that succeeded him and in the centrality it occupied in the *madrasa* curriculum of *tafsīr* studies. *Al-Kashshāf*’s success also cultivated further interest in more detailed and advanced studies of *al-Balāgha* which had not received its final definition with the compositions of al-Jurjānī. Al-Rāzi (d. 1209), in his *Nīyāyat al-ījāz fī dirāyat al-I’jāz* [the succinct culmination in the absorption of (the notion of) inimitability], presented a better and structurally organized form of al-Jurjānī’s works, and al-Sakkākī (d. 1229), in his *Miftāḥ al-ʿulūm* [the Key to sciences/disciplines], attempted to definitively and conclusively delineate the subjects of *al-Balāgha*. But it was probably al-Qazwīnī (d. 1325), in his *Talkhīs al-Miftāḥ* [The abridgement/culmination of the Key], who should be credited with reducing the subject proper of the discipline to *al’maʿānī* (the science of meaning), *al-bayān* (the science of elucidation), and *al-badī’* (the science of [rhetorical] finesse).

Al-Zamakhsharī’s *al-Kashshāf*, however, has generated innumerable secondary studies throughout the medieval Muslim scholarship ranging from attempts to glorifying it to the ones that attempted to absolve the Muslim teaching of its allegedly heretical contents. Saleh’s recent

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22 Ibid., p. 109-112.
study on the early reception history of *al-Kashshāf* through its *hāshiyyās* reveals the fact that those who attempted to abjure and/or stem its rise within especially the Sunni educational settings did so only because certain parts of it contained what amounted to be utter indecency and disrespect for the Prophet.\(^{23}\) Others expressed their displeasure with it on account of its Mu’tazilite and/or anti-Sunni theological content.\(^{24}\) The success that al-Zamakhsharī’s *al-Kashshāf* was perceived to have accomplished, therefore, ought to be sought in the unprecedented rhetorical analyses it proposed. His first and specific reference to the importance of ‘ilm al-ma‘ānī and ‘ilm al-bayān in determining the authorial intent, which otherwise can less definitely be determined by the other sub-disciplines of linguistics, such as syntax, morphology, lexicology, etc., found resonance in the Persian/Eastern scholars, and thus, al-Sakkākī composed his *magnum opus*, *Miftāḥ al-‘ulūm*.\(^{25}\)

Al-Zamakhsharī’s commentary was not only perceived as a religious work targeting a religious Muslim readership, but also since it was a tool to corroborate the fact that the Qur’ān was the undying proof of Muḥammad’s prophethood, it could also be utilized against non-Muslims. There could have been no better medium than the medium of linguistics, a relatively positive science. However, in the estimation of Sunni orthodoxy, it also teemed with heretical Mu’tazilite content which, in the estimation of some Sunni scholars, posed a potential threat to an orthodox Muslim mindset, and it needed to be cleansed of it. Al-Bayḍāwī rose to the task, and abridged what related to literary topics of it, cleansed it of its Mu’tazilite content, and incorporated into it the Sunni orthodox theology. We have previously mentioned that, at least in the Ottoman madrasa setting, the Quranic commentary of al-Bayḍāwī did not definitively


replace that of al-Zamakhsharī until the 18th century. This phenomenon begs the question of why *al-Kashshāf* was still held in high esteem until then? We cannot provide a definitive explanation until further detailed and comparative research reveals more detail about these two Quranic commentaries in the Ottoman madrasa milieu; however, part of the answer probably lies in the fact that al-Zamakhsharī was the first exegete with whom the sub-genre of rhetorical *tafsīr* originated, and consequently the original work had to be preserved on account of historical precedence and intellectual history. Furthermore, as was also argued by Naguib, part of the answer also lies in the fact that though *al-Kashshāf* and *Anwār al-Tanzīl* constituted the core textbooks of advanced *madrasa* curriculum for the discipline of *tafsīr* in the Ottoman madrasa, they did not enjoy the same rank. Al-Bayḍawī’s commentary ranked second to that of al-Zamakhsharī, and even the former was itself viewed as a commentary on the latter. Therefore the commentary of al-Bayḍawī was a *tafsīr* primer that constituted the foundational part of *tafsīr* curriculum and addressed a wider range of *madrasa* students than did *al-Kashshāf* which primarily was studied at the final stage of *tafsīr* curriculum.\(^\text{26}\) A *tafsīr* primer, the commentary of al-Bayḍawī, thus enjoyed a wider audience that did al-Zamakhsharī’s *al-Kashshāf* which remained within the purview of more specialized studies in the discipline of *tafsīr*.

The fact that the stylistic and structural inimitability of the Qur’ān was the primary function of *al-Kashshāf*, and consequently *Anwār al-Tanzīl*, did not escape the attention of Ottoman intellectual milieu, particularly Ebussuud, who, in his Quranic commentary, followed in their footsteps. We find clear evidence in his exordium that attests to this fact. Ebusuud assessed the history of the genre of *tafsīr* in two broad categories:

\(^{26}\) Naguib, “Guiding the Sound Mind”, p. 13.
First, the early exegetes who introduced the meanings, founded the structures, elucidated the objectives, and arranged the regulatory aspects [of Qurʼān] in accordance with how it reached to them from the Prophet; and second, the late exegetes, among whom al-Zamakhsharī with his *al-Kashshāf* and al-Bayḍāwī with his *Anwār al-Tanzīl* stood out, added to the preceding, with further scrutiny, aspects that brought out its [the Qurʼānʼs] lofty and distinct excellences, disclosed its hidden superiorities so that the people could witness the proofs of its inimitability, observe the instances of its superiority and precedence “over all the other divine books.” For a long time during my study and careful reading of these two commentaries and during my teaching career when I taught, assessed, and reviewed them, I have wanted to arrange the pearls of their benefits into a fine thread and their unparalleled beauties in an elegant order, and I have also wanted to add to them the gems of truths that I have encountered in select books … in a way that would befit the majesty and eloquence of the Divine Word …

Ebussud thus views and contextualizes his commentary within the group of late exegetes whose primary concern was to accentuate the inimitable nature of Qurʼān in its literary aspect and, consequently, demonstrate that the Qurʼān is not only superior to any other worldly literary composition but also to the other books that are held holy by the subscribers of other religions. If we were to infer, the Qurʼān, according to Ebussuud, is inimitable not only because it is Divine speech, for he compares it to other divine speeches regardless of whether or not they have been

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27 The emphasis is mine.
distorted\textsuperscript{29}, but because it is, in a vernacular expression, an exclusive and limited edition of Divine speech.

We would like to mention here a little anecdotal story recounted by Kātib Chalabī which has significant ramifications not only for our understanding of \textit{Irshād} but for the history of the genre of \textit{tafsīr} as viewed by Ebussuud. According to this anecdote, Ebusuud was asked why he did not compile the pressing issues of \textit{fiqh} and compose a legal book/compendium, and his response was “I feel shame before the compendium Ibn Bazzāz (d. 1414) and his \textit{al-Fatāwā al-Bazzāziyya} that covers everything as needed”.\textsuperscript{30} While we do not agree with Imber who also noted the same anecdote\textsuperscript{31} and interpreted it to mean that Ebussuud considered himself inadequate in jurisprudence, we would like to interpret it to rather mean that he viewed the available juridical works to suffice the need. And if Ebussuud composed a \textit{tafsīr} work and not a juridical one, as a corollary, it should unequivocally be interpreted to mean that he did not hold the same conviction for the genre of \textit{tafsīr}, namely he did not believe that what had already been composed on \textit{tafsīr} of the Qur’ān satisfied the need. On the other hand, if we were to agree that he viewed himself incompetent and inadequate for a juridical work, the fact that he composed a Quranic commentary should allow us to draw the conclusion that he considered himself just as competent and adequate for a \textit{tafsīr} work.\textsuperscript{32}

The significance that Ebussuud chose to compose a Quranic commentary which primarily focused on distinct linguistic features of the Qur’ān cannot be overemphasized. First, there were practical purposes. Shuruq Naguib examined and demonstrated how the linguistic and literary

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\textsuperscript{29} The prevalent Muslim view holds that the previously revealed holy texts, mainly those that are subscribed to by the followers of Judaism and Christianity are distorted, tampered with, and falsified by human interference.
\textsuperscript{31} Imber, \textit{Ebu’s-Su‘ūd}, p. 20.
\textsuperscript{32} Naguib, “Guiding the Sound Mind”, p. 17-22
studies were cardinal disciplines for the Ottoman intellectual milieu and constituted the focal point for their exegetical and intellectual endeavors. This phenomenon is also manifested in the various other Ottoman exegetical endeavors which were primarily, but not exclusively, imbued with linguistic analyses of the Qur’ān. The biographers of Ebussuud noted that he studied Miftâh al-’ulūm, a fundamental text on the discipline of al-Balâgha, with his father twice. Al-Kafawī and the mufîr Qutb al-Dīn, an eyewitness source for the 16th-17th century biographer ’Abd al-Qādir al-Aydarūs, observed the unparalleled excellence of Ebussuud in literary studies, poetry, and belles-letters. Many biographers deemed it worth including several of his Arabic poems in their entry of Ebussuud’s life. Most noteworthy among those pieces of poetry is the one that Ebussuud composed in order to challenge the odes of Abū ’Alā al-Ma’arrī (d. 1057), one of the legends of classical Arabic poetry and, incidentally, according to some historical accounts, one of those who attempted to match the excellences of the Qur’ān. His message to al-Ma’arrī was clear: what you composed can very easily be reproduced or matched.

Notwithstanding the fact that Ebussuud was famous by trade as the supreme legist in the Ottoman lands, he had also traditionally excelled in literary sciences and it would only make sense that he should compose his exegesis in a literary style. There were also social, political, and religious reasons for which Ebussuud chose to compose his tafsîr in rhetorical style and attempted to match the fame and esteem that the commentaries of al-Zamakhsharī and al-Bayḍāwī had achieved.

33 Refer to the annotated bibliographical list in the appendix 1.
35 See for a brief account on whether or not al-Ma’arrī undertook such an attempt and/or what it involved, Ignaz Goldziher, Muslim Studies, v. 2, p. 364-365.
There were also religio-political reasons for modeling his *tafsīr* work after the compositions of al-Zamakhsharī and al-Bayḍāwī. Prior to the conquest and annexation of central Arab lands, the Ottomans were considered a dynasty which had formed on the periphery of Western Muslim lands and which was vested with the mission of carrying the flag of *jihād* (holy war, *gazā* in Ottoman Turkish) against the infidel world of western Christianity.36 On the other hand, the central Muslim lands in Syria and Egypt were under the suzerainty of Mamluk dynasty where the majority of Muslim intellectual activities took place and therefore were considered a major destination for the pursuit of Muslim knowledge. The Eastern Persian lands were also considered another major destination for the pursuit of Muslim knowledge and, as was mentioned previously, most of the early Ottoman scholars had either travelled to Persian or Mamluk lands for the purpose of advancing their knowledge of Islamic sciences. With the conquest of Arab lands during the reign of Selīm II (r. 1512-1520), Ottomans felt invested with the further duty of being heir to the intellectual legacy of Muslim history. Thus not only did they launch a systematic building of new *madrasas* that would vie to match the fame of those in Persian and Mamluk lands, but they also systematically began recruiting scholars who would, on the one hand, transfer the Muslim intellectual legacy into their land, and on the other would

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36 The role and significance of the notion of *gazā* for the emergence and expansion of Ottoman dynasty has been the subject of extensive studies; however, the majority of the Ottomanists tend to subscribe to the view that even if it was not the only catalyst for their rather fascinating and rapid emergence and rise among the other equally and even potentially more powerful rival Turkic/Anatolian principalities, it most certainly was an undeniably significant factor. The history of first two centuries of the dynasty is clouded with mysteries and most of the historical information is drawn from Ottoman chroniclers that began to be produced around the late 15th and early 16th centuries during which the Ottomans had been intensively engaged in holy war (*gazā*) against the Christian states of eastern and south eastern Europe. Thus, those who raised serious concerns about the idea of holy war being the main catalyst for the rise of Ottomans stipulated that those chroniclers projected their own time to an unknown glorious past for the purpose of invoking religious zeal that was allegedly similar to that of the founding fathers. By contrast, revisionist theories postulate that the notion of religious zeal and holy war was probably rhetorical garb used by a “predatory confederacy” which comprised Muslim and non-Muslim warriors alike, whose main goal was plunder, booty, and acquisition of slaves. See, for example, for a broad overview, Caroline Finkel, *Osman’s Dream*, (New York: Basic Books, 2007), ch. 1; for a synthesis see Halil İnalcık, “The Question of the Emergence of the Ottoman State” *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, v. 2, no. 2 (Winter 1981-82), pp. 71-79; and for a relatively more emphasis on the notion of *gazā*, see also İnalcık, *Ottoman Empire*, pp. 6-8, or İnalcık *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Klâsik Çağ (1300-1600)*, tr. Ruşen Sezer, (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2003), pp. 12-14.
breed a new generation of Ottoman scholars who, in their scholarly endeavors, would rival the known masters of Muslim intellectual history. Ottomans, thus, would not lead the Muslim world with sword only, but with knowledge as well. Although tafsîr was not the only Islamic discipline in which the Ottomans needed to demonstrate their prowess, it was, due to its intimate and direct affiliation with the Muslim Holy Book, the most highly esteemed field of knowledge in which all the other Muslim sciences culminated. The fact that the study of tafsîr was the purview of highly advanced students in the Ottoman madrasa also attests to the significance it was accorded by the Ottomans.

The unparalleled interest in the study of the commentaries of al-Zamakhsharî and al-Baydâwî warranted that any other new tafsîr work ought to compete with them. S. Naguib observed that, prior to Ebussuud’s Irshâd, there had been several instances indicating the attempts by Ottomans to produce a formal work of tafsîr. That Ebussuud’s two predecessors in the office of shaykh al-Islâm, Kamâlpashâzâda (d. 1534) and Fanârîzâda (d. 1548), attempted to compose tafsîr works should only corroborate the fact that they were to fulfill the agenda of an imperial project. Furthermore, the fact that Fanârîzâda was still paid 200 akçes, the total amount that an incumbent shaykh al-Islâm was allocated, after he left the office of shaykh al-Islâm for the purpose of teaching and composing tafsîr should bolster the assumption that a formally commissioned tafsîr work was in the making. However, neither Kamâlpashazâda nor Fanârîzâda was able to complete their tafsîrs. Ebussuud rose to the task and not only was he able to compose a complete tafsîr, but a particular one that would challenge the hitherto most

37 Naguib, “Guiding the Sound Mind”, p. 45.
38 Kamâlpashâzâda reached in his Quranic commentary chapter 37, sūrat al-Šâffât, of the Qur’ân, see Kâtib Chalabi, Kashf, v. 1, p. 439; and for a descriptive study of this incomplete tafsîr, see Enver Arpa, “Şeyhülislam Kemal Paşa zade ve tefsîr anlayışı” in X. Kur’an sempozyumu: Kur’an ve eğitim. (Ankara: Fecr Yayınları, 2008), pp. 195-214; as for Fanârîzâda’s incomplete tafsîr, if he ever practically began composing it, our search in modern studies yielded no result on it.
39 Tâshkuprizâda, al-Shaqâ’iq, p. 229.
esteemed works of al-Zamakhsharī and al-Baydāwī. Ebussuud’s achievement should also be viewed as an attempt to demonstrate that the Ottomans were also able to lead the Muslim world in intellectual endeavors, just as they had been leading and defending it in the face the threat of infidel western Christianity and the new heretical threat that had just sprung up in the east with the rise of Safavids.

As will also be shown in instances of his commentary, Ebussuud was too clever to aim for a single bird with one stone. There were obviously pietistic urges that allowed him to compose his commentary which must have also targeted a non-Muslim audience. There is clear evidence in his exordium that one of his main objectives was to facilitate for his readership the proofs and evidences that the Qur’ān was unprecedented and “superior to all the other holy books”.40 It was beyond any human capability to compose anything comparable to the Qur’ān, which consequently would testify to the truth of Muḥammad’s message.

The political ramifications of Ebussuud’s tafsīr cannot either be overstated. A tafsīr work composed by the head of the highest religious office in the land would no doubt reflect positively on the Sultan’s image. Probably immediately after the conquest of Arab-Muslim lands and their incorporation into Ottoman domain, the image that the Egyptian Arabs in particular held for the Ottomans, as reflected in the words of Cairene chronicler of the time Ibn Iyās (d. 1524), was that they were “bad, cruel, and ignorant”.41 As was also particularly noted after Selīm II’s departure from Mamluk Cairo and his death in 1520, the fact that the Ottoman regime was by and by

40 The emphasis is mine; though we have not so far been able to ascertain if non-Muslims within the Ottoman realm or in Christian Europe during Ebussuud’s time or thereafter had anything to say about Ebussuud’s assertion that the Qur’ān was superior to all the other holy books of various religions, the fact that he made such claims must indicate that he targeted them as well.

viewed less cruel and even Ibn Iyās toned down his criticisms,⁴² should lead us to draw the conclusion that there must have been some reconciliatory policy and rehabilitation process implemented by government authorities. But it was during the long reign of Sulaymān the Magnificent, the successor to Selīm I, that, with the help of Ebussuud as well, the Ottomans were able to transform their image into the defenders and protectors of Muslims and the preservers of Muslim legacy. A religious composition especially in the discipline of tafsīr that would at least match, if not surpass, the significance and esteem the commentaries of al-Zamakhsharī and al-Bayḍāwī were accorded would no doubt enhance the religious image of the sultan in the eyes of his newly conquered Arab subjects. On the other hand, Ottomans had already established their suzerainty through sheer force of sword, but they also needed to bolster their suzerainty in religious terms, and nothing short of a Quranic commentary authored by the highest religious authority could have fulfilled that purpose better. The political significance of this tafsīr could not have been expressed better than Pachawī/Peçevī (d. 1650), the famous 17th century Ottoman chronicler, who in his Tārīkh-i Pachawī/Tarīh-i Peçevī noted that “nothing like the tafsīr of Ebussuud had been composed in the reign of any other Sultan”.⁴³ Here, Peçevī clearly credits the Sultan with this Quranic commentary just as much as he credits Ebussuud. Furthermore, this tafsīr work needed to be one that accentuated the miraculous nature of the Qur’ān. Ebussuud, or Sulaymān for that matter, must have intended to imply that the apparent and continuing success of Ottoman power vis-à-vis their European counterparts is closely related to the fact that the former possessed the religious truth.

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⁴² Ibid., p. 172.
4.2. The reception of *Irshād*

Determining the significance of a given literary composition in history can very much be achieved by examining how it was received by the audience of the said work. Estimation of the authors of biographical dictionaries, the frequency of a work’s circulation among its audience, the number of manuscript copies, the number of glosses (commentaries and supercommentaries) composed on a literary work, and the reception of it in educational settings can all attest to how importantly it should be situated within a genre and how it can be related to other compositions in the same genre.

Even though Ebussuud is said to have authored literary works ranging from poems and odes to treatises on various subjects of jurisprudence and spent a greater portion of his career as a legist at the height of Ottoman power, his greatest achievement in the estimation of his biographers, as Imber puts it⁴⁴, was his Quranic commentary *Irshād al-’aql al-salīm ilā mazāyā al-Kitāb al-Karīm* (Guiding the Sound Mind to the Distinguishing Features of the Noble Book). Though Imber’s source is not one of the biographical dictionaries, but a bibliographical one—*Kashf al-Zunūn* of Hajj Khalīfa/Kātib Chalabi—his remark is on target. Manq ’Alī, the author of *al-’Iqd*, for example, notwithstanding the fact that he also mentions a few of his juridical compositions and several of his poetry, distinguishingly notes his Quranic commentary as containing things that “had been denied to other intellects and had not been heard by other ears”.⁴⁵ We have previously mentioned that Nişancı Meḥmed Pasha (d. 1571), whom Pachawī/Peçevi copied verbatim⁴⁶, did not only deem worthy the mentioning of his Quranic commentary alone, but also described it as having been written with “lights of interpretation”

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(envār-i te’vīl) and as a composition the like of which had never been composed by any other Ottoman scholar. Nev’īzādā ’Atā‘ī, the author of a supplement to Ğāshkuprīzāda’s al-Shaqqā’īq, presented Ebussuud not primarily as a legist but first and foremost as the “sultān of exegetes”, “the author (ṣāḥib) of Guidance (al-Irshād), the son of the possessor (ṣaḥīb) of guidance (al-irshād)”. The 17th century bibliophile Ḥājj Khalīfa (d. 1657), also known as Kātib Chalabī, in his entry on Ebussuud’s Quranic commentary noted that it achieved quick fame, its copies disseminated widely in various lands, and was received well by the erudite and advanced scholars due to its fine and delicate composition; He thus, Kātib Chalabī continues, became to be known as “the orator/speaker (khaṭīb) of exegetes”. Al-Kafawī, the biographer of Ḥanafī scholars, was somehow too comprehensive in his laudatory description of Ebussuud as someone who was “the unveiler of the difficulties of Revelation (al-Tanzīl) and the solver of the intricacies of the Book through exegesis and interpretation”.

Almost all of the secondary literature attributes the title of khaṭīb al-mufassirīn that was accorded to Ebussuud to Kātib Chalabī; however, the close reading of Kashf reveals that Kātib Chalabī merely expresses what he had heard elsewhere (fa ṣār yuqāl laḥ khaṭīb al-mufassirīn). It is difficult to ascertain whether this title was predicated on Ebussuud’s scholarship in Quranic commentary or it was merely a propaganda tool enlisted by unknown quarters within the Ottoman dynastic apparatus. No other Quranic commentary but Ebussuud’s, according to Kātib Chalabī, had acquired that much respect, recognition, and fame after the Quranic commentaries of al-Zamakhsharī and al-Bayḍāwī. He does deserve this rank, he continues, in spite of what it

47 Nev’īzādā/Atā‘ī, Dhayl-i/Zeyl-i Shaqqā’īq, p. 183. Ebussuud’s father was the master of a sufi order, and thence the pun with the words ṣāḥib and irshād.
48 Ḥājj Khalīfa, Kashf, p. 65.
49 Al-Kafawī, Katā’īb, v. 2, f. 263a
[his Quranic commentary] contains concerning the [doctrine of] transcendence (tanzīḥ)\(^{50}\). Another fine detail in \textit{Kashf} is that Kātib Chalabī considered Ebussuud to be lucky.\(^{51}\) Though Chalabī did not elaborate on his criticism about the \textit{Irshād}'s containing things he deemed to oppose the orthodox view of tanzīḥ and on the fact that he considered Ebussuud lucky, his reservations should be viewed noteworthy of one of the greatest bibliophiles of Muslim intellectual history.

Another near contemporary but non-Ottoman biographer, the Yamanī-Indian ’Abd al-Qādir al-Aydarūs (d. 1629), mentioned Ebusuud as the famed Rūmī who “was the judge of sultan Sulaymān of Rūm and the author of \textit{tafsīr}”. The author elaborated no further about Ebussuud’s Quranic commentary; however, he noted the testament of one shaykh Qūṭb al-Dīn who, having met Ebussuud during one of his trips to Istanbul, was fascinated by the latter’s linguistic and literary skills in Arabic to the degree that he uttered: “I was marveled at the Arabic of someone who had never even been in Arab lands; this is certainly \textit{a divine gift}.\(^{52}\)

Najm al-Dīn al-Ghazzī (d. 1061/1651), the biographer of the important Muslim figures of the 10\(^{th}\) Muslim century, broadly mentioned that Ebusuuud authored several works, but deemed worthy of mentioning only his Quranic commentary in which, he continued, the author compiled from al-Bayḍāwī, added miscellaneous material from the Quranic commentaries of al-Qurṭubī, al-Baghawī, al-Tha’labī, al-Wāḥidī, and others.\(^{53}\) One cannot overlook the fact that al-Ghazzī says nothing about how Ebussuud’s Quranic commentary related to that of al-Zamakhsharī, a work that is evidently acknowledged by all historians of \textit{tafsīr} as the primary source and model

\(^{50}\) \textit{Tanzīḥ} is a foundational technical term within Islamic theology and it revolves around the idea of God’s transcendence from creation in all aspects.

\(^{51}\) Hájj Khalīfā, \textit{Kashf}, p. 65.

\(^{52}\) Al-Aydarūs, \textit{al-Nūr al-sāfīr}, p. 319-20. The emphasis is mine and with which I wished to imply that, in the estimation of Qūṭb al-Dīn, Ebussuud was divinely assisted.

\(^{53}\) Al-Ghazzī, \textit{al-Kawākīb al-sā’ira}, v. 3, p. 31-33.
The 17th century Ottoman tafsīr historian Aḥmad b. M. al-Adnawī/al-Adranawī attributed the same epithets, sultān al-mufassirīn, šāhīb al-Irshād ibn šāhīb al-irshād, verbatim from ’Aṭā‘ī mentioned above, and ranked Ebussuud’s Quranic commentary on the same level with al-Kashshāf and Anwār al-Tanzīl.54

The 19th century polymath and exegete al-Shawkānī noted the Quranic commentary of Ebussuud alone as one of his literary achievements, and described it as one of the best and greatest tafsīr works as well as one of those that have been studied and examined the most.55 Al-Laknawī, the 19th century Indian biographer of Ḥanafi scholars, mentioned Ebussuud’s Quranic commentary as his most important literary output, and reported from al-Jāmi’ (?) that this tafsīr was neither long and boring nor short and wanting, but contained beauties and fine points. The author copied the wording of Kātib Chalabī as well; however, interestingly enough, he decided to include only the praising words of Ḥājj Khalīfa and did not mention how the latter viewed Ebussuud to be lucky and how his tafsīr contained some of what might be considered to stand against the orthodox doctrine of tanzīh.56 Cevdet Bey of the early 20th century, one of the last Ottoman scholars and a historian of tafsīr, described Ebussuud with excessive adulation and gave him the epithet of “al-Zamakhsharī of Anatolia”. It is evident that by Cevdet Bey’s time, al-Zamakhsharī and his Quranic commentary still maintained a central place within the Sunni milieu. Cevdet Bey was also of the opinion that Ebussuud’s Quranic commentary was superior to those of al-Biqā’ī and al-Baydüwī.57

54 Al-Adnawī, Ṭabaqāt al-mufassirīn, p. 398.
57 Cevdet Bey, Tarfīr usūlī ve tarihi, ed. Mustafa Özel, p. 155.
A few well-known modern histories of *tafsīr* also recognized Ebussuud as one of the renowned exegetes of the Qur’ān. Al-Dhahabī (d. 1976), in his compendium of *al-Tafsīr wa al-mufassirūn*, accorded Ebussuud a place among those who represented, according to the author, the school of permissible rational exegesis of the Qur’ān. The author described Ebussuud’s *Irshād* as occupying the highest point and the terminus that the sub-genre of reason-based exegesis can see.\(^{58}\) Ebussuud, al-Dhahabī contends, unveiled the elegant and eloquent secrets of the Qur’ān which had not been achieved by anyone else before.\(^{59}\) The late Tunisian exegete Ibn ‘Āshūr asserted that Ebussuud’s Quranic commentary was conceived of particular historical developments. According to him, the genre of *tafsīr* in the Middle East and Persian lands had taken up the mode of examination, analyses, and verification of the commentaries of al-Zamakhsharī and al-Bayḍāwī. This mode of scholarship that materialized in the compositions of glosses/ḥāshiyas produced innumerable topics of discussion round the aforementioned two Quranic commentators’ works, and, consequently, there grew the need for someone who would compose a new Quranic commentary that would sift through the accumulated discussions, winnow out the unnecessary details, and present a refined composition as the culmination of that historical period. Ebussuud rose to the task and delivered on the promise.\(^{60}\) Ibn ‘Āshūr also noted that Ebussuud spent his entire professorship and judgeship career, whenever an opportunity arose, teaching his close circle of students the Quranic commentaries of al-Bayḍāwī and especially al-Zamakhsharī. The mode Ebussuud adopted in his teaching was no different than the mode of mentioning side notes, elaborating on the previously written commentaries in a more detailed manner, verifying, justifying and refuting what was in the material of study. It seems that Ibn ‘Āshūr viewed the commentary of al-Bayḍāwī as a separate study of *al-Kashshāf* of al-


\(^{59}\) Ibid., p. 247

Zamakhsharī, and therefore deemed the latter to have constituted the pivot for Ebussuud. According to Ibn ‘Āshūr, Ebussuud considered the commentary of al-Bayḍāwī wanting and insufficient and, consequently, attended to al-Kashshāf with much more scrutiny than did al-Bayḍāwī. In addition to this, Ibn ‘Āshūr continued, Ebussuud also included in his commentary the results of studies and discussions regarding the two commentaries that had been accumulating in the preceding few centuries. Furthermore, the coherent composition and scrutinizing subtleties of Ebussuud’s commentary allowed it to be received by people with fascination, and its copies became widely disseminated everywhere in the Muslim educational centers, especially after the Ottomans established their suzerainty over the greater part of Muslim geography. Ibn ‘Āshūr also noted that Ebussuud’s Irshād became a textbook in the 17th and 18th century Tunisian madrasas, and Muḥammad Zaytūna al-Manastirī, one of the Tunisian scholars of that time period, wrote a gloss/hāshiya on Irshād and taught it. Considering the fact that shaykh Zaytūna travelled extensively between Tunisia, Alexandria, Syria, and the holy cities of Makka and Madīna while he was still composing his hāshiya and teaching it, the reach and spread of Irshād can be better appreciated.

The number of extant manuscript copies and their wide circulation within the Muslim geography and elsewhere is another index for the popularity of a given literary work and its reception history. Al-Fihris al-shāmil, probably one of the most comprehensive indexes of Muslim literature in various disciplines to date, listed 454 manuscript copies (some are complete and some others incomplete) of Ebussuud’s Irshād scattered all around the libraries of the

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61 Ibn ‘Āshūr, al-Tafsīr wa rijāluh, p. 133.
world. When we compare the number of *Irshād*’s manuscript copies with the number of manuscript copies of other famed *tafsīr* works, we realize that it was the fourth most copied work of *tafsīr* in Muslim literary history. The authors of *al-Fihris* listed 1391 complete and incomplete copies of *Anwār Tanzīl*, 886 of *al-Kashshāf*, 571 of *Ma’ālim an-Tanzīl* of al-Baghawī, and 452 of *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb* of al-Rāzī.

Another index of the popularity and authoritative nature of a given literary work is the number of glosses and marginal notes (*sharhs/hāshiyas/ta’līqāts*) it received, and consequently how frequently it was the subject of study in its respective field. Yunus Ekin listed 18 gloss works on Ebussuud’s Quranic commentary, some of which are in the ḥāshiya-style while some others are in the *ta’liqā*-style. While most of these glosses were not composed on the entirety of *Irshād*, some of them are integrated with the commentaries of al-Zamakhsharī and al-Bayḍāwī. *Al-Fihris al-Shāmil* listed a total of nine ḥāshiya and *ta’liqa*-style compositions on *Irshād*, one of which is by an unidentified author and three of which are not on the list of Ekin. Inarguably, the commentaries of al-Zamakhsharī and al-Bayḍāwī engendered the biggest number of glosses in the genre of *tafsīr*, while the *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* probably achieved the third place. Thus, the number of glosses written on Ebussuud’s Quranic commentary may safely indicate that it was the fourth commentary in the genre that attracted the most *ḥāshiya*. Mentioning one of the glosses, that of Raḍī al-Dīn b. Yūsuf al-Maqdisī (d. 1619), Ḥājj Khalīfā noted that the wording of this author runs: “*al-Kashshāf* said: …, al-Qāḍī (al-Bayḍāwī) said: …, al-Muftī

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64 See *al-Fihris*, in the abovementioned order, part I, pp. 280-320; 155-182; 131-149; and 222-237; A caveat here must be noted: the Quranic commentary of al-Rāzī is at least twice the size of other four most copied works.
(Ebussuud) said: …” followed by an adjudication. Not only did the muhashshäš, the authors of ĥâshiyas, of Ebussuud’s Quranic commentary attempt to integrate the latter’s work into the teaching curriculum in the discipline of tafsîr, but they also elevated it to the position of comparing it to the most acknowledged two Quranic commentaries of the madrasa tradition, a position that no other tafsîr work had attained.

Despite all of the preceding, we do not possess any documentary record of Ebussuud’s commentary being a textbook for teaching tafsîr especially in Ottoman Anatolia, at least until the beginning of the 20th century. Cevdet Bey noted that although Ebussuud might have surpassed al-Bayḍâwî, the fact that his commentary failed to supplant it might be attributed to the possibility that the former did not possess servants (?) and he was considered to have been taken by the worldly success as opposed to spiritual success. Nevertheless, Cevdet Bey also noted that Irshâd was then being taught in al-Azhar University, despite the fact that its author was of the Ḥanafî school. Even though this tidbit of personally provided information by Cevdet Bey cannot be verified at this moment, Abdullah Aydemir, the author of the first and only monograph on Ebussuud’s tafsîr, also noted that he was able to verify, as a result of his personal communication with al-Azhar University, that parts of Irshâd constituted the curriculum of tafsîr teaching at the faculty of Uṣúl al-dîn during his time. Another eyewitness source of Aydemir’s recounted that Irshâd was a widely sought after source of Quranic commentary at the Islamic University of Libya. On the other hand, Ibn Ṭâshûr, with much adulation but no mentioning of any source, noted that Ebussuud’s commentary, since its inception, was received until the author’s own time with equal acknowledgement to the commentary of al-Bayḍâwî, so that

68 Kâtib Chalabî, Kashîf, v. 1, p. 66.
69 He probably means that Ebussuud did not have helping students to propagate his Quranic commentary.
70 Cevdet Bey, Tefsîr usûlû ve tarihi, p. 156.
71 Aydemir, Büyük Türk bilgini, p. 256.
Ebussuud’s *Irshād* became essential reading in the curriculum of Muslim learning institutions and study circles alike of Tunisia. Ibn ḤĀshūr specifically noted that *shaykh* Muḥammad Zaytūna al-Manastirī (d. 1138/1726) and *shaykh* Maḥmūd Maqdish al-Ṣafāqī (d. 1228/1813), Tunisian scholars and authors of glosses on *Irshād*, did teach this *tafsīr*. He further elaborated that the teaching sessions of *shaykh* Zaytūna became so widely known owing to the fact that he traveled very frequently between Tunis, Alexandria, Cairo, and the holy cities of Makka and Madina.72

The significance of *Irshād* within the history of *tafsīr* can also be assessed by looking at the spectrum of first and earliest printed works of Quranic commentary. The history of print editions of classical Muslim literature sheds a very interesting light on the development of the history and historiography of *tafsīr* in our modern day scholarship. Tracking the first printed editions of *tafsīr* works composed by classical and medieval authors is rather an assured method of determining which works were widely circulated, recognized, and/or what arteries of *tafsīr* scholarship were deemed to represent the exegetical heritage of Muslim intellectuals. The attempt of the Salafī camp to reposition the central *tafsīr* works of classical madrasa tradition, the triad of *al-Kashshāf*, *Anwār al-Tanzīl*, and *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb* that are overwhelmingly imbued with linguistic and reason-based analyses, with the tradition-based *tafsīr* works, those of al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Kathīr, especially the latter which was hitherto unspoken of in the scholarly circles of *tafsīr*, has been well demonstrated by Saleh.73 Therefore, the history of print editions of classical compositions betrays this ideological salafī attempt.

Probably the first printed *tafsīr* work was the commentary of al-Bayḍāwī. Our research yielded that it was first printed in 1271/1854-55 in Cairo in the edition of Ḥādī al-Ḥākīm al-

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Siyalkūfī, followed by the two separate print editions of Istanbul and Cairo in 1283/1866-67. Andrew Lane verified that the first print edition of the commentary of al-Zamakhsharī came out in 1856-59 in Calcutta, followed by the Būlāq (Cairo) edition of 1281/1864-65. The significance of the fact that it was first printed in Calcutta, a non-central Arab/Muslim setting, cannot be overstated. The central Muslim mindset was still trying to leave it to oblivion. The *Mafāṭīh al-Ghayb* of al-Rāzi was probably first printed in two separate editions, one in Istanbul and another in Cairo, in 1278/1861-62. Al-Baghawī’s *Maʿālim* was first printed in lithograph edition of 1269/1852-53 in Bombai, and the *Madārik* of al-Nasafī was first printed in 1862. The Quranic commentary of al-Ṭabarī was first printed in 1321/1903-1904, more than two decades before the commentary of Ibn Kathīr was to be printed for the first time. Ebussuud’s *Irshād* was first printed in 1275/1858-59, not in Istanbul but in Cairo, in two volumes, and was then followed by the print edition of it on the margins of a late 8-volume edition of *Mafāṭīh* in 1294/1877-78 in Istanbul, 1307/1889-90 and 1308/1890-91 in Istanbul and Cairo, and another independent print edition in 5 volumes in 1327/1909-1910, 1347/1931, 1372/1952 in Cairo.

The fact that the first print editions of Quranic commentaries comprised only a number of particular works cannot be viewed as mere coincidence. It demonstrates that they were the compositions that occupied the central place within the exegetical corpus of Muslim literature. The record of earliest printed *tafsīr* works also tells us that the commentary of Ebussuud had already secured a central place within the corpus deemed essential during the medieval period within the genre of Quranic exegesis. On the other hand, we should also note here that the two

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74 *DİA*, s.v. “Envârü ’t-Tenzîl ve esrârü ’t-te’vîl”
75 Lane, *A Traditional Mu’tazilite*, p. 93.
76 See *DİA*, s.v. “Mefâtîhu ’l-gayb”
77 *DİA*, s.v. “Meâlimü ’t-Tenzîl” and “Medârikü ’t-Tenzîl”
78 *DİA*, s.v. “Taberî, Muhammed b. Cerîr”
79 *DİA*, s.v. “Irshâdü ’l-akli’s-selem”
widely circulating Quranic commentaries, those of al-Ṭabarî and Ibn Kathîr, in modern day Muslim lands, became printed only after half a century of the first print edition of the Quranic commentaries of al-Bayḍāwî, al-Zamakhsharî, and Ebussuud. This phenomenon should once again bolster the assertion that there is a veiled attempt by the salafi camp of repositioning particular classical Quranic commentaries at the expense of others.

Educational and scholarly circles were not the only settings for which the reception of Ebussuud’s Quranic commentary had historical significance. We also need to examine here how this work was received by the Ottoman imperial court. Our earliest biographical sources, among them the 'Iqd of Manq 'Ali we cite here, recounted that when Ebussuud reached in his Quranic commentary the end of sūrat al-Ṣâd, chapter 38 of the Qur’ān, the sultan, Sulaymān the Magnificent, asked Ebussuud to “redeem” himself (warad al-taqādî min taraf al-sultān Sulaymān khān) upon which Ebussuud made a clean copy of what he had hitherto written and sent it to the Sublime Port and, in return, received unprecedented perquisites and rewards.80 No author of classical and/or modern scholarship has ever questioned whether or not this tafsîr had initially been commissioned by the sultan himself. We would like to propose here that not only is the likelihood not far-fetched, but also partial documentary evidence, the preceding account in al-'Iqd, as well as several other explanations, tend to support such a proposition. We first need to mention that although Naguib clearly expressed how historical indications intimate that there had been failed attempts at producing a formal work of tafsîr by the Ottomans during the 16th century prior to Ebussuud, she seems to have missed the clear circumstantial and textual proofs attesting to the fact that Irshâd was the culmination of such attempts.81 Ebussuud’s two predecessors, Kamālpashazâda and Fanârîzâda, both tried to produce a complete tafsîr work during their tenure

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80 Manq 'Ali, 'al-Iqd, p. 444.
81 Naguib, “Guiding the Sound Mind”, p. 45.
as shaykh al-Islām. While the former died during his post before completing his tafsīr, the latter retired and was assigned an unusually handsome pension of 200 akçes per day, an amount that only an incumbent muftī had hitherto been assigned. The fact that the latter still received as pension the same amount as an incumbent muftī and the fact that he devoted himself to teaching and composing a tafsīr work should very well be taken to mean that he was formally assigned to devote his entire time to producing a formal tafsīr work.82 All in all, we here would like to furnish further evidence demonstrating that Irshād was the result of an imperial project and it was commissioned by Sulaymān himself.

First of all, the verbal noun al-taqādī in Manq ʿAlīʾs wording indicates the settlement of a past payment or the delivery on a past promise. Nevʾizāda ʿAṭaʾīʾs wording is somehow different but the meaning is surprisingly similar: “taraf-i Shahriyārdan istiʿjāl olummaghla (when, by the sultan, he (Ebussuud) was urged to make haste)”. 83 Ḥājj Khalīfaʾs wording, though also somehow different, supports our proposition that the sultan had been in the waiting. His account runs: “when Ebussuud reached the end of sūrat al-Ṣād of his first draft and the promise became protracted (wa ṭāl al-ahd), he made a clean copy and sent it to the sultan”. 84 Sulaymān must have known that Ebussuud was in the process of composing a tafsīr work, or else how could he have asked for a copy of it. It is not unlikely that he had been informed of such an endeavor either by Ebussuud himself or someone else, but it is equally likely that it was the sultan himself who initially asked Ebussuud to compose such a work, a likelihood about which our sources are rather reticent. Kātib Chalabī noted that it was 972/1564-65 CE, when Ebussuud was asked to present the first uncompleted clean copy, a year or so before the Sultanʾs death. It is

82 Ţāshqoprızāda, al-Shaqāʾiq, p. 229.
83 Ṭaṭāʾī, Dhayl/Zeyl-i Şaḥāʾik, p. 186
84 Kātib Chalabī, Kashf, p. 65.
highly probable that Sulaymān must have wished that Irshād had been completed under his reign in. Circumstantial evidence also indicates that it was the sultan himself who ordered Ebussuud to compose a tafsīr work that would be dedicated to him and that would be recorded in history as the work of shaykh al-Islām of his dynasty, and that would also be remembered as a superb and nonpareil literary-religious output of his reign. In a recent study of a number of documents that are related to the Qur’ān and Quranic exegesis, Necmettin Gökkır and Necdet Yılmaz also opined that since the office of shaykh al-Islām was the highest office of the religious apparatus of the Ottoman dynasty, the opinions expressed in the Irshād would, as it were, reflect the official view of the state.85 One of the documents that were discovered by Gökkır and Yılmaz was an imperial edict which revealed that the sultan ordered for the appointment of scholarly help in the reproduction of Ebussuud’s Quranic commentary. The imperial edict, A.DVN.MHM, d. 6/748, stated by Gökkır and Yılmaz to have been dated 15 February 1565, clearly demonstrates that the sultan himself ordered Bedreddīn Efendi (?), a professor at Rodos/Crete madrasa, to immediately come to Istanbul and assist Ebussuud in “the writing/reproduction” of his tafsīr.86 Gökkır and Yılmaz proposed that not only may other individuals have been enlisted but also that a commission of a number of figures may have been involved in “the (initial) composition” of the tafsīr itself. However, our own examination led us to observe that their last proposition is predicated on an erroneous reading of the original text: the reproduced facsimile that they

85 Necmettin Gökkır and Necdet Yılmaz, “Osmanlı arşiv belgelerinde Kur’an ve tefsir konulu belgeler” in Osmanlı toplumunda Kur’an kültürü ve tefsir çalışmaları I, ed. Bilal Gökkır et al (İstanbul: İlim Yayıma Vakfı Kur’an ve Tefsir Akademisi, 2011) 31-42, p. 40. Gökkır and Yılmaz failed to provide more specific information about the library where they discovered it; however, reproduced this document in a facsimile copy in their study, and we can neither verify the date, nor ascertain in which library it is preserved. Nevertheless, with the help of prof. Ostapchuk, we were fortunate to be able to locate another facsimile copy of the same edict in the 6 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri 972/1564-65. See, 6 Numaralı Mühimme Defteri 972/1564/65 Tipkibasım (Ankara: Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, 1995), edict no: 748.

86 Ibid, p. 33-34. Even though Gökkır and Yılmaz identified the name of the person to whom this edict was directed as Bedreddin/Badr al-Dīn Efendi, the writing in the facsimile that they published was not too clear to us to make out the same proper name.
published and another print edition of the same facsimile allowed us to note a minor discrepancy in the rendering of their transliteration: They rendered the word “kitābeti”, mentioned twice within the original text, as “kitābımı”, in both instances, and allowed for a possibility of a commission of scholars in the composition of Irshād. But the word “kitābeti”, in our rendering, should suffice to disprove such a proposition and should amply support our thesis that others might have been involved only for the reproduction of new copies. The wording of the edict clearly states that Bedreddin Efendi was personally asked for by Ebussuud himself; however, our own research on biographical dictionaries yielded nothing about the figure of Bedreddin Efendi.87

The only reasonable explanation about why the sultan would solicit Ebussud for a copy of the latter’s Quranic commentary before it was even completed is that he had commissioned him to compose such a work that would be registered under his reign. We have previously mentioned how Nişancı Meḥmed Pasha and Peçevī after him attributed Irshād not only to Ebussuud as its author but also to the reign of sultan Sulaymān by saying that nothing like it had ever been composed in the reign of any other sultan.

Furthermore Adem Yerinde, who studied the manuscript copies of Irshād, determined that 973/1565-66 was the year when Ebussuud completed his clean autograph copy as well as several other copies that were produced under his supervision and/or during his lifetime. These extra copies must have been the ones that the sultan had requested to be made available and to be sent to other major Muslim cities in the land. Bedreddin Efendi of Rodos/Crete madrasa, and possibly others, must as well have been summoned for the purpose of helping Ebussuud in the

87 The relevant part of the edict runs: Ebu’s-Su’ud edāma ’l-Lāhu Te’ālā feżā’ ilehunun yanında tefsir kitābeti hidmet eylemek için gelmek/gelmeği lazım olduğu muşårun ileyh tarafından arz olunmağın buyurduğun ki ḥüküm-i şerif-i şeriftim varduında te’hir itmeyp gelüp muşårun ileyhüñ yanında tefsir-i şerif kitābeti hidmete/hidmetinde olasın...
production of extra copies of *Irshād*. Sulaymān’s eagerness for the completion of this Quranic commentary that is authored by the head of the religious apparatus of his dynasty and his urgent appeal for its reproduction in several other copies for the purpose of sending them to other major cities of the empire should very reasonably be viewed as part of his imperial project to present himself as the servant of the Holy Book of Muslims.

Another corroborating and significant piece of evidence that *Irshād* was commissioned by sultan Sulaymān and that it was part of his imperial project came to light in a recent survey of early manuscript copies of it. Adem Yerinde examined several early copies that are attested to have been copied during the lifetime of Ebussuud and under his supervision or after his death but were copied drawing on what is determined to be the autograph copy of the author. A total of nine manuscript copies, all in two volumes, were determined to have been copied during the author’s lifetime. Four of these, all in two large volumes, Süleymaniye 69, 70; 71, 72; 73, 74; and 77, 78, were personally made *waqf* (endowment in perpetuity) to Süleymaniye/Sulaymāniya Madrasa by Ebussuud himself and all were completed within one year after Ebussuud completed his autograph copy in 973/1565-66. At least two of the remaining five copies, Damad Ibrahim Paşa 63, 64 and Hacı Selim Ağa 55 and 56, along with two incomplete copies, Fatih 182 and Fatih 193, contain the first three lines that are attested to be the original hand-writing of Ebussuud himself. We can safely conclude that Ebussuud personally wrote the first three lines of the new copies of his commentary and had them sent, on the order of the sultan, to major Muslim cities of the Ottoman domain where they would be completed by and under the supervision of religious authorities of their respective cities.88 The fact that four complete copies were made

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within one year after Ebussuud finished his *tafsīr* can only be explained by the proposition that professional copiers were commissioned either indirectly by the office of *shaykh al-Islām* or directly by the Sublime Port.

In light of the imperial involvement with *Irshād* we would like to further suggest that though it was authored by Ebussuud personally, it was also projected to have been the product of Ottoman dynasty. Notwithstanding the fact that statistical data mentioned earlier about the number of ascertained manuscript copies of *Irshād* indicate that it was the fourth most copied *tafsīr* work in the history of the genre, we should seriously consider the effect that the imperial involvement had on its wide dissemination. Documentary and literary evidence indicate that there was an undeniable and concerted effort by the authorities for new copies to be made and disseminated in the major cities of the Ottoman realm. ‘Aṭā’ī noted that the two copies of *Irshād* were sent to the scholars of Makka and Madina (*al-Ḥaramayn al-Šarīfayn*).\(^{89}\) Hacı Selim Ağa 55 and 56 was copied on the order and under the supervision of Zakariyyā b. Bayrām, the chief judge of Aleppo; Ismihan Sultan 19 and 20, one of the copies that were produced during the author’s lifetime, was copied in Makka by one Maḥmūd; Yeni Cami 24 in one volume was copied after the author’s death on the order of *Amīr* ‘Ulwān al-Tadhkirājī/el-Tezkerecī, a member of the *dīwān* of Egypt’s governorate; Fatih 178, in one volume and copied in 1589, was copied by Muṣṭafā Chalabi/Çelebi, one of Ebussuud’s sons and then the judge of Bursa.\(^{90}\) All these figures are undeniably official figures of the Ottoman governmental apparatus. In light of this dynastic and official effort to have the copies of *Irshād* disseminated in various major cities we cannot help but speculate that the adulatory epithets such as “*khāṭīb al-mufassirīn*” and/or “*sultanān al-mufassirīn*” which were attributed to Ebussuud, and other excessive praises about

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\(^{90}\) Yerinde, “Ebusuud Efendi’nin”, p. 11-14.
his *tafsīr*, especially by Ottoman biographers and chroniclers, were also part of a dynasty-induced propaganda.

This imperial project was probably limited neither to the reign of sultan Sulaymān nor to the tenure of Ebussuud. Yerinde was also able to demonstrate that most of the several copies that were copied after Ebussuud’s death were made by drawing on the autograph copy.\(^9\) We can safely presume that this imperial project of copying and disseminating Ebussuud’s commentary was still underway from the early days of sultan Selīm II’s reign until at least the second half of the 17\(^{th}\) century.

\(^9\) Ibid., p. 26-27.
4.3. The autograph copy

The autograph copy of Ebussuud’s Quranic commentary is now located in Beyazıt Devlet Kütüphanesi, Merzifonlu K. M. (Kara Mustafa) 47 and it originally consisted of five volumes, the first of which is now lost. Yerinde, who examined the surviving volumes of this copy, provided a physical description of it and was also able to determine how Ebussuud might have begun composing his *tafsīr*, how long it took him to complete it, and which volumes were completed when. According to his study, Ebussuud did not begin his commentary in the order of Quranic chapters. He first began with chapters 10-18, *sūrat Yūnus-al-Kahf*, now in the third volume of the autograph copy, and finished it in 1 *Dhī al-Qa’da* 957/11 November 1550. Apparently not all of the Quranic chapters are appended with a colophon and, therefore, we can only speculate when exactly he began composing it. Incidentally, at the end of chapter 14, *sūrat Ibrāhīm*, in the third volume, it is recorded in the colophon that it was completed on 6 *Muḥārram* 956/4 February 1549. Based on the amount he wrote from 6 *Muḥārram* 956 until he finished the volume with chapter 18 of the Qur’ān in 1 *Dhī al-Qa’da* 957, Yerinde proposed that Ebussuud probably began his commentary with the beginning of chapter 10 of the Qur’ān sometime in 953/1546, approximately one year after he was appointed as *shaykh al-Islām*. At this juncture, there naturally arises the question of why Ebussuud began with *sūrat Yūnus*, chapter 10 of the Qur’ān. Yerinde offered the explanation that whenever Ebussuud had the chance he would write commentaries on individual chapters of his choosing and, having heard of it, sultan Sulaymān requested him to compose a complete commentary. Consequently, Ebussuud went back to the

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beginning of the Qur’ān and integrated what he had already written into his complete commentary.\textsuperscript{93}

Based on the preceding account, we would like to further suggest that Ebussuud probably never intended to compose a complete Quranic commentary on his own. Had sultan Sulaymān not put him up to it, he probably would have sufficed himself with a commentary on an individual chapter or two of the Qur’ān, or with a complete or partial hāshiya on either or both of the Quranic commentaries of al-Zamakhsharī and/or al-Bayḍāwī.

The autograph copy was first kept within the holdings of Ebussuud’s descendants, last of whom was probably Meḥmed Şâdiq Efendi. No further information can be ascertained until this copy was stamped with the seal of the grand vizier Merzifonlu Kara Muṣṭafā Pasha (d. 1095/1683) who donated it as \textit{waqf} in 1681 to the library within the complex he had being built in Istanbul Čarşkapı.\textsuperscript{94} İsmail Erünsal tracked the fate of the books in this library and established that they were first moved to Nuru Osmaniye Library and later to Beyazıt Devlet Kütüphanesi.\textsuperscript{95}

Though Yerinde was somehow able to support his research that Beyazıt Devlet Kütüphanesi, Merzifonlu K. M. 47, 48, 49, AND 50 is the autograph copy in five volumes, it is unclear why the subsequent copies that were produced under the supervision and during the life of Ebussuud were made in two volumes.\textsuperscript{96} May we suggest that it was probably projected to be received as another textbook in the genre of \textit{tafsīr}?

\textsuperscript{93} Yerinde, “Ebussuûd Efendi’nin”, p. 35-36.
\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., p. 40.
\textsuperscript{95} \textit{DİA}, s.v. “Merzifonlu Kara Mustaфа Paşa Kütüphanesi”.
\textsuperscript{96} For a number of supporting explanations corroborating that the said copy is Ebussuud’s autographe copy, see Yerinde, “Ebussuud Tefsiri’nde”, p. 37-39.
Lastly we would like to draw attention to a minor discrepancy in Yerinde’s account. There is no chapter 9, *sūrat al-Tawba/al-Barā’a*, in the tables that outline the contents of each chapter in Yerinde’s study. His research indicates that v. 2 ends with chapter 8 of the Qur’ān, and v. 3 begins with chapter 10. There must have been a negligible omission on the researcher’s part, and it must have escaped his attention that v. 3 must have contained and/or begun with chapter 9, *sūrat al-Tawba/al-Barā’a*. This lacuna is also manifest in the folio information he provides: chapter 10 in v. 3 begins at f. 110a, and one is compelled to postulate and assume that f. 1b-109b must have contained chapter 10 of the Qur’ān. The fact that v. 3 must have contained also chapter 9 and therefore Ebussuud must have begun his commentary with that chapter can also be corroborated by the information found in the ḥāshiya of Zeyrekzāda, Muḥammad b. M. al-Ḥusaynī, (d. 1003/1594-95), which states that Ebussuud began composing his commentary with *sūrat al-Tawba*, chapter 9, when he was appointed as the Muftī in 952-3/1545-46.\(^7\) We cannot, on the other hand, exclude the possibility that the autograph copy is not only incomplete with the first volume that contains the chapters 1-3 of the Qur’ān, but also the part of the second or the third volume that contained chapter 9 of the Qur’ān. But Yerinde included chapter 9 in the physical description of the MS, so it simply must have escaped his attention when he tabulated the contents of the volumes.

\(^7\) Zayrakzāda, Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ḥusaynī, Ḥāshiyat/sharḥ Zeyrekzāda ʿalā diḥājat Irshād al-ʿaql al-selim, Süleymaniye library, Hacı Mehmed Efendi, 249, f. 16a
4.4. The structure and characteristics of *Irshād*

Ebussuud’s Quranic commentary largely fits the descriptions of “formal structure of *tafsīr*” proposed by modern studies. The work is introduced with a brief exordium where the author propounded a teleological explanation for the existence of the universe and mankind, namely to know the Lord, which, according to the author, can only be achieved by acquiring and fathoming the instances of Revelation. However, because of the majestic and/or divine nature of the Revelation, acquisition of its content is extremely difficult due to the fact that it was composed in an unprecedented and very strange fashion. He then assesses the compositions of previous scholars in the genre of *tafsīr*, contextualizes himself vis-à-vis his predecessors, and indicates the intellectual lineage he adopts in his own work. He lastly concludes his prologue with a lengthy praise to his dedicatee, Sulaymān the Magnificent, and the title he assigns to his work. Unfortunately the author does not provide even a broad list of his sources except for two works, the commentaries of al-Zamakhsharī and al-Bayḍāwī.

The uniform formal structure that is recognized by most of the modern surveys of the genre of Quranic commentary is the presence of the entire canonical text segmented into units of *sūras*, verses, phrases, and/or words, for the purpose of commenting in a chained style.98 Ebussuud’s Quranic commentary is structured in the same manner: it is an *ad seriatim* commentary in the entirety of the Qur’ān. After the introduction, Ebussuud commences his *tafsīr* with the first chapter of the Qur’ān headed with its name, as is the case with other chapters, and the number of verses it contains. Verses are not introduced in their entirety, but segmented into phrases and commented upon.

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The second structural characteristic of *tafsīr*, proposed especially by Calder, is the citation of named authorities and the concurrent and/or consequent polyvalent reading of the text. This characteristic is also to a large degree present in *Irshād*, especially the features that, according to Calder, conditioned the exploitation of this characteristic. Two such features that stand out are the exercise of authorial choice and authorial preference. Notwithstanding the fact that Ebussuud does cite the named authorities infrequently, his exercise of choice conditioned him to reduce them to a very few in number. On the other hand, the feature of the presence of polyvalent reading is more widespread throughout *Irshād* so that it triggered a number of independent modern surveys. As will be shown shortly, several of the named authorities which constituted the sources that the author drew on and which he cited largely correspond to the historical period that preceded al-Ṭabarī in whom the formative period of *tafsīr* is traditionally viewed to have culminated. The feature of polyvalent readings that is present in *Irshād* also corroborates the fact that Ebussuud styled his composition in a fashion reminiscent of the pre-Ibn Mujāhid, namely the 10th century, period. He either did not limit himself to the traditionally recognized seven, ten, and/or fourteen religiously acceptable readings, or he viewed himself, or his *tafsīr* for that matter, as belonging to the aforementioned formative period of *tafsīr* when the variant readings of Qur’ān had not yet been canonically established. The named authorities and polyvalent readings in Ebussuud’s *tafsīr*, in the wording of Calder, defined the tradition as pre-Ṭabarī and/or pre-10th century *tafsīr* period, within which Ebussuud also fashioned his Quranic commentary. Another characteristic of *Irshād*, namely the paraphrastic exegesis which is fairly

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99 Calder, ‘*Tafsīr* from Ṭabarī’, p. 103
100 Being also a student of al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Mujāhid was arguably the first official promulgator of certain canonical readings of the Qur’ān. For more details on him and on the canonical and non-canonical variant readings, see the next chapter.
frequently encountered in *Irshād*, only corroborates further the fact that it identifies with the pre-10th century period.\(^\text{101}\)

The third structural feature of *tafsīr*, that is the measuring of the meaning of Quranic text against the instrumental and ideological structures, identified by Calder again, is also present in *Irshād*.\(^\text{102}\) However, since Ebussuud’s commentary is overwhelmingly imbued with linguistic and rhetorical analyses, the instrumental structures of orthography, lexis, syntax, rhetoric, symbol and allegory make up his commentary more than do the ideological structures of prophetic history, theology, eschatology, law, and *tasawwuf*.

Another characteristic of Ebussuud’s *Irshād* is the ubiquitous expression “such formulation, commentary, understanding, etc. does not correspond to and/or fit the eloquence of Qur’ān, or the context does not support such and such exegesis”. The author had already mentioned in his introduction that he aimed his commentary to conform to the beauty and eloquence of the expression of the Qur’ān, and throughout, he endeavored to accomplish that goal.

Lastly, we would like to note the implications of the title that Ebussuud gave to his Quranic commentary: *Irshād al-’aql al-salīm ilā mazāyā al-Kitāb al-Karīm* (Guiding the Sound Mind to the Distinguishing Features/Characteristics of the Noble Book). There are two key terms in this title: first is *al-’aql al-selīm*, and the second is *al-mazāyā*. With the former, Ebussuud intimates, or rather clearly expresses, that not only is he guided by rational mindset but he also conveys that the Qur’ān should be approached rationally. Though his father was the head of a sufi lodge, there is no evidence whatsoever that Ebussuud showed so much as the smallest

\(^{101}\) For a sample on the abovementioned structural characteristics of *Irshād*, see Ebussuud’s commentary on the pericope that begins with Q. 6:74.  
\(^{102}\) Calder, “*Tafsīr from Ṭabarī*”, p. 106-107
inclination towards Sufism or the sufis. Any sufi interpretation will have to be forced out of his *Irshād*. Nor is he credited to have authored anything that smacks of Sufism. His relationship with the sufis or those who claim to be sufis is beyond the scope of this study, but we need to mention here that Ebliya Çelebi, the 17th century traveler, noted him to be one of the *ulemā-yi zāhir* (a scholar that is concerned only with exoteric knowledge) who would disparage the müteşeyyihūn/al-mutashayyikhūn (*ulemā-yi zahirden oldugundan müteşeyyihūna tā’n iderdi*).

The second term, *mazāya*, indicates that Ebussuud was more interested in the distinguishing features of the Qur’ān, whether they be from any other human composition or other holy books. This is closely related to the doctrine of inimitability of the Qur’ān about which more detailed assessment was presented previously.

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103 Evliya Çelebi/Awliyā Chalabī, *Evlîyâ Çelebî/Awliyâ Chalabî Seyahâtnâmesî*, 10 vols. (Der Sa‘âdet, 1314/1896-97), v. 1, p. 402; for a brief discussion on his relationship with some of the sufis or some of those that appeared to be sufis, see *IA*, s.v. “Ebüssu’ud Efendi”. Though the term *el-müteşeeyyihūn* that Evliya Çelebi mentions may denote those who only appear to be *shaykhs*, namely sufi masters, he clearly mentions here those who are truly sufi masters.
4.5. The sources of *Irshād*

To speak of sources of a particular classical work of *tafsīr* should involve the inquiry of sources that the author mentions by name or without name, the identification of the impersonal *qīla* (it was said) expressions that dot the pages of his composition, and also the intellectual milieu within which the author’s mindset was informed.

We do not have a detailed account of the stages of education Ebussuud underwent, but the biographers specifically indicate that he studied, with his father, three fundamental primary texts through the supercommentaries of al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī. In the *ijāzatnāma*, the licence of graduation, he issued to one of his students, Ebussuud broadly mentions the names of his teachers and the teachers of his teachers. One of his teachers, Müeyyedzāde ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAlī (d. 1516) was a student of Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawwānī, one of whose famous teachers was the aforementioned al-Jurjānī. Another teacher of Ebussuud, Sayyidī M. b. Muḥammad, was licensed by Ḥiṣn Chalabi/Çelebi who composed a supercommentary/ḥāshiya on the commentary/sharḥ of al-Mawāqif. This commentary on the famous theological treatise of al-Ījī is none other than the one composed by al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī. Ḥiṣn Chalabī, furthermore, was licenced by ʿAlā al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 1482), the author of *al-Dhakhr/al-Dhakhīra fī al-muhākama bayn kitāb Tahāfut al-falāsifa lī al-Ghazālī wa al-Ḥukamāʾ li Ibn Rushd*. On the other hand, Ebussuud’s father was licenced by ʿAlī Qushchī. Al-Jurjānī primarily and ʿAlī Qushchī and ʿAlā al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī secondarily indicate the influence the Eastern rational school of thought had on the mindset of Ebussuud in particular, and the mindset of Ottoman intellectual milieu in general. The significance of this point, especially when we consider the fact that the scholarship of western/central Arab lands had been primarily focusing on the production of tradition-based scholarship represented in such works of Ibn Ḥajār al-ʿAsqalānī, the commentator on the *hadīth*
collection of al-Bukhārī, and Ibn Kathīr and al-Suyūṭī, the most famous Qur’ān commentators of tradition-based tafsīr in the Mamlūk-Arab lands of 14th-16th centuries, cannot be overstated. While the Mamluk scholars were assiduously trying to revive and promulgate the tradition-based knowledge heritage of Islam, Ottoman scholars inclined towards adopting and promulgating reason-based knowledge heritage of Islam.

As for the named and unnamed sources of Irshād, some modern surveys noted that the Quranic commentaries of al-Zamakhsharī and al-Bayḍāwī constituted the primary sources on which Ebussuud drew. That Ebussuud’s own remarks in his short exordium partially, or rather seemingly, attest to the truth of this observation notwithstanding, his named sources were not limited to these two earlier commentaries. Mafāṭiḥ al-ghayb of al-Rāzī was also identified to be the third primary source on which he drew in his Irshād, a phenomenon, coupled with the other two sources, that led many a modern researcher to generalize the sources of Irshād in particular and Ottoman tafsīr heritage in general with the triad of al-Zamakhsharī, al-Bayḍāwī, and al-Rāzī. As will be shown shortly, at least in the case of Ebussuud’s Irshād, there was a much varied spectrum of works that constituted the sources for the study and composition of tafsīr in Ottoman setting.

In the ijāzatnāma Ebussuud granted to one of his students it is clearly stated that the former granted the latter the license of teaching the tafsīr works authored by the legends of the discipline, whether they comprised the madrasa-style (wajīz) works, and/or the encyclopedia-style (basīṭ) works. We can safely presume that Ebussuud had an extensive knowledge of the heritage of previous tafsīr works.
In the imperial edict of 1565 which outlined the curriculum to be implemented in the imperial (highest-ranked) madrasas, there are 12 tafsīr works that range in imprint from linguistic and rhetorical tafsīrs to jurisprudence, tradition, and taṣāwwuf-oriented ones. And the fact that lower level madrasas must have exposed the students to further number of various tafsīr works should only indicate that Ottoman tafsīr scholarship drew on a rather large pool of sources. It is therefore the demanding task for modern researchers, through tedious and close reading of the Ottoman tafsīr heritage, to demonstrate the sources of a given tafsīr work authored by an Ottoman exegete.

Al-Ghazzī seems to be the only biographer who mentioned some of the sources on which Irshād drew. He noted, as was mentioned earlier, that it collected what was in the tafsīrs of al-Bayḍāwī, expanded upon it with fine points from the tafsīrs of al-Qurṭubī, al-Tha’labī, al-Wāḥidī, and al-Baghawi. We need to note that al-Ghazzī hereby ostracized al-Zamakhshari’s al-Kashshāf which, in reality and even with Ebussuud’s own admitting, is one of the most important primary sources for Irshād.

Ebusuud usually offers his commentary on a given verse without referring to any specific source. However, the citation of the names of some scholars is not infrequent either. Our close reading of the text enabled us to identify some of these figures as follows:


ʾAbd al-Raḥmān b. Zayd b. Aslam (d. 182/798-99)106: Q. 7:1


104 He has wrongly been identified with Muʿtazilism, may have written a tafsīr titled either Jāmiʿ al-tafsīr or Durrat al-Tanzīl wa ghurrat al-taʾwil, of which only the initial sections are extant in MS form. Al-Bayḍawī anonymously and al-Rāzī explicitly used him as one of their sources; see EP, s.v. “al-Rāghib al-ʾIsfahānī”; DIA, s.v. “Rāgīb el-ʾIsfahānī”; and al-Dāwūdī, Tabaqāt, v. 2, p. 329.

105 Famous early Muʿtazilite exegete; the editor of a recent publication with the title of Tafsīr Abī Bakr al-ʾAṣāmm, one of a serier attempting to reclaim the died-out Muʿtazilite exegetical heritage even by way of culling and collecting from within various other extant works, indicated that the Maʃūṭī al-ghayb of al-Rāzī was his primary source in this edition (his two other sources are the commentaries of al-Ṭūsī and al-Ṭabarsī), so al-Rāzī especially must have used him as his source extensively. Al-Qaḍīʾ ʿAbd al-Jabbar mentioned that Abī Bakr al-ʾAṣāmm composed a marvelous/superb (ʿajīb) tafsīr. See, al-Qaḍīʾ ʿAbd al-Jabbar, Tabaqāt al-Muʾtazila in Faḍl al-iʿtizāl wa ṭabaqāt al-Muʾtazila, ed. Fuʾād Sayyid (Tūnis: al-Dār al-Tūnisiyya li al-Nashr, n.d.); and, Tafsīr Abī Bakr al-ʾAṣāmm, ed. Khadr Muḥammad Banhā (Bairut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʾIlmiyya, 1971).


108 Muʿtazilite exegete and philologist, wrote a tafsīr in 14 volumes titled Jāmiʿ al-taʾwil li muḥkam al-Tanzīl, now lost; al-Rāzī is the only exegete that used him the most extensively; Saʿīd al-Muḥammad Banhā (Bairut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʾIlmiyya, 1971).

109 A philologist and author of lexical works among which al-Shāmil fi al-lughah and al-Fākhīr fi al-lughah are mentioned. He is also mentioned to have composed a supplement to al-Farrāʾ’s Maʿānī al-Qurʾān. See al-Qiṭṭī, Jamāl al-Dīn Abī al-Ḥasan ʾAlī b. Abī Yūsuf, Inbāh al-ruwāt ʾalā anbāh al-muḥāfẓ, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, 4. Volumes, (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-ʾArabī, 1986), v. 4, p. 188
Ibn al-Sukayt, [Abū Yusuf Ya’qūb b. Ishāqi]\textsuperscript{110} (d. 244/858-59): Q. 9:31


Al-Tha’labī, [Abū Ishāq Aḥmad] (d. 426/1035): Q. 14:26; 17:60; 14:26

Abū Ḥayyān al-Andulusī (d. 745/1344-45): Q. 11:8

Ibn al-Anbārī, [Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim] (d. 328/939-40)\textsuperscript{112}: Q. 13:5

Ibn ’Arafa, [Abū ’Abd Allāh M. b. M. b. Muḥāmmad]\textsuperscript{113} (d. 1400): Q. 14:43

Al-Jurjānī, Abū ’Alī al-Ḥasan b. Yaḥyā b. Naṣr (d. 308/920-21)\textsuperscript{114}: Q. 15:8

Abū al-Baqāʾ al-’Ukbarī (d. 616/1219)\textsuperscript{115}: Q. 16:9


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\textsuperscript{111} Philologist; the medieval biographer al-Dhahabī said that he was the \textit{shaykh of al-ʿArabiyya} and “an authority in Arabic (Ḥujja fī al-ʿArabiyya)”; see al-Dhahabī, \textit{Sīyar aʾlām al-nubalāʾ}, v. 12, p. 16-19.

\textsuperscript{112} Philologist and lexicologist, and an associate of al-Khalīl b. Aḥmad al-Farāhīdī, the famous grammarian, whose lexicon \textit{al-ʿAyn al-Layth} revised and expanded; see, al-Qifṭī, \textit{Inbāh al-ruwāt}, v. 4, p. 42-43.

\textsuperscript{113} Linguist; composed a number of grammatical and lexical works; he is said to have memorized 120 \textit{tafsīrs} from his predecessors. See al-Qifṭī, \textit{Inbāh al-ruwāt}, v. 3, p. 201-208

\textsuperscript{114} A Tunisian exegete who, according to Ibn ’Ashūr, spent half of his life teaching \textit{tafsīr}. Ibn ’Ashūr also said that Ibn ’Arafa did not personally write a \textit{tafsīr}, but his students posthumously collected his teachings into a volume and attributed it to him. He closely followed Ibn ’Aṭīyya and al-Zamakhsharī in his \textit{tafsīr} which is heavily imbued with philological and rhetorical analyses. But the exegetical section on this particular verse, 14:43, is missing in the print edition of this work, therefore the editors probably used an incomplete manuscript. See, Ibn ’Ashūr, \textit{Tafsīr wa rijāluh}, p. 121-27.

\textsuperscript{115} The author of the \textit{tafsīr} entitled \textit{Naẓm al-Qurʾān}, not ’Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī; al-Tha’labī mentions him as one of his sources, al-Wāḥidī and al-Rāzī after him also reference him very frequently; but it is not clear if Ebussuud had direct access to the original source or he had to use one of the intermediaries.

The author of the Quranic commentary \textit{al-Tibyān fī iʿrāb al-Qurʾān}. 198
Nowhere is al-Ṭabarî cited as a direct source in Irshād; however in the commentary on 3:35, his name is mentioned but through the intermediary of al-Qurṭubî.\textsuperscript{116}

Though al-Rāghib al-Asfahānī is said to have authored a \textit{tafsīr} that is only extant in incomplete and manuscript form, Ebussuud did not use it as a source for his Irshād. In all the instances Ebussuud cites him by name, his source is another composition of al-Rāghib, namely the \textit{Mufradāt alfāz al-Qur'ān}.\textsuperscript{117} As for Ibn Baḥr al-Asbahānī/al-Asfahānī, Ebussuud probably did not have direct access to his \textit{tafsīr}. The only exegete that mentions Ibn Baḥr in this particular verse, Q. 8:48, and used him as his source is al-Bayḍāwī whom Ebussuud copied verbatim. Neither al-Bayḍāwī nor Ebussuud provide a rationale about why the proposed interpretation by Ibn Baḥr of the verse is the correct one; however, their wording is telling: “that is what Ibn Baḥr chose”. Both authors must have viewed Ibn Baḥr as a reliable and foundational authority. Although al-Rāzī is said to have used Ibn Baḥr as one of his sources more frequently than any other exegete, we failed to locate Ibn Baḥr in this particular verse in the commentary of al-Rāzī; therefore, it is not unlikely that al-Bayḍāwī had direct access to Ibn Baḥr’s work. Similarly Abū Bakr al-Āṣamm was another extensively used source in \textit{Mafātīḥ}, and Ebussuud used al-Rāzī as his intermediary in Irshād on commenting on the verses Q. 4:82 and 13:3.\textsuperscript{118} Neither al-Tha’labī nor al-Wāḥidī mention Abū Bakr al-Āṣamm in these particular two verses, and therefore we either do not know on whom al-Rāzī drew or that he had direct access to Abū Bakr’s work. Abd al-Raḥmān b. Zayd b. Aslam is the common source for the triad of al-Ṭabarî, al-Tha’labī, and al-Wāḥidī in the verse Q. 8:1, but since Ebussuud never mentions al-Ṭabarî as a source that he drew


\textsuperscript{117} Al-Rāghib al-Asfahānī, \textit{Mufradāt alfāz al-Qur’ān}, ed. Ṣafwān ‘Adnān Dāwūdī (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2009), pp. 228, 670, and 773

on in *Irshād*, he must have used either of the latter two as his intermediary.\(^\text{119}\) As for Abū al-Haytham in verses 9:31 and 10:71, Ibn al-Anbārī in 13:15, al-Layth in 9:31, al-Âšma’ī in 9:31, and Ibn al-Sukayt in 9:31, al-Wâhîdî is the earliest exegete who mentions them in these particular Quranic verses and Ebussuud must have used him as his intermediary.\(^\text{120}\)

A very interesting source among the names cited above is the figure of al-Jurjānī, Abū ‘Alī al-Ḥasan, the author of *Naẓm al-Qur’ān* which is yet to be discovered. In addition to al-Tha’labī, al-Wâhîdî, al-Zamakhsharî, and al-Râzî who used him as one of their sources, Yunus Ekin identified a number of other *tafsîr* works that drew on this same source. These are, chronologically, the Quranic commentaries of Burhān al-Dîn al-Kirmānî (d. 505/1111-12), al-Baghawî (d. 516/1122-23), Ibn al-Jawzî (d. 597/1200-1201), al-Khāzin (d. 741/1340-41), Abū Ḥayyān al-Andulûsî (d. 745/1344-45), al-Samîn al-Ḥalabî (d. 756/1355-56), Ibn Ṭādîl (d. 775/1373-74), al-Nîsabûrî (d. 850/1446-47), al-Shawkānî (d. 1250/1834-35), and al-Qâsimî (d. 1332/1913-14).

This chronological list presents to us a very interesting genealogical artery of knowledge in the history of *tafsîr*. We are for now unable to ascertain if this central work still awaits discovery or it was lost a long time ago. For example, Ekin asserted that Ebussuud probably did not have direct access to this work and instead had to resort to an intermediary which in this case was the Quranic commentary of al-Râzî.\(^\text{121}\) It is then not unlikely that *Naẓm al-Qur’ān* was already lost by Ebussuud’s time. Our own research, on the other hand, yielded that al-Râzî

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\(^{121}\) Ekin, *Ebusudd ad tefsirinde*, p. 123.
himself may not have had direct access to this source either. The earliest recorded instance of citing this source in this particular verse, 15:8, occurred in al-Wāḥīdī’s Quranic commentary and the wording of al-Rāzī is near identical to that of al-Wāḥīdī.\textsuperscript{122} Therefore, we can safely conclude that al-Rāzī did not have direct access to this work either, and it was already lost by his time as well.\textsuperscript{123} The similarity in wording of al-Wāḥīdī and al-Rāzī should also allow us to question whether Ebussuud’s intermediary was al-Rāzī or it was al-Wāḥīdī whose imprint on \textit{Irshād} is more discernibly detected.

Though al-Zamakhsharī, al-Rāzī, and al-Baydāwī are said to be the main and primary sources for \textit{Irshād} according to most of the secondary surveys, Ebussuud mentions them by name only a very few times. He mentions al-Zamakhsharī’s name only once, al-Rāzī’s name twice, and as for al-Baydāwī, he does not mention his name even once. However, Abdullah Aydemir was able to ascertain that Ebussuud used these three figures as his sources in several verses without mentioning their names as well. Aydemir verified at least 13 instances where Ebussuud used al-Baydāwī as his source without citing his name, at least five instances for al-Rāzī, and at least 11 for al-Zamakhsharī.\textsuperscript{124} He further mused that Ebussuud copied al-Zamakhsharī verbatim so frequently that we can even rectify the editorial mistakes in some of the badly edited print versions of \textit{Irshād} by simply comparing it to al-Zamakhsharī’s \textit{al-Kashshāf}.\textsuperscript{125} In some of these instances, though, these three commentators seem to have drawn on an earlier common source and the gist of their commentary is somehow found in al-Wāḥīdī’s

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[22]{For al-Rāzī, see \textit{Tafsīr al-Fakhr al-Rāzī}, v. 19, p. 163-64; and for al-Wāḥīdī, see \textit{al-Tafsīr al-hasī}, v. 5, p. 153.}
\footnotetext[23]{Ebusuud probably did not use al-Wāḥīdī as his intermediary to al-Jurjānī, because al-Wāḥīdī, within the same context, recounted that a more detailed explanation on the linguistic article “\textit{idhan}” had already been dealt with during his commentary on 4:53, the commentary of which is now lost in the printed edition of \textit{al-Basīt}. Therefore, if Ebussuud had used al-Wāḥīdī as his intermediary, he would have offered the more detailed explanation during his commentary on 4:53, assuming, of course, the relevant part of al-Wāḥīdī was available to him.}
\footnotetext[24]{Aydemir, \textit{Büyük Türk bilgini}, pp. 92-109}
\footnotetext[25]{Ibid, p. 103.}
\end{footnotes}
Based on this fact we would like to suggest that al-Wāḥidī was Ebussuud’s primary source in *Irshād*. The fact al-Wāḥidī was probably the earliest source for Ebussuud’s *Irshād*, and a common source to a great degree for the triad of al-Zamakhsharī, al-Rāzī, and al-Bayḍāwī for that matter, can further be corroborated in the printed edition of *al-Wasīṭ*. The editors of *al-Wasīṭ* have extensively searched the instances in which the exegetical views of al-Wāḥidī appeared on the works of succeeding generations of exegetes. Our random browsing of *al-Wasīṭ* on chapter eight of the Qurʾān, a relatively short chapter with 75 verses, yielded at least 15 instances in which al-Wāḥidī’s exegetical interpretation appeared on Ebussuud’s *Irshād*. In another chapter, chapter 7, between the verses 149-171, there were 21 instances. Therefore we would like to unreservedly state that the primary source for Ebussuud’s *Irshād* is the Quranic commentaries of al-Wāḥidī. Although we need more independent case studies in order to more safely state that al-Wāḥidī is the primary source on whom Ottoman *tafsīr* endeavors drew, we would like to mention the fact, as was previously mentioned, that the Quranic commentaries were categorized as *al-basīṭ*, *al-wasīṭ*, and *al-wajīz* in the Ottoman madrasa milieu. The fact that al-Wāḥidī is the earliest figure with whom this categorization is credited reinforces our assessment for the primacy of al-Wāḥidī as the most foundational exegete in the estimation of Ottoman exegetical circles.

We furthermore would like to mention two specific instances from the commentaries of Ebussuud, al-Zamakhsharī, and al-Wāḥidī in order to bolster our assertion that al-Wāḥidī was the primary source for Ebussuud. In the verse 9:31, Ebussuud cites the names of a number of

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126 See for example the commentary on 2: 53; though Ebussuud verbatim copies al-Bayḍāwī, similar wording is also found in al-Zamakhsharī’s *al-Kashshāf* which in turn seems to have drawn on al-Wāḥidī’s *al-Wasīṭ*. We have observed same pattern in the commentary on 2:133. And on the commentary of verse 2: 102, where Ebussuud is said to have drawn on al-Rāzī without citing his name, al-Wāḥidī again seems to be the earliest common source.

authorities from the formative/pre-Ṭabarī period of *tafsīr*. It is not only al-Zamakhsharī that does not mention these figures, but al-Tha’labī does not mention them either. And whereas the latter offers lexical analyses on the etymology of the word *ḥbār*, the plural of *ḥibr/habr*, drawing on entirely different authorities from the formative period than the ones mentioned by al-Wāḥidī, the former neither offers lexical explanations on the same term nor names any of the authorities mentioned differently both by al-Tha´labī and al-Wāḥidī. By contrast, not only does Ebussuud also offer lexical analyses of the same term, but he also names the same authorities mentioned by al-Wāḥidī. The fact that Ebussuud used al-Wāḥidī as his intermediary and not al-Tha´labī is not without significance. Saleh observed that al-Tha´labī was the middle member of the triad of Nishapūrī school of *tafsīr* which consisted of al-Tha´labī’s teacher Ibn Ḥabīb, al-Tha´labī, and his student al-Wāḥidī.128 A comparative examination of al-Tha´labī and al-Wāḥidī on this specific verse led us to realize how the latter’s commentary is more encyclopedic and more encompassing not only in terms of a higher number of named authorities from the formative period, but also in terms of more concerted effort of reviving the linguistic analyses of the same period. Thus, if this triad is credited with attempts of reworking the corpus of formative period and presenting to us alternative accounts of that period, al-Wāḥidī’s commentary should represent the refined, more encompassing, and matured culmination of these efforts.

Moreover, a tradition that depicts an encounter between the Prophet and his Companion ʿAdiy b. Ḥātim is mentioned by all three commentators, al-Tha´labī, al-Wāḥidī, and al-Zamakhsharī. Some of the specific information within the narrative of the encounter is glossed over in *al-Kashshāf* but elaborated both in *al-Kashf* and *al-Baṣīf*. Ebussuud’s wording even in the specifics is near identical with both al-Tha´labī and al-Wāḥidī.

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In verse 13:15 runs: “And unto Allah prostrates whoever is in the heavens and the earth, willingly and/or unwillingly, as do their shadows in the morning and in the evening (wa li Allahi yasjudu man fī al-samāwāti wa al-arḍi ṭaw’an wa karhan wa ẓilāluhum bi al-ghuduvvi wa al-āṣāl”). Al-Zamakhsharī offers a very superficial exegetical explanation of three lines in length, whereas Ebussuud furnishes a lengthy explanation of almost an entire page for the apparent difficulties the verse contains. The word yasjud(u) generated heated debate among the early exegetes of the formative period and al-Wāḥidī presents their discussion in a detailed manner. Al-Tha’labī’s does not provide any discussion and seems to have suffered in offering an informed interpretation. By comparison, al-Zamakhsharī’s short analysis offers a categorical interpretation of yasjud(u) with submission to Divine Providence. Al-Zamakhsharī did not come up with this interpretation by himself and whereas al-Kashf lacks this interpretation of yasjud(u) with submission to Divine Providence, the earliest figure who preserved and transmitted this specific exegetical interpretation from the scholars of rhetoric (ahl al-ma’ānī) is al-Wāḥidī. The latter’s analyses of the verse, however, contains a plethora of other interpretations for the term reflecting the exegetical corpus of the formative period. Ebussuud, on the other hand and unlike al-Zamakhsharī, engages the earlier discussions on the term, as was done by al-Wāḥidī, weighs different views against one another, and, in a way, summarizes al-Wāḥidī’s interpretational explanations. Though Ebussuud finally offers the same meaning as that of al-Zamakhsharī, his handling of the topic is the culmination of an informed discussion of the exegetical corpus transmitted only by al-Wāḥidī.

Since al-Zamakhsharī’s al-Kashshāf was considered the canon in tafsīr par excellence and not the commentaries of al-Wāḥidī, it may seem somehow problematic to identify the latter as the main source for Ebussuud’s Irshād. In addition to the preceding examples, we have
several other reasons that compelled us propose that al-Wāḥīdī and not al-Zamakhsharī was Ebussuud’s main source. First of all, our current understanding of the *tafsīr* canon(s) should be qualified: there is a subtle difference between a textbook canon and a source canon. Historical evidence indicates that the commentaries of al-Zamakhsharī and al-Baydāwī were the textbook canons of *tafsīr*, but were they also the source canons of *tafsīr*? We would like to suggest that our understanding of the history of the genre defies an easy affirmative answer to such a question. That al-Ṭabarī was one of the source canon for tradition-oriented *tafsīr* works is a given. Saleh’s study of al-Tha’labī’s Quranic commentary identified another artery of exegetical knowledge in the latter’s work, to which we now suggest that al-Wāḥīdī be added, which contested al-Ṭabarī in representing the heritage of the formative period. Even though al-Zamakhsharī, or al-Baydāwī for that matter, was considered the canons of *tafsīr*, their canonicity was limited to their being the staples of *madrasa* curricula. These works are relatively condensed reworkings of the exegetical corpus carried over by al-Tha’labī and, in a more mature form, al-Wāḥīdī. Even the ḥāshiya, either on *al-Kashshāf* or *Anwār*, should not entirely be considered to have drawn on either work. Saleh’s study on the reception of al-Tha’labī’s commentary revealed that al-Ṭībī’s *Futūḥ al-ghayb*, a ḥāshiya on *al-Kashshāf* of al-Zamakhsharī, is a work based on both *al-Kashshāf* and *al-Kashf*.129

Secondly, we have proposed that Ebussuud composed his Quranic commentary for the purpose of rivaling the commentaries of mainly al-Zamakhsharī and al-Baydāwī. Contrary to the prevalent presumption, he never explicitly states that those two constituted his sources in *Irshād*. In his exordium, he merely distinguishes them from among the compositions of late Quranic

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129 Saleh, *The Formation*, p. 205; the author also noted a marginal note in a manuscript copy of *al-Kashf* by an unknown bygone reader who informed others that “this *al-Kashf* was the work which lies at the heart of the famed commentary of al-Ṭībī”.

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commentaries and expresses his overdue will to compose a commentary in which “he would arrange their beneficial pearls (durar fawā‘iddihimā) and unique luminosities (ghurar farā‘iddihimā) in a refined manner and add to them the gems of truth from what he had found within the landmark books (al-kutub al-fākhira)...in a style as warrants the majesty of the Revelation and the eloquence of the Sublime Text (al-ʿNaẓm al-Jalīl)”.

Ebussuud merely modeled his commentary after these two works and situated himself as an exegete on par with the author’s of these two commentaries. As will be shown in several examples in chapter six of this study, not only did Ebussuud modeled his Irshād after these two works, especially that of al-Zamakhsharī, but also reengaged and reworked the earlier exegetical corpus on which they had drawn and contested them in the presentation of the same exegetical heritage: this could not have been done without mainly drawing on the original sources on which these two late works had drawn. And in addition to the religio-political reasons we have mentioned for attempting to rival these two tafsīr works, the ḥāshiya compositions on Irshād, which we mentioned in the section devoted to its reception history, also reinforce our assertion that Irshād was studied in tandem with the commentaries of al-Zamakhsharī and al-Bayḍāwī. A number of these ḥāshiyas were composed as a comparative study of exegetical instances within these three tafsīr works, a fact which attests to our conviction that Irshād contested the field with these two staples of madrasa curricula.

Saleh observed that al-Wāḥidī’s Quranic commentary al- Başī is one of the masterpieces of medieval Quranic commentaries and viewed him as the only figure whose all three Quranic commentaries, al-Basī, al-Wāṣī, and al-Wājīz survived, a fact which indicates the value they are
accorded by the generations of Muslims.\textsuperscript{130} If al-Ṭabaṛī is credited with collecting the traditional heritage of exegetical material of the formative period of \textit{tafsīr}, the period between the 7\textsuperscript{th}-10\textsuperscript{th} centuries CE, the triad of Ibn Ḥabīb (d. 406/1015), al-Tha’labī, and especially al-Wāḥidī, the representatives of what Saleh termed the Nishapuri School, are to be credited with carrying over not only the traditions that are omitted by al-Ṭabaṛī, but also the philological heritage of exegetical material of the formative period, largely omitted by al-Ṭabaṛī as well. Al-Wāḥidī in particular seems to have epitomized the efforts to reconcile the philological attempts with traditional approach. However, in the estimation of Saleh, al-Wāḥidī’s philological endeavors were not without safeguards that limited his so-called unfettered hermeneutical mindset.\textsuperscript{131} But al-Wāḥidī’s approach to reclaim philology and juxtapose it with traditional exegesis found resonance in Ottoman exegetes. That Ebussuud chose al-Wāḥidī as the main source for his \textit{Irshād} and his philological-hermeneutical approach with its wider sub-disciplines of grammar, lexicology, and rhetoric cannot be underestimated within the historical period that it came out. While the exegetes of Mamluk lands during the preceding two centuries had been feverishly trying to reinforce and consolidate the hold of tradition-based exegesis with the works of Ibn Kathīr and al-Suyūṭī, Ottomans had been slowly but adamantly reclaiming the hold that philology had in the hermeneutical approaches to the Qurʾān. And lastly, though we tend to prefer that al-Wāḥidī and not al-Tha’labī was Ebussuud’s primary source, it should not indicate that the latter was any less significant than the former for our author. There are two historical figures that Ebussuud cites with the title of “\textit{al-imām}”: one of them is al-Rāzī and the other one is al-Tha’labī in the commentary on verse 17:60.


\textsuperscript{131} See how al-Wāḥidī knew how to reign in his philological approach and safeguard it with traditionalism, Saleh, “The Last Nishapuri School of Tafsīr”, p. 239-242.
The use of impersonal qīla (it was said) or ruwiya (it was reported) may indicate that Ebussuud did not deem it important to mention who the source was, or he himself did not know the source and copied it from an earlier work which relayed the content in the same manner. In some instances, the use of impersonal qīla or ruwiya points to the fact that what was said was more important than who said it, while in some instances Ebussuud merely might have used this sort of citation in order to indicate the weakness of the report or just to enrich his composition with anecdotal notes.
Chapter 5

Irshād and the variant Quranic readings

5.1. The traditional account on the history and development of the Quranic text and its reading

Before we delve into Irshād on variant readings, we would like to present here a brief Muslim traditional account on the history of Quranic text in order to prepare the ground for a discussion of Ebussuud’s and other Muslim scholars’ attitude towards the phenomenon of variant Quranic readings. The modern western scholarship has raised objections to the traditional Muslim narrative and produced alternative accounts for the history of Quranic text, an aspect of Quranic studies that is beyond the scope of this study.

According to Muslim traditional account, the Qur’ān, held to be the revealed speech of God, was received piecemeal by Muḥammad over the course of 23 years from 610 to 632. These revelations received by Muḥammad were preserved either in memory or in writing in primitive materials, such as flat animal bones and stones, and pieces of cloth and wooden boards, or even both in memory and writing. We do not know if the written fragments of the Qur’ān into abovementioned primitive materials constituted collectively the entire Qur’ān, but the circumstantial evidence may indicate that it was the case. The Qur’ān as we have it today in a

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1 The concept of variant readings is a convention of western scholarship and denotes that there is a standard reading to which others are considered variant. But the Muslim scholarship does not differentiate between various Quranic readings and all readings are considered just as standard.


uniform book was never in toto written during the time of the Prophet may strongly indicate that it was meant to be preserved in memory and recitation. The traditional narrative also preserved several traditions which clearly indicate that the Prophet taught these revelations to his Companions in an unspecified number of variances in reading, probably reflecting the variances in the dialects of tribes to which those Companions belonged. At any rate, when Muḥammad died, the Qurʾān had not been collected into a uniform written book. Though the generally accepted tradition propounds that the Qurʾān had been collected/preserved by heart by a number of individuals before Muḥammad died, unorthodox views that may be interpreted otherwise are also encountered. The traditional account tells us that there were two collection attempts after the death of the Prophet: the first one was by the first caliph Abū Bakr (r. 632-634); and the second one by the third caliph ʿUthmān (r. 646-656). Abū Bakr commissioned Zayd b. Thābit, a Companion of the Prophet who, according to the Muslim narrative, was also one of his secretaries who wrote down the revelations as they descended, to collect the Qurʾān. According to the Muslim narrative this attempt of collecting the Qurʾān into a binder of sheets was instigated by the fact that most of those who had been preserving the Qurʾān in their memories had been perishing in the late battles that Abū Bakr had waged against the rebels on the wake of Muḥammad’s death. Zayd thus proceeded and wrote the Quranic revelations into sheets, coupled with the oral testimony of other Companions, which had previously been recorded on the abovementioned primitive materials. These sheets that Zayd collected formed a Muhḥaf (a

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4 The word Qurʾān lexically means recitation and/or reading.
5 This phenomenon of variances in reading during the Prophet Muḥammad’s time is predicated on the doctrine of al-ʿAthrat al-Sab’a (the Seven Modes [of reading]) about which more will be discussed in the following pages.
6 See Gilliot, “Creation of a fixed text”, p. 44 where Gilliot opined that the Muʿtazilite Abū al-Qāsim al-Balkhī’s (d. 319/931) contradictory report that “no one had collected (or memorized “jama’a”) the Qurʾān during the life of the Prophet” could also be understood to mean “no one had memorized it”. See for a further detailed discussion on the technical term jama’a, Claude Gilliot, “Collecte ou mémorisation du Coran. Essai d’analyse d’un vocabulaire ambigue (Collection or memorization of the Koran. An attempt to analyse an ambiguous vocabulary” in Lohlker (Rüdiger ) (hrsg.von), Ḥadīṯstuden – Die Überlieferungen des Propheten im Gespräch. Festschrift für Prof. Dr. Tilman Nagel, (Hamburg, Verlag dr. Kovac, 2009), 77-132.
collection/binder of sheets) which was then entrusted to the care of Abū Bakr, the first caliph/head of the Muslim community. We have no way of ascertaining if the collection of Abu Bakr was predicated on a single mode of reading or if it was written in a way that reflected a number of possible variances representing the variances condoned by the Prophet. When Abū Bakr died, the Musḥaf passed to ʿUmar (r. 634-646), who succeeded the former in caliphate, and, upon ʿUmar’s death to Ḥafṣa, the latter’s daughter and one of Muḥammad’s widows. We are here to infer that though there was a written uniform Qurʾān, Muslims in various and remote parts of the realm must have been learning the Qurʾān from Companions, now dispersed in far-off lands, who must have passed it onto their students in the variance(s) that they claimed they had received from the Prophet. Though these variances seem not to have engendered any controversy or disputation amongst most of the Companions, those who were unaware of the variance phenomenon and/or the generation of Successors (al-Tābiʿūn) began raising serious problems over the correct reading of Qurʾān. During the caliphate of ʿUthmān, who succeeded ʿUmar, Ḥudhayfa b. al-Yamān, a military commander of one of the expeditions, became concerned about the disputes that arose amongst his soldiers over the correct reading of the Qurʾān and brought it up with the caliph. ʿUthmān thus formed a commission of four or five Companions headed by Zayd b. Thābit for the collection of the Qurʾān for a second time. ʿUthmān requested the sheets that were collected by Abū Bakr and were now in Ḥafṣa’s possession, and ordered the commission to produce a codex on the basis of Abū Bakr’s collection. He further instructed them that if there was any discrepancy and/or disagreement in dialect, they should record it according to the dialect of Quraysh, the tribe to which Muḥammad belonged. Upon the completion of this copy which came to be known as the ʿUthmanic Codex (al-Muṣḥaf al-ʿUthmānī), ʿUthmān ordered for the reproduction of four, or, according to some
accounts, six more copies which were to be sent to the central cities of Makka, Başra, Kūfā, and Damascus. The city of Madina, the seat of the caliphate, was to preserve the Imām/original copy. ‘Uthmān further ordered his governors in those cities to burn and destroy all other copies that may have been circulating and were in non-compliance with his copy. His attempt to procure a uniform text did not initially achieve conclusive success and other Companions, now dispersed in various central and remote cities of a vast Muslim realm, and spearheaded by the likes of Ibn Mas‘ūd (d. 653), Ubayy b. Ka‘b (d. 639 or 649), and Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī (d. 662), all of whom were eminent Companions of the Prophet, produced their own codices that differed in reading and writing from the codex of ‘Uthmān. The copies of these codices produced by other Companions did not survive, but contents of them have survived in oral transmissions until recorded in early tafsīr works.\footnote{Based on Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī’s death date, the \textit{terminus ante quem} for ‘Uthmān’s collection should be 649 CE, or it is also not unlikely that the former, the other Companions, had already collected the Qur‘ān in writing into a \textit{Muḥāf} years before ‘Uthmān, thence the latter’s order that all the other codices be burnt and destroyed.\footnote{For a collection of \textit{ḥaddūhs} on \textit{al-Aḥruf al-Sab’a}, see Abī Shāma al-Maqdisī, Shihāb al-Dīn ’Abd al-Rahmān b. Ismā‘īl b. Ibrāhīm (d. 665/1266-67), \textit{al-Murshid al-wajīz ilā ‘Uṯūm tata'allaq bi al-Kitāb al-‘Azīz}, ed. Ibrāhīm Shams al-Dīn (Bairut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2003), p. 78-86; and for a somehow systematic presentation and study of these traditions see, Shady Hekmat Nasser, \textit{The Transmission of the Variant Readings of the Qur’ān: The Problem of Tawātur and the Emergence of Shawādhdh}, Leiden, Brill, 2013: pp.18-29.}}

Reports about variant ways of reciting and/or reading the Qur‘ān even during the life of Muḥammad abound. These variances involved the whole range of lexical points from simple pronunciation through different case endings, synonyms, to variances in entire phrases. The Islamic tradition predicated these variances during the lifetime of Muḥammad on the doctrine of \textit{al-Aḥruf al-Sab’a} (the Seven Modes [of reading/reciting]) which involved a number of variances in reading/recitation according to which Gabriel recited the Qur‘ān to Muḥammad and the latter allowed his followers to freely choose to recite/read the Qur‘ān in accordance with one of those modes.\footnote{For a collection of \textit{ḥaddūhs} on \textit{al-Aḥruf al-Sab’a}, see Abī Shāma al-Maqdisī, Shihāb al-Dīn ’Abd al-Rahmān b. Ismā‘īl b. Ibrāhīm (d. 665/1266-67), \textit{al-Murshid al-wajīz ilā ‘Uṯūm tata'allaq bi al-Kitāb al-‘Azīz}, ed. Ibrāhīm Shams al-Dīn (Bairut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2003), p. 78-86; and for a somehow systematic presentation and study of these traditions see, Shady Hekmat Nasser, \textit{The Transmission of the Variant Readings of the Qur’ān: The Problem of Tawātur and the Emergence of Shawādhdh}, Leiden, Brill, 2013: pp.18-29.} Traditional accounts indicate that the Qur‘ān was equally canonically being read and
recited in one of these various modes until 'Uthmān collected it for a second time into a relatively uniform written text in a volume of sheets—*Mushaf*—, had it reproduced into four more copies, or six more copies according to some accounts, and sent it to major cities of the Muslim realm. We would like to note our reservation by saying that the *Mushāf* collected by 'Uthmān was relatively uniform, because there were two significant characteristics to it: first was that not all of the five copies were identical in script; and second is that it was defective (*scriptio defectiva*), without vowels and/or diacritical marks in the sense that it allowed for a number of possible different readings.⁹

There arose the phenomenon of variant readings of the Qur’ān. On the one hand there was a group of variant readings that were predicated on the doctrine of *al-Aḥruf al-Sab’a*, and on the other, there was a group of reading that was engendered by the *scriptio defectiva*. Though the variant readings borne out by the doctrine of *al-Aḥruf al-Sab’a* involved a variety of variances, the most conspicuous characteristic of them was that in innumerable instances they differed from the 'Uthmanic Ductus in the expression of an entirety of a given Quranic word in grapheme. For example, the reading of the beginning of Q. 2:148 *wa li kullīn wijhatūn* is read in the reading attributed to Ibn Mas‘ūd as *wa li kullīn qiblatūn*. Even though the meaning may remain the same, in this instance the entire grapheme of the Arabic expression changes.¹⁰ But the variant readings borne out by the *scriptio defectiva* represented mostly variations without making any changes with the grapheme of the words. The variances in reading, whether they be borne out by the script or the doctrine of *al-Aḥruf al-Sab’a*, continued to exist in an unspecified number even after the introduction of 'Uthmanic codex. The canonicity of a given reading was in a way up for

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⁹ For a number of sample variances see, Ibn al-Jazārī, Abī al-Khayr M. b. Muḥammad al-Dimashqī (d. 833/1430), *al-Naṣḥ fī al-qirā‘āt al-‘ashr*, ed. ‘Alī M. al-Ṣabbāḥ and Zakariyyā‘ Umayrān, 2 vols. (Bairut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1998), v. 1, p. 16. Note that these variant readings borne out by the *scriptio defectiva* are not necessarily the same as the variant readings that had prophetically been accommodated.

¹⁰ In several other instances even the meaning changes depending on the interpretation rendered by a given exegete.
grabs, no official attempt was recorded for a period of two or three centuries to determine the admissibility or inadmissibility of given transmitted reading, and it was rather the purview of Muslim scholars in various fields to assess the validity of this heritage of unspecified number of variant readings. Probably the official attempt to mark some boundaries on the written form of the Qur’ān came during mid-Umayyad period. The *scriptio defectiva* was made into *scriptio plena* probably by al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf (d. 714), the governor of Irāq during the reign of the Umayyad caliph ’Abd al-Malik (r. 685-705), who introduced a number of systems represented in the diacritical marks and vowellization symbols, that served to distinguish between the identical graphemes of the Arabic alphabet and captured the case endings, short/long vowels, and so forth. But the variant readings that differed from the ‘Uthmanic codex continued to be transmitted from various companions, especially from Ibn Mas’ūd, and survived until the 10\textsuperscript{th} century Quranic scholar Ibn Mujāhid’s (d. 936) time who, with the help of Abbasid authorities, introduced certain criteria by which the canonicity of a given reading could be measured. Ibn Mujāhid also reduced the number of readings to be deemed canonical to seven, each is identified with an eponymous reader from the cities to which ’Uthmanic copies had been sent. Even though Ibn Mujāhid did not expressly state his criteria for determining the canonicity of a given Quranic reading, the medieval and modern scholarship inferred them to boil down to three\textsuperscript{11}:

1. Compliance with the ’Uthmanic Ductus/rasm;  

2. Authoritative transmission\textsuperscript{12};  

3. Compliance with the rules of Arabic language.

\textsuperscript{11} Revisionist hypotheses on these criteria will be discussed in more detail soon.  
\textsuperscript{12} A rather loose term that may designate several technical meanings; more on this will soon be discussed further.
Between the introduction of 'Uthmanic codex and Ibn Mujāhid’s time, on the other hand, Muslim scholars did not feel bound by the 'Uthmannic Ductus and continued to treat the readings that differed from it equally as canonical as al-Muṣḥaf al-'Uthmānī. Though those early scholars did not stipulate the criteria they observed, F. Leemhuis deduced that there were also three:

1. Compliance with “a codex/Muṣḥaf” (any codex);
2. Transmission through an authoritative chain;
3. Compliance with the rules of Arabic language.

It seems that the difference between Ibn Mujāhid’s criteria and the criteria of those who preceded him boils down to the issue of compliance with a written text; Ibn Mujāhid identified the written text solely with the 'Uthmanic Ductus, while his predecessors recognized the other codices, mainly that of Ibn Masʿūd, as equally canonical.

Owing to the political backing Ibn Mujāhid was able to secure through the 'Abbasid authorities of his time, his system was solely enforced in liturgy and the variant readings that did not comply with the 'Uthmanic Ductus continued to survive within the literary output of scholarly circles, especially the corpus of exegetical material that survived through the Quranic commentary of al-Tha’labī (d. 1035) and those whose works mainly drew on it. It is therefore not improbable that had Ibn Mujāhid not secured the support of political authorities of his time, the variant readings would have survived even in liturgy.

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13 *EQ*, s.v. “Readings of the Qur’ān”
The fact that Ibn Mujāhid limited the acceptable canonical readings to seven is not without significance. Although Ibn Mujāhid did not clearly state it, the way that the medieval Muslim scholars treated the subject indicates that he intended to identify his selection of seven readings with the Seven Modes (al-Āhruf al-Sabʿa) of reading that are prophetically and/or divinely sanctioned. Regardless of whether or not Ibn Mujāhid had such intentions, the majority of scholars have expressed their disagreement on such identification and viewed al-Āhruf al-Sabʿa as something entirely different than the phenomenon of current variant readings of the Qurʾān.  

After Ibn Mujāhid, the variant readings that did not make into his list did not immediately die out and scholars continued to debate the criteria implicitly advanced by him. Eventually three more readings that are stipulated to have agreed with his unstated criteria were added to make up the number of canonical readings to ten. The debate around the degree of authoritative transmission, one of Ibn Mujāhid’s criteria, proved crucial. It seems that Ibn Mujāhid did not elaborate on the degree of authoritative transmission, and consequently some took it to mean mutawātir (multiply attested), and some others took it to include even the mashhūr transmissions.

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14 _EQ_, s.v. “Readings of the Qurʾān”
15 Mutawātir, mashhūr, and āḥād are technical terms that have been developed by Muslim scholars for the purpose of verifying oral transmissions. Mutawātir is a highly polemical category and was mostly adopted not by ḥadīth scholars, but by the ḥudūfīs, those who were interested in the theoretical foundations of Islamic epistemology. In broad terms it designated an oral report that is transmitted by so big a number of transmitters whose collusion in fabricating such a report is precluded by sound reasoning. An oral report transmitted in mutawātir manner was held to have yielded epistemological certainty as to the source and provenance of it, namely it could with certainty be ascribed to the source from which it was said to have originated. The key factor in mutawātir is the number of transmitters. Different scholars have designated this number differently. Mashhūr, on the other hand, is an oral report that is transmitted by a number of transmitters fewer than those found in mutawātir. Āḥād reports are the transmissions that are transmitted by single persons or only by a very few number of individuals. Most of the traditions fall under the category of āḥād. Many eminent medieval scholars of ḥadīth rejected the category of mutawātir on account of its extreme rarity. Though the categories of mashhūr and āḥād are broadly termed as being sound (ṣaḥīḥ), Muslim scholars stated that they yield only probable knowledge, namely that they can with high probability be ascribed to its origin. For a somehow detailed analysis of mutawātir between the ḥudūfīs and ḥadīth
In addition to discussions about the nature and degree of authoritative transmissions, the scholars also disagreed over which of Ibn Mujāhid’s criteria had precedence over another. The argument that the conformity with the ‘Uthmanic Ductus constituted *ijmā’*, consensus of the community and/or scholars, allowed for the controversial acceptance of four more readings which continue to be viewed by some as *qirā’āt shādhdha* (deviant/isolated readings).\(^\text{16}\)

Of the seven readings established by Ibn Mujāhid, the reading of the Kūfan ’Āṣim (d. 127/745) as transmitted by Ḥafṣ (d. 180/796) was adopted by the Ottomans under whose suzerainty the greater part of the Middle East had lived until the early 20th century. In 1924, the Qur’ān was published in Cairo on the basis of the reading of ’Āṣim and this is the edition that commonly and widely circulates in the Muslim world today.

The traditional account broadly outlined above resulted in several complications that the succeeding generations of scholars were invested with the task of resolving. We would now like to touch upon the efforts of some scholars to resolve the issues surrounding the variant readings in order to demonstrate that the issue remained rather unresolved, and that although these attempts were coupled at times with political interferences, the liberal approach to the acceptance of an unspecified number of variant readings continued to exist until late medieval ages.

First of all, there was an official written codex, and at the same time a few unofficial codices reported to belong to the likes of Ibn Mas’ūd, Ubayy b. Ka’b, and Abū Mūsā al-‘Ashʿarī, scholars, see Shady Hekmat Nasser, *The Transmission of the Variant Readings of the Qur’ān: The Problem of Tawātūr and the Emergence of Shawādhdh*, Leiden, Brill, 2013: pp. 66-76; and for the epistemological degree of each of these categories see, Wael Hallaq, “The Authenticity of Prophetic Ḥadīth: A Pseudo-Problem” *Studia Islamica*, no. 89 (1999), pp. 75-90.\(^\text{16}\) Nasser further divides *shādhdh* (pl. *shawādhdh*) readings into two distinct categories: anomalous and irregular; while the latter designates a reading which conforms to the consonantal outline of ‘Uthmanic Ductus but suffers the support in transmission and the consensus of the community of readers, the former is that which disagrees with the ‘Uthmanic *rasm*. He provides no further detail if the former category can find support in tradition and linguistic requirement. See Shady Hekmat Nasser, *The Transmission of the Variant Readings of the Qur’ān*. p. 16, ft. 59.
along with readings that differed from the official codex. Not only was there more than one Qur’ān, but the number of readings according to which these Qur’āns were being recited was unspecified. Two main theories have been advanced by scholars in an attempt to first accommodate the apparent discrepancy and second pave the way for the creation of a uniform text. One of these theories was the doctrine of abrogation. Those who have argued that the compliance with the official 'Uthmanic Codex is the most foundational criterion for the acceptability of a given reading tried to support their claim with the doctrine of abrogation on two fronts. On the one hand, they argued that the Prophet Muḥammad used to rehearse the Qur’ān with Gabriel every year, and the year he passed away he had rehearsed it twice. Based on this last rehearsal, Zayd b. Thābit, who was present during it, was charged with the task of collecting the Qur’ān into sheets first by Abū Bakr and then by 'Uthmān, and consequently Zayd must have known this last reading that was sanctioned by Gabriel. It was not mere coincidence that Zayd was the choice for both Abū Bakr and 'Uthmān to be tasked with the collection of Qur’ān. This explanation operates on the presumption that Muḥammad rehearsed only one mode of reading and Gabriel sanctioned it. Though our sources say nothing about whether or not Gabriel sanctioned only one mode of reading in the last rehearsal and the probability does not seem to be far-fetched, the opposite, namely that Gabriel might have sanctioned a number of other readings or Muḥammad might have rehearsed the last time in a number of modes of reading, is equally not unlikely. As a matter of fact there is circumstantial evidence indicating that Zayd’s collection of 'Uthmanic Codex, much less the one he collected on the order of Abū Bakr the first time around, was not written in a single mode of reading. The traditional account tells us that the copies produced on the order of 'Uthmān were not identical and there was some degree of variance among them. Ibn Abī Shāma (d. 665/1266-67), a prominent medieval figure
and a close examiner of the scholarly discussions in the field, related from Abū Ṭāhir 'Abd al-Wāḥīd b. Abī Hishām, a student of both Ibn Mujāhid and al-Ṭabarî, that in Q. 2:132 the copy sent to Madīna and Damascus read \textit{wa awṣā biḥā Ibrāhīm} whereas the copy sent to Kūfā read \textit{wa waṣṣā biḥā Ibrāhīm}. The author concluded that Zayd must have heard the Prophet recite the abovementioned verse in both modes.\footnote{Abī Shāma, \textit{al-Mursīd al-wajīz}, p. 118.} To question whether Zayd heard him recite in two different modes during the last rehearsal or during different occasions is irrelevant here. This instance clearly indicates that variant readings still existed even during the second collection of the Qurʾān and therefore the claim of abrogation falls through the cracks. On a side note we have to mention here a point borne out by the abovementioned sample of variance in the 'Uthmanic codex. The point mentioned in the traditional account that 'Uthmān ordered Zayd to record the collection in the Qurayshī dialect is also problematic. Al-Qurṭubī related from al-Qāḍī Ibn al-Ṭayyib [Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī] (d. 1003) that the tribe of Quraysh did not indicate the \textit{hamzah}, the glottal stop, in writing, whereas the copies sent to Madīna and Damascus, as we saw above, record it. He also related from Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr (d. 1071) that 'Uthmān’s wording that the Qurʾān was revealed in the Qurayshī dialect, and therefore he ordered Zayd to collect it in that dialect, does not necessarily mean that the entire Qurʾān was revealed in it, but most of it, or the overwhelming part of it. This is obviously an attempt to reconcile the factual discrepancy between what 'Uthmān is reported to have ordered Zayd and the fact that some copies which Zayd collected did not comply with the Qurayshī dialect.\footnote{Al-Qurṭubī, \textit{al-Jāmiʿ li āhkām al-Qurʾān}, v. 1, p. 75.} Based on the abovementioned verse, we can clearly state that not only were Zayd’s collected copies not identical, but also, in the abovementioned instance, some of the copies were not recorded in the Qurayshī dialect either. Furthermore, nor can we safely state that what Zayd had collected the first time on the order of
Abū Bakr was based on single mode of reading. In fact, the subsequent traditions tend to refute such a statement. When 'Uthmān charged Zayd for the second time along with three or four other Companions with the task of collecting the Qurʾān he specifically instructed them that had they differed in the reading of a word and/or a verse they should record it with the dialect of Quraysh, the tribe to which Muhammad belonged. If the first collection Abū Bakr was already written in one mode of reading or in the dialect of Quraysh, 'Uthmān’s specific instructions would have no point. Nor is there a reason for Zayd to collect it in a dialect other than the dialect of Quraysh if we were to assume that he recorded it in one specific mode of reading. Therefore, he must have written it either in the dialect of Quraysh or in a way that reflected several modes of reading. The possibility that some verses or some words were written in a dialect other than that of Quraysh is also highly probable on account of the fact that Zayd collected it from an unspecified number of people belonging to an unspecified number of different tribes. So the probability that a word or an expression in a given verse was recorded according to a dialect reflecting the tribe of the person from whom Zayd collected it, and the probability that another word or an expression in another verse was recorded in accordance with the dialect of the person of another tribe from whom Zayd collected it, cannot be dismissed.

On the other hand, if with the last rehearsal all the other permitted modes of reading were abrogated, why was Abū Bakr’s codex not made official, or why did 'Uthmān not simply copy it to the letter the second time around.

The theory that the last rehearsal constituted the final sanctioned version and all the other modes of reading were therefore abrogated with it does not really hold water.
Another theory propounded by the same camp, those who argued for the principality of compliance with the 'Uthmanic Ductus, was that it also involved the doctrine of abrogation, but from another front. They argued that 'Uthmān’s collection and its widely accepted reception by the community constituted *ijmā’* (consensus) which, in turn, abrogated the previously permitted seven modes of reading. The fact that the likes of Ibn Masʿūd, Ubayy b. Kaʿb, and Abū Mūsā al-ʿAsh’arī continued not conforming with the 'Uthmanic Codex allows us to seriously question if the claim of *ijmā’* can be established. Furthermore, the fact that *ijmā’* constituted the abrogation of a divinely ordered permission engendered problems of foundational proportions. It is beyond the scope of this study to discuss here the premises of legal theories, but we would like to only mention here that among the earliest scholars who discussed the doctrine of *ijmā’* on the variant readings was Makkī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 437/1045-46), a prominent medieval figure on the subject of variant readings. Though Makkī admitted that the abrogation of the Qur’ān with *ijmā’* was a disputed matter, he nevertheless castigated and went on a tirade against those who contradicted and/or differed from the 'Uthmanic Ductus. One cannot help but detect the emotional pain that Makkī went through when he discussed this situation, as was relayed by Ibn Abī Shāma: “This (namely differing from the 'Uthmanic *rasm*) is neither good (*jayyid*) nor right (*sawāb*).” Ibn Abī Shāma took, as it were, Makkī b. Abī Ṭālib to task and stated that the close examiners (*al-muḥaqiqūn*) of foundations of legal theory have verified that “nothing can be abrogated by *ijmā’* on account of the fact that there can be no abrogation after the revelation

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19 Note the difference between the two theories of abrogation: the first indicates that the abrogation was predicated on the last rehearsal by the Prophet; the second indicates that it was predicated on the consensus of the community of Muslims—*ijmā’*—long after the Prophet had passed away, that justified it.

ended; all that *ijmā’* can do is to determine the abrogating (instance) that happened during the descension of revelation”.\(^{21}\)

We would like to mention as a side note here a significant ramification of the assertion that the permission of *al-Aḥruf al-Sab’a* was abrogated. To state that the certain reception of the Qur’ān or its certain feature was abrogated should amount to no less than the simple admission of the historicity of the Qur’ān or parts of its features.

There is no disagreement among the early or late Muslim scholars that, during the Prophet’s lifetime, reading the Qur’ān was not limited to a single mode and what was meant by *al-Aḥruf al-Sab’a* is something other than what came to be traditionally and in practice known as the seven, ten or 14 modes of reading. Even those who propagate the permissibility of seven, ten and/or 14 readings admit that the doctrine of *al-Aḥruf al-Sab’a* was a historical fact but they limit its practice up to the time of 'Uthmanic recension. There have been innumerable attempts at explaining what was meant by *al-Aḥruf al-Sab’a*, but it defied any easy solution.\(^{22}\) We are not going to venture a detailed study of these attempts here and, for the sake of brevity, simply express the prevailing view in the matter that *al-Aḥruf al-Sab’a* involved the variance in wording of a particular concept by various Arab tribes such as *halumma*, *ta’āla*, and *aqbil*, all of which mean the common expression of the imperative form of “come” but each of which is used exclusively by different tribes.\(^{23}\) This is also the view propounded by Abū Ţāhir ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Hishām, a student of both Ibn Mujāhid and al-Ṭabarī who elsewhere are said to have

\(^{23}\) See for this and for a more detailed medieval study on *al-Aḥruf al-Sab’a*, Ibn Abī Shāma, *al-Murshid al-wajīz*, p. 77-111; and also al-Qurṭubi, *al-Jāmī’ ʿTafsīr al-Qurṭubi*, v. 1, p. 71-83
stated the same view. The strongest proof for the fact that the traditionally accepted readings are not the same *al-Aḥruf al-Sab’a* is the historical fact that the former are not limited to seven any more, but to ten almost unanimously or 14 controversially. We need to note the caveat that what is indicated by the word “seven/*al-Sab’a*” is to be taken to mean seven, as was mostly understood by a majority of scholars, and it is not merely a symbolic number to represent an unlimited number of readings, as was also understood by a number of scholars. What we would like to draw attention to here is the fact that the ‘Uthmanic Ductus engendered newer problems. The *scriptio defectiva* of ‘Uthmān’s was liable to cause another number of possible variant readings. Were the variant readings that were engendered by the ‘Uthmanic Ductus part of the doctrine of *al-Aḥruf al-Sab’a*? If we are to understand the number seven as a symbol for an unlimited number of variant readings, the probability cannot be dismissed. Otherwise, we are compelled to accept the fact that the *scriptio defectiva* was the cause of them. Notwithstanding the fact that the definite meaning of *al-Aḥruf al-Sab’a* defied a consensual proposition, the majority of scholars stated that they were entirely different from the variant readings that are borne out by the ‘Uthmanic Ductus. The variant readings that existed prior to the ‘Uthmanic recension were predicated on the doctrine of *al-Aḥruf al-Sab’a*. Notwithstanding the fact that medieval Muslim scholarship does not make a distinction between pre-‘Uthmanic and post-‘Uthmanic variant readings in terms of what they are predicated on, we fail to locate a distinct account on what justifies the current variant readings. The phenomenon of variant reading collectively is founded on the doctrine of *al-Aḥruf al-Sab’a*. But the fact that the current variant readings of the Qur’ān are predicated on and justified by the doctrine of *al-Aḥruf al-Sab’a* creates for us the modern scholars a predicament of utmost significance. If *al-Aḥruf al-Sab’a* are entirely different from the existing variant readings that are mainly borne out by the ‘Uthmanic

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24 Ibid.
Ductus, how can the latter be predicated on the former? Though not entirely improbable, a perfunctory explanation that the doctrine of *al-Aḥruf al-Sab’a* allowed for an unfettered liberal approach to the number of modes of reading the Qurʾān engenders other problems of major proportions and betrays the orthodox attempts to present a uniform Qurʾān. The issue has a very close bearing to the notion of informed reasoning/ijtihād by virtue of which innumerable non-canonical readings have to date survived, and it requires a more detailed and extensive study.

The literary compositions authored by various authors until Ibn Mujāhid’s time, namely the early 10th century CE, attest to the fact that the subject of variant readings was hotly debated among them and the number of variant readings was never fixed. Probably the earliest collector of religiously acceptable readings was Abū ’Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām (d. 224/838-39) who accounted for a total number of 25 readings which allegedly also included the seven modes (*al-Aḥruf al-Sab’a*). Al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), the editors of a recent study demonstrated, collected over 20 variant readings that were in compliance with the ‘Uthmanic rasm.’ Ibn Abī Shāma reported from Makkī b. Abī Ṭālib that before Ibn Mujāhid, some scholars composed books on five variant readings commensurate with the number of copies that ‘Uthmān produced, and some others authored compositions that collected eight readings; he added: “this is an immense topic (*hādhā bāb wāsi’*)”. Makkī further stated the names of some individuals whose ”choice” of readings that differed from that of Ibn Mujāhid continued to exist after the death of the latter up to his own time, namely to the middle of 11th century. The editors of *al-Budūr al-zāhira*

provided a historically ordered list of compositions according to which some scholars even after Ibn Mujahid authored works that accounted for 50 variant readings.²⁸

The preceding examples indicate almost beyond doubt that although 'Uthmān introduced an official codex and ordered the remainder of all other codices to be burnt and destroyed, the Muslim community continued to recite the Qur’ān in modes of reading that differed from the ‘Uthmanic Codex not only in seven modes, but in an unspecified number of modes.²⁹ The traditional account itself confirms this phenomenon. And it seems that it was not Ibn Mujahid who first attempted to limit the number of readings, but several other scholars had already undertaken such attempts, though the number that they wanted to limit the readings to varied. What distinguishes Ibn Mujahid’s attempt from that of his predecessors are two significant factors: one is the fact that he secured political backing, second is the fact that he chose to limit the readings to seven. Instances of political enforcement of Ibn Mujahid’s seven readings are already mentioned in historical sources.³⁰ As for Ibn Mujahid’s limiting the acceptable/canonical readings to seven, some scholars stated that he only did so on account of the fact that ‘Uthmān, according to some varying accounts, had made seven copies to be sent to seven major geographic centers around which the majority of the Muslim community had settled. Ibn Mujahid based his limitation on the number of copies ‘Uthmān produced and each of these copies bore differences which Ibn Mujahid attempted in his choice of seven readings to reflect. But since no one had reported any reading from Yaman and Bahrayn, the two other centers that ‘Uthmān is said to have sent copies to, Ibn Mujahid chose instead two additional reciters from Kūfā.³¹ Makkī must

²⁹ I use the word “mode” to refer to both the technical term “ḥarf” as it was used in “al-ʻAhruf al-Sab’a” and the mode of reading that differed in recitation but matched the ‘Uthmanic Codex.
³⁰ See for example, Goldziher, Schools of Quranic Commentaries, p. 30-31; and also, EQ, s.v. “Readings of the Qur’ān”, and EP, s.v. “Kīrā’ā”
have felt compelled to come up with such an explanation because of the fact that he did not subscribe to the notion of identifying *al-Ḥurf al-Sab’a* with Ibn Mujāhid’s seven readings. Another rationale of accounting for Ibn Mujāhid’s choice was that the number seven was to be identified with the number seven in *al-Ḥurf al-Sab’a*. The significance of numerology in religious context can never be overstated. Though traditional sources tell us that Ibn Mujāhid never expressly stated that he personally meant to identify his choice of seven readings with *al-Ḥurf al-Sab’a*, circumstantial evidence indicates that it was received so. Makkī tried to explain it away by saying that the canonical seven readers chosen by Ibn Mujāhid were identified with *al-Ḥurf al-Sab’a* “figuratively”.32 We cannot help questioning if they were really identified with *al-Ḥurf al-Sab’a* “figuratively” or this is how Makkī wished it were the case. At any rate, the fact that they were so received remains a historical truth.

The three criteria mentioned earlier, which were inferred to have been established for the validity of canonical readings by Ibn Mujāhid, did not run the gamut of historical facts. Some of these canonical readings seem to fail to meet some of these criteria. Prior to the introduction of three additional readings to the list of seven canonical readings, authoritative transmission was understood by the majority of scholars to mean the transmission by way of *tawātur* (multiply attested and/or a transmission that is alleged to yield epistemological certainty).33 But historically it did not reflect reality; al-Zarkashī problematized it and verified that the claim of *tawātur* can only be established up to the *Imāms* with whom these seven canonical readings were identified, but then back to the Prophet, the transmission link does not go beyond being individually attested

32 Ibid, p. 123
(aḥād, a way of transmission that yields only probable knowledge)\(^ {34}\). Realizing the fact that the condition of tawātur cannot be met by all the seven canonical readings, Ibn Abī Shāma sought to reconcile this discrepancy by stating that tawātur per se was not a prerequisite and the sound transmission which comprised the individually attested transmissions (akhbār aḥād) can also be deemed authoritative.\(^ {35}\) Ibn al-Jazarī, a very famous late medieval verifier in the field of Quranic readings who early in his scholarly career viewed the criterion of transmission by way of tawātur as an indispensable characteristic of variant readings, also finally determined that the ten canonical readings were not actually transmitted by way of tawātur.\(^ {36}\) Furthermore, the category of transmission by way of tawātur was also a subject of foundational discourse among the various disciplines of Muslim scholarship. While the usūlis/the legal theoreticians admitted this category as one of the criteria for assessing oral transmissions, the muhādithūn/hadīth scholars rejected it on account of its extreme rarity of occurrence.\(^ {37}\) Hallaq’s recent study on the categories of hadīths yielded the fact that while early eminent scholars of hadīth could only ascertain one or two mutawātir hadīths, some late and post classical era scholars were able to add only a few more, bringing the total amount of verifiable mutawātir transmissions to no more than ten in number.\(^ {38}\)

The criterion of compliance with the ‘Uthmanic Mushaf also created other problems of its own. There are a number of well-known expressions in the ‘Uthmanic Codex that are recorded in script in a particular way but read and/or recited differently. For example the word al-ṣalā(t), and

\(^{34}\) For a study of the characteristics of various ways of transmission, see Wael Hallaq, “The Authenticity of Prophetic Ḥadīth”, pp. 75-90.

\(^{35}\) Ibn Abī Shāma, al-Murshid al-wafīz, p. 133.

\(^{36}\) See his al-Nashr, v. 1, p. 18; He even therefore had to reject the criterion of transmission by way tawātur for what may be deemed Qur’ān, a premise that had been established by the legal theoreticians (usūlis) for the admissibility of a given Quranic expression, variant or otherwise.

\(^{37}\) For a comparative study of tawātur between the usūlis and muhaddithūn, see Nasser, The Transmission of the Variant Readings of the Qur’ān, pp. 66-76.

\(^{38}\) See Hallaq, “The Authenticity of Prophetic Ḥadīth”, p. 87-88.
al-zakā(t), or al-hayā(t) for that matter, all are written with wāw but read with an elongated “ā”. Ibn Abī Shāma attempted to explain that such instances were probably either the remnants of al-Aḥruf al-Sab’a or that what was meant by compliance with the ’Uthmanic rasm was limited to inadmissibility of a different word in its entirety, or the absence of a known word and/or expression, or the replacement of a word with another that is synonymous, the likes of which are abundantly found in the codices of Ibn Mas’ūd and Ubayy b. Ka‘b. The discrepancies related to individual letters and their fashioning in a particular way, the author continued, did not matter much. However, being unconvinced, Ibn Abī Shāma felt compelled to discard the criterion of compliance with the ’Uthmanic rasm and sufficed himself with the two criteria of sound transmission and compliance with Arabic language.39

Furthermore, the condition of agreement with the linguistic requirement of Arabic language is another loose end that Ibn Abī Shāma was unable to reconcile but surrender. He presented many instances of traditionally accepted/canonical readings that did not agree with the language of Arabs. It should suffice to mention only the Q, 18:97, where Ḥamza, one of the three Kūfān readers of the seven canonical readers, read “fāmā ’ṣṭṭā’ū” with double “ṭ”, an instance where two sukūns (non-vowelled two consonants) are cluttered in a single word.40 al-Zajjāj dismissed this reading as being solecism (laḥn) and reported that all the grammarians viewed it so.41 Sībawayh deemed it impossible [to pronounce].42 The traditionalists, however, attempted to encounter al-Zajjāj’s claims that the reading was transmitted in tawātur and, therefore, must be accepted.43 Ibn Abī Shāma, typical of him, came up with his ubiquitous explanation that such a

39 Ibid., p. 134.
40 Ibid., p. 135.
42 ’Abd al-Latīf al-Khaṭīb, Mu’jam al-qirā’āt, 10 volumes (Damascus: Dār Sa’d al-Dīn, 2000), v. 5, p. 311.
43 Ibid., p. 310.
reading was probably a remnant of *al-Ahruf al-Sab’a*, a seeming solution that leads to a lot of other problems.

We have previously mentioned that Ibn Mujāhid did not personally state that the criterion of transmission by way of *tawātur* was a prerequisite for the acceptability of a given reading, and that he instead used a more broader term of “sound transmission” which in the end led Muslim scholars as well as modern western studies to infer that sound transmission was one of his criteria. However, Nasser’s study compels us to question this inference and revise the current scholarly opinion on this topic. Circumstantial evidence indicates that sound transmission was not as important a criterion as the criterion of the consensus of the variant readers. Nasser demonstrated that while Ibn Mujāhid was aware of readers whose transmissions were just as equally sound as the established canonical readers, he dismissed them on account of a more solid criterion that reflected the consensus of a community of readers in a given setting. For example, Ibn Mujāhid chose Ibn Kathīr from the city of Makka as one of the seven not because his transmission was sound, but because of the reason that the community of readers in the city of Makka had agreed to adopt and adhere to Ibn Kathīr’s reading. The reading of Makkan Ibn Muḥayṣin (d. 740), one of the four after ten, was rejected by Ibn Mujāhid not on account of reasoning that his transmission was not sound, but merely because his reading disagreed with the reading of the majority of readers of the city of Makka. The case of the city of Madina was no different than Makka. The reading of Abū Ja’far Yazīd b. al-Qa’qa’ (d. 747), one of the three after seven, was rejected by Ibn Mujāhid not because his reading was not transmitted in sound manner but on account of the fact that according Ibn Mujāhid the community of readers in

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Madina adopted the reading of Nāfi’ (d. 785) and not that of Abū Ja’far. Nasser’s proposition allows us make better sense of why Ibn Mujāhid chose three readers from the city of Kūfa alone whereas he limited his choice of readers from other cities to only one. The answer probably lies in the complex realities of the city of Kūfa during the eighth century. There was no single reader in the city of Kūfa whose reading was adopted and adhered to by the majority of the community of readers. He therefore chose three readers from the city of Kūfa in order to make up for the absence of the the criterion of consensus there. ‘Āşim (d. 745), for example, one of the seven and one of the three Kūfan readers, was probably the least agreed upon reader among the other Kūfan readers some of whom would later make into the list of ten and/or fourteen canonical readers. Ḥamza (d. 773), one of the seven and another one of the three Kūfan readers was disliked and his reading was dismissed by many eminent Muslim scholars of his time. And as for al-Kisā’ī (d. 804), one the seven and the third of the Kūfan readers, though he was not widely received by the community of readers, his solid hold on Arabic grammar could not be surpassed. So, the criterion of consensus that Ibn Mujāhid adopted in his choice of readers from the cities other than Kūfa could not be enforced in Kūfa in a way that would not compromise on the other two criteria. It seems that Ibn Mujāhid chose these three Kūfan readers on account of the fact that their readings alone from among the other readers of Kūfa could be reconciled with the other two criteria of compliance with the ’Uthmanic Ductus and Arabic grammar.

Scholarly opinions converge on the fact that the canonical readings identified with the seven individuals were the result of personal choices made by those seven individuals. Prior to Ibn Mujāhid’s time there had been numerous variant readings, some of which were probably the continuation or the remnants of al-Aḥruḍ al-Sab’a and some others were borne out by the *scriptio*

defectiva. Ibn Abī Shāma related from Makkī that the generation of scholars of the 4th/10th century wanted to stem the unmanageable effects of increasing disputes and conflicts resulting from the subject of variant readings, and for practical reasons and as exigency warranted chose from central settings a famous imām who was pious, trustworthy, knowledgeable, well-received, and respected in public, and whose choice of reading complied with the ‘Uthmanic Muṣḥaf. According to Makkī’s account then, as well as those of several other scholars who are mentioned in various sources, a canonical reading that is identified with an imām/eponymous reader was the personal choice of that imām.47 Others had also attempted to limit the number of canonical readings before Ibn Mujāhid or, more correctly, composed on variant readings according to their own personal choices. For example, al-Ṭabarī chose 22 readings, Ibn Jubayr (d. 259/871-72) went with five, and others preferred eight.48 Several other scholars also noted that there were some readings that did not make into Ibn Mujāhid’s list but still met the three criteria mentioned above. These other readings were the choice of other scholars in their compositions on variant readings.49

Ibn al-Jazarī, in whom the medieval scholarship on variant Quranic readings seems to have culminated, related the following from Abu al-‘Abbās Aḥmad b. ‘Ammār al-Mahdawī (d. 430/1038-39), a famous scholar in Quranic sciences and exegesis:

The limitation to Nāﬁ’, Ibn Kathīr, Abī ‘Amr, Ibn ‘Āmir, ‘Āṣim, Ḥamza, and al-Kisā’ī by the people of their respective cities was adopted by some late-comers for the purpose of condensing (ikhtisāran) and on account of choice (ikhtiyāran). Then the public took it to mean as obligatory (al-farḍ al-maḥtūm) so that if they heard anything differing from

49 Ibn al-Jazarī, al-Nashr, pp. 33-38
them they faulted and apostatized its reader despite the fact that it was probably more clear and better-known. Then some of those who were deprived of soundness and examining skills limited the transmitters from those readers to only two transmitters and any other person other than those two transmitting from them was also faulted while that transmission was probably better-known (ashhar). Truly, the musabbi’/the septutlist (Ibn Mujāhid who limited the number of canonical readings to seven) of those seven did something he ought not to have done and confounded the community to the degree that they grew negligent of what they ought not to have been negligent of, and those who were of little understanding fancied that those seven were the same as mentioned in the prophetic ḥadīth. They confounded the understanding of succeeding generations too. Only if he (Ibn Mujāhid) would have condensed the number he would have condensed either to a higher or a lower number than seven”

5.2. Ebussuud’s handling of variant readings in Irshād

Now we would like to investigate Ebussuud’s handling of variant readings in his Quranic commentary in light of the preceding historical development of the subject. A conspicuous feature of Ebussuud’s Quranic commentary is that it teems with instances of mentioning the variant readings of a given Quranic word. Aydemir was able to determine some four thousand instances of mentioning variant readings in Irshād. A number of studies have attempted to tease out a methodological feature that Ebussuud might have observed, however to no avail. “His methodological approach seems to be so varying that it defies homogeneity” one researcher comments, and also states that he was not interested in variant readings as a separate discipline. The author was of the conviction that Ebussuud either merely wanted to enrich his commentary with the sporadic and unsystematic mentioning of variant readings or he simply propounded them in order to bolster his commentarial views of a given Quranic verse. The same study also ascertained that Ebussuud tackled the variant readings in one of four ways:

1. He would mention only a number of all known variant readings of a given word/expression and grammatically justify and examine each one of them;

2. He would examine and justify only some of the number of all known variant readings he mentions;

3. He would justify and predicate some instances of variant readings he mentions in comparison to other grammatical instances from various other parts of the Quranic usage;

Aydemir, Büyük Türk İslam bilgini, p. 192.
4. He would simply mention a variant reading without offering any foundation or justification.\textsuperscript{52}

Our own survey of the secondary literature on the variant readings in \textit{Irshād} led us to conclude that their assessments and results are informed by the modern orthodox mindset that now views the topic of variant readings as the established and unchanged premise from the time immemorial and disregards the fact that the criteria for the validity of a given reading was still a point of controversy at least up to the middle of 15\textsuperscript{th} century.

The very first instance that we encounter in \textit{Irshād} about the variant readings is on the commentary of \textit{Basmala}, the formulaic expression uttered at the beginning of \textit{sūras} or verses, or considered to be the heading for each individual \textit{sūra}.\textsuperscript{53} After propounding several juridical opinions about whether or not the \textit{Basmala} is a verse, independent or otherwise, Ebussuud mentions the consensus that it is recorded in the codices (\textit{maṣaḥif}) and whatever is in the codex (\textit{bayn daffatayn}) is the word of God.\textsuperscript{54} In this instance Ebussuud considered the existence of a particular reading within the \textit{Mushaf} to be the evidence of its validity and/or Quranicity, or for the veracity of the way it is supposed to be recorded. At the beginning of chapter two where he comments on the way some individual letters of the Arabic alphabet (\textit{ḥurūf al-muqattāʿāt}) are written, he states that the \textit{rasm} of the codex cannot be rejected merely on account of the fact that it contradicts linguistic analogy. Even though conjoined in writing, these letters are written individually and read individually, whereas linguistic analogy would require that they be written separately and/or written by their names. But the unusual orthography is accepted by Ebussuud


\textsuperscript{53} There is an unending discussion on whether or not the \textit{Basmala} is a verse and part of the \textit{sūra} that it is headed with it, or a single and independent verse that is considered to be the heading of each \textit{sūra}, or merely a non-Quranic formulaic expression that is intended for the purpose of seeking blessing; see for a brief discussion, Nasser, \textit{The Transmission}, p. 88-96.

\textsuperscript{54} Ebussuud/Abū al-Suʿūd al-Imādī, \textit{Irshād al-`aqīl al-salīm} v. 1, p. 9.
on account of the fact that it was how it is recorded in the codex, which constituted the veracity and Quranicity of such orthography.

In verse 1:5, on the word al-ṣirāt, the letter “ṣ” was also canonically read as “s”, considered to be the original form, and/or “z” which somehow drove the current recorded orthography closer to the original letter in sound. Ebussuud viewed the first reading as the most eloquent and the one that is transcribed in the codex, and based it on the fact that it reflected the dialect of Quraysh. Though the author justified a particular variant reading in this instance on account of the fact that it was the one that conformed to the rasm, he also, in the same verse, mentions another variant reading “arshidnā” in the reading of Ibn Mas’ūd for the expression “ihdinā”. Not only is “arshidnā” non-canonical, but it contradicts the orthography of the ’Uthmanic codex. The author does not say anything further about this non-canonical reading nor does he elaborate on whether he confirms it or repudiates it on account of the fact that it does not comply with the rasm. Based on the three preceding early examples, it is rather difficult to make sense of how Ebussuud tackled one of the criteria—compliance with the ’Uthmanic rasm—traditionally accepted to be a yardstick for the admissibility or inadmissibility of a given variant reading.

In verse 12:32 the phrase wa layakūn(an)56, with the light emphatic nūn (nūn al-tawkīd al-khafīfa), is rendered in the reading of a group of readers57 wa layakūnann(a) with the heavy nūn of emphasis (nūn al-tawkīd al-thaqīla). Ebussuud, as well as al-Zajjāj and al-Zamakhsharī before him, chose the first reading on account of the fact that the nūn of emphasis is always recorded in the form of light one throughout the Musḥaf. In this instance as well, the criterion of

55 Ebussuud, Irshād, v. 1, p. 18.
56 Case markers are usually omitted in western scholarly conventions of transliterating Arabic words; however, since some variant readings involve permutations in case markers, we here indicate them in parentheses.
57 We have been unable to identify the readers of this reading in the sources available during this study.
compliance with the *Mushaf* seems to have constituted a guiding principle for the admissibility or inadmissibility, or the preference of one reading over another for that matter, of a given reading.

In the verse 5:114, the expression “*takūn(u)*” is read by al-A’mash, one of the four after ten, Ibn Mas‘ūd, and al-Muṭawwā’ī as “*takun*” in the jussive case and was deemed deviant and/or isolated (*shādhdh*).\(^{58}\) Since the orthography of this *shādhdh* variant reading did not contradict the written codex and it did not contradict the Arabic linguistics grammatically, the reason that it was deemed *shādhdh* must have been some sort of weakness in the way it was transmitted. This *shādhdh* reading was compared to another in the Qur’ān, 19:5 where the expression “*yarith(u)ni*” in the nominative case was also read “*yarithnī*” in the jussive/vowelless case, where the same linguistic rules applied and the orthography did not change, and was received as canonical on account of the fact that it was transmitted by way of *tawātur*. Grammarians reasoned that in verse 19:5 the expression “*yarithnī*” in the jussive was in accordance with the rules of Arabic and syntactically analyzed it as the apodosis for the protasis of the conditional expression “*fahab lī*” at the beginning of the verse. The same reasoning can also be applied to the first verse, 5:114, where “*takun*” in the jussive can be rendered grammatically as the apodosis of the protasis “*anzil*” at the beginning of the verse and thus can be admitted linguistically just as canonical. Though Ebussuud labeled the variant reading in the first instance as *shādhdh*, he did not provide any further explanation as to what that term warrants. His wording that the variant reading in the second instance, 19:5, was transmitted by way of *tawātur* whereas the variant reading in the first instance, 5:114, was transmitted by way of *shādhdh* may somehow indicate that he viewed the criterion of sound transmission, by way of

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tawātur in this particular instance, as another valid criterion for the admissibility or inadmissibility of a given variant reading. Both al-Zamakhsharī and al-Baydāwī pointed to the same variant reading in the first instance and drew the same analogy with the second instance without further elaborating on the admissibility or inadmissibility of the first variant reading, or without terming it shādhdh and/or the second one mutawātir. Al-Zamakhsharī’s wording, however, that he viewed nothing wrong with the analogy between the two instances and al-Baydāwī’s short linguistic justification for the first instance, and also the fact that neither al-Zamakhsharī nor al-Baydāwī mentioned any technical label for either instances may be taken as indicative for them of the admissibility of the non-canonical reading in the first instance. We would like to note our reservation that Ebussuud viewed the variant reading in the first instance inadmissible not merely because he deemed it shādhdh, for in several other instances he mentions variant readings that are deemed shādhdh by tradition because of weakness in their transmission, but mentions them without stating their inadmissibility or without explaining why they ought to be viewed shādhdh. In another instance, verse 4:140, Ebussuud drew a similar linguistic analogy with another instance, 51:23. While the variant reading in 4:140 is deemed by tradition and by Ebussuud shādhdh, the one in 51:23 made it into the list of canonical readings. In both instances Ebussuud provides a linguistic justification for both variant readings, a phenomenon that may be taken as corroborative of our preservation about whether shādhdh was outright dismissed by the author or not. The variant shādhdh readings in 5:114 and 4:140 did not keep Ebussuud from using them in interpreting the respective verses based on the shādhdh readings. However the fact that Ebussuud termed the variant readings in both instances shādhdh, despite the fact that both instances can on the same linguistic grounds be justified, may indicate
that sound transmission had more weight for Ebussuud than did the criterion of linguistic compliance.

In 7:10, the word *ma‘āyish* in the reading of the majority of canonical readers is rendered *ma‘ā’ish*, “y” being replaced by *hamza* /the glottal stop/ by Ibn ‘Āmir, one of the seven, as well as in the readings other non-canonical transmitters who transmitted it from Nāfi’, also one of the seven. Ebussuud mentioned the reading of Ibn ‘Āmir, which is deemed just as canonical as the first reading by tradition, but also stated that it is the reading of the majority, *ma‘āyish*, that has a foundation linguistically—*al-wajh fi qirā’atih ikhlāṣ al-yā‘*. Al-Zajjāj dismissed the reading of Ibn ‘Āmir on account of the fact that it had no linguistic foundation. Al-Zamakhsharī also stated that the sound reading (*al-wajh*) was the one that rendered *ma‘āyish* with “y”, and al-Bayḍāwī, who attributed the variant reading to Nāfi’ via a non-canonical transmission, also viewed the reading of the majority to be the correct one. However, the justification provided for the canonical reading of Ibn ‘Āmir, or Nāfi’ according to al-Bayḍāwī, al-Zamakhsharī, and Ebussuud is telling: they thought that Ibn ‘Āmir must have presumed a similarity between this word and others that are like it, such as  ṣaḥā’īf and  madā’in. Though they did not unequivocally state it, their wording clearly indicates that this reading was the result of Ibn

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59 Al-Khaṭīb, *Mu’jam al-qirā’āt*, v. 3, p. 8-9; Though the eponymous canonical readers had several students who transmitted from them innumerable variant readings, some of which are now deemed non-canonical by the traditional orthodox view, only two of those students’ transmissions were deemed canonical; thence the tradition of two canonical *rāwīs/transmitters from the eponymous readers. For example, Nāfi’, one of the seven canonical readers in Ibn Mujāhid’s rendering, had 15 students who all transmitted from Nāfi’ innumerable variant readings, canonical and non-canonical alike, but only the transmission of two of his students/transmitters, namely Warsh (d. 812) and Qālūn (d. 835), were received and deemed canonical. Therefore, it is commonly encountered within the literature of Quranic readings readings that are transmitted from the eponymous readers but are deemed non-canonical on account of the fact that they are not transmitted by the two canonical *rāwīs*.


‘Āmir’s personal reasoning (ijtihād) and they indirectly accused him of committing a linguistic mistake. Al-Wāḥidī explained in length, seven pages in the print edition of his encyclopedic Quranic commentary al-Basīt, how the reading of maʾāʾish was linguistically incorrect, but in the end admitted the fact that the existence of linguistic mistakes by individuals of a given language was a factual phenomenon.62 Though Ebussuud did not label any of these readings as canonical or otherwise, or shāhdh or mutawātīr, he deemed a traditionally admitted reading as incorrect on account of the fact that it did not meet the linguistic requirements. The way he seemed to have justified the linguistically incorrect variant reading implies that according to him some readings, a canonical one in this particular instance, may have been engendered by personal reasoning/ijtihād.

In verse 3:30, the verb tawadd, in the present nominative tense, is rendered waddat, in the past nominative tense, in the non-canonical reading of Ibn Masʿūd.63 Ebussuud did not reject Ibn Masʿūd’s reading but preferred the canonical one on account of the fact that it is more effective in meaning (aqwā maʾnan) which is more effectively rendered by the better-known reading (al-qirāʿat al-mashhūra). Here the author did not reject a non-canonical reading that did not comply with the orthography of the codex, but preferred the canonical one because of the meaning it rendered. Ebussuud neither mentioned that this non-canonical reading of Ibn Masʿūd was deemed shāhdh nor did he explain that it did not comply with the ʿUthmanic Ductus. It seems that in this instance in particular, Ebussuud was guided by the principle of meaning that a given reading entailed.

63 See al-Khaṭīb, Muʿjam, v. 1, 474.
He uses a broad spectrum of terms when he makes preferences among the readings, canonical or non-canonical. Some of these terms that dot the pages of his commentary *Irshād* are *afṣah* (more eloquent) (1:6; 7:137; 11:81), *aqwā* (stronger) (2:177; 30:54), *ablāgh* (more eloquent) (2:25, 132; 36:19; 39:5; 78:37), *awjah* (sounder/better/more reasonable) (8:59; 9:1), *asahh* (sounder/more correct) (11:88), *awfaq* (more convenient/more fitting/more deserving) (3:147; 13:4), *ażhar* (more apparent) (7:82; 89:27), *a'kad/ākad* (more completing/more confirming/more solid) (16:126; 45:21), and several other similar terms in other instances. His preferences seem to have been based on linguistic measurements. He does not make a difference between canonicity or non-canonicity of a variant reading in his preference of a linguistically better reading, and sometimes prefers a canonical reading over a non-canonical one, while at other times he expresses his preference of a canonical reading over other equally canonical readings. Moreover at other times he considers a non-canonical reading to be better, more fitting, sounder, more eloquent, stronger, more solid and/or more deserving etc. We have seen in the previous example, 3:30, how he preferred a canonical reading over a non-canonical one by rendering it *aqwā* in terms of the more effective meaning that resulted from it. In 3:54, as an example where he expressed his preference of a canonical reading over equally canonical other readings, the word *da'f* is also read as *du'f*, a canonical reading which Ebussuud deemed more solid and stronger (*aqwā*). He justified his preference on account of a tradition which states that the Prophet had read it *du'f*. Collections on variant readings note that *da'f* is the reading of Ḥamza, 'Āṣim (the two Kūfan readers of the seven), and Ibn Mas‘ūd, and that *du'f* is the reading of Ibn Kathīr, Nāfi’, Abū 'Amr, Ibn 'Āmir, and al-Kisā‘ī, the remainder of the seven. The former is in the dialect of the tribe of Tamīm, and the latter is in the dialect of Quraysh.\(^{64}\) The fact that the former was also read by Ibn Mas‘ūd whose reading accorded with the readings of

\(^{64}\) Al-Khaṭīb, *Mu'jam*, v. 7, p. 175-76.
the other two canonical readers of Kūfa should allow us to presume that the copy sent to Kūfa was, at least in this instance, written/read in non-Qurayshi dialect. Ibn Mas’ūd hailed from the tribe of Tamīm and it would only make sense that he read this specific word as ʿḍaʿf. Also the fact that the other two Kūfan readers read it the same way would only reinforce our assessment that their choice was based on a non-Qurayshi dialect.

There are also instances where Ebussuud preferred a non-canonical reading over the canonical ones on account of the fact that he viewed the former to be ablاغ. In 38:5, the word ʿuğāb in all the ten canonical readings was also read with doubled “j”, ʿuğjāb, but was considered shādhdh by the tradition. This shādhdh reading was reported from Ṭālīb and several other early scholars and non-canonical transmitters. Ṭalīb and several other early scholars and non-canonical transmitters.65 Ebussuud, as well as al-Zamakhsharī and al-Bayḍāwī before him, viewed the shādhdh reading as more eloquent but said nothing further.

2:84, fa yaghfir(u) li man yashāʾ(u) is rendered in a canonical reading by Yaʾqūb [al-Haḍramī], one of the three after seven, in a way that conjoined (bi idgham) “r” at the end of yaghfir(u) into the “l” in the next word li, which resulted in the reading of fa yaghfil-li man yashāʾ(u) in clear contradiction to the linguistic rules of Arabic, and Ebussuud viewed it as solecism (lahn). Al-Zamakhsharī expressed the same view about linguistic discrepancy on this reading which he attributed to Abī Ṭālīb, one of the seven, but in a non-canonical transmission, and went on a tirade against the transmitter that reported it from Abī Ṭālīb and accused him of being negligent in Arabic. The fact that he also viewed it as a detested dialect should actually indicate that he viewed it nevertheless as a dialect.66 Abū Ḥayyān took him to task and related

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65 Al-Khaṭṭābī, Muʾjam, v. 8, p. 80-81.
from Sībawayh that this sort of usage was encountered in Arabic.\textsuperscript{67} We are not sure what Ebussuud meant to convey when he considered a canonical reading to be \textit{lahn}. He does not expressly state in instances like this that a \textit{lahn} reading is admissible or not. In another instance, 9:12, the word \textit{a’imma} is also canonically read \textit{ayimma}. In this instance again Ebussuud, like his predecessors of al-Zamakhsharī and al-Baydāwī, viewed it as \textit{lahn}. As a matter of fact Ebussuud related it from al-Farrā’ who viewed it as \textit{lahn}, but he would not have mentioned it so unless he himself agreed with him. In 9:90, for another example, the expression \textit{al-mu’adhdhirūn} is rendered \textit{al-mu”adhdhirūn} with doubled ‘ayn by one Maslama in a non-canonical reading. Ebussuud, like other earlier exegetes, also viewed it as \textit{lahn}. He does not even use the technical term \textit{shādhdh}, which may constitute clear evidence that it may be viewed as a reading accommodated by Arabic linguistics.

An interesting case is also found in 18:97 on the expression of \textit{famā ’stā’ū}. Ebussuud mentioned a canonical reading, by Ḥamza, one of the seven, with the doubling of “†”, \textit{famā ’stttā’ū}, and noted that it warranted the unprecedented cluttering of two consonants with no vowels, which here is rendered against the requirements of Arabic language. It is difficult to infer any indication from his wording as to whether he dismissed it or not, nor did he use any technical term such as \textit{shādhdh} or \textit{lahn}. His predecessors had no qualms in dismissing such a reading as being \textit{lahn}. al-Zajjāj rejected this canonical reading as being mere solecism and reported that all the grammarians viewed it so.\textsuperscript{68} Sībawayh deemed it impossible [to pronounce/read]. The traditionalists however, attempted to encounter al-Zajjāj’s claims that the


\textsuperscript{68} Al-Zajjāj, \textit{Ma`ānī al-Qur`ān}, v. 3, p. 312.
reading was transmitted by way of *tawātur* and, therefore, must be accepted.\(^{69}\) How Ebussuud accepted such a reading, if he did at all, is not clear, though the probability that he viewed such readings, as did Ibn Abī Shāma long before him, as remnants of *al-Ahruf al-Sab’a* cannot be excluded.\(^{70}\) Al-Wāḥidī, on the other hand, explained at length again how the majority of Baṣra al-Alā linguists mounted poignant attacks against Ḥamza in this canonical reading of his and how Ibn al-Anbārī somehow disqualified these attacks by providing similar examples from other parts of the Qur’ān which did not similarly cause the Baṣra al-Alā linguists to raise doubts about them.\(^{71}\)

In a canonical reading the phrase *wa makra al-sayyi’(i)* in 35:43 is rendered *wa makra al-sayyi’* without the genitive inflection at the end of the second term of the construct phrase (*iḏāfāta*). Al-Zajjāj viewed it as *lahn*. Ebussuud, and al-Zamakhsharī before him, was able to accommodate such a reading on account of their conviction that the transmitter must have committed a minor mistake: it was probably read with *ikhtilās* (whereby the reader would lower his voice at the end of the phrase in a way that the inflection or the vowel will not be clearly heard) or the end of this phrase was considered a full stop, whereby the reader is not supposed to vocalize the ending inflection and/or the vowel. In either probability the fact that the reader must have made a mistake remains a factual assessment.

*Akun*, in imperfect jussive, in 63:10 is also rendered *akūn(a)*, in imperfect subjunctive, by al-Ḥasan, al-A’mash, and Ibn al-Muḥaysin, three of the four after ten, and Abū ’Amr, one of the seven, and several other companions whose readings were deemed non-canonical. But *akūn(u)*, in imperfect indicative, is only read by ’Ubayd b. ’Umayr and was deemed *shādhadh* by the tradition. Ebussuud mentioned all these readings without calling any one of them either *shādhadh*


or otherwise, and without seeing a problem with any of them.\textsuperscript{72} Similarly in 56:22, \textit{wa hār\textsuperscript{(in)}} 'īyn\textsuperscript{(in)} in genitive was rendered \textit{wa hār\textsuperscript{(an)}} 'īyn\textsuperscript{(an)} in the reading of Ibn Mas'ūd and 'Ubayy. Ebussuud mentioned this reading and saw no problem with its validity. He founded it on a valid linguistic ground, and, since the meaning did not change, he treated it as equally valid as the recorded canonical reading. Al-Zajjāj dismissed this variant reading on account of the fact that it differed from the \textit{Mushaf}.\textsuperscript{73} Since the first copies of 'Uthmanic \textit{mushaf} did not have vocalization marks, al-Zajjāj must have drawn on the late and vocalized copy of the 'Uthmanic \textit{mushaf}.

Al-`A’mash, one of the four after ten, Ibn Mas’ūd, and 'Ubayy read \textit{alā/allā yasjudū} in 27:25 as \textit{halā/hallā yasjudūn/tasjūdū/yasjudū}, all of which are considered \textit{shādhdh}.\textsuperscript{74} Since these traditionally considered \textit{shādhdh} readings in this verse can be justified linguistically, as reported from other famous Companions, the meaning rendered by them can be accommodated religiously; since as a general rule the \textit{hamza} in the \textit{mushaf} can be rendered into “\textit{h}” in recitation, these readings were considered to be in compliance with the \textit{Mushaf}. Ebussuud neither dismissed them nor termed any of them as \textit{shādhdh}.

In 7:105, the phrase \textit{ḥaqīq\textsuperscript{(un)}} ‘alā \textit{an lā aqūl\textsuperscript{(a)}} is rendered in \textit{shādhdh} readings as \textit{ḥaqīq\textsuperscript{(un)} bi an lā ‘aqūl\textsuperscript{(a)}}), and \textit{ḥaqq\textsuperscript{(un)} an lā aqūl\textsuperscript{(a)}}. While the first \textit{shādhdh} reading is attributed to Ibn Mas'ūd, 'Ubayy, and al-'A'mash, the second is only attributed to the former two. Both \textit{shādhdh} readings contradict the 'Uthmanic \textit{rasm}: the first replaces ‘\textit{alā} with “\textit{bi}”, and the second discards ‘\textit{alā} without replacing it with anything else. Ebussuud founded the first \textit{shādhdh} reading on a well-known Arabic usage for the purpose of emphasis, but provided no explanation for the second one. However, he did not deem either variant reading as being \textit{shādhdh}, a fact that

\textsuperscript{72} See for the name of the readers for a number of variances, al-Khaṭīb, \textit{Mu’jam}, v. 9, p. 479-80.
\textsuperscript{73} Al-Zajjāj, \textit{Ma‘ānī al-Qur‘ān}, v. 5, p. 111.
\textsuperscript{74} See, al-Khaṭīb, \textit{Mu’jam}, v. 6, p. 506-507
should indicate that he accepted them. In another variant reading that did not comply with the ‘Uthmanic rasm but which Ebussuud mentioned and did not reject, we find the article anna conjoined with the third person object pronoun, annahā, rendered la’allahā in ‘Ubayy’s reading and was deemed shādhdh by tradition in 6:109. But Ebussuud thought that this reading could be accommodated in this verse linguistically as well as in terms of the meaning it renders. Though it contradicted the rasm as well, he did not reject it nor did he term it shādhdh.

In 7:3, lā tattabi’ū is also read lā tabtaghū in a non-canonical reading. Ebussuud mentioned this reading and grounded it on the meaning of another verse, namely 3:85. Here the justification for the admissibility of a non-canonical reading is not predicated on linguistics, but on mere meaning. Ebussuud, and al-Zamakhsharī whom he follows in this verse, seems to have exercised ijtihād and focused solely on the meaning. According to this reasoning then, if the meaning can be supported by another verse, and/or a reading does not contradict the meaning of another verse, and is reported by way of sound transmission, it should be admitted at least for the purpose of elucidating the meaning of the verse. There are prophetic traditions that attest to the permissibility of a variant reading measured against the criterion of meaning. In a tradition reported in the collection of Abū Dāwūd, one of the hadīth collections that are deemed canonical by Sunni orthodoxy, the angel (probably Gabriel) allowed Muḥammad to read freely as long as he did not confuse a verse indicating mercy with a verse indicating punishment.⁷⁵ This report clearly indicates that reading variantly was allowed as long as the meaning did not change or as long as it could be corroborated in another part of the Qurʾān. In 2:148, wa li kull(in) qiblat(un) is rendered in ‘Ubayy’s reading wa li kull(in) qiblat(un). Though this reading is considered shādhdh by tradition, probably because it contradicted the rasm, Ebussuud neither mentioned

'Ubayy nor that it was shādhdh. Other instances where the non-canonical readings that did not comply with the 'Uthmanic rasm but were however mentioned by Ebussuud and not clearly rejected by him can also be seen in 2:46, 43:61, and throughout other sūras in the commentary of the author.

There are historical reports indicating that when the 'Uthmanic codices were written, 'Uthmān examined them and realized that they included instances of lahn, but felt assured that the Arabs would rectify it in their reading. Some of these instances are also mentioned in these reports and they were taken to be mistakes committed by the scribes of the 'Uthmanic mushaf. The phrase al-muqīmīn, in the genitive or accusative case, al-ṣalāt(a) is one of those instances in 4:162. The said reports mentioned by Ibn Abī Dāwūd (d. 929) indicated that this reading and the way it was recorded in the 'Uthmanic Mushaf was a scribal mistake, and that it was lahn, and the correct form was supposed to be al-muqīmūn in the indicative case. We are not sure what lahn may have meant back then, but there are also reports in the same section of Ibn Abī Dāwūd’s Kitāb al-maṣāḥif which indicate that the term simply meant dialect. But this explanation engenders another problem: why then did ‘Ā’isha for example, the Prophet’s wife and one of the Companions from whom such reports had been transmitted, as well as several others, view such reading as problematic? No valid disagreement on the acceptability of different dialects has been reported. And if it was a dialect, why did the succeeding generations of Muslims go to great lengths trying to provide justificatory and conciliatory explanations for a reading that could otherwise simply be justified on account of its being a dialect? Al-Zajjāj and al-Zamakhsharī, for example, painstakingly tried to explain in their commentaries on this verse that there can be no

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lahn in the Mushaf. But they had no qualms about stating in several other instances in the Qurʾān that some readings, canonical or otherwise, were lahn. It is clear that neither al-Zajjāj nor al-Zamakhsharī took the word lahn to mean simply dialect. The fact that several exegetes attempted to justify this apparent linguistic discrepancy in this phrase should indicate that they all interpreted lahn to mean mere solecism. The verse in its entirety runs:

But those who are firm in knowledge from among them and the believers believe in that which is revealed unto you, and that which was revealed before you, and al-muqīmīn al-ṣalāt(a) (the diligent in performing the prayer), and those who pay the poor due, and the believers in Allāh and in the Last Day; upon those we shall bestow immense reward.

Al-Zajjāj, al-Thaʿlabī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Zamakhsharī all rendered the phrase in their first interpretation of a number of other potential interpretations as accusative, al-muqīmīn, on account of the fact that those that are indicated in this phrase are praised and/or distinguished. Al-Thaʿlabī clearly stated that it was one of a number of expressions that ‘Āʾisha considered to be the mistake of the scribes; however, he did not feel compelled to repudiate such a claim or such a report. Another explanation advanced by some grammarians was that it was conjoined (maʿṭūf) to “from among them (minhum)”, in which case the verse would read: “and from among those who diligently perform the prayer”, was dismissed by al-Zajjāj on account of the fact that this type of conjoining was detested by the majority of grammarians. Another explanation mentioned by al-Thaʿlabī and al-Zamakhsharī was that muqīmīn was conjoined to “that which was revealed unto you” and the meaning would then be rendered: “and that which was revealed unto those who diligently perform the prayer”. The question that naturally arose was who are those that diligently performed the prayer and received the Revelation? And the ready answer was that they were the prophets. Al-Wāḥidī alone among the early abovementioned exegetes did
not mention anything about this phrase in this verse being viewed as *lahn* and said nothing to repudiate it. He must have been content with the first interpretation that it was the direct object of an elided praise verb, a phenomenon that, according to al-Wāḥidī, is widely encountered in Arabic.78 Ebussuud on the other hand mentioned all of the abovementioned explanations, except for the tradition which attested to the fact that ‘Ā’isha viewed it as *lahn*. He also mentioned, as did al-Zamakhsharī and al-Bayḍāwī before him, that it was also read in nominative case, *al-muqīmūn al-ṣalāt(a)*, in the reading of Ibn Mas‘ūd along with several other readers who were deemed non-canonical79 but whose readings must have circulated widely nonetheless. This non-canonical reading of Ibn Mas‘ūd would have complied with Arabic linguistics and would have engendered no discussion grammatically. We are unable to offer at this moment any explanation as to why Ebussuud did not tackle the aspect of this phrase’s being viewed as *lahn*. The fact that he had no qualms about using the term *lahn* in several other instances should outright exclude the probability that he strove to walk an orthodox line. May we suggest that he was not completely satisfied with any of the previous explanations and was thus unable to accommodate the current canonical reading, and therefore merely glossed over the topic entirely? Ibn Rufayda viewed *Irshād* as mere replication of the contents of previous *tafsīr* works, especially *al-Kashshāf* and *Anwār al-Tanzīl*, but this instance in particular tends to repudiate such a general claim.80

5.3. Assessment and conclusions

What can we make of the preceding instances in *Irshād*? The way Ebussuud handled the variant readings in his commentary indicates that he did not consistently observe the traditionally set criteria for the admissibility or inadmissibility of them. Sometimes he justified a given reading on the ground that it complied with the *muṣḥaf* but in other instances he freely utilized the ones that did not accord with the *rasm*. Some variant readings, canonical or non-canonical, were justified and/or dismissed by him on account of their compliance or discord with the linguistic requirements of the Arabic language. It is rather difficult to make sense of the criterion of sound transmission in *Irshād*, but it seems that if a variant reading could be established in an acceptable way of transmission, whether it be *mutāwātir*, or *mashhūr*, or *aḥād*, and it did not constitute further discrepancy with the *rasm* of the text, or, at times, with the meaning rendered by it, Ebussuud did not outright reject it and was content with its utilization at least for exegetical purposes. Some researchers that studied the variant readings in *Irshād* concluded that Ebussuud was rather inconsistent with his observation of the three criteria set by tradition, and they even disparaged him for being negligent in the topic.81 Some other researchers attempted even to demonstrate, by “selectively” choosing a number of variant readings from *Irshād*, that Ebussuud actually did abide by the traditionally set three criteria and observed them throughout his Quranic commentary.82

We have previously mentioned that most of these studies invariably reflect a mindset that is informed by our modern day understanding which operates under the premise that the three

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traditionally set criteria had been set at least since the time of the collection of Qur’ān by ‘Uthmān, and proponents of this mindset fail to see, or turn a blind eye to, the historical and diachronic developments undergone by the phenomenon of variant readings. We have provided ample evidence above for how ’Uthmān’s collection of the Qur’ān into Mushaf did not keep other companions and their successors from entertaining readings that were in discord with it, how Ibn Mujāhid’s attempts failed to limit the canonical/acceptable readings to seven, and how a considerable number of scholars still kept debating after ’Uthmān and after Ibn Mujāhid about the criteria against which the admissibility or inadmissibility of a given variant reading could be measured. These debates and discussions seemingly culminated towards the end of 14th or the beginning of 15th century in the literary work of inarguably one of the most famous figures in late medieval Islamic history in Quranic readings, Ibn al-Jazarī. The close reading of Ibn al-Jazarī’s al-Nashr fī al-qirā’at al-‘aṣhr leaves one with the undeniable impression that the topic was still being hotly debated among the scholars until at least the beginning of the 15th century and the fact that though Ibn al-Jazarī himself wanted to limit the variant readings to ten, he also accepted the idea that other readings beyond ten could equally be entertained as canonical was also observed. When the famous ’Irāqī scholar of Quranic reading Abū Muḥammad b. ’Abd Allāh b. ‘Abd al-Mu’min al-Wāṣiṭī (d. 741/1341) came to Damascus and read in ten variant readings, some scholars who did not accept other than the seven took offense and attempted and sought political backing in order to drive him away from the city, but some other scholars accommodated him. Very interestingly, one of the scholarly figures who was accommodative of al-Wāṣiṭī was none other than Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328), the champion of traditionalism. Because of the significance of Ibn Taymiyya as the figurehead of traditionalism we here would like to give his response to the situation in its entirety:
There is no disagreement among the acknowledged scholars that *al-Ahruf al-Sab‘a* in which the Prophet said the Qur‘ān was revealed are not the well-known seven variant readings. But Ibn Mujāhid is the first one that collected the seven variant readings with the intention of matching the *hurstūf* modes in which the Qur‘ān was revealed, and not out of conviction on his part or on the part of other scholars that those seven variant readings are the same as *al-Ahruf al-Sab‘a* or those identified seven readers are the ones whose readings should not be violated and/or no other reading should be allowed. For this reason, some of the leading scholars in Quranic reading said: had Ibn Mujāhid not before me identified Ḥamza [one of the seven], I would have identified al-Ḥadramī [Ya’qūb, one of the three after seven] instead… and for this reason also no scholar of early Islam disagreed on the fact that it cannot be adjudicated on the inadmissibility of a reading in other than those [seven] readings in all the cities of Muslim community. On the contrary, whoever can determine the veracity of al-A‘mash’s reading [one of the four after ten and at the same time Ḥamza’s teacher], or Ya’qūb al-Ḥadramī’s reading or someone else in their stature in the same way they determine Ḥamza’s and/or al-Kisāʾī’s [readings], they are allowed to adopt those readings without disagreement by the acknowledged scholars. Furthermore, most of the Imām Scholars like Sufyān b. ‘Uyayna (d. 198/815), Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241/855), the eponymous founder of the Ḥanbalī school and the father of the modern day salafī school, and Bishr b. al-Ḥārith (d. 227/850) all knew about Ḥamza’s reading but chose to follow and adopt the reading of someone else such as Ja’far b. al-Qa’qa’ (d. 130/747) [one of the three after seven] and Shayba b. Naṣṣāh (d. 130/747) [a non-canonical reader but also a teacher of Nāfī’], both of whom are from Madina, or the readings of Baṣrans such as the teachers of Ya’qūb [al-Ḥadramī] and others over Ḥamza
and al-Kisā‘ī…for this reason the Imāms of the ‘Irāqī community determined the ten readings or “eleven readings” (the emphasis is mine) to be the same in canonicity as the seven readings. And on this foundation as well they continued collecting/composing books and continued exercising these readings “during ritual prayers” (the emphasis is mine) as well as outside of them, a phenomenon that all scholars agreed and none repudiated them.83

It is clear that at least during Ibn Taymiyya’s time, 14th century, scholars still continued debating and/or accommodating and/or repudiating readings that went beyond the confines of seven or even ten variant readings. It is this fact in light of which the Quranic commentaries that were seemingly imbued with a liberal approach vis-à-vis the variant readings at least up to and through middle of 14th century should be viewed and assessed. That an exegete in the stature of al-Zamakhsharī may have never felt compelled to comply with an established tradition on the variant readings should allow us to seriously question the presumed veracity of the establishment of such tradition. It is our conviction, therefore, that the number of canonical variant readings and/or the identity of canonical readers were in a rather fluid form, and the criteria for the canonicity of a given reading continued to be topic of debate and discussion among not only the scholars of Quranic reading but the exegetes as well. Even though the discipline of variant readings is today considered a separate field of study that is solely appropriated by the scholars of Quranic readings, the exegetes of classical and medieval period seem to have stood their ground and contested them in determining the Quranicity of a given reading. Al-Zamakhsharī primarily and al-Bayḍāwī and Ebussud after him engaged in their Quranic commentaries with the topic of variant readings selectively only in order to point out to the discrepancies that the

attempts of establishing a conclusive tradition involved. Though at instances they, primarily al-Zamakhsharī and Ebussuud, measured some variant readings against the criteria of ʿUthmanic Mushaf, or the requirement of Arabic linguistics, and/or the condition of the quality of transmission, they also allowed for the utilization of readings that in one way or another contradicted with one of these criteria. We do not either believe that the liberal approach to variant readings was the purview of the Quranic exegesis alone and in liturgy only canonical readings were attested to have been in practice according to the prevalent Muslim narrative. Some literary evidence, especially the legal rulings of eminent jurists, entitles us to question the limitation of this liberal approach to exegetical endeavors alone. We should also seriously consider revising the current understanding that the exegetes liberally approached the variant readings and incorporated them, canonical and non-canonical ones alike, into their Quranic commentaries for the sole purpose of enriching their hermeneutical explanations. The editors of Abī Ḥayyān’s al-Bahr covered the topic of permissibility of non-canonical readings during ritual prayers and it seems that some acknowledged scholars did not view anything wrong with it. Among some of the scholars that permitted recitation in non-canonical readings during ritual prayers are Mālik b. Enes (d. 795), the eponymous founder of the Mālikī school, and some well-known Ḥanafī scholars.84 Ibn Taymiyya, in the abovementioned note, condoned the readings that went beyond even ten readings even in ritual. Nor do we encounter in the commentary of Ebussuud anything resembling a distinction between exegetical and liturgical purposes, and we strongly believe that neither Ebussuud nor al-Zamakhsharī, or other exegetes whose commentaries can be characterized similarly, established such a distinction between liturgical reading and exegetical reading either. It is rather our modern scholarship understanding of how and why some exegetes more liberally covered the topic of variant readings in the Quranic

84 See Abū Ḥayyān al-Andulūsī al-Bahr al-muhīf, v. 1, p. 87-89.
commentaries or how and why they based some of their commentaries on traditionally non-
canonical readings.
Chapter 6

Ebussuud’s hermeneutical approach in his *Irshād*

6.1. The age of verification: theoretical approaches

Though al-Dhahabī categorized Ebussuud’s Quranic commentary under the rubric of religiously accepted commentaries based on reason, the relatively high number of traditions in it, prophetic or otherwise, led some researchers to opine that it is also a commentary that is imbued with characteristics of Quranic commentaries that are largely based on tradition, and thereby to suggest that it should also be considered within commentaries based on tradition/riwāya. Aydemir noted that there were upwards of twelve hundred ḥadīths in *Irshād*, a feature that, according to him, allowed for its placement within the category of commentaries based on tradition/Sunna as well.1 These ḥadīths in *Irshād* are mentioned on various occasions ranging from interpretation of a given verse and explanation of a legal regulation deduced from another, to grammatical analyses of words and expressions in verses and the occasions of revelations upon which some verses were revealed.2 While some of these traditions mention the name of their first transmitter, the majority of them are introduced with the impersonal kamā warad (as was received [in tradition]), ruwiya (it has been reported), and/or qīla (it was said). The absence of transmission links in these traditions is probably attributed to the fact that the overwhelming majority of ḥadīths had already been collected and their veracity could very easily have been ascertained in them, or the fact that Ebussuud was not very concerned about the soundness of those traditions in terms of their transmission links. In other words, Ebussuud was more

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2 See for example, for the purpose of commentary on a given verse, Q. 2:7, 156, 180, 183, 238; 4:82, 125; and for the purpose of clarifying the Occasions of revelations, 2:4, 168, 186, 188, 217, 219; 3:18; 4:32; 5:4; 15:24, 87; for legal rulings, 2:198, 228; 5:4; and for various other instances, 2:87, 178, 198, 228; 3:36; 17:78.
interested in the meaning that those traditions provided for the exegetical interpretation of given verse than whether or not they could in transmission be verified. Al-Shāwish observed that Ebussuud does not mention the transmission link of a given ḥadīth except in two instances, and the traditions he mentions are mostly rendered in meaning and mentioned only partially.³ While Ebussuud very infrequently employs some of the technical terms of mutawātir, mashhūr, āḥād, ḍaʿīf, and/or mawdūʾ for some of the ḥadīths he mentions, some of them are traditionally categorized as sound (sahīh), and others are deemed to be dubious/unsound (ḍaʿīf) or even fabricated (mawdūʾ).⁴ Ebussuud does not seem to have been meticulously concerned about the probity of the way these traditions had been transmitted. However, in at least two instances, Ebussuud accepted the validity of traditions that are reported by individuals (akhbār al-āḥād) as binding. In Q. 9:122, he stated that based on this verse it was adduced that the akhbār al-āḥād constituted binding proof (ḥujja).⁵ And in Q. 24:2, he even allowed for such traditions to abrogate the injunctions of Quranic verses.⁶ He somehow reinforced the same notion in Q. 49:6

³ Al-Shāwish, Tafsīr Abī al-Suʿād, p. 198.
⁴ See for a sound ḥadīth, for example, Irshād on Q. 27:2; and for a dubious one, 22:11; and for a fabricated and forged one, 3:188, and almost all of the traditions, which are traditionally categorized under the rubric of faḍāʾil al-suwar (the merits of the sūras), that are mentioned at the end of commentary on each Quranic chapter.
⁵ In this verse, the Qurʾān enjoins the believers to observe the foundational need of the community in the pursuit of knowledge; it tells them not take part altogether even in a holy war and orders them collectively that there should be some individuals who would remain behind and constantly devote themselves to the pursuit of religious knowledge (tafaqquh) so that when those who go out on a holy war return, they may be able to find individuals from whom religious knowledge could be obtained. Ebussuud reasoned that since those who remain behind are only individuals, namely a few in number, the knowledge that they would later impart would be considered the sort of knowledge that is transmitted by individuals and the sort of knowledge that would be binding on those who return. He furnishes no further explanation about how the understanding of those individuals in a given matter should constitute abinding proof on those who go out on a war and return.
⁶ This verse is the famous Quranic verse that involves the punishments to be meted out to the fornicators/adulterers. The verse indicates that the punishment to be administered to those who commit sexual intercourse out of wedlock is one hundred floggings, without distinguishing between a married or unmarried person. The orthodox view, nevertheless, distinguished between the two categories of individuals and deemed this verse to have addressed only the unmarried individuals. The punishment of the adulterer, on the other hand, is established by the Sunna of the Prophet in an aḥād transmission, and it is death by stoning. Ebussuud pointed to this distinction between the two class of individuals and reasoned that since the changing, modifying, and/or narrowing down the meaning of a verse is also considered some sort of abrogation, there is clear evidence in this verse and the established Sunna of the Prophet that the Qurʾān can even be abrogated by traditions that are transmitted in aḥād manner.
but qualified it with a rather vague phrase of “in some instances”, and without further elaboration. It is rather difficult to infer what “some instances” may involve, but the abovementioned instances indicate that Ebussuud viewed the sound āḥād transmissions to yield epistemological certainty. While in several instances during his commentary he mentions a number of traditions with an analysis and assessment of them followed by rejection or repudiation; he also infrequently mentions them without expressing his personal preference, rejection or dismissal of any one of them. For example, he cites several traditions on the commentary of Q. 2:35, without naming the transmitters, about where Adam and Eve were in the earthly world before they were taken to Paradise. In the end he makes no assessment or preference and states that all these traditions point to a probable truth and the ultimate truth cannot categorically be determined on this point. We need to provide some clarification about our observation on the fact that Ebussuud sometimes makes preferences among the traditions that are transmitted in āḥād manner and some other times he dismisses them. There seemingly arises a problem: how can Ebussuud make preferences between the traditions which he holds to yield epistemological certainty and between the Quranic verses that are held to yield epistemological certainty as well? Or how can he repudiate and dismiss some of those traditions? The answer lies in the fact that though the way those traditions can be established to have been transmitted in a manner that yields epistemological certainty, the relevance in meaning that they are rendered is the purview of a given scholar. To put it differently, Ebussuud does not prefer one tradition over another, repudiates or dismisses some of them on account of whether or not they are transmitted in particular manner; but on account of its relevance in meaning to the interpretation of a given verse. We also need to note here the caveat that in this context Ebussuud

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7 In this verse the Qur’ān enjoins the believers to seek verification and corroboration when they receive information from a sinful (fāsiq) person. Ebussuud reasoned that the information received from an upright and just (al-’adl) person by comparison need to be deemed true.
also distinguishes between traditions that are transmitted directly from the Prophet and those that reflect the personal opinions of the Companions and their Successors.

On the other hand, while some of these traditions are also cited and mentioned in his usual sources mentioned previously, some others seem to have been drawn from other sources. For example, in the commentary of Q. 2:78, he examines the question of who the *ummīyyūn* are; Ebussuud mentioned a total number of three traditions, one is ascribed to the Companion 'Alī [b. Abī Ṭālib], another is ascribed to al-'Ikrima and al-Ḍahḥāk, the famous Successors, and the third is by unnamed figures, concerning the meaning of this word. These three traditions indicate that the *ummīyyūn* are either the Christian Arabs, or a group of people from among the People of the Book (*ahl al-Kitāb*) who had been dispossessed of their book on account of the sins they committed, or simply the Zoroastrians. Whereas al-Thaʿlabī nor al-Ẓāḥiḍī and al-Zamakhsharī mentioned none of these three traditions, the latter’s wording indicates that he took them to be the Jews. By comparison, al-Rāzī did not mention any tradition but interpreted them to be the negligent Jews. Even al-Ṭabarī does not mention the traditions Ebussuud cited in the commentary of this particular verse. We have however been able to ascertain these traditions only in the Quranic commentary of al-Qurṭubī and we can categorically state that, even in wording, Ebussuud used him as his source in the interpretation of this particular verse. Both authors chose the reference to be to a group of Jews who had no direct knowledge of the Book (*Torah/Tawrāh*). Neither author provides an explanation for their choice among these various traditions; however, Ebussuud’s wording *wa al-ḥaqq alladhī lā mahīd ’anhu annahum (jahalat)*

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8 The plural of *ummī*, a Quranic term whose definite meaning has been the subject of extensive medieval and modern studies; for a detailed discussion of both medieval and modern surveys and their analysis, see, Mehdy Shaddel, “Qur’ānic ummī: genealogy, ethnicity, and the foundation of a new community” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 46 (2016): pp. 1-60.


al-Yahūd may indicate that no other interpretation can be accommodated within the context. We also need to mention here that these traditions, as well as other traditions throughout Irshād, are mentioned after the commentary on the verse is already propounded. This phenomenon should inevitably beg the question of “why”? The answer should also reveal the function the traditions serve for Ebussuud: He employed and utilized the traditions only to reinforce and corroborate the interpretation he had already presented on a given verse. The acceptance of a tradition or its dismissal did not depend so much on its veracity as the meaning it rendered vis-à-vis the interpretation he deduced from the verse depending on several criteria that he utilized throughout his commentary. Traditions, canonical or non-canonical, and stories, historically true or apocryphal, are not mentioned in Irshād for the initial understanding of a given verse. On the contrary, the meaning of a verse is clearly understood and interpreted with the help of linguistic tools and collocational/textual setting (ṣiyāq and sībāq, and naẓm). Traditions and stories are then mentioned only to support an already presented interpretation or for the purpose of repudiating their veracity and/or their relevance to the verse. Ebussuud presents here the traditions and stories to the text and/or context (naẓm and siyāq) of the Qurʾān and measures them against it. We will shortly present some samples in which Ebussuud mentioned traditions that are related to a verse in various aspects. Some of these traditions concern the occasion of revelation of a verse, some others concern the meaning the verse renders, and others relate to grammatical analyses of a word or expression in the verse. What all these traditions share is the fact that they are all subjected to a process of assessment and analysis in which the primary measuring tool Ebussuud used is the text and/or context of the verses themselves.

In his entry on Ebussuud and his Quranic commentary, Ibn ʿĀshūr proposed an historical development in the history of Quranic commentaries and attempted to define the setting that led
to the conception of *Irshād*. He pointed to the historical period during the 8th-9th/14th-15th centuries when the exegete scholars of Middle East, Iran, and Transoxiana/Transoxania began an ongoing activity of studying, analyzing, and verifying the commentaries of al-Zamakhsharī and al-Bayḍāwī. The leading figures of this movement were al-Taftazānī and al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī whose legacies extended into Ottoman lands in Anatolia. Ottoman scholars participated extensively in these efforts of studying, analyzing, and verifying the exegetical corpus that had hitherto been written. The unsystematic growth of the accumulated knowledge produced by this movement, Ibn Ṭūṣ, suggested, called for a new composition. While some scholars sorted what they deemed worthy within this accumulated knowledge into separate collections, some chose to present them again in separate compositions in abridged and/or summarized form, while others opted for the model of adjudicating on a single point or a number of points which engendered heated debates among the scholars of this movement. Ibn Ṭūṣ continued, for a single work that would assess, evaluate, and collect between *al-Kashshāf* and *Anwār al-Tanzīl* and summarize the most essential points that had been accumulating on them, and Ebussuud achieved this task. Ibn Ṭūṣ may have considered *Irshād* to be a condensed composition of *al-Kashshāf* and *Anwār*, but the examples that we will propound shortly will demonstrate that Ebussuud went beyond those works and examined, analyzed, criticized, adjudicated and verified the exegetical material of a particular artery of exegetical corpus against the Quranic text, and attempted to present a Quranic commentary which is more concise in the interpretation of Qur‘ān. The earlier *tafsīr* works were overwhelmingly imbued with a number of potential interpretations on a given Quranic verse and/or with a number of

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12 For a comparative study of such compositions see Saleh, “The Gloss as Intellectual History”; and for a number of compositions that are authored after *Irshād* on the triad of *al-Kashshāf*, and *Anwār* and *Irshād* comparatively, see appendix 2.
traditions adduced for the interpretation or the occasion of revelation of another, and/or with a number distinct of stories, sound or apocryphal, that attested to have provided the context for the interpretation of a given verse. Though some of these Quranic commentaries have utilized terms that would somehow allude to the choice of their authors from among the various and potential exegetical views, cases where they leave the reader confounded abound. Same phenomenon may be encountered in *Irshād* as well notwithstanding; it seems to be a rarity in it, but the norm in previous Quranic commentaries. Furthermore, seldom do we find al-Zamakhsharī or al-Rāzī, for example, justifying their infrequent preferences within a number of exegetical opinions. Ebussuud, on the other hand, was concise in the interpretation of any given verse, and was clear in justifying his interpretation or his choice of interpretation from among the accumulated corpus of exegetical views, and at times, criticizing and repudiating the ones that he dismissed as incorrect.

*Irshād* cannot be assessed or appreciated if isolated from the previous works of *tafsīr*: it needs to be juxtaposed largely with a heritage of Quranic exegesis that is represented in the broader genealogical artery of knowledge through the works of al-Tha’labī, al-Wāhidī, al-Zamakhsharī, al-Rāzī, al-Bayḍāwī, and Abū Ḥayyān. Only then can any attempt of its study ascertain its value and the contribution it has made in the field of Quranic exegesis. Not only did Ebussuud closely follow and subscribe to the methodology and heritage of the Quranic commentators of the abovementioned scholars, but he also analyzed them, criticized them, repudiated and dismissed some of their propositions, and verified some others. Furthermore, Ebussuud did not only declare solid preferences from amongst the corpus of exegetical views as was sporadically and rarely done by his predecessors, but he also offered clear foundations for
his analyses. Ebussuud then posited himself as someone who felt the dire need to winnow out the hitherto available exegetical corpus and verify the heritage of knowledge therein.

At this moment we are unable to verify if Ebussuud analyzed the accumulated corpus of exegesis solely on his own or resorted to other works that had been produced in the form of ḥāshiya, taʾlīqāts, etc. on it, and if he did, which works these were. Based on his study of al-Saqāʾs ḥāshiya on Irshād, Ekin noted that Usāma Aḥmad, who produced a PhD study on Irshād, reached the conclusion that the objections Ebussuud directed to al-Zamakhsharī are mostly drawn from the ḥāshiya of al-Ṭībī on al-Kashshāf.14 We have been able to ascertain an instance in al-Saqāʾs ḥāshiya where he indicated al-Ṭībī as Ebussuudʾs source, and al-Saqāʾs wording is very interesting: “It is stolen from al-Ṭībī”.15 The emotional resentment that al-Saqāʾ expressed here aside, it is a common feature of medieval compositions not to ascribe every single opinion to its original source. The editors of Futūḥ al-ghayb, al-Ṭībīʾs ḥāshiya on al-Kashshāf, propounded a number of instances in which Ebussuud might have drawn on al-Ṭībīʾs work. Our own examination of these instances led us to question this assessment, and it is imperative that we give a closer look at this claim. Q. 6:1 reads in translation: “Praise be to Allah who created the heavens and the earth, and made the darkness and the light; Yet (thumma, literally “then”) those who disbelieve equate others with their Lord”. The article thumma is interpreted by Ebussuud to render a sense of meaning that disqualified (istibʿād) the probability of what comes after it, namely that the Qurʾān disqualified the possibility of shirk because of what preceded thumma in the verse—that God had already set proofs in the creation of the heavens and the earth and that the article thumma serves the function of an exclamation mark at the end of this

14 Yunus Ekin, Ebussuud tefsirinde siyakʾin yeri, p. 37-38. Usāmaʾs study was unavailable to us during this research, and therefore we were unable to verify this information and ascertain its veracity.
verse. Ebussuud added that those proofs did not include the revealed proofs in Scripture. His reasoning entails that the disqualification of *shirk* is already warranted by the creation of the cosmic world, and as for the revelations, they were merely sent for reinforcement of the same truth. The editors of *Futūḥ al-ghayb* surmised that Ebussuud here summarized al-Ṭībī’s views, which also interpreted the article *thumma* in the same manner. But the editors must have overlooked a nuance in both interpretations: while al-Ṭībī stated that the proofs which God set are both in the cosmic world and in the revelations which comprised the sending of prophets and the Scripture, Ebussuud enunciated that the creation of the heavens and the earth was enough proof for the disqualification of *shirk* and no revelation and/or sending of messenger is warranted. This minor difference between the two interpretations has ramifications of great proportions, and the theologians have discussed at great length whether the creation alone is enough for knowing and/or believing in God or messengers and revelation were also a prerequisite. At any rate, not only did Ebussuud not copy al-Ṭībī’s exegetical view in this instance, but he also went completely the opposite way. On the other hand, Ebussuud did not actually need to draw on al-Ṭībī to interpret the article *thumma* for the meaning of *istib‘ād* because al-Zamakhsharī had already rendered it so. al-Zamakhsharī did not clearly elaborate on this aspect, and it is the very reason that both al-Ṭībī and Ebussuud felt the need to explicate it. In this instance, both al-Ṭībī and Ebussuud contested with each other about the detailed meaning of a Quranic expression that was initiated vaguely by al-Zamakhsharī.

Another instance that the editors mentioned is Q. 6:59. But the close comparison of *Irshād* with *Futūḥ al-ghayb* reveals nothing to indicate that the former drew on the latter. Ebussuud simply copied here not al-Ṭībī’s interpretation, but that of al-Zamakhsharī directly.

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16 See *Irshād*, v. 3, p. 105.
Furthermore, Ebussuud’s wording may even be viewed as neater than that of either commentators’ expositions. As an anecdote, however, we should probably mention as an indication of al-Ṭībī’s staunch orthodox stance vis-à-vis Ebussuud’s that the former related from al-Intiṣāf (Ibn al-Munayyir’s critique of al-Kashshāf) that the expression of tawāṣṣul cannot be used for God because it indicates temporal and/or spatial progress in the pursuit of an objective.\textsuperscript{17} We do not know why al-Ṭībī needed to cite this from al-Intiṣāf, for he himself used the same term with no qualms—perhaps he wanted to insinuate how naïve, simpleminded, and ingenuous Ibn al-Munayyir was; that is if we were to read his remarks charitably.

The next examples, Q. 6:100; 7:17; and 7:92, also seem to have been taken directly from al-Kashshāf and not from Futūḥ al-ghayb. We do not wish to intimate that Ebussuud did not draw on al-Ṭībī’s ḥāshiya at all, but would only like to demonstrate that the instances propounded by the editors of Futūḥ al-Ghayb do not hold true.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{17} All three exegetes use this term for God, “yatawaṣṣal”
6.2. The age of verification: practical approaches

Now we would like to closely examine some of the examples from *Irshād* in comparison with the exegetical corpus composed before Ebussuud’s time in order to have a better understanding of the preferences and justifications Ebussuud propounded throughout his Quranic commentary.

In Q. 3:12, “Say unto those who disbelieve *(qul li alladhīna kafārū)*: you shall be defeated and gathered unto Hell, an evil resting place” for example, there are three traditions that Ebussuud mentioned for the occasion of the revelation of this verse; all of which are propounded for the purpose of identifying who are meant by “those who disbelieve”. The first one, transmitted by Ibn ’Abbās, indicated that when Muḥāmmad and his followers won the battle of Badr against the people of Makka, some of the Jews in Madina with whom Muḥāmmad had signed a truce for a period of time, began questioning if Muḥāmmad’s call was truly divine and if they had been wrong about him all along. But when Muḥāmmad and his followers were dealt a defeat at the battle of Uḥud the next year, they retracted this assertion and a group of them even went to Makka and joined the idol worshippers of Makka to fight against Muḥāmmad the next time around, upon which this verse was revealed. According to this tradition then, this verse was revealed after the Battle of Uḥud. The second *ḥadīth*, transmitted by Mujāhid, ḬIkrima, and Ibn ’Abbās, related that when Muḥāmmad won in Badr, he gathered the Jews of Madina and warned them against treachery and threatened them that what had happened to Quraysh in Badr could very well happen to them too. The Jews belittled him and told him that the people of Makka were inexperienced in battle, and if Muḥāmmad were to engage in war with them instead, he would see that they are not to be taken lightly and they are to be feared; and the verse was revealed. According to this tradition then, this verse was revealed immediately after the Battle of
The third tradition is transmitted by Muqātil who said that the verse was revealed before the battle of Badr and the disbelievers mentioned in the verse are the idol worshippers of Makka. The first tradition indicates that they were the idol worshippers of Makka along with the Jews of Madina who joined them; and the second tradition indicates that they were the Jews of Madina only; and the third one indicates that they were the people of Makka only. Al-Tha’labī mentioned all three traditions but preferred the one transmitted by Muqātil, which he mentioned the first, and interpreted the word disbelievers to refer to the idol worshippers of Makka. Al-Wāḥidī mentioned only the two views that resulted from known traditions which indicate that the disbelievers were either the idol worshippers of Makka or the Jews of Madina. However, in the end, he came up with his own view that they were both meant in this verse, and supported his view by adducing several other verses from other parts of the Qur’ān. Al-Zamakhsharī, along with al-Bayḍāwī who copied him verbatim, and al-Baghawī, mentioned all three traditions the way al-Tha’labī did and also adopted the latter’s choice. But al-Rāzī seems to have adopted al-Wāḥidī’s approach and concluded his discussion of the traditions with the generalization of the disbelievers with the idol worshippers of Makka and the Jews of Madina. Ebussuud, on the other hand, interpreted the disbelievers to refer to the Jews of Madina only. While the previous exegetes did not mention any reason for their preference, Ebussuud dismissed Muqātil’s view on account of the fact that the verse immediately after this verse “There was a token/lesson (āya) for you in the two hosts/groups (fī ’atayn) which met: one group fighting in the way of Allah, and the other disbelieving …” was revealed after the battle of Badr. And if those referred to in the current verse were the idol worshippers of Makka there would be an unreasonable disconnect between this verse and the one after it. The next verse, 3:14, talks about the battle of Badr and points to the lessons that its interlocutors are expected to draw. Therefore, we can with some
certitude state that it was revealed after Badr. While al-Tha‘labi said nothing about whom this verse addressed, al-Zamakhshari, perhaps on account of consistency with the first verse, stated that this verse also addressed the idol worshippers of Makka. However, there is no historical record of any event that would trigger the addressing of such a verse to Makkans, and Ebussuud must have realized this discrepancy. The fact that most of the previous exegetes mention all the obviously contradictory traditions is no less indicative of the fact that they also viewed the discrepancy. Though they also chose the implication of one tradition over another, they never tell us why and how they chose what they chose. Ebussuud, on the other hand, clearly stated the reason behind his choice and preference: that rendering the addressed group in the first verse as the idol worshippers of Makka does not accord with the collocational setting of this verse and the one that comes immediately after it; and there is no historical evidence to support it; and lastly, it causes an unreasonable disconnect between these two verses.19

In another instance Ebussuud offered his preference within a number of exegetical views and justified his choice on the overall meaning of the context. Q. 6:38 can be rendered in translation as follows: “There is not an animal in the earth, nor a flying creature on two wings, but they are nations like you. We have not neglected anything in the Book. Then unto their Lord they will be gathered/resurrected/die (yuḥṣarūn).”

The expression yuḥṣarūn in the coda of this verse was interpreted differently by the early exegetes in accordance with two variant traditions transmitted by Ibn ‘Abbās.20 While one tradition indicated that ḥashr meant death here; that they will all die unto their Lord, the other

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20 That the second tradition is transmitted by Ibn ‘Abbās cannot really be verified: al-Wāḥidī reported from Ibn ‘Abbās that they would be yuḥṣarūn for the purpose of accounting for their deeds, but the editors were unable to verify the source of such hadīth from Ibn ‘Abbās.
indicated that what is meant by hashr here is the resurrection; that they will all be resurrected and/or gathered unto their Lord whereby they will all account for their deeds. It seems that al-Tha’labī is the first exegete, along with al-Ṭabarī, that reported the first tradition from Ibn ʿAbbās and took the expression yuḥsharūn to mean that they would all die. But al-Wāḥidī neither mentioned this tradition nor interpreted yuḥsharūn the same as al-Tha’labī; He attributed another tradition to Ibn ʿAbbās, probably wrongly, which stated that yuḥsharūn here means that they will all be gathered unto their Lord. This last interpretation actually is the apparent meaning of yuḥsharūn and all of the exegetes that subscribed to the same artery of the exegetical heritage, al-Zamakhsharī, al-Rāzī, al-Bayḍāwī, and Ebussuud, interpreted this expression the same way as al-Wāḥidī. What is interesting is that none of these late exegetes mention the first tradition by Ibn ʿAbbās, except for al-Bayḍāwī who at the end of his commentary on the verse introduced it with the impersonal qīla which indicates that he did not condone it. Though all these late exegetes exercised choice among traditions, two in this case, Ebussuud is the only one who elaborated why the tradition which explained yuḥsharūn to mean death should be dismissed. He reasoned that because the situation and context of the verse calls for fear and worry, interpreting al-hashr as death cannot be entertained in this context (wa ya’bāh maqām tahwīl al-khaṭṭī wa tafzī’ al-ḥāl). 21

Q. 15:24 is one of the verses that is difficult to render in translation unless a particular meaning is observed, therefore we will render the terms in discussion in their original Arabic: “We surely know al-mustaqaḍīmīn among you and surely We know al-musta’khirīn”. The identification of al-mustaqaḍīmīn and al-musta’khirīn was the cause of debate for generations of exegetes, and the meaning those terms rendered varied from “those who preceded” and “those

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who followed” temporally, and/or those “who hastened forward” (in the path of God) to “those who lagged behind” and to “those who are eager to occupy the first line of duty” and “those who are laggards”, respectively. There are two traditions adduced to constitute the occasion of this revelation, and both al-Tha’labī and al-Wāḥidī mentioned both of these two traditions. According to the first one, there was an exquisitely beautiful woman who joined the congregational prayer at the mosque; while some of the male members of the congregational prayer chose to go forward onto the first lines of the congregation for fear of being distracted by the beauty of the woman, others intentionally remained in the last lines in order to be able to leer at the woman from under their arms every time they prostrated, and the verse was revealed. The second tradition indicates that the Prophet urged his community to hasten forward onto the first lines during the congregational prayers upon which they all crowded onto the first lines; and this verse was revealed. So, based on these two traditions, the meaning of the verse would be rendered to refer to those who were eager to perform the congregational prayers in the first lines and those who were not, and for different purposes. However it was only one of the potential meanings those two terms were understood to mean by early figures among both the Companions and the Successors who felt unconstrained in expressing different meanings on these two terms. While some Companions and Successors took these two terms to refer to the generations that temporally preceded (al-mustaqdimīn) and the ones that were still to follow (al-musta’khirīn), others took them to refer to those who would hasten and show eagerness in the path of God for the former and those who lagged behind and remained laggards for the latter. While both al-Tha’labī and al-Wāḥidī mentioned all these traditions, the fact that the former’s first introduced interpretation is that they are the bygone and future generations, and the latter’s first introduced interpretation is that they are those who hasten forward in obeying God’s orders, whether they be
in the performance of rituals or in war, indicates that they preferred it, respectively. We need to note that while both authors explicitly state that it was their choice of interpretation, they did not elaborate on why they chose their respective interpretations to constitute the potentially correct meaning of the verse. Al-Zamakhsharī, whom al-Bayḍāwī copied verbatim, introduced these two interpretations, that those that are meant in the verse are the preceding and following generations or those that hasten forward in complying with God’s orders, equally and potentially to be true—either of the two groups of people identified by al-Tha’labī and al-Wāḥidī—and introduced the interpretation drawn from the traditions about the occasion of revelation with the impersonal qīla, which may be indicative of the fact that he was disinclined to accept them. Al-Rāzī noted all the traditions and the different exegetical views mentioned in this verse, but in the end came up with his own interpretation which somehow comprised the combined meaning of all of the above mentioned traditions: He stated that the verse means that God knows everything and everyone. Abū Ḥayyān mentioned all these interpretations and found himself confounded. He wittily came up with the solution of stating that it is best to take these various interpretations as mere speculative representations which should not be mutually exclusive. Then he comprehensively offered that what is meant by this verse is that God knows everyone (man taqaddam wa man ta’akhkhar) and He knows their status (wa muḥīṭ bi aḥwālihim) as well.22 Ebussuud, by contrast, mentioned all the traditions in a way similar to that of al-Zamaksharī and treated either of the two interpretations first introduced by al-Tha’labī and al-Wāḥidī to be equally and potentially true. As for the traditions adduced to constitute the occasion of revelation and according to which the meaning of the verse would have to be narrowed down, he disregarded the meaning rendered by them on account of the fact that he viewed the other

interpretations as more appropriate (*al-munāsib*) to the context of preceding and following verses (*li mā sabaq wa mā laḥīq*). Though Ebussuud adopted the same interpretation propounded by al-Zamakhsharī, what distinguished him from the latter is the fact that he explained the reasons that led him to his choice. He founded his preference on the context of the verse along with the verses immediately surrounding it. He reasoned that the previous verse involved God’s unlimited power and the following verse pointed to His unlimited knowledge. Though he introduced both traditions for the occasion of revelation of this verse, he chose to predicate his interpretation not on them but on the context of these verses. We need to note that he did not dismiss the veracity of these traditions, but simply chose not to utilize them in the interpretation of this verse. In the previous verse the Qur’ān says “and indeed, it is We who give life and cause death, and We are the inheritors” and in the following verse “and indeed, your Lord will gather them; indeed, He is Wise and Knowing” Therefore, Ebussuud reasoned that *al-mustaqdīmīn* and *al-musta’khirīn* must be the terms that encompassed all those who preceded temporally and all those who would follow the addressed audience.

In another verse Ebussuud assessed a number of exegetical views and offered his preference for the one that fit the context of surrounding verses as well. In Q. 2:64, the point of discussion among the exegetes revolved around what “the grace of God” involved. The verse in its entirety runs: “Then, even after that, you turned away, and if it had not been for the grace of Allah and His mercy you would have been among the losers”. There are basically three interpretations about “the grace of Allah” in this verse: either that God enabled them to repentance and accepted it from them, or sent Muḥammad and the Qurʾān to them as a token of His grace and mercy, or that God postponed and delayed their worldly punishment by which they would otherwise have perished. The pericope begins with verse 63 where God addresses the sons
of Israel and reminds them that He made a covenant with them and mentions some of the favors He bestowed on them; He continues in verse 65 reminding them of their ancestors who violated the sanctity of Sabbath and as punishment, God turned them into apes; despised and hated. While al-Tha’labī mentioned that the grace of Allah meant the delaying of their punishment, al-Wāḥidī thought that it either involved the postponement of the punishment or that Allah sent them Muḥammad and the Qur’ān. Al-Zamakhsharī opted for the enabling for repentance with which al-Bayḍāwī agreed but also equally expressed the possibility that it may also have involved the fact that He sent Muḥammad and the Qur’ān to them. Al-Rāzī’s first interpretation, related from al-Qaffāl\(^2\) (d. 365/976), is the postponement of the punishment, to which he added, until they repented. He also mentioned repentance independently as the second interpretation, but offered no preference in the end. And while Abū Ḥayyān enriched the commentarial opinions in this verse on Grace which he said refers to Islām, Muḥammad, the Qur’ān, or the repentance and its acceptance by God, al-Samarqandī and al-Baghawī took it only to mean the postponement of punishment. Though Ebussuud mentioned the last meaning that the grace of Allah was the postponement of punishment, he preferred it to be the most appropriate rendering than interpreting it with either repentance or the sending of Muḥammad—the other two probable interpretations that he mentioned first. He based his choice on the fact that it better suited the following verse. The following verse reminded them, the sons of Israel, of how God punished their ancestors immediately after they violated the Sabbath, and, it follows, that if in the previous verse they were not administered the punishment upon their turning away, it must be considered that God delayed it. The fact that He may as well have delayed it to the Hereafter only until they have repented cannot be excluded. But Ebussuud’s justification for his choice of interpretation allows for the easy dismissal of such probability: He contextualized verse 64 with verse 65

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\(^2\) Known also as al-Qaffāl al-Kabīr al-Shāshī, he is said to have authored a *tafsīr.*
exactly for the purpose of dismissing such probability. Verse 65, he explains, introduced the punishment with the specific grammatical article “f” which indicates that He administered the punishment immediately after they committed the sin, and there is no evidence that he would postpone the punishment of those in the previous verse only until they have repented. He would either postpone it to the Hereafter by virtue of His grace or mete out the punishment immediately. Those who have mentioned more than one interpretation offered no explanation as to what they were based on, nor did they offer any preference among their various interpretations. Though al-Tha’labī and al-Wāḥidī mention this exegetical interpretation, we have failed to ascertain the provenance of this interpretation that Ebussuud preferred in the corpus of traditions, and even al-Ṭabarī does not mention it. Muqāṭil’s interpretation is vague: if it were not for His ni’ma (bounty/grace) [onto you] He would have punished you. Since both repentance and postponement of punishment can be considered ni’ma, it is rather difficult to ascribe this interpretation to him. It therefore seems that al-Qaffāl was the initiator of postponement interpretation and both al-Tha’labī and al-Wāḥidī must have drawn on him.

Another verse that we would like to examine here is Q. 2:78 which runs: “Among them the unlettered (ummiyyūn) who know not the Book/book (al-kitāb) but [follow their own] wishes/desires/hearsay (amāniyy); they do nothing but conjecture”. Here we will only examine how Ebussuud and the other earlier exegetes commentated on the terms al-kitāb and amāniyy. There are several different interpretations about these two terms. Al-kitāb may refer to Torah/al-Tawrāh or to the ability of writing (al-kitāba). Ebussuud rejected the second interpretation on account of the fact that it cannot be accommodated in the current context (sibāq al-Naẓm wa siyāquh). Amāniyy is understood to refer to the baseless and unfounded wishes that, according to Ebussuud, the negligent (jahala) of the Jews were promised and taught by their scholars (aḥbār).
These wishes comprised the promise that God will forgive them, and/or their ancestor prophets will intercede for them, all of which are presumed to have been predicated, by the *aḥbār*, on the Book—Torah. Another potential interpretation that *amāniyy* may also refer to and that it involves lies in absolute terms, in the sense that they are fabricated by individuals and are not drawn from the Book, is also rejected by Ebussuud simply because the text of the Qurʾān (*al-Naḥm al-Karīm*) in this instance does not support it. He rejected this interpretation because he believed that *amāniyy* had to have drawn from and/or be connected to the Book. We would like to point briefly to an inconsistency on his reasoning before we go on to examine how previous scholars tackled these terms in the commentaries. He unequivocally took the article of exception *illā* that preceded the term *amāniyy* to be the disconnected exception.24 This ruling warrants that *amāniyy* should refer to something other than what the Book contains, namely it should involve things that are not drawn from the Book.

Al-Zamakhsharī’s first and only interpretation for *al-kitāb* is Torah. As for *amāniyy*, he took it to refer to a range of things that they (*al-ummiyyūn*) may have adopted by themselves or been taught by their *aḥbār*. These are wishes about how God will forgive and show mercy on them, or how their ancestor prophets will intercede for them, and the hellfire will not touch them but only for a number of days. Al-Zamakhsharī also propounded two more potential interpretations but introduced them with the impersonal *qīla* which may indicate that he did not as strongly approve of them as he did with the previous one. One of these interpretations is that *amāniyy* refers to various lies that they had heard from their scholars, which they accepted and to

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24 There are two types of exceptions in Arabic grammar: connected (*muṭṭasīl*) and disconnected (*mungatī*); while in the connected exception the excepted is a member of the category of those from whom/which it is excepted as in: everyone came except for ‘Alī: here ‘Alī is a member of the category of everyone; in the disconnected exception the excepted is not a member of the category of those from whom/which it is excepted, as in the classical example in grammar books: everyone came except for the donkey: here the donkey is not a member of the category of everyone and therefore the exception is grammatically rendered as disconnected.
which they blindly subscribed. The other one is adduced from poetry as a marginal and less commonly used meaning of the root letters of *amāniyy* which can also render the meaning as what they read (*yatlūn*) only. According to this last interpretation, the meaning of the verse would then be rendered as: “among them are *ummiyyūn* who do not know the Book other than what they [superficially] read." Al-Bayḍāwī seems to have copied al-Zamakhsharī on *amāniyy*, but in commentating on *al-kitāb* he offered that it meant being lettered (*al-kitāba*) which resulted in them being unable to review Torah and corroborate with it the knowledge that they had acquired by themselves and/or through their *ahlābār*. He also mentioned, only as a probability, that it may also refer to Torah. Al-Rāzī repeated al-Zamakhsharī’s views in his commentary on *amāniyy* and he even cited him by name. As for *al-kitāb*, that he rendered *lā ya’lamūn* to be the adjectival sentence for *ummiyyūn* which he interpreted to mean being unlettered in reading and writing, should allow us to understand that he equated it with *al-kitāba*.

It seems that the common source for all these various interpretations in this verse for al-Zamakhsharī, al-Rāzī, al-Bayḍāwī, and Ebussuud is either al-Tha’labī or al-Wāḥidī, both of whom, especially al-Wāḥidī, offered in more detail all these possibilities except for the interpretation of *al-kitāb* with Torah. Al-Zamakhsharī is probably the earliest exegete on whom Al-Rāzī, al-Bayḍāwī, and Ebussuud have all drawn for this interpretation. But the fact that none of these earlier exegetes offer any preference or hint that would clearly indicate the weight of one interpretation over another proves to reflect a conspicuous characteristic of Ebussuud’s *Irshād*. Ebussuud did not merely and blindly cite his named and/or unnamed sources, nor did he blindly draw on them. He closely examined the commentarial views in them, weighed them one against another and against the Quranic text independently, and was thus, unlike his predecessors, able

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25 He probably means that they read the Book but do not and/or unable to contemplate its true meaning.
to repudiate and dismiss some of them. The primary yardstick that he utilized in his endeavor of
making preferences among various interpretations was the \textit{Naẓm} and/or \textit{sīyāq} and \textit{sibāq} of the
verse.

However, sometimes it is not evident how Ebussuud justified his choice of interpretation,
and his choice of interpretation and dismissal of a tradition were not built on easily visible and
tangible grounds. In Q. 17:45 the rationale for the dismissal of a tradition was not only limited to
the requirements of the Quranic text, but it was also coupled with the requirements of sound taste
\textit{(al-dhawq al-salīm)}. The verse reads: “and when you recite the Qur’ān We place between you
and the disbelievers in the Hereafter a hidden barrier”. According to a tradition transmitted by
Asmā’ b. Abī Bakr, the wife of Abī Lahab, one of Muḥammad’s uncles, wanted to throw an
animal carcass on Muḥammad and went to Kā’ba where the latter was with Abu Bakr, upon
which Muḥammad began reciting the Qur’ān and became invisible to her.\footnote{Al-Ṣuyūṭī mentioned this \textit{ḥadīth} to have been reported by al-Ḥākim, who viewed it sound, al-Bayhaqī, and by
b. ‘Abd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī (Cairo: Markaz al-Ḥijr, 2003), v. 9, p. 366-67.} Though this tradition
was probably first mentioned by al-Tha’labī among Ebussuud’s sources, it was al-Rāzī or al-
Qurṭubī on whom he drew for this tradition. Al-Tha’labī transmitted it not from Asmā’ but from
Ibn Jubayr. Al-Wāḥidī offered the same meaning, but provided no text of the tradition. While al-
Tha’labī interpreted this verse to mean that Muḥammad’s enemies were not able to see him
physically while he was reciting the Qur’ān, al-Wāḥidī also added a second interpretation which
stated that the barrier (\textit{ḥijāb}) in this verse was a reference to the seal in their hearts. Al-
Zamakhsharī, who mentioned no tradition in his commentary on this verse, indirectly stated that
the idol worshippers of Makka were unable to see Muḥammad in the sense that they were unable
to fathom and realize the truth of his message. Al-Rāzī’s first interpretation was that they were
unable to see Muḥammad physically, but he indicated also a second interpretation in passing in a similar vein to that of al-Zamakhsharī, which may be indicative of the fact that he was personally inclined to subscribe to the first interpretation. Ebussuud indicated only one interpretation according to which the verse refers to the fact that those idol worshippers were unable to see and fathom the truth of Muḥammad’s message with their hearts and minds. As for the tradition transmitted by Asmā’, he simply dismissed it for being both in discord with the Naẓm and the sound taste (al-dhawq al-sālīm).

The verse in Q. 7:187 indicates that the Hour was heavy to the heavens and earth, and the discussions about the meaning of heaviness engendered several interpretations within the corpus of exegetical heritage. The verse in its entirety runs: “They ask you of the Hour and when It will take place. Say: Knowledge of It rests with my Lord, none but He alone will reveal its proper time. It is heavy in the heavens and the earth. It comes to you only unawares. They ask you if you were eager in Its search. Say, the knowledge of It rests with Allah alone, but most men know not.”

What does “It is heavy in the heavens and the earth (thaqulat fī al-samāwāt wa al-ard)” mean? Ebussuud took this part of the verse to be a new sentence verifying and corroborating the meaning of the sentence that preceded it. And the meaning is that It ([the time of] the Hour) troubled and distressed anyone in the heavens and the earth on account of the fact that It is hidden and that It is outside the confines of reason. So, according to this interpretation, the heaviness is a euphemism for distress and worry that are caused by the hiddenness of the time of the Hour. The second interpretation that Ebussuud introduced with the impersonal qīla interpreted this part of the verse to mean that It troubled them in the sense that they feared Its calamities. And the third interpretation, also introduced with qīla, rendered it to mean that It was
heavy because it was too heavy for heavens and earth as well as for whatever is in them to endure. Ebussuud concluded that the first meaning was more appropriate because of the preceding and the following (bimā qablah wa mā ba’dah) sentences. The following sentence, again Ebussuud continues, is also a new sentence that corroborates and verifies the content and meaning of the sentence that preceded it. The fact that the preceding verse indicated that the knowledge of the Hour was confined to the purview of Divine knowledge only and the fact that the following verse indicated that it will take place only unexpectedly, allowed Ebussuud to sift through a corpus of exegetical interpretations and winnow out the one that according to him fit the context the best. Al-Zamakhsharī had also mentioned these three interpretations in the same order but without any specific term or qīla or anything else, and without expressly stating his preference among these interpretations. Al-Bayḍāwī offered only one interpretation but somehow coupled it with another. He stated that it was too heavy/huge (‘azīm) to the heavens and earth because of the fear it engendered in them; and followed with a reference to its hiddenness. Al-Rāzī also mentioned all three interpretations about what the heaviness of the time of the Hour involved, and attributed some of these interpretations to early exegetical figures. It seems that the interpretation which rendered the heaviness of the Hour indicated in the verse as the result of its hiddenness was first initiated by the eminent Successor al-Suddī (d. 127/745). Though al-Rāzī expressed this interpretation after the other two in order, he offered no preference or any reason about if any of these interpretations was better than the others. When we compare these interpretations with the commentaries of al-Tha’labī and al-Wāhidī, we realize that they are the sources that the aforementioned late exegetes used because they all mention the same interpretations. However, Ebussuud seems to be the only exegete that examined all these interpretations against the text of the Qur’ān itself and the verses around this specific verse that
he commentates upon, and he is the only one that specifically and clearly offered a preference among a number of interpretations. The style and fashion with which the other exegetes, especially al-Zamakhsharī, introduced these various interpretations may very well indicate that they too had indirectly expressed their own preference among these various interpretations; however, they do not predicate their choice on anything. Ebussuud, on the other hand, specifically states that his choice of interpretation is predicated on the context and/or the meaning rendered by the surrounding verses.
6.3. \textit{Al-\textbf{Naẓm}}, \textit{al-siyāq} and \textit{al-sibāq} as measuring tools for traditions in the hermeneutics of Ebussuud

We present here only a select number of instances where Ebussuud utilized the contextual tools of \textit{al-\textbf{Naẓm}}, \textit{al-siyāq} and \textit{al-sibāq} to assess, evaluate, and reject the available tradition adduced in the interpretation of a given verse in the exegetical corpus.\footnote{For several other instances where Ebussuud utilized \textit{siyāq} and \textit{sibāq} for measuring tools for his exegetical views and for the assessment of previous exegetical corpus, see for example, Q. 2:84, 113; 3:128; 4:32; 5: 26; 6:2, 57, 158;7:152; 10:9; 16:127; 17:45; 18:19, 98; 19:9; 20:9, 40; 22:5, 15, 47; 23:34; 24:53; 26:198-99; 27:87; 36:75; 54:17; 60:5.} Modern studies independently conducted on this specific topic and on this specific feature of \textit{Irshād} seem to abound.\footnote{See for example Yunus Ekin, \textit{Ebusuud tefsiri’nde siyak’ın yeri}, pp. 157-277}

Verse 10 of chapter 44 talks of a sort of Smoke/smoke (\textit{dukhān}) with which the chapter itself is titled. The verse runs: “Wait then for the day when the sky will bring forth a sort of visible smoke/Smoke”. Depending on the meaning of smoke various translations are possible, and it is around this word that the discussions of the generations of exegetes revolved. Is it a historical event that took place in Makka and refers to the calamity that God sent to the people of Makka upon Muḥammad’s call, or is it an eschatological event that has not yet transpired but is one of the signs of the Hour? There are traditions that support both meanings. Al-Tha’labī, al-Wāḥidi, al-Zamakhsharī, and al-Baydāwī all mentioned both traditions, and while the first two did not offer any preference between the two interpretations, the fact that al-Zamakhsharī introduced his first interpretation with the term \textit{yurwā} (it has been reported) somehow indicates that he did not deem it verified and rendered the Smoke as one of the signs of the Hour.\footnote{We need to note here that al-Wāḥidi mentioned only one interpretation in his \textit{al-Wasīṭ}. He rendered the \textit{dukhān} to refer to the historical event and the calamity that befell the people of Quraysh. A comparative study of al-Wāḥidi’s three commentaries, \textit{al-Baṣīṭ}, \textit{al-Wasīṭ}, and \textit{al-Wajūz} seems to be pregnant to very interesting observations! See \textit{al-Wasīṭ}, v. 4, p. 87.} Al-Baydāwī, on the other hand, was unable to incline towards one interpretation at the expense of
the other and treated them equally to be the potential meaning of dukhān. Al-Rāzī, by contrast, approached the two traditions with more scrutiny and problematized the first one because, he reasoned, dukhān should not refer to calamity unless it is used figuratively, examples of which are encountered in Arabic usage. He also reasoned that unless there is in the text and in the surrounding verses anything (qarīna) that would indicate the figurative usage of this term, it cannot be taken in its figurative meaning. He went on propounding dialectically the probabilities and refutations, but in the end relieved himself by saying Allāh a’dam.30 Our author, Ebussuud, mentioned both traditions along with the names of their transmitters in a way that is identical to that of al-Wāḥidī, and therefore we can safely state that he drew on al-Wāḥidī in the interpretation of this verse. However his reliance on al-Wāḥidī goes only as far as copying the source and the provenance of the interpretations. Unlike al-Wāḥidī and other exegetes, Ebussuud examines both traditions and makes an informed choice between the two interpretations that resulted from them. Ebussuud preferred the first interpretation which indicated that dukhān here refers to a historical and calamitous event that befell the Quraysh upon Muḥammad’s call to his Lord. The editors of al-Kashshāf verified the quality of two hadīths adduced in this verse and concluded that while the first hadīth was mentioned by al-Bukhārī in his collection of sound hadīths, the one which attested to the second meaning—that it is one of the signs of the Hour—was not found in any of the collections of sound hadīths and therefore deemed it unsound/weak (qa’īf). But not only did either Ebussuud or any of the abovementioned exegetes feel the need to verify the soundness of either hadīths, the former did not found his preference on the quality and/or the meaning of the first hadīth either. It seems that Ebussuud as an exegete did not care much about the veracity of a given tradition/hadīth in terms of its transmission link, and it was

rather more important for him whether or not it accorded with the Quranic text in meaning. Ebussuud’s criteria for preferring the meaning adduced from the first tradition was not because it was sound or unsound, but because it was the tradition that accorded with the context of the text (masāq al-Naẓm). He expressed his preference with words that leaves no doubt about his certitude: “it is the first one that the masāq al-Naẓm categorically warrants ṣaṭ’(an)”. He also adduced verse no. 13 where the Qur’ān says: “how will they avail themselves of this reminder (annā lahum al-dhikrā) when a messenger had already come to them”. The gist of the historical calamitous event that had taken place in Makka was that when Muḥammad called upon his Lord to send a heavy torment/calamity on Quraysh, God sent down the smoke as a result of which the people of Quraysh were subjected to extremely poor and calamitous conditions of living. They then went to Muḥammad and implored to him to revoke his call and call again upon his Lord to remove the dukhān so that they would become believers. But once the plague ended they turned away and ended up reneging on their promise of becoming believers. The last point, according to Ebussuud, is referred to in verse 13. The smoke was a reminder (dhikrā) by virtue of which they could have availed themselves of the truth of Muḥammad’s message. But the greatest of all the reminders, Muḥammad, had already been among them and they did not take it as a reminder. Ebussuud wanted to enunciate the satire that this pericope and the meaning he rendered for it conveys. He intimated that the Qur’ān mocks and chastises (tawbīkh) the idol worshippers of Makka: Although they said that they learned their lesson and would become believers once God relieves them of the smoke, the Qur’ān admonishes them by saying in verse 13 “How can they avail themselves of the lesson (dhikrā) [in the smoke] while a manifest (mubīn) messenger had already come to them [and they did not heed]”.

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Ebussuud was not the only exegete who preferred the meaning adduced by the first tradition. Al-Ṭabarī also chose the interpretation that dukhān referred to the historical event which took place during Muḥāmmad’s time and he justified it on the same grounds, namely the sibāq al-Ṯāqib. But since we have been unable to locate in the entirety of Irshād any other instance where al-Ṭabarī might have potentially be drawn on by Ebussuud, we cannot state that the al-Ṭabarī might have also been one of his sources in this particular verse or elsewhere in Irshād.

A very interesting verse for a comparative study between Irshād and the other early Quranic commentaries that constituted the corpus of sources for Ebussuud is in Q. 3:191. The pericope begins with verse 190 and the two verses run: “In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of the night and the day, there are verily signs for men of understanding. Such as remember (yadhkurūn) Allah standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides and contemplate the creation of the heavens and the earth; (they say) Our Lord! You have not created this in vain; Glory to You, give us salvation from the Hellfire”.

Ebussuud took the entire verse in 191 to be the adjective of men at the coda of verse 190. Then the meaning of the two verses runs: “… men of understanding who remember Allah …” Ebussuud interpreted this verse to mean that those that are referred to in this verse are the ones that are never heedless (yaghfalun) of God and are in constant remembrance of him, not only with their tongues in litany (wird), but in their hearts as well. Sitting, standing, and reclining are not mentioned to narrow down the remembrance of God to particular states or positions, but they are only mentioned on account of the fact that these are the states and positions in which humans are usually instantiated. After furnishing this interpretation, he mentioned one tradition and one ḥadīth which are adduced in the interpretation of this verse in the previous corpus of Quranic
commentary. The gist of the first tradition involves a group of people who went to the mosque and began performing *dhikr*, most likely sitting, and when someone reminded them with this verse they got up on their feet and continued their session of *dhikr* standing.  

This tradition that is mentioned only by al-Zamakhsharī is rejected by Ebussuud who stated that those who got up and engaged in remembrance of God did it only for the purpose of seeking blessings (*tabarruk*) by literally complying with only part of the entire verse and did not mean to interpret the whole verse. Ebussuud’s explanation is not without a touch of harsh criticism for those, whom we now know is al-Zamakhsharī, who, according to Ebussuud, inconceivably propounded this tradition for the interpretation of this verse. The second tradition is a prophetic *ḥadīth*, the meaning of which is adduced in several other variants, in which Muḥammad told one of his Companions to perform the ritual prayer (*al-ṣalāt*) standing, and if unable sitting, and if unable lying down and/or reclining and with his eyes. Ebussuud rejected this *ḥadīth* also to be used for the interpretation of this verse not on account of its veracity, but he problematized the meaning that the verse is rendered with it. He predicated his reasoning on the fact that the context (*siyāq al-Nazm wa sībāquh*) does not support any limitation, whereas this *ḥadīth* reduces the meaning of *dhikr* to ritual prayer.

Though al-Zamakhsharī, whom al-Bayḍāwī copied almost verbatim except for the first tradition, interpreted the verse to mean constant remembrance (*dhikr*) in any state and position, he also mentioned both the tradition and the *ḥadīth* but offered no elaboration or preference. Neither al-Zamakhsharī nor al-Bayḍāwī elaborate on the meaning of *dhikr* and one may very well be left with the impression that they, or the verse according to them for that matter, meant the *dhikr* by tongue. But Ebussuud elaborated that it encompasses both the tongue and the heart,

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31 Of all the other earlier exegetes, al-Zamakhsharī alone mentioned this tradition, and we have been unable to ascertain its provenance; however, it is clear that Ebussuud drew on him in this tradition.
a meaning that is more exclusively rendered by Ebussuud with *tafakkur*. Al-Rāzī, by contrast, also took *dhikr* in absolute terms that encompassed the remembrance with the tongue and the heart. He mentioned the second interpretation but without citing the prophetic *hadīth* that reduced the meaning of *dhikr* to ritual prayer, and preferred the absolute and more general meaning of it without limiting it to the ritual prayer. While both al-Rāzī and Ebussuud seem to have rendered the same meaning for *dhikr*, their reasoning differed. The latter justified his preference on account of the *Naẓm*, and the former chose it to be better (*awlā*) merely because there are many other verses that attest to the virtues of *dhikr* and also chose it to encompass *dhikr* with both the tongue and the heart merely because it is more perfect (*akmal*). While al-Rāzī’s choice seems to have been predicated on pietistic urges, that of Ebussuud is founded on sound reasoning. Both al-Tha’labī and al-Wāḥidī mentioned the same two interpretations without offering any preference. Al-Zajjāj seems to have preferred to interpret *dhikr* with ritual prayer, and the wording of al-Wāḥidī indicates that he may have taken the same stance.32

It seems that at least the triad of al-Zamakhsharī, al-Rāzī, and al-Bayḍāwī are overwhelmingly transmitters of the exegetical heritage carried over by al-Tha’labī and al-Wāḥidī from the formative period of the first three centuries of Islam. Though they, mostly al-Zamakhsharī and al-Rāzī, winnow out some of these exegetical corpus and offer preference amongst the variety of them, this is rather infrequent, especially in the commentary of al-Zamakhsharī. By contrast, Ebussuud is probably the only and the earliest exegete that subjected the same corpus to a closer examination and analyzed it, rejected and repudiated what did not comply with the yardsticks that he utilized in his exegetical analyses.

Q. 4:82 runs: “Will they not contemplate the Qur’ān? Had it been from other than Allah they would have found many *ikhtilāf* in it”. The word *ikhtilāf* generated various views among the exegetes who unendingly debated what it involved. Al-Tha’labī related the general terms of dissimilarity (*tafāwut*) and contradiction (*tanāqud*) from Ibn ‘Abbās, and added from others that it involved the information that the Qur’ān presented about the unseen (*al-ghayb*), past and future, to be contrary to the factual events. Al-Ḥājidī mentioned the same two interpretations with considerably more detail but also added from the people/masters of rhetorical sciences (*ahl al-ma’ānī*) that it may also involve the dissimilarity in its eloquence in the sense that parts of it would be highly eloquent and others would be less eloquent or not eloquent at all. Al-Zamakhsharī took it to refer to the dissimilarity in eloquence of Qur’ān *in toto* in the sense that parts of it are eloquent and others non-eloquent and/or parts of it are inimitable and others are not, and to the notion that the information about the unseen does not accord with factual events. Al-Bayḍāwī repeated al-Zamakhsharī’s views but also added that it may also refer to variance in regulations (of different prophets/sharā‘ī) which, he viewed, is not because of contradiction in them *per se*, but on account of the fact that interests and benefits throughout different historical periods vary. 33 Ebussuud castigated the holder of this view—al-Bayḍāwī—and said that he is the farthest removed from the truth (*la qad ab’ad ‘an al-ḥaqq bi marāḥil*). Al-Rāzī presented a more detailed account of these exegetical views: he recounted that Abu Bakr al-Aṣāmm is probably the first who propounded in this verse that *ikhtilāf* refers to the incongruity of Qur’ān in the information it provides about the unseen. He justified it on the fact that Muḥammad’s enemies used to plot against him in his absence, but Muḥammad would learn of it and throw it in their face. Al-Rāzī attributed the second view to the theologians (*al-mutakallimīn*) who stated that the

33 Perhaps he refers to the variance in religious regulations between the community of Muḥammad and other monotheistic communities.
Qur’ān is a huge book and if it were from other than God there would be many inconsistencies in its expressions. The third interpretation that al-Rāzī attributed to Abū Muslim al-Asfahānī (d. 933-34 CE) take the meaning of *al-ikhtilāf* to be the difference in level of the eloquence in its verses in the sense that some verses are more eloquent than others and/or some are not eloquent at all.

Ebusuud by contrast, reduced the meaning of *al-ikhtilāf* to involve only the information about the unseen, which, he viewed, is what the purity and eloquence (*jazāla*) of the Qur’ān warranted; and he rejected anything other than that. He cited the names of al-Zajjāj and Abū Bakr al-Ašāmm, probably through the intermediary of al-Rāzī, who explained that the Qur’ān would inform Muḥammad of the details of his enemies’ plots that none other than the plotters could have known. Ebusuud rejected the other two interpretations which he said were propounded by the Majority (*al-Jumhūr*) on account of the fact that they are not supported by the context (*mimmā lā yusā’i duh al-siyyāq wa al-sibāq*). Though he did not explicitly elaborate, the context (*al-siyyāq wa al-sibāq*) he probably referred to is the previous verse where the Qur’ān talked about those who plotted against Muḥammad in his absence and that Allah recorded their intrigues, and enjoined Muḥammad to put his trust in Allah.\(^{34}\)

Q. 36:14 recounts a story attested to involve the emissaries sent by Jesus to the king and the people of Antioch. The story had been mentioned both by al-Tha’labī and al-Zamakhsharī, but while the former recounts two variant codas for the same story, the latter mentions only one version. Ebusuud must have drawn on al-Zamakhsharī because he does not say anything about the variant version which would otherwise accord with his exegetical view. The story involves

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the emissaries that Jesus sent to the people of Antioch. He first sent two missionaries who met a man (traditionally identified as one Ḥabīb al-Najjār) who embraced their call and believed in them. But then the king heard of them, summoned them, listened to them, rejected their call and imprisoned them, upon which Jesus sent a third emissary who met the king in disguise, won his favor, and convinced him to give another audience to the previous two emissaries. During this second encounter, the emissaries demonstrated a number of miracles before the king and he accepted their call and, along with some of his retinues, embraced their religion. In the second version of the same story the king did not embrace their call, rejected it, and planned to kill all the emissaries, upon which Ḥabīb al-Najjār came to the city and urged the people to embrace the call of the emissaries. While al-Wāḥidī and al-Rāzī mentioned neither version of the story, al-Zamakhsharī, al-Bayḍāwī, and Ebussuud mentioned only the first version. The fact that neither al-Zamakhsharī nor al-Bayḍāwī provided any comment about the veracity of the story should indicate that they saw no discord between this story and the pericope of the verses. Ebussuud, by contrast, rejected this story on account of the fact that it cannot be supported by the context of the Qur’an (siyāq al-Nazm). He reasoned that the group of verses that recounted this story in the Qur’ān, 14-32, does not mention anything about how the king and his retinue, or anyone else other than the one man—Ḥabīb al-Najjār—embraced the truth. On the contrary all the verses in the entire pericope continuously mentioned how they all obstinately and obtusely refused to accept the truth. This is a very clear example of how some or most of the exegetes were mere copiers of the exegetical heritage that was carried over by al-Tha’labī, and it was Ebussuud who subjected them to certain criteria represented in the siyāq and sibāq of the verses.
6.4. Political interpretations in *Irshād*

Q. 17:58 runs: “There is no town/village but We shall destroy it before the Day of Resurrection or punish it with a severe punishment; this has been recorded in the Book”

Again we have a Quranic verse whose meaning has rather been vaguely interpreted by the early exegetes, and the reader is confounded about what to make of it. Does the verse refer to a worldly punishment/destruction or an eschatological event? Al-Tha’labī interpreted the destruction to refer to the physical destruction of towns and perishing of its inhabitants, and interpreted the punishment as an unspecified variety that is to be meted out to wrong doers. He also added from an unspecified source that this verse was comprehensive [of all towns, those of the believers and those of the disbelievers], and a report from Muqātil who interpreted perishing (*al-halāk*) for the good doers and torment/punishment (*al-’adhāb*) for the wrong doers. Al-Wāḥidī noted from Mujāhid that every town on earth will be subjected to either destruction or punishment. He also reported from Qatāda that God will destroy them with death or He will destroy them with an exterminating punishment if they disobeyed His orders and belied His prophets. Al-Wāḥidī reported the same tradition from Muqātil that al-Tha’labī had mentioned, but he also added from Ibn ´Abbās that the destruction before the Day of Resurrection or the punishment is similar to what had been done with the people of Makka. 35 Al-Zamakhsharī said nothing about the towns, interpreted the destruction with death and eradication, and the punishment with killing and an unspecified variety of torment (*’adhāb*). He repeated Muqātil’s view but also added a story which Muqātil said he copied from the Quranic commentary of al-Ḍahḥāk. This legendary story gives a list of towns and accounts of how they perish. Al-Bayḍāwī summarized only the interpretational section of *al-Kashshāf* in this verse. Al-Rāzī stated that

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35 Perhaps the reference here is to one of the interpretations on verse 44:10 studied above.
every town must in the end face either destruction or punishment. He also mentioned Muqāṭil’s interpretation, and introduced with qīla the interpretation that the term “town” refers to the towns of disbelievers; they will either end up with being eradicated or being punished.36

It seems that all these exegetes took the term “town” to encompass all the towns, without distinction between the towns of believers or disbelievers. We do not know what to make of the phrase “before the Day of Resurrection”, for these commentaries treat it as if it was not there.

Ebussuud, by contrast, presents a more concise and more refined interpretation of this verse. He states that the word “town” refers only to the towns of disbelievers who, after being warned, do not heed. Destruction means extermination or eradication of the inhabitants of these towns due to the great sins they have committed. Severe punishment refers both to the worldly and the otherworldly punishments. He explained that the destruction refers to a worldly phenomenon only and the punishment to the worldly and otherworldly phenomenon, on account of the fact that while the former was qualified with the phrase “before the Day of Resurrection”, the latter was unqualified with any restriction. While the previous exegetes understood this verse to refer to the destructive eschatological events, Ebussuud clearly referred to it as a worldly calamity. He justified his interpretation on the ground that destruction on the Day of Resurrection is not limited only to the towns of disbelievers, and the fact that it does not take place as a way of punishment, but because the lifespan of worldly life ends. He took this verse to be a warning against a Divine and worldly calamity.

Ebussuud also mentioned Muqāṭil’s view and the story he related from al-Ḍaḥḥāk but he introduced them with the impersonal qīla which may be indicative of the fact that he did not

view them as binding. He mentioned two more legendary and/or apocryphal stories and ended his commentary on the verse by stating that generalizing the towns to encompass all cannot be supported by the context (siyāq wa sībāq). Interestingly enough, neither of these two stories is mentioned by any of the aforementioned exegetes and it is one of these two stories that constitute the focus of our examination for the political aspect of Irshād. Yunus Ekin was able to ascertain the originators of this story in the exegetical corpus, and it seems that this specific story is only mentioned in Nazm al-durar, the Quranic commentary of al-Biqā‘ī (d. 885/1480) who obtained it from a book of Fītan by one al-Ḥāfīz Abū Amr 'Uthmān b. Sa‘īd al-Dānī; he also noted in the end that it was also reported by al-Tirmidhī, the famous collector of ḥadīth, not in his compendium of ḥadīth but in another composition of his about the hagiography of the city of Madina. The fact that Ebussuud did not mention al-Biqā‘ī but the originator of this story al-Ḥāfīz, a rank accorded to the consummate scholar in tradition, Abū ’Amr al-Dawwānī (sic) may indicate that not only did he take it seriously, but also intended to convey of sense of veracity to it by enunciating that it was reported by a al-Ḥāfīz.

Why did Ebussuud mention this apocryphal story that none of his usual sources mentioned? He is rather cunning: The reason can very easily be detected by closely examining the contents of this story. It lists the destruction of cities one by one until the Armageddon (al-Malḥamat al-kubrā) after which the city of Constantinople will be conquered by “a man from the progeny of the sons of Hāshim (the clan of the Prophet Muḥammad)”. Constantinople/Istanbul had already been conquered two centuries ago by the Ottoman sultan Meḥmed II. Ebussuud does not mention this legendary tradition so much for the exegetical purpose as to support a political and dynastic claim he attempts to propagate to his wide Muslim readership. We have previously

talked about how Ottomans proved rather practical in substantiating their dynastic right to rule with whatever, secular as well as religious, grounds they could practically utilize.\textsuperscript{38} When the Ottomans annexed the Arab lands which comprised Makka and Madina, the holiest cities of Islam, and Syria and Cairo, hitherto the seat of the Abbasid caliphate, they put the final nail in the coffin of debilitating Abbasid claims to the caliphate, the theoretical headship of the Muslim community in its entirety. Though the Ottomans now practically appropriated the caliphate, there had been traditions attesting to the fact that caliphs are supposed to descend from the progeny of the tribe of Quraysh from which the previous two Sunni caliphates, the Abbasids, the progeny of the clan of Hāshim, and the Umayyads, had descended. Ottomans had previously come up with stories that were supposed to attest to their noble lineage, once of the legendary Oghuz Khān, and another of the prophet Noah; however those stories had previously drawn only on legendary folk tales and aimed only to substantiate peripheral claims to rulership. But they now possessed a class of people represented in the ‘ulamā who no longer needed to put forth dynastic claims derived from ethnic legendary tales and stories entertained by the folk religion. They could now draw on learned historiography and the learned sources of orthodox Islam of the madrasas.\textsuperscript{39} They now aimed for a much bigger claim of rulership: the head of the entire Muslim/Sunni community; and they could not have resorted to a better foundation than the Qurʾān and its exegesis.

And it seems that during the 16\textsuperscript{th} century, after the conquest of Arab lands and their incorporation into the Ottoman domain, Ottomans engaged in a systematic attempt to establish the ground for the appropriation of the institution of caliphate. Luṭfī Pāshā, who served as the Grand vizier under Sulaymān the Magnificent until his dismissal from office in 1541, identified

\textsuperscript{38} See chapter 2, section Huğur dersleri.
\textsuperscript{39} Imber, “The Ottoman Dynastic Myth”, p. 23.
a prophetic tradition in a canonical hadīth collection which runs: “At the beginning of each century, God most High will send to this community someone who will renew its faith and sovereignty”, and interpreted it, with certain tweaking in chronology as Imber notes, to refer to Ottoman sultans: Osmān/’Uthmān, the eponymous founder of the dynasty, had already restored Islam at the beginning of eighth Islamic century after the destruction caused by the Mongols; Mehmed I revived the faith after the havoc Timur/Tamerlane wrought throughout central and eastern Anatolia at the turn of ninth century; and Selīm I defeated the Safavids and upheld the Sunni Islam. Similarly, the court chronicler Şâ’d al-Dīn/Sadeddin claimed that the Ottomans represented the ideal Islamic sovereign, abided by the Sharī’a and Sunnism, upheld justice and suppressed the transgressors, helped the oppressed and rooted out rebellion. He also adduced the verse in Q. 5:59 which reads: “God will bring a people whom he loves and who love Him, humble towards Believers but mighty towards Infidels, fighting in the path of God and not fearing the blame of anyone”, and intimated “the believers” in this verse to refer to Ottoman sultans. In the headings of the law books of Buda, Skoplje, and Thessalonika which were authored by Ebussuud, both sultan Sulaymān and his son Selīm II are described as the “Caliph to the Apostle of the Lord of the worlds … the heir to the great caliphate.40

There was apparently a major problem in the way of legitimizing Ottoman claims to caliphate. A widely circulated and well-known hadīth indicated that imāms (a’imma) or rulers (umarā’) are from Quraysh, which was understood to mean that the caliph was supposed to descend from the tribe of Quraysh.41 Luṭfī Pāshā, in a separate treatise, discussed and interpreted the hadīth in a way that either attempted to disprove the apparent understanding of it or reduced

its meaning to a bygone age during the early centuries of Islamic history. Others came up with seemingly historical narratives attesting to a historical meeting between Selīm I and the conquered caliph during which the latter is said to have willingly transferred the caliphate to the former.\footnote{Hakan Karateke, “Legitimizing the Ottoman Sultanate: A Framework for Historical Analysis” in \textit{Legitimizing the Order: The Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power}. Ed. H. T. Karateke & M. Reinkowski (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 13-52, p. 26-28.}

It seems that Ottomans needed more explicit and more concrete evidence for their appropriation of the title of caliphate and, as they had probably done with the fabrication of other genealogical stories connecting them once to their epic father Oghuz Khān and once to the prophet Noah, they also needed to establish a genealogical link connecting them to the Prophet Muḥammad. It could not have been done more cunningly than how Ebussuud did it in his \textit{Irshād}. Nowhere else in the entirety of \textit{Irshād} have we been able to ascertain that the commentary of al-Biqā’ī was used as a source by Ebussuud. The author drew on al-Biqā’ī in this verse only because he is the only exegete that accommodated such a story in his Quranic commentary. Though Ebusuud, at the end of his commentary on this verse, refuted any tradition that generalized the towns to include both the towns of believers and disbelievers, that interpretation would only go as far as to refute certain parts of this legendary story and not the part which indicates that Ottomans descended from Quraysh. He nonetheless had a clear and surgical objective by citing this story: He aimed to imprint on his readership the notion that the conquest of Istanbul/Constantinople was prophesied to be achieved by a Hāshimite, and the fact that it was conquered by a descendent of Osman/ʿUthmān. Although Ebussuud does not explicitly state anything in this vain, he nonetheless says that it looks like a duck, swims like a duck, and quacks like duck, and leaves the answer to his reader.
6.5. Apocrypha/legendary stories

Al-Dhahabī noted that Ebussuud infrequently used legendary stories (isrāʾīlīyyāt) but introduced them with the terms of “ruwiya” or “qīla” which may indicate that he did not care much about their veracity or he believed that their truth could not be verified. He also observed that Ebussuud relatively frequently mentions stories transmitted by al-Kalbī from Abī Sāliḥ who are traditionally labeled to be liars and fabricators of apocryphal stories. But, al-Dhahabī continues, the fact that Ebussuud seals off this sort of stories with an expression like “Allah a’lam/God knows better” indicates that he did not take them seriously.\(^{43}\) There is no doubt that al-Dhahabī is attempting to rehabilitate Ebussuud and his Irshād in the mindset of those that are enamored by Quranic commentary in light of verified tradition and verified historical narratives. He does not question if Ebussuud concerned at all about the veracity of such stories and/or if the veracity of them was relevant for him.

By contrast, Aydemir noted several of these stories, some of which Ebussuud repudiated on account of the fact that they either are drawn from the traditions of Jews, or they explicitly contradict the premises of rational and scriptural knowledge. However, he also stated that such stories are probably folkloric tales mentioned for the purpose of exhortation and warning (al-targhīb wa al-tarḥīb).\(^{44}\) Ebussuud mentioned a story in his commentary on Q. 2:102 about the two angels from among the angels who descended down to earth to prove that they were more worthy of God’s favor than the human beings, but quickly succumbed to the seduction by a woman, realized their mistake and were subjected to eternal worldly torment. The same story was probably first mentioned by al-Tha’labī and copied by al-Rāzī who, like Ebussuud,

\(^{43}\) Al-Dhahabi, al-Tafsīr wa al-mufassirūn, v. 1, p. 249.
\(^{44}\) See Aydemir, Büyük Türk bilgini, p. 205-207.
repudiated it to reflect the truth on account of the fact that it taints the sanctity of angels who innately cannot disobey God. Veracity of such stories for Ebussuud did not so much depend on the quality of transmission as the meaning it conveyed. If the meaning of such stories contradicted a basic premise of religious knowledge, or an orthodox doctrine for that matter, he would easily repudiate it, no matter the quality of its transmission. Here in this specific instance, the story of those two angels contradicted the basic premise of orthodoxy which stipulates that angels innately cannot commit sin.

At other times, Ebussuud mentioned such stories with a tweak of his own or by copying the changes that had already been applied by someone else and by rendering it a manner that would accord with the premises of orthodox religious knowledge. He also recounts the original story that is in clear contrast to his religious mindset only for the purpose of repudiating it, and to take to task those who had without repudiation incorporated them into their Quranic commentaries. One such story is the story of prophet Dāwūd/David that we will shortly mention in more detail. However, stories also abound in Irshād that are deemed apocryphal by the orthodoxy, but are mentioned and expressly rejected by Ebussuud. While some of these stories relate to miraculous events during the previous prophets’ times, such as the one about how the disciples of Jesus asked him to call upon his Lord to send them a table spread of dinner in Q. 5:112-115 during which Ebussuud mentioned several miraculous events that are attested to have taken place, or the story of Moses and how his staff turned into a dragon with extreme proportions in size that Ebussuud mentioned during his commentary on Q. 7:107, others relate to genesis stories of Adam and Eve such as in Q. 2:35, the Ka’ba and the Black Stone (al-ḥajar al-aswad) and others at the end of which Ebussuud did not leave any comments.45 Most of these

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45 See for a variety of such stories Aydemir, Büyük Türk bilgini, pp. 208-221.
stories seem to identify with the commentated verses in their kernel, and the fact that they could not be historically verified did not seem to have concerned Ebussuud. In his commentary on Q. 27:6 which runs: “and O Muḥammad, verily, you are receiving the Qur’ān from the One Who is Wise and All-Knowing”, Ebussuud viewed the Qur’ān to contain not only the knowledge (of sciences)/’ulūm but wisdom/ḥikma as well. His wording indicates that Muḥammad received the Qur’ān from a source of both knowledge and wisdom, and while the former brought out creed and religious regulations (’aqā’id wa sharā‘i’), wisdom brought out stories (qaṣaṣ) and the news of the unseen (al-akhbār al-ghaybiyya). Thus stories, Isrā‘iliyyāt or otherwise, abounded in Irshād. Al-Shāwish argued that Ebussuud’s particular objective was to draw lessons (‘ibar) from them.\(^46\) Therefore, any story, sound or apocryphal, that is not in discord with the basic premises of religious knowledge or religious doctrines may have been utilized by Ebussuud for the purpose of exhortation and warning (al-targhīb wa al-tarḥīb).

He also founded the stories that involved miraculous events on his conviction that such miraculous events might have happened during the age of prophets. The qualifying phrase “during the age of prophets” is indicative of the premise that he did not hold them to potentially occur after the age of prophets. This qualifying phrase should also indicate Ebussuud’s witty formulation that though miracles might have happened in a bygone age, they cannot happen today, and since, according to the Sunni orthodoxy, Muḥammad was the last prophet, they can never happen again. He accepts the miracles but also rejects them!

In Q. 4:157, for example, he mentioned a story according to which a man by the name Ṭayṭānūs, who plotted against Jesus and told his enemies of his whereabouts, entered into the hut where Jesus was supposed to be, but Ṭayṭānūs did not find him because God had just taken him

up to heavens and created his (Jesus’) look on Ṭayṭānūs’ face and when he came out he was taken for Jesus and thus was killed.

Ebussuud did not cull these stories from outside the exegetical corpus; they had already been incorporated into Quranic exegesis. Most of these stories are verbatim or partially mentioned in the commentaries of al-Tha’labī, al-Zamakhsharī, and al-Rāzī. However, Ebussuud subjected them to his own personal criteria with which he at times rejected them, chastised those who incorporated them into religious learning, and at other times, remained reticent. Though the Ibn Taymiyyan school of tradition is credited with the attempts of expunging these apocryphal stories from religious Muslim literature, we find Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373), a staunch representative of Ibn Taymiyyan school, also entertain such stories in his universal history al-Bidāya wa al-Nihāya, with certain caveats however. Tottoli noted him saying “we shall quote from Isrāʾīlyyāt only what does not contrast the Book of God”.

Ebussuud’s approach to these stories resembles the same mentality, namely the fact that if such stories did not contradict the basic premises of religion, there should be nothing wrong in their utilization for the purpose of entertainment and for the purpose of al-targhīb wa al-tarḥīb. This reminds us of al-Khūlī’s observation that Isrāʾīlyyāt is of little concern/danger (amr yasīr al-khaṭar).

However, if one of these stories clearly contradicted basic religious foundations, Ebussuud would either reject it or tweak and rehabilitate it, or convey only the tweaked and rehabilitated version in previous sources in a way that would cause no potential harm religiously. One conspicuous example of such stories is the story of Dāwūd/David and what happened with Ūrīyā, one of his military commanders, and the latter’s wife.

48 Al-Khūlī “al-tafsīr” p. 278.
In Q. 38:22-26, where the Qurʾān talks about how God tried and tested Dāwūd, Ebussuud mentions several stories which he renders compatible with the basic premises of an orthodox understanding of Islam. However, he also mentions another variant of these stories similar to the one in Samuel 11 of the Bible. The gist of this story revolves around the fact that Dāwūd became infatuated with the wife or a fiancée of Ūrīyā, one of his military commanders. He cunningly continued to send Ūrīyā in military expeditions until he was killed, upon which not only did Dāwūd not mourn his death as he would for other martyrs, but he also married his wife. Ebussuud mentions this story only to repudiate it and state that “woe unto those who fabricated and circulated such a story which ears repudiate and human nature detests”. Ebussuud then does not mention these stories haphazardly; he either mentions them because he views nothing religiously wrong with them, or he mentions them and if he deems something in them to be religiously wrong, he dismisses them and/or repudiates them. This sort of stories is here and there part and parcel of the broader exegetical heritage and Ebussuud posits himself as someone who needs to evaluate them. He does not only offer his own exegetical views of the entire Qurʾān, but he also assesses the exegetical corpus of previous Quranic commentaries. Some other variants of this tale indicate that Dāwūd summoned Ūrīyā and asked him to give up his wife so he can marry her. Al-Qurṭubī covered this story at length, and mentioned several other variants with negligible differences from transmitters like Ibn ’Abbās, Anas b. Mālik, al-Suddī, al-Kalbī, and al-Ḥasan. The story is also found in the famous ḥadīth collector al-Tirmidhī’s (d. 240/892) Nawādir al-uṣūl as reported directly from the Prophet Muḥammad. Though al-Qurṭubī very early on categorically stated, after he mentioned the first tradition from Ibn ’Abbās and which was repudiated by Ebussuud, that it could not be true, he continued propounding several other versions as transmitted from several other early figures. He also mentioned in his
commentary on verse 24, drawing on other traditions from the Companions and Successors, that Dāwūd did ask Ūrīya to give up his wife so he could marry her. And in the end, al-Qurṭubī categorically dismissed anything other than the versions which indicate that Dāwūd demanded the man to give up his wife and beyond that, he continued, there was nothing that could be corroborated by the Qur’ān.49 The variant which indicates that Dāwūd did demand the man to give up his wife was also brought up by al-Wāḥidī who had stated in his commentary on verse 24 that the apparent meaning of “akfilnīhā/entrust her with me” within the conversation of the two litigants that came to Dāwūd and asked him to adjudicate between them can be taken as a clear indication that such a request by Dāwūd must have taken place. The story of these two litigants is presented as a parable and as the representation of what Dāwūd had done. One of the litigants is the personification of Dāwūd and the other is of Ūrīyā. Dāwūd the king is also the arbitrator and the adjudicator between these two litigants. Ūrīyā complains that Dāwūd the litigant asked him to give up his wife despite the fact that he already had 99 wives, and overwhelmed him (wa ʿazzanī fī al-khīṭāb—probably due to the fact that he was a king) in speech. Dāwūd the judge adjudicated that Ūrīyā was wronged, and also realized the situation and the fact that he, Dāwūd the king, had wronged Ūrīyā, and understood that he was being tested by God, upon which he repented and prostrated before God.

Some of the versions of the story mention that Dāwūd asked the husband to give up his wife for him. And though different and separate traditions indicated on the commentary of verse 24 that Dāwūd demanded from the husband to forgo his wife and this fact can somehow be corroborated by the Quranic expression “akfilnīhā”, the key point is the fact that neither anywhere in this pericope nor in any other tradition within the exegetical corpus can we find that

49 For a number of the variants on the story see al-Qurṭubī, al-Jāmī’, v. 18, pp. 155-169.
Ūrīyā acquiesced to Dāwūd’s demand. This fact must have caused great pain for al-Wāḥidī who sighed “it has not been reported that Ūrīyā acquiesced to Dāwūd’s request, but it was reported that Dāwūd sent him in military expeditions until he was killed and upon which Dāwūd married his wife”. The significance of al-Wāḥidī’s remark cannot be overstated. In a way, he says that he wished that Ūrīyā would have acquiesced to Dāwūd’s request; but it had not been reported in any tradition. Above all, there would be religious reasons for such a tradition to exist: had it been reported that Dāwūd acquired Ūrīyā’s approval, none of the above mentioned stories would have caused any trouble and he, as well as other Muslim scholars, would have easily been able to explain it away that everything was carried out with mutual agreement. In a nutshell, such a piece of information would have reflected positively on Dāwūd and it cannot have been merely overlooked; but it simply did not exist! Al-Wāḥidī did not explicitly state that the husband did not comply with Dāwūd’s request, but that he did not, a fact that seems to have pained al-Wāḥidī, is easily inferred.

Ebussuud, however, in his version of the story that he mentioned first on his commentary of this pericope, did not agree with al-Wāḥidī and said that the husband felt ashamed to reject Dāwūd’s request, acquiesced to it, and thus Dāwūd married his wife as the result of mutual agreement. He then postulated how this sort of dealing was permitted in Dāwūd’s shari’a and similar dealings were also exercised by Muḥammad and his Companions when they first migrated to Madina. Ebussuud boldly rendered the story into a religiously acceptable version. Where did Ebussuud acquire this tidbit of information? We have been unable to ascertain any tradition that would corroborate Ebussuud’s version in previous Quranic commentaries which provided in more detail several slightly different versions of the story. We have, however, been able to realize that al-Zamakhsharī rendered the same version in his commentary on verse 22 and
it must have been al-Zamakhsharī on whom Ebussuud drew for an acceptable version of this story. We do not know where al-Zamakhsharī acquired this small detail of utmost significance, but we are also confounded to find out one page later that he also unequivocally stated that all that the parable pictured by the Qur’ān on the story of Dāwūd indicates is that he asked Ūrīyā to give up his wife for him, and nothing beyond. (wa alladhī yadull 'alayh al-mathal alladhī ḍarabah Allah li qiṣṣatih ‘alayh al-salām laysa illā ṭalabuh an yanzil lah 'anḥā fahash). Al-Qurṭūbī must have realized the discrepancy in al-Zamakhsharī’s account and went to great lengths digging up the scholarly views and traditions to find out that Dāwūd acquired the husband’s consent. However, all the traditions and scholarly views he mentioned indicate that there was nothing more than a request on the part of Dāwūd and there was no acquiescence by Ūrīyā in any of the traditions because the latter never offered it.

The specific expressions that the Qur’ān uses in the conversation of the litigants with Dāwūd are very interesting: “we are two litigants one of whom wronged (baghā) the other … (and when Dāwūd adjudicated that) he has wronged you (zalamak) in demanding your ewe (wife)”. The Qur’ān clearly states by way of this representational story that what Dāwūd did amounted to al-baghy and al-zulf. Neither al-Wāḥidī nor al-Tha’labī said even a single word about these two heavily loaded Quranic expressions, as if they were not there. Though al-Zamakhsharī stated in passing that the parable was executed before Dāwūd so that he would personally admit that he had wronged (mu’tarifūn ‘alā nafṣih bi zulmīh), he neither tackled the word zulf nor did he elaborate on al-baghy. Al-Qurṭūbī nonetheless elaborated only on al-baghy which he rendered to mean transgression (al-ta’addī), but said nothing on zulf. Zulf is a loaded term throughout the Qur’ān and it is used for extremely detested and/or unacceptable phenomena. It probably suffices to mention that it is also a term that in one instance was used to
denote *shirk*, associating others/idols with God.\(^{50}\) Though Ebussuud did not explain what the expressions *al-baghy* and *al-zulm* in the verse involved, he interpreted the former as a hypothetical situation (*baghā ba‘dunā ‘alā ba‘d, huwa ‘alā al-farq*), and the latter as an exaggeration/hyperbole (*qaṣad bih al-mubālaqa fi inkār fi‘l šāhibihi*).\(^{51}\) How are we to understand Ebussuud’s explanations? It is true that those two litigants are the personifications of Dāwūd and Ūrīyā, and the events that they recount are truly hypothetical for them *per se*, but their accounts do reflect the true events that took place. He is rather bold and audacious to claim that the angels/the litigants, or God for that matter, exaggerated in the use of the term *zulm*.

The mindset of all the above-mentioned exegetes is informed by the premise that the prophets are protected from sin and major crimes of which they are innately characterized to be free (*ma‘ṣūm*). Even al-Zamakhsharī, traditionally known to have been a staunch non-Sunnī Mu‘tazilite, clearly stated in his commentary on Q. 93:7 that the prophets are held to be sinless both before and after they received the prophethood.\(^{52}\) And, surprisingly in this instance, it is al-Zamakhsharī that extended the saving hand to the Sunni orthodoxy by tweaking the story of Dāwūd. Or is it time we questioned if Sunnism, Mu‘tazilism, Shi‘ism, etc. are rather demarcated with blurry lines.

\(^{50}\) See Q. 31:13


\(^{52}\) Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, v. 6, p. 393. Some recent studies adduced other instances in *al-Kashshāf* where al-Zamakhsharī used terms such as *jināya* and/or *zalla* for the wrongdoings that have been committed by Muhammad or other prophets and it led some scholars to opine that he may have differed from the Sunni orthodoxy on the doctrine of *ʿisma* (the notion of being free of sin) for prophets. But in our estimation his wording in 93:7 is unequivocal.
6.6. Merits of Sūras epilogues

Ebussuud concluded his commentary at the end of each Quranic chapter with a number of prophetic traditions attesting to the benefits that the reader and/or reciter of it is supposed to reap. R. Sellheim posited that the traditions about the merits of sūras (faḍā’il al-Qurʿān) were generated for the purpose of bringing the focus of study back to the Qurʿān for Muslims who otherwise had been occupied with other sciences. The scholars of hadīth dismissed the corpus of faḍa’il traditions as being dubious and/or forged. Though the traditions about the faḍā’il al-Qurʿān were known in the hadīth collections and independent works prior to al-Tha’labī’s time, he and his student al-Wāḥidī were probably the first exegetes who incorporated them into Quranic exegesis. While al-Tha’labī and al-Wāḥidī presented these traditions at the beginning of sūras, al-Zamakhsharī, al-Bayḍāwī, and Ebussuud appended them to the end of each Quranic chapter. Saleh noted that al-Tha’labī would pay heavily for incorporating these traditions into exegesis, and examples of the cost he was later billed by several late scholars abound.

Ebussuud also suffered his share of criticism for including these traditions in his Irshād. Ismail Hakki İzmirli, the late Ottoman/modern Turkish Muslim scholar, and Cevdet Bey criticized him for relying on these dubious and fabricated traditions. Aydemir counted 120 of these traditions in Irshād and also observed that they are invariably and verbatim mentioned both in al-Kashshāf and Anwār, of al-Zamakhsharī and al-Bayḍāwī respectively. Saleh mentioned samples of these traditions in al-Tha’labī’s commentary in considerable detail and Ebussuud’s

53 See EP, s.v. ‘Faḍā’il’
55 Ibid, p. 22
56 See Saleh, The Formation, p. 103; and for the critique of late scholars see, Afsaruddin, “The Excellences”, p. 22.
57 See, Aydemir, Büyük Türk bilgini, p. 166; Cevdet Bey, Tefsir usulü ve tarihi, p. 155-156.
58 Ibid, p. 166.
*Irshād* bears close resemblance to it.⁵⁹ He also argued that the difference between presenting these traditions at the beginning of Quranic chapters, as was done by al-Tha’labī, as opposed to presenting them at the end of each Quranic chapter, as was done by al-Zamakhsharī, al-Bayḍāwī, and Ebussuud, probably reflects the attitudes of scholars towards this corpus. While the former may have insinuated that exegesis was the way to God, the latter may have taken a somehow ambiguous stance towards these traditions.⁶⁰ Also it is not unlikely that the latter scholars preferred to place these traditions at the end of each sūra, as a result of the backlash this corpus was subjected to by the scholars of ḥadīth.

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Chapter 7

Conclusions

The preceding study has undertaken a mostly neglected period in the history of Quranic commentaries; the era that largely corresponds to the period during which the greater part of the Muslim geography was under the suzerainty of Ottoman reign. We have pointed to this lacuna as represented in the current studies of the history of *tafsīr*. Our study examined the possible reasons that have led to misconceptions and misunderstandings about the history of the genre of *tafsīr* and tried to identify the areas of improvement. Most of the modern literature on the history of *tafsīr* seems to have been informed by a sectarian understanding that is largely appropriated by the salafī camp which has striven to shuffle and reposition works of *tafsīr* that suited its own religious agenda. It was undoubtedly done at the expense of particular *tafsīr* works that had once been at the center of the study of *tafsīr*. Sectarian approach to the Quranic commentary literature, on the other hand, has also overlooked the continuous and integral nature of the whole *tafsīr* literature, and precluded the need to pay attention to other and different voices not only in the genre of *tafsīr*, but also the sub-genre of ḥāshiya that is in fact no less valuable than the independently authored works. The dismissal of ḥāshiya literature is overwhelmingly predicated on the presumption that the post-al-Ghazālī period witnessed an era of stagnation and intellectual torpor for Islamic thought which largely was the effect and outcome of a period imbued with unoriginal thinking and the literature of repetitive works represented in the ḥāshiya writing. The same line of thought is also projected into the Ottoman era religious scholarship which has largely been viewed to have been permeated by ḥāshiya-type scholarship. Notwithstanding the high probability that the overall number of compositions in ḥāshiya-style, when the partial and incomplete ones are taken into consideration, may exceed the complete ones collectively in all
the disciplines of Islamic sciences, our research demonstrated that, at least during the Ottoman period, independently authored complete works of *tafsīr* were far more in number than the complete *ḥāshiya*s composed on previously written Quranic commentaries. Our study also preliminarily tackled the literature of *ḥāshiya* in order to demonstrate that the current understanding of this sub-genre is replete with misconceptions and understated. We have first pointed to the significance of the notion of repetition for the foundational concept of *ijmā*/consensus in the Muslim thought and delved into the functions that *ḥāshiya*/gloss literature might have served. *Ḥāshiya* literature corresponded to an era that can be termed as the age of stabilization, consolidation, and verification during which previously composed works were subjected to a rigorous phase of study and assessment. It was also developed as a channel through which authoritative arteries of knowledge were held to compete against each other. As was shown in Saleh’s study of number of *ḥāshiya*s composed on al-Zamakhsharī’s *al-Kashshāf*, the *ḥāshiya*s are inestimable works for our understanding of how a given work was received throughout history and how their authoritative nature was constantly positioned and repositioned by the authors of these works. *Ḥāshiya*s also functioned not only as helping side-literature for the understanding of difficult-to-read texts, but also as tools to rehabilitate the works that might otherwise be regarded by some to contain religiously unacceptable views and as tools to inform a particular understanding of a given text.

Our study on the status of *tafsīr* during and under the Ottoman realm allowed us to draw the following conclusions. *Tafsīr* was undertaken in various settings that included the *madrasas*, mosques, Sufi lodges, and private dwellings of individuals in their own study circles. The commentaries of al-Zamakhsharī and al-Bayḍāwī were the main and primary textbooks in the *madrasas*, but they were not the only ones. The commentary of al-Zamakhsharī was probably the
central textbook at least until the beginning of 16\textsuperscript{th} century, and it was coupled with the commentary of al-Bayḍāwī until the end of the 17\textsuperscript{th} century or the beginning of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century when the former was overtaken by the latter. The six complete \textit{hāshiyas} on the commentary of al-Bayḍāwī which were composed during the 16\textsuperscript{th} century must have underlied the efforts to popularize al-Bayḍāwī’s commentary and supplant with it the commentary of al-Zamakhsharī. According to the biographical information of some scholars, \textit{madrasa} students did not study the entirety of a given 
tafsīr\ work, but parts of a variety of them. The students of high-ranking madrasas, as was shown in the document of 1565, were exposed to a variety of 
tafsīr\ works that run the gamut of the entire genre. Though the study of 
tafsīr\ constituted one of the main subjects of high-ranking madrasa curriculum, the students did undertake the study of 
tafsīr\ either individually or with individual scholars in other private settings as well. The 
tafsīr\ works that were chosen to be included in the Ottoman madrasa curriculum were mainly the compositions that were written in madrasa-style. The study of 
tafsīr\ in Ottoman madrasas was probably viewed as an occasion where students could measure up their accumulated knowledge in previous years of study against the Qur’ān. The 
tafsīr\ works to be studied were categorized as short, medium-length, and long/encyclopedic size works.

Although the tradition of writing \textit{hāshiyas} was a conspicuous feature of Ottoman scholarship of 
tafsīr, the number of autonomous and complete 
tafsīrs, as far as it can be ascertained to date, was almost three times the number of complete \textit{hāshiyas}. The widespread prevalence of \textit{hāshiya} compositions, when the partial ones are taken into consideration as well, should not diminish their value as less significant than the autonomous works. Most of the 
tafsīr\ and 
tafsīr-related works authored by Ottomans are still in manuscript form, and the bibliographical account is not yet complete.
The rubric of “Ottoman Tafsīr Movement” presumes a systematic and collective approach to a group of scholars whose lives spanned some six hundred years and who were guided by a single and obvious impetus that is informed by a distinct feature which had not been seen in previous undertakings of other dynasties. This approach obfuscates the fact that Ottomans appropriated the previous heritage of tafsīr and incorporated it into their own learning culture, maintained and preserved it, assessed and criticized it, enriched and discarded parts of it, and engraved their names in the history of tafsīr as a discipline of collective Muslim literature.

Preliminary bibliographical studies and some modern surveys in some tafsīr works authored by Ottoman exegetes indicate that they made use of all sorts of previously written tafsīrs. The available bibliographical data, however, should allow us to determine that most of the tafsīr works authored by Ottomans were heavily imbued with philological analyses. Even the works that are deemed as Sufi exegeses could not dispense with philological interpretations. One striking feature of the available bibliographical data is the fact that there is no tradition-based composition like the commentaries of Ibn Kathīr and al-Suyūṭī in the tafsīr scholarship of Ottomans. The Quranic commentary of al-Ṭabarī, furthermore, is hardly encountered as a significant source of a given exegetical work of an Ottoman exegete. For a more definite and comprehensive assessment of the entire tafsīr legacy of Ottomans, further analytical and critical studies need to be conducted on more individual tafsīr works authored by them.

In part two of our survey we studied Ebussuud and his Quranic commentary Irshād al-‘aql al-salīm ilā mazāyā al-Kitāb al-Karīm. Though Ebussuud’s father was a sufi master, he himself chose a different career path that drew him closer to politics and the men of state. He seems to have set his eyes from the very beginning on the high echelons of the ʿilmīyye apparatus of the government. Worthy of his nickname Ebussuud, the father of auspiciousness, he seized
every opportunity to secure the patronage of the high level men of state and steadily rose in the
hierarchy of 'ilmiyya branch of the government and spent the greater portion of his career as the
shaykh al-Islām, the highest position in the religious establishment of Ottoman governmental
apparatus. He authored a number of juridical works and his governmental duties were of juridical
nature notwithstanding, to the estimation of biographers and historians alike he was remembered
for his Quranic commentary above anything else. With the meager biographical data available on
Ebussuud it is somehow demanding to fully reconstruct his intellectual development, but it
seems that rational school of knowledge represented in the works of al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī and al-
Taftazānī was of great influence on his mindset. His literary skills in Arabic, on the other hand,
were deemed unprecedented in the estimation of some of his contemporaries and his biographers.
It was the coupling of these two skills, rational thinking and linguistic skills, that informed his
Quranic commentary but not unrestricted by tradition and/or orthodoxy.

Ebussuud’s introductory remarks in his Quranic commentary indicate that he viewed the
history of Quranic commentary writing in two distinct phases; while the early exegetes strove to
establish and fortify the understanding of the meaning of Qur’ān, the late exegetes, among whom
according to Ebussuud al-Zamakhsharī with his al-Kashshāf and al-Bayḍāwī with his Anwār al-
Tanzīl stand out, strove to bring forth the distinguishing features of the Qur’ān. Ebussuud seems
to have viewed himself as the continuation of the second group of exegetes and a competitor to
them, and outlines his approach as one of consolidation and verification of an accumulated
heritage on the distinguishing features of the Qur’ān. He therefore drew on the sources of these
two central madrasa works and reworked the exegetical corpus that is more maturely presented
by al-Wāhidī. These distinguishing features in toto boil down to the old-age phenomenon that is
known as the inimitabilityli jāz of Qur’ān. He seems to have been driven by two main objectives
in composing a Quranic commentary modeled after the two central works of madrasa teaching in the discipline of tafsîr: the commentaries of al-Zamakhsharî and al-Bayḍāwî. While he aimed at bringing forth a work that attempted to demonstrate the uniqueness of the Qur’ân against all other divine scriptures, he also tried to prove himself, and at the same time the Ottomans that continuously vied to appropriate the moral and religious heirship to Muslim world, worthy of producing a religious work that could compete with the central works of Quranic commentary especially within the educational settings of the Muslim world.

Circumstantial evidence indicates that Ottomans had previously attempted to produce a formal tafsîr work prior to Ebussuud’s time. But it was Ebussuud that was credited to have accomplished that task. Biographical data both on Ebussuud and other figures of his era, as well as historical attestations, led us to believe that Ebussuud’s Quranic commentary was initially commissioned by sultan Sulaymân himself. Thus this tafsîr work was not only viewed as the personal work of Ebussuud, but also a work of Sulaymân’s rulership. The role of Ottoman dynasty on Ebussuud’s Quranic commentary was also demonstrated in the rigorous official attempts for its wide dissemination immediately after its completion to the other parts of the Ottoman realm. The statistical data about the number of available manuscript copies of Irshâd should then be viewed in light of dynastic interferences for its dissemination. However, these dynastic interferences should not diminish the value of this work’s contents and the worth attributed to it, and the estimation of independent and pre-modern assessments should not be understated.

The sources that Ebussuud might have drawn on in his commentary led us to reach the conclusion that, contrary to the wide spread conviction that it solely drew on al-Zamakhsharî’s al-Kashshâf and al-Bayḍāwî’s Anwâr, there was a broad spectrum of sources. The named
sources in *Irshād* indicate that Ebussuud drew on an artery of commentarial knowledge that can be traced back to al-Tha’labī and al-Wāḥidī. The fact that the latter was probably drawn on more than the former is also attested to in the editorial notes of the printed edition of *al-Wasīṭ*. Al-Wāḥidī was not only the commentarial source for Ebussuud but seems to be also the source that he adopted in methodology. Previous studies have demonstrated that al-Wāḥidī adopted a methodology of applying linguistic sciences to Quranic commentary but restricted and checked it with tradition and/or orthodoxy. Some of the other named sources of Ebussuud are strikingly well-known Mu’tazilites and Ebussuud seems to have had no qualms about using them as his sources. We have failed to locate even a single instance where the well-known commentaries that are conventionally labeled as tradition-based, as a source for *Irshād*. The fact that Ebussuud very infrequently names his sources indicates that he addresses a well-versed audience in the genre of *tafsīr*.

A conspicuous feature of *Irshād* is the sporadic mentioning of variant readings of a given expression in the Qur’ān. Although Ebussuud infrequently mentions some of the technical terms in the discipline of variant readings, he seems to have been unbounded by the traditional concepts of canonical and/or non-canonical readings. While in some instances he founded some of the variant readings on linguistic regulations and in some others on the fact that they were recorded in the *Mushaf*, in other instances he dismisses the variant readings that are traditionally viewed to be canonical, and yet in others he mentions and bases his commentary upon variant readings that are traditionally viewed as non-canonical. His approach to variant readings seems to be dismissive of the traditionally inferred three criteria for the canonicity of a given variant reading. Ebussuud actually is not the only and the earliest figure that reveals a non-traditional approach to the phenomena of variant readings and he mostly reiterates a number of previous
exegetes that were unbound by the tradition of canonical and/or non-canonical readings. Our survey on the history of the Quranic text and the history and development of variant readings led us to conclude that at least until the beginning of 15th century the criteria for the canonicity or non-canonicity of a given reading remained inconclusive, and Ebussuud’s approach should therefore be viewed on that backdrop and not as an inattentive scholar to a presumed old-age tradition conceptualized and presumed to have been established most likely by the modern day salafi camp.

Though Ebussuud’s Quranic commentary is categorized in most of the classical and modern tafsīr histories under the rubric of language/reason-based commentary, it should be viewed as an amalgamation of both reason and tradition-based tafsīr on account of the fact that the number of traditions that he employed amounts to more than twelve hundred. The modern Muslim understanding of tafsīr works into the two vague categories of tradition-based and reason-based (al-tafsīr bi al-ma’thūr/al-riwāya and al-tafsīr bi al-‘āql/al-ma’qīll/al-dirāya) is once again betrayed in the commentary of Ebussuud. Works that are presumed to have been authored in one category can very well be situated within the other category as well. The spectrum of traditions that Ebussuud mentioned in his commentary ranges in occasion from the interpretation of a given verse, and the grammatical analysis of another to legal deductions and occasions of revelation. Most of the traditions that Ebussuud mentions are not utilized for the initial understanding of a given verse but as bolstering evidence for the interpretation of it already deduced by means of linguistic and textual analyses. He very frequently dismisses traditions that are attested to have bearing for the understanding of a given verse in previously composed Quranic commentaries. We need to bear in mind that Ebussuud does not delve into whether or not such traditions are sound, unsound or forged; he dismisses them only because he
either does not see them relevant in a given context or he renders them contradictory to the contextual meaning of the verse. Thus Ebussuud presents a given tradition to the context of the Quranic verse and measures the relativity of it against the verse or the broader context of a given pericope.

Ibn ‘Āshūr’s assessment of post-classical *tafsīr* writing has guided us to observe that *Irshād* was largely a work of verification. A close observance of early Quranic commentaries reveals that they are largely teemed with a number of interpretations on a given Quranic verse and it is extremely infrequent to find an author who analyzes, assesses, and offers preference among various interpretational views. The reader of these early *tafsīr* works is rather confounded about what to make of this plethora of commentarial views. By contrast, Ebussuud seems to have striven to weigh in on this topic and winnowed out several of these commentarial views, founded his choices on clear and understandable grounds, and offered preferences in more concise terms. The criterion of *siyāq* and *sibāq* of the Quranic text was the primary tool that Ebussuud employed in his preferences. Though the instances where Ebussuud offers a number of interpretations on a given verse without making any preferences among them are also infrequently encountered, the attempt to verify the authorial intent of the Quranic text seems to be the norm throughout *Irshād*. The study of whether or not Ebussuud drew on *ḥāshiya* literature that was composed prior to his day and if he did to what extent and which *ḥāshiya* were of primary significance remains the subject of further and separate studies. But our initial survey of alleged reliance on one of the well-known *ḥāshiya* of al-Zamakhsharī’s *al-Kashshāf*, that of al-Ṭībī, failed to corroborate such assertions.

His rational and/or linguistic analyses of the Quranic text, on the other hand, were not free-reined. His relatively positive approach in his commentary seems to have been checked by
orthodoxy. As was demonstrated in the story of the prophet Dāwūd/David, he neither boldly tackled the loaded Quranic terms of *al-zulm* and/or *al-baghy*, nor he refrained from tweaking and transforming the well-known traditions and/or incidentally failed to verify the truth of a tradition that had already been tweaked and transformed by a previous exegete. The premises of orthodoxy led him to freely entertain traditions and stories that can traditionally be deemed as unsound and/or apocryphal.

His political agenda is revealed probably in a single instance but with utmost significance. The point that is of notice especially for Ottoman historians is the fact that the dynasty by the 16th century began appropriating the religious realm not through legendary tales of folk religion but through learned religion and the holy book of Islam.
Appendix 1

A bio-bibliographical account of Ottoman heritage of Quranic commentaries

A bio-bibliographic account of the Quranic commentators and their commentaries that are composed during and under the Ottoman dynasty is listed below. This list is by no means exhaustive, but provides a preliminary outlook of the heritage whose existence have so far been ascertained only in the catalogues of libraries, print editions, and some modern surveys. We have only accounted here for the works that are complete and/or deemed to be complete but some parts of which await discovery.


Owing probably to the turbulations that the Anatolian peninsula underwent during the 14th and 15th centuries, very little is known about the life of this scholar. He was probably a slave or a descendent of a slave whose origins and ethnicity are unknown. He spent part of his life in Sivas/Siwaš, in central Anatolia today, or Ayasluğ/Ayāthlūgh, present day Selçuk of the province of Izmir on the modern day Aegean cost of Turkey. Some researchers determined his date of death as 1456 based on copy dates of some of his writings and also on the epigraph in his tombstone that records it so.¹ His tafsīr is complete and available in several manuscript copies in Istanbul libraries.² Edited and commented by Bahaddin Dartma, it was recently published in 4 volumes in Beirut in 2006.

¹ DİA, s.v. “Şehâbeddîn Siwašî”
² For catalogue record of some these copies see, Demir, Osmanlı müfessirleri, p. 111.
The title of this work may imply that it was a mere compilation, a view that has been voiced by some researchers. But the process of compilation and selection must be worth studying and none of the modern surveys tackles this aspect! Written in simple and flowing style, this tafsīr has been characterized as one of the classics of al-tafsīr bi al-dirāya with lexical, linguistic, and literary explanations along with infrequent mentioning of traditional reports. Recent studies have identified some of the sources that this tafsīr drew on as the commentaries of, with the order of frequency, al-Zamakhsharī (d. 1144), Abu al-Layth al-Samarqandī (d. 983), al-Baghawī (d. 1122), and infrequently al-Wāḥidī (d. 1075), al-Rāzī (d. 1209), al-Qurṭubī (d. 1272), and al-Bayḍāwī (d. 1286). The commentator proposes several possible interpretations on a given verse but seems to avoid making preferences among them. He is criticized of having used unsound traditions, and, at times, of having distorted the wording of some these traditions. Though the author was known to be a member of the Zaynīya sufi order and a direct student of this order’s founder Zayn al-Dīn al-Ḥāfī (d. 1435), no mystical interpretation could be detected in his commentary.


Only two volumes of this work have so far been discovered, but the contents of these two volumes allow us to determine that it is a complete Quranic commentary. The first discovered

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3 Ibid, p. 113.
5 Bahattin Dartma “Şihābuddīn es-Sivāsi: Hayatı ve İlli Şahsiyeti” Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi, cilt IX/2, (Sivas, 2005), p. 100.
6 Dartma, İlk Osmanlı müfessirlerinden..., p. 266.
7 A sufi order that branched out of Suhrāwardīya in Harāt at the beginning of 15th century by Zayn al-Dīn al-Ḥāfī (d. 1435), see DİA, s.v. “Zeyniyye”.
8 Dartma, İlk Osmanlı müfessirlerinden, p. 268.
9 Taşkoprızāda, al-Shaqa’iq, p. 52-53.
volume, Süleymaniye Carullah 94, contains the commentary from the beginning of Quran to 3:91, and the second discovered volume marked as the 10th volume, İstanbul Üniversitesi Arapça Ktp. 1794, begins with the commentary of chapter 34 and ends with 41:54. Kātib Chalabī catalogued this commentary as a “huge and multi-volume tafsīr”. We agree with Demir who, based on the information provided in biographical sources and the contents of the discovered volumes, propounded that this is a complete Quranic commentary and several of its volumes await discovery. And based on the size and content of the discovered volumes we can presume that it is a 12-13 volume work.

Originally from Konya and famed as the Ibn Sīnā (d. 1037), Avicenna, of Anatolia, Hacı Paşa travelled to Egypt, and, having studied the religious sciences there, he took up the study of medicine and became the head doctor of Dār al-tadāwī there. He then returned to Aydın and taught in madrasas there. With the death of the Isa Bey, the prince of Aydın principality, and the ensuing turmoil there, Hacı Paşa moved to his native Konya where he composed his tafsīr, and, after the accession of Murad II in 1421 to the Ottoman throne, dedicated it to Murad II. He must have been seeking sultanic patronage and must have been disappointed, because he changed his nisba name from al-Aydinī to al-Qonawī in the introduction of his Quranic commentary, and then returns to the province of Aydın and dies there in 1424.

No modern study of this tafsīr has been undertaken!

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10 Demir, Osmanlı müfessirleri, p. 116-117.
12 Demir, Osmanlı müfessirleri, p. 116.
14 DIÅ, s.v. “Hacı Paşa”
15 Ibid.

A copy of this work is located in Süleymaniye, Kılıç Ali Paşa 106-109. Other copies that have been identified in Süleymaniye Library by Abay are Esad 68, H. Hüsnü 55, Laleli 98. Another copy in Topkapı Palace Museum, Ahmed III/31 is a complete *tafsīr* of the Qur‘ān, and the remainder part, form 58:5 to the end, was penned by one Ābd al-Wahhāb b. Muḥammad b. Kamāl al-Dīn (?).

Also known as ‘Alā al-Dīn al-Qaramānī, al-Samarqandī originally hailed from Samarqand and migrated to and settled in Larende in the present day province of Karaman in Turkey. It cannot be ascertained when al-Samarqandī moved to Anatolia or where and when he started composing his *tafsīr*; however, based on the fact that he reached chapter 58:5 in his work, we may safely presume that he had been in the process of writing it just before his death in Ottoman lands. His work was wrongly attributed to Abū al-Layth al-Samarqandī (d. 983) and was printed under latter’s name. (more on this discrepancy will be elaborated further soon).

There has been no analytical or critical study of this *tafsīr* and any attempt to propose any insight would be presumptuous.

Originally from Shākhruš of Bisṭām, of Khorasān, Muşannifak migrated to Konya in 1444 or 1446 where he was appointed as madarris in one of the madrasas and composed 4 works in Persian, one of which was al-Tuhfa al-Mahmudiya, a composition in the genre of nasihat al-wuzarah/mirror for princes, dedicated to Mahmud Pasha who later introduced the author to Sultan Mehmēd II. His tafsir is in mixed Arabic/Persian and was commissioned by Mehmēd II, hence it was also titled al-Muhammadiya. He was appointed as madarris at one of Mehmēd II’s eight imperial colleges, madāris-i ṣahni, in Istanbul where the author spent the rest of his life. One of Muşannifak’s teachers was one Jalal al-Dīn Yūsuf al-Awbahī who was a student of al-Taftazānī by whom he was also licenced to teach the latter’s hāshiya on the commentary of al-Kashshāfi. Tāhsqoprızāda replicates a copy of this licence, ijāza, and we can quite safely presume that Muşannifak’s tafsir lineage goes back al-Taftazānī. This tafsir is known by different names: al-Muhammadiya, Multaqā al-bahrayn, Kitāb al-shifā’, and Kitāb al-shifā’ī tafsir kalām Allāh al-munzal min al-sama’. Although some medieval biographers, as well as some modern tafsir historiographers, catalogued these works as separate compositions, Demir seems to have verified that these are different names for a single work of Muşannifak. Ğashkuprizāda claims to have seen this tafsir which, according to him, comprised the commentary on al-Fātiha, the first chapter of the Qur’ān, and the last cuz’, chapters 78-114; however, Cevdet Bey, who also claims to have seen it, stated that it was a mufasal, large and/or detailed work, and that he had the chance to examine the first volume and the parts that contained chapters 51-114. No single complete copy of this tafsir has yet been discovered;

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20 Tāhsqoprızāda, Mawsū’at, p. 966.
21 Cevdet Bey Tefsir usūlü ve tarihi, p. 141.
22 Tāhsqoprızāda, Mawsū’at, p. 966.
23 Demir, Osmanlı muffessirleri, p. 124-25.
24 Tāhsqoprızāda, Mawsū’at, p. 966.
25 Cevdet Bey, Tefsir usūlü ve tarihi, p. 141.
however, several scattered copies of it on distinct parts of the Qur‘ān led Ziya Demir to conclude that it must be a complete work. Abay included the catalogue records of these copies as follows: Ayasofya 285, Bayezid 296, Esad 35, Fatih 635, 636 (autograph copy), Reşid Efendi 54, Köprüülü Fazıl Ahmed 1596, Veliiyyüddin 169, 260, 261, 396, Hekimoğlu 51, and a copy containing the introductory section along with part of the commentary on Baqara in Isparta, Hamit Paşa Ktp. 1426. His hāshiya on al-Kashshāf is also catalogued in Bayezid 701, Laleli 326/1.

Z. Demir, who examined Fatih 636, described it as tackling a given verse under several sections which mostly deal with lexical, linguistic, and literary analyses; and traditional reports are infrequently mentioned in this work.

Muşannifak is a conspicuous example for the institution of patronage. Scholars and men of state alike have utilized this institution for various reasons. The author had already written a short commentary on the Mathnawī of Rūmī when he first settled in Konya, then still under a Karamānid principality, and dedicated it Çaramanoğlu Ibrāhīm Bey. However, when he moved to Ottoman realm, not only did he revise his commentary, removing the parts related to his dedicatee, but also his tafsir, now dedicated to Meḥmed II, “thanked God for delivering him from the ruins of Karamānid principality and the roost of owls”. He even cites in his introduction to his tafsir 2:257 which runs: “Allah is the Protecting Friend of those who believe.

26 Demir, Osmanlı müfessirleri, p. 125.
28 Ibid, p. 288; Sinan Taşdelen, “Musannifek Alaaddin Ali bin Muhammed’ın Mevlânâ’nın Mesnevî’si ile ilgili risalesi (İnceleme, metin, tercümė)” PhD Dissertation, Selçuk Üniversitesi, 2007. (This dissertation provides detailed data on what each of these MS copies contains).
29 Demir, Osmanlı müfessirleri, p. 127-128.
He brings them out of darkness into light..., alluding that the Karamānid principality was the abode of darkness!³¹

Franz Babinger noted that what is known as Meḥmedīye, probably the same as al-Muḥammadīya, which is listed as the name of Muṣannafak’s tafsīr, is a didactic poem authored by Yāzidji-oghlu/Yazıcıoğlu Mehmed (d. 1455) and containing a lengthy exposition of the doctrines and traditions of Islam with considerable space devoted to Meḥmed II’s divine mission and his spiritual master Hadjdjī Bairām/Hacı Bayram. This work was translated into Persian by Muṣannifak.³² Yazıcıoğlu Meḥmed originally composed it in Ottoman Turkish³³ and Muṣannifak must have been commissioned for its translation into Persian. We have been unable to corroborate such titled tafsīr work for the author in primary sources on which the modern research draws!³⁴


A native of Gūrān, a village of Shahrzūr in present day Northwestern Iraq, Gūrānī travelled to Baghdād, Syria, and finally to Egypt to acquire religious knowledge under the tutelage of celebrated scholars of his time.³⁵ No sooner than he became a prominent scholar in Egypt, he fell out of favor with the ruling elite and his scholar colleagues due to his mischievous proclivities and his blunt transgressions against the hanafi and Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 767). A serious of infelicitous events led to his banishment from Cairo and the ensuing recruitment of him by

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³¹ Ibid, p. 120.
³² El¹ s.v. “Yāzidji-Oghlu”.
³⁴ Ziya Demir cites Miḥlāḥ al-saʿāda, Cevdet Bey, and al-Shaqa‘iğ, but our examination of these sources yielded no such data. Only Katib Chalabi mentions this as being the title of the author’s tafsīr work, see Kashf II, p. 1618.
³⁵ DİA, s.v. “Molla Gūrānī”
Murad II (r. 1421-1451) into Ottoman domain.\textsuperscript{36} Trained as Shāfi‘ite in Egypt, Gūrānī, changed his judicial affiliation to Ḥanifite in Anatolia\textsuperscript{37}, was appointed in several madrasas of Bursa and then Istanbul and reached the highest position of sheikh al-Islām, but allegedly turned down the wazīr position offered to him by Meḥmed II.\textsuperscript{38} He would also fell out of favor with the Sultan, leave Istanbul, seek reconciliation later and return in 1462.\textsuperscript{39} He is said to have had a tremendous role in the conquest of Constantinople/Istanbul.\textsuperscript{40} A Faṭḥnāma penned by Gūrānī and sent out to Mamlūk Cairo shows how he wittily framed his letter of victory in a way that not only portrayed the Ottoman sultans as the fulfillment of the famous Prophetic ḥadīth\textsuperscript{41} but also his role and position during the conquest, and portrayed himself as a cataclysmic figure that had a hand in the course of history.\textsuperscript{42} It was an auspicious event that enabled Molla Gūrānī to vindicate himself of the infelicitous event that befell him back in Cairo.

He probably started writing his tafsīr in 1457, when he left Istanbul, completed it in 1463, one year after returning to Istanbul, and dedicated it to Meḥmed II. This tafsīr remains unpublished, but there are at least 15 manuscripts, one of which, Damat İbrahim Paşa 146, is copied in 1479 by İbrāhīm b. Aḥmad, a student of Gūrānī, and bears Gūrānī’s signature indicating that the author must have read and approved of it.\textsuperscript{43} Other copies are catalogued as follows: Millet Ktp. Murat Molla 164, Millet Ktp. Feyzullah Efendi 210-11, Üsküdar Selim Ağa Ktp. 93-94, Ragib Paşa 207, Bayezid/Veliyyüddin Efendi 248, Süleymaniye/Hasan Hüsnü Paşa 14, Süleymaniye/Hacı Mahmud Efendi 162, Nuru Osmaniye 423, Süleymaniye/Nazif Paşa 118-

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid, 242.
\textsuperscript{38} DİA, s.v. “Molla Gürânî”
\textsuperscript{39} Sakıp Yıldız, Fatih’in hocası Molla Gürânî ve tefsiri, [Istanbul, Sahaflar kitap sarayı], 66
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid, 55-58.
\textsuperscript{41} La tufiḥanına al-Qoṣṭanṭîniyâ fâ la ni’mâ al-amîr amîrîhâ wa la ni’mâ al-jaysh dâhîl al-jaysh.
\textsuperscript{42} Sakıp Yıldız, Fatih’in hocası, p. 59-60.
Some of the sources that the author mentions he drew on by name are, in the order of frequency, the commentaries of al-Zamakhsharī, al-Bayḍāwī, al-Ṭībī (d. 1361)\textsuperscript{45}, al-Taftazānī (d. 1391)\textsuperscript{46}, al-Rāzi (d. 1210), al-Ṭabarī (d. 923)\textsuperscript{47}, and others whose mention occurred only once or twice. The sources that he must have used and referred to anonymously are yet to be identified.\textsuperscript{48}

According Demir, Molla Gürānī’s critical assessments of previous tafsīrs and his personal independent comments are not few.\textsuperscript{49} He begins commenting on a given verse by lexically and linguistically analyzing it, criticizes al-Zamakhsharī and al-Bayḍāwī at times, and reaches his own conclusions.\textsuperscript{50} M. Kamil Yaşaroğlu stated that some Ottoman sultans had this tafsīr copied and sent to Bukhārā Khānate and other places, and that it was also used as a textbook in some Ottoman madrasas.\textsuperscript{51}

This tafsīr awaits a critical and analytical study.


No biographical information on this figure can be found in classical biographical literature. Whatever the secondary literature has on him is taken from the biographical literature

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid, p. 38-40.
\textsuperscript{45} Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Abd Allāh al-Ṭībī, and his ḥāshiya on al-Kashshāf of al-Zamakhsharī, Futūḥ al-ghayb fī al-kashf an qinā’ al-rayy, is a well-known multi-volume printed work.
\textsuperscript{46} Al-Taftazānī’s ḥāshiya on the commentary of al-Zamakhsharī is, to my knowledge, still in MS form.
\textsuperscript{47} Yıldız exhausted all the instances in which the author cites Ibn Jarīr and counted them as ten, and these are limited to reporting of the traditions; see Fatḥ’īn Hocası, p. 159-161.
\textsuperscript{48} Sakıp Yıldız, Fatih’in Hocası, p. 151-161.
\textsuperscript{49} Demir, Osmanlı müfessirleri, p. 133.
\textsuperscript{50} Yıldız, Fatih’in hocası, p. 248-252.
\textsuperscript{51} DİA, s.v. “Molla Gürānī”.
\textsuperscript{52} Perhaps more correctly munzil
that has been composed during the 20th century. He was most likely the father of Idrīs al-Bidlīsī (d. 1520), the famous court historian during the reign of Bayezid II (r. 1489-1512). A documentary evidence, an imperial record book, indicates that his son Idrīs al-Bidlīsī, was offered condolences by Bāyezīd II (r. 1489-1512) on 13 Shaʾbān 909/1504.⁵³ Some surveys indicate that he was in the court of Uzun Ḥasan (d. 1478), the prince of Aqqoyunlu, and then his son and successor sultan Yaʿqūb (d. 1490).⁵⁴ We do not know if he had come to Ottoman realm before his patron and protector Prince Yaʿqub died; however, Demir, who studied the MS copy of his tafsīr, noted that in the introduction of his composition the author stated that he had come into Anatolia upon the invitation of Meḥmed Chalabi (r. 1413-1421) to whom he had presented his work.⁵⁵ He either must have had a rather lengthy life time, or this anachronism cannot be explained away!⁵⁶

The only copy of his tafsīr, Jāmiʿ al-Tanzīl wa al-Taʿwīl, is located in Süleymaniye Ktp. Şehid Ali Paşa/109-1 12 in four volumes.⁵⁷ This work was commissioned by ’Abd al-Raʿūf Pasha, then the governor of Erzurum.⁵⁸ He mentions some of the sources he drew on as the commentaries of al-Thaʿlabī (d. 1035), al-Baghawī (d. 1122), al-Zamakhsharī, al-Bayḍāwī, and one Shihāb al-Dīn al-Hindi⁵⁹ (d. 1444).⁶⁰ Another library record for a 2-volume tafsīr work attributed to al-Bidlīsī and is said to exist in Edirne Selimiye Ktp. could not be ascertained.⁶¹

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⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 147.
⁵⁵ Demir, Osmanlı müfessirleri, p. 137. Turgay, who wrote the most recent article on al-Bidlīsī, is reticent on this topic!
⁵⁶ It might as well be the copyist error, someone who took Meḥmed II for Meḥmed Chalabi.
⁵⁷ Demir, Osmanlı müfessirleri, p. 136; Turgay, “Klasik Osmanlı”, p. 150.
⁵⁸ Turgay “Klasik Osmanlı”, p. 151.
⁵⁹ A rather unknown figure, only three biographical sources have scanty information on him. He is probably Aḥmad al-Zāwilī (d. 848-49/1445), Aḥmad b. Shams al-Dīn b. ’Omar al-Zāwilī al-Dawlat Ābādī al-Ḥanāfī (Shihāb al-Dīn); an exegete and grammarian, among his works is a al-Baḥr al-mawwāj wa al-sirāj al-wahhāj fi tafsīr al-Qurʾān, (probably in Persian). See, ’Umar Rıdā Kahlhala, Muʾjam al-muʾallifin: tarājim musānnifī al-kutub al-arabiyya 4 volumes (Bairut: Muʾassasat al-Risāla, n.d.), v. 1, p. 152; See also, Ismāʿīl al-Baghdādī, İdāh
Turgay’s notes are descriptive, and no critical and/or analytical study of this *tafsīr* exists!


Born in Nakhchiwān, modern day Azarbaijān, a region that was then ruled by Sultan Ya’qūb of Aqqoyunlu and mostly populated by people of Turkic stock, Ni’matullāh, and, ensuing the throne fights that led to the establishment of Safawid power in the region, moved and settled in Akşehir, present day Konya, probably in 1499. 63 There is a tomb bearing his name in Akşehir, and, according to *taḥrīr* notes conducted in 1584 during the reign of Murād III, there was a *zāwiyā* (a sufī lodge) and some other religious foundations built for him. 64 He most likely completed his *tafsīr* in Tabrīz in 1496. Comprised of two volumes, this *tafsīr*, in Arabic, was published in two volumes in Istanbul in 1326/1908. 65 Several MS copies are extant, and what has been ascertained to be the autograph copy is located in Topkapı Palace, Ahmed III, 61. 66 This *tafsīr* has recently been translated into Turkish under the rubric of *Nahcivānî Tefsiri* by Ali Îhsan Türcan in 3 volumes, last of which was published in 2015.

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60 Turgay, “Klasik Osmanlı” p. 151.
63 *DİA*, s.v. “Ni’metullah b. Mahmūd”.
64 Ibid.
66 Yaşar Kurt, “Ni’metullah Nahcivānî”, p. 82.
He claims to have written his *tafsir* solely drawing on his own revelatory (*mukāshafa/ilhām*) knowledge resorting to no other *tafsir* work.  

Yaşar Kurt, in his PhD dissertation, was able to ascertain, though in footnotes, some of the previous *tafsir* works with which al-Nakhchivi’s expressions near identical; however, no modern survey devoted a section to the sources on which the author might have relied. Prof. Ateş noted that his *tafsir*, unlike previous sufī *tafsirs* which had dwelt on the esoteric meaning of only particular verses of the Qurʾān, covered every single verse from beginning to end. A follower of Ibn ʿArabī’s *wuḥdat al-wujūd* theory, al-Nakhchivi is said to have written succinctly and to the point, with also a lengthy introduction of 16 pages.


by Sağır Aḥmed/Saghir Aḥmad, Aḥmad b. Maḥmūd al-ʾAṣam al-Lārandawī (d. 1564 or 1574).

Born in Larende, present day Central Anatolian province of Karaman in Turkey, Sağır Aḥmed studied in his hometown and in Istanbul, and was appointed as ṭārīq and started teaching ḥadīth and *tafsīr* in Fatih Mosque.

Some sources indicate that he could not complete his *tafsīr* due to his untimely death, and he only reached chapter 63 of the Qurʾān; however, Demir, who studied the manuscript copies and based his opinion on the information found on the cover pages, is of the view that probably it was complete but the end part was lost. This *tafsīr* was originally 11 volumes, but the second and eleventh volumes have not been located, and the MS copy of the 9 volumes is available at

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68 Yaşar Kurt, “Nihmetullah Nahiyyenî”, pp. 95-177
70 Demir, *Osmanlı müfessirleri*, p. 141-42.
71 Demir, *Osmanlı müfessirleri*, p. 159.
the Süleymaniye Library, Carullah 109-117 some of which are copied by different hands.\textsuperscript{72} Abay located another copy of it in Bayezit 477-92.\textsuperscript{73}

The author mainly draws on al-Bayḍāwī and al-Zamakhshāri, and other \textit{tafsīr} works in a critical and assessing manner. The beginning of this commentary for any given Quranic verse is teemed with lexical, linguistic, and literary analyses.\textsuperscript{74}

9. \textit{Irshād al-‘aql al-sa li m ilā mazāyā al-Kitāb al-Karīm} by Abū al-Su’ūd (d. 1574). (the subject of our study above)


Born in the village of Akhisar of the province of present day Manisa in Turkey, al-Munshī first studied in his native land, went to Istanbul and advanced his religious knowledge in \textit{madrasas} there. He was so well versed in the primary religious languages of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish, that he could equally elegantly produce poetry and \textit{inshā} works in any of those three languages.\textsuperscript{76} Having subscribed to the sufi order of Naqshibandiyya, al-Munshī occupied first the judgeship of Egypt, and then he was awarded, after presenting his \textit{tafsīr} to sultan Murād III, with the shaykhhood of the \textit{Haram al-Nabī} where he remained for the rest of his life.\textsuperscript{77} He dedicated his \textit{tafsīr} to Murad III.\textsuperscript{78}

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid, p. 160.
\textsuperscript{73} Abay, “Osmanlı döneminde”, p. 292.
\textsuperscript{74} Demir, \textit{Osmanlı mufessirleri}, p. 162.
\textsuperscript{75} \textit{GAL} II, p. 580; \textit{GAL Suppl.} II, P. 651-52.
\textsuperscript{76} Demir, \textit{Osmanlı mufessirleri}, p. 152.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., 152-53.
\textsuperscript{78} M. Abay, “Osmanlı dönemi mufessirleri”, MA theses, p. 72.
Autograph copy of this work has been located at Topkapı Palace Museum, Emanet 566; and other copies are at Süleymaniye Library, Aşır 390, Mihrışah 19, İstanbul Üniversitesi Merkez AY 737, 5036, and Ayasofya 282.79

Among the sources he mainly drew on are the ḥāṣhiyas of al-Ṭibī and al-Taftazānī on al-Kashshāf, and the Bahr al-Muḥīṭ of Abū Ḥayyān. This tafsīr is short and similar to the style of tafsīr al-Jalālayn.80


Commissioned by vizier Ibrāhīm Pashā, this tafsīr was completed in Turkish in 1685. Autograph copy is found in Nuruosmaniye 313, and a lithograph edition was printed in Istanbul, 1292-94 AH, in two volumes. In his introduction, the author states that he mainly drew on Irshād al-ʾaql al-salīm of Abu al-Suʿūd, Maʿālim al-Tanzīl of al-Baghawī, al-Mawāhib al-ladunniyya/al-ʿaliyya of Ḥusayn Wāʾiẓ al-Kāshiṭī,81 and many other works related to tafsīr.82

12. Tercüme-i Tibyān/Tarcumat al-Tibyān by Muḥammad b. Ḥamza al-ʿAyntābī (d. 1699).

Born in ʿAyntāb, the present day Antep in Turkey, ʿAyntābī studied in Sivas and taught in madrasas there.83

80 Ibid, p. 72.
The author himself in his introduction accounts that he was invited to Istanbul by the 
sheikh al-Islām Minkârîzâde Yahyā Efendi to participate in Huzur Dersleri during one of which 
sultan Meḥmed IV, who was then present, asked him to translate the Qur’ān and its tafsîr into Turkish. 84 Some researchers determined that it was the translation of Khaḍr b. ’Abd al-Raḥmān al-Azdī’s 85 (d. 700/1300-1301) al-Tibyān fī tafsîr al-Qur’ān. 86

Even though it is known to be the translation of al-Azdī al-Tibyān, Orhan İyibilgin’s detailed study revealed that the translator did not abide by literal translation of the interpretation of a given verse, but added various other interpretations of his choice from other sources. 87 The main exegetes that al-’Ayntābī drew on were al-Farrā’, al-Baghawī, al-Bayḍāwī, and al-Rāzī. 88 This tafsîr was first published in Cairo in the years of 1841, 1849, 1866 in two volumes, and several later editions were printed in Ottoman script in Istanbul in 1875 through 1906 in four volumes, and, lastly, in latin alphabet in simplified modern Turkish by Süleyman Fahir in two late editions, 1956 and 1963, in four volumes. Several manuscripts exist in several libraries not only in Istanbul but all over different provincial libraries of Turkey. 89


Bursawī was born in Aydos, in present day Bulgaria, where his father, a native of Üsküdar, Istanbul, had moved to one year before Bursawī was born. He was a prolific author and is said to have authored more than one hundred works, forty of which are in Arabic. He was a

84 DİA, s.v. “Tibyan Tefsiri”
85 There are several MA theses and PhD dissertations on al-Azdī’s work produced by female students of the Kulliyat al-Tarbiya of Umm al-Qurā University in Makka. See, Badriya Khalaf Aḥmad al-Ḥarīthī “al-Tibyān fī tafsîr al-Qur’ān li Khadr b. ’Abd al-Raḥmān al-Azdī” (MA thesis, Makka: Umm al-Qurā University, 2011)
87 Ibid., p. 27-42.
88 Ibid., p. 27-42
89 Ibid., p. 20-27.
renowned sufi shaykh of the Jalwaf order and succeeded his sheikh Osman Fazlı Atpazarı (d. 1691).  

His tafsir grew out of his public sermons that ended in 1705 in Bursa. His mystical approach was heavily influenced by his primary sources Bahr al-Haqā’iq of Najm al-Dīn al-Dāya, but, not insignificantly, was also adorned, as it were, by poetical lines in Persian from the Dīwān of al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Shīrāzī (d. 1390), the Mathnawī of al-Rūmī (d. 1273), Būstān and Gulistān of Sa’dī al-Shīrāzī (d. 1292), Molla Jāmī (d. 1492 ?). He is said to have started his tafsir in 1685 orally in his public sermons, and how it was put into writing remains a question for research. He had probably started writing it back in the days when he was still in Balkan lands of the Empire, and had reached the middle of surat al-Nisā’ when he resumed it after he started his public sermons in Bursa. Our own research, which will be mentioned shortly, yielded the result that he started his oral sermons from the beginning of the Qur’an and when he reached almost the end of the second chapter of the Qur’an he incorporated what he had written with what he had orally been delivering in Bursa.

Among his sources, the modern surveys indicate, were the classical tafsīrs of al-Zamakhsharī, al-Bayḍāwī, al-Rāzī, al-Qurṭubī, Abū Ḥayyān, al-Nasafī, Abu al-Su’ūd, ‘Alā al-Dīn al-Samarqandī, Najm al-Dīn al-Dāya and his Bahr al-haqā’iq wa al-ma’ānī, al-Kawāshī’s Tahṣīrat al-Mutadhakkir, al-Kāshānī’s Ta’wilat al-Qur’ān, and Rūzbihān Baqlī’s Arā’is al-bayān. Even though it is taken to be mainly of mystical nature, this tafsīr significantly focuses on linguistic and rhetorical analyses of Quranic verses, and makes considerable use of al-İsfahānī’s

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90 DİA, “İsmâıl Hakkı Bursevî”
91 DİA, s.v. “İsmâıl Hakkı Bursevî”; also see, M. Öztürk, Osmanlı tefsir mirası, p. 78.
92 DİA, s.v. “Rûhu’l-Beyân”

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al-Mufradât as another of his source. Other features of classical tafsîr tradition such as hadîth reports, the topics of nâsîkh and mansûkh, rational analyses are also significantly prevalent.\textsuperscript{93}

The autograph copy of this tafsîr is at Bursa Eski Yazmalar ve Basma Eserler Kütüphanesi, Genel no. 12-27. It has also been published several times: Istanbul, in Hagira years, 1255, 1285, 1286, 1306, 1330; Bûl'aq 1255, 1264, 1276, 1278, 1287. M. ‘Alî Sâbûnî summarized this tafsîr into an abridged version titled Tanwîr al-adhhân min tafsîr Rûh al-Bayân and published in Damascus in 1998.


The son of ‘Izz al-Dîn Aḥmad, the sufî sheikh of the Ashrafîyya sufî order, Ashrafzâda was born in Bursa, studied there within the vicinity of the said sufî order, and received he favors of both sultan Aḥmad III and sultan Maḥmûd I.\textsuperscript{94}

The autoghrap copy of his Tafsîr al-jinân, in ten volumes, was abridged with the title of Zubdat al-bayân by his son ‘Abd al-Qâdîr Necib/Abdülkadir Necib Efendi.\textsuperscript{95} Fatma Çalık, in her PhD dissertation “Eşrefzade Izzettin ve tefsiri: Enîsü’l-cinân”, stated that the aforementioned autograph copy comprised 12 volumes, but, interestingly, she also mentioned elsewhere in the same dissertation that it comprises 16 volumes!\textsuperscript{96} She tried to explain it away by saying that 5 volumes were the rewriting of the volumes that were damaged for unnamed reasons, but the ambiguity on the number of volumes remains unsolved. Çalık was able to ascertain more than twenty tafsîr-related sources that Ashrafzâda used in his work. She gave a chronological list of

\textsuperscript{93} DİA, “Rûhu’l-Beyân”
\textsuperscript{94} DİA, “İzzeddin Efendi, Eşrefzade”
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid.
these sources. Among these sources the frequently used ones are as follows: *Tafsîr al-Qur’ân al-’Azhîm* of Abû al-Layth al-Samarqandî (d. 983), *Mâ’âlim al-Tanzîl* of al-Baghawî (d. 1122), *Kitâb al-taysîr fî al-tafsîr* of Najm al-Dîn ‘Omar b. Muḥammad al-Nasafî (f. 1142), *Bahr al-haqq ‘iql* of Najm al-Dîn al-Dâya (d. 1256), *Tabṣîrat al-mutadha’ik* of al-Kawâshi (d. 1281), the ḥâshiyas of Ibn Tamjîd (d. 1485) and Shaykhzáda (d. 1544) on the *Anwâr al-Tanzîl* of al-Baydâwî (d. 1286), *Madârik al-Tanzîl* of al-Nasafî (d. 1310), *‘Uyûn al-Tafsâsîr fî Fuḍâla’ al-Samâsîr* of al-Sîwâsî (d. 1401 ?), *al-Lubâb fî ‘Ulûm al-Kitâb/Tafsîr Ibn ‘Adîl* of Ibn ‘Adîl (d. 1475), *Irshâd al-‘Aql al-Salîm* of Abû al-Su‘ûd (d. 1574), *Rûh al-Bayân* of al-Bursawî (d. 1725), and many other *tafsîr* works that are used rather infrequently.97

The mystical approach influenced by the school Ibn ‘Arabî along with the sayings of the famous followers of Ibn ‘Arabî prominently figure in this work. On the other hand, linguistic analyses, traditional reports, and didactic exhortations also abound.98

The autograph copy is available at Bursa Eski Yazma ve Basma Eserler, Genel, nos. 976-977.


This mainly sufî-style *tafsîr* of al-Ardurûmî draws on al-Baydâwî’s commentary to a great extent, but, on the other hand, the topical dealing with modern sciences of astronomy, geology, medicine, physics, and psychology related comments abound.99 Greatly influenced by Ibn ‘Arabî’s thought through his student and representative Şadr al-Dîn al-Qonawî in Anatolia,

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98 Ibid, p. 113-14.
al-Arḍūrūmī makes use of other famous sufī figures as well, such as al-Qushairī, Najm al-Dīn al-Dāya, ʿIsnāʾīl Ḥaqqī Bursawī, and follows a naẓārī-sufī mode of thought that is heavily mixed with philosophy. He mainly follows the artery of al-Zamakhsharī, al-Bayḍāwī, al-Rāzī, and Abū al-Suʿūd on one hand, and Ibn Ṭarabī, al-Qonawī, al-Kāshānī, and Bursawī on the other.\(^{100}\)

The only known MS copy of this taṣṣīr is in Süleymaniye Library, Halet Efendi 20.\(^{101}\)

16. Zubdat al-bayān fī taṣṣīr al-Qurʾān by Eşrefzade Bursevî/Ashrafzāda Bursawī

Najīb al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Qādir b. ʾIzz al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Qādirī al-Bursawī (d. 1788)

Some studies asserted that this was an abridged version of his father’s Anīs al-jinān.\(^{102}\) It was probably completed in 1768 in three volumes. Abay listed also a taṣṣīr with the title of Mukhtasar Zubdat al-bayān and ascertained that the autograph copy is in BEEK (Bursa Eski Eserler Kütüphanesi)-Genel, 997-998, and/or 994-996.\(^{103}\)

17. Taḥṣirat/Baṣirat al-qulūb fī Kalām ʿAllām al-ghuyūb by Molla Halil/Khalīl Siʿirdī (d. 1843).

Born in Bitlis, in present day southwestern region of Turkey, and spent most of his life in the town of Siirt, then within the same geographical vicinity, Molla Khalīl acquired his religious education in the madrasas of the region and started teaching in them.\(^{104}\)

There appears to be a single MS copy which is attested to be the autograph copy, but we have failed to locate a catalogue record in the only PdD dissertation on Molla Khalīl and his

\(^{100}\) Ibid, p. 4-12.
^{101} M. Abay, “Osmanlı Döneminde”, p. 271; unfortunately, Halis Ören’s PhD dissertation of Marmara Üniversitesi, 1995, titled “Göğsüşgür Lütfullah Erzurumî (1202/1788) ve Ramuzu’t-Tahrir Adlı Tefsiri” was unavailable to us during this research.
^{102} DİA, s.v. “İzzeddin Efendi, Eşrefzade”
^{104} DİA, “Molla Halil Siʿirdī”; M. Öztürk, Osmanlı Tefsir Mirası, p. 132.
tafsīr. The author of the dissertation explicitly says that the MS copy of this work does not exist in libraries, and the DİA article on the author indicates under a facsimile plate of a folio of this tafsīr that it belongs to the private collection of the author’s great grandsons. The MS copy that Mustafa Öncü studied comprises 373 folios with extensive marginal notes in almost every single folio.

The author explicitly stated in the introduction to his work that he solely drew on al-Bayḍāwī’s commentary and two hāshiyyas on it; that of ’Īṣām al-Dīn al-Isfārāyīnī (d. 1537) and of Shaykhzāda (d. 1544), along with the Tafsīr al-Jalālayn in order to produce a much easy to read tafsīr. Other tafsīr works that Molla Khalīl used as his sources and anonymously alluded to are the commentaries of al-Zamakhsharī, al-Rāzī, and Bursawī.

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107 Ibid, p. 49.
Appendix 2

The gloss works composed on Ebussuud’s Quranic commentary *Irshād al-‘aql al-salīm ilā mazāyā al-Kitāb al-Karīm*

The list below provides the number of glosses that are recorded to have been composed by several medieval authors on Ebussuud’s Quranic commentary. They comprise both the ḥāshiyas and the *ta’līqas*. None of these works seem to be on the entirety of *Irshād*, but overwhelming majority of them is ascertained to have been extant and dispersed in various libraries around the world. We have drawn on various reference works, biographical dictionaries, as well as modern studies that have provided varying lists.


Only the *Qāmūs al-a’lām* of Shams al-Dīn Sāmī provided a scanty information about the author who, he stated, was a jurist and the author of *al-Ishārāt wa al-nażā’ir*.109

This work is available in manuscript form in Süleymaniye Ktp. Hacı Mahmud Efendi 249, and it consists of 69 folios with sporadic but extensive marginal notes, perhaps by another unknown author. Kātib Chalabī noted that the author composed it in 1003/1595, the year he died.110 The author commentated on the exordium of *Irshād*. Close to the entirety of first three folios is Zayrakzāda’s own exordium, and the rest of the work is a word by word and/or phrase by phrase commentary on Ebussuud’s introductory remarks.111

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109 Shams al-Dīn al-Sāmī, *Qāmūs al-a’lām*, 6 volumes (İstanbul: Mihrān Maṭba’aṣi, 1894), v. 4, p. 2442.
111 See, MS, Süleymaniye Ktp. Hacı Mahmud Efendi, no. 249.

Kātib Chalabī named it a huge taʿlīqa close to half of Irshād. Al-Maqdisī comparatively commented on the texts of al-Kashshāf, Anwār al-Tanzīl, and Irshād in the following manner: al-Kashshāf said ..., al-Qāḍī said ..., and al-Muftī said ..., and I say ... He followed the three authors with his own adjudication. This work has been ascertained to be within a volume of manuscript that contained another author’s ḥāshiyya taʿlīqa on Irshād as well (see the next entry). Al-Maqdisī’s ḥāshiyya comprises only from the beginning of Qurʾān up to the end of chapter five (sūrat al-Maʿida) of the Qurʾān. Therefore, Aydemir’s statement that al-Maqdisī’s ḥāshiyya runs from the beginning of Qurʾān to the end of chapter 6 (sūrat al-Anʿām) is probably incorrect and he probably based his observation on the fact that this extant volume is catalogued to be the work of al-Maqdisī in its entirety. But the colophon of this MS volume clearly states that al-Maqdisī wrote only up to the end of chapter five, and the rest, which comprises the entirety of chapter six of the Qurʾān, was authored by one Abū al-Riḍā al-Raḍiyy Tāhā b. Ṣāliḥ b. Yahyā b. Muḥammad Najm al-Dīn al-Dayrī al-Khālidī (d. ?). Al-Maqdisī’s gloss ends in f. 382, and the latter’s begins with f. 383.

The manuscript volume is now in Bayezit Devlet Ktp. Veliyyüddin Efendi no. 310. Al-Maqdisī’s ḥāshiyya consists of 382 folios of a total of 411 folio volume.

Another ḥāshiyya with the rubric of Ḥāshiyya 'alā Tafsīr al-Kashshāf wa al-Qāḍī al-Bayḍāwī wa al-Muftī that is listed under one Marʾī b. Yūsuf b. Abī Bakr al-Maqdisī al-Karmī (d. 1033/1624) seems to be identical with this ḥāshiyya. Ekin was able to ascertain a two-volume MS

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112 See, Kashf, v. 1, p. 66
113 Aydemir, Büyük Türk bilgini, p. 254.
114 See, MS Süleymaniye Ktp. Veliyyüddin Efendi no. 310.
copy of this work at Süleymaniye Ktp. Hamidiye 163. First volume consists of 311 folios and the second 263 folios. 115 Both groups of folios are now in a single volume. Our study of this MS revealed that it begins with the first sūra of the Qurʾān and ends with the last verses of chapter 6 (al-Anʿām) of the Qurʾān. The cover page of this MS, however, notes it to be the work of on Ibn al-Laṭīf al-Ḥamawi (?). The comparison between this MS and the one listed in this entry revealed unmistakable similarities between the two works, and it is our conclusion that they are the same of the same author. 116


Appended to the previous author’s work, this gloss adopted the same methodology as his predecessor, probably his teacher. It comprises only the gloss on the the triad’s commentaries on chapter six of the Qurʾān in 29 folios. (see also the previous entry for another MS copy).

4. Ḥāshiya ʿalā Tafsīr Abī al-Suʿūd, by Ibrāhīm b. ʿAlī al-Saqā (d. 1298/1881)

Yunus Ekin located this ḥāshiya in al-Azhar University Library, tafsīr 1312 which consists of 300 folios. 117 A widely circulating copy of this ḥāshiya MS on the internet marks it as the first part, and therefore, there must be more to it! Cevdet Bey noted that it ran to the end of chapter 21 (al-Anbiyāʾ) of the Qurʾān. 118

5. Ḥāshiyat Ťāskuprīzāda [Kamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad (d. 1030/1621)] ʿalā sūrat al-Kahf min tafsīr Abī al-Suʿūd.

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115 Ekin, Ebussuud Tefsirinde, p. 42.
116 See, MS, Süleymaniye Ktp. Hamidiye no. 163.
117 Yunus Ekin, Ebussuud Tefsirinde, p. 40.
118 Cevdet Bey, Tefsir Usulu ve Tarihi, p. 142.
Though al-Ḥabāshī rendered this figure the same as Ṭāshkopřizāda ʿIṣām al-Dīn (the author of al-Shaqāʾiq), he is probably wrong. The author of this ḥāshiya stated that he “was” in his (Ebussuud’s) service for years, so it must be one Ebussuud’s students and a descendent of the more widely known Ṭāshkopřizāda ʿIṣām al-Dīn (d. 968/1560-61).

Though al-Ḥabāshī noted a copy of this MS in Ayasofya 24(359), Ekin was able to locate three different copies in the libraries of Istanbul: one of them consists of 115 folios and is now in Süleymaniye ktp. Reisülküttab 67; the second one is in 79 folios and is located in Süleymaniye ktp. Nazif Paşa 102; and the third one in Bayezit Devlet Ktp. Veliiyyüddin Efendi 377 and it consists of 63 folios. We have acquired a copy of the last one and our study revealed that it consists of 105 folios with one flyleaf at the beginning of the volume and 6 at the end. Pages are numbered and the text proper begins at page number 3 which indicates that the first two pages are now lost. Several marginal notes on the folios may be indicative of the fact that it is either the autograph copy or it was also commented by someone else.


The late medieval bibliographer Al-Murādī mentioned this work and its author in the biographical entry of his grandson, Khālid al-ʿAraḍī. Al-Fihris provided catalogue record of this MS as al-Azhariyya 1/260 (al-Saqā 28482)-222 and also noted that it begins with the beginnings of chapter seven (al-Aʾrāf) of the Qurʾān.

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120 See, MS. Süleymaniye, Veliiyyüddin Efendi, 377.
121 Ekin, Ebussuud tefsirinde, p. 40.

Al-Fihris recorded it to be in *al-Tīmūriyya* 1/14 (Majāmiʿ 260) within the *taḥrīriyyāt tafsīriyya* (probably a collection of the author’s writings compiled by his son) of the author’s son. That this work is the same as the previous one is also likely!


Ḥabāshī noted that this MS covered more than half of *Irshād* in 16 volumes, and he also located two extant copies: one in Ḥasan Ḥusnī Ṭabd Allah al-Wahhāb Library [in Tunisia] 18(18017); and the other in the Algeria Museum (*al-Maṭḥaf al-Jazāʾirī*), probably the Museum of Antiquites, Algiers, 18(83).

We have been able to locate a volume/partial copy of this MS in Sūleymaniye ktp. Ragib Paşa 161 with the title of *Maṭāliʿ al-suʿūd wa fath al-dadūd `alā tafsīr Abī al-Suʿūd*. It is written in difficult to read *al-Maghrībi*/North African script in 512 volumes.


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126 Al-Ḥabāshī, *Jāmiʿ al-Shurūḥ wa al-hawāshī*, v. 1, p. 148
127 See, MS, Sūleymaniye Ktp. Ragib Paşa 161.
Al-Fihris provided two library records for a MS copy of this work: one in Istanbul University 1/173 (404 A. 1953); and the other one in Süleymaniye Ktp. Şehit Ali Paşa 19(247).\(^{128}\)


Al-Fihris located the copy of this MS within a collected volume that is recorded as Leningrad Oriental Institute 1/62-63 (579).\(^{129}\)


Ekin discovered a 9-folio copy of this work in Süleymaniye Ktp. Şehid Ali Paşa 2847.\(^{130}\) This copy that we have examined consists of the folios 136-145, 11 in total, within a collected volume of various works. The author comparatively studied some instances of both al-Bayḍāwī’s and Ebussuud’s exegetical views followed by his own adjudication.\(^{131}\)

12. Ta‘līqa ‘alā tafsīr Abī al-Su‘ud, by ’Abd al-Karīm Efendi Hoca Sinān Pāsha al-Wardārī (d. 1113/1701 ?).

While al-Fihris listed a MS copy of this work in Şehid Ali Paşa 14(182), Ekin seems to have located another copy in Konya Karatay Yusuf Ağa Ktp. 3731/6.\(^{132}\)

13. Ta‘līqa ‘alā tafsīr Abī al-Su‘ūd fī qawlih Ta‘ālā “wa Isḥāq wa Ya‘qūb” [Q. 2:136], by ‘Atā’ Allah Muḥ b. al-Balgrādī (d. ?).

\(^{130}\) Ekin, Ebussuud tefsirinde, p. 42.  
\(^{131}\) See, MS Süleymaniye Ktp. Şehid Ali Paşa 2847, pp. 136-145.  
\(^{132}\) See al-Fihris, v. 2, part 2, p. 655; Ekin, Ebussuud tefsirinde, p. 41.
Ekin ascertained a two-folio copy of this MS within a collected volume that is catalogued in Süleymaniye Ktp. Laleli 3653.\textsuperscript{133}


This tiny MS of four folios is now in Süleymaniye Ktp. Laleli 3654. Our study of this MS revealed the fact that during one of the study sessions in *tafsīr*, probably in the Sublime Port, our author wanted to raise his own objections on a point of discussion in the verse but due to “taʿaddub and ḥijāb” was unable to talk and instead he authored this tiny commentary. Several marginal notes on these folios indicate that he also received commentary and follow up by an unknown author.\textsuperscript{134}


A copy of this MS within a collected volume is at Şehid Ali Paşa 2847. Our examination of this MS of a number of folios demonstrated that this unknown author comparatively studied al-Bayḍāwī’s and Ebussuud’s Quranic commentaries between the verses 253-259 of chapter two of the Qur’an, and followed each instance with his own adjudication.\textsuperscript{135}

\textsuperscript{133} Ekin, *Ebussuud Tefsirinde*, p. 42.
\textsuperscript{134} MS. Laleli 3654, pp. 1-4.
\textsuperscript{135} See, MS, Şehid Ali Paşa 2847, pp. 128-132
16. Ḥāshiya 'alā taafsīr Abī al-Su’ūd, by Abū al-Thanā’ Maḥmūd Maqādīsh (d. 1228/1813), probably the Tunisian al-Ṣafāqīsī that Ibn ‘Āshūr mentioned to have composed a ḥāshiya on Irshād.\textsuperscript{136} No copy of this work has so far been discovered!


Ekin listed this ḥāshiya under the rubric of Marāqī al-su’ūd 'alā taafsīr Abī al-Su’ūd but provided no source!\textsuperscript{137} Al-Fihris listed a number of MS for this author on various individual verses of the Qur’ān without however indicating on whose commentary these works were. The library records are provided as Rabat, al-Khazāna al-‘āmma, 2/1/38 [(D938) 679] and 2/1/41 [(D1348) 692].\textsuperscript{138}

\textsuperscript{136} Ibn ‘Āshūr, Tafsīr wa Rijāluh, p. 135; Ekin, Ebussuud Tefsirinde, p. 42; al-Ḥabāshī, Jāmi’ al-Shurūḥ, v. 1, p. 147.
\textsuperscript{137} Ekin, Ebussuud Tefsirinde, p. 42.
\textsuperscript{138} Al-Fihris, v. 2, part 2, p. 802.
1. MANUSCRIPTS

al-Anṣārī, 'Abd al-Nāfī b. Shaykh 'Umar. Risāla ‘alā mawādī‘ min tafsīray al-Qādī wa Abī al-

al-Kafawī, Maḥmūd b. Sulaymān. Katā ‘ib a’lām al-akhyār min fiqahā’ madhhab al-Nu‘mān al-

Süleymaniye Library, MS Fatih 631.

Al-Maqdisī, Raḍīyy al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Yūsuf Ibn 'Abd al-Laṭīf. Ḥāshiya ‘alā tafsīr al-
310.

———. Ḥāshiya ‘alā tafsīr al-Bayḍāwī wa al-Kashshāf wa Abī al-Su‘ūd al-Muftī. Süleymaniye
Ktp. Hamidiye, no. 163.

Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allah al-Ma’rūf bi Zaytūna [al-Manastirī] Maṭāli’ al-su‘ūd wa fath al-

Rodoslīzāda/Rodosīzāda, Muḥammad b. Nūḥ. Ta’līqa ‘alā tafsīr gawlih Ta‘alā ‘wa yakfurūna
Taʿliqa ʿalā tafsīr al-Bayḍāwī wa Abī al-Suʿūd fī awwal āyāt “tilka al-rusul faḍḍalnā baʾdahum ...


Zayrakzāda, Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ḥusaynī, Ḥāshiyat/sharḥ Zeyrekzāda ʿalā dībājat

Irshād al-ʿaql al-selīm, Süleymaniye library, MS Hacı Mehmed Efendi, 249.

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