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Suraiya Faroghi

SOCIAL MOBILITY AMONG THE OTTOMAN 'ULEMÁ IN THE LATE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

Research on the social strata that made up Ottoman society is still very much in its beginnings; extensive studies on the peasantry, the bureaucracy, the 'ulemá and others will have to be undertaken before any far-reaching conclusions can be drawn. This study focuses on the 'ulemá of the late sixteenth century, their social composition and mobility within the hierarchy. Materials dealing with the 'ulemá are more easily accessible than those dealing with other segments of the group that governed the Ottoman empire, because, as in most other Islamic cultures, there was a great deal of contemporary interest in the lives of poets and learned men.

Collections of biographies of 'ulemá therefore are thus fairly frequent among the narrative sources extant. For the Ottoman empire one of the best known of these collections is Aḥmed Taşköprüzâde's¹ *Şakâ'îk en-nu'mânîye*. This was continued by 'Atâ'î,² who completed his book in 1044/1634–5, and later by 'Uşakîzâde,³ whose book encompasses most of the seventeenth century.

The biographies by 'Atâ'î, which form the basis of this study, follow a fairly rigid format. In the beginning of each text we find the subject's place of origin, often the name and/or occupation of his father and, in very few cases, the date of his birth. Occasionally, the names of other prominent relatives are also mentioned.

Next, 'Atâ'î lists some of the subject's more famous teachers, and in most cases the name of the person that granted him his *mülâzemet*, whereby the subject became a candidate for office. After that, we get a list of the jobs held by the person in question. Information on this matter is always included, even when there are no other data, and the year of death is also always listed.

After that, the author makes some personal comments on the subject of his biography. Usually this takes the form of a eulogy, but in a few cases he is quite outspokenly critical.⁴ He proceeds to mention the subject's scholarly interests and lists the books he wrote, in many cases giving their exact title or quoting from poems. He then lists the *vakıfs* that the subject of the biography founded, and sometimes includes some data on his sons. Occasionally more or less anecdotal material is included at the end, and sometimes this can be of use to the historian.

¹ Aḥmed Taşköprüzâde, *Şakâ'îk en-nu'mânîye*, tr. Mecdî efendi (Istanbul, 1269).

² 'Atâ'î, *Hadâ'îk ül-ḥakâ'îk fî tekmiilet üş-şakâ'îk* (Istanbul, 1269).

³ H. J. Kissling, ed., *'Uşakîzâde's Lebensbeschreibungen berühmter Gelehrter und Gottesmänner des osmanischen Reiches im 17. Jahrhundert (zeyl-i şaqâ'îq)* (Wiesbaden, 1965).

⁴ 'Atâ'î, p. 271.

The biographies are more or less organized according to the year in which the subjects died, but this principle is not strictly adhered to. For the reign of Sultan Murâd III (1574–95) 162 'ulemâ are listed, not including the *seyhs* of the various *dervîş* orders, of whom there are 31 biographies.

From this material it is possible to gain some limited statistical information on the 'ulemâ of the time. In this study only one question is dealt with: that of social mobility, in order to have some idea of the ease or difficulty with which people of different social backgrounds entered the religious career and advanced within the system once they were in it.

The first hundred 'ulemâ mentioned by 'Atâ'î in the chapter on Sultan Murâd III were selected as a sample. The biographies are by no means as complete as one could wish for; therefore not all the questions relevant to the topic could be explored. For instance, the sons of people that were made the subjects of biographies are rarely mentioned, much less treated in any detail. In order to track them down, it would be necessary to go through the biographies of the 'ulemâ who died under Murâd's successors, since fathers, especially when they were themselves members of the religious institution, are more often listed than sons. It might also be possible to obtain additional data from other biographical dictionaries.

Another problem is posed by the fact that we do not know the criteria which 'Atâ'î used to select his subjects. It is obvious that he included those who were *kâzî* 'askers, or *kâzîs* of Istanbul, Bursa or Edirne, yet he also recorded the biographies of quite a few who never held a higher office than that of a modest *kâzî*, or even died while they still held teaching positions at comparatively low-paying *medreses*. It is sometimes not easy to see why these people were included as opposed to others of similar attainments, although it is clear enough that not every provincial *müderriş* or *kâzî* was included. Since the biographies of the more modest 'ulemâ also tend to be very short and rarely contain anything except the place of origin and the offices held, they are no help in judging questions of this sort. Several complexes of questions have been examined in this study: one group deals with family background and connections, another with the *vakf* and its importance for the career of the 'ulemâ, yet another with the function of publications. Patronage by members of the administrative hierarchy and the Sultan himself, the importance of the home town and of the *medreses* that members of the religious hierarchy taught in are also treated in some detail.

Patronage by 'ulemâ who already held high office was more official than that by other members of the administration and has not been treated here, since this must form the subject of a separate investigation. A candidate for office was required to serve in the retinue of certain great 'ulemâ, as for instance a *kâzî* 'asker, who thereby exercised considerable control over new members of the profession.

If one examines the occupations of the fathers of the subjects, one finds that in 47 out of 100 cases either the father's name or occupation or both are given.

In 15 cases the father is known to have been a member of the *'ilmiye* hierarchy who made it to the very top; that is, according to the criteria applied here, a *ḳâzî* of Aleppo, Jerusalem, Damascus, Medina, Cairo, Bursa, Edirne, Mekka, or Istanbul as well as the *ḳâzî 'askers* of Rumelia and Anatolia and the *şeyh ül-islâm*.¹ In 11 cases, and in all likelihood in 8 additional ones as well, the father was a *müderriş* or a provincial *ḳâzî*. In 5 cases a grandfather is mentioned as having been a high religious or administrative dignitary. In 4 other cases, which do not involve the same five people already mentioned, the uncle was a somewhat noted member of the religious hierarchy. Besides, in 11 cases other relatives of the person in question, usually brothers, held the same position, and 8 *'ulemâ* were related by marriage to other members of the religious hierarchy. Relationships of this sort seem to have been mentioned only when the in-laws were fairly prominent.

Fifty-six out of 100 persons never held office as *ḳâzîs* at all, but taught in *medreses* or in three cases served as private teachers to princes or viziers. If they served as consultants in religious law, or *müftîs*, they still retained their posts as teachers in a *medreses*. Only the *şeyh ül-islâm* or chief *müftî* did not achieve his office through this branch of the service, but usually held the office of *ḳâzî 'asker* before he moved into the highest office that the religious hierarchy had to offer. He is therefore classed with the *ḳâzîs* and not with the *müftîs* and *müderrişes*. Besides, the two tutors of princes in the sample have been classed with the *ḳâzîs* because of the great influence they had over promotions.

Of the remaining 44, 17 held office ranking below that of *ḳâzî* of Aleppo, while 29 achieved ranks ranging from that of *ḳâzî* of Aleppo to that of *şeyh ül-islâm*. In order to find out whether the top-level *'ulemâ* had any special family backgrounds, these 29 subjects were analysed separately in the same fashion as the sample at large.

Out of the 29, 6 or possibly 7 had high-ranking *'ulemâ* for fathers (21 or 24.5 per cent as against 15 per cent in the original sample). Nine or possibly 10 were the children of lower-ranking *'ulemâ* (31.5–34 per cent as against 11–19 per cent in the original sample). As far as grandfathers in high religious or administrative office are concerned, the score is 14–17.5 per cent as opposed to 5 per cent in the original sample. In the case of uncles the score is 7 per cent for the 29 and 4 per cent for the sample as a whole; 17.5 per cent of the 29, as opposed to 8 per cent of the original sample, were related to other members of the religious hierarchy.

For the ten *'ulemâ* that reached the level of *ḳâzî 'askers* the sample is too small to allow computation of percentages. However, it is worthy of note that only two out of ten did not have fathers mentioned by 'Aṭâ'î as having been *'ulemâ* or members of the regular administration.

Of interest in this context is also the high incidence of *vakf*-building among *'ulemâ*. For the purposes of this study, bequests of libraries, etc., have not been

¹ Ismail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı devletinin ilmiye teşkilatı*, Türk Tarihi Kurumu Yayınlarından, VIII, 17 (Ankara, 1965), p. 276.

counted, but only the building of mosques, *medreses* and other charitable institutions which in turn provided training or employment to members of the religious hierarchy, and quite often to the appropriately trained sons of the donator himself.

Out of 100 members of the sample, 8 per cent are reported to have donated *vakf*-buildings; in 4 additional cases the family had already established such a *vakf*. In the case of the 29 top-level 'ulemâ, 7 out of 29 (22.5 per cent) are mentioned as donators, but only one came from a family that had already established a *vakf*. Working on the family *vakf* as a career seems to have been more favored by the lower levels of the religious institution.

Interesting also is the fact that so many 'ulemâ found it advantageous to write books. The literary genres most favored were poetry and *inşâ*, *fetvâs*, commentaries and supercommentaries on a limited number of canonical texts for use in the *medrese*. It might be useful to make a list of the literary works mentioned in biographical works and then check the library catalogues in order to find out how much of the literary production of those times has been preserved. Another popular genre were collections of 'ulemâ-biographies, which, if they were to be made accessible, might be useful for checking on 'Atâ'î.

'Ulemâ engaging in other types of literary endeavor were quite rare, but one person translated al-Ġazâlî into Turkish and wrote a history of the Ottoman dynasty. Another translated Arabic animal fables.¹

It is difficult to say how widely circulated these texts were; according to Gibb and Bowen,² many of these writings never were copied at all. Therefore, it is impossible to say whether there was any definite connection between a person's career and his literary productivity, but even so, the figures are striking.

Of the 100 people examined, 22 wrote *fetvâs*, commentaries and supercommentaries for *medrese* use, 16 composed poetry and *inşâ*, one of the most popular applications of *inşâ* being the composition of *vakf* texts. Seven or possibly eight persons were active in other branches of literature. Together that accounts for 33 per cent of the group, since quite a few people wrote texts of more than one category.

Among the 29, the figures are 42 per cent for the *fetvâs*, commentaries and supercommentaries (12 persons), 21 per cent for poetry and *inşâ* (6 persons) and 3.5 per cent (1 person) for other types of literature.

This markedly different distribution may have had something to do with the fact that the first two categories were the prestige categories, with the textbooks for *medrese* use taking precedence over poetry and *inşâ*. It is also worthy of note that historical writing is not at all represented among the top-level 'ulemâ, this being mainly the province of members of the administrative service. Taking all

¹ 'Atâ'î, pp. 257, 259.

² H. A. R. Gibb and Harold Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West. A Study of the Impact of Western Civilization on Moslem Culture in the Near East*, 1 vol. in 2 parts (London, 1937), vol. 1, part 2, p. 160.

the literary categories together, 15 out of 29 *ulemâ* – that is, 52 per cent – had written books of some sort.

These figures are difficult to evaluate, because the 100 '*ulemâ*' are by no way a random selection from the religious service as a whole. 'Aṭâ'î probably included all the persons who achieved a high rank; out of the lower-ranking '*ulemâ*', those with some claim to fame probably took precedence over those who did not, and this fact may in part account for the high incidence of literary production among the persons who made up the sample.

Because the original sample already included so many prominent members, the differences between the 29 top-level '*ulemâ*' and the sample as a whole are all the more striking. And as far as this difference is concerned, the high incidence of publications cannot be dismissed as part of the author's bias; there really seems to have been a marked tendency on the part of high-level '*ulemâ*' to write more. Other factors were probably more important in securing a person's advancement in the hierarchy, but publications might have played at least an indirect role.

In this context, it also might be very useful to collect evidence on the examinations that were supposed to be administered when there was more than one applicant for a vacancy in a *medrese*. 'Aṭâ'î very often records the names of the participants, the examiners, the results, the problems posed, and the jobs that were passed out not only to the winner but also to the other competitors as well. This fact seems to indicate that while academic performance was a factor that helped a person advance in the hierarchy, other elements played an even more important role. However, generalizations would have to be made for larger periods of time, since examinations are not described very often.

According to both Gibb and Bowen the most important single factor contributing to advancement in the '*ulemâ*' hierarchy in the late sixteenth century and after was patronage. Itzkowitz agrees with them on this point.¹ The data in 'Aṭâ'î's biographies allow some generalizations on this issue. Patronage by members of the *ḵalemiye* and *seyfiye* could take many different forms: we find provincial '*ulemâ*' joining the courts of the princes in Amasya or Manisa and becoming important personages after that prince ascended to the throne. We find '*ulemâ*' as members of the retinue of *paşas*, serving as their religious instructors. After a while, they would be promoted to a *medrese* donated by the person they served, or this person would help them gain entrance into the religious hierarchy in other ways and further their advancement through influence at court.

'*Ulemâ*' quite often made use of their literary accomplishments to secure patronage. The poet 'Abdülbâkî, for instance, owed his rapid rise in the hierarchy, in the face of influential opposition and counter to established rules of promotion, to the liking that Sultan Murâd took to his poetry.² The astronomer

¹ Gibb and Bowen, p. 150. N. Itzkowitz, 'Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Realities', *Studia Islamica*, vol. XVI (1962), pp. 73–95.

² *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, art. 'Bâkî'.

Takîüddîn first established himself by offering some of his writings to Sa'dud-dîn, the Sultan's *hoca*.¹ Because the Sultan's favor was so important, the competition for contact with him was great. 'Aṭâ'î reports how one member of the religious hierarchy was able to show some of his literary work to the Sultan, but through the influence of some people of his retinue was banished from court, because the 'ulemâ already established there feared he might try to become the Sultan's *hoca*.²

Out of the 100 people that make up the sample, 'Aṭâ'î lists 14 or possibly 15 that had a *vizier*, *beglerbeg*, or a palace official for a patron. In 15 or possibly 16 cases he mentions a special connection with the Sultan and his family – that is, that the person was received at court, presented the Sultan with copies of his book, or was a doctor or tutor to the ruler or one of the princes. Only in four cases did the same person have both connections to the Sultan and to one of the top administrators, so that at least 25 per cent of the sample enjoyed this type of patronage. Of the top-level 'ulemâ 6 (21 per cent) had connections to a *beglerbeg*, *vizier*, or palace official and 7 (24.5 per cent) had at some point in their career had dealings with the ruler himself. Since only one person is reported to have had access to both sources of patronage, this amounts to 12 persons (42 per cent) thus favored. One also should allow for those 'ulemâ whose fathers and/or brothers were members of the regular administration. In the original sample this is true for 4–7 out of 100; among the 29 top-level 'ulemâ 2–4 people fall into this category (7–14 per cent).

There obviously existed fairly close relationships between top-level administrators and top-level 'ulemâ, in which the administrators seemed to have been the dispensers and the 'ulemâ the receivers of patronage. While 'ulemâ acted as patrons for other 'ulemâ, the instances of their being patrons to ambitious members of the administrative hierarchy are quite rare. It is far from clear, however, whether one can draw conclusions from the situation at the seat of the central government to the situation in the provinces. Since the minor *kâzîs* dropped out of the *medreses* before they ever came in contact with the most important members of the central administration, they seemed to have formed more local ties and, supposedly more than once, sided with the local notables against the provincial government and its soldiers. But in this matter we must largely rely on impressionistic data, and definite figures are very difficult to obtain.

Some results can also be achieved by counting the home towns of the 'ulemâ in the sample and by establishing regional patterns. 'Aṭâ'î supplies information on a person's home town in many cases in which nothing is said about his family: only in 22 cases out of 100 can no information be obtained.

Out of the 71 'ulemâ that did not rise up to the rank of *kâzî* of Aleppo, 16 were probably either born in Istanbul or spent a major part of their adolescent years there (22.5 per cent). The same is true for 9 out of 29 top-level 'ulemâ (30 per

¹ *Ibid.* p. 286.

² *Ibid.* p. 257.

cent), usually because their fathers held jobs which must have kept them in the capital most of the time; but exactly because these figures form so much of a parallel to the figures dealing with family background, they are not very valuable. More interesting are the 53 *'ulemâ* that came from various provincial cities. Here a more detailed comparison of the original sample with the 29 prominent *'ulemâ* cannot be made, because the origins of the people concerned are too diverse and meaningful percentage figures cannot be obtained.

The most obvious point is the weak representation of all of the non-Turkish-speaking parts of the empire. For example, only one of the *'ulemâ* came from Egypt, and he never held a regular post in the religious hierarchy. For a while he was chief astronomer at the Sultan's court,¹ until *şeyh ül-islâm* *Ḳâzîzâde efendi* persuaded the Sultan to have the observatory destroyed, because it would bring bad luck to the empire. Two members of the sample probably came from Mecca, three came from Aleppo, three from the Persian-speaking parts of the empire or from Persia proper, and one from Kurdistan.

The remaining 45 persons came mainly from western and central Anatolia and to a lesser extent from the Balkans. Eastern Anatolia was remarkably under-represented, with only one person occurring in the sample. The distribution over the various towns and regions of Anatolia is as follows: Aksaray (Karaman), 1 person; Akşehir (Karaman), 1 person; Alanya, 2 persons; Amasya, 2 persons; Ankara, 1 person; *vilâyet-i Aydın*, 2 persons; Balıkesir, 2 persons; *vilâyet-i Bolu*, 2 persons; *vilâyet-i Hâmid*, 1 person; Karahisar, 1 person; Kastamonu, 1 person; Kayseri, 1 person; Konya, 3 persons; Larende (Karaman), 1 person; *vilâyet-i Karasu*, 2 persons; Manisa, 1 person; Saruhan, 1 person; northwest Anatolia, 1 person.

The remainder came from different towns and cities in the Balkans, from Florina in Greece, from Sofia, Sarajevo in Bosnia, and from Edirne, with no clustering in any one region. Thus, the only conclusion that can be drawn from these figures is that a fairly large number of *'ulemâ* tended to come from Istanbul or have very close ties with that city (25 per cent) and that western and central Anatolia were also well represented (25 per cent).

From the biographies it is apparent that while most *'ulemâ* came from cities and larger towns, this was by no means uniformly the case. Occasionally the names of fairly small towns or even villages are mentioned; thus we have one person from *Ḳızılca Tuzla* in the province of Karasu, one from the small town of *Güzelhişâr* in the vicinity of Aydın, one from the village of *بدوی* not far from Amasya, one from the vicinity of Balıkesir, one from the *vilâyet* of Bolu, and one from the small town of *برکی* in the region of Aydın.

While the number of *'ulemâ* with known small-town or village backgrounds is too small to allow for generalizations, the individual cases may be worthy of some note. Of *Baḫrî Ḥasan Çelebi* we know that he was a nephew of Sultan Murâd's first *hoca*, and presumably owed his rise in the *'ulemâ* hierarchy to him.²

¹ *Ibid.* p. 286.

² *Ibid.* p. 289.

'Abdülğanî, son of Emîr Şâh, was the son of a provincial *kâzî* who must have resided in the region for quite some time, for he was known as Bolulu Emîr Şâh.¹ Muştafâ b. Meḥmed also had a well-known member of the religious hierarchy for a stepfather.² The most interesting figures were probably Ḥasan, whose father was known as the Koca Nâzir,³ and Sinâneddîn Yusuf b. Ḥüsâm.⁴ Ḥasan's two brothers Oveys and Ramazân Paşa were both *beglerbegs*, but the family was obviously of Moslem Anatolian and not of *devşirme* Christian background. Sinâneddîn's family was friendly with the *Halvetiye-şeyh* Ḥabîb ül-Karamanî, and his son received his education from him. The 'ulemâ with rural backgrounds seem to have no characteristics in common that set them apart from the sample as a whole, but larger samples might yield somewhat better results.⁵

More important than the place of a person's birth are probably the *medreses* in which he received his education, but unfortunately 'Atâ'î mentions only the teachers, but not the schools a person visited. Practically always the person who granted the *mülâzemet* is mentioned by name, but since usually no dates are given (which would make it possible to establish the names of the *medrese* since we know what the top-level 'ulemâ were doing at a given time) we cannot say much about the schools attended. This is particularly annoying since this type of information could help us determine the function of the local, non-élite *medreses*: were they basically terminal institutions satisfying a local demand for preachers, *imâms*, teachers and *Koran* readers, or could people pass through them to the more prestigious *medreses* and thus move into the upper layers of the 'ulemâ?

'Atâ'î does, however, provide fairly full information on the teaching posts held by certain people at a certain time. Ottoman *medreses* were strictly stratified, with both teachers and students passing through a variety of schools in a given order.⁶ For the teachers, passing to a more advanced *medrese* also meant an advancement in salary. In the lowest-ranking *medreses*, called *hâşiye-i tecrîd*, the teachers were supposedly paid 15/20 *ağçes* a day. The next rank was the *miftâh*, with a daily pay of 30/35 *ağçes* attached to the position.

¹ *Ibid.* p. 294.

² *Ibid.* p. 295.

³ *Ibid.* p. 282.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 248.

⁵ Unique among the 'ulemâ that made up the sample was the case of Mîrza Maḥdûm. His father was a descendant of Seyyid Curcânî, and on his mother's side he was descended from Mîr Giyâseddîn Manşûr of Tabrîz. He studied law, became a teacher of Ismâ'îl II while still a crown prince, and in 953 emigrated to the Ottoman empire, where he joined the Ḥanefî persuasion. When Ismâ'îl ascended to the throne, he returned to Persia, soon became *sadr-ı 'ulemâ* and *seyyid ül-eşrâf*. After his protector's death he went back to the Ottoman empire, where he was appointed to various important offices as *kâzî*. In 994 he became *kâzî* of Istanbul. According to 'Atâ'î, toward the end of his life he became so strange that he could almost be considered insane. He left a diary, from which his biographer quotes a few lines, and which seems to have consisted of isolated lines without any attempt at connection. It is not apparent whether the quote is a translation, and in what language the original was written. If this diary could ever be found, it would constitute an extremely valuable source. ('Atâ'î, p. 297.)

⁶ Uzunçarşılı, p. 11 and *passim*.

The *Kırklı medrese*, so called because the daily pay was theoretically 40 *ağçes*, was probably considered a social dividing line of some sort; in most cases, 'Atâ'î will not list the jobs that his subjects held prior to this appointment, but will just say: after having passed through the forty-*ağçe medrese* he was appointed to a given place. When listing the jobs held by one of his subjects, he often begins the series with the first job held after the *kırklı*.

The next higher rank was the *hâric*, which paid 50 *ağçes* a day. According to the historian 'Âlî, many of the *medreses* holding this rank were quite old; in many cases the founders were the rulers of *Selçuk* and *beğlik* times, their *viziers*, sons, and daughters. Establishments founded by members of the Ottoman administrative hierarchy also often held that rank.¹

The next step was the *dâhil*, also called *müşila-i şahın* or *tetimme*, mostly founded by Ottoman Sultans, their mothers, or their children. From these, students and teachers passed to the *Şahn-ı semâniye*, the eight famous *medreses* attached to the mosque of Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror. After this, 'ulemâ who did not become *kâzîs* immediately could teach at the *medrese* of the Aya Şofya, while the *Dâr ül-ḥadîs* was usually reserved for retired *kâzîs* of the highest ranks. Sometimes these dignitaries remained at this post until they died, but not infrequently they were called out of their retirement to serve again at important posts. This situation also tended to favor the establishment of 'ulemâ-families: their pensions and sinecures enabled them to wait out periods of disfavor or loss of patronage, while the lower-ranking 'ulemâ had no such reserves.

Since 'Âlî and 'Atâ'î, who form two important sources on Ottoman *medreses*, were contemporaries of the 'ulemâ they described, it is probable that the figures that they give for salaries are reasonably close to the amounts actually paid. This is especially true when they are talking about *medreses* that were founded in the second half of the sixteenth century. Where later periods are concerned, allowance has to be made for the inflationary process that went on in the Ottoman empire throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and beyond, and which must have caused changes in the amounts actually paid.

Since 'Atâ'î normally mentions the salary that a person made at a certain job, it is in some cases possible to determine at what time that person passed from one rank to the other, the amount of money usually paid in a given rank, and the rank held by a particular *medrese* at a given time. The ranks of *medreses* changed occasionally, though this seems to have been the exception and not the rule.² There probably also existed certain *medreses* that did not in themselves hold a very high rank, but that proved a good jumping off position for the really prestigious schools.

One of the most remarkable features is the geographical distribution of the *medreses* that the 100 subjects who make up the sample taught in. Not in all cases do we know in what town a given *medrese* was located, but in about 100 cases

¹ *Ibid.* p. 19.

² *Ibid.* p. 62.

the school could be identified. Of these, 32 were in Istanbul. Among them we find not only the well-known, high-ranking schools such as the Şahn-ı semâniye, the Old *medrese* of Sultan Selîm, and the Süleymâniye, but also small schools such as the Manav Kâzî and the Kürkcübaşı *medrese*.

The key position of the Şahn is readily apparent; 40 out of 100 'ulemâ taught there at some point in their careers. Of all except four do we have some idea as to the length of time they spent at this school, because 'Atâ'î gives the dates of their appointments to the Şahn and that of their next appointment or death. If a longer period of time elapsed between deposition and reappointment, the author often lists these two dates separately. Of the 36, 19 remained at the Şahn less than two years. Twelve stayed for less than four years, and only five remained there four years and over.

The next most frequently occupied *medrese*, and like the Şahn really a complex of schools, was the Süleymâniye, with 13 'ulemâ teaching there. Tenure patterns seem to have been slightly different from those in the Şahn: out of the 12 people for whose period of teaching we can set an upper limit, only 2 stayed less than two years, 4 less than four years, the rest stayed four years and over.

In terms of the number of 'ulemâ occupied there at some point in their career, the Davud Paşa and Haşşekî *medreses* are next in line (eight 'ulemâ each). Tenure patterns somewhat resemble those of the Şahn: out of the eight people teaching there, five remained less than two years at the Haşşekî, and the same is true for three out of the six teachers at the Davud Paşa *medrese*, the length of whose tenure we can determine. The next in line is the Aya Sofya *medrese* with seven 'ulemâ, four of whom again spent two years or less at this post.

One of the other two Istanbul *medreses* in which more than four 'ulemâ belonging to the sample worked was the Şehzâde *medrese* (six 'ulemâ), ranking above the Şahn and sometimes awarded to people who had already held important posts as *kâzî*. The 'ulemâ teaching here seemed to remain longer, none of the four teachers whose length is known staying less than three years. The Kalendarhâne *medrese*, of relatively low rank (some of the teachers received 40 *ağçes* a day, others 50) had five 'ulemâ teaching there, the duration of their stay varying from two to four years.

The other centers attracting most of the 'ulemâ were the old capitals, Edirne and Bursa. For Bursa, 14 *medreses* are mentioned. The most frequented one was the Yıldırım Bâyezîd *medrese*, with six of our 'ulemâ teaching there at different times in their career. About the average duration of their stay nothing can be said, since there is too little data available. The pay attached to this *medrese* seems to have varied between 40 and 50 *ağçes*.

Somewhat higher in rank, if the salary paid is an indication, was the Manastır *medrese*, where five 'ulemâ held office, with one exception, for over three years. The Mürâdiye paid 60 *ağçes* a day and thus counted among the higher-ranking establishments; the five members that taught here stayed different periods of time, varying between one and four years, so that no generalizations are possible.

Of equal rank was the Sultâniye, where four 'ulemâ taught, while the four teachers at the Hanceriye received 40 akçes a day. Another well-known medrese was that of Emîr Sultân, also with four of the 'ulemâ under study teaching. Except for the Kaplıca medrese, which paid 40 akçes a day and where the later famous şeyh ül-islâm Kazîzâde taught at the beginning of his career, the other medreses of Bursa seem to have been of the elementary variety, paying their teachers 20–30 akçes a day.

Fourteen medreses are mentioned for Edirne as well, the Üç şerefeli medrese being the most frequented. Nine 'ulemâ taught there at different times in their careers, but with the length of tenure varying between one and fourteen years it is difficult to make any general statements. Five members of the sample taught at each of the following institutions: the medrese connected with the Camî-i 'atîk, the Halebiye, the Bâyezîdiye, and the Dâr ül-ħadîs. In the Halebiye, nobody stayed less than two years, three 'ulemâ stayed less than two years, three 'ulemâ stayed between two and four years, and two over four years. In the Bâyezîdiye, paying 60 akçes a day and seemingly of higher rank than any of the others, three people stayed two years or less and two people between two and four years. In the Dâr ül-ħadîs only one person stayed under two years, two people between two and four and two persons over four years. The other high-ranking medrese in Edirne, to which 'ulemâ were promoted after they had already taught at the Şahî, was the Selîmiye; but only two people from among the sample taught there, since it was only founded during the period in question.

The next important group was that of the Istanbul suburbs, most of which today form part of Istanbul proper, but were then considered separate towns: Beşiktaş with the medreses of Hayreddîn Paşa and Muştafâ Paşa, both paying more than 40 akçes a day, the newly founded Sinân Paşa medrese, paying 40 akçes and in which three of the 'ulemâ under study taught at different times, and the Yahya efendi medrese, which belonged to the low-ranking, elementary type of school. More prestigious, ranking higher than the Şahî, was the medrese of Eyüb, with six 'ulemâ teaching there. Here, the turnover must have been fairly high – four out of the five people the duration of whose stay there we know remained no longer than about a year. Other medreses in the environments of Istanbul were situated in Üsküdar, Hasköy, Kadırga, Küçük Çekmece, Çorlu, and Uzunca ova.

Compared to this concentration in and around the major cities, it is remarkable to see how few 'ulemâ of prominence took jobs even in western Anatolia or the eastern Balkans, not to mention any places farther afield. As far as Anatolia is concerned, we hear of one person taking a job in Ankara, one in Amasya, one in Inegöl, and five in Iznik, in the Orhân and Süleymân Paşa medreses. One person worked at the Ağa beg medrese in Kastamonu, two at the Rüstem Paşa and Germiyânoğulları medreses in Kütahya, and one at the Süleymân Paşa medrese in Yenişehir. One person probably taught at the Cemâleddîn medrese in Çankırı.

The Muştafâ Paşa medrese in Gebze, near the Gulf of Izmit, must have had a position of some importance. Five of the 'ulemâ taught there, none remaining more than two years; it would be interesting to find out by whom this medrese was founded and whether the people who taught there were in some fashion connected with the founder and his family. Of the five 'ulemâ, two in their later careers were to rise to the rank of *kâzî* of Aleppo and above, and that fact makes this relatively unknown medrese all the more interesting.

As for the Balkans, even fewer schools are mentioned outside the immediate environment of Istanbul and Edirne. One 'ulemâ worked in Sarajevo, one in Gelibolu, one in Ruschuk, and two in the Şehâbeddîn Paşa medrese in Philippopolis. More popular were the medreses of Dimetoka, one called after Uruç Paşa (three 'ulemâ) and the other after 'Abdülvâsî' Efendî, which paid only 20–30 *akçes*, but at which five of the 'ulemâ under study taught. Hayrebolu and Silivri, which are represented by one teacher each, are so close to Istanbul that they could almost be counted among its wider surroundings.

Nothing very significant can be said about the distribution of the 29 top 'ulemâ as opposed to the sample as a whole. The reason is probably that, except for the Şahî and the Süleymâniye, too few 'ulemâ worked in any given medrese, and because of that it is not possible to establish whether top-level 'ulemâ worked in certain schools more frequently than in others while they were still at the beginning of their careers. It is worthy of note, however, that among all the Anatolian medreses, top-level 'ulemâ taught only in the Muştafâ Paşa medrese in Gebze, the Germiyânoğulları medrese in Kütahya, and the newly founded medrese of Soğollu Mehmed Paşa in Kadırğa.

As a result one can say that medrese teachers who wanted to rise high in the hierarchy usually went to Bursa, Edirne, or Istanbul as soon as possible. Usually they then remained in these cities and their immediate environment. The pattern is even slightly more marked among the top-level 'ulemâ. On the other hand, there must have been considerable mobility between these three cities, with many people changing back and forth within the span of a few years.

A larger sample would be necessary to determine whether there were, even at the lower level, certain prestige schools from which it was advantageous to start a career. In the present sample, we get too few 'ulemâ teaching in any one school for the results to be very meaningful. At first glance, one might suspect that the Ferhâdiye in Bursa was a school of this sort. Three 'ulemâ from out of the sample taught there, and all eventually rose to the position of *kâzî* of Aleppo and above. On the other hand, there also might have existed certain ties of patronage between the founder and his family on one hand and the 'ulemâ concerned on the other. To make a study of these relationships fruitful, eventually the founders of all the medreses mentioned would have to be established.

It would also be interesting to investigate how long it took a member of the 'ulemâ hierarchy to rise from the candidacy to a 40 *akçe* medrese, then to the Şahî, and from there to the office of *kâzî* of Aleppo. Unfortunately, 'Atâ'î is

not of much help in this respect, as he does not mention the necessary dates regularly enough.

Remarkably few *'ulemâ* seem to have participated actively in *dervîş*-orders. Five *'ulemâ* are listed as members: one was a Mevlevî, one a Naqşbendî, one was a member of the Bayrâmiye, and in the other two cases the name of the order is not mentioned. Of these only one was a *şeyh*, the *kâzî* Balı Bosnevî, first *mevlâ* of Sarajevo and *protégé* of the Grand Vizier Sokollu Meḥmed Paşa, who was himself a native of the region. Balı became famous for his savage repression of the movement of Ḥamza, which had originated in a *dervîş*-order. Two of the *'ulemâ* in the sample had *dervîş şeyhs* for fathers, but on the whole the two institutions seem to have remained quite separate.

Besides these phenomena that were common enough to lend themselves to statistical generalizations, there are other observations worth following up. For instance the great majority of the *'ulemâ* in the sample, once they had embarked on careers as religious officials, stayed with it. But there were exceptions: 'Abdür-rahmân, son of the famous *müftî* Kâzîzâde,¹ taught at *medreses* paying 40 *ağçes* a day and joined the *müteferriķas* of the *dâr-i 'alî* while he was still teaching. Eventually he became *defterdâr* of Rumelia. The son of Maḥmûd, who rose to become a *kâzî* of Diyarbekir before his death in 983, was known as Aḥmed Paşa. He had first become a *mülâzim*, taught at a *medrese* paying 50 *ağçes*, and then was made a *kâzî* of Gelibolu. The next thing that we hear about him was that he became *defterdâr-ı mâl* and then *beğlerbeğ*.²

Maḥmûd, son of the *şadr* Mu'allimzâde and brother of another high-ranking religious dignitary, after a career that led him as far as the Şaḥn, became Ferîdün *beğ*'s successor as *nişâncî* in 984.³ This serves to show that even in the second half of the sixteenth century *'ulemâ* could switch into the offices of *defterdâr* and *nişâncî*, a phenomenon that Gibb and Bowen thought was more or less limited to the fifteenth century.⁴

Maḥmûd's brother İbrahîm at one point in his career received a *ze'âmet* of 30,000 *ağçes*, which was an unusual but not irregular procedure.⁵ Uzunçarşılı mentions the amount of *ze'âmet* money that different ranks of *'ulemâ* were to receive once they joined the ranks of the *zâ'im*.⁶ In spite of this new function, İbrahîm continued his career as a provincial *kâzî* in various Anatolian towns.

Among the 100 *'ulemâ* studied, three withdrew from the hierarchy after one or more of their children had died. In two cases the persons concerned returned to public life the next year, but in the case of 'Abdülevvel, son of the well-known Saçlu Emîr *efendi*, it was a final decision.⁷ At first he received a pension of 15 *ağçes* a day; but after he had established a reputation for the miracles he performed, his pension was augmented to 150 *ağçes*, which corresponded to the

¹ 'Atâ'î, p. 245.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 252, 284.

⁵ 'Atâ'î, p. 270.

⁷ 'Atâ'î, p. 262.

² *Ibid.* p. 238.

⁴ Gibb and Bowen, p. 147.

⁶ Uzunçarşılı, p. 55.

income of top-level 'ulemâ; after his death the *müftî* Naķib *efendi* said the funeral prayers.

The techniques used on this sample could also serve to test the generalizations now current about the religious career. Itzkowitz¹ has checked the 50 'ulemâ that Taşköprüzâde lists in the chapter on Sultan Selîm's reign, and found that out of the 24 on whom information had been given, only three were not from 'ulemâ families. Checking a sample from Taşköprüzâde and 'Uşakîzâde, whose biographies encompass the early sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in the same fashion as has been done here, might help us get some concrete idea of the changes that the religious establishment was going through in this period.

One of the main problems to be investigated is that of the role of heredity inside the 'ulemâ hierarchy. According to Uzunçarşılı, the upper ranks of the 'ulemâ, in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, consolidated their position to such an extent that the Sultans were never able to dislodge them.² Itzkowitz speaks of a 'hardening of the career arteries'.³ Gibb and Bowen call the upper ranks of the 'ulemâ a 'hereditary and privileged' aristocracy and indicated that things were not the same in the heyday of the Ottoman empire.⁴ The results of Itzkowitz' count, however, make one wonder whether the changes in the 'ulemâ institution were really as great as has been claimed, but comparing samples of different times might test this claim. What makes comparison difficult is that different authors do not always use the same criteria for the selection of the 'ulemâ treated, and that one and the same author's criteria might vary from time to time, especially since information on contemporaries was much more readily available.

That the 'ulemâ institution was in a crisis, however, revealed itself in the *medrese* uprisings, while at the same time the dissatisfaction of the lower-ranking *kâzîs* broke out in protests and demonstrations.⁵ With so little concrete research yet done, any explanation has to be partial at best. One phenomenon aggravating the crisis was the fact that the number of jobs available did not grow as fast as the number of *medrese* graduates. *Vakfs* were established all the time, since they enabled the founder to put his property out of the reach of confiscation and yet retain some measure of control over it. Since whoever endowed a *medrese* would also make provision for the material sustenance of the students, people from outside the 'ulemâ hierarchy could enter the system. But at the end of their long period of study they would find no jobs waiting for them. Whether the great *medrese* uprisings, which seem to have been largely limited to Anatolia and to that part of the Balkans in which there was compact Turkish settlement, changed the social composition of the 'ulemâ remains a topic for future research. This type of question is especially difficult to answer, because the scanty official

¹ Itzkowitz, *passim*.

² Uzunçarşılı, pp. 71-4.

³ Itzkowitz, p. 91.

⁴ Gibb and Bowen, p. 107.

⁵ Selânîkî Muştafâ, *Tarîh-i Selânîkî Muştafâ* (Istanbul, 1281), p. 269.

records of the crisis usually stop whenever its superficial manifestations are dealt with in some fashion.

Another topic for study that has been very much neglected is that of the provincial *müderrises* and *ḳâzîs*. Probably sufficient material could be gained to make possible a comparison between the *'ulemâ* working at the center of the empire, with access to power and privilege, and those whose aspirations were pretty much limited by the environment they were educated in. The fact that the higher *'ulemâ* usually sided with the Sultan and his administration against the *medrese* students and the lower-level *'ulemâ* shows how much this layer of the hierarchy was a group by itself, singled out by the privileges of birth, family relationships, and patronage.

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