



THE CLASSIFICATION OF SCIENCES IN AN OTTOMAN ARABIC ENCYCLOPAEDIA:
ṬAŠKÖPRÜZÂDA'S "MIFTÂḤ AL-SA'ÂDA"

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addition, he wrote a chronologically-organized biographical dictionary on the class of the jurisconsults, the *Ṭabaqāt al-fuqahā'* (Classes of jurisconsults).²⁰

The *al-Šaqā'iq al-Nu'māniyya* is a monumental work, a point of reference for the early Ottoman period that “provides an alternative, and somewhat critical, account of Ottoman history – an ‘ulamā’ (scholar/jurists) version”.²¹ This is not a work on historiography or an historical chronicle, rather it is a history of the most eminent scholars of the Ottoman period. In this context, the inclusion of an autobiography gains a strategic importance, since “the driving force behind our author’s writing project was apparently the need to find a proper place between the ‘ulamā’ and the Ottoman dynasty while simultaneously answering the changes of corruption brought against his colleagues by the *derviş* chroniclers of some years before”.²² The *al-Šaqā'iq al-Nu'māniyya* is therefore an institutional work which presents the educational background and career of many ‘ulamā’ as part of a broader institutional framework.

The different structures Ṭaşköprüzāda chose for his biographical works are important elements in order to understand how he viewed the transmission of scholarly knowledge. The *Nawādir al-aḥbār* was arranged in alphabetical order.²³ Indeed *al-Šaqā'iq al-Nu'māniyya*²⁴ is divided into ten classes (*ṭabaqāt*), arranged on the basis of the Sultans’ reigns culminating in the reign of Sulaymān the Magnificent (reg. 1520-1566). From the fourth class on, one chapter is devoted to religious scholars and one to dervishes, and from the seventh class onwards a third chapter on physicians is added.

This work was very successful in the Ottoman period. ‘Alī b. Bālī (d. 997/1569) wrote its continuation with the title *al-‘Iqd al-manzūm fi dīkr afādīl al-*

20 Ṭaşköprüzade, *Ṭabaqāt al-fuqahā'*, ed. by Aḥmad Naila, al-Mawṣil: Maṭba‘at al-zuharā’ al-ḥadīta, 1961.

21 Ali Anooshahr, “Writing, Speech, and History for an Ottoman Biographer,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 69, 1 (2010), pp. 43-62, quot. p. 44.

22 Anooshahr, “Writing, Speech, and History,” p. 60.

23 Ḥaḡḡī Ḥalīfa, *Kaṣf al-zunūn*, vol. 6, p. 385, compares the *Nawādir al-aḥbār* to other important works arranged in alphabetical order (*‘alā tartīb al-ḥurūf*), such as *Siyar al-Šahāba* by al-Andarsaqānī, the *Wafayāt al-A’yān* by Ibn Ḥallikān and the *Ta’rīḥ al-ḥukamā’* by al-Šahrastānī.

24 Ḥaḡḡī Ḥalīfa, *Kaṣf al-zunūn*, vol. 4, pp. 65-68, nr. 7630: *Flores Anemoneae de viris doctis aulae Othmanicae*; al-Bālī, *al-‘Iqd al-manzūm*, p. 339; Brockelmann, *GAL*, vol. 2, pp. 425-426, nr. 2; Idem, *GAL, Suppl.*, vol. 2, p. 633; al-Baḡdādī, *Hadiyat al-‘Arifn*, vol. 2, p. 144. For editions of this work see note 3. On this work see: Ökten, “Scholars and Mobility”; Nora Anani-Sia, “Power of the Dervishes in the Ottoman Balkans as Witnessed by the *Šhaqā'iq al-Nu'māniyya* of Ṭaşköprüzade Ahmed (1495–1561) and Narrative Sources,” in: *Power and Influence in South-Eastern Europa 16th-19th century*, ed. by Maria Baramova, Plamen Mitev, Ivan Parvev, Vania Racheva, Wien-Zürich-Berlin: LIT, 2013, pp. 405-416.