

For Dad and Mom,

Ronald Frances Sheridan (1937–2017)

Louise Anna McLellan Sheridan (1942–2018)

“I CURSE NO ONE WITHOUT CAUSE”:
IDENTITY, POWER, RIVALRY, AND INVECTIVE
IN THE EARLY 17TH-CENTURY OTTOMAN COURT

The Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences
of
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by

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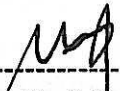
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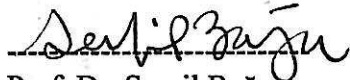
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ABSTRACT

“I CURSE NO ONE WITHOUT CAUSE”: IDENTITY, POWER, RIVALRY, AND INVECTIVE IN THE EARLY 17TH-CENTURY OTTOMAN COURT

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In the early 17th-century Ottoman Empire, a series of sociocultural, administrative, political, and economic changes were underway that left their mark on how the learned and cultural elite viewed the empire and themselves. Though contemporary sources reflect these shifts in many ways, this period’s rich corpus of invective verse, centering around the poet Nef’î, has been understudied as a historical source. This dissertation rectifies this neglect by examining this invective corpus as a locus of rivalries and enmities revealing how those involved agonistically defined and were defined by their others, thus necessarily defining themselves in the process. Observing this process of definition and self-definition in the light of contemporary historical developments and sources, the dissertation examines invectives produced against both patrons (*i.e.*, vertical invective) and fellow poet/clients (*i.e.*, horizontal invective) in such a way as to demonstrate how the ferocity of the period’s invective verse, and reactions thereto, laid bare how Ottoman elites’ imaginary of themselves was in fact a marginalizing construct. Through analysis of the discourse of the period’s invective corpus alongside contemporary chronicles and advice literature, the dissertation explores how Ottoman elite identity came to be defined, or redefined, during this turbulent period.

Keywords: Early Modern, Invective, Nef’î, Ottoman Identity, Sihâm-ı Kazâ

ÖZET

“YOK YERE BEN KİMSEYİ SÖĞMEM”:
17. YÜZYIL BAŞI OSMANLI SARAYINDA
REKABET, HİCİV VE GÜÇ ÇATIŞMALARI

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Osmanlı İmparatorluğu, erken on yedinci yüzyılda, eğitimli, kültürel seçkinlerinin, imparatorluğu ve kendilerini algılayış biçimleri üzerinde derin iz bırakan bir dizi sosyokültürel, idari, siyasi ve ekonomik dönüşüme sahne oldu. Her ne kadar bu döneme ait yazılı kaynaklar birçok yönden bu dönüşümü yansıtsa da, bu dönemde üretilen ve büyük bir bölümü şair Nefî çevresinde yoğunlaşan zengin hiciv külliyatı tarihsel bir kaynak olarak bugüne değin yeterince incelenip irdelenmemiştir. Bu tez, söz konusu hiciv külliyatını, dönemin güç çatışmaları açısından, ilgili kişilerin tartışma yoluyla kendi “öteki”lerini ve bunun zorunlu bir sonucu olarak aynı süreçte kendilerini de nasıl tanımladıklarını ortaya koyan biçimde rekabet ve husumetin odağı olarak inceleyerek bu araştırma eksikliğini gidermektedir. Tez, bu tanımlara ve üstü kapalı öz-tanımlara yönelik sürece dönemin tarihî gelişmeleri ve kaynakları ışığında bakarak hem hamilere (“dikey hiciv”) hem de şair/istemcilere (“yatay hiciv” yoluyla) yazılan dönemin hiciv şiirlerini irdelleyerek söz konusu hicivlerin şiddetinin –ve buna karşı gelen tepkilerin– seçkinlerin kendilik hayalini ötekileştirici bir benlik algısı olarak açığa vurduğunu göstermektedir. Dönemin hiciv külliyatının söylemini, çağdaşı olan tarihî kaynaklar ve nasihatnamelerin eşliğinde incelemek yoluyla, bu tez Osmanlı’da seçkin kimliğinin söz konusu çalkantılı tarihsel dönemde nasıl tanımlandığı ya da yeniden tanımlandığını tüm yönleriyle açıklamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Erken Modern, Hiciv, Nefî, Osmanlı Kimliği, Sihâm-ı Kazâ

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

*Though they have been historically neglected, the evaluation of invectives as documents is undoubtedly a fitting enterprise. And it is obvious that through such an enterprise, certain new facts will come to light.*¹

In September 1621, two men were simultaneously appointed to the positions of chief judge (*kāzī'asker*) of the Ottoman Empire's European and Asian provinces. To the more prestigious European position went 'Alī Efendi (d. 1623/24), a black eunuch who was the first such man to hold this position, while to the somewhat less prestigious Asian position went Mūsā Efendi (d. 1646), who was the son of the physician Şücā'e'd-dīn İlyās Efendi (d. 1574/75) and was advanced to the chief judgeship directly from his post as chief physician (*re'īs-i eṭṭbbā'*).² Both were relatively unprecedented appointments,

¹ "Tarihe mal olmuş hicvin vesika olarak değerlendirilmesi şüphesiz yerinde bir teşebbüstür. Bu suretle yeni ba'zı hakikatlerin elde edileceği de âşikârdır." Saffet Sıdkı (Bilmen), ed., *Nef'î ve Sihâm-ı Kazâ'sı* (Istanbul: Aydınlık Basımevi, 1943), 4.

² Nev'îzâde 'Atâ'î, *Hadâ'iku'l-Hakâ'ik fî Tekmileti'ş-Şakâ'ik: Nev'îzâde Atâyi'nin Şakâ'ik Zeyli*, Vol. 2 ed. Suat Donuk and Derya Örs (Istanbul: Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2017), 1694. For more on 'Alī Efendi, see Baki Tezcan, "Dispelling the Darkness: The Politics of 'Race' in the Early Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Empire in the Light of the Life and Work of Mullah Ali," in *Identity and Identity Formation in the Ottoman World: A Volume of Essays in Honor of Norman Itzkowitz*, ed.

the eunuch ‘Alī Efendi owing to his origins as a slave educated and trained in the Ottoman palace system (and also, frankly, to the color of his skin) and the physician Mūsā Efendi owing to his lack of experience in the empire’s administrative and judicial systems. Their dual appointment gave both of them a seat on the powerful imperial council (*dīvān-ı hümāyūn*).³ Representing on the council the empire’s religiojudicial branch, called the *‘ilmiyye*, the chief judges also had the enviable power of supervision and appointment within that branch throughout the empire.

For the occasion of ‘Alī and Mūsā Efendi’s appointment, a poet and clerk in the Ottoman financial branch who went by the pen name Nefī (c. 1572–1635), meaning “beneficial,” produced a poem in the *kıt‘a* form⁴ not to celebrate but to decry the situation:

behold the two ministers on the imperial council | who have presented to one another
their talon and beak || they have flayed the world to such an extent | they are like a
vulture and a raven feasting on a carcass⁵

Baki Tezcan and Karl K. Barbir (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2007), 76–82. For more on Mūsā Efendi, see Şeyhī Mehmed Efendi, *Vekayii ‘l-Fudalâ*, Vol. 1, ed. Abdülkadir Özcan (Istanbul: Çağrı Yayınları, 1989), 129.

³ The imperial council during this period was composed of the grand vizier, several other viziers with strict hierarchical ranks (second, third, etc.), the governor (*beğlerbeği*) of the province of Rumelia, the grand admiral (*kapudân paşa*), the chief judges of the European and Asian provinces, the treasurers (*defterdâr*), and the head of the Ottoman chancery (*nişancı*), with the Agha of the Janissaries also occasionally serving as a member. For detailed overviews of the imperial council, its historical development, its duties, and associated offices and functionaries, see İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devletinin Merkez ve Bahriye Teşkilâtı* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1988), 1–387 and Ahmet Mumcu, *Hukuksal ve Siyasal Karar Organı Olarak Divan-ı Hümayun* (Ankara: Birey ve Toplum Yayınları, 1986).

⁴ The *kıt‘a* is a variety of quatrain, consisting of two distichs rhyming in xa xa. Please note that, in this dissertation, I will use the term “distich” to refer to two unrhymed lines of verse and “couplet” to refer to two rhymed lines of verse.

⁵ “seyr eyleş iki şadırın dīvān-ı hümāyūnıñ | kim miñleb ü minķārın birbirine şunmuşlar || dünyāya dōşenmişler ol mertebe kim gūyā | bir aķbaba bir kuzğun bir lāşeye konmuşlar”; Istanbul University Nadir Eserler Kütüphanesi (henceforth IUNEK) TY 511, 75b. Throughout the dissertation, please note that, unless otherwise indicated, all translations are mine. Also note that, in translations and transcriptions of

Nef'ī reimagines the two chief judges as scavenging birds, and particular emphasis is laid on their color: Mūsā Efendi the “white” vulture (*aḳbaba*; literally, “white father” in Turkish) and ‘Alī Efendi the black raven. As for the “carcass” (*lāṣe*) on which they are scavenging, that might be read in several ways: as the position of chief judge with all its dignity and power over the empire’s religiojudicial branch; as the imperial council; or most broadly as the Ottoman Empire itself. In any case, the implication is clear: something is rotten in the Ottoman state, and the appointment of these particular men to such positions of power is a sign thereof.

It is a truism that, in the Ottoman Empire, the early 17th century represents a period of extensive social, demographic, political, economic, and cultural change and transformation. These changes and transformations were, in large part, triggered by extensive external and internal pressures that were stretching the empire’s economic, administrative, and social resources to the breaking point. On an international front, nearly half a century of continual warfare—first with the Persian Safavids between 1578 and 1590, then with the Austrian Habsburgs between 1593 and 1606, and then with the Safavids again between 1603 and 1618—put significant strains on the empire’s finances and manpower. This pressure was further exacerbated internally by an outbreak of banditry and a series of rebellions in the empire’s Asian provinces, which flared up with some regularity between the mid-16th and the mid-17th centuries and were prompted by

verse throughout the dissertation, one vertical bar “|” represents the end of a hemistich while two vertical bars “||” represents the end of a distich or couplet.

a variety of interconnected causes of an economic, political, social, and even climatic nature.⁶

The changes and transformations that such events both signaled and helped to bring about were of course recognized at the time, and have rightly continued to be recognized and studied ever since, although some degree of debate and even argument has always existed concerning the precise causes and extent of the changes that were occurring. A multiplicity of contemporary sources can be used to trace the development and effects of these changes, from the relatively empirical evidence found in the cadastral surveys (*taḥrīr defteri*), to the somewhat more anecdotal evidence of court records (*şer'iyye sicili*) and registers of important affairs (*mühimme defteri*), to the highly subjective advice literature (*naşīḥatnāme*) that flourished during the period in explicit reaction to what was going on.

Yet if we turn to the period's poetry—which among the Ottoman literati was always the literary form *par excellence*—it is not so easy to trace contemporary changes: the predominant lyric ghazal and panegyric *kaşīde* forms were relatively static, bearing as they did a great deal of symbolic prestige owing to their long pedigree, and because of this these forms were only very rarely used as vehicles to directly comment on societal change, with the topically oriented panegyric more forthcoming in this regard than the ghazal. The narrative *meşnevī* form did occasionally touch upon such issues—as seen, for instance, in certain parts of Nev'izāde 'Aḫā'ī's (d. 1635) *meşnevīs*—but, by the early

⁶ For a recent overview of this situation in the empire's Anatolian countryside, see Oktay Özel, *The Collapse of Rural Order in Ottoman Anatolia: Amasya 1576–1643* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2016), 134–181.

17th century, this form had grown largely outmoded and was entering a period of relative eclipse as comparatively few poets apart from ‘Aṭā’ī undertook to produce extended examples in this mode. As a result, the number of works in verse that might easily be read as social criticism and used to shed light on the changes the empire was undergoing during the early 17th century is quite small.

However, the picture is somewhat different when we examine this period’s corpus of invective verse (*hicv*), of which Nef’ī’s quatrain quoted above can be taken as a rather typical example. On the one hand, it must be stated from the outset that, for the most part, Ottoman invective verse did not engage in open social commentary: its currency was personal attack and abuse, meaning that—as will be analyzed in the literature review in Chapter 2—it cannot and should not be mistaken for “satire” in the usual sense of that term in English. This resolutely *ad hominem* approach of Ottoman invective was a consequence of its links with the established tradition of Islamicate invective in Arabic and Persian, some aspects of which will be briefly discussed in the following section.

On the other hand, though, the fact that invective verse is characterized and even defined by personal attack and abuse means that, if considered in context and as a mode of discourse, it provides a window onto the predilections and prejudices of its authors; in a word, it sheds light on the mentality that lay behind their choice to abuse a particular target or targets, as well as on the possible roots of those predilections and prejudices. In this regard, there are two fundamental questions to ask. First, *who* used invective to abuse *whom*? And second, *how* did they abuse the target in the verse itself? The first is an empirical question, the second one that is related to the discourse through which

invective verse receives expression. Once the researcher has established these as far as it is possible to do so, the hostilities on open display in invective can be used as stepping stones to approach the key question of *why* these works were produced. And this, in turn, can lead on to the broader issue of *how*, and *how much*, the producers of invective and their own mentality or mentalities reflect those of the larger sociocultural circles of which they were a part.

In answering these questions and addressing these issues, this dissertation focuses specifically on the invective corpus centered around—that is, both produced by and targeting—the poet Nef‘ī. For three main reasons, this corpus is especially conducive to an examination of the early 17th-century Ottoman elite circles from which this corpus emerged, as well as the historical conditions and the mentalities that drove these circles. Firstly, this corpus is significantly larger than any earlier, and most later, Ottoman invective corpora. In Nef‘ī’s invective collection known as the *Sihām-ı ƙazā* (Shafts of Doom)—whose contents were produced between approximately the years 1606 and 1630—are found 250 pieces of invective verse, both short and long, targeting approximately 70 distinct individuals. Alongside this, the number of invective poems produced against and specifically targeting Nef‘ī numbers nearly 70. This voluminous corpus of verse provides the researcher with a plethora of material with which to work. Secondly, the figures targeted by Nef‘ī in his invective verse range from such high-ranking dignitaries as grand viziers, chief finance ministers (*başdefterdār*), and chief judges to poets both distinguished and undistinguished, thereby covering a wide spectrum of the Ottoman political and cultural elite. Such a variety of targets allows the

researcher to observe, both synchronically and diachronically, how a single person approached, or rather attacked, figures of varying position and provenance. Moreover, as will be examined in detail in Chapter 5, several of the most common targets of Nef'ī's invective were in fact scholars (*'ālim*), judges (*kādī*), and men of letters who were close friends and associates of one another, constituting a loose network of *'ālim*-littérateurs against whom Nef'ī consciously aligned himself—with they, in turn, consciously aligning themselves against him as well. Thirdly and finally, the ferocity and lack of inhibition of this invective corpus' diction permits the researcher to observe, with an almost unprecedented degree of directness, the disagreements, conflicts, and sociocultural clashes and prejudices developing among the Ottoman cultural elite during this period of change and transformation.

Utilizing primarily this invective corpus and its unique properties as outlined above, this dissertation's basic aims are to undertake a comprehensive and in-depth analysis both of the varied conflicts centering or touching on Nef'ī and of the specific invective corpus produced and consumed as a direct result of these conflicts; to show how this corpus and the sociocultural and literary environment within and from which it emerged were integrated with the elite culture of the early 17th-century Ottoman Empire; and to investigate how this corpus reflects the specific concerns and anxieties that animated this culture and its representatives at the time.

1.1 Defining invective in the Islamicate context

Used throughout this dissertation to translate the Arabic *hijā'* (هجاء), Persian *hajw* (هجو), and Turkish *hicv* (هجو), the word “invective” ultimately derives from the Latin root

invehere, meaning “to carry [something] in against [someone].” It is, to put it simply, a manner of abusing, attacking, or insulting a person or institution through the medium of verse or prose. In a Western context, it was a prominent element in ancient Greek and Roman literature, with such figures as Arkhilokhos (*fl.* 7th century BCE), Cicero (106–43 BCE), Catullus (*c.* 84–54 BCE), Martial (*c.* 40–*c.* 103 CE), and Juvenal (*fl.* 1st–2nd century CE) becoming particularly well known for their invective.⁷ Significant to note in regards to invective, because it applies also to the Islamic⁸ and Ottoman invective traditions that are the focus of this dissertation, is the fact that it is not a literary genre in and of itself, but rather a particular discursive mode that exists within literature. It is not defined by a specific verse or prose structure, adopting as it does numerous structures and forms within the scope of vastly different historical contexts and sociocultural structures. Instead, it represents a manner of approach to the subject or topic at hand: just as, for example, the panegyric mode is one of praise, the elegaic mode one of lament, and the lyrical mode one of love or passion, so is the invective mode one of blame or, perhaps more accurately, of attack.

In the remainder of this section, I will provide a definition of Islamicate invective based in praxis rather than theory, by elucidating some of the more salient aspects of this

⁷ The literature on ancient Greek and, especially, Roman invective is vast. For some good introductory overviews and studies of the tradition, see Anthony Corbeill, *Controlling Laughter: Political Humor in the Late Roman Republic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Anna A. Novokhatko, ed. and trans., *The Invectives of Sallust and Cicero: Critical Edition with Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 1–15; and Art L. Spisak, *Martial: A Social Guide* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2007), 15–22.

⁸ In this dissertation, following the lead of Marshall Hodgson, I use the term “Islamicate” to designate (primarily) sociocultural aspects that, while existing within the pale of lands where Islam is the dominant religion, do not themselves have any necessary connection with that religion. Likewise, when the term “Islamic” is used, a connection to religion is implied. See Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, Vol. 1 (*The Classical Age of Islam*) (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), 57–60.

discursive mode. It is important to note that this is by no means intended to provide a historical overview, which anyway would be well beyond the scope of this work. Rather, insofar as my primary aim here is to provide the necessary background for the detailed analysis of early 17th-century Ottoman invective that is the crux of the dissertation, I take a structuralist approach. Thus, the subsequent section concentrates primarily on the earliest beginnings of invective in the period of transition into the Islamicate *Weltanschauung* in the 7th and 8th centuries CE before moving on to an examination of certain cases and concepts drawn from the Ottoman invective corpus of the 16th century. I do this because it is my contention that, because invective has always been a decidedly topical mode necessarily defined by its functions of assigning blame and insulting or attacking, the fundamental characteristics of the mode have remained largely unchanged within the scope of the Islamicate poetic tradition as a whole. That is to say, if one takes, for instance, the invective verse of the Arabic-language poet Ibn al-Rūmī (836–896 CE), the Persian-language poet Sūzanī (*fl.* 12th century CE), and the Turkish-language poet Meḫmed Eşref (1846–1912), while the historical circumstances within which they operated and the targets at whom they took aim were indeed vastly different, what they were actually *doing* with their invective, and in fact even to a great extent their register and manner, one finds that they are all remarkably similar to one another when considered from a structuralist standpoint. The structural similarities that unite different iterations of Islamicate invective in widely varying places and times derive from the functional or instrumental aspect of the mode, and to examine the invective tradition with an acknowledgement of these similarities will, I argue, ultimately make the historiographical differences that do exist emerge more sharply into the foreground.

All this is by no means meant to imply that the Islamicate invective tradition was a static entity. On the contrary, it is my contention that certain periods when sociocultural, political, and/or economic conditions were in flux have tended to produce a proliferation and consequent enriching of the invective corpus: one of these periods was the transition into the early Islamic era concentrated on in the following section, while another was the early 17th-century Ottoman Empire that serves as the primary field of study for this dissertation.

1.1.1 Aspects and functions of Islamicate invective

In the Islamicate context, the tradition of verse invective goes back to pre-Islamic Arabia. The term used in the Arabic language for the discursive mode of invective is *hijā'* (هجاء). Originally, this word appears to have referred to incantations or semi-ritualistic curses uttered against one's foes on the battlefield, a practice that was carried out as a means of assaulting the honor (*'ird*, عرض) of a given foe, whether it be an individual or a tribe, as a way of diminishing that foe's power before or during actual combat.⁹ Indeed, the word that later came to mean "poet," *shā'ir* (شاعر), originally referred to a figure considered endowed with a knowledge of magic who would go before troops marching to war and chant verses, including verses of *hijā'*.¹⁰ *Hijā'* thus, at least originally, was not simply a discursive mode but was also conceived of as

⁹ See the summation in Charles Pellat, "Hidjā'," *Encyclopaedia of Islam 2* (henceforth *EI²*), Vol. 3, 352–353 and, especially, Bichr Farès, *L'honneur chez les Arabes avant l'Islam: Etude de sociologie* (Paris: Adrien-Maissonneuve, 1932), 214–218.

¹⁰ Toufic Fahd, "Shā'ir, 1. In the Arab World," *EI²*, Vol. 9, 225 and Toufic Fahd, *La divination arabe: Etudes religieuses, sociologiques et folkloriques sur le milieu natif de l'Islam* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1966), 127.

performative, as pointed out by Ignaz Goldziher in his extensive study on the origins of *hijā'*:

The position of *hijā'* in the view of the Arabs [...] will become more coherent to us if we assume that, in the most ancient times, it was not merely abuse and insult. Instead, the poet of the tribe (or some other poet)—who had been advanced to his position by virtue of his personal abilities and his relation with the higher powers (the *jinn*)—was viewed as capable of [actually] *harming enemies through his vituperations*.¹¹

As such a status and performance indicates, pre-Islamic Arabic *hijā'* was a practice that was deeply embedded in the tribal-based social and political structure of Arabia.¹²

Within this structure, individual identity was closely tied with familial (*i.e.*, tribal) identity such that any attack on individual honor was simultaneously an attack on the honor of the target's entire tribe or clan; thus, *hijā'* was simultaneously *ad hominem* and *ad tribum*. This fact is reflected in the discourse of the *hijā'* poems themselves, which continuously associate the tribe with the individual, and vice versa, well into the early Abbasid era. By the time of the advent of Islam in the mid-7th century, belief in the incantatory material efficacy of *hijā'* seems to have fallen by the wayside, at least among the more urbanized populations of the Arabian peninsula, but by this time the mode's

¹¹ “Die Stellung des *Higā'* in der Anschauung der Araber wird uns [...] verständlicher werden, wenn wir davon ausgehen, dass es sich dabei in den ältesten Zeiten nicht um blosse Schmähung und Beschimpfung handelte. Man betrachtete vielmehr den Dichter des Stammes oder einen fremden Dichter, denn man zu diesem Zwecke herbeiholte, kraft seiner persönlichen Fähigkeiten und seiner Beziehung zu höheren Mächten (*Ġinnen*), als dazu geeignet, durch seinen Schmähspruch *dem Feinde zu schaden*.” Ignaz Goldziher, *Ueber die Vorgeschichte der Higā'-Poesie*, in *Abhandlungen zur arabischen Philologie* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1896), 27; emphasis added.

¹² It should also be noted, however, that such conceptions were by no means confined to Arabia, but could be found in several societies throughout the world; for an example that bears numerous similarities to the case of Arabic *hijā'*, see Fred Norris Robinson, “Satirists and Enchanters in Early Irish Literature,” in *Studies in the History of Religions, Presented to Crawford Howell Toy by Pupils, Colleagues, and Friends*, ed. David Gordon Lyon and George Foot Moore (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1912): 95–130.

discourse, diction, and approach had already been irrevocably shaped by the earlier paradigm.

In conceptual terms, the attacks of which *hijā'* was composed were considered *dhamm* (ذم), a word that is typically rendered as “blame” but that, in fact, “implies outrage and blackens [one’s] honor” and “is far from being just blame or simple disapprobation.”¹³

On one level, this assault on honor was initially derived from the aforementioned incantatory aspects of pre-Islamic *hijā'*, in which the denigration of an individual and/or tribe by name was thought to be capable of producing actual physical disempowerment. On a less metaphysical level, however, the employment of *dhamm* to attack *‘ird*—which was the fundamental activity of *hijā'*—was quite explicitly a power play, as outlined by Bichr Farès when he links honor to the martial culture of the pre-Islamic Arabs:

[A]ny sign of failure in fighting or of loss of independence humiliated the Arab and dishonoured him. Now humiliation (*dhilla*) is the opposite of power (*‘izza*) simply because it implies weakness; hence weakness is the condition of dishonour, while power is the foundation of honour or *‘ird*. In other words, *everything that contributes to power is an element of honour, while all that causes weakness is an element of dishonour*.¹⁴

This relation between power and honor also lies behind the discursive mode that was considered to be in binary opposition to *hijā'*; namely, *madīḥ* or *madḥ*, meaning “praise.” Thus, where *madīḥ* was a way of exalting the honor of an individual and/or his tribe, thereby contributing to their power and prestige, *hijā'* was a symbolic diminishing of that power and, at least if effective, an actual diminishing of prestige. In this sense, then, *hijā'* was quite explicitly a broadly socially sanctioned instrument of interpersonal

¹³ Farès, *L'honneur chez les Arabes*, 42. Also see Farès' discussion of *‘ird* as “honor” in *ibid.*, 34–38.

¹⁴ Bichr Farès, “‘Ird,” *EF*, Vol. 4, 77; emphasis added.

and inter- or intratribal conflict, as well as a means of social policing aimed at the preservation of norms, and it would remain so during the transition to Islam in the mid-7th century.

The advent of Islam, quite apart from its obvious religious dimensions, was a real attempt at a social revolution. On the one hand, the introduction of the concept of the *umma*, or community of believers, signaled an aim to upend, or at least override, the dominant tribal social structure by means of what was effectively a supratribes “based on religion and not on kinship.”¹⁵ On the other hand, and indeed in close connection with the concept of the *umma*, Islam marked an attempt “to replace the traditional anthropocentric ethos based on honour and shame with a new ethos that was theocentric and based on guilt.”¹⁶ When we consider the fact that *hijā’* was a practice that served very specific social functions in regard to local tribal structures—functions that radically relied on the concepts of honor and shame to provide a means of social policing and even waging war—then it is not difficult to understand how expressed attitudes toward this practice would change, especially inasmuch as the new regime’s goal was to conduct such policing via appeals to the “higher” authorities of God, the Qur’ān, and the prophet Muḥammad (and later, to a lesser extent, his representative the caliph) and his *sunna*. Within this structure, ostensibly little place could remain for *hijā’* in theory. In practice, however, it was of course not something so easily gotten rid of, and almost immediately concessions had to be made.

¹⁵ Frederick M. Denny, “*Ummah* in the Constitution of Medina,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 36, no. 1 (Jan. 1977), 42.

¹⁶ Geert Jan van Gelder, *The Bad and the Ugly: Attitudes towards Invective Poetry (Hijā’) in Classical Arabic Literature* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988), 13.

One of the clearest examples of this can be seen in the story relating to the occasion for revelation (*sabab al-nuzūl*) of the final verse of the Qur'ānic sura “The Poets” (*al-Shu‘arā*). This sura appears, in all likelihood, to have originally concluded with the following verses, which like the sura’s preceding verses were formulated before Muḥammad and his followers’ migration from Mecca to Medina in the summer of 622 CE: “And the poets—the deviators follow them. Don’t you see that they wander in every valley, and that they say what they do not do?”¹⁷ The verses are in accord with the Meccan suras’ general disparagement of poets and poetry, a tactic by means of which it was strenuously denied that Muḥammad was a poet and that the Qur’ān was “mere” poetry, which was what it was largely taken for by the non-Muslims of the time.¹⁸ However—probably in the year 627 CE, five years after the Hijra¹⁹—the following verse was added to the above verses: “Except for those who believe, and perform righteous deeds, and remember God much, and avenge themselves after they have been wronged. And those who have done wrong will come to know to what return they will return!”²⁰ The reason for the later addition of this verse is related in an anecdote recorded in the Qur’ānic exegesis of the scholar al-Ṭabarī (d. 923 CE): in Medina, Ḥassān b. Thābit (d. c. 659 CE), ‘Abd Allāh b. Rawāḥa (d. 629 CE), and Ka‘b b. Mālīk (d. c. 670 CE) approached Muḥammad weeping and upset about verses 224 to 226, because they were poets themselves and hence were among those being directly denounced by the verses. In

¹⁷ “وَالشُّعْرَاءُ يَتَّبِعُهُمُ الْغَاوُونَ أَلَمْ تَرَأَهُمْ فِي كُلِّ وَادٍ يَدْعُونَ وَيَقُولُونَ مَا لَا يَفْعَلُونَ.” Qur’ān 26: 224–226; translation mine.

¹⁸ See Qur’ān 52: 29–33.

¹⁹ For this dating, see Irfan Shahid, “Another Contribution to Koranic Exegesis: The *Sūra* of the Poets (XXVI),” *Journal of Arabic Literature* 14 (1983): 16. For a stylistic analysis in support of the contention that verse 227 is a Medinan addition, see Régis Blachère, “La poésie dans la conscience de la première génération musulmane,” *Annales Islamologiques* 4 (1963): 95–96.

²⁰ “إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَانْتَصَرُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا ظَلَمُوا وَسَيَعْلَمُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا أَيَّ مُنْقَلَبٍ يَنْقَلِبُونَ.” Qur’ān 26: 227; translation mine.

response, Muḥammad read out verse 227 and said that it was revealed as a change (*naskh*) and an exception (*istithnā*) to the preceding verses, thereby excluding from the denunciation those poets who were believers (*i.e.*, Muslims).²¹

Behind this exclusion favorable to Muslim poets lay something eminently practical: at the time, Muḥammad and his followers were being continually subjected to *hijā*’ by the people of Medina opposed to the new religion and its concomitant social and moral understanding—people who were thus acting in line with the established and largely accepted method of policing sociocultural deviation.²² The addition of verse 227, however, created an exception that allowed Muslim poets to continue to produce work and so paved the way for Muslim poets to fight fire with fire via retaliation through *hijā*’ of their own.²³ And this they did, with Ḥassān b. Thābit in particular producing numerous scathing invectives against various opponents of the Muslims.²⁴

²¹ Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī: Jāmi‘ al-Bayān ‘an Ta’wīl āy al-Qur‘ān*, Vol. 17, ed. ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī (Riyadh: Dār ‘Alim al-Kutub, 2003), 682.

²² From the point of view of the non-Muslims around them, of course, the adherents of the new religion were deviators from sociocultural norms, whereas from the point of view of the Muslims and their attempt to radically reorient society, it was these very norms that were the deviation, hence verse 224’s specific reference to “the deviators” (*al-ghāwūna*). Incidentally, the same verse’s specific use of the verb “follow” (*tāba‘a*) may be a veiled reference to the aforementioned fact that poets would precede armies marching off to war.

²³ For more on this interpretation of verse 227, see Irfan Shahid, “A Contribution to Koranic Exegesis,” in *Arabic and Islamic Studies in Honor of Hamilton A.R. Gibb*, ed. George Makdisi (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1965): 574–575 and Shahid, “Another Contribution,” 17.

²⁴ On some occasions, he was even personally requested to do so by Muḥammad, as seen, for example, in the hadith describing how, during the Muslims’ siege of the Jewish Banū Qurayza tribe’s neighborhood in Medina in the year 627, Muḥammad said to Ḥassān, “Ridicule them [*i.e.*, the Jews], for Gabriel is with you” (*فَجْهَمُ [هَاجِمِهِمْ] وَجَبْرِيلٌ مَعَكَ*); Muḥammad al-Bukhārī, *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahīh Al-Bukhārī, Arabic-English*, Vol. 4, ed. Muhammad Muhsin Khan (Riyadh: Darussalam, 1997), 278 and *ibid.*, Vol. 8, 103; translation mine.

One historical²⁵ example of this may serve as an illustration of how *hijā*’ functioned within this environment. Following the Muslim defeat by the armies of Mecca at the Battle of Uḥud in December 624, hard on the heels of a Muslim victory at the Battle of Badr some nine months earlier, a woman of the Meccan Quraysh tribe named Hind bt. ‘Utba, several of whose family members had died at Badr, scoured the battlefield mutilating the Muslim dead, after which she stood atop a rock and recited:

we have paid you back for Badr | and a war that follows a war is always violent || I could not bear the loss of ‘Utba | nor my brother and his uncle and my first-born || I have slaked my vengeance and fulfilled my vow | you, o Waḥshī,²⁶ have assuaged my burning heart²⁷

When, after the battle, Ḥassan b. Thābit was informed that she had recited these lines, he said to the informer, “Tell me some of what she said, and I will deal with her for you.”²⁸

Then, after hearing Hind bt. ‘Utba’s words, he produced a *hijā*’ that read, in part:

the vile woman was insolent, and she was habitually base, | since she combined insolence with disbelief || may God curse Hind, distinguished among Hinds,²⁹ she with the large clitoris, | and may he curse her husband with her! || did she set out for Uḥud on an ambling camel, | among the army on a saddled camel-colt? || [...] || her

²⁵ In referring to the example that follows as “historical,” I am fully cognizant that it—being first recorded at least a century after the events it describes—features many signs of being partial propaganda for the still relatively young, if by then quite dominant, religion. Nonetheless, inasmuch as the story as recorded is not reticent about the words or actions of its protagonist Ḥassan b. Thābit, which showcase some decidedly pre-Islamic elements, it certainly has much to say about both the period it recounts and the period in which it was recounted.

²⁶ This refers to Waḥshī ibn Ḥarb, a manumitted slave who had killed Muḥammad’s uncle Ḥamza ibn ‘Abdu’l-muṭṭalib during the Battle of Uḥud.

²⁷ Ibn Ishāq, *The Life of Muhammad, a Translation of Ishāq’s Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, ed. and trans. A. Guillaume (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1967), 385. Translation by A. Guillaume.

²⁸ Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *The History of Al-Ṭabarī, an Annotated Translation, Vol. VII: The Foundation of the Community: Muhammad at Al-Madina, A.D. 622–626 / Hijrah–4 A.H.*, ed. and trans. W. Montgomery Watt and M.V. McDonald (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), 130. Translation by W. Montgomery Watt and M.V. McDonald.

²⁹ The term “Hind” (Indian) is here used to ostracize Hind bt. ‘Utba as an outsider, regardless of the fact that she was not, of course, actually Indian. This rhetorical tactic will be seen again in abundance in Chapter 4 and, especially, Chapter 5.

backside and her genitals are covered with ulcers | as a result of prolonged swift travel in the saddle³⁰

And that is the end of the story as recounted in the history of al-Ṭabarī: “dealing with” Hind bt. ‘Utba amounted to producing an invective slandering and cursing her. While there is certainly a degree of residual belief in the magical efficacy of *hijā*’ involved in Ḥassan b. Thābit’s recitation, it is just as likely that the intent was for the verses to be subsequently spread orally and eventually come to the ear of their target, thereby damaging her reputation and by proxy that of the non-Muslim Quraysh as well. Such a reliance on the oral distribution of invective verse with the aim of reducing the target’s esteem will be seen again, albeit in a very different context, in Chapters 3 and 4, in relation to Nefī’s invectives against the Ottoman chief treasurer Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha (d. 1618) and the grand vizier Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha (d. 1626).

Considered together, what the addition of a limiting verse to the end of the Qur’ānic sura 26 and the advent of Ḥassān b. Thābit as a semi-sanctioned producer of *hijā*’ for the nascent Muslim polity show is that, regardless of the new social and moral paradigm Muḥammad was in the process of fashioning and instituting, circumstances nevertheless compelled him to make certain concessions to the dominant moral understanding and social practice. In the anecdote related in al-Ṭabarī’s Qur’ānic commentary regarding the addition of verse 227 to sura 26, the concession made was to the actual praxis of poetry within Arabian society, which of necessity included *hijā*’ as well. This is then demonstrated by the same author’s account, in his history, of Ḥassan b. Thābit’s

³⁰ *Ibid.* Translation by W. Montgomery Watt and M.V. McDonald.

lamponing of Hind b. ‘Utba, which reveals that the vaunted new moral paradigm of the Muslim *umma* was, as it had to be, highly flexible and contingent.

The praxis of invective did not become obsolete once Islam had become the prevailing paradigm in the region. However, as the religion became the dominant political force and social authority, spreading beyond Arabia, the sociocultural environment perforce also began to change, a process that was compounded by increasing urbanization.³¹

Further affecting the practice of poetry, including invective, was the gradual development—under the Umayyad caliphs of the late 7th and early 8th centuries and, especially, under the Abbasids at Baghdad between the 8th and the 10th centuries—of a relatively centralized administrative structure devolving authority outward toward the periphery. This permitted the development of a stratified series of courts wherein literary and artistic patronage was practiced, giving poets various loci within which to ply their trade and various rival power foci against whose poet/clients (or rulers) they could direct their invective.³² Such political and institutional changes necessarily altered the environments within which *hijā’* was produced. From another perspective, however, a seemingly novel development such as court-based patronage can be seen as simply a different iteration of what was already in place: for instance, Muḥammad’s sanctioning of Ḥassan b. Thābit’s poetic practice—which was not limited to invective, as he also

³¹ For an overview of regional urbanization focused on the early Islamicate era, see Paul Wheatley, *The Places where Men Pray Together: Cities in Islamic Lands, Seventh through the Tenth Centuries* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

³² For an overview of the development of patronage and courts in the early Islamicate period, see Monique Bernards and John Nawas, eds., *Patronage and Patronage in Early and Classical Islam* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005). For the same subject with regard to the medieval period, see Jocelyn Sharlet, *Patronage and Poetry in the Islamic World: Social Mobility and Status in the Medieval Middle East and Central Asia* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011).

produced numerous panegyrics praising the Muslim prophet—is best understood if Muḥammad is viewed as a patron residing at his court in Medina and traveling with a peripatetic court to the varied battlefields where he fought. While the structure and trappings of the courtly and urban environments would be drastically different over subsequent centuries according to the surrounding political, economic, and sociocultural environments, the basic functions of invective (as well as of its fraternal twin, the panegyric mode) within these macro and micro settings would remain remarkably stable, largely as a consequence of the fact that, as discussed above, invective is a discursive mode that is fundamentally *defined by* its functions.

In the following section, I will use a pair of specific cases to examine several different aspects of the invective mode as practiced in the 16th-century Ottoman sociocultural sphere, which will establish the immediate historical background against which the subsequent in-depth examination of early 17th-century Ottoman invective can be set.

1.1.2 Aspects of 16th-century Ottoman invective

In the early 1520s, in the courtyard of the Mosque of Sultan Bāyezīd in Istanbul, a confectioner originally from Bursa had a famed confectionery that the biographer ‘Āşık Çelebi (1520–1572) said “was like the azure mansion of the sky, its doors and walls luminous as the stars with its ceramic and glass pots.”³³ The confectioner was also a poet who went by the pen name Kāndī (d. 1555) and was especially well known for his production of verse chronograms on current events both momentous and mundane.

³³ “Kaşr-ı mīnā-yı felek gibi çini vü şırça hoşkalarla der ü divār-ı dükkānı pür-encüm-i tãbdãrdı.” ‘Āşık Çelebi, *Meşâ’irü’ş-Şu’arâ: İnceleme – Metin*, Vol. 3, ed. Filiz Kılıç (Istanbul: İstanbul Araştırmaları Enstitüsü Yayınları, 2010), 1329.

‘Āşık Çelebi tells the story of how one of these chronograms, directed against the poet Ḥayālī (d. 1557), led directly to Ḳandī’s professional ruin.

Ḥayālī, the target of the chronogram, had himself originally come to Istanbul as part of a ragtag band of antinomian Ḥaydarī dervishes,³⁴ but over time his penchant for verse—and, in the view of many, his sycophantic nature—won him a succession of powerful patrons, until finally he became favored by Sultan Süleymān the Magnificent (r. 1520–1566) as well as his grand vizier Ibrāhīm Pasha (d. 1536). Up to this time, despite his burgeoning fame and wealth as a result of gifts bestowed in return for poetry, Ḥayālī continued to affect the manner and the clothing of an antinomian peripatetic dervish, with earrings in his ears, bracelets round his wrists, and a collar round his neck (see Illustration 1).³⁵ But then, so as to be given a regular military salary (‘*ulūfe*), he was granted a nominal post in the Istanbul-based *sipāhī* corps, and such dervish accoutrements were no longer fitting.³⁶ ‘Āşık Çelebi takes up the story from there:

³⁴ Though many have described the group of dervishes Ḥayālī had joined as Qalandarī, his manner of dress as described in the invectives against him makes it clear that he was in fact affiliated with the Ḥaydarī. For more information about the Ḥaydarī during the period in question, see Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *God’s Unruly Friends: Dervish Groups in the Islamic Later Middle Period, 1200–1550* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006), 67–70.

³⁵ The engraving in Figure 1 is from Nicolas de Nicolay, *Le Navigationi et Viaggi, Fatti nella Turchia* (Venice: Francesco Ziletti, 1580), 108. Note that de Nicolay mislabels this clearly Ḥaydarī dervish as a Qalandarī. In the engraving, one can see the collar, earrings, and bracelets that Ḥayālī is likely to have worn, though one would assume he would not have so openly worn the penis ring, at least not while in the presence of the sultan or grand vizier.

³⁶ This seems to have been the order of events as recounted in ‘Āşık Çelebi’s biographical entry on Ḳandī. The same author’s biography of Ḥayālī himself, however, seems to indicate that the dervish accoutrements came off somewhat earlier, when Ḥayālī first became a companion of the grand vizier; see ‘Āşık Çelebi, *Meşâ’irü’ş-Şu’arâ*, Vol. 3, 1544. In any case, ‘Āşık Çelebi’s dense style of *inşâ* composition makes it impossible to pinpoint exactly when Ḥayālī’s dress changed; suffice it to say that it surely happened sometime relatively soon after he began to enjoy the patronage and company of the Ottoman state’s highest officials.



Illustration 1

Engraving depicting a Haydarī dervish

The late Ḥayālī Beg was granted a military salary, and when the Ḥaydarī collar went from his head and neck and the Qalandarī hooks fell from his arms, out of envy Ḳandī recited a chronogram.

Verse: o Ḥayālī! that hoop can never come off, alas!³⁷

Hearing this, one day Ḥayālī, drunk, filled his skirts with stones and went and pelted Ḳandī with them. Ḳandī, under attack, ended up [looking as ridiculous as] a monkey, and he turned and fled. Ḥayālī was reciting his own couplet [as he stoned Ḳandī's shop].

Couplet: the mad lover is he who, in the bazaar of love, | glazes the heavens' nine glasses with disdain's stones

All of [Ḳandī's] pots and bottles were shattered like the honor of a drunkard and the heart of a lover and the whole shop became a cacophony of glass with the broken fragments. The late Ḳandī went to that modern-day Ḥātīm of generosity,³⁸ that signet ring on the finger of viziership, İbrāhīm Pasha, to complain of and weep over what had happened to him. In exchange for his tears, [the grand vizier] filled his skirts with silver and gold pieces, and despite himself [Ḳandī] was consoled as easily as if he were a little boy.³⁹

This anecdote, and the invective chronogram at its core, might be analyzed in terms of three facets: (1) the cause of or reason for the composition of the invective; (2) the immediate effect(s) that the invective produced; and (3) the medium- and long-term effect(s) to which the invective, and its aftermath, led. These three facets, in turn, provide a window onto the sociocultural, political, and economic aspects that lay behind

³⁷ The chronogram (*ey Ḥayālī halka geçmez oldu āh*) records the date AH 932 (1525/26 CE). The version of the verse used by Muştafā 'Ālī of Gallipoli in his account of the story (*Geçmez oldu Ḥayālīyā [h]ulkuḡ*) records the date AH 931 (1524/25 CE); see Muştafā 'Ālī, *Künhü'l-Ahbar'ın Tezkire Kısmı: Metin*, ed. Mustafa İsen, http://courses.washington.edu/otap/archive/data/arch_txt/texts/a_kunhul.html.

³⁸ This is an allusion to Ḥātīm al-Ṭā'ī (*fl.* 6th century CE), an Arab warrior and poet of the Ṭayy tribe, who became proverbial for his generosity and magnanimity, with stories of these qualities of his frequently used in works of *adab*; see Cornelis van Arendonk, "Ḥātīm al-Ṭā'ī," *EF²*, Vol. 3, 274–275.

³⁹ "Ḥayālī Beg-i merhūma 'ulūfe olup başdan ve gerdeninden tavḡ-ı ḥayderī ve kollarından ḡullāb-ı ḡalenderī ḡitdükde Ḳandī ḡasedinden *Mıṣrā* 'Ey Ḥayālī halka geçmez oldu āh diyü tārīḡ didükde Ḥayālī işidüp bir gün mestāne dāmānın taṡ ḡoldurup gelüp Ḳandī'yi taṡa tṡtdı[.] Ḳandī ḡopa tṡtilmiş maymuna dönüp ḡaçdı[.] Ḥayālī kendünün bu beytin okıyarak *Beyt* 'Aṡıḡ-ı dīvāne oldur 'ıṡḡ bāzārında kim / Bu ḡokuz mīnāyı sır bir seng-i istiḡnā ile [h]oḡḡaları ve ṡiṡeleri 'ırz-ı mest ve ḡalb-ı 'āṡıḡ gibi pāre pāre olup ferṡ-i dükkānı rīze-i mīnūyla çerḡ-i mīnāya döndi. Ḳandī-i merḡum Ḥātem-i zemān-ı mürüvvet, ḡātem-i engüṡt-i vezāret İbrāhīm Paṡa'ya ḡālin aḡladı. Gözi yaṡından bedel dāmānın sīm ü zerle pür itdi ki tıfl-ı küdek-sāle gibi bī-iḡtiyār avundu." 'Aṡıḡ Çelebi, *Meṡā'irü's-ṡu'arā*, Vol. 3, 1329–1330.

the production of Ottoman invective not only in the 16th century, when Ḥayālī vandalized Ḳandī’s confectionery, but also in the early 17th century, the period on which the rest of this dissertation will focus.

1.1.2.1 Envy and rivalry

*Alas, there is no return for the arrow once shot.*⁴⁰

To discuss the aforementioned facets of the Ḳandī-Ḥayālī anecdote in order, the cause of or reason for Ḳandī’s production of the invective chronogram was, on a basic level, simple envy: Ḥayālī received a special favor above and beyond the gifts of money or clothing that he and other poets would be routinely granted for poetic compositions, and this was looked at askance by Ḳandī, who, according to the contemporary biographer Laṭīfī (1491–1582), was known for his “selfish jealousy, evil mind, and malicious nature.”⁴¹ Yet Ḳandī seems to have been by no means alone in his rancor toward Ḥayālī on the occasion of his being granted this favor: in his own account of this incident, the historian and polymath Muṣṭafā ‘Ālī of Gallipoli (1541–1600) mentions how “the rest of the poets who envied him (*e.g.*, Ḥayālī) made [Ḳandī’s] verse quite famous.”⁴²

One of the other poets who “envied” Ḥayālī was the soldier Duḳaginzāde Yaḥyā Beḡ (d. 1582) of Taşlıca (today’s Pljevlja in Montenegro). These two poets had a quarrel, punctuated by an exchange of invectives, that would ultimately play a part in Ḥayālī’s

⁴⁰ “Dırīḡā ki dönmeḡ yokdur ol oḡ ki atılmışdur.” ‘Āşık Çelebi, *Meşâ ‘irü’ş-Şu ‘arâ*, Vol. 2, 880.

⁴¹ “Ammâ ḡasüd-ı ḡod-bîn ve siyâh-ḡâṭır u pür-kîndür.” Laṭīfī, *Tezkiretü’ş-Şu ‘arâ ve Tabsiratü’n-Nuzamâ (İnceleme – Metin)*, ed. Rıdvan Canım (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Başkanlığı, 2000), 450.

⁴² Walter G. Andrews, Najaat Black, and Mehmet Kalpaklı, ed. and trans., *Ottoman Lyric Poetry: An Anthology* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997), 235. The Ottoman text is “sâ’ir şu ‘arâ ḡasedlerinden bu mışra’a şöhret virdi”; Muṣṭafā ‘Ālī, *Künhü’l-Aḡbar’ın Tezkire Kısmı*.

disappearance from the scene. The exchange began in earnest during Sultan Süleymān's 1548 campaign against the Safavids around Van. Yaḥyā Beğ, who was participating in the campaign, submitted a panegyric to the sultan that featured the following distichs:

had there been granted to me the honors shown to Ḥayālī | God knows, I'd have made original verses like white magic || what a calamity that while he is as far beneath me as my shadow | some flaming dervish should take a place above me like the sun || I am the sword of bravery, he an impotent mystic | I am a soldier on the day of war, and he dares only strip naked⁴³

When these lines were heard by the grand vizier Rüstem Pasha (d. 1561), who was no patron of poets and harbored a special antipathy toward Ḥayālī, he granted Yaḥyā the revenues of five different waqf trusteeships upon the latter's return from campaign.⁴⁴

By this time, nearly thirty years after the incident with Ḳandī, Ḥayālī's patrons had largely disappeared, including the grand vizier İbrāhīm Pasha, whom Sultan Süleymān had had executed in 1536. As a result of this situation, Ḥayālī became something of a sitting duck for the barrage of invectives that Yaḥyā unleashed upon him, several of which mocked Ḥayālī's headgear—specifically his use of the then fashionable hat called a *yelken takyesi* (literally, “sail cap”)⁴⁵—and one of which insinuated that his wife was an adulteress.⁴⁶ To the former insults, Ḥayālī responded with the simultaneously mocking and threatening couplet: “you put a fancy hat on your head and now you're in

⁴³ “baña olaydı Ḥayālī'ye olan ḥörmetler | Ḥaḳḳ bilür sihr-i helāl eyler idüm ŧi 'r-i teri || ne belādür bu ki sāyem gibi altumda iken | gün gibi bir ışığıñ üsti yanum ola yeri || ben ŧecā'at kılıcıyam ol ışıklar pulucu | ben savař günü çeriyem o hemān cerde ceri”; Yaḥyā Beğ, *Yahyā Bey, Dīvan: Tenkidli Basım*, ed. Mehmed Çavuşođlu (Istanbul: Edebiyat Fakültesi Matbaası, 1977), 44. I have altered Çavuşođlu's transcription slightly to accord with the style used in this dissertation. Translation from Andrews, Black, and Kalpaklı, *Ottoman Lyric Poetry*, 243.

⁴⁴ The waqfs in question were those of the mosques of Abū Ayyūb al-Anřārī and Bāyezīd in Istanbul as well as of Ḳapluca, Orḥān, and Bolayır; see 'Ařık Çelebi, *Meřā 'irü 'ş-Şu 'arā*, Vol. 2, 677.

⁴⁵ For a detailed description of this cap, see Cemal Kafadar, *Kim Var İmiş Biz Burada Yođ İken: Dört Osmanlı: Yeniçeri, Tüccar, Derviş ve Hatun* (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2009), 118, note 110.

⁴⁶ For the text of these invectives, see 'Ařık Çelebi, *Meřā 'irü 'ş-Şu 'arā*, Vol. 3, 1555–1556.

vogue | don't be hurt, hatboy, I'll fuck your slanted cap."⁴⁷ Against Yaḥyā's claim that he was undeservedly enriching himself through poetry, then, Ḥayālī counters with the implicit (yet not unfounded) assertion that, at least in this instance, Yaḥyā has in fact done nothing different. As for the slander against his wife, Ḥayālī answered with the *rubā'ī* quatrain: "[you] damned pimp of a poet with a hat | crazy pimp whose wife I fucked | cast with your kohl-browed whore | and your kohl-eyed self around from city to city."⁴⁸ Whatever Ḥayālī's responses may have been, though, they had no effect upon the fact that he would not again be able to find a patron who could support him to the extent that, for instance, İbrāhīm Pasha once had.

Ḳandī and Yaḥyā's quarrels with Ḥayālī show that the apparent envy that greeted the latter's rise to fame and wealth emerged, within the invective discourse that constitutes the primary record of the quarrels, in the form of subtly sociocultural slander targeting Ḥayālī's rather socially stigmatized origin as a dervish. And in both cases, the slander centered largely around the most readily apparent manifestation of these origins; namely, the actual dervish accoutrements in the invective chronogram by Ḳandī and poor fashion sense in those by Yaḥya.

Besides this, as Yaḥyā's panegyric to Sultan Süleymān reveals, the quarrel he had with Ḥayālī also rested on a dichotomy between a veteran soldier (Yaḥyā) who had seen combat and another (Ḥayālī) who had been officially registered as a *sipāhī* to receive a salary but who never put his life on the line in battle. This was not unlike the clashes

⁴⁷ "giydün revāce başuḡa bulduḡ revācuḡı | incinme şabḳalı sikeyim eḡri ḥaḥuḡı"; *ibid.*, 1556.

⁴⁸ "şu'arānıḡ be şabḳalı gidisi | avretin sikdüḡüm delü gidisi | ḳaşı rāstıḳlı ḳahbesiyle hemān | şehrden şehre sürmelü gidisi"; *ibid.*, 1556–1557.

sometimes seen between beat cops and pencil pushers on police procedurals. What is more, as will be seen in Chapter 4, the distinction between “real soldiers” and sycophants would emerge again in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, when it not only saw use as a rather convenient fiction in the era’s advice literature, but also proved one of the underlying causes behind the numerous uprisings of the Istanbul soldiery that occurred in those years.

1.1.2.2 Power and retribution

*Proximity to the sultan is a flaming fire.*⁴⁹

To turn now to the second facet of the *Ḳandī-Ḥayālī* incident, the immediate effect(s) of *Ḳandī*’s invective chronogram—namely, *Ḥayālī*’s reaction and his drunken vandalism—are clear enough as to call for little in the way of additional analysis. What does deserve a closer look, though, is the matter of *why* *Ḥayālī*’s reaction to what seems a relatively innocuous line of verse took such an extreme and physically threatening form. At the moment when *Ḥayālī* was granted a regular military salary, his star had already been on the rise for several years, with this grant cementing and even strengthening the sociocultural status that this rise indicated: the sartorial fact of *Ḥayālī*’s having to remove his dervish accoutrements as part of the grant’s conditions was a symbolic representation of his move to a higher status and his acceptance into the Ottoman hierarchy. Contrary to this, *Ḳandī*’s verse implies that, regardless of *Ḥayālī*’s change of

⁴⁹ “قرب سلطان آتش سزان بود”. This hemistich is taken from *Farīd al-dīn ‘Aṭṭār*’s (c. 1145/46–1221) *Pandnāma* (Book of Counsels), from the eleventh chapter, entitled “On Four Things That Are Perilous” (در بیان چار چیز که اندر خطر بود), with the four things in question being proximity to the sultan, companionship with wicked people, desire for the world or worldly things, and associating with women. See *Farīd al-dīn ‘Aṭṭār, Pend-namēh ou Le livre des conseils de Férid-eddin Attar*, ed. Silvestre de Sacy (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1819), ۲۰.

status, as a person of unknown (but most likely humble) origin who had come to the capital as a young hanger-on of a wandering dervish shaykh, there was in Ḥayālī an essential “lowness” that neither removal of the dervish accoutrements nor the granting of a regular military salary could efface. Coming from Ḳandī, himself a confectioner of humble origin, such a veiled indictment of social mobility may seem to be an instance of both the pot calling the kettle black and of potentially shooting himself in the foot.

Nevertheless, the chronogram needs to be considered in the context of the Ottoman patronage of the time and how poets maneuvered within its rather unsystematic system: Ḳandī’s chronogram was not simply railing against a social mobility that could elevate a “lowly” figure like Ḥayālī, but also working to elevate its author’s own cultural status as a producer of refined verse in an environment where such personal attacks were for the most part accepted, owing to their ongoing presence throughout nearly ten centuries of the Islamicate poetic tradition. Until the target Ḥayālī responded to the attacker Ḳandī’s invective—preferably in kind (*i.e.*, with invective adopting a similar approach or point of attack)—the whole weight of the accusation would necessarily fall on the former. As such, since the scales had thus been tipped in favor of the attacker, the target would be expected and even, from a certain perspective, required to respond, whether that response be studied silence or verbal or (as turned out to be the case) physical attack. The point behind Ḳandī’s invective, then—and indeed behind virtually all invective—was to aggressively devalue Ḥayālī in the eyes of peers (*i.e.*, fellow poet/clients) and particularly of actual or potential patrons (*i.e.*, figures like the sultan and grand vizier), and in so doing to potentially raise his own value in the eyes of the same.

In Kāndī's case, of course, this did not work out: his target Ḥayālī was protected directly by the grand vizier İbrāhīm Pasha and even, albeit more remotely, by the esteem of the sultan himself. When Yaḥyā set his sights on Ḥayālī some three decades later, however, the situation had changed. Rüstem Pasha, who was initially appointed to the grand vizierate in 1544, was a patron more of scholars than of poets,⁵⁰ and as mentioned above appears to have had a particular aversion to Ḥayālī.⁵¹ As such, Yaḥyā's defamation of Ḥayālī in his panegyric to the sultan did indeed manage to raise the former's esteem in Rüstem Pasha's eyes, creating a windfall for himself through the grand vizier's bestowal of waqf trusteeships. This brief period of prosperity for Yaḥyā, however, would last for no more than a few years, as 'Āşık Çelebi describes:

Later [in 1555], [Rüstem] used the excuse that [Yaḥyā] was misappropriating a small amount from the sultan's favor to have him dismissed from his trusteeships and investigated [for misconduct], ruining his honor (*'irz*). Finally, he granted him a fief (*ze 'āmet*) of 27,000 *ağçes*⁵² [in Izvornik in Bulgaria], jesting with his posterity.⁵³

Though it is covered up by 'Āşık Çelebi here, Yaḥyā's falling out with and exile by Rüstem Pasha was a result of his having produced an elegy (*mersiyye*) for the prince Muştafā (1515–1553), who had been executed by Sultan Süleymān—an elegy in which Yaḥyā criticized the sultan for the prince's execution. The content of this elegy was

⁵⁰ Halûk İpekten, *Divan Edebiyatında Edebî Muhitler* (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1996), 154–155.

⁵¹ “[R]ağman li'l-Khayālī”; 'Āşık Çelebi, *Meşâ 'irü'ş-Şu'arâ*, Vol. 2, 677.

⁵² According to Muştafā 'Ālī, the fief was of 30,000 *ağçes*; see Muştafā 'Ālī, *Künhü'l-Ahbar'ın Tezkire Kısım*.

⁵³ “Ba' deḥū cüz'ī nesneyi şehāne iḥsānlarından rücū'a bahāne edüp tevliyetden 'azl ve teftişler etdürüp 'irzın bezl etdiler. Āḥir yiğirmi yedi biñ ağça ze 'āmet verüp ceddin hezl etdiler.” 'Āşık Çelebi, *Meşâ 'irü'ş-Şu'arâ*, Vol. 2, 677.

conveyed to Rüstem, possibly in part by Ḥayālī, when he returned to the grand vizierate in 1555 after a brief period of dismissal, and Rüstem used this fact to be rid of Yahya.⁵⁴

1.1.2.3 Favor and deprivation

*The poem's meaning is in the poet's belly.*⁵⁵

Finally, to examine the implications of the medium- and long-term effect(s) of Kandı's invective chronogram, the relative ease with which he was bought off by Ḥayālī's patron, the grand vizier Ibrāhīm Pasha, is rather derisively criticized by 'Āşık Çelebi, who basically compares him to a little boy whose father shuts up his whining by giving him something pretty. Similarly, Muştafā 'Ālī's account accomplishes much the same criticism by simply altering the amount of money the grand vizier used to buy the poet off from 'Āşık Çelebi's skirt-filling mass of silver and gold to the dismissive "a few *ağçes*" (*bir kaç ağça*).⁵⁶ Given the expectations laid upon affronted poets within the Ottoman patronage system, as mentioned above, the clear implication is that Kandı's going straight to Ḥayālī's patron for restitution lacked a certain integrity, as he effectively turned himself into a beggar rather than replying to the offender directly. In any case, as both biographers point out, the whole incident put an end to Kandı's confectionery, since he never again opened a shop but instead chose to live in a room rented from the waqf associated with the Mosque of Sultan Bāyezīd.

⁵⁴ Muştafā 'Ālī, *Künhü'l-Ahbar'ın Tezkire Kısmı*. See also Ahmet Atillâ Şentürk, *Taşlıcalı Yahya Beğ'in Şehzâde Mustafa Mersiyesi yahut Kanunî Hicviyesi* (Istanbul: Büyüyen Ay Yayınları, 2014), 94–97.

⁵⁵ "معنى الشعر في بطن الشاعر". This is an Arabic proverb that is generally used to mean that only the author of a particular poem, particularly an obscure one, can know the poem's real meaning; in this sense, the word *باطن* (*batn*) refers to the notion of something that is internal, intrinsic, or unapparent. Here, however, I take the liberty of rendering this word in its more fundamental meaning of "belly, stomach," and thereby use the proverb to indicate how poetry in the context of the Ottoman patronage system was often a means of earning one's livelihood.

⁵⁶ Muştafā 'Ālī, *Künhü'l-Ahbar'ın Tezkire Kısmı*.

Nevertheless, this change in andī’s occupational fortunes appears to have had little, if any, effect on his standing or reputation as a poet *per se*, because over the next decade he continued to submit panegyrics to the sultan, primarily on the occasion of holidays (‘*īd*), and to receive substantial cash gifts in return. This is evidenced by a government register recording the gifts granted to poets in return for their verse between the dates of Rajab 933 (April 3–May 2, 1527) and Rajab 942 (December 26, 1535–January 24, 1536).⁵⁷ During this period, beginning just a year after the destruction of andī’s shop and corresponding to nearly the last ten years of Ibrāhīm Pasha’s grand vizierate, andī received cash gifts on eleven separate occasions, with all but two of these being in the amount of 1,000 *açes*, a quite significant sum, and the total amounting to 9,600 *açes*.⁵⁸ Thus, even if andī’s reputation among his peers may have been somewhat tarnished as a result of his brush with the more highly favored ayālī, his ability to use poetry to extract income from potential patrons clearly remained quite intact.

This was not the case, however, with all of ayālī’s rivals for favor. We saw above how Yayā Be had a brief period of prosperity in the late 1540s and early 1550s as a direct result of invective against ayālī. Such had not always been the case, however. For instance, in the same register of gifts to poets mentioned above, Yayā is recorded as receiving remunerations on only three occasions, amounting to a total of no more than 2,000 *açes*. While it is true that, as a soldier, for a significant amount of this period he

⁵⁷ See İsmail E. Erünsal, “Türk Edebiyatı Tarihinin Arşiv Kaynakları II: Kanunî Sultan Süleyman Devrine Ait Bir İn’âmât Defteri,” *Osmanlı Araştırmaları / The Journal of Ottoman Studies* 4 (1984): 1–17.

⁵⁸ It is worth noting that, over the same period, ayālī also received cash gifts on eleven separate occasions, with each gift being in the amount of 1,000 *açes* and the total thus amounting to 11,000 *açes*. That is to say, in terms simply of the money with which they were gifted (at least as recorded in the register), there was relatively little to distinguish ayālī from andī.

was in fact away on campaign, this only serves to further emphasize the complaint that he would later level about Ḥayālī's being "an impotent mystic" (*ışıklar pulucu*) while he himself was "the sword of bravery" (*şecā'at kılıcı*): Yaḥyā, for much of his life, lacked many opportunities to utilize the currency of poetry to earn economic capital, and his apparent resentment at this particular contingency spilled over into resentment against Ḥayālī.

I have here dwelt upon the story of Kāndī's "fall"—if it can be considered such—as well as Ḥayālī and Yaḥyā's clash because they rather neatly encapsulate some of the aspects of the practice of invective in Ottoman poetic circles during the early modern era. In particular, these two conflicts centered on Ḥayālī point, in their genesis and the subsequent development of their invective discourse, to the social or sociocultural elements underlying the production of invective verse in the Ottoman context. Ḥayālī's origins and, especially, group affiliation are employed by Kāndī and Yaḥyā as weapons against him, weapons with the potential (unrealized in the case of Kāndī, realized if only briefly in the case of Yaḥyā) to reduce the target Ḥayālī's esteem while simultaneously raising the esteem of the invectives' producers themselves. At the same time, in their resolution the two conflicts hint at the variety of economic environment within which poets operated and produced invective: this was a patronage system where poetry served not only as an index of cultural achievement and sociocultural status, but also where, in many cases, it functioned as an actual commodity, one that was able to secure definite material advantages for the producer. Finally, there is a political aspect to the Ottoman practice of invective that is especially apparent in the clash between Yaḥyā and Ḥayālī,

but even to some extent in that between Ẕandī and Ḥayālī as well: the ultimate authority deciding these poets' fates was not their direct antagonist (Ḥayālī) and his reaction to their invective, whether verbal or physical, but the patron (İbrāhīm Pasha, Rüstem Pasha) who stood outside and above the conflict yet could also serve as a final and irrevocable appeal in the matter—at least during this period, although, as will be seen in Chapters 3 and 4, this situation would prove to be quite different in the early 17th - century context.

These different aspects of the Ottoman practice of invective point to both a vertical (*i.e.*, client-patron) dimension and a horizontal (*i.e.*, client-client) dimension, a consideration of which will serve as the subject of the following section.

1.1.3 Vertical and horizontal invective

The poets Ẕandī and Yaḥyā, in writing invectives against their fellow poet Ḥayālī, were producing what, following and adjusting the work of Thomas Conley,⁵⁹ I choose to call “horizontal invective.” By contrast, the invective produced by the poet Nef‘ī against the chief judges ‘Alī and Mūsā Efendi, given at the beginning of this chapter, are examples of “vertical invective.” Working in the broader area of insult, both written and oral, Conley plots what he calls the “scenario” of insult along horizontal and vertical axes: the former involves “exchanges [of insults] between equal parties” or social peers, while the latter refers to insults “levied by (purported) superiors to inferiors or inferiors to

⁵⁹ Thomas Conley, *Toward a Rhetoric of Insult* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2010).

superiors.’⁶⁰ This is of course, as Conley himself readily admits, at best a rough rubric. Indeed it must be, since for example a target who is *de jure* and/or *de facto* one’s superior in a given sociopolitical hierarchy, such as the Ottoman administrative structure, might simultaneously be considered one’s inferior in a given cultural realm, such as literature or science.

Such would be the case applicable to Nef‘ī’s quatrain against the chief judges. At the time of writing, he held a post in the financial sub-branch (*māliyye*) of the Ottoman bureaucratic branch (*kalemiyye*), which was a quite separate part of the Ottoman administration as compared to the positions held by ‘Alī and Mūsā Efendi, which were in the judicial sub-branch of the religiojudicial state apparatus (*‘ilmiyye*). Moreover, Nef‘ī’s post was a middling one quite far below the high level of dignity and power accorded to a position such as chief judge. Thus, in Bourdieusian terms, which will be mentioned in more detail below, this instance was not a matter of the figures involved belonging to separate fields, but rather of their occupying distinct positions within the same broad field that was the overall Ottoman state structure. In this sense, then, Nef‘ī’s quatrain against the two chief judges must certainly be considered an “inferior” striking at a “superior.” At the same time, however, Nef‘ī held a degree of esteem as a poet who had already produced sizable *dīvāns* of collected poems in both Turkish and Persian, while ‘Alī and Mūsā Efendi were, respectively, a scholar and a physician, with only the former having a scholarly work credited to his name, the 1612 *Rāfi‘ al-ghubūsh fī*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

fazā'ili'l-Hubūsh (Dispelling the Darkness on the Merits of the Ethiopians).⁶¹ In this case, then, Nef'ī might in a sense be taken as the cultural “superior” of both men—and his quatrain certainly hints that he saw himself as such, since his response to their appointment is to attack and insult them in a vehicle, poetry, that one might assume both targets were much less versed in than him.

Similarly, in the case of Kāndī's invective chronogram against Ḥayālī, in spite of the fact that both men were poets, there was a clear difference between them in terms of hierarchy, with the target Ḥayālī, a companion of the grand vizier and the sultan, noticeably higher on the totem pole than the confectioner Kāndī. In fact, it was in large part this difference in their status that prompted Kāndī's invective in the first place, as was also the case with Yaḥyā's initial complaint against Ḥayālī embedded in the panegyric addressed to Sultan Süleymān. Nevertheless, the fact that Kāndī and Yaḥyā's objections to Ḥayālī were framed in these terms actually demonstrates that a roughly horizontal relationship was in play: their insults and complaints were designed to reduce Ḥayālī's status and to even the playing field, as it were, while Ḥayālī's response to Yaḥyā and even, in a sense, to Kāndī were aimed at a kind of preservation of the status quo.

Not all such “horizontal” exchanges of verse, it should be noted, were of such a serious nature. Very often they were more in the nature of joking among fellow poets who were

⁶¹ Süleymaniye Library, Fatih collection, 4360; the definitive introduction to this work is Tezcan, “Dispelling the Darkness,” 85–95. It should be noted, however, that regardless of how fascinating this work is for the modern historian, the fact that it exists in just one known manuscript copy shows that it exercised little to no influence in its time or after, and thus can hardly be taken to have been, to contemporaries, an indication of 'Alī Efendi's scholarly clout.

friends, a variety of friendly rivalry to see who might come up with the wittier turn of phrase or the more striking image. The exemplar of this is the poet Zātī's (1471–1547) collection under the rubric *Lātīfehā* (Pleasantries). This collection, as its rubric suggests, is marked by a non-aggressive, mocking tone, and indeed the collection is structured as a series of brief anecdotes, most of which explain the particular occasion for the production of a given piece of verse by Zātī, with the verse generally given as the anecdote's punchline in such a way as to showcase the author's skill and wit. The following might be seen as a typical example, employing as it does clever punning on the meanings of the words *beyt* ("distich" and "house") and *ehl* ("people" and "wife"):

Pleasantry: Master Keşfi lampooned (*hicv eylemiş*) this weak and frail one [*i.e.*, Zātī], he recited many verses, he read them out at length to another poet (*yārān*). That poet said, "Why did you write so much? All he'll do is recite a verse against you [in response]." Keşfi said, "He can recite what he wants, my verses have lots of supporters (*beytümün ehli*)." When I heard this, I came up with this verse. *Verse:* "Keşfi said his verses have many supporters | bravo! I'll go and fuck his wife (*ehl-i beyt*) then."⁶²

However serious an insult or threat this may seem, there are two points that, taken in conjunction, reveal that it is in fact little more than playful ribbing. Firstly, the poets Zātī and Keşfi (d. 1538/39) were operating in a male and highly masculinized homosocial environment in which such "pleasantries" were by no means abnormal, albeit if taken seriously they could certainly lead to a falling out between the parties involved.

⁶² "**Lātīfe:** Mevlānā Keşfi bu za'if ü naḥīfī hicv eylemiş, çok beyitler demiş, uzun uzak yārānuḡ birine okıyū vērmiş. Ol yārān ayıtmış: Ne çok demişsin? ol saḡa bir beyit dēr ancak. Keşfi ayıtmış: Anuḡ dēdüḡi neye yarar, benüm beytümün ehli çokdur. Bunu işidicek bu beyti dēdüm *Beyt:* Keşfi çokdur beytümün ehli demiş | vāy ben anuḡ ehl-i beytini sikem." Mehmed Çavuşoḡlu, "Zātī'nin Letāyifī," *Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Dergisi* 18 (1970), 28. I have altered Çavuşoḡlu's transcription slightly to accord with the style used in this dissertation.

Secondly, and more importantly, both this collection by Z̄ātī and other sources⁶³ confirm that Z̄ātī and Keşfi were close friends plying their trade in the same poetic circles.

Essentially, then, anecdotes and verse of this variety were no more than 16th-century Ottoman locker room talk. As such, it would in fact be misleading to classify such “pleasantries” (*leṭā’if*) as invectives (*hicv*), as their context and intentions were fundamentally different from, for example, the quarrel between K̄andī and Ḥayālī or, indeed, between Neṫī and any number of other poets in the early 17th century, as will be seen in Chapters 5 and 6.

In the case of what I call “vertical invective,” though, any such joking among friends is more or less out of the question. A poet, and thus potential client, producing verse against a figure who, due to his status or official post or wealth, was in a position to serve as a potential patron, simply would not mockingly jest with that figure of higher status in a manner touching upon the latter’s honor (*’ird*), as that would potentially endanger the poet/client’s livelihood—and possibly his life as well. Therefore, all such vertical invectives are inherently serious in nature. The history of Islamicate invective affords numerous examples of such vertical invective. Straddling the pre-Islamic and Islamic era, for example, was the poet al-Ḥuṭay’a (*fl.* 7th century CE), who was known to travel along with different tribes from one city to another threatening figures of authority with invective in such a way as to extort money from them so that he would not lampoon

⁶³ For instance, when Keşfi’s brother, the poet Ḥaşbī, was imprisoned by the grand vizier İbrāhīm Pasha, Z̄ātī called together some from among his circle, including the aforementioned K̄andī, to attempt to get the grand vizier to pardon him; see K̄inalızāde Ḥasan Çelebi, *Tezkiretü’ş-Şu’arâ*, ed. Aysun Sungurhan (Ankara: T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2017), 320.

them.⁶⁴ In the Persian sphere, the poet Anwarī (d. c. 1186) was long a courtier under the Seljuk sultan Sanjar (r. 1118–1157), a stable position from which he would produce invectives against various authority figures not only demanding gifts or cash, but also criticizing them for ostensible moral failings.⁶⁵

In the Ottoman sphere, prior to Nef'ī's invective collection in the early 17th century, the most extensive extant example of vertical invective was the flurry of work produced in the wake of Sultan Süleymān's execution of his son, the prince Muştafā, already mentioned above in connection with the exile of Yaḥyā Beğ.⁶⁶ All of these pieces are framed as elegies for the deceased Muştafā, but many of them, such as Yaḥyā's, also contain criticism of the figures perceived as involved in the execution, including the sultan, his wife Hürrem Sultan (Roxelana; d. 1558), and the grand mufti (*şeyhü'l-İslām*) Ebū's-su'ūd Efendi (1490–1574). For the most part these criticisms were rather veiled and subtle, though in some cases the discourse took on an approach much more akin to direct invective, as in these lines from the poet Nisāyī's elegy:

⁶⁴ For more on al-Ḥuṭay'a, whose real name was Jarwal b. 'Aws, and his reputation, see Ignaz Goldziher and Charles Pellat, "Al-Ḥuṭay'a," *ET*, Vol. 3, 641 and Ishaq Olanrewaju Oloyede, "A Re-consideration of the Life of the Arab Poet Al-Ḥuṭay'ah (590–679 C.E.)," *ALORE: The Ilorin Journal of Humanities* (n.d.): 67–86.

⁶⁵ For more on Anwarī, see J.T.P. de Bruijn, "Anwarī," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, December 15, 1986. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/anwari> and Riccardo Zipoli, "Anvari, a Master of Obscene Verse," in *Studies on the Poetry of Anvari*, ed. Daniela Meneghini (Venice: Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia, 2006): 149–172.

⁶⁶ For collections of these pieces, see Mehmed Çavuşoğlu, "16. Yüzyılda Yaşamış Bir Kadın Şair: Nisāyī," *Tarih Enstitüsü Dergisi* 9 (1978), 411–413; Mehmed Çavuşoğlu, "Şehzâde Mustafa Mersiyeleri," *Tarih Enstitüsü Dergisi* 12 (1981–1982): 641–686; Mustafa İsen, "Şehzâde Mustafa İçin Yazılmış Üç Yeni Mersiye," *Türk Kültürü Araştırmaları* 22, nos. 1–2 (1984): 104–109; Ayhan Gültaş, "Bilinmeyen Şehzade Mustafa Mersiyeleri," *Kubbealtı Akademi Mecmuası* 18, no. 3 (July 1989): 37–49; Şentürk, *Taşlıcalı Yahyâ Beğ'in Şehzâde Mustafa Mersiyesi*; and Muvaffak Eflatun, "Hasbî'nin Şehzade Mustafa Mersiyesi," *21. Yüzyılda Eğitim ve Toplum Eğitim Bilimleri ve Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi* 5, no. 15 (2016): 159–178.

you [*i.e.*, Süleymān] listened to the words of a Russian witch [*i.e.*, Hürrem] | duped by [her] wiles and deceit you heeded that hag | [you] have slaughtered that tall cypress [*i.e.*, Muştafā], the fruit of your life's garden | what has the pitiless shah of the world done, Prince Muştafā! || you are the shah of the world yet the people despise you | no one will show you the slightest pity now | [and] may the mufti [*i.e.*, Ebū's-su'ūd] who caused this not obtain God's mercy | what has the merciless shah of the world done, Prince Muştafā!⁶⁷

Following the criticisms aimed at himself both openly and subtly, Sultan Süleymān appears to have done nothing in the way of exacting punishment from his critics, although as has been seen, Rüstem Pasha did arrange for Yaḥyā Beğ to be exiled as a result of the latter's critical elegy. This lack of action on the part of the sultan, while possibly partly attributable to personal regret, rests on a basis of power that is among the main elements distinguishing vertical from horizontal invective. Within the horizontal dimension, a poet who had been lampooned by another poet was generally expected to reply or else lose face, which would effectively hand his antagonist the victory. Within the vertical dimension, however, response to an invective would require actual punishment of some variety, leading to a situation whereby clemency could be used as an assertion (or reassertion) of power over the producer of invective. In connection with medieval Islamicate invective, Zoltán Szombathy describes this possibility as follows:

[T]he more powerful—and conspicuously powerful—a person, the more potential for longanimity. The wider the gap, socially and politically, between offender and offended, the greater the possibility of forgoing punishment, and the less likely the act to be mistaken for a lack of power.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ “bir Urus cādūsınuñ sözin kulağuna koyup | mekr [ü] āle aldanuban ol ‘acüzaya uyup | bāğ-ı ‘ömrün ħāşılı ol serv-i āzāda kıyup | bī-terahḥum şāh-ı ‘ālem n’ētdi Sultān Muştafā || şāh-ı ‘ālemsin veli ḥalk tutdı senden nefreti | kimsenün ħalmadı hergiz saña meyl-i şefkati | bā’is olan müftıye de ėrmesün Ḥaḳḳ rahmeti | merḥametsüz şāh-ı ‘ālem n’ētdi Sultān Muştafā”; Çavuşoğlu, “16. Yüzyılda Yaşamış Bir Kadın Şair: Nisâyi,” 412.

⁶⁸ Zoltán Szombathy, “Actions Speak Louder than Words: Reactions to Lampoons and Abusive Poetry in Medieval Arabic Society,” in *Public Violence in Islamic Societies: Power, Discipline, and the*

As will be examined in Chapters 3 and 4, this is a phenomenon that has much to reveal about the early 17th-century situation at the Ottoman center in connection with Nef'ī's production of vertical invective. As Walter G. Andrews and Mehmet Kalpaklı point out in this regard:

Nef'ī, as a poet of the court, is caught up in a struggle to see which class will emerge dominant from a highly fluid economic and political climate. [...] More than any of the poetic greats, Nef'ī uses the powers of language—both the positive [*i.e.*, panegyric] and the negative (satiric)—in the transactional economics of court poetry.⁶⁹

1.2 Methodology and theoretical framework

As can be gleaned from the foregoing discussion concerning the primacy of function in invective, this is a discursive mode that is thickly intertwined with and reflective of the sociocultural, political, and even economic environment within which it is produced.

While this is of course true for any literary production, for invective the relation between text and context is necessarily even more direct than is the case with many other modes of literature. Since invective is a relatively unmediated response to (usually) a person or persons that is less concerned with aesthetic matters than with creating an immediate effect upon its target, any analysis of invective that forgoes or deemphasizes the external environment in which that effect is meant to be produced in favor of concentrating on how an invective is internally constructed—*i.e.*, on aesthetics—will of necessity be telling far less than half the story. This, for example, has been one major element in the problematic approaches plaguing the literature on Nef'ī's invective corpus, as will be

Construction of the Public Sphere, 7th–19th Centuries CE, ed. Christian Lange and Maribel Fiero (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 99.

⁶⁹ Walter G. Andrews and Mehmet Kalpaklı, “Across Chasms of Change: The Kaside in Late Ottoman and Republican Times,” in *Qasida Poetry in Islamic Asia and Africa. Volume One: Classical Traditions and Modern Meanings*, eds. Stefan Sperl and Christopher Shackle (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996): 302, 304.

seen in the literature review in Chapter 2. Briefly, as will be fleshed out there, those scholars who have dealt with this corpus—and, more broadly, this mode—have been guided mainly by aesthetic and moral concerns, attempting to see whether the works that constitute this corpus can be considered “literature” or “literary”—or even fit for reading at all. This approach leads to analyses that fail to situate such texts within their contexts and that neglect to look very deeply into the vital matter of *why* and *to what purpose* they were produced. Invective is a discursive mode where, to be blunt, the ends (and causes) are of significantly greater import than the means—as a result, the historical context is everything.

With this in mind, the initial and most fundamental method I will bring to bear in this dissertation is a close reading of the texts that make up the majority of the early 17th-century Ottoman invective corpus; *viz.*, Nefī’s collection known as the *Sihām-ı kazā* together with the invective verse that was produced against or in direct response to Nefī. However, because as discussed above invective is first and foremost a discursive mode, this will be a variety of close reading informed by some of the techniques utilized in critical discourse analysis. Moreover, since historical context is indeed everything as relates to work in the discursive mode of invective, any variety of close reading would necessarily remain extremely limited and perhaps even wholly ineffectual as a historical tool if not fully contextualized within the time period when such works in question were produced. As such, in the case especially of the vertical invectives that I examine, which were directed against significant contemporary political figures, I will initially provide a biographical *précis* of the targets in question based on extensive use of contemporary

chronicles, including analysis of these chronicles' often conflicting viewpoints.

Supplementing these sources will be examples drawn from among the contemporary advice literature, chiefly the *Nuṣḥatü's-selāṭīn* (Counsel for Sultans) of Muṣṭafā 'Ālī, the anonymous *Kitāb-ı Müsteṭāb* (The Agreeable Book), and one of the two treatises of Koçi Beğ (d. c. 1650). Such works were produced as a direct result of and in an attempt to understand and stem the varied sociocultural, administrative, and economic changes that were underway in the Ottoman Empire during this period, changes that the producers of the advice literature interpreted, or presented, as signals of a decline in the empire's fortunes. Due to such aims, these works have much in common with the contemporary early 17th-century invective corpus insofar as they offer a relatively unimpeded glimpse of the ideals and ideologies that drove their producers. As such, both the invective corpus and the advice literature allow the researcher a view into how the empire's social and cultural elite reacted to contemporary events and sought to use what power and ability they had to affect those events via communication with power brokers and other influential figures of their time, whether in the form of mostly impersonal criticism and counsel (the advice literature) or of personal attack and admonition (the invective corpus).

When considering any variety of Ottoman poetry and literature, and indeed Ottoman art, in conjunction with the historical context within which they were produced, the researcher must take into account three particular pervasive phenomena: the patronage system, the networks of association and affinity called *intisāb*, and the power relations

that form the interconnecting and hierarchical web among these. These phenomena will thus necessarily serve as the essential foundation of my approach to the topic.

In connection with these issues, one of the fundamental concepts lying beneath this dissertation's argument is as follows: within the framework of the patronage system, the patron-client relationship, whether actual or potential, was at least ideally meant to be a symbiotic one, in which each party held a certain kind and degree of power over the other. The patron's power over the client was fundamentally economic in nature whereas the client's power over the patron was fundamentally sociocultural in nature. A simple example of this within the paradigm of the Islamicate tradition and taking into account the presence of invective might operate as follows. In the vertical dimension, the poet/client has a particular economic need or desire and composes a poem, generally a panegyric, for presentation to the patron as part of an effort to convince the latter to meet this need or desire, though the particular need or desire need not always be openly expressed in the poem. If, however, the patron does not provide the desired or at least an acceptable response, the poet/client can level the threat of invective against him, which brings with it the possibility of undermining the patron's reputation and thus potentially diminishing, however incrementally, his social status. One particularly stark example of this is a quatrain by the aforementioned Persian poet Anwarī, who addressed an unknown patron in the following terms:

I have given you praise as immaculate as a virgin cunt | I have totally worn out the arse of my mind with passion || but if you don't fuck me with the cock of a gift | I will crush the balls of satire from behind you⁷⁰

An example quite similar to this but much more extensive will be seen in Chapter 4's discussion of Nef'ī's invectives against the grand vizier Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha.

In the horizontal dimension, the power exerted by the producer of any given invective would initially be sociocultural in nature, reducing the target's esteem in much the same manner as described above with regards to the vertical dimension. However, given that such horizontal exchanges between poet/clients occurred against a backdrop of patron-client relations, then if the invective or series of invectives achieved its aim, the power thus exerted could turn out to have an economic dimension as well. For instance, a poet/client might attack another poet/client, whether actual or potential, by means of an invective, and if that invective was judged successful by either other poet/clients or by actual or potential patrons, the target poet/client's social status or personal or poetic reputation would be eroded, thereby reducing the chances that he would be able to have his economic needs or desires met by either his actual patron or by potential future patrons.

In line with such economic and sociocultural aspects, a number of recent studies have begun to examine how, within the Ottoman patronage system just as within the patronage systems of such earlier Islamicate polities as the Abbasids and the Seljuks, the production and consumption of poetry, and particularly panegyric verse, operated

⁷⁰ Zipoli, "Anvari, a Master of Obscene Verse," 158; translation Zipoli's.

according to the principles of a gift economy.⁷¹ In such studies, the concept of a gift economy—which was first elaborated upon by the anthropologist Bronisław Malinowski and the sociologist Marcel Mauss⁷²—has successfully been employed to show that panegyrics presented to a patron in expectation of some reward, whether immediate or deferred, effectively functioned as a commodity within Islamicate patronage systems; that is, they were a good produced and exchanged for cash, for other goods (*e.g.*, rewards such as valuable caftans), or for favors or services (*e.g.*, a post in the state bureaucracy or the right to collect revenues). However, at least in the Ottoman context, the role that invective played within such an economy has yet to be examined, as pointed out by Walter G. Andrews:

[A]s can only be mentioned, the kaside [*i.e.*, panegyric] economy [...] seems bound inexorably to an obverse, backstage, obscene, sexual and excremental satyric poetry that plays stick to the kaside's carrot and serves as the kaside's repressed other in the silent spaces of our scholarly dialogues.⁷³

This dissertation is, to some extent, meant to be a preliminary examination of precisely the role played by this “repressed other” within the gift economy and changing sociocultural environment of the early 17th-century Ottoman patronage system.

⁷¹ For example, see Walter G. Andrews, “Speaking of Power: The ‘Ottoman Kaside’,” in *Qasida Poetry in Islamic Asia and Africa. Volume One: Classical Traditions and Modern Meanings*, eds. Stefan Sperl and Christopher Shackle (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996): 281–300; Sharlet, *Patronage and Poetry in the Islamic World*; and Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, “Abbasid Panegyric and the Poetics of Political Allegiance: Two Poems of al-Mutanabbī on Kāfūr,” in *Qasida Poetry in Islamic Asia and Africa. Volume One: Classical Traditions and Modern Meanings*, eds. Stefan Sperl and Christopher Shackle (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996): 35–63.

⁷² See Bronisław Malinowski, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific: An Account of Native Enterprise and Adventure in the Archipelagoes of Melanesian New Guinea* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1932) and Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans. Ian Cunnison (Londra: Cohen & West, 1966).

⁷³ Andrews, “Speaking of Power,” 288.

Furthermore, as the economic historian Karl Polanyi has shown,⁷⁴ prior to the emergence of a fully developed market economy, the economy of a given place was both more profoundly integrated with the social structure of that place and more closely bound to the notion of reciprocity, one of the fundamental elements of a gift economy. As a result, it would be highly misleading to examine as separate entities such an economic system and the social structure within which it is embedded, especially when the particular topic of research is one that, like investive, is so highly and directly laden with the ramifications of social relations. It is for this reason that this dissertation will also make occasional appeal to sociological concepts that can shed light on how investive functioned within the gift economy of the Ottoman patronage system. Chief among these are Pierre Bourdieu's interrelated concepts of the field, capital of different varieties (cultural, economic, social, symbolic), and *habitus*, concepts that Bourdieu exhaustively explored over the course of his long career.⁷⁵ Essentially, in Bourdieusian terms, a field is a social space wherein different actors occupying different hierarchical positions compete with one another to either improve or maintain their position. While doing so, they simultaneously work to accumulate capital—whether cultural (knowledge, aesthetic tastes, the works that represent these), economic, social (networks

⁷⁴ Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001).

⁷⁵ Owing to Bourdieu's voluminous work and the constantly developing and interacting nuances of these concepts, no single work of his can be said to provide a simple overview of them. Some of the key works are Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984); "The Market of Symbolic Goods," trans. Rupert Swyer, *Poetics: Journal of Empirical Research on Culture, the Media and the Arts* 14, nos. 1–2 (April 1985): 13–44; *Language and Symbolic Power*, ed. John B. Thompson, trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991); and *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). In terms of secondary sources, among the most clear and concise expositions of these and other Bourdieusian concepts is Michael Grenfell, ed., *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts* (Durham: Acumen, 2008).

and connections, or *intisāb* in the Ottoman context), or symbolic (the honor or prestige that accrue when one's accumulation of the other capitals is recognized as being legitimate). Capital accumulation, in turn, aids one in improving one's position within a given field. Finally, *habitus* refers to how cultural capital (*i.e.*, one's knowledge or aesthetic tastes) specifically becomes embodied in how one acts, performs, and maneuvers within and among the social space of fields. Possessing and enacting a *habitus* within a field for which it is not suited thus becomes a recipe for diminished positioning within that field.

One particular aspect of this Bourdieusian constellation of concepts that stands out in connection with the production and consumption of poetry, and especially invective, in the Ottoman context is a given poet/client's ability, as a potential arbiter of literary fashions, to alter poetic tastes and styles and, in this way, to potentially reduce, via invective attack, the value of the symbolic capital that a given patron is in the process of accumulating. This power on the part of the poet/client stems from the significant degree of control that he necessarily has over the value of the particular cultural capital (*i.e.*, the poetry) that he produces. It is at exactly this point that economics and power come together with the aesthetic, because the horizontal conflicts between Nef'ī and his contemporaries—particularly the coterie of 'ālim-littérateurs who were mentioned above—resulted both from differences in their background and social status and from aesthetic differences.⁷⁶ While this is a topic that will be explored extensively in Chapter 5, it can be summed up briefly here. In his voluminous work in the panegyric mode,

⁷⁶ Aslı Niyazioğlu, "The Very Special Dead and a Seventeenth-century Ottoman Poet: Nev'îzade 'Atā'î's Reasons for Composing His *Mesnevîs*," *Archivum Ottomanicum* 25 (2008): 221–231.

Nef'ī consciously made a break from established compositional tradition to explore novel means of expression, while his opponents, by and large, continued to follow the established traditions. With this in mind and within the historical context of the early 17th century, invective can be seen, from one perspective, as an attempt to obtain a degree of economic security by either changing the course of the flow of symbolic power (*i.e.*, that which comes with accumulated symbolic capital) in line with new conditions, as Nef'ī was attempting, or to keep that flow continuing in more or less the same direction, as the group of *'ālim*-littérateurs was attempting. Overall, this dissertation attempts to illustrate all of these different aspects of invective production in the early 17th century via specific examples that cover the scope of the sociocultural, political, and economic factors that influenced invective production and proliferation during this period.

1.3 Structure of the dissertation

Following this introduction, Chapter 2 of the dissertation will provide additional necessary background for the main body by first recounting what is known concerning the life of the poet Nef'ī, followed by a broad consideration of the content and significance of his collection of invective verse known as the *Sihām-ı kaza* (Shafts of Doom). This is followed by a critical review of the literature on the *Sihām-ı kaza*, concentrating especially on how misperceptions of this work, as well as of the invective mode as a whole, have led to its neglect as a potential source for historical inquiry.

Chapters 3 and 4 focus on the vertical aspect of the early 17th-century Ottoman invective corpus through an examination of, respectively, the lives and careers of the

chief treasurer Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha and the grand vizier Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha and Nefī's extensive invectives targeting them. Chapter 3 especially emphasizes Aḥmed Pasha's status as a novel variety of power player in the Ottoman administrative hierarchy, utilizing both Nefī's invectives and contemporary criticisms to paint a picture of how some in Ottoman elite circles at the time viewed social mobility as a dangerous development. Chapter 4, on the other hand, concentrates on how Meḥmed Pasha's rise to power and rapid fall therefrom are emblematic of the turbulent atmosphere that followed upon the regicide of Sultan 'Osmān II (r. 1618–1622), with contemporary chronicles reflecting widely different views of his character and accomplishments and Nefī's invectives targeting him displaying how this discursive mode could be used as an especially effective tool for self-aggrandizement in times when a tendency toward decentralization was the rule.

Chapters 5 and 6 turn to the horizontal aspect of the early 17th-century Ottoman invective corpus. Chapter 5 examines Nefī's clash with a group of *'ālim*-littérateurs—including Riyāzī, Nev'izāde 'Aṭā'ī, and 'Abdu'l-ḡanīzāde Meḥmed (Nādirī)—through parallel consideration not only of his invectives against them, but also of their invectives against him. This exchange of invective, it is argued, reveals that during this period, the two different sides' method of attack evinces how ostensibly aesthetic differences emerged in the form of mutual defamation that took on a strongly sociocultural cast, with each side implicitly representing itself as the proper guardian of the “Ottoman way,” Ottoman high culture, and indeed the Ottoman or rather “Rūmī” identity. Chapter 6 looks at Nefī's invectives targeting figures of Persianate origin who had, for a variety

of reasons, emigrated to Istanbul and entered the Ottoman hierarchy, utilizing these texts to further support and deepen Chapter 5's argument concerning Rūmī high cultural identity. In connection with this issue, the remainder of Chapter 6 turns to a discussion of the contours of that Rūmī identity and how the whole of the period's invective corpus evinces the factionalization and indeed fracturing that were occurring within that identity under contemporary sociocultural, political, and economic pressures.

Finally, in the concluding Chapter 7, following a brief summation of the main issues discussed in the body of the dissertation, I move on to suggest a number of areas connected with historical analysis of the discursive mode of invective that cry out for further research, including the need to better situate Ottoman invective into the framework not only of the Islamicate invective tradition as a whole, but also of contemporary European invective and satirical traditions, which display many of the same characteristics, and for many of the same reasons, as those seen in the Ottoman invective corpus of the early 17th century.

CHAPTER 2

NEF'Ī AND THE *SİHĀM-I KAZĀ*

While the focus of this dissertation, broadly speaking, is how the whole Ottoman invective corpus of the early 17th century both reflected and exacerbated tensions within the elite cultural stratum, to speak of this period's "invective corpus" is really to allude to the poet Nef'ī (1572?–1635). There was certainly contemporary invective verse that had no connection with him, yet the fact remains that he was at the center of Ottoman invective production through the first three decades of the 1600s. His own invectives, collected under the name *Sihām-ı kazā* (Shafts of Doom), are voluminous in number, broad in scope, and achieved a certain degree of popularity after his death, to judge from the number of extant manuscript copies—but just as significant as Nef'ī's invectives are those that were written against him. Although the early 17th-century invective corpus is thus firmly Nef'ī-centric, the discourse and diction within which these works were framed makes it readily apparent that they were not produced solely out of personal malice, but were in fact—sometimes unconsciously but more often quite consciously

and explicitly—products born out of clashes with a resolutely sociocultural, political, and economic foundation.

The late 16th and early 17th centuries were a time when, as the cliché goes, the Ottoman Empire was experiencing a concatenation of changes and transformations in response to political and economic pressures that frequently erupted not only in rebellions in Anatolia⁷⁷ but also in the form of sociocultural hostility and animosity. It is these latter that are found in abundant supply and in their most vitriolic form in the Nef'î-centered invective corpus, which, as subsequent chapters will show, can in many ways be seen as a conflict of identity between an elite sociocultural “old guard” and an “avant-garde” in which both sides of the conflict present themselves as the “true” Ottomans.

This is an aspect of the contemporary invective corpus that has been almost entirely overlooked, primarily because the corpus has only come to the attention of literary critics, nearly all of whom have approached it with great trepidation on account of the copious profanities it contains, which diverges sharply from the normative conception of Ottoman poetry as an elegant enterprise replete with profound and even spiritual meaning. As something of a salve to this, the second half of this chapter will constitute a literature review examining in detail the approach that has been taken to this invective corpus—or rather, specifically to Nef'î's *Sihām-ı kazâ*—in order to expose the

⁷⁷ Often erroneously lumped under the term “Celâlî” rebellions after Bozoğlu Şeyh Celâl (d. 1519), who was associated with the Safavids and rose up declaring himself the messiah (*mehdî*) before being summarily crushed, these rebellions in fact arose independently of one another and for a variety of different reasons. The first monograph in English on the subject was William Griswold, *The Great Anatolian Rebellion, 1000–1020 / 1591–1611* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1983), but the definite study remains Mustafa Akdağ, *Türk Halkının Dirlik ve Düzenlik Kavgası: ‘Celâlî İsyânları’* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2017). Also see Karen Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).

underlying preconceptions that have shaped critical attitudes toward the corpus and led, ultimately, to its neglect. First, however, I will present an account of what is known (and not known) about Nef'î's life, followed by a brief introduction to the *Sihām-ı ƙazâ*,⁷⁸ a more detailed consideration of several aspects of which will serve as the focus of Chapters 3 through 6.

2.1 The poet Nef'î and his *Sihām-ı ƙazâ* (Shafts of Doom)

In the 17th century, the Ottoman biographical encyclopedias of poets (*tez̄kire*) turned from the detailed relation of biographical information and anecdotes found in the voluminous examples of the genre produced by such authors as Laṭîfî (1491–1582), 'Āşık Çelebi (1520–1572), and Ƙınalızâde Hasan Çelebi (1546–1604),⁷⁹ to works more of the nature of an anthology, typically providing only the barest facts about a poet and focusing instead on providing what the compiler deemed characteristic samples of the poet's work.⁸⁰ As a result, the available biographical information on the poet Nef'î is quite slim and filled with lacunae. Nevertheless, through reference to other contemporary and near-contemporary works, most especially chronicles and histories, as well as to Nef'î's often topical poetry itself, a general picture of his life and career can be pieced together.

⁷⁸ For a more concise overview of the *Sihām-ı ƙazâ* within the context of its time and Nef'î's life, see Mehmet Kalpaklı, "Nef'î's *Sihām-ı Kaza*: A Satirical View of Seventeenth Century Ottoman Society," in *Acta Viennensia Ottomanica: Akten des 13. CIEPO – Symposiums (Comité International des Études Pré-Ottomanes et Ottomanes) vom 21. bis 25. September 1998 in Wien*, ed. Markus Köhbach, Gisela Procházka-Eisl, and Claudia Römer (Vienna: Institut für Orientalistik, 1998): 183–186.

⁷⁹ See Laṭîfî, *Tezkiretü 'ş-Şu'arâ ve Tabsiratü'n-Nuzamâ (İnceleme-Metin)*, ed. Rıdvan Canım (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Başkanlığı, 2000); 'Āşık Çelebi, *Meşâ'irü 'ş-Şu'arâ: İnceleme-Metin*, 3 vols., ed. Filiz Kılıç (Istanbul: İstanbul Araştırmaları Enstitüsü Yayınları, 2010); and Ƙınalızâde Hasan Çelebi, *Tezkiretü 'ş-Şu'arâ*.

⁸⁰ For a list and brief analysis of the 17th-century biographical encyclopedias, see Mustafa İsen *et al.*, *Şair Tezkireleri* (Ankara: Grafiker Yayınları, 2002), 77–100.

2.1.1 Life of the poet Nef'ī

Nef'ī, whose real name was 'Ömer, was born in Hāsanqal'ası, the modern Pasinler, 25 miles to the east of the city of Erzurum, capital of the Ottoman province of Erzurum. The exact date of his birth is uncertain, though the common scholarly consensus, based on a conjecture by the scholar Abdülkadir Karahan, is that he was born around the year 1572.⁸¹ His grandfather was Mīrzā 'Alī, a figure who had been in the service of the Safavids⁸² until the 1530s or 1540s, after which he had entered into Ottoman service and in 1554 was made district governor (*sancaqbeği*) of the Oltu district (*sancaq*) to the northeast of the city of Erzurum.⁸³ Over the next two decades, he would be appointed to a series of district governorships in this region, later serving the Ottoman state in the war against the Safavids that began in 1578; it was during this war's campaign in the Caucasus that Mīrzā 'Alī died in 1584.⁸⁴ Nef'ī's father Meḥmed, who appears to have been Mīrzā 'Alī's second son, was granted a timar in the district of Pasin in 1556 and subsequently, sometime soon after 1567, a *ze 'āmet* and then the local district

⁸¹ Abdülkadir Karahan, *Nef'i: Hayatı, Sanatı, Şiirleri* (Istanbul: Varlık Yayınevi, 1967), 4. Karahan's conjecture is based on a panegyric Nef'ī composed for Hāfiz Aḥmed Pasha's (c. 1564–1632) appointment to the grand vizierate in 1625 (1034 AH), in which the poet wrote: “were you not the customer for the merchandise of my verse | the marketplace of my thought would lie empty till Doomsday || none among the people of meaning can guess its price | for thirty years the string of pearls of my verse has been fated for auction” (*metā '-ı nazmımıñ sen olmasañ zīrā ḥarīdārı | ḳalurdı ḥaşre dek bāzār-ı endīşem kesād üzre || bahā taḥmīn eder bir kimse yoḳ erbāb-ı ma'nāda | otuz yıldır felek 'ıkd-ı dürr-i nazmım mezād üzre*); Nef'ī, [*Dīvān-ı Nef'ī*] (Bulaq, Cairo: Dāru'l-tıbbā'ati'l-āmiri, 1836), 95–96. Karahan extrapolates thirty years back from this to 1596 (1004 AH) as the commencement of Nef'ī's poetic career.

⁸² Abdülkadir Karahan also makes reference to a miscellaneous manuscript (*mecmū'a*) in which Nef'ī's roots are said to be based in Safavid Shirvan on the western shore of the Caspian Sea. See Karahan, *Nef'i: Hayatı, Sanatı, Şiirleri*, 3.

⁸³ DüNDAR Aydın, “Belge ve Kaynaklara Göre Nef'ī'nin Dedesi Mirza Ali'nin Hayatı ve Soyunu,” *Marmara Üniversitesi Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi Türklük Araştırmaları Dergisi* 5 (1989), 169.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 176–177.

governorship.⁸⁵ It was thus around this time, when Mehmed was serving as a district governor in the region,⁸⁶ that Nefî was born.

Little is known of Nefî's youth, although he seems to have suffered from hardship at some point when his father apparently left his family to serve in the court of the Khan of Crimea.⁸⁷ This is mentioned in a long invective poem that Nefî later wrote castigating his father for leaving:

since [my] father has happily been companion to the Khan | I have seen nothing of
either lentils or *tarkhana*⁸⁸ || poverty is my calamity, I wonder if I should | like my
father show myself a beggar to the Khan || if he does not grant a skin full of oil | what
harm could [a gift of] two skins of *kumis* be to the Khan?⁸⁹

Though no other documentary evidence has yet come to light regarding any time spent in the Crimea by Mehmed, little about whose life is known in any case, there would seem to be no practical reason for Nefî to produce an invective mentioning this were there not at least a grain of truth to it. Besides such familial circumstances, there is nothing known concerning Nefî's education, either, although his poetic works make it

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 178.

⁸⁶ M. Fahrettin Kırzioğlu states that the district in question was Micingerd (today's Sarıkamış), some 80 miles to the northeast of Hasançal'ası; see M. Fahrettin Kırzioğlu, "Tolgadırlu (Dulkadırlu) Beylerinden Gelen Pasınlı Şair Ömer Nefî'nin Sekiz Arka Atası ve Babası Şah-Mehmed'in Bir Tarih Şiiri," *Türk Dili Dergisi* 10, no. 120 (September 1961), 923. However, Aydın (*op. cit.*, 184) points out that Kırzioğlu's identification of the figures mentioned in his article is faulty, thus casting doubt on the certainty of the district in question: it may or may not have been Micingerd, though it seems highly likely that it was a district in this general region (*i.e.*, the central and eastern part of the province of Erzurum) of which Mehmed was made governor.

⁸⁷ Given the lack of precise information coupled with the time period in question, this could have been any of the following khans: Devlet I Giray (r. 1551–1577), Mehmed II Giray (r. 1577–1584), İslâm II Giray (r. 1584–1588), or possibly Gâzî II Giray (r. 1588–1596, 1596–1608).

⁸⁸ Both lentils (*mercimek*) and *tarkhana*, a thick grain-based soup, were especially cheap foodstuffs, here used by Nefî to emphasize the extremity of his youthful poverty.

⁸⁹ "sa'âdet ile nedim olalı peder Hân'a | ne mercimek görür oldı gözüm ne tarhana || züğürtlük âfetim
[o]ldı 'aceb midir êsem | peder gibi buradan ben de 'arz-ı cerr Hân'a || eğer müsâ'ade olmazsa bir tulum
yağa | iki tulum kıymız olsun nedir zarar Hân'a"; Universiteitsbibliotheek Leiden, Legatum Warnerianum
Cod. Or. (henceforth ULLWCO) 662, 1b.

apparent that he was quite well educated and, particularly, that he learned Persian to a high and perhaps even native degree of fluency. Given that his grandfather Mīrzā ‘Alī had served the Safavids before coming over to Ottoman service, possibly in Shirvan, and that his father Meḥmed may have been born and raised during this period, it is not inconceivable that Persian was heard in his household and family circles, though this must remain conjecture.

There has also been speculation⁹⁰ that, during his youth in Erzurum, Nef‘ī met the author Muṣṭafā ‘Alī of Gallipoli (1541–1600): Muṣṭafā ‘Alī was appointed treasurer (*defterdār*) for the province of Erzurum in the fall of 1584 and remained in this post until the fall of 1585.⁹¹ There is nothing certain indicating that they did meet at this time, but they surely did meet several years later in Istanbul. We know this from the preface to Muṣṭafā ‘Alī’s Persian work *Majma‘ al-baḥrayn* (Confluence of the Two Seas), a series of parallel poems (*naẓīre*) to ghazals by the poet Ḥāfeẓ (*c.* 1315–*c.* 1390) that was put together as a volume in 1591/92. At the time, as the preface describes, Muṣṭafā ‘Alī was in the Ottoman capital and struggling to put these poems together when supposedly Nef‘ī—who would have been around 20 years old at the time—“came in through the door” (*az-*

⁹⁰ See, *e.g.*, Karahan, *Nef‘i: Hayatı, Sanatı, Şiirleri*, 5 and Fatma Tulga Ocak, “Nef‘î ve Eski Türk Edebiyatımızdaki Yeri,” in *Ölümünün Üçyüzdellinci Yılında Nef‘î*, ed. Mehmet Çavuşoğlu (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1991 [1987]), 4.

⁹¹ Cornell H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Âlî (1541–1600)* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 115–118. Note that both Karahan and Ocak point out that in 1588–1589 Muṣṭafā ‘Alī also served as the finance director of the province of Rum, with its capital at Sivas, using this appointment to state that Nef‘ī may have met Muṣṭafā ‘Alī here as well. Why this would be the case baffles the imagination, as nothing indicates that Nef‘ī was ever in Sivas, which is some 300 miles to the west of Erzurum. Moreover, Muṣṭafā ‘Alī, during his time in Sivas, was largely in social isolation working on a collection of essays entitled *Nawādir al-ḥikam* (Curious Bits of Wisdom), making any potential encounter with Nef‘ī even less likely; see Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, 131–132.

dar dar-āmad),⁹² praised him effusively, and informed him that cultured people “constantly clamor for your praiseworthy poems” (*ba-ash ‘ār-e mufakkkhir-shi ‘ār-e shumā harāyīna rāġiband*), which inspired Muṣṭafā ‘Ālī to complete the volume.⁹³ In describing Nefī’s entrance through the door, Muṣṭafā ‘Ālī mentions his grandfather and father and describes him as “one of our [*i.e.*, my] students” (*az-talāmīz-e mā*) who produces fine ghazal poems.⁹⁴ This speaks to a degree of already established familiarity between the two men, strengthening the supposition that they may have met one another several years earlier in Erzurum.

Another possibility for their initial meeting is found in a short treatise Muṣṭafā ‘Ālī wrote explicating a particular couplet by the Persian poet Jāmī (1414–1492).⁹⁵ Here, in a short introductory section to which Abdülkadir Karahan first drew attention,⁹⁶ the author describes how he came to produce the work:

In the eloquent couplet [of Jāmī’s], certain enigmatic meanings were intended and several symbols from among the abundant arts of rhetoric were attained. A [certain] person who was a sincere and excellent acquaintance [of mine] and who was a chief among the praiseworthy brotherhood of wits felt gratitude [toward me], and being a renowned person of culture and a well-known inquisitive [member] of the people of the pen, he had a desire to have his heart of hearts enlightened and [requested] that [I] write the couplet and expend the ink of making assistance manifest to expound upon the jewels of [the couplet’s] hidden subtleties. And so he sent [his request] to this

⁹² This physical entrance through the door, which places Nefī in Istanbul at this time, was for some reason mentioned by neither Karahan nor Ocağ, nor did they use Muṣṭafā ‘Ālī’s preface to establish that Nefī was indeed physically in the Ottoman capital in 1591/92.

⁹³ İ. Hakkı Aksoyak, ed., “Gelibolulu Mustafa Âlî’nin Mecmau’l-Bahreyn’inin Önsözü,” in *I. Uluslar Arası Türk-İran Dil ve Edebiyat İlişkileri Sempozyumu* (Istanbul: Kültür ve Sosyal İşler Daire Başkanlığı, 2012), 330/331–332/333.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 330/331.

⁹⁵ See Mehmet Arslan and İsmail Hakkı Aksoyak, eds., “Gelibolulu Âlî’nin Şerh Muhtevalı Dört Risalesi: ‘Me‘âlimü’t-Tevhîd,’ ‘Dakâ’iku’t-Tevhîd,’ ‘Nikâtü’l-Kâl fî Tazmîni’l-Makâl,’ ‘Câmî’nin Bir Beytinin Şerhi’,” *Türklük Bilimi Araştırmaları* 6 (1998), 267, 285–288.

⁹⁶ Karahan, *Nefî: Hayatı, Sanatı, Şiirleri*, 5.

humble one through a precious being by the name of Nef'î, who was among the party of those of the finest understanding and of those adept poets free of fear.⁹⁷

Regrettably, we do not know the identity of the “sincere and excellent acquaintance” (*ecāvîd-i hullân-ı rû-şināsân*), and so we do not know where Nef'î was traveling from, nor is it known exactly when this treatise was written, and thus where Muştafâ 'Âlî was at the time Nef'î brought him this acquaintance's request. It seems likely that the treatise dates to sometime between 1590 and 1595, both because this was a period when Muştafâ 'Âlî was in Istanbul rekindling his engagement with Persian poetry⁹⁸ and because the treatise in question bears similarities to and is collected together with three other short treatises,⁹⁹ each of which offers an explication of a ghazal by Sultan Murâd III (r. 1574–1595),¹⁰⁰ who died in 1595. If we assume that this treatise was indeed written in Istanbul during this period, then it substantiates the claim that Nef'î was also in the Ottoman capital at this time. Although it is possible that the recipient ('Âlî), the sender, and the messenger (Nef'î) were all in Istanbul at this time, if indeed the acquaintance's request was sent from *outside* of the Ottoman capital, this may well have marked Nef'î's arrival in the city.

⁹⁷ “[B]eyt-i laţîfînde ki ba'zı ma'ânî-i ğâmîza kaçd olunmuş ve şanâyî'-i bedâyi'-i fâyizadan nice rumûza dest-res bulunmuş ecāvîd-i hullân-ı rû-şināsân ve şanâdîd-i ihvân-ı nükte-dânân zümre-i hamîdesinden biri minnet-dâr olduğdan mâ'adâ ahibbânun bir nâm-veri ve erbâb-ı kalemün bir taleb-kâr-ı eşheri zamîrînde müstenîr olacaktayın tahtîrîni ve ser-rişte-i midâd-ı bâhirü'l-îmdâdîla nikât-ı setîresi cevâhirinün tahtîr-i taştîrîni irâde kılmış ve hüner-mendân-ı tîz-fehm ve şu'arâ-i zevî'l-iz'ân-ı bî-vehm firçasından Nef'î-nâm bir vücûd-ı 'azîzle bu haķîre göndermiş.” Arslan and Aksoyak, eds., “Gelibolulu Âlî'nin Şerh Muhtevalı Dört Risalesi,” 285. I have altered Arslan and Aksoyak's transcription slightly to accord with the style used in this dissertation.

⁹⁸ Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, 141–142.

⁹⁹ IUNEK TY 3543.

¹⁰⁰ Arslan and Aksoyak, eds., “Gelibolulu Âlî'nin Şerh Muhtevalı Dört Risalesi,” 263–264.

In any case, the preface to the *Majma' al-baḥrayn* shows that Nef'ī had arrived in Istanbul by 1591/92.¹⁰¹ We do not know if he was living in the city, or to what end or in what capacity he was there, but that he was in contact with Muṣṭafā 'Ālī at this time is clear. It is also clear that, regardless of whether or not they had met in Erzurum several years before, they were quite close during this period, and in fact were in an informal mentor-mentee relationship. Muṣṭafā 'Ālī's reference to Nef'ī as his “student” (*tilmīz*) shows this, as does the fact that Nef'ī later credited 'Ālī with choosing the pen name *Nef'ī* (meaning “useful”).¹⁰² This he did in a panegyric *kaṣīde* where he wrote, “you [*i.e.*, Muṣṭafā 'Ālī] have augmented my value through the pen name Nef'ī | seeing in my pure mind [as you did] the power of the acumen of the word || with your favor my poetry continuously progressed | each of my ghazals became to the world a legendary word.”¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Previously, the common consensus—based on the fact that Nef'ī, the panegyrist *par excellence*, produced no panegyrics for any sultan or grand vizier prior to the reign of Sultan Aḥmed I (r. 1603–1617)—was that he did not come to the Ottoman capital until after 1603 at the earliest. See, *e.g.*, Karahan, *Nef'i: Hayatı, Sanatı, Şiirleri*, 7 and Ocak, “Nef'ī ve Eski Türk Edebiyatımızdaki Yeri,” 4–5.

¹⁰² There is an often repeated claim that Nef'ī's original pen name was *Ḍarrī* (meaning “harmful”); see, *e.g.*, Karahan, *Nef'i: Hayatı, Sanatı, Şiirleri*, 4–5; Ocak, “Nef'ī ve Eski Türk Edebiyatımızdaki Yeri,” 3–4; and Metin Akkuş, “Nef'ī,” *Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (henceforth *DİA*), Vol. 32, 523. This is based on a short note published by İbnü'l-emīn Maḥmūd Kemāl (İnal) in 1928; see İbnü'l-emīn Maḥmūd Kemāl (İnal), “Nef'ī'ye Dā'ir,” *Türk Tārīḥ Encümeni Mecmū'ası* 19 (96) (1928): 159–160. A careful reading of this note, however, reveals that İnal fabricated the claim that Nef'ī's first pen name was *Ḍarrī*. Based on an incomplete version of Nef'ī's panegyric to Muṣṭafā 'Ālī found in another short work, “*Ṭaḳṭuḳa*” by Veys Paşazāde Zeyne'l-'ābidīn Reşīd, İnal—whose note reproduces this partial version of the panegyric—reasons as follows: “The author of the piece [*i.e.*, Reşīd] says that ‘many distichs are missing from the middle and end’ of the panegyric. Therefore, it is probable that, among the missing distichs, there are references relating to the pen name ‘Ḍarrī’” ([*Şaḥib-i risāle, kaṣīdeniñ “ortasından ve soñundan ḥayli ebyāt zāyi” olduğunu söylüyor. Binā'en 'aleyh ebyāt-ı zāyi'e meyânında “Ḍarrī” maḥlaşına müte'allik sözler bulunması muḥtemeldir*; İnal, “Nef'ī'ye Dā'ir,” 159). However, the full version of the panegyric—such as that found in Naimüddin Seyyid, “Nef'ī'nin Bilinmiyen Kasideleriyle Diğer Manzumeleri,” *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil-Tarih ve Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi* 11, no. 1 (1953), 130–132—shows that this is not the case. While we do not know what Nef'ī's previous pen name was, if indeed he had one, it appears that İnal simply formed “Ḍarrī” out of whole cloth, likely on the basis of Nef'ī's reputation as a renowned writer of both panegyrics (“useful”) and invectives (“harmful”).

¹⁰³ “eylediñ maḥlaş-ı Nef'ī ile ḳadrüm efzün | zihni-pākümde görüp kuvvet-i iz'ân-ı sūḥan || himmetünle giderek buldı terakkī şî'rüm | oldu her bir ḡazelüm 'āleme destān-ı sūḥan”; Seyyid, “Nef'ī'nin Bilinmiyen Kasideleri,” 131. I have altered Seyyid's transcription slightly to accord with the style used in this

In these lines, it is also telling that Nef'î presents himself primarily as a producer of ghazals, just as had Muşţafâ 'Âlî's preface to the *Majma' al-baḥrayn*, where he referred to his student as a “singer of ghazals” (*ghazal-sarāyî*).¹⁰⁴ Given this, it might not in fact be surprising that Nef'î produced no panegyrics (or at least none that he chose to preserve) during this period. It might also be the case that this panegyric to Muşţafâ 'Âlî is his earliest extant one, as the poem's diction hints that it may have been written while its subject was still alive, though this could just as well be a rhetorical choice.

Following his rather enigmatic appearance in Istanbul in the early 1590s, Nef'î next appears in Egypt over a decade later, in the year 1604: at that time, he produced a panegyric welcoming the new governor of Egypt, Ḥācî İbrāhîm Pasha (d. 1604), who was appointed to the position in the spring of that year.¹⁰⁵ The discourse of this panegyric, which began with a refrain of *Merḥaba!* (“Hello!” or “Welcome!”), makes it clear that Nef'î was present in Egypt, probably Cairo, at the time.¹⁰⁶ However, in what

dissertation. Note that Karahan, *Nef'i: Hayatı, Sanatı, Şiirleri*, 4 quotes a slightly different version of these distichs, but without naming the source.

¹⁰⁴ Aksoyak, ed., “Gelibolulu Mustafa 'Âlî'nin Mecmau'l-Bahreyn'inin Önsözü,” 330/331.

¹⁰⁵ Kâtib Çelebi, “Fezleke: Tahlil ve Metin,” ed. Zeynep Aycibin (Ph.D. dissertation, Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, 2007), 459.

¹⁰⁶ For the original publication of the panegyric's text, see Seyyid, “Nef'î'nin Bilinmiyen Kasideleri,” 132–134. Note that Seyyid identifies the İbrāhîm Pasha mentioned in the text as the governor of Egypt in 1622–1623. For an analysis of this panegyric and its attribution to Nef'î, see Özer Şenödeyici, “Nef'î Biyografisine Ek,” *Türklük Bilimi Araştırmaları* 21 (Spring 2007), 186–190. Şenödeyici (*op. cit.*, 192) uses stylistic and content clues to hypothesize that Nef'î cannot have been in Egypt during 1622 and 1623. However, more solid than this is the fact that during the period in question Nef'î was employed as the comptroller of mines (*ma'den* or *me'âdin muḳâta'acısı*) and even took part in Sultan 'Osmân II's (r. 1618–1622) campaign in Poland; see 'Abdu'l-kâdir Efendi, *Topçular Kâtibi 'Abdülkâdir (Kadrî) Efendi Tarihi: Metin ve Tahlil*, Vol. 2 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2003), 709, 759, 765. Also note that Şenödeyici's subsequent speculations (*op. cit.*, 193–197) concerning the identity of İbrāhîm Pasha, whom he claims to be the İbrāhîm Pasha appointed as governor of Egypt in 1583, as well as the wild conjectures regarding Nef'î's life that he derives from this (*e.g.*, that Nef'î must have been born in the 1560s, that he may not have been from Erzurum, etc.), are based on the simple fact that he failed to notice that there was in fact an İbrāhîm Pasha serving as the governor of Egypt (albeit briefly) in 1604, at a time that would accord with the standard timeline of Nef'î's life.

capacity he was there is unknown, though it is possible that it was in Egypt that he first encountered one of his future foes, Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha,¹⁰⁷ who was sent to replace Ḥācī İbrāhīm Pasha after the latter was killed during an uprising by local soldiers.¹⁰⁸

Nefī's next documented appearance dates to the spring of 1606, when he is in Istanbul as part of a party of state officials and employees who traveled to Küçükçekmece west of the capital to greet the return of the grand vizier Lala Meḥmed Pasha (d. 1606) upon his return from a campaign in the Long War against the Habsburgs in which the Ottoman forces had captured the castle at Esztergom.¹⁰⁹ At this time, Nefī is listed as the comptroller of mines (*ma'den* or *me'ādin muḳāta'acısı*),¹¹⁰ a middling bureaucratic position in the empire's financial branch. Wherever his earlier peregrinations may have taken him after his youth in the province of Erzurum, he was now established in Istanbul and would remain there—with one brief exception to be discussed below—for the rest of his life.

It was during his long years in the Ottoman capital that Nefī would build his poetic reputation. Although as mentioned above Muṣṭafā 'Ālī had, in the preface to his *Majma' al-baḥrayn*, specifically singled out the then young poet for his lyrical ghazals, in the new century it was particularly Nefī's panegyrics—as well as his invective—that would

¹⁰⁷ Nefī's invectives against Meḥmed Pasha will be examined in Chapter 4.

¹⁰⁸ For more details, see section 4.1.

¹⁰⁹ For the siege and capture of Esztergom, see Kâtib Çelebi, "Fezleke," 495–500.

¹¹⁰ 'Abdu'l-kādir Efendi, *Topçular Kâtibi 'Abdülkādir (Kadrî) Efendi Tarihi: Metin ve Tahlil*, Vol. 1 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2003), 450–451. This reference is also sufficient to refute the rather wild claim made by Ebū'z-ziyā Tefḳik and doubted, but mainly on circumstantial evidence, by Abdülkadir Karahan that Nefī originally came to Istanbul when the Crimean khan Cānıbek Giray (1538–1636) recommended him to the grand vizier Murād Pasha (viz. 1606–1611), who was in Anatolia fighting against rebels. See Ebū'z-ziyā [Tefḳik], *Nefī* (Istanbul: Maṭba'a-i Ebū'z-ziyā, 1311 [1893/94]), 6–7 and Karahan, *Nefī: Hayatı, Sanatı, Şiirleri*, 7.

cement both his reputation and his connections with elite patrons. His earliest panegyrics addressed to figures in the Ottoman state were to Sultan Aḥmed I and to the grand viziers Murād Pasha (viz. 1606–1611) and Naşūḥ Pasha (viz. 1611–1614). Nef'ī was on especially good terms with the latter two, and even used the production of invective verse to assist in these grand viziers' attempts to destroy the reputation of the chief treasurer Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha, as will be detailed in Chapter 3. Nef'ī appears to have especially cultivated relations with Naşūḥ Pasha: not only did the poet produce four panegyrics to him during his three years in the position, but at some point the grand vizier also wrote a letter to the poet, to which Nef'ī responded via a panegyric praising his writing style.¹¹¹ Whether Nef'ī was actually close to Aḥmed I is less clear, although after a certain point his reputation, built largely on the strength of numerous panegyrics addressed and presumably presented to the sultan either in person or via the mediation of others, was such that Nef'ī was permitted to come along with the court and government when the sultan relocated to Edirne for the winter of 1613/14.¹¹²

Between 1609, when Nef'ī was dismissed from his post as the comptroller of mines (possibly by the chief treasurer Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha, as will be discussed in Chapter 3), and 1621, when he once again is documented as holding the same post,¹¹³ it is not certain what official position he held, though it can be assumed that he took the

¹¹¹ See Nef'ī, [*Dīvān*], 71–73.

¹¹² Na'imā Muştafā Efendi, *Târih-i Na'imâ (Ravzatü'l-Hüseyn fî Hulâsati Aḥbâri'l-Hâfikayn)*, Vol. 2, ed. Mehmet İpşirli (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2007), 401–402. See also 'Abdu'r-raḥmān Ḥibrī, *Enisü'l-Müsâmirîn: Edirne Tarihi, 1360–1650*, ed. and trans. Ratip Kazancıgil (Edirne: Türk Kütüphaneciler Derneği Edirne Şubesi Yayınları, 1996), 167.

¹¹³ 'Abdu'l-kâdir Efendi, *Tarih*, Vol. 1, 709.

post up again sometime after around 1612.¹¹⁴ After the death of Sultan Aḥmed I in 1617, the Ottoman throne was briefly occupied by his apparently unstable half-brother Muṣṭafā I (r. 1617–1618, 1622–1623) before the latter was deposed in favor of Aḥmed’s young son ‘Osmān II (r. 1618–1622). Though Nef’ī would write no panegyrics to Sultan Muṣṭafā during either of his brief reigns,¹¹⁵ this was not the case with ‘Osmān, to whom he would address four panegyrics, the earliest one celebrating his succession (*cülūsiyye*) and the final one praising his campaign against the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth conducted in the campaign season of 1621.¹¹⁶ Nef’ī, as already noted, was actually present on the Polish campaign,¹¹⁷ which ended quite indecisively. Nonetheless, it was represented as a great victory to the Ottoman public, and when the army returned to Istanbul three days of victory celebrations were held on the sultan’s order.¹¹⁸ Nef’ī’s panegyric on this rather Pyrrhic victory—beginning with the couplet “bravo, o heroically advancing horseman of the time! | now hang in the heavens your sword whose

¹¹⁴ This is based on the fact that the post is listed as occupied by a certain Mıkrās Efendi in September 1611; see *ibid.*, 604. Note that the records of actual appointments and dismissals, which are held among the *Ruūs Kalemi Defterleri* (A.RSK.d) in the Prime Ministerial Ottoman Archives, are regrettably missing between the dates of 1606 and 1619; see *Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi Rehberi*, ed. Yusuf Sarııary et al. (Istanbul: Başbakanlık Basımevi, 2010), 77–81.

¹¹⁵ Concerning this, Ocak says, “The fact that Nef’ī did not write any panegyrics to [...] Muṣṭafā I shows that he did not praise people whom he did not sincerely admire.” Ocak, “Nef’ī ve Eski Türk Edebiyatımızdaki Yeri,” 8. This is a far too impressionistic statement, claiming as it does an extensive insight into Nef’ī’s internal character that is hardly possible, especially considering the fact that Nef’ī is known to have produced panegyrics in praise of and invectives attacking one and the same person; e.g., Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha. It would seem more plausible, given the place of panegyrics within the economy of poetic production discussed in the introduction, that Nef’ī simply realized that the powerless and possibly feeble-minded Muṣṭafā would have little to nothing to offer him in return for a panegyric, and thus saw no use in producing work for presentation to him.

¹¹⁶ For a brief account of this campaign, see Kadir Kazalak and Tufan Gündüz, “II. Osman’ın Hotin Seferi (1621),” *Ankara Üniversitesi Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi* 14 (2003): 129–144.

¹¹⁷ See ‘Abdu’l-kādir Efendi, *Tarih*, Vol. 2, 709.

¹¹⁸ Kâtib Çelebi, “Fezleke,” 669.

jewel is the Pleiades!”¹¹⁹—fit well into the celebrations for which it was written, since it presents ‘Osmān as a world-conquering hero who had vanquished the infidel.

Several months later, in May 1622, ‘Osmān would himself be vanquished, murdered during an uprising of soldiers in the capital in the first regicide in Ottoman history and succeeded by the former sultan, Muṣṭafā.¹²⁰ Nef‘ī’s only known comment on the regicide came in the first invective he produced against the grand vizier Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha toward the end of the same year, when he laconically wrote, “their [*i.e.*, those whom I have praised] fame and renown has spread all round the world through my verse | although Sultan ‘Osmān was removed from the Friday sermon.”¹²¹ In the chaotic environment and power vacuum that would reign over Istanbul and the Ottoman administration for the following sixteen months until the ascension of the 11-year-old¹²² Murād IV (r. 1623–1640) in September 1623, Nef‘ī was especially active in producing invective, as will be seen in Chapter 4.

It was during Murād’s reign that Nef‘ī’s prestige would reach its peak, owing to the fact not only that the sultan was his patron, but also that he was a close companion of Murād. It is not clear how exactly the poet managed to get so close to the young sultan:

¹¹⁹ “āferīn ey rūzgârīñ şehsüvâr-ı şafderi | ‘Arş’a aş şimdengerü tīg-i süreyyā-cevheri”; Nef‘ī, [*Dīvān*], 32.

¹²⁰ A brief but comprehensive account of ‘Osmān’s death is to be found in Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 153–175. A detailed account taking into consideration the contemporary historiography is Gabriel Piterberg, *An Ottoman Tragedy: History and Historiography at Play* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

¹²¹ “cihāmi tūtdı nazmımla serāser şöhret [ü] nāmı | eğerçi huṭb[e]den tarḥ étdiler Sultān ‘Osmān’i”; ULLWCO 662, 3b. The reference to the Friday sermon (*huṭbe*) alludes to the fact that the sultan was killed on a Friday evening.

¹²² The exceedingly young age of Murād upon coming to the throne may explain why Nef‘ī did not produce a panegyric for the occasion, although given the tumultuous environment of the time, the uncertainty of how long he might actually reign may have played a part in this as well.

panegyrics—of which Nef‘ī produced nearly 20 in various poetic forms over the twelve years from Murād’s ascension to his own death—certainly must have played a part, though it is likely that Nef‘ī also utilized invectives to this purpose as well. For instance, in April 1624, the young sultan ordered the death of the grand vizier Kemānkeş ‘Alī Pasha (d. 1624), ostensibly for lying to the sultan about the capture of Baghdad by Safavid forces in January of the same year.¹²³ Soon after the execution, Nef‘ī wrote a long invective beginning with the distich, “praise be to God, that black-faced vizier is dead! | he whose shameless dark face (*yüzi kara*) was more dark and turbid than his balls,”¹²⁴ and concluding with the lines, “with an [ugly] appearance like [his], how could he take Baghdad back? | he was the laughingstock of the age, fate’s vile bag of tricks || for such a pointless ass to be the grand vizier | was a disgrace difficult for the Ottoman state to comprehend.”¹²⁵ Though it was hardly unprecedented to write a celebratory invective for a deceased person,¹²⁶ the matter of the audience for such a piece must

¹²³ The most detailed account of the grand vizier’s execution is given by Thomas Roe, an English diplomat resident in Istanbul at the time: “Ali bassa, the great vizier, was sent for unto the Seraglio, where, beeing questioned by the young emperour about the affaires of the Persian situation, hee was condemned instantly to loose his head, which was executed there, and his body throwne out naked into the streets. The occasion of his sodaine death is attributed to his dissimulation with the grand signor in the losse of Babilon [i.e., Baghdad]; which hee denied, and suborned false advice, that there was no such matter, either for sloth or feare to take upon him the charge of the warre with an army that would not obey in the city, and to the base money which hee had caused to be coyned, beeing butt one fift silver, with which hee made a whole payment to the soldioury, putting the good dollars in his coffers. Butt the true cause was, his owne sordid covetousnesse, who in sixe moneths had heaped upp an infinite treasure, by port sale of justice and offices, which hath weighed him to the ground, and will supply much of the present wants for the intended warre in Asia.” Thomas Roe, *The Negotiations of Sir Thomas Roe, in His Embassy to the Ottoman Porte, from the Year 1621 to 1628 Inclusive* (London: Samuel Richardson, 1740), 230. Contemporary Ottoman accounts can be found at Hasan Beyzāde Aḥmed Pasha, *Hasan Bey-zāde Târîhi: Metin ve İndeks*, Vol. 3, ed. Şevki Nezih Aykut (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2004), 986 and Kâtib Çelebi, “Fezleke,” 722.

¹²⁴ “ḥamdu li’l-lāh oldı maḳtūl ol vezīr-i rû-siyāh / kim yüzi kara taşakdan dahı türe-reng idi”; ULLWCO 662, 9a.

¹²⁵ “bu kıyāfetle bunıñ Bağdād’a ḥākim olması | süḥre-i devrān çarḫ-ı dūn-ı pür-nireng idi || şadr-ı a’zam olması ḥod öyle bir bāṭıl ḥarıñ | devlet-i ‘Osmāniyān’a rabṭı güç bir neng idi”; *ibid.*, 9b.

¹²⁶ Nef‘ī himself would write other posthumous invectives, most notably against Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha, for which see Chapter 5. But this practice goes far back into the Islamicate invective tradition, with one of the

remain puzzling—unless we consider that it might somehow, given Nef‘ī’s reputation, have reached the new sultan’s ears and thus represented, in essence, a show of support for him in his first major action as the ruler, articulating that the right decision had been made.

Over the following years of Murād IV’s minority, then, Nef‘ī would continue to shower him with effusive praise via panegyric and other poetic forms.¹²⁷ As a result, the poet and the sultan seemingly became quite close, with Nef‘ī likely a regular presence at Murād’s gatherings as a boon companion (*nedīm*). His expressedly high opinion of Murād was reciprocated by the sultan himself, perhaps the most striking example of which is the following poem by the sultan expressing admiration for Nef‘ī’s verse:

come, let’s do right and observe [the proper] proportion | let’s leave off the boast of saying “We’re poets, too” || let’s seek God’s pardon before we speak our inspid words | let’s hold on to the skirts of Nef‘ī of the excellent style || we pronounce [mere] words, [but] where is the one of [true] speech? | let’s cede the floor to him, let’s obey his command¹²⁸

more prominent instances occurring among the agonistic *naqā’id* poets of Umayyad times: after the Christian poet al-Akḥṭal (d. c. 710) had died, he continued to be viciously attacked by his longtime foe Jarīr (d. c. 728); see Salma K. Jayyusi, “Umayyad Poetry,” in *Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period, The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature*, ed. A.F.L. Beeston, T.M. Johnstone, R.B. Serjeant, and G.R. Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 410, 411–412. The practice is also not unknown in the Ottoman context, with perhaps the most prominent example being the poet Yaḥyā Beğ’s (d. 1582) invective elegy for the deceased grand vizier Rüstem Pasha (d. 1561); see Yaḥyā Beğ, *Dīvan*, 169–172.

¹²⁷ All together, by the time of his death in 1635 Nef‘ī had produced 26 known pieces of verse dedicated to or addressing Sultan Murād: 14 panegyric *kaşīdes* (including one in Persian), 1 *meşnevī* in rhyming couplets, 3 long *ktū’as*, 7 ghazals (most of which have a distich naming Murād added at the end, indicating that they may have been composed earlier and then extended in the sultan’s presence so as to serve a panegyric end), and 1 independent distich (*müfred*).

¹²⁸ “gelin insaf edelim fark edelim mikdarı | şairiz biz de deyü lâf ü güzafi koyalım || edelim bî-meze söz söylemeden istiğfâr | dâmen-i Nef’î-i pakize-edâyı turalım || biz kelâm nakiliyiz nerde o sahib-güftar | ona teslim edelim emrine münkad olalım”; quoted in Karahan, *Nef’i: Hayatı, Sanatı, Şiirleri*, 9. I have preserved Karahan’s transcription as is.

Their mutual familiarity was well enough known as to inspire the production of a miniature depicting the two men seated together (see Illustration 2). Added to an early copy of Nef'î's *dīvān* of collected poems whose copying was completed in 1623, while Nef'î was still alive, the miniature appears to date from roughly the mid-17th century.¹²⁹

Another example of the sultan's esteem—and how it turned to wrath—is apparent from an anecdote related by the historian Muştafâ Na'imâ (1655–1716), in which the sultan while away his free time perusing a collection of Nef'î's invective verse:

On Tuesday [*sic*], Dhū al-qa'da 14 of the year [1039; June 25, 1630], such a great rain, thunder, and lightning arose that hearts were affrighted and afraid. Sultan Murād Khan was sitting in Beşiktaş by the pavilion of the late Sultan Aḥmed Khan, with a collection of Nef'î's invectives in his hands and the chief physician Emîr Çelebi [d. 1638/39] by his side. A great flash of fiery lightning struck near the royal presence and the eunuchs [nearby] all dropped down as a great terror fell all around. The esteemed sultan tore into pieces the collection [in his hands]. He reprimanded Nef'î, who commenced repenting and seeking divine pardon and innumerable expressions of faithfulness. One of the wits of that time rebuked Nef'î by expressing and describing this incident in the following couplet. *Couplet*: “a poem paralleling (*naẓīre*) the ‘Shafts of Doom’ fell from the sky | Nef'î's tongue brought down upon him the wrath of God.”¹³⁰

¹²⁹ See Eleazar Birnbaum, *Ottoman Turkish and Çağatay MSS in Canada: A Union Catalogue of the Four Collections* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 119. The manuscript in question is numbered T4 in Birnbaum's private collection, and was first described in Eleazar Birnbaum, “The Poet and the Sultan: Nef'î's *Dīvān*, a Contemporary Manuscript with a Miniature of the Poet and His Sultan,” *Journal of Turkish Studies* 31, no. 1 [In Memoriam Şinasi Tekin] (2007): 140–155.

¹³⁰ “Sene-i mezbure zilka'desinin on dördüncü günü yevm-i sülâsâda azîm ra'd u bârân ve berk vâki' olup kesret-i savâ'ikten gönüllere havf u hirâs geldi. Hattâ Sultan Murad Han Beşiktaş'ta merhum Sultan Ahmed Han Köşkü'nde oturup Nef'î'nin hicve müte'allik mecmû'ası ellerinde imiş ve huzûrlannda Ser-etibbâ Emir Çelebi var imiş. Meclis-i hümâyûna bir sâ'ika-i ateş-bâr-ı azîme nüzûl edip Enderun ağaları yüzleri üzerine düşüp meclise hevl-i azîm hâsıl oldu. Padişah hazretleri ol hiciv mecmû'asın paralayıp Nef'î'yi âzâr edip tövbe vü istiğfâra ve bezl-i sadakât-ı bî-şümâra meşgul oldular. Hattâ ol asrın zürefasından biri Nef'î'ye tevbihi iş'âr için kazıyyeyi bu beyt ile izhâr ve ifade eyledi derler.

Beyt:

Gökden nazire indi Sihâm-ı Kazâ'sına

Nef'î diliyle uğradı Hakk'ın belâsına.” Na'imâ, *Târih*, Vol. 2, 671.



Illustration 2

17th-century miniature depicting Nef'ī and Sultan Murād IV.

The caption, a 19th-century addition, reads, “Meeting of the Conqueror Sultan Murād Khan and the late Nef'ī” (*Fātiḥ Sultān Murād Ḥān ve Nef'ī merhūmıñ meclisi*)

This anecdote, of course, bears all the hallmarks of being a merely fanciful addition to the story of Nef'ī. Nonetheless, the fact that it was told and retold for some fifty years up to the time of the composition of Na'imā's history speaks further to the well-known close relation between the sultan and the poet. Moreover, whatever the actuality behind this anecdote may have been, Nef'ī indeed does seem to have been not only removed from his post, which may or may not have been as the comptroller of mines during this period, but also to have been exiled to Edirne. This is based on a note in a manuscript of Nef'ī's *dīvān* of collected poems that was copied by the poet Cevrī (c. 1595–1654), in which a panegyric addressed to the sultan wishes the commander of the army, the grand vizier Hüsrev Pasha (d. 1632), success in the campaign to retake Baghdad from the Safavids.¹³¹ Cevrī's note reads, "Sent to the capital while [Nef'ī was] trustee of the Murādiyye [waqf] in Edirne."¹³² As the army's march toward Baghdad commenced in August 1630 and the unsuccessful siege of the city lasted between the end of September and the middle of November,¹³³ Nef'ī must have written the poem during this period. In the panegyric, he expresses sorrow at not being in the capital and vows to forego invective: "I swear, from this day forth I shall lampoon no one, no matter what | though if you gave leave I would lampoon discordant fate || for it has taken me far from the shelter of your court | why shouldn't I lampoon such a cruel and treacherous one?"¹³⁴ As the poem was produced within a few short months after the anecdote recounted by

¹³¹ See Nef'ī, [*Dīvān*], 54–57.

¹³² See Karahan, *Nef'i: Hayati, Sanati, Şiirleri*, 11 and Ocak, "Nef'i ve Eski Türk Edebiyatımızdaki Yeri," 9.

¹³³ See Kâtib Çelebi, "Fezleke," 811–812.

¹³⁴ "bugünden 'ahdim olsun kimseyi hicv étmeyem illā | vèreydiñ ger icâzet hicv éderdim baht-ı nâ-sâzı || beni dūr étđi zîrâ dergeh-i devlet-penâhıñdan | nice hicv étmeyem bir böyle ğaddâr u çep-endâzı"; Nef'ī, [*Dīvān*], 55–56.

Na‘īmā, it is clear that Nef‘ī was immediately sent to Edirne to serve as the trustee (*mütevelli*) for the waqf of the Murādiyye mosque, and the panegyric was his attempt at getting back in the sultan’s good graces. This, however, was not to happen immediately. In fact, Nef‘ī appears not to have held the position of trustee for the Murādiyye waqf for more than two years, as he is not listed as the trustee in the waqf account book covering the period between November 28, 1632 and August 17, 1633.¹³⁵

Exactly when and why Nef‘ī lost the trusteeship position, and what he did afterwards, remains uncertain. It may have been during this period that, in search of potential patrons and taking a page from his father’s book, he got in contact with Cāmbek Giray, the khan of Crimea (r. 1610–1623, 1624, 1627–1635), with whom he appears to have exchanged letters and to whom he addressed a short panegyric.¹³⁶ In any case, Nef‘ī remained in Edirne until at least the spring of 1634. At this time, Sultan Murād traveled to Edirne at the head of an army in preparation for a campaign against the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, with whom tensions had long been rising as a result of raids conducted across shared borders by both polities.¹³⁷ The situation would quickly be resolved without any military campaign, and in the meantime Nef‘ī composed a panegyric welcoming the sultan to the city, beginning with the couplet, “welcome (*merhabā*), O just sultan of exalted lineage! | with your honorable visit Edirne has become the envy of the world!”¹³⁸ The poem goes on to express Nef‘ī’s personal joy in

¹³⁵ See Ömer Lütfi Barkan, ed., “Edirne ve Civarındaki Bazı İmâret Tesislerinin Yıllık Muhasebe Bilânçoları,” *Belgeler* 1, no. 2 (July 1964), 370, where the trustee is listed as a certain Hasan Pasha.

¹³⁶ See Nef‘ī, [*Dīvān*], 145.

¹³⁷ For an account of Murād IV’s planned Polish campaign and his actions toward this end, see ‘Abdu’l-kādir Efendi, *Tarih*, Vol. 2, 991–1005.

¹³⁸ “merhabā ey pâdişāh-ı ‘ādil ü ‘ālī-nijād | oldı teşrîfñle şehr-i Edrine reşk-i bilād”; Nef‘ī, [*Dīvān*], 57.

reuniting with the sultan with whom he had once been so close, before continuing with extensive praise of his military accomplishments and his suppression of rebellious elements and traitors. The panegyric appears to have worked, as Nef'î returned to Istanbul—most likely when the sultan returned there at the end of July—and was appointed to the position of accountant for poll taxes (*cizye* or *harâc muhâsebecisi*).¹³⁹ He was not to hold this post for long, however, as he would be executed at the beginning of 1635.

The most laconic contemporary account of his death comes from the chronicle of the *sipâhî* clerk 'Abdu'l-kâdir Efendi (d. c. 1644), who writes, “The poll tax accountant Nef'î Efendi is reproved; he is killed on account of his impudent manner.”¹⁴⁰ Also rather brief is the reference in Şeyhî Mehmed Efendi's (1668–1731) biographical dictionary, where the entry for Nef'î reads, “In Sha'bân 1044 [January/February 1635], when he was the accountant for poll taxes, [Nef'î] was killed because the royal wrath was manifest, and when [his body] was thrown into the sea a poet of the time produced this enigmatic chronogram. *Couplet*: It was very sudden, his chronogram less one¹⁴¹ was said | ‘Alas! fate slaughtered a master like Nef'î!’”¹⁴² Kâtib Çelebi's account, found in his list

¹³⁹ 'Abdu'l-kâdir Efendi, *Tarih*, Vol. 2, 1054; Kâtib Çelebi, “Fezleke,” 870; Şeyhî Mehmed, *Vekayii'l-Fudalâ*, Vol. 1, 93; and Na'imâ, *Târih*, Vol. 2, 799.

¹⁴⁰ “Cizye Muhâsebecisi olan Nef'î Efendi'ye gûş-mâl olur; bî-edebâne vaz'ı sebebinden katl olur.” 'Abdu'l-kâdir Efendi, *Tarih*, Vol. 2, 1054.

¹⁴¹ This phrase (*bir eksikli*) refers to the fact that the date produced by the chronogram in the second hemistich adds up to AH 1043 rather than AH 1044.

¹⁴² “Biñ kırk Şa'bânında cizye muhâsebecisi iken gâzab-ı husrevâne mazhar olmağla katl olunup deryâya atıldıkda zamânesi şu 'arâsından biri ber-vech-i ta'miyye bu târihi demişdi. Beyt: nâgehân geldi bir eksikli dedi târihin | âh kim kıydı felek Nef'î gibi üstâda.” Şeyhî Mehmed, *Vekayii'l-Fudalâ*, Vol. 1, 93.

of deaths for AH 1045,¹⁴³ also uses this anonymous chronogram and is more forthcoming about the reason for Nef'ī's death: "When [Nef'ī] was the accountant for poll taxes, he lampooned Bayrām Pasha, who asked for permission from Sultan Murād Khan and had [him] strangled in the palace on the eighth day of Sha'bān [January 27, 1635]. A chronogram was produced. *Verse*: 'Alas! fate slaughtered a master like Nef'ī!'"¹⁴⁴ The most extensive account comes, however, from the later history of Na'imā:

[Nef'ī] grew haughty with the sultan's compliments, and for some reason he felt offended by the vizier Bayrām Pasha and lampooned that vizier of illuminated heart in a *kaṣīde* in the *ṭawīl* meter.¹⁴⁵ At a royal gathering, the esteemed sultan sounded out [the poet] by asking, "Nef'ī, don't you have any new invectives?" When [Nef'ī] then placed his Bayrām Pasha invective in the royal hand, [the sultan] read it and pretended to enjoy it. Then he summoned Bayrām Pasha and, showing him the invective, gave him permission to kill [Nef'ī]. Thus wrote the chronicler.¹⁴⁶

The story popular among the people, however, is that, at a royal gathering, the esteemed Sultan Murād insisted [to Nef'ī], "Lampoon Bayrām Pasha!" Nef'ī did so, and when Bayrām Pasha learned of this invective, he came into the royal presence and pleaded [to the sultan], "This invective has destroyed my honor and standing among the people. My sultan, grant me leave to have that scoundrel killed!" [The sultan] gave permission for [Nef'ī's] death. This story, as related, is not accurate; the chronicler's account is more sound. For it makes little sense for and is not befitting of rulers to permit the lampooning of viziers. Whatever the case may be, Bayrām Pasha was permitted to have [Nef'ī] killed, and when he came to the palace he sent a man and—as the judges of the time had permitted according to the meaning of [the verse] "that poet of invective who goes by the name Nef'ī | his death, like the death of a

¹⁴³ This was a slip of the pen on Kâtib Çelebi's part. He used the correct date in his Arabic bibliographical dictionary *Kashf az-zunūn*; see Kâtib Çelebi, *Lexicon Bibliographicum et Encyclopaedicum, Mustafa Ben Abdallah, Katib Jelebi Dicto et Nomine Haji Khalifa Celebrato Compositum*, Vol. 3 (London: Oriental Translation Fund, 1835), 318.

¹⁴⁴ "Harâc muhâsebecisi iken Bayram Paşa'yı hicv itdikde Sultân Murad Hân'dan istifzân idüp Şa'bânın sekizinci günü sarâyında boğdurdi.

Mısra':

'Ah kim kıydı felek Nef'î gibi üstâda'

târîh didiler." Kâtib Çelebi, "Fezleke," 870.

¹⁴⁵ *Ṭawīl* was a rarely used poetic meter in which feet of either the *hezec* (· ---) or *remel* (- · ---) meters were repeated within each hemistich; for a detailed explanation in relation to Persian poetry, see M. Dabîrsîqî, "Baḥr-e Ṭawīl," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, December 15, 1988.

<http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/bahr-e-tawil-type-of-persian-verse>.

¹⁴⁶ It is unclear to which of his numerous sources Na'imā is referring here.

viper, is called for by the four schools [of Islamic jurisprudence]”¹⁴⁷—he summoned poor Nef‘î, who arrived ignorant [of what was going to happen], and after reproaching him severely, [Bayrâm Pasha] said, “Take him away!” and he was held in the palace woodshed and then strangled and [his body was] thrown into the sea.

The *‘ulemâ* and powerful figures of the time were pleased with Nef‘î’s death, and those important people and notables who had been wounded by the taunts of his tongue said abundant prayers for Bayrâm Pasha for what he had done. I heard from Ma‘an[oğlu] Hüseyin Bey¹⁴⁸ that when Bayrâm Pasha ordered Nef‘î seized and then taken out [of the woodshed to be killed], the chief sergeant-at-arms (*çavuşbaşı*) was Boynieğri [Meḥmed Agha], and as he was an [uncultured] Turk, he came up to Nef‘î and censured him in a [crude] Turkish manner, saying, “Come, Nef‘î Efendi, there’s someone in the woodshed who’s going to write a lampoon, come and see!” Nef‘î, despairing of his life, said, “Screw off! do whatever you’re going to do, you damned Turk!” and rained filthy insults down on all those gathered round.¹⁴⁹

The Bayrâm Pasha (d. 1638) mentioned by both Kâtib Çelebi and Na‘îmâ as being instrumental in Nef‘î’s death was, at the time, the deputy grand vizier (*kā’im-maḳām*), in

¹⁴⁷ This Persian verse was composed over a decade earlier by one of Nef‘î’s foes, the poet and judge (*kādî*) Kāfzāde Fā’izî (1589–1622); see section 5.1.

¹⁴⁸ Ma‘anoğlu Hüseyin was among Na‘îmâ’s primary informants for events from roughly the mid-17th century. He had been raised and educated in the palace, and thus had seen much and learned about much more, and Na‘îmâ would not only listen to his accounts, but also utilized a notebook in which Hüseyin had recorded events. See Na‘îmâ, *Târih*, Vol. 1, XXIV.

¹⁴⁹ “İltifât-ı padişaha mağrûr olup bir sebep ile Vezîr Bayram Paşa’ya hâtır-mânde olup bir kasîde-i tavîlü’z-zeyl ile ol vezîr-i rûşen-zamîri hicv eyledi. Padişah hazretleri bir meclis-i hâssü’l-hâsda ‘Nef‘î bir tâze hicvin yok mudur’ deyü su’âl ile ağzın arayıp, ol dahi Bayram Paşa hicvini keff-i hümâyûna sundukta okuyup pesend mu‘âmelesin edip ba‘dehû Bayram Paşa’yı çağırıp hicvi gösterip katline izin verdiler. Müverrih böyle tahrîr eylemiştir.

“Ammâ halk beyninde meşhur olan, Sultan Murad hazretleri meclis-i hâssında ibrâm edip ‘Bayram Paşa’yı hicv eyle’ deyü iltizâm edip Nef‘î dahi hicv etmeğin Bayram Paşa vâkif oldukta huzûr-ı hümâyûna gelip, ‘Bu hicvden sonra halk beyninde benim ırzım ve vak‘ım kalmadı, padişahım ol habîsin katline izin ihsân eyle’ deyü ibrâm-güne niyâz etmekle katline izin verdiler deyü nakl olunan hikâyenin aslı olmayıp müverrihin kelâmı sihhate akrebdir. Zira hicv-i vüzerâyâ rıza vermek mülûke şâyeste ma‘nâ değildir. Her ne tarikle olursa Bayram Paşa katline me’zûn olup sarayına geldikte adam gönderip

“Ân şâ‘ir-i heycâ-gû ki nâm-ı âst Nef‘î

“Katleş be-çâr mezheb vâcib çü katl-i ef‘î

“mefhûmu üzre ulemâ-i vakt ibâhat-ı demini tecviz ettikleri Nef‘î-i fakiri çağırıp gâfilâne geldikte ‘itâb-ı azimden sonra ‘Kaldırın’ deyüp saray odunluğunda habs ve anda boğup deryâya attılar.

“Asrın ulemâ vü uzemâsı Nef‘î’nin katlinden mesrûr olup husûsan ta‘ne-i lisânından mecrûh olan ekâbir ü a‘yân bu bâbda Bayram Paşa’ya du‘â-i firâvân ettiler. Ma‘an Hüseyin Bey’den işittim, Bayram Paşa Nef‘î’yi ahza ferman edip taşra çıkardıklarında Boynu-eğri çavuş-başı imiş, bir Türk âdemîsi olmakla Nef‘î’nin önüne düşüp ‘Gel Nef‘î Efendi odunlukta bir hiciv düzecek kişi vardır, gel gör’ deyü Türk-vârî ta‘rîz etmiş. Nef‘î hayatından me’yûs olup ‘Yürü bildiğinden kalma bre mel‘ûn Türk’ demiş ve zîr ü bâlâyâ vâfir şütûm-ı galîza etmiş.” Na‘îmâ, *Târih*, Vol. 2, 799–800.

which capacity he had been serving since October 1633.¹⁵⁰ He appears to have been particularly close to Sultan Murād, or at least later famed as such, judging from the fact that the sultan was said to have wept profusely when he, by that time the grand vizier, died in 1638.¹⁵¹ Nefī had even composed a panegyric to him,¹⁵² either when he had come to Edirne with Sultan Murād or after returning to Istanbul: if, as Na‘īmā mentioned, Nefī was indeed “offended” (*hāṭır-mānde*) with Bayrām Pasha, it is possible that it had something to do with not receiving the expected reward or favor in return for this panegyric, a subject about which the poet was notoriously touchy, as will be seen in connection with Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha in Chapter 4. Whatever the case may have been, the invective ostensibly written against Bayrām Pasha by Nefī has not survived. The fact that this invective is not extant lends credence to Na‘īmā’s initial story, according to which only Nefī, Sultan Murād, and Bayrām Pasha were aware of the piece: if, as the popular story Na‘īmā relates only to doubt has it, this invective were widely known enough to be damaging the pasha’s reputation, it would almost certainly have been recorded and survived in at least one of the numerous manuscripts of Nefī’s *Sihām-ı kaza*—which it has not. Assuming Na‘īmā’s initial story to be more or less accurate, then, it seems that the sultan may have permitted Nefī’s execution either because he had gone back on his earlier vow to produce no more invective,¹⁵³ or because he dared to lampoon someone to whom Murād was personally close, or both.

¹⁵⁰ For his initial appointment, see Kâtib Çelebi, “Fezleke,” 841.

¹⁵¹ See *ibid.*, 875.

¹⁵² See Nefī, [*Dīvān*], 104–106.

¹⁵³ Although the dating of invectives is very often difficult to impossible, it does seem as if Nefī refrained from producing invective in the course of his four years in Edirne, during which time he also appears to

Another theory regarding Nef'î's execution was first put forward by the scholar Mehmed Fuad Köprülü, who claims to have seen, in a miscellaneous manuscript (*mecmû'a*), a quatrain (*kıt'â*) ostensibly by Nef'î that contained harsh words against the sultan himself and that, had Murād seen this poem, would surely have led to Nef'î's execution.¹⁵⁴ Two versions of this poem were later discussed by Ocak, who doubted on stylistic grounds that it was the work of Nef'î,¹⁵⁵ as well as by Cemil Çiftçi, who following Köprülü said that it seems more likely to have been written by someone else—perhaps one of Nef'î's rivals—and then attributed to him so as to blacken his name.¹⁵⁶ One of the versions discussed by Ocak and Çiftçi bears the Persian heading “Invective [produced] by Nef'î at the insistence of Sultan Murād and the cause of his death” (*Hajw-e Naf'î bā-ibrām-e Sulṭān Murād wa sabab-i qatlash*),¹⁵⁷ while the other lacks a heading.¹⁵⁸ Consisting of a series of quatrains mentioning and lampooning a series of largely unnamed figures in the Ottoman state hierarchy, the poem is, for lack of a better term, little more than doggerel. It is written in the *rajaz* family of poetic meters, with each line being a single poetic foot in the pattern – – · – – (*müstef'ilātīn*) and the quatrain rhyming in the pattern a a a x || b b b x, etc., with the last line of each quatrain the refrain *anlar da bundan* (“he is one of them, too”). In the version bearing a heading,

have produced little in the way of panegyric apart from four pieces written to the sultan in the hopes of getting back into his good graces; see Nef'î, [*Dīvān*], 50–60.

¹⁵⁴ Mehmet Fuat Köprülü, *Eski Şairlerimiz: Divan Edebiyatı Antolojisi* (Istanbul: Muallim Ahmet Halit Kitaphanesi, 1934), 392. Karahan repeats Köprülü's words more or less verbatim; see Karahan, *Nef'i: Hayatı, Sanatı, Şiirleri*, 13.

¹⁵⁵ Ocak, “Nef'î ve Eski Türk Edebiyatımızdaki Yeri,” 13.

¹⁵⁶ Cemil Çiftçi, *Maktul Şairler* (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 1997), 360–362.

¹⁵⁷ Süleymaniye Library, Mehmed Arif–Mehmed Murad 246, unnumbered folio. This heading accords with what Na'imā described as the unreliable popular account of Nef'î's death, in which Sultan Murād insisted that the poet lampoon Bayrām Pasha, though the copy of the poem itself contains no reference to the pasha or indeed to anyone by name, apart from the name “Nef'î.”

¹⁵⁸ IUNEK TY 5511, 74a.

the quatrain touching on the sultan is as follows: “the possessor of the caliphate | is a calamity twice over | [he] looks like a raven | he’s one of them, too.”¹⁵⁹ In the version without a heading, the corresponding quatrain reads, “the host of banquets | [he] looks like a raven | that bewitching man | he’s one of them, too.”¹⁶⁰ Only the former, which mentions “the possessor of the caliphate” (*şāhib-hilāfet*), could be construed as referring to the sultan. Moreover, there are two heretofore undiscovered variants of this same poem in miscellanies, each with a very slightly different refrain (*anlar da bunda*) and quite different takes on the sultan. One of these variants bears the heading “Commanders under the sultan” (*Ümerā-yı sulṭān*) and mentions the sultan as follows: “the just sultan | versed in science | that perfected man | he is one, too.”¹⁶¹ The other variant, under the heading “On all the dignitaries” (*Der-ḥaḳḳ-ı cümle ricālān*), presents the list of state officials¹⁶² and others via a frame wherein the sultan requests the poet, in return for a reward, to say something about each of them, as indicated in the initial quatrain’s lines, “the sultan commanded | [to tell] who were among them.”¹⁶³

The attribution of the poem to Nef’ī, made directly in the heading of the copy at the Süleymaniye Library, is based on the final quatrain of the poem, which again is quite different in the four versions. The first reads, “Nef’ī is faith[ful] | unique with his poems

¹⁵⁹ “şāhib-hilāfet | oldı dü āfet | kuzğun kıyāfet | anlar da bundan”; Süleymaniye Library, Mehmed Arif–Mehmed Murad 246, unnumbered folio.

¹⁶⁰ “şāhib-ziyāfet | kuzğun kıyāfet | ol merd-i āfet | anlar da bundan”; IUNEK TY 5511, 74a.

¹⁶¹ “sulṭān-ı ‘ādil | fenninde māhir | ol merd-i kāmil | anlar da bunda”; Millet Kütüphanesi AE Mnz 650, 90a.

¹⁶² In this variant, several of the figures are named and are among those whom Nef’ī had targeted in his invectives; e.g. Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha, Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha, Ḳāfzāde Fā’izī, and so on. With this element, this variant reads much as if it were the work of a person who had perused Nef’ī’s invectives—many of which are included in the same miscellany—and used the names found there to create a new piece, perhaps in the hopes of making it seem authentically from Nef’ī’s own pen.

¹⁶³ “emr etdi sulṭān | kim var ise bunda”; Milli Kütüphanesi 06 Mil Yz A 5379, 91b.

| that infidel catamite | he’s one of them, too.”¹⁶⁴ The second reads, “[show] favor to Nef’ī | a frightful omen | praise to the devil | he’s one of them, too.”¹⁶⁵ The third reads, “Nef’ī the poet | skilled in his field | that infidel catamite | he is one, too.”¹⁶⁶ And the fourth reads, “Nef’ī the satirist | has again struck while the iron’s hot | that crazed arrow | he is one, too.”¹⁶⁷ These final quatrains, far from allowing the poem to be attributed to Nef’ī, make it abundantly clear that it is *not* in fact Nef’ī’s work, as it is he who is insulted in these lines.¹⁶⁸ At most, then, if this poem does date to Nef’ī’s own time, it was intended to slander him via attribution, since the final quatrain bearing his name might, at a glance, be taken as analogous to the final couplet of a ghazal, in which the poet effectively “signs” the work by employing his pen name. Even this, however, seems unlikely: given the stylistic problems mentioned by Ocak in light of Sultan Murād’s close familiarity with Nef’ī’s style as well as his ability in reading and writing poetry, it is difficult to imagine that Murād, had he seen or heard this work (only one version of which actually insults the sultan), would have been fooled. In the lack of any further evidence, therefore, the conclusion must be that Na‘īmā’s account of Nef’ī’s execution is a largely accurate one.

¹⁶⁴ “Nef’ī vefādır | şî’riyle nādir | ol puşt-ı kâfir | anlar da bundan”; Süleymaniye Library, Mehmed Arif-Mehmed Murad 246, unnumbered folio.

¹⁶⁵ “Nef’ī’ye himmet | hā’il nuḥūset | şeytāna minnet | anlar da bundan”; IUNEK TY 5511, 74a.

¹⁶⁶ “Nef’ī-yi şā’ir | fenninde māhîr | ol puşt-ı kâfir | anlar da bunda”; Millet Kütüphanesi AE Mnz 650, 90a.

¹⁶⁷ “Nef’ī[-yi] heccāv | etmiş yine tāv | ol deli pertāv | anlar da bunda”; Milli Kütüphanesi 06 Mil Yz A 5379, 92b.

¹⁶⁸ Though some writers of invective throughout the Islamicate poetic tradition were known to occasionally mock themselves, this was a practice in which Nef’ī himself never engaged.

2.1.2 Introduction to the *Sihām-ı ƙazā* (Shafts of Doom)

The corpus of invective verse produced by Nef'ī is known by the name *Sihām-ı ƙazā*, translated by E.J.W. Gibb as “Shafts [*i.e.*, arrows] of Doom.”¹⁶⁹ The term is used in the corpus itself, in a quatrain that, in most manuscripts, is situated at the beginning of the second half of the collection containing short quatrains as opposed to longer pieces. This quatrain reads as follows: “whoever dares to vie with me in the science of meaning [*i.e.*, poetry] | should know my fateful onslaught will be enough || my verse is the archer Rustam,¹⁷⁰ and for that | the quiver of my quatrains with shafts of doom is enough.”¹⁷¹

While this poem is clearly a declaration of intent and a generalized threat directed against rival poets, as are a few other poems in the collection, it is not entirely clear from the last line whether Nef'ī himself intended “shafts of doom” as a title for his invectives, especially since the line refers only to the collection’s quatrains (*muƙaṭṭa ‘āt*).

Nonetheless, whatever Nef'ī’s original intent in this regard may have been, within a decade after his death his invectives as a whole were known under the rubric *Sihām-ı ƙazā*.

This is understood from the earliest known manuscript copy of the work, which bears that heading.¹⁷² According to its colophon, this copy was completed in the month of Dhū'l-qa‘da in the year 1053 AH (*Zi'l-ƙa‘de-i mübārek min şuhūr-ı sene şelāse ve*

¹⁶⁹ E.J.W. Gibb, *A History of Ottoman Poetry*, Vol. 3, ed. Edward G. Browne (London: Luzac & Co., 1904), 253.

¹⁷⁰ Rustam was a legendary Persian warrior whose life and exploits are narrated at greatest length in the *Shāhnāmah* of Ferdowsī (940–1019 or 1025); see J.T.P. de Bruijn, “Rustam,” *EF*², Vol. 8, 636–637.

¹⁷¹ “kimdir benimle fenn-i ma'nā[da] baḡs eden | bilsün ki aḡa ḡaml[e-i] ṭab'im belā yeter || ol Rüstem-i kemānkeş-i nazm[ım] ki ṭab'ıma | terkeş-i muƙaṭṭa'āt-ı sihām-ı ƙazā yeter”; ULLWCO 662, 15a–15b.

¹⁷² ULLWCO 662, 1b.

ḥamsīn ve elf),¹⁷³ corresponding to January 11–February 9, 1644, nine years after Nef‘ī’s death in 1635. While this manuscript contains 172 poems in total—13 long invectives and 142 short—it is not a complete collection of Nef‘ī’s invective verse: considering this manuscript in conjunction with the verses found in other extant manuscripts,¹⁷⁴ none of which (among those I consulted) can be dated to any earlier than approximately 1660,¹⁷⁵ the total number of poems appears to be 254, comprising 18 longer invectives of at least 9 distichs and 236 quatrains or *kıt‘as* of two distichs each.

In terms of the individual figures who serve as the targets of Nef‘ī’s invectives, these amount to approximately 70 different individuals. While many of these individuals, comprising the bulk of the collection, are mentioned using their real names and hence identifiable (for the most part), several are referred to only by epithets (*e.g.*, *Ḳara Taşak* or “Black Balls” and *Fırşatī* or “Opportunist”), patronymics (*e.g.* *Çavuşoğlu* or “son of the halberdier” and *Dedezāde* or “son of the shaykh”) or by titles (*e.g.* *Çelebi* and *Hekimbaşı* or “chief physician”), and hence cannot always be identified with absolute

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 28b.

¹⁷⁴ The manuscripts that I was able to personally access and consult, totaling thirteen in all, are the following: ULLWCO 662; IUNEK TY 511, 1653, 3003, and 3004; Millet Kütüphanesi, Ali Emiri, Mnz 1028; Millî Kütüphane 06 Mil Yz A 5379 and 8545; Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Yazma Bağışlar 7274; Marmara University İlahiyat Fakültesi Kütüphanesi 12017/YZ0273; Ali Fuad Türkgeldi MS (private collection); and Ali Nihad Tarlan MS (private collection). The manuscripts of which I am aware but was unable to consult, totaling twelve in all, are the following: ULLWCO 870; IUNEK TY 9699; Millet Kütüphanesi AE Mnz 1027 and 1097; Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi Ali Nihad Tarlan 10; Edirne Selimiye Yazma Eserler Kütüphanesi 2143; Konya Mevlana Müzesi Library 389 and 5913; Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Türkische Handschriften, Mxt. 260 and 1244; Bodleian Library MS. Turk e. 100; British Museum Or. 7170; and Gazi Husrev Begova Library 6816. This amounts to a total of 25 individual partial and “complete” manuscripts, though several of these—*e.g.*, the Ali Fuat Türkgeldi and Ali Nihad Tarlan and the Millet Kütüphanesi MSs—are clearly copied from one or more others in the list.

¹⁷⁵ IUNEK TY 511 appears likely to be the earliest among the other manuscripts I consulted, most of which are undated, based on the fact that it is a miscellany of poems that contains the work of no poet later than Ḥasan Çelebi (Bahā’ī / Küfrī) (d. 1660).

certainty. Nearly all¹⁷⁶ of the (known) figures targeted can be considered members of the Ottoman “elite” in a broad sense inasmuch as they were members of one of the three untaxed branches of the state hierarchy; that is, the military-administrative branch (*seyfiyye* or *‘askerī*), the religiojudicial branch (*‘ilmiyye*), and the clerical or bureaucratic branch (*‘kalemiyye*).¹⁷⁷ In terms of particular positions held, these figures run the gamut from clerks (*e.g.*, Ḥaylī Aḥmed Çelebi) and imams (*e.g.*, Pendī Meḥmed); to a large number of teachers (*müderris*) and judges (*kaḍī*) of various ranks; to chief treasurers (*başdefterdār*), a grand mufti (*şeyḥü’l-İslām*), and grand viziers.

As attested to by the anecdote related by Na‘īmā above regarding Nef‘ī’s exile to Edirne, collections of his invective verse were likely extant as early as 1630, when Sultan Murād sat in the garden of a pavilion in Istanbul’s Beşiktaş district reading them. This is to be expected, since, as mentioned above, after his forced exile to Edirne, Nef‘ī appears to have produced little in the way of further invective; his work in the invective mode is thus essentially confined to roughly the years between 1600 and 1630.

The problem of dating specific pieces of invective verse within this timeframe, however, is a complicated matter. There are a few references to particular events, generally the appointment of the invective’s target to a position or his assignment to a military

¹⁷⁶ The one exception that I have been able to identify is Pendī Meḥmed (d. 1635), who served as an imam or prayer leader in Istanbul in addition to being a poet.

¹⁷⁷ In classifying the Ottoman state apparatus in this manner, I follow the lead of Norman Itzkowitz, “Eighteenth Century Ottoman Realities,” *Studia Islamica* 16 (1962): 73–94 and Lewis V. Thomas, *A Study of Naima*, ed. Norman Itzkowitz (New York: New York University Press, 1972). This is not the only approach to classifying this apparatus, but, as Itzkowitz and Thomas argue, it seems to accord more closely with the changes being wrought on this apparatus by conditions from the 17th century onward. For a discussion of the historiography in relation to this matter, see Carter V. Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire: The Sublime Porte, 1789–1922* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 43–47; but note that Findley’s work is still under the influence of the by now rather outdated notion of Ottoman decline.

campaign, that can be used to date a piece with some precision. For instance, one long invective written by Nef'î against the chief treasurer Etmekçizâde Aḥmed Pasha contains the line, “praise God, this year that accursed one did not go on campaign” (*minnet Allāh'a bu yıl gitmedi mel'ün sefere*),¹⁷⁸ a reference to the practice whereby, on occasion, the chief treasurer would be assigned to join the Ottoman army on campaign and serve as the military treasurer there. In this case, examination of contemporary chronicles shows that there was just one year, AH 1017 (1609 CE), where, as the line suggests, Aḥmed Pasha was nearly assigned to a campaign but then remained in Istanbul.¹⁷⁹ Similarly, in one particular case the later chronicle of Na'īmā actually partially quotes an invective of Nef'î's, providing the context for precise dating. In a short section entitled “On the soothsaying of poets” (*Min bāb-ı kehāneti 'ş-şu 'arā*), Na'īmā writes:

When the grand vizier Çerkes Mehmed Pasha became commander of the army and departed on campaign, [‘Abdu’l-]Bākī Pasha went as treasurer as well. At that time, the poet Nef'î said: “so now you are the campaign treasurer again | take care to follow the same road as İstikāmet [Efendi].”¹⁸⁰ And Bākī Pasha read this distich himself and would constantly repeat it. And in truth, just like the late İstikāmet Efendi, Bākī Pasha also passed away on this campaign, and [so] Nef'î's witticism hit the mark exactly.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁸ ULLWCO 662, 5a.

¹⁷⁹ This incident and the accompanying invective will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

¹⁸⁰ İstikāmet Efendi (d. 1616)—whose name means “direction,” providing Nef'î's poem with a play on words—was a high-ranking treasurer who was appointed as military treasurer for the 1616 campaign against Yerevan, and while with the army he grew ill and died; see ‘Abdu’l-kādir Efendi, *Tarih*, Vol. 1, 649.

¹⁸¹ “Sadri‘zam Çerkes Mehmed Paşa serdar olup sefere çıktıkta Bākī Paşa defterdarlıkla bile çıkmış idi. Ol vakitte Nef'î şâ‘ir demişti:

“İşte oldun yine hâlâ sefere defterdar
 “İstikāmet yoluna gitmeğe himmet eyle

“Ve bu beyti Bākī Paşa kendi okuyup dâ'im tekrar edermiş. Fi'l-hakīka merhum İstikāmet Efendi gibi Bākī Paşa dahi bu seferde fevt olup hezel-i Nef'î isābet-i mahz oldu.” Na'īmā, *Tarih*, Vol. 2, 569.

This refers to Çerkes Meḥmed Pasha’s (d. 1625) departure on a campaign to suppress a rebellion in the spring of 1624. ‘Abdu’l-bāḳī Pasha (d. 1625) was the chief treasurer, and he was assigned to accompany the grand vizier on this campaign.¹⁸² Thus, this particular invective by Nefī— a quatrain whose first distich reads “hey Bāḳī, catamite of catamites, have you no moderation at all? | set aside your thievery and be just a little satisfied”¹⁸³— must have been written in the spring of 1624 when ‘Abdu’l-bāḳī was assigned to Meḥmed Pasha’s Anatolian campaign.

Such relatively clear-cut examples as these, though, are the exception to the rule. For the most part, the relatively generalized insults that characterize the majority of Nefī’s invectives against known personages in elite circles do not permit any specificity with regard to dating. In such cases of temporal obscurity, the most that can be done is to observe the target’s date of birth and/or date of arrival in Istanbul (if applicable) as well as his date of death, and then to note that the piece in question must have been written within that particular period. For instance, the poet Meḥmed Efendi (Zamān) from Nakhchivan came to Istanbul in AH 1000 (1591/92 CE) and died in Ramaḍān 1022 (October/November 1613),¹⁸⁴ and thus, given that Nefī does not seem to have become especially active on the Istanbul poetic scene until around 1606, it can be assumed that his invectives against Meḥmed Efendi were produced between around 1606 and 1613. Even that, however, is a comparatively simple case: the timeframe is relatively short,

¹⁸² See ‘Abdu’l-kādir Efendi, *Tarih*, Vol. 2, 793–794 and Ibrāhīm Peçevī, “Peçevī Tarihi: 317b–351a Metin, Dizin, Özel Adlar Sözlüğü,” ed. Zuhul Kayayurt (M.A. thesis, Marmara University, 2005), 40–41.

¹⁸³ “yok mı inşafın eyā Bāḳī-yi eḫset niçe bir | ko be hırsızlığı bir parça ḳanā’at eyle”; IUNEK TY 511, 72b.

¹⁸⁴ Meḥmed Süreyyā, *Sicill-i Osmanî*, ed. Nuri Akbayar and Seyit Ali Kahraman (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1996), 1705.

and the number of invectives few. By contrast, the poet Nev'izāde 'Aṭā'ī, one of Nef'ī's most frequent targets, was approximately the same age as him and died several months after him in 1635.¹⁸⁵ Therefore, in the absence of any more precise indications in the poems themselves, these particular pieces could date to anywhere between around 1606 and 1630, when as mentioned above Nef'ī appears to have more or less ceased producing invective.

At the time Nef'ī was active, the size and scope of his invective verse was unprecedented. Prior to the late 16th and early 17th centuries, many and perhaps even most poets—some of whom were mentioned in the introduction—had produced some invective verse on various occasions.¹⁸⁶ Moreover, while the majority of earlier invective was directed at poets' peers (*i.e.*, other poets, often friends of the author), as is also the case with Nef'ī, there were from time to time pieces penned against specific figures of authority, such as grand viziers and even the sultan.¹⁸⁷ Nevertheless, prior to Nef'ī, no poet in the Ottoman tradition had ever engaged in such a sustained and wide-ranging production of invective verse that would later be collected into an integral volume; the fact that this collection, as mentioned above, became known so soon after

¹⁸⁵ The precise date of 'Aṭā'ī's death is uncertain, but appears to have been around October or November; see Şeyhī Meḥmed, *Vekayii'l-Fudalā*, Vol. 1, 5.

¹⁸⁶ This does not include such works as Şeyhī's (d. c. 1431) *Ḥarnāme* (Book of the Ass) or Rūhī of Baghdad's (d. 1605/06) long poem in the *terkīb-i bend* stanzaic form, neither of which can be considered personal invective, but are more of the nature of broad social satire. For the former, see Şeyhī, *Şeyhī'nin Ḥarnāme'si*, ed. Faruk K. Timurtaş (Istanbul: Edebiyat Fakültesi Basımevi, 1971); for the latter, see Rūhī-i Bağdādī, *Bağdatlı Rūhī Dīvānı: Karşılaştırmalı Metin*, ed. Coşkun Ak (Bursa: Uludağ Üniversitesi Basımevi, 2001), 187–195. For more concerning the difference between invective and satire, see the following section.

¹⁸⁷ The prime—and indeed almost the only—examples of invective against the sultan are the numerous pieces that were written against Sultan Süleymān the Magnificent in the form of elegies (*mersiyeye*) for the prince Muştafā, whom the sultan had, as mentioned in the introduction, had executed. For texts and analysis of these pieces, see footnote 66.

his death under the rubric *Sihām-ı kazā* can serve as indirect evidence of the singularity of this enterprise at the time.¹⁸⁸ Tellingly, perhaps the closest analogue to Nef'ī's work in this regard emerged from the pen of his mentor Muṣṭafā 'Ālī, many of whose prose works—particularly the groundbreaking *Nuṣḥatü's-selāṭīn* (Counsel for Sultans) of 1581¹⁸⁹—are peppered with a large quantity of invective verse that is of both a personal as well as a more general nature and that pulls no punches in terms of the severity of either its criticism or its language,¹⁹⁰ something that was characteristic of 'Ālī's prose as well. This was a trait taken on by Nef'ī's invective, probably at least partly in emulation, and, as will be seen in Chapter 5, this connection between 'Ālī and Nef'ī in terms of style came in for criticism and mockery on the part of the latter's contemporaries.

2.2 *Hicv*: satire vs. invective

*Nam castum esse decet pium poetam
ipsum, versiculos nihil necesse est*¹⁹¹

In the Ottoman context, invective has attracted very little in the way of serious research or dedicated studies. This is true as well for the early 17th century, the period that is the focus of this dissertation and that was in many ways a golden age for invective production, owing partly to the polarizing figure of Nef'ī and his abundant invective verse and partly to the tensions triggered by this period's changes and transformations.

While most broad overviews of Ottoman and Turkish literature do make mention of this

¹⁸⁸ The most prominent example of an earlier collection of similar work is Zāṭī's *Leṭā'if* (Pleasantries), already mentioned briefly in the introduction as being more in the nature of anecdote than invective *per se*.

¹⁸⁹ The definitive edition of this work is Muṣṭafā 'Ālī, *Muṣṭafā 'Ālī's Counsel for Sultans of 1581: Edition, Translation, Notes*, 2 vols., ed. and trans. Andreas Tietze (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1979).

¹⁹⁰ I am currently preparing a study of Muṣṭafā 'Ālī's invective verse in relation both to their era and the prose context within which these verses are embedded.

¹⁹¹ "For it is proper that the true poet be chaste | himself, [though] in no way is it necessary for his poems." Catullus, *The Poems*, ed. Kenneth Quinn (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 1970 [2009]), 11.

period's invective, it nearly always amounts to little more than an aside, as if it were an afterthought. This is by no means a flawed approach for such works insofar as invective was undoubtedly a minor mode in the field of Ottoman poetry as a whole, particularly in comparison with the voluminous work produced in the lyrical (primarily the ghazal), panegyric (primarily in the *kaşīde* form), and narrative (primarily in the rhymed couplets of the *mesnevī* form) modes. Yet despite this somewhat understandable paucity of research on the topic, my contention is that the neglect of Ottoman invective has largely been the result of semi-conscious misconceptions concerning what this mode actually entails in the broader context of the Islamicate tradition from which Ottoman invective emerged. Furthermore, such misunderstandings have often been coupled with moral apprehensions about the approach and content of such work. In a nutshell, as touched upon in the introduction, Islamicate invective (*hijā'* or *hajw*) was always resolutely personal in nature, both in the sense of being prompted by subjective concerns and framed in explicitly subjective terms, and in the sense of constituting a primarily *ad hominem* (or, in some cases, *ad tribum*) attack. Because of this radically personal nature, and because the aim of invective was to slander and discredit the target to as effective a degree as possible, invective has often if by no means always had recourse to profanity. On the surface, it is such profanity that has caused moral apprehension for invective's critics, but on a more profound level the mode's subjectivity and the frequent lack of "fairness" or "justice" that this leads to have proven just as disturbing. This, in turn, has prompted critics to engage in all sorts of mental and rhetorical contortions and acrobatics in an attempt to come to grips with the mode.

A fine initial example of how Ottoman invective has been received and evaluated by critics can be seen in the definition of *hicviyye* (i.e., “individual work of invective”) and *hecā* (i.e., “invective”) given by the teacher, journalist, and literary historian Tāhir Olgun (1877–1951), better known as Ṭāhirü’l-Mevlevī owing to the fact that he was a shaykh in the Mevlevi Sufi order. In his *Edebiyat Lügatı* (“Dictionary of Literature”), published in its full form posthumously, he defines the terms *hicviyye/hecā* as follows:

Writings composed in order to disclose disgraceful acts and expose scandalous behavior. However, in [writing] them, decency of expression is necessary, for if the style of expression transgresses the bounds of modesty, one will have [only] cursed oneself and rendered oneself contemptible, rather than others. On condition that it is [thus] pure, invective defends what is right and true and hinders injustices and shameful acts. It is invective’s immediacy, rather than the fear of God’s delayed wrath, that is threatening to one who is unjust and haughty.¹⁹²

The very first sentence here constitutes something of a redefinition of invective.

Considering the aforementioned inherently personal and subjective nature of the mode, the “disgraceful acts” (*rezâil*) and “scandalous behavior” (*erâzil*) Olgun mentions are as often as not simply the topic of a given invective, regardless of whether they occurred in reality or not. Nev’îzâde ‘Aṭā’î: “Nev’îzâde, you’re an absurd catamite with a mouth full of shit | and there are few in this city who haven’t fucked you.”¹⁹³ Of course, ‘Aṭā’î may or may not have served as a passive sexual partner (*hîz*) to numerous men: the point here is not in fact to expose any “disgraceful acts” or “scandalous behavior,” but simply to sully

¹⁹² “Teşrîh-i rezâil ve teşhîr-i erâzil için yazılan yazılardır. Maamâfih bunlarda nezâhet-i beyâna riâyet zarûrîdir. Çünki tarz-i ifâde dâire-i edebi tecâvüz ederse âdetâ nazmen sövülmüş ve terzil yerine rezâlet edilmiş olur. Nezîh olmak şartıyla hiciv, hak ve hakikatin müdafii, gadr ve fezâhatin mâniidir. Bir zâlim-i müteazzımı Allâhın kahr-ı imhâlkârîsinden ziyâde hicvin te’sîr-i ânîsi titretir.” Ṭāhirü’l-Mevlevî, *Edebiyat Lügatı*, ed. Kemâl Edîb Kürkçüoğlu (Istanbul: Enderun Kitabevi, 1973), 53.

¹⁹³ “Nev’îzâde sen bir ağız poğlu hîz-i yâvesin | kim bu şehre icrede saña az kimse var larķ etmemiş”; IUNEK TY 511, 78b.

‘Aṭā’ī’s name and reputation. In a word, the aim is to insult him. However, Olgun, by presenting invective as if this were not its fundamental performative goal (in most cases), glosses over this fact, in the process redefining invective according to his own moralistic reservations. This is why he is subsequently able to bring up the supposed necessity of “decency of expression” (*nezâhet-i beyân*), which in practice had rarely ever had anything to do with Islamicate invective.¹⁹⁴ This prescriptive approach, wherein the critic sets up boundaries so as to clarify what is and is not acceptable, has been the common thread running through most of what little criticism there has been on Ottoman invective, and particularly Nef’î’s *Sihâm-ı kazâ*, as will be examined in detail below.

Olgun’s approach to his definition, though it comes in a dictionary of literary terms, is at least openly prescriptive in that it does nothing to disguise the fact that it is the author’s own personal view of invective, albeit this is a view that would not permit much of Ottoman invective as actually practiced into the canon. However, one particular recent utilization of this passage proves even more telling in regards to the long process of how Ottoman invective came to be redefined in such a way that much or even most of it was

¹⁹⁴ While there were of course always some poets who were more “decent” than others in terms of language, and some who tended to be less, this appears to have been primarily a matter of individual style than the effect of any kind of pressure to censor one’s tongue. As van Gelder remarks in relation to invective produced during the first century of the Islamic era, when the mode was at its most beleaguered due to the novel moral understanding introduced by the young religion, “what [was] objectionable in *hijā* [was], above all, the danger of stirring up unnecessary strife and the severing of bonds newly joined by Islam.” van Gelder, *The Bad and the Ugly*, 29. In fact, as time went on, the use of “indecent” language—*i.e.*, for lack of a better term, obscenity—increased to the point that it even, during the Abbasid caliphate, developed into a distinct and popular literary mode of its own, known as *sukhf*, which became “linked specifically to obscenity and scatology”; Sinan Antoon, *The Poetics of the Obscene in Premodern Arabic Poetry: Ibn al-Hajjāj and Sukhf* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 12. In the context of Islamicate literature in the Persian language, which emerged at the same time that Arabic *sukhf* gained popularity, obscenity was always a common element; see, *e.g.*, Riccardo Zipoli, “The Obscene Sanâ’î,” *Persica* 17 (2001): 173–194; J.T.P. de Bruijn, “Hajw,” *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, December 15, 2003. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/hajw>; and Zipoli, “Anvari, a Master of Obscene Verse.”

effectively decanonized. Ahmet Atillâ Şentürk, in his otherwise valuable study on the janissary poet Yaḥyâ Beğ's elegy for Sultan Süleymân the Magnificent's son Muştafâ, uses Olgun's passage, which he provides in full in a footnote, to support the following blanket statement: "People of former times [*eskiler*] called poems that were written with the aim of exposing and publicly proclaiming scandals and injustices *hicviyye* or *hecâ* [*i.e.*, invective], *on condition that they remained within the bounds of morality.*"¹⁹⁵ What was clearly prescriptive in Olgun's text is here presented as fact by Şentürk, who declares that "people of former times"—an exceedingly vague term that appears to be a euphemism for cultured Ottomans regardless of period—did not consider invective that transgressed morality to have actually been invective. In other words, such "immoral" works were supposedly thought to be mere insult rather than a true literary mode. This, of course, is a fallacy employed by Şentürk in service of his broader (and much more reasonable) aim of presenting Yaḥyâ Beğ's elegy as a work of profoundly nuanced and morally unobjectionable critical invective written against Sultan Süleymân.

While there were most certainly always moralists and critics who objected to invective on the basis of its profanity and obscenity and/or, more broadly, on the grounds that by its very nature it was an *ad hominem* attack, it was not until the reimagining of Ottoman literature that occurred, first, in the mid-19th century and, later and more profoundly, after the advent of the Republic of Turkey that the term *hicv* began to be recast as part of a process of canonization attempting to winnow out the "bad" from the "good." As I will

¹⁹⁵ "Eskiler, *edep sınırlarına riayet etme şartıyla*, rezillik ve haksızlıkları açıklama ve bunları ilan etme maksadıyla yazılmış şiirlere 'hicviyye' yahut 'hecâ' demişlerdir." Şentürk, *Taşlıcalı Yahyâ Beğ'in Şehzâde Mustafa Mersiyesi*, 99; emphasis added.

show below, this attempted reorientation of *hicv* arose not simply due to moralistic qualms, but also out of a desire to force the term to better approximate to what satire had come to signify in Western literature. This was a desire that was implicit in Tâhir Olgun’s aforementioned definition of *hicviyye/hecā*, where he claimed the mode had the moral purpose of “disclos[ing] disgraceful acts and expos[ing] scandalous behavior.” But Olgun had made his desire to reorient Ottoman invective toward Western-style satire explicit in the original and much more concise edition of his dictionary, where the entry for *hicv* reads as follows:

This [*i.e.*, *hicv*] means to bring out into the open someone’s faults or shameful deeds [...] The Europeans call the writings that we term *hicviye* “satire,” and they consider satire to be a kind of didactic work. Any statement that is to be considered didactic—that is, that imparts a lesson or advice—must above all be pure. Therefore, statements like “O you vile, shameless scoundrel, fie on you!” are not *hicviye* but curses in verse.¹⁹⁶

The definition here is just as prescriptive as that in the posthumous edition of Olgun’s dictionary, albeit much more curt. Yet this time the prescription is based not on morality or “purity” exclusively, but rather is justified via a direct appeal to the Western literary mode of satire: we have *hicv*, which the Europeans call “satire” and view as didactic, and our *hicv* must be didactic as well, which means that it must be morally upright. In other words, we must look at *hicv* as if it were didactic and “pure” (*nezîh*) Western satire and discard what does not accord with this (re)definition.

¹⁹⁶ “Birinin kusurunu ve aybını meydana koymak demektir [...] Frenkler, bizim *hicviye* dediğimiz yazılara *satire* diyorlar ve satirleri, *didaktik* nev’inden sayıyorlar. Didaktik sayılacak, yâni ibret ve nasihat alınacak bir sözün her şeyden evvel *nezîh* olması şarttır. Binâenaleyh: ‘A edepsiz, a utanmaz, a rezil tu yüzüne!’ [g]ibi sözler, *hicviye* değil, ancak manzûm söğüntü [*sic*] olurlar.” Tâhir Olgun, *Edebiyat Lügati* (Istanbul: Âsâr-ı İlmiye Kütüphanesi Neşriyatı, 1355/1936), 44–45.

Olgun’s approach appears to be based on the mistaken assumption that satire—whose exact definition and boundaries have bedeviled Western literary critics for centuries—is a mode of literature with a clear identity agreed upon by all, one that excludes the typically harsher and coarser discourse found in invective. And indeed there have been Western critics who have forcibly excluded invective from the realm of satire—but significantly, these have been critics of a highly prescriptive bent concerned with elevating literature, and hence satire as well, as a “high art.” This concern shows very clearly in their descriptions of invective as compared to satire, of which Gilbert Highet’s characterization of invective and the closely related mode of lampoon¹⁹⁷ may serve as an example, albeit an extreme one that borders on racism:

On one side of satire lies its grim gruff old ancestor born in the stone caves, still echoing the martial monotony of the savages’ skin drums roaring for the destruction of an enemy tribe, still shrieking with the furious passion of the witch-doctor denouncing a rival. This is Invective, whose parent on one side was anthropoid, and on the other, lupine. Lurking near by is the smaller, weaker, but sometimes more dangerous mutant of Invective: a by-blow born of a snake and a toad, a hideous little creature with a mouth full of poisoned fangs. This is Lampoon, a parasite which has no life of its own and can exist only through destroying its victim.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁷ While there is hardly room here to go into the matter of the rather fine distinctions between invective and lampoon, suffice it to say that Test’s characterization of lampoon strikes closest to the heart of the matter: “Lampoon may be thought of as a specialized version of invective in that it is a satiric attack on an individual. [...] When a satiric portrait begins to emerge from a generalized abusive attack, there is the beginning of lampoon [...] Personal abuse consisting of remarks [...] which are not concerned with portraiture as such and cannot therefore be detached from their context should not properly be called lampoon. When the portraiture becomes a primary means of attack, as it does in some Greek satire, the art of lampoon has arrived.” Test, *Satire*, 121. With this definition in mind, many, though by no means all, works in the Islamicate *hijā’* tradition could easily be described as lampoons; however, for the sake of consistency, throughout the dissertation I will continue to use invective for this tradition and its works, confining “lampoon” to use as a verb due to the lack of a corresponding concise verbal form of the word “invective.” For his part, Highet is rather less clear on the distinction between invective and lampoon, though his description of invective as “the prosecuting attorney” and of lampoon as “the assassin” suggests that he views the former as primarily accusatory and the latter as primarily destructive; Gilbert Highet, *The Anatomy of Satire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), 155.

¹⁹⁸ Highet, *The Anatomy of Satire*, 151–152.

For Hight, these modes are either primitive, even savage (invective), or wild and feral (lampoon). Elsewhere, he makes clear that his exclusion of invective and lampoon from the realm of satire is based entirely on the thorny matter of authorial intent:

The man who writes an invective would be delighted if, after delivering it, he were told that his subject had been overwhelmed by shame and obloquy and had retired into oblivion. The lampoonist would like his victims to die of a hideous disease, or [...] to hang themselves. [...] As for satire, the satirist always asserts that he would be happy if he heard his victim had, in tears and self-abasement, permanently reformed; but he would in fact be rather better pleased if the fellow were pelted with garbage and ridden out of town on a rail. [...] The purpose of invective and lampoon is to destroy an enemy. [...] The purpose of satire is, through laughter and invective, to cure folly and to punish evil; but if it does not achieve this purpose, it is content to jeer at folly and to expose evil to bitter contempt.

The gist of this somewhat confused and confusing passage, with its long series of assumptions, is that satire has a serious moral purpose that invective and lampoon lack, and it is precisely this purpose—regardless of any actual outcome—that elevates “true” satire above the others.¹⁹⁹ This, in turn, takes us right back to Tâhir Olgun’s characterization of satire as “didactic”—*i.e.*, possessed of a moral purpose and aiming to impart a lesson or even initiate reform—and his implicit wish that Ottoman *hicv* be confined only to works of this type. This amounts to a repudiation of what the Ottoman and indeed entire Islamicate tradition of *hijâ’* had, with few exceptions, always been: attacks of an explicitly personal nature, though frequently with much broader implications in the way of social criticism.

¹⁹⁹ It is also worth noting that it is not only critics who have adopted such a stance: the producers of satire and related modes have also often been keen to elevate their work in the eyes of the audience, even when their actual practice is by no means so moral. As pointed out by Brian A. Connery and Kirk Combe, “[m]ost satirists [...] *claim* one purpose for satire, that of high-minded and usually socially oriented moral and intellectual reform; however, they *engage* in something quite different, namely, mercilessly savage attack on some person or thing that, frequently for private reasons, displeases them.” Brian A. Connery and Kirk Combe, “Theorizing Satire: A Retrospective and Introduction,” in *Theorizing Satire: Essays in Literary Criticism*, ed. Brian A. Connery and Kirk Combe (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1995), 2.

The literature review that follows will specifically trace criticism of Nef'î's invective collection *Sihām-ı kâzâ*, not simply because it forms the main primary source material for this dissertation, but more importantly for two other reasons. First, there are no overviews of Ottoman invective as a whole that go beyond anthological itemization and the relation of anecdotes to take a critical and analytical stance.²⁰⁰ Second, and in fact in direct correlation with the previous point, *Sihām-ı kâzâ* is as already mentioned the most extensive single collection of invectives by a major, canonical Ottoman poet of the early modern period, and as a result it has attracted more criticism (though still very little) than any other work in the mode. Accordingly, an examination of the literature on *Sihām-ı kâzâ* can serve as a litmus test of how Ottoman invective has been approached and the attitudes that have been brought to bear on the subject.

2.2.1 Contemporary assessments of the *Sihām-ı kâzâ*

The earliest critical mention of Nef'î's invective poetry is to be found in the historian and polymath Kâtib Çelebi (Muşafâ b. 'Abdullâh) (1609–1657)'s bibliographical dictionary in Arabic, *Kashf az-zunûn 'an asâmi'l-kutub wa'l-funûn* (The Removal of Doubt from the Names of Books and the Sciences). The dictionary's entry on the *Sihām-ı kâzâ*²⁰¹ reads as follows: “*Shafts of Doom*. Turkish language, verse, all invectives, by the Anatolian poet of the pen name Nef'î, who was killed by Sultan Murâd Khan, son of

²⁰⁰ The exception to this is Tunca Kortantamer, *Temmuzda Kar Satmak: Örnekleriyle Geçmişten Günümüze Türk Mizahı* (Ankara: Phoenix Yayınevi, 2007). Although this work remains largely descriptive in nature, Kortantamer's brief discussion of the nature of *hicv* is a nuanced one evidencing a clear awareness of the actual practice of the mode; see *ibid.*, 75–83. As for anthologies, the most comprehensive and thus still the standard work is Hilmi Yücebaş, *Hiciv ve Mizah Edebiyatı Antolojisi* (Istanbul: Milliyet Dağıtım, 1976). Both works, it should be noted, focus not on invective in particular, but on the matter of humor in Turkish literature in general.

²⁰¹ Adjusting the title so as to conform to Arabic grammatical practice, Kâtib Çelebi lists the work as *Sihām al-qaḍā'*, using the Arabic genitive construction as opposed to the Persian genitive of *Sihām-ı kâzâ*.

Aḥmed Khan the Ottoman, in the year 1044 [1634/35 CE], though [*Shafts of Doom*] is held in esteem by the wits of Anatolia because it is agreeable to their sinister temperament.”²⁰² While this criticism seems to be directed primarily against Ottoman “wits” (*zuraḫā*) and their taste for the obscene, the unmistakable implication is that Nef‘ī’s work had a deserved reputation for licentiousness that played a role in his downfall and death.

A more extended and more openly censorious critical assessment of Nef‘ī’s invective is to be found in the Ottoman historian Muṣṭafā Na‘īmā’s (1655–1716) work *Ravzatu’l-Ḥusayn fī ḥulāṣati aḥbāri’l-ḥāfiqayn* (The Garden of Ḥusayn, Being the Choicest of News of East and West), a chronicle which was completed in 1704 and encompasses the years between 1591 and 1660. There, as described in section 2.1.1, Nef‘ī’s death is among the events described for the Hijri year 1044, the same date mentioned by Kâtib Çelebi. Na‘īmā’s lengthy account of this event emphasizes Nef‘ī’s continual production of invective, explicitly linking this production with his eventual execution, and concludes with the following passage:

Verily, [writing] invective is a deplorable and shameful act, and to expend one’s creativity and time on it is especially reprehensible and improper. Those who journey toward this valley [of invective] are neither fortunate nor prosperous, and there is no doubt that the majority of them will fall into ruin in this world and receive due punishment in the hereafter. Poets of awesome power, whose sweetly expressive language is the key to hidden treasures, deem it improper to sully the heart’s page and the tongue’s pen with blemishes and evil acts.²⁰³

²⁰² سهام القضاء تركى منظوم كلها هجويّات شاعر من شعراء الروم المتخلّص بنفعى قتله السلطان مراد خان بن احمد خان، “العثماني سنة ١٠٤٤ لکنها معتبر عند ظرفاء الروم لكونها موافقا لطبعهم الشوم”. Kâtib Çelebi, *Lexicon Bibliographicum et Encyclopaedicum*, Vol. 3, 631–632.

²⁰³ “Hak budur ki hiciv bir fi’l-i münker[-i] fazîh ve tahayyülât u evkâtı buña sarf etmek dahi ziyâde zemîm ü kabîhdir. Ve bu vâdiye sülûk edenler behre-mend ü kâmyâb olmayıp ekserinin âkibet-i hâli dünyada harâb ve âhiretde dahi müstahakk-ı azâb olduğunda irtiyâb yoktur. Elsine-i şîrîn-beyânı mefâfih-i

While this is more in the nature of moralizing admonition than true criticism, Na‘īmā nevertheless does present a highly normative, albeit truncated, description of poetry as an art ideally to be based on “sweetly expressive language [that provides] the key to hidden treasures.” Though such an ideal was commonly voiced in relation to poetry, it is a condition that necessarily excludes invective, with its typically abrasive language and insistently topical nature. At the same time, Na‘īmā’s use of “poets of awesome power” (*şu‘arā-yı mu‘ciz-nümā*) as a standard serves as an oblique reference to Nef‘ī—who often refers to his poetry’s almost magical power and ability to inspire awe²⁰⁴—and thereby implies that he was, in fact, a poet of worth. This judgment is further borne out by Na‘īmā’s other references to Nef‘ī, which describe him as a “poet of sweet expression” (*şā‘ir-i şīrīn-beyān*²⁰⁵) and mention two of his panegyric *kaşīdes* as being “illustrious panegyrics” (*kaşīde-i ğarrā*²⁰⁶). As a result of this two-pronged approach, Na‘īmā effectively accepts the value of Nef‘ī as a poet, but only with the caveat that his invective be considered a deviation from this value. In fact, it is well worth noting that in the entirety of Na‘īmā’s voluminous chronicle, which makes numerous references to and quotations from poetry of various genres and modes, the invective mode (*i.e.*, *hicv*) is mentioned only in connection with Nef‘ī, indicating that this poet had become virtually

künüz-ı gaybiyye olan şu‘arā-i mu‘ciz-nümâ safha-i cenân ve hâme-i zebânı mesâlib ü mesâvî ile telvîs etmeyi revâ görmezler.” Na‘īmā, *Târih*, Vol. 2, 800. The translation is mine; for an alternative, though problematic, translation of this passage, see Thomas, *A Study of Naima*, 119.

²⁰⁴ Nef‘ī’s *dīvān* of collected poems abounds with self-praise of this sort, but two examples may suffice here. In a spring ode (*bahāriyye*) addressed to Sultan Aḥmed I, he claims, “I am that poet-sorcerer whose manner magically | strings pearls rather than [spiritual] meanings on the thread of expression” (*benim ol şā‘ir-i sâhîr ki tab‘ım sihr ile ğâhî | ma‘ânî yêrine dürrler dîzer silk-i beyân üzre*); Nef‘ī, [*Dīvān*], 12. In a panegyric to the grand vizier Öküz Mehmed Pasha (d. 1619), he writes “I swear I cannot verify just what it is my pen does | for it is a sorcerer that leaves [readers of my poetry] in awe” (*tahkîk êdemem n’eydiġini hâmemiñ el-ḥakk | zîrâ ki o bir sâhîr-i i‘câz-nümâdır*); *ibid.*, 80.

²⁰⁵ Na‘īmā, *Târih*, Vol. 2, 645.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 402.

synonymous with a particularly harsh variety of invective in learned circles within a half century after his death.

This impression is reinforced by the fact that the author and traveler Evliyā Çelebi, in his *Seyāhatnāme* (Book of Travels) compiled nearly a half century after Nef'ī's death, mentions Nef'ī's *Sihām-ı kazā* in just such a manner, almost as if it were a brand name. When describing the city of Manisa in the ninth volume of his work, Evliyā mentions a local poet by the pseudonym of Nīmī ("Half"), owing to a stroke that paralyzed him from the waist down. After praising this Nīmī's intellect and skill in rhetoric, Evliyā describes how he spends his days: "Day and night he abuses and slanders people, biting [at them] like a rabid dog. And each of his invectives resembles the *Sihām-ı kazā* of Nef'ī."²⁰⁷

While neither Kâtib Çelebi's nor Na'īmā's assessments of Nef'ī's invective evince a modern scholarly approach to this material, their approach—which might be succinctly summarized as an ethically-based marginalization of the work and, by extension, the invective mode as a whole—has proven to be the dominant one in terms of the reception of his invective verse. With few exceptions among the dearth of material on the topic, scholars and critics have consistently, and both overtly and covertly, used ethical standards particular to their own time, place, and/or personal morality as the basis of their approach to Ottoman invective poetry, and particularly the Nef'ī-centered invective corpus of the early 17th century. The result has been a devalorization and consequent

²⁰⁷ "Ammâ şeb [u] rûz halkı mezemmet [ü] kadh edüp kuduz it gibi dalamadadır. Ammâ her hicvi Sihâm-ı Kazâ-i Nef'î'ye mânenddir." Evliyâ Çelebi, *Evliyâ Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi*, Vol. IX, ed. Yücel Dağlı, Seyit Ali Kahraman, and Robert Dankoff (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2005), 43.

decanonization of this corpus as literature, but more importantly for the concerns of this dissertation, this very devalorization has led this corpus to be further neglected by scholars in other fields in terms of the insight it can provide into the historical and/or social conditions of the time.

In order, then, to show this process in action, as it were, the remainder of this literature review will constitute a contextualized *précis* and analysis of critical approaches to Nef'î's invective poetry, as found in the more salient critics and authors who have dealt with the topic in the manner of a broad overview or appreciation. Owing to the uniqueness of Nef'î's *Sihām-ı kâzâ* within the context of its time, the work attracted some—though still quite little—attention from critics both European and Turkish; accordingly, this review will divide the relevant criticism into that written in European languages and that written in Turkish. This is an admittedly artificial division, but it is implemented here primarily because the respective audiences being addressed had differing literary traditions and thus differing understandings of the genres or modes in question, which in turn necessitated differing approaches on the part of critics towards this aspect of Nef'î's work. However, one point that will emerge is that the approach of early European critics toward this work came to shape, whether directly or indirectly, the approach of Turkish critics, owing to the prevalence of European-influenced conceptions of and approaches toward literature in the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey from the mid-19th century onwards.

2.2.2 Assessments of the *Sihām-ı kazā* in European languages

Turning first to the European critics, the fundamental point to be made is that they typically treated Nef'ī's *Sihām-ı kazā* as though it represented the broader mode of social satire rather than the narrower one of personal invective. Working from this faulty foundation, they would then proceed to inveigh against the work with relatively little regard for the fact that the socially critical yet ostensibly morally responsible Western satire of the sort they were implicitly comparing it to was hardly common in Islamicate literature before the incursion of Western literary influence in the 19th century.

The first European scholar to provide a detailed appreciation of Nef'ī's invective poetry was Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall (1774–1856), who, in the fourth volume (1837) of his *Geschichte der Osmanischen Dichtkunst bis auf unsere Zeit*, devoted two pages to a list of the targets of Nef'ī's attacks in the *Sihām-ı kazā*, accompanied by carefully selected translations of a number of verses and framed by general observations as to the character and style of the work. In these latter, Hammer-Purgstall makes abundantly clear his moral reservations concerning the value of the work:

[Nef'ī] upbraided viziers in his famed satire (*Satyre*), which he entitled *Shafts of Doom* and which is such a farrago of libels (*Pasquillen*) and scatology that these pages will not be permitted to be stained with their translation. [...] Nearly all [of these poems] are a true cloaca of the most vulgar abuse, which the Turkish satirists (*Satyriken*) take to be humorous.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁸ “[S]chimpfte [Nef'ī] [viziers] aber in seiner berühmtem Satyre, welche er die *Schicksalspfeile* betitelt, und welche ein Gemische von Pasquillen und Zotten, mit deren Übersetzung diese Blätter nicht beflecket werden dürfen. [...] Fast alle eine wahre Kloake der pöbelhaftesten Schimpfes, der Türkischen Satyrikern für Witz gilt.” Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall, *Geschichte der Osmanischen Dichtkunst bis auf unsere Zeit*, Vol. 3 (Pest: Conrad Adolph Hartleben, 1837), 240, 242.

In part, this clear reluctance to accord literary merit to Nef'î's work is directly driven by the tension between different ways of conceiving and rendering into a Western language the Ottoman term *hicv*. This is evident from the fact that Hammer-Purgstall's comments uses the names of what are in most Western literatures, as outlined above, two different although related literary modes to refer to the *Sihām-ı kazā*; namely, *Satyre* ("satire") and *Pasquill* ("libel, lampoon, invective").²⁰⁹ The former term is used to introduce the work and provide a basic sense of its mode ("in his famed satire"), while the latter term is used to pass judgment on the work ("a farrago of libels and scatology").²¹⁰ This terminological distinction made by Hammer-Purgstall is reflective of how, by the early 19th century, the process of valorizing socially oriented satire over and above personally oriented invective or libel was essentially complete.

The distinction made between satire on the one hand and invective on the other also serves as the animating force for Elias John Wilkinson Gibb's treatment of Nef'î's *Sihām-ı kazā* in the third volume (1904) of his monumental *A History of Ottoman Poetry*. Gibb, in contrast to Hammer-Purgstall, explicitly draws a line between satire and invective, beginning his discussion of the *Sihām-ı kazā* by flatly, and accurately, stating: "The so-called satirical poems of Nef'î would be more correctly described as

²⁰⁹ The German term *Satyre* covers essentially the same broad ground as "satire" in English. As for *Pasquill*, as a literary genre it refers to largely anonymous, popular libels originally oral in nature but later—somewhat similar to the English broadsides of the late 17th through the 19th centuries—printed as well. See Günter Hess, "Pasquill," in *Reallexicon der deutschen Literaturwissenschaft*, Vol. 3, ed. Georg Braungart, Harald Fricke, Klaus Grubmüller, Jan-Dirk Müller, Friedrich Vollhardt, and Klaus Weimar (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003): 31–34.

²¹⁰ As indicated in the previous footnote, *Pasquill*—like its approximate English counterpart, "libel"—was not inherently a value-laden term, but Hammer-Purgstall clearly uses it as such, much as "libel" can be used in English as a means of criticism.

vituperative or invective.”²¹¹ Having pointed this out, however, he quickly dismisses this redefinition and, directly calling these works “satires,” proceeds to criticize them for failing to conform to the satiric mode:

For the most part [the poems in Nefī’s *Sihām-ı kazā*] miss the point of satire, which is to show up what is really vicious or foolish, and are little else than a mass of scurrilous and obscene abuse flung at whatever person chanced to incur the writer’s displeasure. These satires are the counterpart of the *qasidas* [*i.e.*, panegyrics]; just as in the latter Nefī overleaps the bounds of taste and propriety in the fulsome adulation and the extravagant and bombastic flattery which he heaps upon his patrons, so in the former he leaves far behind him the limits of decency, and riots in every excess of filthy and foul-mouthed abuse. Here again we see the same extraordinary facility of language and the same marvellously fertile imagination; only it is no longer the perfumes of the rose-garden that surround us, but the poisonous exhalations of the cloaca.²¹²

In Gibb’s formulation, the satiric mode is meant “to show up what is really vicious or foolish,” which indicates that he expected satire to engage in a certain degree of prescriptive social criticism; that is, to be broad enough in its implications that it might lead to moral reflection on how not to be “vicious or foolish.”²¹³ This posits a relatively active social role for *hicv* that, while perhaps it could be expected in the print-based

²¹¹ Gibb, *A History of Ottoman Poetry*, Vol. 3, 256.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 256–257.

²¹³ This is a fact that also helps to explain Gibb’s highly positive evaluation of the early 17th-century work entitled *Naṣīhat-i İslāmbol* (Admonitions to Istanbul). Calling it “a scathing yet temperate indictment of the corruption and profligacy then rampant throughout Turkey,” Gibb goes on to say that “[i]n this work for the first time in Turkish poetry we get an absolutely truthful picture of society as it actually was; the gloss of conventionality and lying flattery is away, and the poet tells us what he really saw, not what he desired the great men of his day to believe he was content to see”; *ibid.*, 211–212 as well as Gibb’s translation at 214–218 and his publication of the original in E.J.W. Gibb, *A History of Ottoman Poetry*, Vol. 6 (London: Luzac & Co., 1909), 179–182. Gibb’s statement concerning this poem, whether consciously or unconsciously, clearly echoes the Irish satirist Jonathan Swift’s (1667–1745) influential statement that “[s]atyr is a sort of Glass, wherein Beholders do generally discover every body’s Face but their own”; Jonathan Swift, *A Tale of a Tub, Written for the Universal Improvement of Mankind; To which is added, An Account of a Battel between the Antient and Modern Books in St. James’s Library* (London: John Nutt, 1704), 227. Gibb’s approach in this regard also goes a long way toward explaining his quite positive evaluation of the social critique found in Rūhī of Baghdad’s aforementioned *terkīb-i bend*; see *ibid.*, 186–193.

literary culture of *fin-de-siècle* Great Britain,²¹⁴ was scarcely applicable to the less public manuscript culture of the early 17th-century Ottoman Empire.²¹⁵ In contrast, Nef'î's "satires" are derided for being "a mass of scurrilous and obscene abuse" and for "[rioting] in every excess of filthy and foul-mouthed abuse"; in other words, Gibb devalues them precisely because they are the "vituperative or invective" that he initially claims they are.

The anachronistic and anachoristic aspects of Gibb's criticism become even more blatant when, in the fifth volume (1907) of his history, he praises Ziyā Pasha's (1825–1880) satirical *Zafernâme* of 1870, which was aimed specifically at the grand vizier Mehmed Emīn 'Alī Pasha (1815–1871) and his response to a revolt in Crete but whose scope and approach was less *ad hominem* attack than serious critique and the search for alternatives.²¹⁶ Gibb's praise of Ziyā Pasha's work is accomplished through an explicit comparison with Nef'î's *Sihām-ı kâzâ*, much to the advantage of the former:

This work [the *Zafernâme*] stands by itself in Ottoman literature; there is nothing the least like it in the past [...]. Several of the earlier poets, it is true, wrote *what they were pleased to regard as satires*; but the verses of this class composed by such men as Nef'î and Sururî are little else than strings of grossly abusive epithets, exercises in

²¹⁴ Also not to be forgotten in this regard is the role played in shaping Gibb's evaluations by his Ottoman informants and their personal agendas, chief among them Abdülhak Hamid (Tarhan) (1852–1937). While this is an issue that goes well beyond the scope of this dissertation, it is nevertheless a neglected but potentially very fruitful area of exploration in the field of Turkish literary history.

²¹⁵ In the concluding sentences of his discussion of the *Sihām-ı kâzâ*, Gibb evidences his awareness of the applicability of historical relativism to such a work: "Most certainly it was in Turkey as in England, and much that nowadays would be condemned was permissible enough when Nef'î wrote. But even then there was a point beyond which one might not go, and beyond which Nef'î went, as the story of his career [*i.e.*, his forced exile and eventual execution] abundantly testifies"; Gibb, *History*, Vol. 3, 257. This, however, is a relativism limited to the ethical realm, and as such remains a universalist view that fails to take into account changes in either how literature was produced and disseminated or differences in the historical development, aims, and functions of various literary genres and modes.

²¹⁶ The first modern edition of the *Zafernâme* is Ziyā Pasha, *Zafernâme*, ed. Fikret Şahoğlu (Istanbul: Tercüman, 1975).

vulgar vituperation, the grotesque abominations of which serve only to disgust the reader with their foul-mouthed authors. The work of Ziyá is very different; the *Zafer-Náme* is really a *satire as that term is understood in modern Europe*. Although it is not quite free from personal allusions, which are at times in somewhat dubious taste, there is no trace, however faint, of the outrageous scurrility of the “Shafts of Doom”; the poet seeks his purpose either through bitterly ironical praise of his victim, or by holding up to ridicule his pretentious ignorance. Here again *the influence of the West is evident*; had Ziyá known nothing of French literature, the *Zafer-Náme* would either never have been written, or it would have been quite other than it is.²¹⁷

While Gibb mentions “earlier poets” writing “what they were pleased to regard as satires,” what he means is that he himself—and/or his informants—would have preferred them to have written “satire as that term is understood in modern Europe,”²¹⁸ because in fact such authors as Nef‘ī and Sürūrī (1752–1814)²¹⁹ were of course not writing satire *per se*, but *hicv*, which Gibb himself has already clarified as being “more correctly described as vituperative or invective.”²²⁰ Thus, in each of his assessments of Nef‘ī’s *Sihām-ı kaza*, Gibb makes crystal clear his aversion to the actual mode of invective or *hicv* as it was practiced throughout most of the history of Ottoman and Islamic literature, and instead attempts to redefine it as “satire” in line with his hyperbolic praise of such ostensibly Westernizing authors as Žiyā Pasha.

²¹⁷ E.J.W. Gibb, *A History of Ottoman Poetry*, Vol. 5, ed. Edward G. Browne (London: Luzac & Co., 1907), 69; emphases added.

²¹⁸ Gibb’s comparison of Žiyā Pasha and Nef‘ī to the distinct advantage of the former is in line with his explicitly Eurocentric dismissal of most Ottoman poetry up through the Westernizing efforts of the Young Ottomans İbrāhīm Şināsī, Nāmıķ Kemāl, and Žiyā Pasha. The emotional underpinning of this aspect of Gibb’s thought is laid bare in the following purple passage: “[N]ow all is on the verge of change; Asia is on the point of giving place to Europe, and the tradition of ages is about to become a memory of the past. A voice from the Western world rings through the Orient skies like the trumpet-blast of Isrāfil; and lo, the muse of Turkey wakes from her death-like trance, and all the land is jubilant with life and song, for a new heaven and a new earth are made visible before the eyes of men.” *Ibid.*, 3.

²¹⁹ Sürūrī (Seyyid ‘Osmān) was, after Nef‘ī, the Ottoman poet best known for his invectives, both personal and impersonal, especially in the form of chronograms. Collected under the title *Mudhikāt-ı Sürūrī-yi Hezzāl* (Drolleries of Sürūrī the Droll), they are available in Sürūrī, “Sürūrī ve Hezliyyât’ı (İnceleme – Tenkitli Metin – Sözlük),” ed. Elif Ayan (Master’s thesis, Hacettepe University, 2002).

²²⁰ Gibb, *History*, Vol. 3, 256.

Following Gibb, the next Western scholar to examine Nef'ī's invective verse was Franz Babinger, who devoted a significant proportion of his article on the poet for the third volume (1934) of the first edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* to an appreciation of the *Sihām-ı kaza*.²²¹ Explicitly terming Nef'ī “the greatest *satirist* of the Ottomans,”²²² Babinger's focus lies to a great extent on the linguistic difficulties of Nef'ī's invective verse and how these have hindered fuller study of these texts:

The reason why [Nef'ī] is so little known [as a satirist] is that a scholarly edition with full annotations of his Turkish *Dīwān* entitled “Arrows of Fate”, *Sihām-i Kaḍā*, has so far never been undertaken, so that at the present day hardly any one is able to understand the countless allusions to particular circumstances and the veiled attacks on the individuals dealt with. The publication of his poems demands a knowledge of the conditions of his period and particularly of life at court which it is hardly possible to attain and which it would be very difficult to gather from the existing sources.²²³

Here, Babinger rightly points out that the *Sihām-ı kaza* “demands a knowledge of the conditions of [the] period and particularly of life at court,” thereby recognizing that this invective corpus, to be truly understood, must be situated firmly in its historical context, a task whose difficulty he also acknowledges.

However, in the sentences immediately following the above, Babinger falls into the trap of moralizing about the *Sihām-ı kaza*'s language and content: “Many of his poems are distinguished by an obscenity which can hardly be surpassed and however great may be their importance for the social history of his time, they are of little value as evidence of

²²¹ The article on Nef'ī printed in the second edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* is a verbatim reprint of Babinger's article from the first edition; see Franz Babinger, “Nef'ī,” *EP*, Vol. 8, 3.

²²² Franz Babinger, “Nef'ī,” in *E.J. Brill's First Encyclopaedia of Islam, 1913–1936*, Vol. VI, reprint (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1993), 899; emphasis added.

²²³ *Ibid.*

his poetic gifts.”²²⁴ This is a much less forthright and more subdued moralistic approach than that seen in Hammer-Purgstall and Gibb, and, importantly, it takes care to point out the insight these poems can provide into contemporary social history (which is among the major aims of this dissertation). Yet Babinger’s approach remains quite in line with contemporary and later assessments of the *Sihām-ı kazā*, being moralism all the same in that, much as Na‘īmā had done, it divides Nef‘ī’s poetic output into, to put it bluntly, the “high” and the “low,” with the latter being “low” by virtue of “an obscenity which can hardly be surpassed” and only the former being considered representative of Nef‘ī’s true significance.

This approach is subsequently tempered by the admission that “[s]ome of [Nef‘ī’s] poems which pillory existing institutions, like the popular saints, the *Ḳalendar-dervishes* etc. are of value for social history.”²²⁵ Here, Babinger is referring especially to the poem given the rubric “On the *Ḳalenders*” (*Der-ḥaḳḳ-ı Ḳalenderān*),²²⁶ but while his point is a valid one in general, his statement again betrays the implicit conviction that personal invective is necessarily of less value than social satire: so long as a work is *ad institutionem* rather than *ad hominem*, then it can potentially have at least some reformative social value. This view, though, fails to take into account the fact that personal invectives, as Chapters 3 through 6 of this dissertation will show, can provide a great deal of insight into the social history of their time: *how* a target is attacked and *what* or *whom* a target is explicitly or implicitly seen as representing bears traces both

²²⁴ *Ibid.*

²²⁵ *Ibid.*

²²⁶ See ULLWCO 662, 13b–14a.

clear and more obscure of the contemporary social (not to mention political and economic) environment of the period.

2.2.3 Assessments of the *Sihām-ı kazā* in Turkish

When we turn from European critics to critics writing in Turkish, we observe many of the same concerns and approaches, particularly the manner of couching moral discomfort or even outrage in considerations of genre and (re)definitions of what constitutes literature proper. This could already be seen in embryonic form as early as Kâtib Çelebi and Na‘īmā’s comments on Nef‘î’s invective verse, given at the beginning of this review, and it continued with critics in the late 19th-century Ottoman Empire and on into the republican period. What especially distinguishes this criticism in Turkish, however, is an active attempt to come to grips with the significance of the *Sihām-ı kazā*, either in its historical context or in terms of where it stands in the history of Turkish literature; in a sense, the stakes were higher for these critics writing about their “own” literature, and particularly for the republican critics writing in the midst of a wholesale reevaluation of the Ottoman project. Typically, this attempt took the form of providing a justification or excuse for the *Sihām-ı kazā*’s aggressive language and content. Such an approach can be directly linked to the fact that, from the late 19th all the way through to the late 20th centuries, there was a continual endeavor to construct a canon of Ottoman and/or Turkish literature, and the almost *sui generis* nature of Nef‘î’s invective verse made it something that had to be reckoned with: it had to be either admitted into the canon, or outright excluded therefrom.

The first such modern appreciation in Turkish directed toward Nef'î's invective verse is found in a letter, undated but probably from 1880, written by Nâmîk Kemâl (1840–1888) to Recâ'îzâde Maḥmûd Ekrem (1847–1914). The letter focuses on the different terms—namely *edebîyyât*, *şî'r ü inşâ'*, and *kitâbet*—then in circulation as possible Turkish counterparts of the broad Western concept of “literature,” and looks at how Nef'î's invectives as well as certain other types of work might or might not be able to be encompassed by these terms:

In my opinion, the *Sihâm-ı kazâ* contains, after the collected poems of Nedîm, among the Turkish language's most finely said or, more accurately, most uniquely imagined poems. However, given that Şinâsî's principle of [literature as] “an instiller of virtue and ethics”²²⁷ is so widely accepted, it cannot be included as exemplary material in the realm of *edebîyyât*, although it is among the subcategories of *literature*, which is much broader [as a term] than the term *edebîyyât*. Considering these aspects of the language, one is tempted to translate [the term] *literature* just as did the ancients [*i.e.*, classical Turkish littérateurs] or Ziyâ Pasha, as “verse and prose” [*şî'r ü inşâ'*].²²⁸ Rather than “verse and prose,” if we literally translate [the term “literature”] as “composition” (*kitâbet*), what would be understood from such a use is that not only does poetry fall by the wayside, but the supplicatory entreaties of our scribes' written petitions also become part of the category of “composition” or “literature,” don't you think?²²⁹

²²⁷ The full quote by İbrâhîm Şinâsî (1826–1871) is as follows: “The science of literature (*fenn-i edeb*) is a field such that, because it is an instiller of virtue and ethics, it is known as *edeb* and its practitioner as *edîb* [*i.e.*, littérateur or one who instills ethics]” (*Fenn-i edeb bir ma'rifetdir ki insâna ḥaşlet-âmûz-ı edeb olduğu için “edeb” ve ehli “edîb” tesmiyye kılınmıştır*). Şinâsî, *Müntaḥabât-ı Tavsîr-i Efkar, Mebâhiş-i Edebiyye, Mes'ele-i Mebhûset^m-anhâ*, ed. Ebû'z-ziyâ [Tevfik] (Istanbul: Maḥba'a-i Ebû'z-ziyâ, 1303 [1885/86]), 38.

²²⁸ This is a reference to Ziyâ Pasha's essay “Şî'r ve İnşâ',” in which he openly rejects the high Ottoman poetic tradition in favor of a more nationalistic stance proposing Turkish folk poetry as the truest expression of the Turkish people; see Ziyâ Pasha, “Şî'r ve İnşâ',” *Hürriyet* 11, September 7, 1868. Here, however, Nâmîk Kemâl does not refer to these at the time somewhat controversial opinions, but rather to the fact that Ziyâ Pasha's essay puts Ottoman poetry and *inşâ'* (*i.e.*, ornate prose) together into the same negatively evaluated category.

²²⁹ “Sihâm-ı Kazâ benim fikrimce Nedîm Dîvânı'ndan sonra Türkçe'de en güzel söylenmiş, veyâ daha sahih bir ta'bir ile en garib tehayyül olunmuş şiirlerdendir; fakat Şinâsî'nin, ‘...Haslet-âmûz-i edeb...’ kâ'idesi müsellemlenince, istiḥâd için edebiyât âlemine dâhil olamaz; fakat edebiyât sözüne nisbet pek ziyâde vâsî' olan literature aksâmında dâhildir. Lisânın bu hâllerine bakılınca, literature'ü insanın âdetâ kudemâ, veyâ Ziya Paşa gibi [ş]iir ve [i]nşâ' ile terceme edeceği geliyor. Şiir ve [i]nşâ' yerine, aynen terceme edip de kitâbet desek, lafzdan bizim isti'mâlimizce hem şiir sâkıt oluyor, hem de kâtib

Here, Nāmīk Kemāl especially highlights one of the main practical aspects of conscious canon formation going on in the late 19th century: the compilation of anthologies of Ottoman literature, primarily but not exclusively poetry. He points out how, despite what he sees as the merits and linguistic riches of the *Sihām-ı kazā*, the work is unable to be used in such compilations owing, effectively, to the widespread association of the then newly emerging term *edebiyāt* with the idea of *edeb* (“decency, civility”).²³⁰ Thus, although he does not himself pass any ethically-based judgment on Nef’ī’s invective poetry, he is realistic enough to recognize that such a judgment has already been passed by this time, and that consequently these and similar works have effectively already been ushered out of the emerging canon. As will be seen below, the link between *edeb* and *edebiyāt* has run through Turkish criticism of Nef’ī’s *Sihām-ı kazā* like a red thread, leading to repeated devalorization and consequent decanonization.

While Nāmīk Kemāl’s passing mention of the *Sihām-ı kazā* was primarily made in service of other, broader considerations, a more extensive, focused, and historically contextualized appreciation of the work was undertaken by Ebū’z-ziyā Meḥmed Tevfīk (1849–1913) in his self-published 1887/88 monograph on Nef’ī. In discussing the poet’s invective verse, Ebū’z-ziyā is especially concerned with recasting the invective mode, or

efendilerimizin yazdıkları “niyâzım bâbında” arz-ı hâlleri kitâbet, veyâ literature sınıfına iltihâk ediyor; öyle değil mi?” Nāmīk Kemāl, *Nāmīk Kemal’in Husûsî Mektupları III. VI. Midilli Mektupları – II*, ed. Fevziye Abdullah Tansel (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1973), 52–53.

²³⁰ The term *edebiyāt* was an offshoot of the Arabic *adab*, which had once referred to culture and humanities in the broadest sense, as the area of endeavor meant to instill urbanity and civility, before later narrowing to refer to belles-lettres; *i.e.*, works produced from such a standpoint and with such functions in mind. For more on *adab*, see Francesco Gabrieli, “Adab,” *EF²*, Vol. 1, 175–176; Djalal Khaleghi-Motlagh, “Adab, I: Adab in Iran,” *Encyclopædia Iranica*, December 15, 1983. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/adab-i-iran>; and Charles Pellat, “Adab, II: Adab in Arabic Literature,” *Encyclopædia Iranica*, December 15, 1983. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/adab-ii-arabic-lit>.

at least Nef'ī's iteration of it, not as a morally objectionable collection of *ad hominem* curses, but rather as a kind of righteous crusade against that which is wrong; essentially, he depicts the *Sihām-ı kazā* as the poet's attempt to fight fire with fire:

Invective is a manner of defending what is right from the destructive might of those who are in power. It is a vilified practice. However, while poison is deadly in and of itself, it may also serve as an immediate remedy for certain ailments. As such, even though Nef'ī lampooned a number of his contemporaries, up to and including figures of importance, he did so because their words or actions compelled him to.

For example, exposing the true nature of such figures as Gürcī Mehmed Pasha, Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha, Kemānkeş 'Alī Pasha, and Bākī Pasha—to whose evil actions history itself bears irrefutable witness—is not invective, even if the language used is abusive in nature. [...]

Those figures [whose names are] recorded in the quatrains of the *Sihām-ı kazā* were well aware that Nef'ī composed the majority of his quatrains as retaliation and, in this regard, the dictum “the person who started [it] is more culpable” (*al-bādī azlam*) devolves responsibility onto those who attacked [Nef'ī].²³¹

In essence, because Ebū'z-ziyā formulates, or reformulates, the *Sihām-ı kazā* so that Nef'ī is both retaliating against initial attacks made on him and exposing the reprehensible qualities of his targets, he exonerates the poet of any blame that might accrue owing to the caustic quality of the language used. In this narrative of events, Nef'ī is made over into someone who speaks truth to power.²³²

²³¹ “Hicv, erbāb-ı iktidārın bir takım kadr-ı şikestān-ı dehre karşı bir nev'ī salāh-ı müdāfa'asıdır. Vākı'ā mezmūmdur. Faķat zehr daḥı ḥadd-i zātında mühlik olmakla berāber, ba'zı 'illete karşı devā-yı 'ācildir. Binā' en-'aleyh Nef'ī, mu'āşırından ba'zı ekābire kadar birçok zevātı hicv etmiş ise anların ef'āl veyā akvāli mecbūriyyet vėrdiđi için etmiştir.

Meşelā Gürcī Mehmed Paşa, Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Paşa, Kemānkeş 'Alī Paşa, Bākī Paşa gibi zāten seyyī'āt ef'āli şehādet-i tārīhiyye ile sābit olanların māhiyyetlerini, velev lisān-ı şetm ile olsun teşhīr etmek hicv deđildir. [...]

Muķatta'āt-ı Sihām-ı kazā mazbūtı olan zevāta mechūl deđildir ki Nef'ī, ekşer-i kıta'atını muķābele bi'l-mişl olarak inşād etmiş ve bu ḥuşuşda da 'al-bādī azlam' ḥükmi müşār^{un}-ileyhe musallaḥ olan şu'arāya rāci' bulunmuşdur.” Ebū'z-ziyā [Tevfik], *Nef'ī* (Istanbul: Maḥba'a-i Ebū'z-ziyā, 1311 [1893/94]), 18–19.

²³² The phrase “to speak truth to power”—which I employ here as a neat summary of Ebū'z-ziyā's advocacy for Nef'ī's invective verse—seems to have originally been coined by the African-American civil rights activist Bayard Rustin (1912–1987) in a letter dated August 15, 1942, where he states that “the

In effect, this is a reversal of the moral trepidation with which critics like Gibb and Babinger approached the invectives in the *Sihām-ı kazā*. Nevertheless, it remains a stance that is fundamentally moralistic in nature, only this time from the other side of the coin. Just as Gibb and, to a lesser extent, Babinger effectively redefine *hicv* so as to devalorize Nef'ī's work in the mode because it is not socially oriented satire, Ebū'z-ziyā redefines it in order to valorize Nef'ī's supposed struggle against injustice: since it is just such a struggle, then of necessity the *Sihām-ı kazā* "is not invective" (*hicv değıldir*). Ebū'z-ziyā is thus saying, without actually saying it, that Nef'ī's invectives are satire, and hence endowed with a redemptive social value. The lengths to which he goes to defend Nef'ī in this regard are evident from the following passage:

It is true that, in the *Sihām-ı Kazā*, there are also poems containing certain indecent words. However, the majority of these are from invectives composed in retaliation, and I hold that the fault belongs to poets (*yārān*) who have started on the slippery slope of "the person who started [it] is more culpable" (*al-bādī azlam*). Even so, quite apart from his panegyrics to Gürcī [Meĥmed] Pasha and Etmekçizāde [Aĥmed Pasha], in his invectives [against them], no matter to what degree Nef'ī may have chosen [to use] bad language, he still did not depart from a foundation of witticism (*laṭīfe*), and in all his quatrains (*kıt'ā*) he assigned a chain of causation to [the faults of] the persons whom he wished to expose by attributing [those faults to them].²³³

The first point that deserves mention here is how Ebū'z-ziyā mentions panegyrics (*kaşīde*, here used not in the sense of the poetic form, which is also used for invectives,

primary social function of a religious society is to 'speak the truth to power'; see Bayard Rustin, *I Must Resist: Bayard Rustin's Life in Letters*, ed. Michael G. Long (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2012), 2. This concept, and especially its applicability or inapplicability to Nef'ī and his invective verse, will be examined in more detail in the discussion of the rhetorical figure of parrhesia in the conclusion to Chapter 4.

²³³ "*Sihām-ı Kazā*'da ĥaĥīkaten bir taĥım elfāz-ı ġalīzeyi ŧāmil eŧ'ār da vardır. Faĥaĥ bunlar ekseriyet üzere bi'l-muĥābele söylenmiŧ hicviyyātdan oldıġından, vebāli "el-bādī azlem" mezlaĥasına dūŧmüŧ olan yārāna 'ā' iddir ŧanuruz. Bununla berāber Nef'ī, Gürcī Paŧa ile Etmekçizāde'ye olan kaŧīdelerinden mā' adā hicviyyelerinde ne rütbe iltizām-ı fazāzet etmiŧse, yine laṭīfe zemīninden ayrılmamıŧ ve her kıt'asında mā' āyibini ta'yīn ile teŧhīr etmek istediġi zevāta isnād-ı sebebiyyet eylemiŧdir." Ebū'z-ziyā [Tevfīk], *Nef'ī*, 29–30.

but rather the poetic mode) written by Nef'ī to Meḥmed and Aḥmed Pasha: while Nef'ī did write a panegyric to Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha while he was serving as deputy grand vizier (*kā'im-makām*), he wrote none to Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha. But leaving aside this inaccuracy, once again Ebū'z-ziyā returns to the issue of retaliation, supporting his claim by the Arabic saying *al-bādī azlam* (“the person who started [it] is more culpable”); however, the matter of tracing the genesis of any particular invective clash is by no means straightforward, and sometimes impossible. Besides this, the fact that Nef'ī used witticism (*laṭīfe*, which might also be translated here as “humor”) as the basis of his attacks is used as a wild card in his defense, but more troublesome is the defense that the fact that the phrase a “chain of causation” (*isnād-ı sebebiyyet*) is utilized to claim that all of Nef'ī's invectives were rational and righteous responses to injustices of various kinds. As Chapters 3 through 6 will clarify, this is accurate in the sense that Nef'ī's invectives are mostly driven by an internal logic, but the points through which he attacks his targets can, in many cases, hardly be claimed as the righting of any wrong. Of course, my aim here is not to throw Nef'ī back down after Ebū'z-ziyā has picked him up, which would be to fall into the same moralistic trap. Instead, the point being made here is that Ebū'z-ziyā's defense of Nef'ī's invective verse is riddled with inaccuracies and inconsistencies, most of which are a direct result of his attempt to valorize and indeed canonize the *Sihām-ı kazā* by transforming it into something that it most decidedly is not.

Following the transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Turkey, the relatively tolerant and forgiving, not to mention nuanced, approach of Nāmıḳ Kemāl and Ebū'z-ziyā Tefvīḳ turned into something else entirely. The first scholar in the republican

era to deal with the *Sihām-ı kâzâ*, albeit only very briefly, was Mehmed Fuad Köprülü (1890–1966), one of the most influential canon creators of pre-Ottoman and Ottoman Turkish literature to work during the early republican project. In a succinct statement that forms part of his biographical notice on Nefî in a 1934 anthology, Köprülü has this to say concerning the *Sihām-ı kâzâ*:

With the exception of a few rare pieces whose harmony and majesty immediately make one think that they are the work of this great poet, the majority of [Nefî's] invectives are made up of crude and loathsome verses full of vulgar, shameful, senseless, and frequently mean curses, as well as often being faulty in terms of their meter. It is enough to make one not wish to believe that such a great poet as Nefî could go and write such primitive vulgarities. However, if one is familiar with the literary environment of that era, it is easy to see that the fault lies not so much with the poet as with the environment itself.²³⁴

While the condemnation on display here bears a good deal of similarity to the disgust evidenced by Hammer-Purgstall and Gibb, what is especially interesting is that, even though the writing of such “primitive vulgarities” (*müptezel ve iptidai şeyler*) is explicitly termed a “fault” (*kusur*), this fault is blamed not on the poet but on the contemporary “literary environment” (*edebî muhit*). On the one hand, this is a page right out of Gibb,²³⁵ but on the other hand, it is also quite clearly a way of defending a particular literary canon, and one literary figure’s inclusion in it, by a disguised lament about the corruption of those times. Köprülü openly states that, in comparison with the work found in Nefî’s more “highbrow” *dīvân* of collected poems, the invectives found

²³⁴ “Hicivlerine gelince, ahenk ve ihtişamıyla büyük şairin eseri olduğunu derhâl hatırlatan çok nadir bazı parçalar istisna edilecek olursa, ekseriyeti, müptezel, çirkin, manasız ve çok def’a âdî küfürlerle dolu kaba ve iğrenç manzumeler teşkil eder; onlar çok defa nazım tekniği itibarıyla de kusurludur. O kadar ki, insan Nefî gibi büyük bir şairin nasıl olup ta bu kadar müptezel ve iptidai şeyler yazabildiğine inanmak istemez. Maamafih, o devir edebî muhitinin mahiyeti bilinecek olursa, bu kusurun şairden ziyade muhite ait olduğu kolaylıkla anlaşılır.” Köprülü, *Eski Şairlerimiz: Divan Edebiyatı Antolojisi*, 394–395.

²³⁵ Cf. footnote 215, concerning the issue of historical relativism.

in his *Sihām-ı kazā* are aberrant, whatever the reason, and so ultimately of no value. In this, Köprülü's stance has much in common with that of the chronicler Muştafā Na'īmā, however much they may be writing in very different historical contexts and with very different aims.

A decade after Köprülü's anthology, Saffet Sıdkı (Bilmen) undertook to transcribe and print, for the very first time in republican Turkey, several selections from the *Sihām-ı kazā*. In his introductory remarks, he mounts a challenge to the tendency by critics to guard against admitting invective into the canon:

Why is it that many poets must be known as one-sided, such as, for instance, “Nef'î wrote only *kaşîdes*” [*i.e.*, panegyrics]?

Nef'î is a part of our literature through both his panegyrics and his invectives. And just as in [other] literatures of the world, in our literature as well invective exists as a highly extensive and abundant genre. Who would not accept that humor is a more genteel form of invective? And yet invective has not been limited simply to playing an originating role, but has continued alongside humor as a separate but equally favored style.²³⁶

This is, in effect, a call to accept invective as having a rightful place in the canon of Ottoman and Turkish literature. Furthermore, unlike Ebū'z-ziyā Tevfîk's call to include the *Sihām-ı kazā* in the canon, this one is not predicated on an implicit redefinition of *hicv* as something akin to satire, but rather looks to accept it just as humor (*mizāh*)—with which Bilmen is referring to pieces whose language is of a less harsh nature than that typically found in invective—is accepted. In effect, then, this statement by Bilmen

²³⁶ “Niçin bir çok şairleri tek cephele, bu arada meselâ Nef'îyi yalnız kaside söyler gibi bellemelidir.

Nef'î, edebiyatımızda methiyeleri ve hicviyeleriyle vardır. Ve dünya edebiyatlarında olduğu gibi bizde de hiciv çok geniş ve verimli bir janr olarak mevcuttur. Mizahın, hicvin incelmış bir şekli olduğunu kim kabul etmez. Fakat hiciv, burada yalnız men'şe rolünü oynamakla kalmamış, mizahın yanında onun kadar tutulan ayrı bir nev'î olarak ta devam etmiştir.” Bilmen, *Nef'î ve Sihām-ı Kazâ'sı*, 22.

was the first time that any critic appeared willing to fully accept invective at face value, as works reflective of their contemporary literary and social environment.

At the same time, however, partly owing to the publishing conditions of the era and partly to what appears to be a certain reticence on his own part, Bilmen admits in a separate introductory note that he has subjected his edition to heavy censorship: “Those parts that have been replaced with ellipses [...] are words or sentences that it would be not at all right to include in a book, even one whose topic is invective. [...] I hope that you will trust that *absolutely nothing of value* would be gained through publication of those parts.”²³⁷ Thus, even while calling for the canonical inclusion of invective and of the *Sihām-ı kazā*, he nonetheless still evinces a trace of the by-now familiar moral trepidation concerning its language and contents.

Nevertheless, Bilmen—whose words serve as the epigraph to this dissertation’s introduction—was one of the first after Babinger to take seriously invective’s potential for historical inquiry, as is especially apparent in this passage:

To lampoon [someone] is, of course, not [just] to insult [them]. One must, without being influenced in any way, establish whether the lampooned person has earned the attributes attributed to him. In this manner, invectives—which have been neglected—will prove to be valuable documents.

True invective is the eternal punishment against the will of one who has made a mistake. However, the smallest misuse, the tiniest mistake will reduce to nothing the value that [invectives] can have as documents. And verifying whether or not this is

²³⁷ “Noktalarla geçtiğimiz kısımlar [...] ‘mevzuu hiciv de olsa’ bir kitapta bulunması kat’iyen doğru olmayacak kelimeler veyâ cümlelerdir. [...] [İ]timad etmenizi isteriz ki, o parçaların neşriyle *kıymetli hiç bir şey* de elde edilmiş olmayacaktı.” *Ibid.*, 27; emphasis added.

the case is difficult. Therefore, it is equally wrong to claim invectives as precise [historical] documents and to accept [*i.e.*, dismiss] them as [merely] obscene.²³⁸

Valuable as the approach he outlined in his introductory remarks was, Bilmen's publication seems to have had little impact, perhaps partly owing to the numerous errors in his readings of the poems. Soon afterwards, however, there began to emerge the works of one of the most significant names in critical studies of Nef'î: Abdülkadir Karahan (1913–2000). Although Karahan's work on the poet is invaluable, he, too, approached the *Sihâm-ı kazâ* with a great degree of moralism. In the encyclopedia entry that he wrote on Nef'î for the Ministry of National Education (*Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı*)'s *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, he states that “while some of Nef'î's invectives appear witty and decent, the majority consist of *repugnant and coarse* examples of curses and insults.”²³⁹ Twenty years later, in a short monograph on the poet, this brief evaluation of the work was expanded into the following: “It is not objectionable to state that the *Sihâm-ı kazâ* has some significance in our literature as a notable product of satirical invective, [at least] through those of its verses that tease their targets using clever and witty language.”²⁴⁰ Thus, once again, it is only those parts of the *Sihâm-ı kazâ* employing “clever and witty language” so as to “tease” (*takılmak*), as opposed to attacking, the

²³⁸ “Hicv etmek elbette sövmek değildir. Hicv edilen kimsenin, ona isnad edilen vasıflara hak kazandığını hiç bir te'sir altında kalmadan kestirmek lâzım gelir. Böylece de tarihe mal olmuş hiciv kıymetli vesikalar arasında yer alır.

Hakiki hiciv, hatâ eden insan iradesinin ebedî cezasıdır. Fakat ufacık bir súiistimal, küçücük bir aldanma onun vesika olmak i'tibâriyle kazanabileceği değeri hiçe indirir. Böyle olup olmadığının tahkiki de zordur. Binaen aleyh, hicvi tam vesika telâkki edişin ifratiyla, tamamen müstehçen kabul etmenin tefriti, bunlar aynı derecede yanlıştır.” *Ibid.*, 22.

²³⁹ “Nef'î'nin hicviyelerinden bâzıları nükteli ve nezih gibi görünüyor ise de, çoğu küfür ve hakaretin *çirkin ve kaba* misâllerinden ibârettir.” Abdülkadir Karahan, “Nef'î,” *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 9 (İstanbul: Millî Eğitim Basımevi, 1964), 177; emphasis added.

²⁴⁰ “*Sihâm-ı Kazâ*, bizde, satirik hicvin, zekâ ve esprili bir dille karşısındakine takılmanın örneklerini de kapsayan bazı manzumelerle dikkati çeken bir mahsulü olarak, önem taşır, demekte mahzur yoktur.” Abdülkadir Karahan, *Nef'î* (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1986), 14.

target that are considered canonically worthy by Karahan. Finally, ten more years after this, he expands even more on this idea:

These invectives contain everything from [the arts of] implication and allusion to insults, belittlement, and every kind of defamation, [yet] *their crude manner and aggressiveness generally prevent them from being considered as literary (edebî) works*. Even so, there are in the *Sihâm-ı kazâ* some pieces that are worth considering as successful examples of satirical poetry and of spirited and intense invective. Of these, *those that remain within the bounds of propriety* and those that seem opportune for exemplifying to the reader the artist's powerful mastery of an invective gleaming with wit are the ones that permit us to give credit to Nef'î in this field.²⁴¹

Here, in his call for admitting to the canon only those poems from the *Sihâm-ı kazâ* that are “gleaming with wit” (*zekâ parıltısı ile*), it is not difficult to see that Karahan is using the word *edebî*, whose primary modern meaning is “literary,” through the filter of that word's origins in the concept of *adab*, just as was seen in a less actively engaged way in Nâmîk Kemâl's letter of 1880. In Karahan's view, any work that does not “remain within the bounds of propriety” cannot truly be considered “literary” (*edebî*). While this view runs throughout Karahan's evaluations of the *Sihâm-ı kazâ* from the very beginning, over time it comes to be expressed at increasingly greater length, with more and more detailed commentary coupled with evasiveness: it is, once again, just as with nearly all the critics before him, a clear attempt to delineate just how much, if any, of the *Sihâm-ı kazâ* ought to be considered canonical.

²⁴¹ “İmâ ve kinâyeden başlayarak tahkîr, tezlil ve her türlü sövmeye kadar genişleyen *bu hicivlerin çoğundaki kaba edâ ve saldırı, onların edebî bir eser gibi telâkkilerini çoğu zaman engellemektedir*. Bununla beraber *Sihâm-ı kazâ*'da, satirik şiirin, canlı ve yoğun hicvin başarılı örnekleri sayılmaya değer parçalar da vardır. Bunlardan *terbiye sınırları içinde kalan* ve okuyucuya, sanatkârın zekâ parıltısı ile işlenmiş, güçlü hiciv ustalığına örneklik etmeye elverişli gözükümlerdir ki: Nef'î'ye bu alanda da değer vermemizi sağlamaktadır.” Abdülkadir Karahan, *Nef'î Divanından Seçmeler* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1992), 12–13; emphases added.

Around the same time as Karahan was producing his work on Nef'î, in 1987 there appeared, under the auspices of the scholar Mehmet Çavuşoğlu, a volume of essays dedicated to the poet's life and work. Though all the volume's essays touch on the *Sihām-ı kazā* to some extent, the only one to present a detailed consideration is that by İsmail Ünver.²⁴² Ünver's essay concentrates specifically on Nef'î as a panegyrist and a writer of invective—that is, on the classical modes of *madīh* and *hijā*'—but devotes considerably more space to the former than to the latter. Even so, in terms of invective, Ünver makes an important distinction between those lines of invective that are to be found here and there in Nef'î's *dīvān* of collected poems²⁴³ and those to be found separately in the *Sihām-ı kazā*.²⁴⁴ In regards to the former, Ünver is highly descriptive, largely contenting himself with providing examples and very brief explications, but he does make the significant points that these lines of invective are, linguistically, much more restrained than the *Sihām-ı kazā* and that, being found exclusively in his panegyrics, they were clearly meant “to discredit his targets in the eyes of the statesman to whom he presented the panegyric.”²⁴⁵ When he comes to the *Sihām-ı kazā*, Ünver takes largely the same descriptive approach—yet also scatters moralistic evaluations throughout his descriptions. Thus, in reference to the long tradition of harsh Islamicate invective and especially to the invectives written against Nef'î, he makes the point that “if all we had were [the invectives] written by Nef'î, perhaps we could reproach him; but

²⁴² İsmail Ünver, “Övgü ve Yergi Şairi Nef'î,” in *Ölümünün Üçyüzdüncü Yılında Nef'î*, ed. Mehmet Çavuşoğlu (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1991 [1987]): 45–78.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 70–74.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 74–78.

²⁴⁵ “Nef'î, hedef aldığı kişileri, kasidesini sunduğu devlet büyüğünden gözünden düşürmeyi amaçlar.” *Ibid.*, 70.

[the invectives] written about him are no worse than those that he wrote.”²⁴⁶ Lest there be any doubt concerning what Ünver means by “worse,” he later describes Nef’î’s numerous invective quatrains as follows: “Most of them have the quality of being unspeakably vulgar insults.”²⁴⁷ At the same time, in reference to one of Nef’î’s tamer and more witty invectives (which may not actually be Nef’î’s),²⁴⁸ he echoes Ebü’z-ziyâ’s defense by means of an extremely broad generalization: “Observing such fine invectives that have no vulgarity, I am of the opinion that Nef’î lampooned everyone to the extent that they deserved.”²⁴⁹ Overall, then, while Ünver’s discussion of Nef’î’s invective verse serves the primarily introductory purpose for which it was included in the volume, it remains just as colored by moral trepidation and confusion about the different aims of satire and invective as previous criticism had been.

Subsequently, in 1998 Metin Akkuş ventured to publish the second transcribed edition of the *Sihâm-ı kazâ*, following Saffet Sıdkı (Bilmen)’s 1943 edition. While Akkuş’s publication is in the style of a critical edition and accordingly is much larger, more exacting, and better referenced than Bilmen’s edition of fifty years earlier, it too

²⁴⁶ “Elimizde Nef’î’nin yazdıkları bulunsa, belki onu ayıplayabiliriz; fakat onun hakkında yazılmış olanların, Nef’î’nin yazdıklarından aşağı kalmadığı görülmektedir.” *Ibid.*, 74.

²⁴⁷ “Çoğu, ağza alınmayacak kaba sövgü niteliğinde[dir].” *Ibid.*, 76.

²⁴⁸ The invective in question is the quite well-known one directed at a certain Ṭāhîr (“Clean”) Efendi; see Ebü’z-ziyâ [Tevfîk], *Nef’î*, 21, where no source is provided. However, it is my suspicion that this poem was produced much later and attributed to Nef’î, possibly within the oral tradition or possibly by Ebü’z-ziyâ Tevfîk himself in order to emphasize his point. Examination of contemporary chronicles and biographical encyclopedias reveals not only no one named Ṭāhîr, but in fact the name Ṭāhîr appears not to have even come into use in the Ottoman context until the 18th century. Moreover, the quatrain in question appears in none of the manuscripts of the *Sihâm-ı kazâ*, and although it is supposedly a response to Ṭāhîr Efendi, the only extant source of Ṭāhîr’s original words dates to a 1967 piece published by Hilmi Yücebaş in *Yeni İstanbul* newspaper, where it is written that Ṭāhîr was sitting with some friends who mentioned Nef’î, upon which Ṭāhîr said, “For God’s sake, don’t mention that dog!” (*Aman anmayın şu kelbi*); reproduced in Yücebaş, *Hiciv ve Mizah Edebiyatı Antolojisi*, 140.

²⁴⁹ “Böylesi güzel, bayağılıktan uzak yergileri görerek, Nef’î’nin herkesi hak ettiği biçimde yerdiği kanaatine varıyoruz.” *Ibid.*, 78.

amounts to only a partial selection—nearly half of the poems extant in manuscripts are not included—and contains not only censorship of what are considered profanities in modern-day Turkish, but also numerous significant errors.²⁵⁰ Moreover, this edition also features the censorship of many entire distichs by the compiler, who in his preface explains as follows the reason for both his extensive excisions of poems and his censorship:

In this study, *beauty*—one of the fundamental principles of literature (*edebiyat*)—was especially taken into account. The word *beautiful* is closely related to a society’s mores and morals. [...] The texts removed [from this study] are works that have no value in a literary sense. Of course, those texts not included in this study do contain a certain value in terms of comprehending the period’s society and culture. However, these texts—which I believe have nothing to offer in terms of the artistic aspect of literature—are obscene banter that exemplify the simple, unartistic aspect of life.²⁵¹

Similar to Babinger, Akkuş admits the potential value of the whole of the *Sihām-ı kazâ* for understanding early 17th-century Ottoman society. However, he admits to holding back or removing numerous texts owing to the supposed fundamentality of the vague principle of “beauty” to literature, while at the same time implicitly defining literature (*edebiyat*) in an anachronistic manner that does not accord with the practice of either

²⁵⁰ While these errors are too numerous to detail here, it should be noted that some of the misreadings, whether wittingly or unwittingly, involve a degree of whitewashing, substituting innocuous words for less innocuous, but correct, ones. For instance, the Persian word *kūn* (کون), meaning “ass” or “anus,” is consistently read as the Arabic word *kawn* (کون), meaning “existence” or “the existent world,” while the noun *kekez* (ککک), referring to a catamite, the passive partner in a pederastic relationship, is consistently read as the adverb *gehez* (گهز), meaning “easily” or “with ease.” Such shifts in meaning, needless to say, can result in rather ridiculous misreadings; e.g. the Persian line reading *Vahdatī kūn-e to āvāza-ye digar andākht* (“Vahdetī, your *anus* emits quite a strange sound”; Millet Kütüphanesi AE Mnz 1028, 54, emphasis added) is read as *Vahdatī kaw-n-e to āvāza-ye digar andākht* (“Vahdetī, your *being* emits a different sound”); see Nef’ī, *Hicvin Ankâları: Nef’î ve Sihâm-ı Kazâ*, ed. Metin Akkuş (Ankara: Akçağ Yayınları, 1998), 241.

²⁵¹ “[B]u eserde edebiyatın temel ilkelerinden olan *güzellik* öncelikle dikkate alınmıştır. *Güzel* kelimesi, toplum örf-adet ve ahlakıyla yakından ilişkilidir. [...] [Bu eserden] [ç]ıkarılan metinler edebi yönden bir değeri olmayan eserlerdir. Bu esere alınmayan metinlerin, dönemin toplum kültürünü tesbit açısından bir değer ifade etmeleri tabiidir. Ancak edebiyatın sanat yönüne bir katkısının olmadığını düşündüğümüz bu metinler günlük hayatın basit –sanat dışı– yönünü, müstehcen şakalaşmaları örnekleyen eserlerdir.” *Ibid.*, 10.

Nef'î's time or indeed of any period in Ottoman literature until at least the mid-19th century.

Finally, in recent years this process of decanonizing, or only selectively canonizing, the *Sihâm-ı kazâ* has culminated with a series of articles by Ahmet Akgül and Nurettin Çalışkan that attempt to use the methods of textual criticism not only to castigate Nef'î's collection for its supposed immorality, but even to cast doubt on the work's authorship and authenticity.²⁵² Though these articles have little to no value as textual, literary, or historical criticism, they are nonetheless quite revealing of how the moralistic approach to Ottoman invective, and culture more broadly, has recently combined with neo-Ottomanist trends in a conscious attempt to fashion what amounts to an ideology-ridden Ottoman fantasy land. Both Akgül and Çalışkan feign to be rather astounded by the fact that the admittedly harsh and crude diction of the *Sihâm-ı kazâ* was produced by the same author whose *dīvân* of collected poems showcases a highly refined and aesthetic diction. Akgül, for instance, states that “in the verses of the work known as the *Sihâm-ı kazâ* [...] it is scarcely possible to see the intelligence and literary power of Nef'î to which we are accustomed.”²⁵³ Later, he expands upon this by comparing the critical or satirical verses found in Nef'î's *dīvân* to those found in the *Sihâm-ı kazâ*:

[In the former] Nef'î uses no indecent expressions whatsoever (which is true for all the verses in his *dīvân*), and we observe that he never loses the harmony of his poems

²⁵² The articles in question are Ahmet Akgül, “Nef'î'nin Sihâm-ı Kazâ'sı ile Türkçe Divan'ındaki İki Farklı Üslup Üzerine Bazı Tespitler,” *Turkish Studies* 7, no. 2 (Spring 2012): 47–57; Nurettin Çalışkan, “Nef'î Divanı ve Sihâm-ı Kazâ'nın Zihniyet, Edebîlik ve İçerik Bakımından Karşılaştırılması,” *Turkish Studies* 9, no. 3 (Winter 2014): 397–422; and Nurettin Çalışkan, “*Sihâm-ı Kazâ*'nın Dil ve Üslup Bakımından Eleştirisi,” *Turkish Studies* 9, no. 12 (Fall 2014): 75–100.

²⁵³ “*Sihâm-ı Kazâ* adlı eserde yer alan manzumelerde Nef'î'nin alışık olduğumuz zekâsını ve edebî kudretini görmek pek mümkün değildir”; Akgül, “İki Farklı Üslup Üzerine Bazı Tespitler,” 49.

and that, even when lampooning someone, the satirical patterns that he utilizes are always based on perspicacity. What is more, we see that Nef'î, as one who considered himself a master in [the art of] speech, does not [in his *dīvān*] lampoon contemporary poets on the basis of their physical appearance but on the basis of their poetry, challenging them [only] in this regard. In the *Sihām-ı kazâ*, however, the poet's manner changes: he moves away from such aims as showcasing his poetic power and mounting a challenge to display a style that takes people as direct targets. In fact, these lampoons adopt a form wherein [the poet] assaults the personal dignity of his targets, toys with their honor, mocks their physical appearance, etc.²⁵⁴

The fact that Akgül appears so aghast at the wholly different styles of Nef'î's *dīvān* and his *Sihām-ı kazâ* reveals two serious deficiencies on his part. Firstly, he seems to be unaware that a *dīvān* of collected poems, which typically represents a poet's claim on posterity, and a collection of invectives, of which Nef'î's *Sihām-ı kazâ* is in fact one of the very few sizable examples from the early modern Ottoman Empire, were necessarily produced and put together using different linguistic registers in accordance with their particular literary functions. With few exceptions, such as some manuscripts of the *dīvān* of Bâkî (1526–1600) or the collected poems of authors like Me'âlî (1490–1535/36) or Bahâ'î whose whole schtick was the liberal employment of curse words, poets' *dīvāns* simply did not include either invectives or poems utilizing “indecent” language or a more colloquial register.²⁵⁵ Lacking knowledge of or willfully ignoring this fact, Akgül

²⁵⁴ “Nef'î'nin değil edep dışı bir kelâm etmek (Bu yargı şairin Divan'ındaki tüm manzumeler için geçerlidir.), şiirde ahengi kaybetmediğine, birilerini hicvederken sarf ettiği yergi kalıplarının zekâyâ dayandığına şahit olunmaktadır. Ayrıca kendini söz söylemede üstat olarak gören Nef'î'nin, çağdaşı olan şairleri dış görünüşleriyle değil şairlikleri yönüyle hicvettiği ve onlara bu yönde meydan okuduğu görülmektedir. Sihâm-ı Kazâ'da ise şairin tavrı farklılaşır. Hicivlerini şairlik kudretini göstermek yahut meydan okumak gayesinin dışına çıkararak kişileri doğrudan hedef alan bir tarzda sergiler. Hatta bu hicivler genellikle hedef alınan kişinin haysiyetini kırma, şerefiyle oynama, dış görünüşüyle alay etme vb. biçimini alır”; Akgül, “İki Farklı Üslûp Üzerine Bazı Tespitler,” 52.

²⁵⁵ This division between a poet's *dīvān* and his invective verse was hardly a phenomenon unique to the Ottoman Empire: it can likely be dated as far back as Umayyad times, when, as discussed by Ali Ahmad Hussein, the competing poets al-Farazdaq (c. 644–c. 728) and Jarîr (c. 650–c. 728/729) seem to have had “regular poems that they composed in different circumstances and to meet different needs such as denunciation or praise. This kind of poetry is found in the *dīvāns* of the two poets. [A] second kind [of poetry] is the *naqā'id* [i.e., flytings or reciprocal invectives], which does not seem to have gained the same

proceeds to support his argument by presenting a table of 100 words that appear in the *Sihām-ı kazā* but not in Nef'ī's *dīvān*, subsequently pretending that it is a sound analytical step forward in terms of textual criticism to discover that the *dīvān* does not contain words like “anus” (*büzük*), “ass” (*göt*), or “catamite” (*hiz*).²⁵⁶ The second deficiency that undermines Akgül's argument is his apparent lack of familiarity with the tradition of Islamicate invective going back to pre-Islamic times, a tradition in which, as was touched upon in the introduction, “assault[ing] the personal dignity of [one's] targets, toy[ing] with their honor, mock[ing] their physical appearance” and so on had long been more the norm than the exception, with such *ad hominem* attacks in fact serving as the very *raison d'être* of this literary mode. This was a tradition with which Nef'ī—always an author keen to drop names, assert his own greatness, and thereby carve out a place for his work in the canon—was almost certainly familiar, and so he cannot have been unaware that the nature and harshness of his attacks had precedent.

Moving on to Çalıřkan's pair of articles, which complement one another and indeed seem to have been conceived of and composed as a piece, they are very similar to Akgül's in that they focus largely on a comparison between Nef'ī's *dīvān* and his *Sihām-ı kazā*. In the later article, Çalıřkan's stated aims are to demonstrate that these two collections present the reader with “two different poetic personalities in terms of literary

artistic attention from these two poets. These poems are found in the book by Abū 'Ubayda [*i.e.*, a collection made in the early 9th century, nearly a century after these works were composed].” Hussein, “Rise and Decline,” 330–331. While these particular comments are admittedly in reference to a process of collecting made posthumously, it points to a clear division in terms of both perceived “quality” and, more significantly, composition process and function—a division that would continue to be predominant throughout the history of the Islamicate invective tradition and on into Ottoman times.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 53–55.

approach, language usage, and verse style”²⁵⁷ and to show that the *Sihām-ı kazâ* “did not address the aesthetic tastes of the reader of 17th-century *dīvān* poetry of high literary quality.”²⁵⁸ He does this through the use of what is ostensibly textual criticism, presenting a set of conditions for literary language²⁵⁹ and showing that the *Sihām-ı kazâ* does not meet these conditions, and moreover that it is rife with grammatical, syntactic, and semantic errors. However, the sources of Çalışkan’s prescriptions for literary language—M. Kaya Bilgegil, Ahmet Haşım, Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, and Mehmet Önal—are all 20th-century littérateurs and scholars, and thus their views on what constitutes literary language are neither here nor there when discussing a 17th-century context, regardless of how much or how little their ideas may have been influenced by early modern Ottoman poetics. Besides this, and again similarly to Akgül, Çalışkan’s obstinately highbrow approach to literature does not take into account the clear differences between *dīvāns* and invective in terms of function: the former, as already mentioned, represents a manifest claim of aesthetic significance and literary permanence, whereas the latter is resolutely occasional in nature and indeed sometimes appears to have been extemporized.

Çalışkan’s earlier article, while also concentrating on a comparison between Nefî’s *dīvān* and his *Sihām-ı kazâ*, has the rather different and more explicitly moral aim of

²⁵⁷ “[E]debi duruş, dili kullanım ve nazım üslubu bakımından iki farklı şair kişiliği ile karşılaşılmaktadır”; Çalışkan, “Dil ve Üslup,” 98.

²⁵⁸ “[E]serin edebi kalitesi yüksek 17. asır divan şiiri okurunun bedii zevk düzeyine hitap etmediği”; *ibid.*

²⁵⁹ These conditions are as follows: “(1) Literary language is finely wrought [...] (2) Literary language is rich [...] (3) Literary language is individual [...] (4) Literary language is a deviation from the common/natural language, particularly in verse [...] (5) Literary language is abstract and obscure [...] (6) Literary language is a [divinely based] ‘word’ [...] (7) The *raison d’être* of literary language is beauty”; Çalışkan, “*Sihām-ı Kazâ*’nın Dil ve Üslup Bakımından Eleştirisi,” 78–79.

showing how it was and is “impossible for the poems of the *Sihām-ı kazâ*, whether in terms of their content or their style, to appeal to Turkish society, which is conservative.”²⁶⁰ In other words, the goal in this article is to devalue the *Sihām-ı kazâ* not only as a literary work, but also as a product emerging from within Ottoman society. In line with this, Çalışkan lays out a point-by-point program of how the discourse animating the *Sihām-ı kazâ* violates the supposed moral norms of the time: (1) it denigrates Ottoman society and family structure; (2) it trivializes and defames the Ottoman administration; (3) it depicts poets as beggars; (4) it presents Ottoman society as a cesspool of immorality; (5) it uses base expressions for divine values; (6) it mocks targets’ congenital defects and physical appearance; (7) it disparages its targets on the basis of race and ethnicity; (8) it displays a vindictive attitude; (9) it fails to criticize general social and moral decay (*i.e.*, it engages in *ad hominem* attack rather than potentially constructive criticism); and (10) it slanders those in religious offices, such as judges, descendants of Muḥammad, and muftis.²⁶¹ Of course, nearly all of these elements of the *Sihām-ı kazâ* that Çalışkan insinuates were exceptional and unique were, in fact, standard elements of Ottoman invective and, more broadly, of the entire Islamicate invective tradition. Yet, like Akgül and indeed like most of the critics discussed in this review, Çalışkan implicitly insists on reimagining *hijā*’ or *hicv* as if it were a more modern variety of social satire rather than invective or lampoon, anachronistically foisting this misreading back onto the 17th-century context of Nef‘î’s work.

²⁶⁰ “Sihâm-ı Kazâ’daki şiirlerin hem içerik hem de üslûp bakımından muhafazakâr Türk toplumuna hitap etmesinin mümkün olmadığı”; Çalışkan, “Nef‘î Divanı ve Sihâm-ı Kazâ,” 397.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 406–421.

In the end, then, Çalışkan evidences a pernicious lack of familiarity with the style and functions of the Ottoman and Islamicate tradition of *hijā'* or *hicv*. In line with this, one of his justifications for the decanonization of the *Sihām-ı kazā* is based in the distinction between satire and invective already discussed above:

Nef'î is a powerful satirical poet (*esashî bir hiciv şairi*), yet it is a more sensible approach to seek out the central [elements] and foundation of his poetic work in this regard in his *dīvān*, which is the product of an uncorrupted social fabric. Here [*i.e.*, the *dīvān*], the poet's moral stance is unproblematic, while his literary language is flawless and extremely expressive. [Here], the satire is not aggressive and insulting, but rather complains and deplores (*yakınıcı ve şikâyet edici*).²⁶²

In other words—and despite Çalışkan being manifestly unaware of the distinction being made and its provenance²⁶³—Nef'î produced “satire” in certain parts of his *dīvān* and “invective” in the *Sihām-ı kazā*, and only the former is acceptable in moral and literary terms. Ultimately, then, Çalışkan's methodology—a rather confused hodgepodge of philological analysis, impressionistic (and indeed openly religious) critique, and weak stabs at reception theory—actually undermines his argument by making his moralistic and unscholarly approach as plain as day.

It is also worth noting here that, in both Çalışkan's and Akgül's case, there appears to be an ulterior motive implied by their particular approach, one that they are either unable or unwilling to make clear but that emerges when we consider the academic context from

²⁶² “Nef'î esashî bir hiciv şairidir ama bu yöndeki tanınmışlığının temellerini, şiir zeminini yozlaşmamış bir toplumsal dokunun oluşturduğu divanlarında aramak daha mantıklı bir yaklaşımdır. Burada şairin ahlaki duruşu sorunsuz, edebi dili ise pürüzsüz ve son derece etkileyicidir. Hicvi saldırgan ve aşağılayıcı değil, yakınıcı ve şikâyet edicidir.” Çalışkan, “Nef'î Divanı ve Sihâm-ı Kazâ,” 403.

²⁶³ In this regard, it hardly seems to be a coincidence that the one critical work that Çalışkan uses to support his definition of *hicv* is a short article that is based entirely on German sources and hence itself unable to distinguish between the crosscultural nuances of the terms involved; *viz.*, Yüksel Baypınar, “Hiciv Kavramı Üzerine Bir İnceleme,” *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi* 29, no. 1.4 (1978): 31–37.

within which these articles were produced. Both Akgül and Çalışkan are, or were at the time of writing, part of a circle of scholars based at Isparta's Süleyman Demirel University and coalescing around the critic Menderes Coşkun. This circle, seemingly led by Coşkun, has instituted what amounts to an informal campaign to question the authenticity of Ottoman literary works that they consider to be morally questionable. This began with Coşkun's article "Internal and External Criticism of the Sources of Turkish History and Literature" ("*Türk Tarih ve Edebiyat Kaynaklarının İç ve Dış Tenkidi Meselesi*"), which lays out the basic approach and methodology of the campaign and concludes with the following statement:

The Turkish scholar is responsible for critiquing those works that present material conducive to [creating] negative views of old Turkish [*i.e.*, primarily Ottoman] society. While it is true that libraries of old works [in manuscript] are a treasury, it is the most natural and the most noble right of the Turkish reader to suspect that some of the jewels in this treasury may be fake.²⁶⁴

The openly moralistic program of wholesale expurgation put forward here was later put into practice in a series of articles²⁶⁵ and an electronic journal²⁶⁶ concentrating, for the

²⁶⁴ "Türk ilim adamı, eski Türk toplumu ile ilgili olumsuz bakış açılarına malzeme sunan eserleri tenkit etmekle sorumludur. Eski eser kütüphanelerinin bir hazine olduğu doğrudur; ancak bu hazinedeki mücevherlerin bazılarının sahte olabileceğinden şüphe etmek Türk okuyucusunun en tabî ve en asil hakkıdır"; Menderes Coşkun, "Türk Tarih ve Edebiyat Kaynaklarının İç ve Dış Tenkidi Meselesi," *Turkish Studies* 4, no. 2 (Winter 2009), 196.

²⁶⁵ In addition to Akgül and Çalışkan's articles already discussed, some of the works in question are as follows: Menderes Coşkun, "Latîfi'de Oryantalizmin Parmak İzleri: Latîfi'nin Türk ve İslam Büyüklerini Anekdotlar Vasıtasıyla Değersizleştirme Gayreti," *Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 23 (May 2011): 1–25; Burak Fatih Açıkgöz, "İlk Osmanlı Edebiyat Tarihleri ve Tarihçileri Hakkında Bazı Değerlendirmeler," *Selçuk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* 27 (2012): 1–8; Vedat Korkmaz, "Anekdotlarındaki Mesajlar Bakımından Latîfi ve Âşık Çelebi Tezkirelerinin Tenkidi," *Turkish Studies* 9, no. 6 (Spring 2014): 745–760; Âdem Gök, "Tezkireci Latîfi'nin Türkçeyi Kullanım Sorunları: Hal Ekleri," *Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi* 8, no. 38 (June 2015): 188–197; Menderes Coşkun, "Osmanlı Toplumunu Ahlaksız Gösteren Tezkireci Latîfi'nin Eşdizim ve Gramer Hataları," *Eleştirel Bakış Dergisi* 2 (2016): 1–40; Ahmet Akgül, "Şuara Tezkirelerinde Anekdotlar Vasıtasıyla Bilinçaltına Telkin Edilen Olumsuz Mesajlar: *Künhü'l-Ahbâr*'ın Tezkire Kısmı Örneği," *Littera Turca: Journal of Turkish Language and Literature* 2, no. 1 (Winter 2016): 13–34; and Menderes Coşkun, "Tezkireler Klasik mi, Nevzuhur mu: 20. Asırda Temel Tarihi Kaynak

most part, on using clumsily employed philological techniques not only to cast doubt on the authenticity of what these scholars considered to be morally questionable Ottoman works, but also to insinuate that such works were in fact fabrications created by mostly Western “Orientalists” with the aim of “showing how the Ottoman Turks were an oppressive and immoral people.”²⁶⁷ In their articles on the *Sihām-ı kazā*, Akgül and Çalışkan both stop short of openly saying that the collection is a fabrication, but the implication is clearly there, and when their presence at Süleyman Demirel University at the time of the articles’ composition and publication is considered together with their approach and methodology, identical to that of Coşkun and others in this scholarly circle, there can be little doubt that their work intends to be a step toward a potential claim that the *Sihām-ı kazā* is not in fact the product of Nef’î’s pen, but rather of some shadowy cabal of “Orientalists” who, at some time in the past, stitched the collection together in the hopes of defaming and thereby weakening the Ottoman Empire and/or the Turkish people’s reputation.

The reason I have dwelled in such detail upon Akgül and Çalışkan’s assessments of Nef’î’s *Sihām-ı kazā*, despite their lack of scholarly merit hidden behind a veneer of philological rigor, is because in the final analysis it represents a kind of culmination of over a century’s worth—or several centuries, if one wishes to include Kâtib Çelebi and Na’ımā—of steady devalorization, on largely moralistic grounds, of the *Sihām-ı kazā*.

Olarak Kullanılan Osmanlı Şair Tezkirelerinin 19. Asırda Bilinmemesi,” *Eleştirel Bakış Dergisi* 3 (2017): 1–22.

²⁶⁶ *Eleştirel Bakış Dergisi* (the Journal of Critical Analysis), <http://www.elestirelbakis.com/>.

²⁶⁷ “Osmanlı Türklerinin ne kadar zalim ve ahlâksız bir millet olduğunu göstermek”; Coşkun, “İç ve Dış Tenkidi Meselesi,” 192.

This devalorization was, as Nāmiḳ Kemāl’s letter indicates, originally undertaken with the implicit aim of deciding on the canonicity of this text, a decision that was made necessary due to the fact that it represented a highly significant element of the work of a poet, Nef’ī, whose place in the canon was never contested outside of his own time. For the most part, even scholars who were unwilling to admit the *Sihām-ı ƙazā* as a whole—such as Mehmed Fuad Köprülü or Abdülkadir Karahan—were, on the one hand, willing to admit some of Nef’ī’s invectives on account of their wit and relatively restrained language, and on the other hand were never tempted to deny these invectives’ authenticity, knowing that they were a product of both their own time and of a centuries-long tradition of Islamicate personal invective. With recent years’ politically inspired “reevaluation” of Ottoman history and literature, however, the need to decanonize work that does not fit into fabricated idyllic images of a Muslim empire united under powerful and charismatic sultans has become more pressing in certain circles, leading to a small group of scholars lacking the rigor of a Köprülü or Karahan to take the moralistic pronouncements present in their work on the *Sihām-ı ƙazā* as a starting point, rather than a personal side issue.

2.3 Conclusion

Nef’ī’s life was at times relatively serene and at times quite turbulent. Yet his verse, and especially his invective, was aggressive, self-aggrandizing, and volatile, and in this his work might be seen as a true child of its tumultuous era. The general approach taken by critics toward his invective, however, was a child of an entirely different era when literary and moral parameters were undergoing a sea-change. As the literature review

above details, very few critics of the *Sihām-ı kâzâ* were able or willing to take it as a given and consider it in the context of the literary tradition from which it emerged or in connection with the particular set of historical circumstances that it reflected and fed back into.

It was Nef'î's life as lived under the effects of these circumstances that gave the impetus to his production of such resolutely topical verse. In the 1610s and again in the second half of the 1620s, he was for the most part in a stable position, backed up by powerful patrons—whether grand viziers or the sultan himself—whom he worked to keep on his good side even as he burnished his reputation as a poet; during these periods, it was this relative degree of personal stability and outside support that permitted him to engage so freely and, as many of his later critics might say, so recklessly in an abundant production of invective. By contrast, the early 1620s were a period marked by chaos and flux in the Ottoman state and apparently in Nef'î's life as well—yet it was also this environment that allowed him to continue to produce invective at a rapid pace, and even to use verse to assault the grand vizier, the *de facto* ruler of the empire who, as evinced by the extreme instability of that post during these years, was in fact much more than usual simply a pawn in the hands of forces beyond his control. As Andrews and Kalpaklı have said of the early 17th century environment as a whole:

Nef'î, as a poet of the court, is caught up in a struggle to see which class will emerge dominant from a highly fluid economic and political climate. Within this struggle, the symbolic position of the sultan—the ability to speak *for* the sultan—is an increasingly contested area as the actual person of the ruler and the army which supports him diminish in significance. This situation is sometimes naively attributed to incompetent [*i.e.*, Muṣṭafâ I] or underage [*i.e.*, the early years of Murâd IV] rulers but is more likely a result of ongoing diffusions of political and economic power outside

the control of the court. For the dependent elites of the cultural economy, attachment to the person of the sultan becomes a much less secure and less powerful position.²⁶⁸

While the 1620s could hardly be said to be a time when the army had little significance—at least in Istanbul, where, as will be seen in Chapter 4, they exercised effective control over the rhythms of the city’s life and even government appointments for several years—nevertheless it was largely the lack of the stable symbolic figure of the sultan that led not only to the transformations in the discourse of panegyrics that Andrews and Kalpaklı are discussing, but also to an opportunity to use the discourse of invective, with its ability to spread rumor and symbolically or even practically diminish reputations, in such a way as to take advantage of constantly shifting alliances and loci of power. The details of how Nefī did this, as considered in the light of the sociocultural, political, and economic context, will serve as the focus of the remaining chapters, with Chapters 3 and 4 presenting case studies of vertical invective, as described in the introduction, through the examples of the chief treasurer Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha and the grand vizier Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha, and Chapters 5 and 6 moving on to horizontal invective.

²⁶⁸ Walter G. Andrews and Mehmet Kalpaklı, “Across Chasms of Change: The Kaside in Late Ottoman and Republican Times,” in *Qasida Poetry in Islamic Asia and Africa, Volume One: Classical Traditions and Modern Meanings*, ed. Stefan Sperl and Christopher Shackle (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), 302–303.

CHAPTER 3

“NO TRACE OF NAME OR CLAIM TO FAME”:

NEF‘Ī vs. ETMEKÇİZĀDE AḤMED PASHA

The poet Nef‘ī’s first extensive foray into the production of vertical invective came against Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha (d. 1618). As will be detailed below, Aḥmed Pasha rose from humble Muslim origins to become the Ottoman chief treasurer (*başdefterdār*) and a vizier during the early years of the reign of Sultan Aḥmed I (r. 1603–1617), and even came within a stone’s throw of the grand vizierate itself before a circle of opponents squelched his hopes in this regard.

Altogether, Nef‘ī produced eight pieces of invective aimed directly against Aḥmed Pasha. Three of these are longer works, one in the *terkīb-i bend* form and two in the *kıt‘a-i kebīre* form,²⁶⁹ while the remaining five are all quatrains in the *kıt‘a* form. At the time he produced these works, between approximately 1609 and 1614, Nef‘ī was a fairly well-established figure in Ottoman poetic circles, and was continuing to gain renown,

²⁶⁹ The *terkīb-i bend* is a form consisting of several stanzas of several distichs each, with each stanza separate and rhyming in aa xa xa ... bb. The *kıt‘a-i kebīre* (“long *kıt‘a*”) is much like a single stanza of the *terkīb-i bend*, consisting of at least three distichs rhyming in aa xa xa

particularly for his panegyric *kaşīdes*, on which much of his contemporary and posthumous reputation rested. Prior to this period, as mentioned in the brief biography in the previous chapter, Nef'ī had been employed as the comptroller of mines (*ma'den* or *me'ādin muḳāta'acısı*), a middling bureaucratic position that had been created around the mid-16th century and that entailed accounting for the tax-farm revenues (*muḳāta'a*) obtained from the mines of Rumelia in addition to dealing with a variety of what would now be called “vice” taxes (wine, tobacco, coffee) as well as the annual per capita tax (*cizye*) levied on non-Muslims in Rumelia.²⁷⁰ Significantly, this was a post that was under the direct order and supervision of the chief treasurer: in other words, when he produced his invectives against Aḫmed Pasha, Nef'ī was slandering his own boss—or, as the case may be, his ex-boss, since he appears to have been dismissed from this post by late 1609, right around the time he began writing against the chief treasurer. Simple personal spite thus quite likely served as one motivating force behind Nef'ī's invectives, though another motivation was certainly a desire to strengthen his ties with those patrons, such as the grand viziers Murād Pasha (viz. 1606–1611) and Naşūḫ Pasha (viz. 1611–1614), who stood in opposition to the chief treasurer and to whom Nef'ī dedicated several panegyric *kaşīdes* throughout this period.

This chapter will first present a biographical overview of the life of Etmekçizāde Aḫmed Pasha (3.1) and an examination of some of the salient aspects of his background and career (3.2). These will be followed by a detailed analysis of Nef'ī's invectives against

²⁷⁰ For more on the mining bureau, see Nejat Göyünç, “Ta'rīḫ Başlıklı Muhasebe Defterleri,” *Osmanlı Araştırmaları / The Journal of Ottoman Studies* X (1990), 31 and Linda Darling, *Revenue-Raising and Legitimacy: Tax Collection and Finance Administration in the Ottoman Empire, 1560–1660* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), 63, 75–76.

Aḥmed Pasha (3.3), conducted in the light of the points mentioned regarding the chief treasurer's life, background, and career; also included here will be analysis of Nef'ī's invectives against a later chief treasurer, 'Abdu'l-bāḳī Pasha (d. 1625), who came from a similar background to Aḥmed Pasha and was indeed his friend and associate from an early age. The section will then conclude with a few final remarks (3.4).

3.1 Life and career of Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha

Etmekçizāde Aḥmed was born in Edirne, probably sometime in the last years of the reign of Sultan Süleymān the Magnificent. His father was a certain Ḥācī Meḥmed, who was a *sipāhī* baker—thus the epithet Etmekçizāde, “baker's son”—of Albanian origin and the chief of the local baker's guild.²⁷¹ According to Baki Tezcan's summation of Aḥmed's early years and career, he “made enough capital for himself in the market of Edirne to become involved in the collection of the taxes imposed on Romanies. Later he became the finance director of the Danubian provinces.”²⁷² Tezcan goes on to make the important point, which will be discussed further below, that Aḥmed's background was not in the Ottoman chancery, but rather the army, “which [at the turn of the 17th century] was about to become as much of [*sic*] a financial institution as it was a military one.”²⁷³ In this, the novelty of Aḥmed's background might be considered similar to the novelty of 'Alī and Mūsā Efendi's appointments as chief judges, as mentioned in the introduction.

²⁷¹ Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*, 14–15.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 15. As will be seen in the following section of this dissertation, Aḥmed's service as a tax collector (*āmil*) among the Roma was known of and, indeed, mocked.

²⁷³ Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*, 16.

It was during the Long War (1593–1606) between the Ottoman Empire and the Austrian Habsburgs that Etmekçizāde Aḥmed’s star began to rise. At the beginning of the campaign season of 1597, the commander over the shores of the Danube, Saṭırcı Meḥmed Pasha (d. 1599), was appointed commander of the Ottoman forces in Europe, which were about to move against Vác in Hungary, and with him came Etmekçizāde Aḥmed—who, as mentioned above, appears to have been the local finance director²⁷⁴ at the time—to serve as the military treasurer (*sefer* or *ordu defterdāri*), being granted 1,000 *yüks*²⁷⁵ of *aḳçes* from the treasury for expenses and the payment of salaries.²⁷⁶ While Aḥmed appears to have acquitted himself well in this capacity, in the next year’s campaign season he experienced a setback: while encamped at Szolnok during the attempted advance on Váradi in August, the army was suffering from a lack of provisions and hungry janissary troops rose up in protest, raiding the tents of both Meḥmed Pasha and Etmekçizāde Aḥmed.²⁷⁷ Coupled with the lack of success in the war, this event led to the dismissal of both Meḥmed Pasha as commander and Aḥmed Efendi as treasurer.

²⁷⁴ This was the fourth-rank treasurer position (*şıkk-ı rābi ‘ defterdāri*), with jurisdiction over the Danube region. As outlined by İsmail Hami Danişmend, in 1587 Sultan Murād III had reorganized the finance directors as follows, according to rank: (1) the finance director of Rumelia, who was also the chief treasurer; (2) the finance director of Anatolia; (3) the finance director of Istanbul and the Bosphorus; and (4) the finance director of the Danube. See İsmail Hami Danişmend, *Osmanlı Devlet Erkānı* (Istanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi, 1971), 240.

²⁷⁵ One *yük* was equal to 100,000 *aḳçes*.

²⁷⁶ Kâtib Çelebi, “Fezleke,” 320; ‘Abdu’l-kādir Efendi, *Tarih*, Vol. 1, 184.

²⁷⁷ Kâtib Çelebi, “Fezleke,” 339; İbrāhīm Peçevî, “Peçevî Tarihi: 250b–284a Metin, Dizin, Özel Adlar Sözlüğü,” ed. Beyhan Dinç (M.A. thesis, Marmara University, 2005), 75–77. According to Kâtib Çelebi, both Meḥmed Pasha and Etmekçizāde Aḥmed were beaten, but Peçevî—who actually served on campaign during the Long War, which occurred before Kâtib Çelebi was born, and who in fact knew Aḥmed personally—does not mention this, pointing out that Meḥmed Pasha saw the soldiers approaching and escaped on horseback, while Aḥmed, after all his possessions had been looted, supposedly said, “And now we have fulfilled the honor of the position of treasurer” (*Bu kerre defter-dārlik ‘ırzın tekmil idük*); Peçevî, “Tarih: 250b–284a,” 77.

At the beginning of 1599, the newly appointed grand vizier, Ibrāhīm Pasha (d. 1601), took up command of the army and, in order to prepare for the next season's campaign against Austria, he came to Edirne—where he was met by Etmekçizāde Aḥmed, who by showering him with gifts (*bezl-i emvāl ile*)²⁷⁸ managed to get himself reappointed as military treasurer.²⁷⁹ Yet the reappointment was short-lived, as just a few days later an imperial decree arrived, ordering that Aḥmed be imprisoned and his property confiscated for the treasury.²⁸⁰ The sentence was duly executed, with the now once again former treasurer being imprisoned in Belgrade.

While Aḥmed was in prison, however, his supporters continued to actively promote his competence to Ibrāhīm Pasha in the face of an increasingly financially strained army,²⁸¹ according to Kâtib Çelebi stressing Aḥmed's thorough knowledge of military affairs and of the thorny matter of military supply.²⁸² Accordingly, in the summer of 1599 Aḥmed obtained release from prison and again took up the position of military treasurer.²⁸³ From this point on, he would continue to serve in this post without interruption until nearly the end of the Long War in 1606.

During this period, though, there was one notable incident that would later come to have a direct effect on Etmekçizāde Aḥmed's career. Around the turn of the century, the

²⁷⁸ Kâtib Çelebi, "Fezleke," 343.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*; Ḥasan Beyzāde, *Târih*, Vol. 3, 601–602.

²⁸⁰ Kâtib Çelebi, "Fezleke," 344.

²⁸¹ Ḥasan Beyzāde, *Târih*, Vol. 3, 605–608; Peçevî, "Tarih: 250b–284a," 80–82; and 'Abdu'l-kâdir Efendi, *Tarih*, Vol. 1, 255.

²⁸² "[A]sker-i [İ]slâm mesâlihini ve sefer levâzımını tedârükden haberdâr ve ehl-i vukûf defterdârdır." Kâtib Çelebi, "Fezleke," 344; *cf.* Ḥasan Beyzāde, *Târih*, Vol. 3, 608.

²⁸³ 'Abdu'l-kâdir Efendi, who like Ibrāhīm Peçevî was an eyewitness to all these events inasmuch as he actively served in the Long War, states that Etmekçizāde Aḥmed's release was also owing to his reputation as a man who was "pious and honest" (*dîndâr ü müstakîm*); 'Abdu'l-kâdir Efendi, *Tarih*, Vol. 1, 257.

governor of the province of Diyarbekir, Murād Pasha (d. 1611), found himself in serious financial difficulty, and the grand vizier Ibrāhīm Pasha began occasionally sending him assistance from his own personal wealth. In the spring of 1601, when Murād’s difficulties hit their peak, the grand vizier requested that Etmekçizāde Aḥmed—with whom he was by now on good terms—also provide the governor with assistance. The treasurer, however, refused to do so, as detailed by Kâtib Çelebi:

One of Murād Pasha’s men came [to Belgrade] bearing an order about a certain matter from the commander-in-chief [*i.e.*, Ibrāhīm Pasha]. Sorrowfully, Aḥmed Pasha told him, “The world has long since grown tired of your pasha [*i.e.*, Murād]. Provincial governorship is not a job for destitute men, and when destitute governors need looking after by the treasury, help will not be forthcoming.” When his words reached Murād Pasha, he was extremely vexed.²⁸⁴

This created enmity toward Aḥmed on Murād’s part, and, as will be seen below, caused high tension between the two men when the latter was himself appointed grand vizier at the end of 1606. Also worth noting in this context is that, by this time, Etmekçizāde Aḥmed had managed to accrue a great deal of personal wealth, indicated²⁸⁵ not only by the fact that Ibrāhīm Pasha felt he could ask his treasurer to provide the governor of

²⁸⁴ “[B]ir husûs için serdâr tarafından buyuruldu ile Murad Paşa’nın bir âdemisi vardıkda, Ahmed Paşa elem çeküp, [S]izin paşanızdan dünyâ çokdan bezdi. Bu beylerbeyilik züğürd âdem işi değildir. Züğürd beylerbeyileri mîrîden gözetmek lâzım gelecek el virmez’ didiği Murad Paşa’ya vâsıl olıcak ‘azîm münkesir ol[du].” Kâtib Çelebi, “Fezleke,” 567.

²⁸⁵ Also worth noting in this regard are the numerous endowments made by Aḥmed Pasha during his life: in Istanbul’s Vefa district was the Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha madrasa complex; in Edirne—Aḥmed’s hometown and the focus of his building activities—were a bridge over the Tunca River, two khans, a coffeeshouse and adjoining water dispensary (*sebîl*), and a Gülşenî dervish lodge; a mosque in Komotini; a dervish lodge in the hills above Alexandroupoli; and numerous water dispensaries in various places. The majority of these endowments were made during Etmekçizāde Aḥmed’s term as chief treasurer between 1606 and 1613. See Semavi Eyice, “Etmekçizāde Ahmed Paşa Medresesi,” *DİA*, Vol. 10, 547–548; Ahmet Vefa Çobanoğlu, “Etmekçizāde Ahmed Paşa Kervansarayı,” *DİA*, Vol. 10, 546–547; Semavi Eyice, “Etmekçizāde Ahmed Paşa Köprüsü,” *DİA*, Vol. 10, 547; F. Th. Dijkema, *The Ottoman Historical Monumental Inscriptions in Edirne* (Leiden: Brill, 1977), 65–70; ‘Abdu’r-raḥmān Ḥibrī, *Enîsü’l-Mîsâmirîn*, 27, 43–44, 51; and Mehmet Zeki Pakalın, *Maliye Teşkilâtı Tarihi (1442–1930)*, Vol. 1 (Ankara: Maliye Bakanlığı Tetkik Kurulu Yayını, 1977), 241–243.

Diyarbakir with financial assistance, but also by the fact that Aḥmed seems to have owned mansions in both Belgrade²⁸⁶ and his hometown of Edirne.²⁸⁷ While it was by no means extraordinary—or, more to the point, suspicious—for such a prominent figure to amass a notable degree of wealth and property, especially given Aḥmed’s own background in commerce, in the years to come his personal wealth would nevertheless provide ammunition for those writing against him, as will be detailed below.

After nearly a decade of serving as military treasurer on the European front, in 1606 Etmekçizāde Aḥmed was appointed as the Ottoman chief treasurer; moreover, in an unprecedented move, he was simultaneously granted the rank of vizier, thereby gaining the title of “pasha.”²⁸⁸ Soon after Aḥmed’s appointment, in December 1606, the former governor of Diyarbakir Murād Pasha was promoted from the governorship of Rumelia to the grand vizierate, and the two pashas finally came face to face in October 1608: at this time, Aḥmed Pasha was given the nominal rank of governor of Rumelia and sent with a consignment of money and Rumelian troops to reinforce the grand vizier’s army, which was in eastern Anatolia fighting against the spate of rebel activity that had begun to erupt there. Aḥmed Pasha, however, was delayed in western Anatolia by the rebel Kalendaroğlu Meḥmed’s (d. 1610) attempts to waylay his force, and when he finally met up with and joined the army in Bayburt, he was chastised by the grand vizier, who ignored his apology and said, “You spent time amusing so many soldiers but did not

²⁸⁶ See Kâtib Çelebi, “Fezleke,” 415 and Ḥasan Beyzāde, *Târîh*, Vol. 3, 675–676.

²⁸⁷ See Ḥasan Beyzāde, *Târîh*, Vol. 3, 694 and ‘Abdu’l-ḳâdir Efendi, *Tarih*, Vol. 1, 410.

²⁸⁸ For a document recording one reaction to Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha’s vizieral appointment, see Rhoads Murphey, “The Veliyuddin Telhis: Notes on the Sources and Interrelations between Koçi Bey and Contemporary Writers of Advice to Kings,” *Bellesten* XLIII, no. 171 (1979): 550, 561. This document will be discussed in more detail below.

come to [my] aid. This was not a deed worthy of the state.”²⁸⁹ At this cold reception, Aḥmed Pasha, apparently fearing for his safety, wrote to friends at the court in Istanbul pleading them to use their influence to have him recalled there, and a week later there arrived an imperial rescript ordering the grand vizier to give the governorship of Rumelia to whomever he wished and to send Aḥmed Pasha back to the capital.²⁹⁰ In his response to the sultan regarding this rescript, Murād Pasha reportedly wrote, “You have invited the governor of Rumelia, Aḥmed Pasha, [to Istanbul]. Do you think that he was an aid to the soldiers of Islam? His arrival was irrelevant [to the army]. What use would it be for him to remain here?”²⁹¹

The chief treasurer thus returned to Istanbul to resume his duties there, but the very next spring he would come into conflict with the grand vizier once again. Murād Pasha was camped in Üsküdar preparing to depart on campaign: though Sultan Aḥmed I (r. 1603–1617) wished and had ordered him to march against the Safavids—who had reignited war by advancing into Ottoman territory in the fall of 1603—the grand vizier insisted on first dealing with the remaining rebels and their leaders in Anatolia. In any case, Murād Pasha requested that Aḥmed Pasha be dispatched to Üsküdar, ostensibly to serve as the military treasurer in the upcoming campaign. Yet in the meantime he also communicated to the sultan that the chief treasurer must, in fact, be gotten rid of because he had laid

²⁸⁹ “Lâkin ol kadar askeri eğlendürüp, imdâdda bulunmadınız. Devlete lâyük iş etmediniz.” ‘Abdu’l-kâdir Efendi, *Tarih*, Vol. 1, 540.

²⁹⁰ Kâtib Çelebi, “Fezleke,” 553. The names of the recipients of Aḥmed Pasha’s letter (*mektûb*) are not given; they are only described as *muḥarreb*, meaning those who were close to the throne and who thus presumably had access to the sultan’s ear. It is possible that among these figures were the chief black eunuch (*dâru’s-sa’âde ağası*) Muşafâ Agha, who as will be seen below later conspired with Etmekçizâde in his efforts to sully the grand vizier’s name before the sultan.

²⁹¹ “Rumeli Beylerbeyisi Ahmed Paşa’yı da’vet buyurmuşuz. Ol hod evvelden dahi ‘asker-i İslâm’a meded mi irişdi? Geldiği gelmediği birdir. Bunda dursa ne fâ’ide.” *Ibid.*

waste to the treasury, and for his part the sultan responded, “That is up to you. Go ahead and kill him, and seize his possessions for the treasury.”²⁹² The grand vizier accordingly had his executioners at the ready for when Aḥmed Pasha would arrive in Üsküdar, but then one of the former’s own servants approached the latter as he stepped ashore and informed him that the grand vizier planned to kill him, whereupon Aḥmed Pasha immediately returned back across the Bosphorus and pleaded for the sultan to save his life by sending ‘Abdu’l-bāḳī Pasha, the treasurer of Istanbul (*şıkk-ı şānī*) and Aḥmed Pasha’s old companion from Edirne, to serve as the military treasurer in his place.²⁹³ Accordingly, a few days later Sultan Aḥmed was in Üsküdar and summoned Murād Pasha, with Kâtib Çelebi describing their meeting as follows:

The pasha arrived at the garden in Üsküdar and kissed the ground in the royal presence. Sultan Aḥmed Khan was a noble soul. “Welcome, my servant,” he said. Murād Pasha kissed the ground again. Then the sultan said, “My dear servant, you are an aged man. Do not remain standing, sit down.” When [the pasha then] said, “My sultan, that is not the custom; one who is a servant must know his place,” [the sultan] stated, “May you be blessed—but I have a request to make of you.” Murād Pasha kissed the ground and said, “Can sultans make requests of those who serve [them]? The command is yours, give the order.” Upon which [the sultan] said, “My request is this: spare Aḥmed Pasha for me. Give up [the idea of] killing him.” What could Murād Pasha do? He said, “The command belongs to my sultan.” Then [the sultan] said, “Let him come to you tomorrow, but make absolutely no mistake. He will be the treasurer here [in Istanbul]. [‘Abdu’l-]Bāḳī Pasha will go [on the campaign] with his tent and baggage.”²⁹⁴

²⁹² “[S]en bilürsün. Var öldür, mālını mîrîye kabz eyle.” *Ibid.*, 568.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁴ “Paşa Üsküdar bağçesine varup huzûr-ı humâyûnda yer öpdi. Sultân Ahmed Hân kerîmü’n-nefs pâdişâh idi. ‘Hoş geldin baba lalam’ didi. Tekrâr Murad Paşa yer öpdi. Ba‘dehû pâdişâh, ‘[B]enim lalacığım, sen bir pîr-i fânîsin. Ayağ üzre durma, otur’ didi. ‘Pâdişâhım, de’b değildir kul olan kendi haddin bilmek gerekdir’ diyicek, ‘[B]erhûrdâr ol ammâ senden bir recâm vardır’ buyurdi. Murad Paşa tekrâr yer öpüp, ‘[P]âdişâhlar kulundan recâ itmek olur mu? Fermân senindir, buyur’ diyicek ‘[R]ecâm budur ki, Ahmed Paşa’yı bana bağışlayasın. Katlinden vaz geçesin’ didikde Murad Paşa neylesin, ‘[E]mir pâdişâhımındır’ didi. ‘Yarın sana varsın, ammâ zinhâr hatâ irgürmeyesin. Bunda defterdâr olsun. Baki Paşa ann çadırı ve bâr-hânesi ile gitsün’ di[di].” *Ibid.* See also Uzunçarşılı, *Merkez ve Bahriye Teşkilâtı*, 183, n. 2.

Murād Pasha later managed to discover that five of the men in his own retinue—including the man who had warned Aḥmed Pasha that he was to be killed—were being paid by the chief treasurer to keep him apprised of all of the grand vizier’s doings.²⁹⁵ Despite the fact that Murād Pasha had now formally forgiven him and, supposedly, abandoned his designs to have the chief treasurer killed, Aḥmed Pasha nevertheless made his own move, as Kâtib Çelebi relates:

The chief black eunuch (*dāru’s-sa’āde ağası*) Muştafâ Agha, the chief treasurer Aḥmed Pasha, and the former deputy grand vizier (*kā’im-makām*) Muştafâ Pasha took every opportunity to say, “Murād Pasha does not want to campaign against the Kızılbaş, he is a frail old man. All he does is dilly-dally around. And the sultan does not pressure him.” When the grand mufti [Şade’d-dīnzāde] Meḥmed Efendi communicated the chief black eunuch’s words to the sultan, [the latter] silenced [Muştafâ Agha] by saying, “Shut up, you scoundrel! How dare you! He is a ghazi and a worthy hajji. He took hold of the province of Anatolia when we had no control there. He defeated and broke many Celālî rebels. You are a group of malicious men. Say nothing more about him! He may do as he pleases.”²⁹⁶

The quarrel between Etmekçizāde Aḥmed and Murād Pasha seems to have subsided at this point, as the relevant sources make no more mention of it. Ultimately, Murād Pasha died while on campaign near Diyarbekir in August of 1611.

Yet despite the death of his foe Murād Pasha, Etmekçizāde Aḥmed was offered no relief when his successor, the governor of Diyarbekir Naşūḥ Pasha (d. 1614), took up the grand vizierate. There seems to have been enmity toward the chief treasurer on the part

²⁹⁵ Kâtib Çelebi, “Fezleke,” 569.

²⁹⁶ “Dârüssa’āde Ağası Mustafa Ağa ve Defterdâr Ahmed Paşa ve mukaddemâ kā’im-makām olan Mustafa Paşa fırsat buldukça dirler idi ki ‘Koca Murad Paşa Kızılbaş seferine gitmek istemez, pîr-i fânîdir. Hemân ayak salup gezer. Pâdişâh dahi var git dimez.’ Bu sözleri Müftî Mehemmed Efendi’nin ilkâsıyla Dârüssa’āde [A]ğası pâdişâha söyledikde, ‘[S]us bre habîs! Ne haddindir! Ol bir gâzî ve hacî ihtiyârdır. Vilâyet-i Anadolu’da ‘alâkamız yoğiken teshîr itdi. Bu denlü Celâlî ‘askerine gâlib olup kırdı. Siz bir alay ehl-i garazsız. Bir dahi anın hakkında söz söylemen! İsterse gitsin, isterse otursun” diyü iskât eylediler.” *Ibid.*, 569–570.

of the new grand vizier from the very start: when Naşūḥ Pasha halted in Hereke on the Gulf of Izmit in early September 1611, while traveling to the capital from Diyarbekir to formally assume his new post, Aḥmed Pasha went there by caïque to greet him and was treated coldly and with disrespect.²⁹⁷ The grand vizier’s rancor came to a head two years later. In the intervening period, Naşūḥ Pasha had had one of his own men spying on Aḥmed Pasha in the hope of digging up dirt, but the latter had eventually discovered the spy and had him poisoned sometime in the autumn of 1613.²⁹⁸ Then, in November of that year, Sultan Aḥmed and effectively his entire court—including the grand vizier and the chief treasurer, not to mention the poet Nef’ī²⁹⁹—relocated to Edirne to winter and hunt. While on the way there, and likely prompted by Aḥmed Pasha’s elimination of his spy, Naşūḥ Pasha appears to have begun to openly malign the chief treasurer to the sultan. The different chronicles present this in different ways. ‘Abdu’l-kādir Efendi, Meḥmed b. Meḥmed, and Kâtib Çelebi give no details about the source of this enmity: the first simply says that they grew opposed to one another and that the grand vizier was in fact trying to have Aḥmed Pasha killed;³⁰⁰ Meḥmed b. Meḥmed says that their relationship soured as a result of an unspecified matter;³⁰¹ and Kâtib Çelebi rests content with the very vague statement that complaints, which are left unspecified, arose in

²⁹⁷ ‘Abdu’l-kādir Efendi, *Tarih*, Vol. 1, 603.

²⁹⁸ Na’īmā, *Târih*, Vol. 2, 401–402. See also ‘Abdu’r-raḥmān Ḥibrī, *Enîsü’l-Müsâmirîn*, 167.

²⁹⁹ Nef’ī’s panegyric to Sultan Aḥmed beginning with the couplet “is this the city of Edirne or a sheltering rosegarden? | is the [garden’s] royal pavilion the highest heaven?” (*Edrine şehri mi bu yâ gülşen-i me’va midir | anda kaşr-ı pâdişāhî cennet-i a’lâ midir*) was composed on the occasion of the court’s arrival in the city. See Nef’ī, [*Dīvân*], 13 and Na’īmā, *Târih*, Vol. 2, 401–402.

³⁰⁰ ‘Abdu’l-kādir Efendi, *Tarih*, Vol. 1, 611.

³⁰¹ Meḥmed b. Meḥmed, “Mehmed b. Mehmed er-Rûmî (Edirneli)’nin Nuhbetü’t-Tevârih ve’l-Ahbâr’ı ve Târîh-i Âl-i Osman’ı: Metinleri, Tahlilleri,” ed. Abdurrahman Sağırlı (Ph.D. dissertation, Istanbul University, 2000), 636 [*Nuhbetü’l-tevârih ve’l-ahbâr*].

regards to the chief treasurer.³⁰² On the other hand, the much later chronicle of Na‘īmā states that the grand vizier created rumors about Aḥmed Pasha, making sure they would reach the sultan’s ear, and also presents the reason for the grand vizier’s enmity as his wish to see the chief treasurer removed from his office and from viziership, partly due to envy of Aḥmed Pasha’s great wealth and seemingly because he saw him as something of a threat.³⁰³ Whatever the case may have been, and whoever they may have originated with,³⁰⁴ the complaints regarding Aḥmed Pasha led to his immediate dismissal from the office of chief treasurer, his place being taken by Lonḳazāde Muṣṭafā Efendi (d. c. 1617) and then, a year later, by Etmekçizāde’s aforementioned old companion from Edirne, ‘Abdu’l-bākī Pasha. Soon after his dismissal, Aḥmed Pasha was appointed first as the governor of the province of Karaman, but immediately afterwards reassigned to the governorship of Aleppo, which, while a high-ranking and prestigious post, nevertheless served the purpose of removing him from the capital.

Naṣūḥ Pasha’s time as grand vizier would not, however, last very long: his conduct quickly earned him numerous enemies in palace circles, which eventually turned the sultan’s opinion against him such that he was finally executed in his home on October 17, 1614, just three years after he had assumed the post. He was succeeded by Kara Mehmed Pasha (d. 1619), who had none of the enmity toward Etmekçizāde Aḥmed that the previous two grand viziers had had, and who in fact, when he came to Aleppo in late

³⁰² Kâtib Çelebi, “Fezleke,” 594.

³⁰³ Na‘īmā, *Târih*, Vol. 2, 402.

³⁰⁴ Some of Nef‘î’s undatable invectives, which will be discussed in the following section, may well have been produced during this winter when the sultan and his court were in Edirne. It is thus quite possible that, given the relatively contained “hothouse” environment of this period, these invectives were actually produced here and then in order to add fuel to the fire of the ultimately successful attempts to have Aḥmed Pasha removed from office.

summer 1615 while on campaign against the Safavids, sent Aḥmed Pasha back to Istanbul to serve as deputy grand vizier in his absence.³⁰⁵ The very next year, in November, the decision was made to dismiss Ẓara Meḥmed Pasha from the grand vizierate as a result of his lack of success in the ongoing war against the Safavids, particularly at Yerevan. According to Ḥasan Beyzāde’s account, as soon as Aḥmed Pasha, who was still serving as the deputy grand vizier, heard the news of the dismissal and was invited to the council where the matter of succession would be discussed, he hastened to get there inasmuch as he had apparently developed designs on the grand vizierate for himself during his time as the deputy grand vizier (if not before), and felt certain that he would be given the post.³⁰⁶ Before he could arrive at the council, however, discussions on the matter of succession had already begun, and indeed the grand mufti Ṣade’d-dīnzāde Es’ad Efendi (1570–1625) pointed out that since Aḥmed Pasha was the deputy grand vizier, it would be appropriate (*bi-ḥasbe’l-tarīḳ*³⁰⁷) to appoint him as grand vizier. The sultan’s response, though, was firmly in the negative. According to Ḥasan Beyzāde’s account, he replied, “He may well be the deputy grand vizier, but I have been made aware of the fact that he has, at times, attempted to spread lies.”³⁰⁸ To this, in turn, the grand mufti immediately said, “He is corrupt (*ẓālim*) and an inveterate liar,”³⁰⁹ upon which the sultan dismissed him as a candidate and, after a bit

³⁰⁵ Kâtib Çelebi, “Fezleke,” 611; ‘Abdu’l-kādir Efendi, *Tarih*, Vol. 1, 639. This was likely done because the deputy grand vizier at the time, Gürcî Meḥmed Pasha (on whom see section 4.1 below), had apparently earned the ire of the sultan for some reason and been dismissed from his position in the imperial council as well as from the deputy grand vizierate. See Mahmut Ak, s.v. “Gürcü Mehmed Paşa,” *DİA*, Vol. 28, 509.

³⁰⁶ Ḥasan Beyzāde, *Târîh*, Vol. 3, 889.

³⁰⁷ Kâtib Çelebi, “Fezleke,” 619.

³⁰⁸ “Gerçi, kā’im-makām odur; lâkin ba’z-ı ahyânda, ihtiyâr-ı dūrûg-ı bî-fürûg itdügüne muttali’ oldum.” Ḥasan Beyzāde, *Târîh*, Vol. 3, 889.

³⁰⁹ “Hem zâlim ve hem kezzâbdur.” *Ibid.*

more discussion, the grand admiral (*kapudân-ı deryâ*) Hâlîl Pasha (d. c. 1630) was decided upon.³¹⁰ No sooner had the grand mufti left, however, than Etmekçizâde Aḥmed entered the sultan's presence, and when the latter asked Aḥmed whom he considered fit for the post of grand vizier and commander of the army, Aḥmed replied, "Command [me], I am at [your] service."³¹¹ At this, the sultan was silent, which Etmekçizâde apparently interpreted as assent, because he then returned home to his mansion and prepared a celebratory feast as he awaited the supposed arrival of the seals marking his ascension to the grand vizierate. Ḥasan Beyzâde relates what happened next:

Etmekçizâde was unaware [that Hâlîl Pasha had been made grand vizier]. He laid out an expansive feast, and as he was dining with those in his retinue, a messenger arrived from Hâlîl Pasha and addressed Yaycızâde, the head of the chancery (*re'îsü'l-küttâb*), who was in the midst of eating, saying [to him], "The grand vizier wants you." Yaycızâde, indicating Etmekçizâde, said, "There is the grand vizier, at the head of the table; he has acceded [to the post]." The messenger realized that none of them knew what had happened, and he announced that the honorable seal [of the grand vizierate] had been granted to Hâlîl Pasha, who wished to see the head [of the chancery]. Upon hearing these words confirming [the actual situation], Etmekçizâde drew his hand away from his food, dumbfounded, and all the others seated at the table were struck silent. Yaycızâde rose and went with the messenger to see Hâlîl Pasha.³¹²

³¹⁰ Kâtib Çelebi gives a slightly different version of the exchange between the sultan and the grand mufti: "When the grand mufti said, 'Would it not be appropriate to give [the grand vizierate] to your majesty's servant Etmekçizâde?', [the sultan] clarified by saying, 'I am aware of certain lies on his part; I will not give [the grand vizierate] to him,' whereupon the grand mufti corroborated the imperial words by saying, 'He is an inveterate liar and corrupt.'" (*Şeyhülislâm [...]* "[B]i-hasbe't-tarîk Etmekçizâde bendelerine virilmez mi?" didikde, "[A]nın ba'zı kizbine vâkıf oldum, ana virmem" diyü tasrîh idicek, "[H]em kezzâbdır, hem zâlimdir" demekle mollâ hazretleri kelâm-ı pâdişâhiyi te'kid [itti].) Kâtib Çelebi, "Fezleke," 619.

³¹¹ "Hidmet buyurun, hıdmete turmuşuz." Ḥasan Beyzâde, *Târîh*, Vol. 3, 889. Kâtib Çelebi reports his reply as, "Command [me], my soul and head are ready to be sacrificed for the sake of your majesty." (*Hidmet buyurun, uğur-ı humâyûnda cân u baş fedâdır.*) Kâtib Çelebi, "Fezleke," 619.

³¹² "Etmekçi-zâde, bu etvârdan haberdâr olmayup, bast-ı mâ'ide-i ni'met idüp, etbâ'ı ile tagaddî iderken, Halîl Paşa'dan bir çâvuş gelüp, ta'âm üzerinde, Re'îsü'l-küttâb olan Yaycı-zâde'ye, 'Seni Vezîr-i a'zam ister' diyü hitâb eylemiş. Yaycı-zâde, 'İşte, Vezîr-i a'zam, sofrâ başında, cülûs itmîşdür' diyü Etmekçi-zâde'yi gösterdüğünde, çâvuş, görür ki, bunlar, ahvâlden habîr degüller, mühr-i şerîf, Halîl Paşa'ya virilüp, ol dahı, re'îsi istediğünü takrîr eylemiş. Etmekçi-zâde, bu kelâm-ı mûrisü'l-me'âli işidicek, ta'âmdan el çeküp, mebhût ve sâ'ir mâ'idede bulınanlar dahı, sükût üzre olmuşlar. Yaycı-zâde, kalkup, çâvuş ile Halîl

Following this incident, one of the grand vizier's men was murdered by one of Aḥmed Pasha's men, who was immediately captured and decapitated on the palace grounds. Subsequently, all those who were known to have received bribes from Etmekçizāde were hunted down, taken into custody, and had their possessions seized.³¹³ This entire process reduced Aḥmed Pasha's esteem in the sultan's eyes, and as a result he was not reconfirmed in his position as deputy grand vizier.³¹⁴

He did not, however, entirely disappear: in January 1617, he was still serving on the imperial council as the second vizier (*vezīr-i s̄ānī*) under grand vizier Ḥalīl Pasha, as confirmed by a waqf deed of the sultan's wife Kösem Sultān (d. 1651), which was drawn up at that time and to which Aḥmed Pasha served as a witness.³¹⁵ He remained on the imperial council for several months, and there still appears to have been some apprehension that, given his past as well as his position as second vizier, he might still become grand vizier should anything happen to Ḥalīl Pasha. In a panegyric addressed to the grand vizier on the occasion of his departing for a campaign in Ardabil, Nef'ī—who as will be seen below had written several much harsher works against Aḥmed Pasha—expressed this apprehension openly:

a couple of state officers have taken aim at me | and taken it jointly upon themselves
to show cruelty || one³¹⁶ is an administrator and one a product of the financial branch |

Paşa'ya revâne olmuş." Ḥasan Beyzāde, *Tārīh*, Vol. 3, 890. Kâtib Çelebi relates a more condensed version of this same scene; see Kâtib Çelebi, "Fezleke," 620.

³¹³ Ḥasan Beyzāde, *Tārīh*, Vol. 3, 890–891; Kâtib Çelebi, "Fezleke," 620. Cf. İbrāhīm Peçevî, "Peçevî Tarihi: Edisyon Kritiği Bağdat Nüshası (284–317 Metin, Dizin, Özel Adlar Sözlüğü)," ed. Melek Metin (M.A. thesis, Marmara University, 2006), 122.

³¹⁴ Ḥasan Beyzāde, *Tārīh*, Vol. 3, 891.

³¹⁵ See Mücteba İlgürel, "Kösem Sultan'ın Bir Vakfiyesi," *Tarih Dergisi* 16, no. 21 (1966): 83–94.

³¹⁶ The identity of the other figure here remains uncertain, as pointed out by İsmail Ünver, who was the first to correctly identify the second figure as Etmekçizāde; see Ünver, "Övgü ve Yergi Şairi Nef'î," 73.

each is more petty and deceitful and cruel than the other || the trouble is that, even with their open treachery, | their presence is still vital for the state and faith || you took away one of them and made Istanbul rejoice | let God take the other and render the world glad || and if He does not, at least let him not become grand vizier | for if he does I hardly know what will befall the world || all the world's people would be bereft of bread | and the world's treasury and coffers would lie empty again³¹⁷

By placing these lines within this panegyric, Nef'ī doubtless hoped that the departing Ḥalīl Pasha would take whatever steps might be necessary to ensure that Aḥmed Pasha would not assume the grand vizierate.

In any case, although Ḥalīl Pasha's campaign would prove unsuccessful and lead to his removal, it was not Aḥmed Pasha who would replace him. Before long, in fact, Aḥmed Pasha fell seriously ill and went into withdrawal.³¹⁸ Apparently fearing for his life, he had 100 *yüks* of *aķçes* delivered to the new chief treasurer to be put into the treasury and dedicated to repairs for the fortress at Özi (the modern-day Ochakiv) and the construction of a new fortress across the strait from it,³¹⁹ as well as having a madrasa, tomb, and water dispensary built in Istanbul's Vefa district, with the superintendent of these endowments to be the grand mufti himself.³²⁰ Etmekçizāde Aḥmed finally passed away in December 1618. When his possessions were subsequently claimed for the state treasury, they amounted to the quite immense sum of 1,000 *yüks* of *aķçes*.³²¹

³¹⁷ “bir iki mültezimi eyledi ḥavāle baḡa | ki iřtirākla  tmiřler iltizām-ı sitem || biri m debbir-i m lk ve biri muḡařsal-ı m l | biri birinden aḡass u m zevvir   azlem || bel  budır ki bu deḡl  fes d-ı f hiř ile | yine v c dleri d n   devlete elzem || birini sen g t r p eylediḡ Sit nb l'ı ř d | birin de Ḥaķķ g t r p  de  lemi ḡurrem || g t rmez ise de bari get rmeye řadra | gelirse ḡ li n'olur yine  lemin bilmem || olurdu ḡaķ-ı cih n yine etmeḡe muḡt c | kalurdu yine teh  c b   ki-se-i  lem”; Nef' , [*Div n*], 87.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*; K tib  elebi, “Fezleke,” 642; ‘Abdu’l-k dir Efendi, *Tarih*, Vol. 1, 665 and Vol. 2, 684.

³¹⁹ K tib  elebi, “Fezleke,” 642.

³²⁰ ‘Abdu’l-k dir Efendi, *Tarih*, Vol. 1, 665–666; K tib  elebi, “Fezleke,” 642.

³²¹ K tib  elebi, “Fezleke,” 642.

3.2 Aspects of the life and career of Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha

Overall, there are several things that stand out in regards to Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha's life and career, but here I will focus on three points in particular: (a) Etmekçizāde's status as a vizier bearing the title "pasha"; (b) his background as a merchant and a soldier in the *sipāhī* ranks; and (c) contemporary divided opinion of him based on an opposition between competence and corruption. The first two of these points were negatively characterized as novelties at the time, and all three would be among the main lines along which Etmekçizāde was attacked in the invectives of Nef'ī.

The first point—namely, Etmekçizāde Aḥmed's status as a vizier with the title of "pasha"—was noticeably remarked upon in his own day. As Baki Tezcan points out in his own discussion of Etmekçizāde's sociohistorical significance, "[t]he status of finance ministers [*i.e.*, chief treasurers] had been rising since the late-sixteenth century, and Ahmed Pasha was not the first one to carry the title of vizier."³²² While this may be factually correct, it nevertheless obscures two important points: first, Etmekçizāde *was* among the very first to be granted viziership in direct connection with his appointment to the position of chief treasurer, as prior to him only Burhāne'd-dīn (d. 1599/1600) had received this privilege, specifically upon his second appointment in May 1599; and second, the sheer power (not to mention fortune) that Etmekçizāde managed to accumulate as a function of the nearly unprecedented length of his time as chief treasurer made him a sort of marked man for critics of this "innovation" (*bid'ā*), such

³²² Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*, 15.

that regardless of accuracy he was indeed *perceived* as being the first joint chief treasurer/pasha.

The trepidation with which Etmekçizâde's viziership was met can, for example, be read between the lines in a petition (*arz*) sent to and granted by Sultan Aḥmed I on March 11, 1607, just a few months after the appointment was made. Before making its particular requests, which involve the granting of *hāşş* revenues to Etmekçizâde in accordance with his vizieral rank, the petition begins as follows: "This is the petition of [your] poor servant. My illustrious sultan has graced his servant, the treasurer Aḥmed Pasha, with viziership; *may God Almighty preserve my sultan from error and peril.*"³²³ While not at all rare, the expression here emphasized is, on the one hand, quite a forceful one to use in a document that would be read personally by the sultan himself and, on the other hand, seemingly an indirect way for the author of the petition—whose identity is unclear, though he was undoubtedly a high-ranking official of some variety—to indicate tacit disapproval of Etmekçizâde being granted viziership and the varied privileges that come with it.

A later document that also explicitly refers to the matter of Etmekçizâde Aḥmed's viziership is somewhat more direct. This document is one of several so-called "Veliyyü'd-dîn" reports (*telhîş*), which were prepared in order to provide a picture of the state of imperial administrative affairs and offer recommendations concerning how to

³²³ "Arz-ı bende-i bî-mikdâr budur ki, devletlü pâdişâhum Defterdâr Ahmed Paşa kullarına vezâret inâyet buyurulmuş *Hak Te'âlâ devletlü pâdişâhu hatâ ve hatardan masûn eylesün.*" Cengiz Orhonlu, ed., *Telhîşler (1597–1607)* (Istanbul: Edebiyat Fakültesi Basımevi, 1970), 131; emphasis added.

rectify some of the contemporary problems affecting those affairs.³²⁴ The report is one example of the advice literature (*naşīhatnāme*) that flourished in the late 16th and 17th centuries due largely to “the emergence of a historical consciousness of ‘decline’ in Ottoman learned circles,”³²⁵ a consciousness that was a reaction to changing conditions in the empire.³²⁶ In this “Veliyyü’ d-dīn” report, which was apparently presented to Sultan Murād IV (r. 1623–1640) in the year 1632,³²⁷ the author excoriates the expansion of the range of offices being granted the right to the title of pasha, which had now begun to include not only the traditional viziers and provincial governors (*beğlerbeği*), but also treasurers, chancellors (*nişāncı*), and district governors (*sancağbeği*):

[T]o become chancellor or treasurer or district governor (*sancağbeği*) with the rank of *beğlerbeği*³²⁸ is an innovation (*bid’a*) and a most improper one. They [*i.e.*, holders of these offices] must be elevated, [but] this rank greatly harms the Sublime State. All of

³²⁴ See Murphey, “The Veliyyuddin Telhis.”

³²⁵ H. Erdem Çıpa, *The Making of Selim: Succession, Legitimacy, and Memory in the Early Modern Ottoman World* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2017), 182.

³²⁶ The foundational studies problematizing the notion of the Ottoman “decline” are Douglas A. Howard, “Ottoman Historiography and the Literature of ‘Decline’ of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” *Journal of Asian History* 22 (1988): 52–77; Cemal Kafadar, “The Myth of the Golden Age: Ottoman Historical Consciousness in the Post-Süleymānic Era,” in *Süleymān the Second and His Time*, ed. Halil İnalçık and Cemal Kafadar (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 1993): 37–48; and Cemal Kafadar, “The Question of Ottoman Decline,” *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review* 4, nos. 1–2 (1997–1998): 30–75. Some more recent studies addressing the matter from different perspectives include, but are not limited to, Marinos Sariyannis, “Ottoman Critics of Society and State, Fifteenth to Early Eighteenth Centuries: Toward a Corpus for the Study of Ottoman Political Thought,” *Archivum Ottomanicum* 25 (2008): 127–150; Heather Ferguson, “Genres of Power: Constructing a Discourse of Decline in Ottoman *Nasihatname*,” *Osmanlı Araştırmaları / The Journal of Ottoman Studies* 35 (2010): 81–116; and Mehmet Öz, *Kanun-ı Kadimin Peşinde: Osmanlı’da Çözülme ve Gelenekçi Yorumları* (Istanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2015).

³²⁷ Rhoads Murphey, “Dördüncü Sultan Murad’a Sunulan Yedi Telhis,” in *VIII. Türk Tarih Kongresi, Kongreye Sunulan Bildiriler (11–15 Ekim 1976)*, Vol. 2 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1981), 1096. Significantly, these reports were submitted to the sultan just as he had reached majority and was asserting his own power after several years of being a young figurehead.

³²⁸ Here, “the rank of *beğlerbeği*” (*beğlerbeğilik pāyesi*) refers to being entitled as a pasha, in line with the fact that pasha was a title originally reserved for provincial governors (*beğlerbeği*) and viziers. See Jean Deny, s.v. “Pasha,” *EF*, Vol. VIII, 279–281; V.L. Ménage, s.v. “Beglerbegi,” *EF*, Vol. I, 1159–1160.

these offices are exalted positions. Their very display is sufficient. There is no need for promotion through false ranks.³²⁹

The fact that this expansion of the range of viziership, with the varied privileges that accompany this title, is described by the very loaded term *bid‘a*,³³⁰ and that any viziership granted to the holders of the offices mentioned is unequivocally labeled “false” (*sāhte*), indicates a clear discomfort with the possible consequences of this trend. In part, this discomfort emanates from the sense, common to all the contemporary advice literature, that the problems faced by the empire at the time were the result of a deviation from established custom (*kānūn-ı kadīm*): traditionally, the title of pasha and the privileges that go with it were reserved for those serving either as viziers on the imperial council³³¹ or as provincial governors; thus, by widening the title’s range so as to encompass what was effectively the next level down in the hierarchy, a way was opened for greater—and more difficult to control—potential abuse of vizieral privileges.

However, the report does not simply lament this situation in the abstract: on the contrary, immediately prior to these rather general statements the report details particular abuses that can and have occurred specifically as a result of the granting of viziership to treasurers—a practice explicitly noted, however inaccurately, as having begun with Etmekçizāde Aḥmed:

³²⁹ “Ve’l-ḥāşıl nişāncı ve defterdārılar ve sancaklar beğleri beğlerbeğilik pāyesiyle olmağ bir bid‘atdır ve bid‘atlarınñ qabīhidir. Anlar yine ref‘ olunmağ gerekdir. Bu pāyeniñ Devlet-i ‘Aliyye’ye çok zararı vardır. Bu manşıblarınñ her birisi refi‘ mağāmlardır[.] Kendi ‘arzları kâfidir[.] Sāhte pāye ile terfi‘e ḥācet yokdır.” Murphey, “The Veliyyuddin Telhis,” 561–562.

³³⁰ The term, meaning “innovation,” is a religious one technically referring to any “belief or practice for which there [was] no precedent in the time of the Prophet”; James Robson, “Bid‘a,” *EF*², Vol. 1, 1199. It appears to have often been used outside of a strictly religious context, but the fact that the “innovation” here is one related not to religious law but to the canonical imperial practice of *kānūn* can nevertheless be taken as a means of stressing the severe impropriety of this new practice.

³³¹ Though the chief treasurer had always had a seat on the imperial council, it was not a position that began to be associated with actual viziership and the title of “pasha” until the end of the 16th century.

Formerly, treasurers were not of the rank of vizier, and if an imperial decree was writ regarding imperial possessions, it would pass through four or five hands, with [the] three [other] treasurers setting their seal on it. Any previously written decree would have been registered by the council's senior clerks, the *muḳāṭa'acıs* and accountants, and so they would be aware of what was written therein. Moreover, revenue would come directly to the imperial gate. In this manner, it was not possible to secrete away any possessions rightfully belonging to the sultan. In the year 1015 [1606/07], the late Sultan Aḫmed [I] Khan made Etmekçizāde Aḫmed Pasha the chief treasurer with the rank of vizier. Since that time, treasurers have been granted viziership.³³² As a result, the condition of the treasury has been disturbed and disordered, and has not been free of destruction and ruin. For now that treasurers are viziers, whenever it is necessary to write an imperial decree, they have a scribe of their very own write it and then affix it with their signature and seal without anyone being aware of what is written therein. With the treasurers of former times, even if they were traitorous thieves, they still did not have the power to steal even one *aḳçe*. But now that they have viziership, they are able to steal whatever amount they desire. In sum, the granting of the rank of vizier to treasurers is immensely harmful to the treasury.³³³

This rather detailed description of the consequences of the loss of bureaucratic checks on the activities of the chief treasurer nowhere accuses Etmekçizāde Aḫmed Pasha of siphoning off money rightfully belonging to the imperial treasury. Nevertheless, the implication is very much there insofar as it is he and he alone who is mentioned by name.

Such discretion is perhaps to be expected in a report meant for submission to the sultan, even if the particular figure being implicated was long since dead. However, other

³³² It should be noted that only about half of the chief treasurers between Aḫmed Pasha's time and the author's own day (*i.e.*, the early 1630s) were in fact granted viziership; however, the precedent was indeed established, and later in the 17th century would become standard practice.

³³³ "Ve defterdārlar muḳaddemā vezāret pāyesiyle olmadan māl-ı pādişāhī için bir emr-i şerīf yazılma dört beş elden geçüp üç defterdār daḫı birer nişān çekerdı. Ve evvel yazılan ḫükmi Ḳubbealtı'nda olan dīvān ḫ'āceleri ki muḳāṭa'acılar ve muḫāsebeciler der-ḳayd edüp ol ḫükmiñ mazmūnına vāḳıflar idi. Ve māl-ı mīrī toḡrı bāb-ı ḫümāyūna gelürdi. Bu tarīḳ ile māl-ı pādişāhī ketm olunmaḳ mümkin deḡil idi. Merḫūm Sulṫān Aḫmed Ḥān biñ onbeş tarīḫinde Etmekçizāde Aḫmed Paşa'yı vezāret ile başdefterdār eyledi. Ol zamāndan berü defterdārlar vezāret ile olur idi. Bu sebebden beytū'l-māl aḫvālī muḫtel ü müşevveş olup zāyi' ü telef olmaḳdan ḫālī degildir. Zīrā defterdārlar vezīr olmaḡla bir emr-i şerīf yazılmaḳ lāzım geldikde kendüye maḫşūs bir kātibe yazdırup kendüsü imzāsın ve tuḡrasın çeküp mazmūnına bir ferd vāḳıf olmaz. Muḳaddemā olan defterdārlar ḫā'in ve ḫırsız olsalar daḫı bir aḳçe sirḳat eylemeḡe ḳādir deḡiller idi. Lakin vezāret olmaḳ murād eyledüḡi miḳdārı sirḳaya ḳādir olur. Ḥāşıl-ı kelām, defterdārların vezāret ile olması beytū'l-māla küllī zarardır." Murphey, "The Veliyyuddin Telhis," 561.

authors writing in different genres for different audiences could afford to be, and in fact were, rather less circumspect. This will be made vividly clear in the next section, when the invectives written against Etmekçizāde by Nef'î are examined in some detail. But the chief treasurer's notoriety appears to have been rather widespread. For instance, a chronogram on the occasion of Aḥmed Pasha's death by an otherwise unknown scribe named 'Ömer is recorded in the margins of a miscellany, describing its subject in the following manner:

Chronogram on the death of Etmekçizāde, in the hand of the scribe 'Ömer

today Etmekçizāde's bread | has been cooked through in the oven || I wonder if he
now repents | the injustice he wreaked on the people || he turned Rumelia to wrack
and ruin | but now they're once again safe and sound || yet he was corrupt since his
rise began | none were so tenacious in *bid'a* || his dead carcass was stuck in the
ground | which could not digest it and threw it up || all his possessions [must be]
seized for the treasury | indeed, the sultan should [have spilled] his blood || I asked
someone how [Etmekçizāde] was doing | and he said the chronogram, "The tyrant is
dead"³³⁴

This poem's emphasis lies primarily on injustice (*zulm*), which in context appears to refer primarily to corruption and theft and the trickle-down effect that these were

³³⁴ "Tarih-i vefât-ı Etmekçizāde bâ hatt-ı Ömer'il kâtib: Bu gün Etmekçizāde'nin nânı / Tükenip oldu furunda âzim / Halka ettikleri zulümlerine / Aceb oldu mu şimdi ol nâdim / Rum ilini harabe vermiş idi / Şimdiden sonra oldular sâlim / Gerçi fûrûnda zâlim idi / Olmadı böyle bid'ate âzim / Şöyle konuldu cıfeye ölüsün / Kay idüb ahir olmadı hâzim / Cümle malını miriye almak / Padişaha hele kanı lâzım / Hâlini ânin birisine sordum / Dedi tarihini 'Öldü ya zâlim.'" A. Turan Alkan, "Etmekçizāde Ahmet Paşa'nın Ölümüne Düşürülmüş Bir Tarih ve Cennetle Müjdelenen Bir Zâlim," *Tarih ve Toplum* 9, no. 54 (June 1988), 46 (374). Note that the date indicated by the phrase *Öldü yâ zâlim* (اولدی یا ظالم) is AH 1033 (1623/24 CE), whereas Etmekçizāde Aḥmed in fact died in AH 1027 (1617/18 CE); however, mistakes in chronograms were by no means unheard of, and moreover the rather classically deficient meter and rhyme of the poem as a whole seem to indicate that the scribe 'Ömer, while certainly educated, nonetheless at least did not slave over this particular composition, which may have contributed to the mistake in the chronogram's dating. Alkan also notes that the miscellany in which he found the chronogram contains the following explanatory note directly below it: "While yet living, the deceased became the treasurer and raised the salaries of certain people, yet he also did wrong to and oppressed many Muslims, [such that] his death was a cause for joy for all those [who had been oppressed] and in the end such curses came to be produced" (*Merhum hâl-i hayâtında defterdâr olub bazı kimselerin vazifelerini ref' idüb nice bunun emsâli Müslümanlara gadr-ü hayf eylediği [için], vefâtına her biri mesrûr olub âkibet bu nam ilenişler olunmuş*); *ibid.*

perceived as having on the Ottoman, and particularly Rumelian, populace of producers. In general, as might be expected, corruption and injustice of all kinds were also among the primary concerns of the authors of this era's abundant advice literature, about which more will be said below in connection with Nef'ī's invectives against Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha, which evince many of the same "declinist" concerns as the advice literature. The invective chronogram by the scribe 'Ömer, interestingly, puts forward the claim that Aḥmed Pasha had been corrupt from the very start of his career (*fürū*'),³³⁵ an assertion that will also be seen in Nef'ī's invectives. In connection with this idea, and like the "Veliyyü'd-dīn" report, 'Ömer's chronogram also makes conscious use of the pregnant term *bid'a* to summarize Aḥmed Pasha's rise to power. Taken together, these lines carry a strong implication that his very background *itself* served as a kind of preliminary to corruption.

This, in turn, serves to highlight the second significant point regarding the career of Etmekçizāde; namely, the novelty of a merchant-cum-*sipāhī* rising through the ranks to become the chief treasurer, a pasha, and very nearly even grand vizier. In his own brief evaluation of Aḥmed Pasha, Baki Tezcan emphasizes that his background "differed greatly from the traditional backgrounds of finance ministers, which were either in the educational-judicial [*i.e.*, *ilmiyye*] or scribal [*i.e.*, *ḵalemiyye*] spheres," going on to point out how he was a soldier, "albeit of a different kind" inasmuch as he appears to have

³³⁵ The word *fürū*' (فروع), it should be noted, is a difficult one to parse, as it would normally refer to a person's descendants, which makes no sense in this context. One meaning of the root ف ر ع, however, has to do with beginning or commencement; see Edward William Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon, Derived from the Best and the Most Copious Eastern Sources*, Book 1, Part 6 (London: Williams and Norgate, 1877), 2378–2380.

bought his way into the *sipāhī* ranks, possibly viewing the army “as an institution that provided financial security and social status.”³³⁶ From there, as mentioned above, he somehow—perhaps most likely by using money he had saved—managed to finagle a position collecting taxes, after which he moved steadily up the ladder of the empire’s financial branch. While it may be going too far to accurately call this, as Tezcan does, full-fledged “social mobility,”³³⁷ it does indicate the beginnings of such and also, as Tezcan underlines, shows how “the role of money and its prestige in politics were rising.”³³⁸

Nonetheless, what was thus *de facto* accepted (or rather, beginning to be accepted) in practice was not necessarily *de jure* accepted in theory: this, in fact, was the driving force behind much if not all of the contemporary advice literature, whose authors were attempting to negotiate between the established customs of *kānūn-ı kadīm* and the new circumstances of the much enlarged empire from the second half of the 16th century onwards, a negotiation that led in most cases to a plea, ultimately in vain, to return to the established customs.³³⁹ This conservative mindset thus looked askance on even the possibility of social mobility, which would make the borders of the four fundamental

³³⁶ Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*, 16.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, 17.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, 16. It should also be noted in connection with this that, during the late 16th and early 17th centuries, the financial branch was becoming increasingly large and specialized so as to better deal with the empire’s vast domains. As a consequence of this, from the 1570s onwards the majority of chief treasurers were coming to their posts directly from this branch: through 1573/74—when Lālezār Mehmed Çelebi (d. c. 1583), the son of a janissary, was appointed chief treasurer—only three of thirty-three total chief treasurers (12%) had come from the still somewhat nascent financial branch, but between 1573/74 and Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha’s appointment in 1606, fifteen of eighteen total chief treasurers (83%) emerged from the rapidly consolidating branch. Data taken from Danişmend, *Osmanlı Devlet Erkânı*, 242–262.

³³⁹ For a reading of the motivations behind the advice literature of the early modern period focusing especially on Kocı Beğ, see Rifa’at ‘Ali Abou-El-Haj, *Formation of the Modern State: The Ottoman Empire, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 20–40.

classes (*erkân-ı erba‘a*)³⁴⁰ porous and, by permitting “outsiders” (*ecnebî*) to move with a greater degree of freedom among the classes, upset the order of the empire (*nizâm-ı ‘âlem*). In the case of Etmekçizâde Aḥmed Pasha, as hinted at by the scribe ‘Ömer’s chronogram, his origins, specifically as a relatively lowly *sipāhî* soldier and merchant, provided a readymade stigma through which he might be denigrated. While this is only an oblique implication in the chronogram, it served as one of the primary fields of attack in the invectives written against Aḥmed Pasha by Nef‘î, as will be seen in the following section.

The third point relating to the career of Etmekçizâde Aḥmed Pasha has to do very specifically with the matter of the very divided way he was perceived during his time and soon after. On the one hand, there were those who viewed him as especially competent in the matter of handling finances. This has already been seen above, in the account of how, in 1599, he managed to obtain release from imprisonment apparently as a direct result of his supporters stressing how able he was in financial matters, particularly in the collection of provisions for the army. This seems to be borne out by the facts themselves. At several points during the course of the Long War—specifically, *c.* 1600,³⁴¹ 1603,³⁴² and 1605³⁴³—Etmekçizâde was temporarily replaced as military

³⁴⁰ These four classes, as typically formulated, comprised the military and administrative class (*seyfiyye* or *‘askerî*), the bureaucratic class (*kalemiyye*), craftsmen and merchants, and agriculturalists.

³⁴¹ Caroline Finkel, *The Administration of Warfare: The Ottoman Military Campaigns in Hungary, 1593–1606* (Vienna: VWGÖ, 1988), 246–247.

³⁴² Kâtib Çelebi, “Fezleke,” 430.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, 495; ‘Abdu’l-ḳâdir Efendi, *Tarih*, Vol. 1, 423.

treasurer in order to be sent out into Rumelia to gather funds and provisions for the army, and he appears to have been notably efficient at doing so.³⁴⁴

On the other hand, however, as has already been seen in the above account of Etmekçizāde Aḥmed's life, there were also persons and factions lined up in opposition to him, chief among them the successive grand viziers Murād Pasha and Naṣūḥ Pasha, who ultimately managed to orchestrate Aḥmed's swift fall from a long grace. Part of the reason behind this was the rising prestige and immense wealth of the chief treasurer, with the former presenting a threat to which the latter offered an opportunity to respond by means of allegations of corruption. As indicated by the example of the invective chronogram by 'Ömer presented above, the notion that Etmekçizāde Aḥmed was corrupt was one that seems to have been held not just among the upper echelons of the government, but to have extended out among a wider proportion of the populace as well, or at least among even the humblest ranks of the Ottoman bureaucracy.

At the higher levels, there was a decided political component to the opposition to Etmekçizāde: with the rise of importance of the finance ministry, especially as a result of the consecutive wars with the Safavids and the Habsburgs between 1578 and 1606, there developed a rivalry between treasurers and viziers, or more broadly speaking between the empire's financial and administrative branches, which over time became especially

³⁴⁴ See, e.g., Finkel, *The Administration of Warfare*, 246–247. Also note, however, that what might be viewed from the state's and/or the modern historian's perspective as efficiency and success in gathering funds (*i.e.*, taxes) could well be viewed as unjust extortion on the part of those providing the funds (*i.e.*, the producers). Considering, for instance, the scribe 'Ömer's specific mention of Rumelia in his invective chronogram, it is not impossible to think that he may well have personally experienced and recalled Aḥmed Pasha's gathering of funds, and is thus referring to them in his chronogram.

heated as the former came to establish itself as increasingly independent of the latter.³⁴⁵

It was in fact within the context of this rivalry that the concerns about the origins of Aḥmed Pasha arose: as a “mere” soldier of the “new” type, with a background in commerce, who rose to the heights of a government branch that was gradually separating from the administrative structure of which it was ostensibly part, and who then threatened to effectively leap from that height across the widening gap to the height of the administrative structure—*i.e.*, to potentially become grand vizier—Aḥmed served as an early encapsulation of how the composition and structure of the empire’s administrative system were transforming under the strictures of the time.

In discussing how the Ottoman bureaucracy gradually became institutionalized over the course of the late 16th and early 17th centuries, Gabriel Piterberg points out how both the chancery and the treasury became increasingly preferable career tracks during this period, the former because it “offered both cultural prestige and an opportunity to exhibit one’s cultural prowess,” and the latter because it was more remunerative.³⁴⁶ As a result, the pool of candidates began to expand to encompass “‘plain’ reaya families” (*i.e.*, of Muslim origin) on the one hand and, on the other hand, “sons of middle- and low-ranking kul, who not infrequently rendered bureaucratic services to the unit in which their fathers served or had served.”³⁴⁷ Moreover, given the increasingly money-based economy, to those candidates who had spent time in an apprenticeship and had

³⁴⁵ This rivalry is outlined in Klaus Röhrborn, “Die Emanzipation der Finanzbürokratie im Osmanischen Reich (Ende 16. Jahrhundert),” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 122 (1972), 130–137 and Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, 218–224.

³⁴⁶ Gabriel Piterberg, *An Ottoman Tragedy: History and Historiography at Play* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), 44.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

come from a relatively modest background, the financial branch proved especially attractive inasmuch as “cultural prestige and prowess were presumably luxuries they could ill afford.”³⁴⁸ Economic change thus not only necessitated the expansion and further institutionalization of the Ottoman financial branch, but also enticed more and more people of different backgrounds to enter that branch, basically creating a snowball effect.³⁴⁹

Reading these developments in Bourdieusian terms, there was an ever enlarging hunt to appropriate economic capital in the case of those entering the financial branch, or one’s cultural capital in the case of those entering the chancery, and yet this very enlargement initiated a change in the composition of these respective fields, thereby necessarily also altering the *habitus* of the actors within those fields. In a word, the set of behaviors, skills, and dispositions called for from any actors within and representing the financial branch and the chancery who might wish to retain their position and status was gradually being transformed in line with what new actors in these fields were bringing with them.³⁵⁰ This, in turn, helps to explain why contemporary critics—be it the authors of advice literature, the chroniclers, or the producers of invective—saw these processes of transformation in largely moral terms as a decline: realizing that they were gradually being left out of, or at least were potentially threatened by, the newly developing networks that constituted the changing field’s social capital, they—and particularly the

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁹ For an overview of the Ottoman financial branch and the changes it underwent from the 16th to the 17th centuries, see Darling, *Revenue-Raising and Legitimacy*, 49–80.

³⁵⁰ Though the notion of the “socialized subjectivity” that is *habitus*, as well as its relation with various fields, is, as a concept fundamental to Pierre Bourdieu’s worldview, utilized throughout his work in a piecemeal fashion, perhaps the most succinct explanation thereof is to be found in Pierre Bourdieu and Loic J.D. Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), 120–140.

moralist *par excellence* Muṣṭafā ‘Ālī and his student and, in a way, spiritual descendant Nef‘ī—embarked on a campaign to reinterpret the transformation of *habitus*, which was an inevitable concomitant of the changing field, as a systemic collapse brought on by a concatenation of personal moral failings. Also of note in this regard is how a polymath critic and littérateur like Muṣṭafā ‘Ālī seems to have had a holistic conception wherein the Bourdieusian field embraced all of what might be called Ottoman “elite” culture, from literature to etiquette to administration, and hence his comprehensive—and at times contradictory—vision was extended out so as to encompass and apply to the whole of this culture.³⁵¹ Given this comprehensive vision, his expectation was that all “elites” would be more or less equally well educated, mannered, and skilled, and thus, as Cornell Fleischer puts it, “Āli’s unhappiness with the system of his time sprang less from a concern with maintaining the integrity of career lines per se than from disgust with a decline in the quality [*i.e.*, the broad cultural capital] of administrative personnel.”³⁵² This vision would go on to shape the advice literature discourse of the early 17th century, though these later works would be much more narrowly focused than Muṣṭafā ‘Ālī’s own.

To return to Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha, as a beneficiary of and one who took careful advantage of the changing situation, he appears to have been viewed or at least

³⁵¹ While the best example of this range is the entirety of Muṣṭafā ‘Ālī’s voluminous *œuvre* as a whole, perhaps the finest concise expression of it is to be found in the wide-ranging *Mevā’idü’n-nefā’is fi kavā’idi’l-mecālis* (Tables of Delicacies concerning the Rules of Social Gatherings); see Mūṣṭafā ‘Ālī, *The Ottoman Gentleman of the Sixteenth Century: Mustafa Āli’s Mevā’idü’n-Nefā’is fi Kavā’idi’l-Mecālis* (“Tables of Delicacies concerning the Rules of Social Gatherings”), ed. and trans. Douglas S. Brookes (Cambridge, MA: The Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University, 2003).

³⁵² Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, 204.

implicitly presented by many as a sort of exemplary symptom of contemporary transformations in the economy and administrative composition. He was not merely, *à la* Baki Tezcan, a soldier “of a different kind,”³⁵³ but even more broadly an “outsider” of a different sort, and it was this fact that could be and was utilized by those opposed to him as a means of intimating or even directly charging that he was incompetent, unworthy of his position, and corrupt. While this, of course, means neither that he was nor that he was not in fact “corrupt,” it was such conceptions as these that contributed more than anything to how Aḥmed Pasha was perceived both in his own day and in subsequent generations. Ḥasan Beyzāde, for instance, had this to say about Etmekçizāde just before recounting how, when he was the deputy grand vizier, his last hopes of achieving the grand vizierate were dashed due to the rumors swirling around him:

As the deputy grand vizier, after a few months of serving in that high vizieral post, Etmekçizāde grew filled with conceit and had no doubt that the grand vizierate and command of the army belonged to him alone, and he entertained no other possibility than this. [So], when he was invited to the consultation [concerning whom to appoint as grand vizier following the dismissal of K̄ara Meḥmed Pasha], and without asking assistance from anyone, he set right off on his way to the imperial pavilion.³⁵⁴

Ḥasan Beyzāde’s own background and career may well have affected this scathing condemnation of Aḥmed Pasha’s shortcomings. His father had served as the head of the chancery, and Ḥasan Beyzade also began his career as a scribe around 1590. In 1605, however, he transferred to the financial branch, and by 1609—when Etmekçizāde, with whom he worked personally, was still serving as the chief treasurer—he had risen as

³⁵³ Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*, 16.

³⁵⁴ “Etmekci-zāde, k̄a’im-makām olup, bir kaç aydan berü, ol sadrda, istihdâm olunmağla, kendüye gurûr-ı tâmm gelüp, sadâret-i uzmâ ve serdârlık, kendüye münhasır olmasında iştibâh eylemeyüp, tahallûf ihtimâli kalbine râh bulmamış idi. Müşâvereye da’vet olındukda, kimseden isti’ânet eylemedin, mağrûrâne, Kasr-ı âlî-şân’a müteveccih ü revâne oldu.” Ḥasan Beyzāde, *Târîh*, Vol. 3, 889.

high as the rank of finance director for the Anatolian provinces, though he was demoted to finance director of the Danubian provinces within a year.³⁵⁵ Unlike Etmekçizāde, then, Ḥasan Beyzāde had taken the largely “traditional” path into the financial branch, by way of the empire’s scribal institutions. Moreover, he appears to have experienced friction with the later chief treasurer ‘Abdu’l-bāḳī Pasha—who was a companion of Etmekçizāde from Edirne and who, like him, had moved directly from the army into the empire’s financial branch—as he appears to have had no post during ‘Abdu’l-bāḳī’s terms or indeed for many years afterwards.³⁵⁶ Thus, even though Ḥasan Beyzāde may not have had any personal ax to grind with Etmekçizāde Aḥmed, he *was* a personal witness from the inside of how the financial branch was transforming and expanding, and so when he started to write his chronicle in the late 1620s, he wrote it as someone with a stake in the matter.

Kâtib Çelebi adopts a rather more complex stance toward Aḥmed Pasha’s character. Just prior to recounting an anecdote from the time when Aḥmed was still enrolled as a *sipāhī* in Edirne, he offers the following brief summation of Aḥmed’s career:

While the aforementioned Aḥmed Pasha was a *sipāhī* enrolled in Edirne, he became known among his friends for his munificence and generosity, [but] later he began to grow extremely prosperous. Owing to his great good fortune, his mortal enemies

³⁵⁵ For fuller accounts of Ḥasan Beyzāde’s background, life, and career, see Ḥasan Beyzāde Aḥmed Pasha, *Hasan Bey-zāde Târihi: Tahlil, Kaynak Tenkidi*, Vol. 1, ed. Şevki Nezihi Aykut (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 2004), XXV–XLVI and Ş. Nezihi Aykut, “Ḥasan Beyzāde Aḥmed Paşa,” *Historians of the Ottoman Empire*, <http://www.ottomanhistorians.uchicago.edu>, ed. Cemal Kafadar, Hakan Karateke, and Cornell Fleischer. <https://ottomanhistorians.uchicago.edu/sites/ottomanhistorians.uchicago.edu/files/hasanbeyzade.pdf>.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

Mezbele Turpu Mahmūd Pasha, Burhān Efendi,³⁵⁷ Naşūh Pasha, and others fell unfortunate, and he was [thus] free to stand out as a treasurer for many years.³⁵⁸

Though Kâtib Çelebi here mentions Aḥmed's "munificence and generosity" (*kerem ü sehā*), he also carefully qualifies this statement by limiting it to his youth and the circle of his friends; indeed, the anecdote that follows this passage could be read as providing an example of this, inasmuch as it recounts how the young *sipāhī* Aḥmed would send snacks to and pay for the wine of a poor dervish who frequented the same Edirne tavern as him and his friends, and who in return supposedly used his spiritual powers to grant this group of young *sipāhīs*' wishes.³⁵⁹

Following this anecdote, however, Kâtib Çelebi immediately appends the following assessment of Aḥmed Pasha's character: "His custom was to cringe before those he feared and try to entice them through abundant gifts while not even glancing at those below him in station but rather toying with, mocking, and insulting [them]."³⁶⁰ Here, then, in connection with his comments on Aḥmed Pasha's youth, Kâtib Çelebi paints a brief yet pointed picture of a once somewhat generous man who became a sycophant and, after having risen to a certain station, put on airs, grew avaricious, and lost what generosity he had had. In fact, this particular assessment is followed by Kâtib Çelebi's account, first, of the genesis of the enmity between Aḥmed Pasha and the future grand

³⁵⁷ Mezbele Turpu Mahmūd Pasha came up through a career in the financial branch to serve briefly as chief treasurer in 1595–1596, while Burhān Efendi is the aforementioned Burhāne'd-dīn, who had also begun in the financial branch and served two terms as chief treasurer, the first in 1585–1586 and the second—which coincided with his appointment as a vizier—in 1599–1600.

³⁵⁸ "Mezbûr Ahmed Paşa Edirneli bir sipâhî iken yârânı beyninde kerem vü sehâ ile iştiḥâr bulup ba'dehû dünyâ ana musahhar olmuşıdı. Kuvvet-i baht u tâlî' ile kendüye hasm-ı cân olan Mezbele Turpu Mahmud Paşa ve Burhan Efendi ve Nasuh Paşa ve gayrı ser-nigûn olup bu denli yıl istiklâl üzre defterdârlıkda teferrüd itmişıdı." Kâtib Çelebi, "Fezleke," 566.

³⁵⁹ This anecdote is summarized and analyzed in Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*, 14–17.

³⁶⁰ "Âdeti korkduğuna kılınmak ve ihsân-ı firâvân ile teshîr eylemek ve aşâğı hâl erbâbına bakmayup belki istihzâ vü tahkîr ile mezelenmek idi." Kâtib Çelebi, "Fezleke," 567.

vizier Murād Pasha, when Aḥmed had refused to provide financial assistance to Murād when the latter was the governor of Diyarbekir; and second, of the time when Murād, as grand vizier, had attempted to have the chief treasurer killed in Üsküdar. Thereby, and in line with his own particular style, Kâtib Çelebi indirectly and rather subtly depicts Aḥmed Pasha as someone who grew corrupted by wealth and power the more he gained and the higher he rose.

Even the chronicler İbrāhīm Peçevî—who earlier in his career had received support from Aḥmed Pasha in being granted the position of clerk responsible for three provincial districts (*sancağ*) in Greece³⁶¹—later evinced a degree of reservation about the chief treasurer despite the assistance he had once received from him. Regarding the time in 1616 when Aḥmed Pasha’s designs on the grand vizierate were thwarted, he directly addresses some of the rumors swirling around the pasha: “And apparently one of his retainers even killed someone; he [*i.e.*, the retainer] was beheaded before the imperial council. And Etmekçizāde got those who made allegations against him and claimed to have given him bribes to withdraw their claims.”³⁶² Though Peçevî’s statements here still evidence a degree of support, even admiration, for his one-time benefactor, the rumors have clearly had some effect on his view of the pasha.

Overall, the picture that emerges of Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha from an analysis of contemporary records is of a rather polarizing figure whose rise to immense personal

³⁶¹ Peçevî, “Peçevî Tarihi: 284–317,” 66.

³⁶² “Ve gālibā kendü mensübâtından bir kimesne katl daḥı itmiş idi. Divān-ı hümāyūnda boynın urdurdı. Ve İtmekçi-zāde’nün kendüsinden daḥı ba’z ḥaqq-ı da’vā idenlere ve rüşvet virdüm diyenlere cümle ḥaqqların redd itdürdi.” *Ibid.*, 122.

wealth and to power—indeed, almost to the grand vizierate—from humble military-cum-commercial origins made him something of a lightning rod for criticisms, both implicit and explicit, of the growing importance of capital for getting into and maintaining positions of power and influence.³⁶³ In this regard, Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall’s overall assessment of Aḥmed Pasha’s career might serve as a succinct summary, based as it is on the consultation of a wide variety of contemporary sources and given that it seems to be trying to encompass all sides of the issue:

Although he never achieved his greatest ambition, the grand vizierate, [Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha] steered his ship safely round the cliffs of hatred and the persecution of such powerful and bloodthirsty grand viziers as İbrāhīm, Murād, and Naşūḥ. He was a man of finance, and therefore, came up against the grand vizier’s enmity—due either to how indispensable his services were or to the sultan’s protection, which he purchased with great sums [of money].³⁶⁴

On the one hand are Aḥmed Pasha’s indispensable services (*die Unentbehrlichkeit seiner Dienste*), pointing out his apparent talent in dealing with state financial matters, the result of precisely his origins in a commercial environment. On the other hand, though, is “the sultan’s protection” (*der Sultans Schutz*) purchased, as the rumors had it, with wealth—the very ability to collect which, whether licitly or illicitly or both, was also a function of his commercial background.

³⁶³ For an overview of the formation and accumulation of (economic) capital in the Ottoman context through the 17th century, see Halil İnalçık, “Capital Formation in the Ottoman Empire,” *The Journal of Economic History* 29, no. 1 (March 1969): 97–140.

³⁶⁴ “Wiewohl er nie das höchste Ziel seines Ehrgeitzes, die Grosswesirstelle, erreicht, so steuerte er doch seinen Kahn durch die Klippen des Hasses und der Versolgung so vieler mächtiger und blutdürstiger Grosswesire, als Ibrahim, Murad und Nassuh, glücklich hindurch. Er war der Mann der Finanzen, und daher wider der Grosswesire Feindschaft entweder durch die Unentbehrlichkeit seiner Dienste, oder durch des Sultans Schutz, den er mit grossen Summen erkaufte, geseht.” Joseph von Hammer, *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches*, Vol. 4 (Pest: C.A. Hartleben’s Verlage, 1829), 510.

There were certainly some who vocally supported Aḥmed Pasha, even if only in the hopes of some variety of *quid pro quo*. İbrāhīm Peçevī was one, as were, for example, the poets Veysī (1561–1628) and ‘Abdu’l-ġanīzāde Meḥmed (Nādirī) Efendi (1572–1626), both of whom wrote poems in praise of the chief treasurer³⁶⁵—and who, likely not coincidentally, were both inveterate opponents of Nef‘ī. For the most part, however, the judgment of contemporaries was one of, at the least, suspicion regarding his accumulation of personal wealth and, at the most, outright hostility owing not only to his wealth, but also to his origins and his power. As the following section will detail, Nef‘ī was firmly in the latter camp.

3.3 Nef‘ī’s invectives against Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha

When Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha was initially appointed chief treasurer in 1606, soon to be followed by Murād Pasha’s appointment as grand vizier in December of the same year, Nef‘ī was serving as comptroller of mines. As already mentioned, this meant that Nef‘ī was not only serving in the Ottoman financial branch, but was indeed directly subordinate to Aḥmed Pasha in the hierarchy. Nef‘ī continued to serve as comptroller of mines until at least late 1609, when a certain Mıkrās Efendi is listed as occupying the post.³⁶⁶ Why Nef‘ī lost the post and what other post, if any, he was appointed (or demoted) to at this time remains uncertain, as does whether or not Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha was in any way directly or indirectly involved in his removal.

³⁶⁵ See Pakalın, *Maliye Teşkilâtı Tarihi*, 244–245 and ‘Abdu’l-ġanīzāde Meḥmed (Nādirī) Efendi, “Ġanīzāde Nādirī: Hayâtı, Edebî Kişiliği, Eserler, Dīvânı ve Şeh-nâmesinin Tenkidli Metni,” ed. Numan Külekçi (Ph.D. dissertation, Atatürk University, 1985), 296.

³⁶⁶ ‘Abdu’l-kâdir Efendi, *Tarih*, Vol. 1, 377.

What is clear, however, is that it was at around or sometime after this time that Nef'ī wrote an extended invective of 66 distichs in six stanzas in the *terkīb-i bend* form explicitly targeting the chief treasurer.³⁶⁷ This poem is structured as a comprehensive takedown of Aḥmed Pasha, and as such touches on nearly all of the elements that were considered, at least by some, to be controversial about the chief treasurer and his rise to power.

The invective's first stanza serves as an introduction that situates Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha within both a cosmic *and* a personal context. The opening distich presents Aḥmed Pasha's presence in high office as a disturbance of order with potentially catastrophic consequences: "what revolution, what agitation, what fate is this! | if this goes on, the heavens and earth will be leveled."³⁶⁸ The words "revolution" (*gerdiş*), "agitation" (*cünbüş*), and "fate" (*devrān*) in the first hemistich are all terms used in astronomy and astrology to refer to the motions of the stars and planets through the sky, signifying change and transition from one time or era to another. While this does not of necessity indicate change for the worse, the second hemistich makes it clear that Nef'ī is presenting this change as one with negative apocalyptic import.

³⁶⁷ While the dating of most invectives is just as difficult, if not more so, than the dating of panegyrics, in this case the date of composition can be determined with some precision owing to the hemistich, "Praise God, this year that accursed one did not go on campaign" (*minnet Allāh'a bu yıl gitmedi mel'un sefere*; ULLWCO 662, 5a), which refers quite clearly to the incident discussed above where, in the spring of 1609, the grand vizier Murād Pasha summoned Aḥmed Pasha to serve as military treasurer on the upcoming campaign, planning but failing to have him assassinated, upon which 'Abdu'l-bāḳī was appointed military treasurer instead. Judging from the content of the invective, it seems as though Nef'ī was unaware of the details of what had transpired, which further suggests that he had not yet begun to cultivate relations with Murād Pasha, though he would soon do so through the composition of panegyrics to the grand vizier.

³⁶⁸ "bu ne gerdiş bu ne cünbüş bu ne devrān olsun | böyle ƣalursa felek ħāk ile yeksān olsun"; ULLWCO 662, 4a.

The poem's second distich, on the other hand, adopts a more limited scale, accusing the pasha of offending the sensibilities of the so-called "people of the heart" (*ehl-i dil*), a term commonly used to refer to poets, littérateurs, and in general to the Ottoman cultural elite: "if he thus ruins the esteem of the people of the heart | may he collapse from his foundations and be himself ruined."³⁶⁹ This intimates that Aḥmed Pasha has, at least, failed to live up to the traditional cultural duty of wealthy officials by patronizing poets like Nef'ī, and at worst has actively offended them somehow. That the latter is more likely the case is indicated by the stanza's final three distichs, where Nef'ī openly states that he has been oppressed by Aḥmed Pasha and is composing this invective in order to avenge himself:

for the wrong he has done me alone, I ask God | to bring lack to his life and his prosperity || if with invective I do not avenge myself on him | may the name of poet be wholly forbidden me || I shall draw the sword of my tongue and split his visage | I shall make his enemies joyous and his friends dejected³⁷⁰

This, as mentioned above, suggests that the poem was composed sometime after Nef'ī's dismissal from his post in 1609, and that this dismissal was either Aḥmed Pasha's doing or perceived as such by the poet.³⁷¹ These lines also implicitly draw a contrast between the pasha and the poet in that the former has already been presented as neglecting or abusing his power and duties by failing to become a patron, while the latter is here

³⁶⁹ "ḥāṭır-ı ehl-i dili ol nice eylerse ḥarāb | temelinden yıkılup ol daḥı vīrān olsun"; *ibid.*

³⁷⁰ "yalnız baḡa olan zulmini Ḥaḳḳ'dan dilerim | 'ömrine devletine bā' iṣ-i noḳṣān olsun || intiḳāmı [*sic*] almaz isem hicv ile ben de andan | ṣā'iriyyet baḡa her vech ile bühtān olsun || zühresi[n] tīḡ-i zebānımla çeküp çāk ideyin | düşmeni ṣād u eḥibbāsımı ḡam-nāk ideyin"; *ibid.*, 4b.

³⁷¹ It is also quite possible that this long invective was composed, or circulated, during the period in the winter of 1613/14 when Sultan Aḥmed I's court relocated to Edirne and, as detailed in the previous section, there was a concentrated effort to have the chief treasurer removed from office.

shown to be actually fulfilling a personal and/or poetic duty by refusing to take the supposed injustice done against him lying down.

Following the introductory stanza that thus establishes the gravity of the issue at hand as well as the poet's own reason for composing the invective, the rest of the poem proceeds to dismantle the chief treasurer's reputation by focusing on four particular areas:

- 1) Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha's corruption
- 2) His lack of education and culture
- 3) His association with disreputable and ignorant people
- 4) His unpleasant physical appearance

Aḥmed Pasha's corruption is detailed primarily in the poem's second stanza, which begins with an announcement of how the poem will proceed: "let me begin to describe that unscrupulous tyrant | that you may see how blameworthy a man he is || first I shall speak of his inauspiciousness | though it is already well known throughout the world."³⁷² While the second distich's evocation of "inauspiciousness" (*şumluk*) serves to connect it tenuously back to the cosmic aspects outlined in the poem's first stanza, what follows makes very clear that what is presented as "inauspiciousness" is, in fact, entirely a result of the pasha's own wrongdoings:

for all those years he was out on campaign | would anything go right for the
commanding pasha sent there? || he would get close to every commander on the front
| and then cause his death and devour his goods || the soldiers on the front saw nothing

³⁷² "başlayam vaşfına ol zālīm-i bī-pervānıñ | böyle mezmūmı olur mı görinüz insānıñ || evvelā şumlığından ideyin baḥşi biraz | gerçi ma'lūmıdır ol gösgötürü dünyānıñ"; *ibid.*

of their salaries | and the goods coming to the sultan were always few || in the end,
that unfortunate man's inauspiciousness | proved the cause of the enemy's victories³⁷³

These lines, made in reference to Aḥmed Pasha's decade serving as the military treasurer during the Long War, evince a high degree of familiarity not only with the trajectory of the pasha's rise to the position of chief treasurer, but also with some of the events that befell him during the war and the complaints that arose against him during that time, particularly the time in 1598 when poorly provisioned janissaries rose up against the commander-in-chief as well as Aḥmed Pasha, who was military treasurer at the time, and raided the tents of both men.

Having thus imputed Aḥmed Pasha's corruption, Nef'ī moves on to the matter of consequences, stating that these transgressions present sufficient cause for the sultan to have him executed: "if the injustice and oppression he has inflicted on the state and faith | were known by the honored Aḥmed Khan || it is my conviction that he would not hesitate an instant | to kill that dog of the devil."³⁷⁴ This raises the issue of how much Sultan Aḥmed knew of the rumors being imputed to Etmekçizāde, who was after all one of the sultan's most favored ministers at the time. On the one hand, he may well have known, but either discounted the rumors or saw them as not enough to outweigh the treasurer's benefits as a talented administrator. On the other hand, if he did not know—which is what Nef'ī implies here—then this poem itself might be considered a part of the efforts to disseminate the rumor of the chief treasurer's corruption. Moreover, if the

³⁷³ "bunca yıllar ki seferde idi serdār [evvel] | hiç işi rāst gelür miydi varan paşanın || kankı serdāra qarīn oldıysa serḥadde | yēdi başını bütün mālī ile hep anı || görmez olmışdı mevācib yüzün ehl-i serḥadd | hep kem olurdu varan mālī şeh-i devrānı || ḥāşılı her yıl uğursızlığı ol bed-baḥtın | bā' iş olurdu zafer bulmasına a' dānı"; *ibid.*

³⁷⁴ "devlet [ü] dīne bunı etdüğü ğadr [u] ḥayfı | olsa ma'lūm-ı şerīfi eğer Aḥmed Ḥan'ın || i'tikādım bu ki bir dem kımayup dünyāda | öldürüp ol köpeği şırdı bütün şeytānı"; *ibid.*, 5a.

poem was composed or partly circulated, whether in written or oral form, during the winter spent at Edirne in 1613/1614—when, it will be recalled, Aḥmed Pasha’s removal from his post was effected—then it is likely to have served as an active element in what was basically the smear campaign being mounted against the chief treasurer at that time.

Apart from the extended accusation of corruption laid out in the second stanza, Nefī’s invective also strategically scatters throughout the poem other distichs on the same issue. Within the context of a long poem such as this one, this was likely done, at least in part, for the purposes of retention and hence, potentially, a wider oral distribution and a more effective feeding of the rumor mill. Any image or claim that was particularly striking or extreme would be more likely to be retained or spread, much like the tall tales recounted by Evliyā Çelebi to a group of companions in Aleppo: the bigger and bolder, in a sense, the better.³⁷⁵ Yet in the case of verse, brevity was especially key: much of Ottoman poetry was orally recalled and retained in terms of particularly strong or striking and yet concise couplets or distichs, as evidenced by how poets’ work was anthologized in biographical encyclopedias of poets, with their concentration—even in the case of the relatively short ghazal form—on recording at most two or three distichs from individual poems. Thus, for example, apparently in reference to those occasions several years earlier when Aḥmed Pasha had gone out into Rumelia for the purpose of gathering funds for the army, Nefī succinctly alleges, “if he goes to collect funds, he oppresses, and when he comes [back] it’s with a treasure | no one knows the coercion the poor were

³⁷⁵ See Michael D. Sheridan, “The ‘Lies’ of Courtiers: A Performative Analysis of the Aleppan Tall Tales in Evliya Çelebi’s Book of Travels,” *Milli Folklor* 92 (Winter 2011): 86–94.

subjected to.”³⁷⁶ Even more telling, just as the second stanza raised the question of how much Sultan Aḥmed knew of Etmekçizāde’s supposed corruption, two distichs in the fourth stanza broach the issue of how the chief treasurer managed to rise so steadily up to his position in spite of his corruption and oppression: “his steady advancement is quite the mystery | when everyone in the world knows of his injustice and cruelty || what lies behind his stability [in his post] | when the state today lies in need of advance money?”³⁷⁷ The last hemistich here might be read as an implicit call for confiscation of the chief treasurer’s wealth. Finally, in relation to Aḥmed Pasha’s corruption in the sense of siphoning off goods and money for himself, he is also depicted as directly lying to the imperial council about this matter: “when he came to the council with a stool [to sit on] and report | the viziers all thought some storyteller had come to the square || that pimp really had a screw loose | the legend he told was more than just a story.”³⁷⁸

Nef’ī’s accusations of corruption on the part of Aḥmed Pasha are repeated in other invectives apart from his long *terkīb-i bend* as well. One of his quatrains (*kıt‘a*), for instance, reads:

did the baker [*i.e.*, Etmekçizāde] put caches to fill | here and there in the cellar, doors,
and ceiling of his house? || if they don’t believe it, let me carry out the inspection | I’ll
find a treasure trove in his wife’s cunt³⁷⁹

³⁷⁶ “çıkısa taḥṣīle [y]ıkar gelse ḥazīneyle gelür | kimse bilmez fuḳarā çekdüğü zorı ne idi”; ULLWCO 662, 5a.

³⁷⁷ “bu ne sırdır ki dükenmez bunıñ istidrācı | zılm ü bī-dādı cihān ḥalkına hep şāmil iken || bu ḳadar bunda ḳarār eylemeniñ vechi nedir | devlet-i devr ü zamān devlet-i müsta‘cil iken”; *ibid.*, 5b.

³⁷⁸ “varıcak ‘arz için iskemli ile [dīvān]a | ḳıṣṣa-ḥ[ā]n geldi şanurdı vüzerā meydāna || gidiniñ bir çıbığı eksik idi elde hemān | ḳıṣṣadan artuḳ idi söyledüğü efsāne”; *ibid.*, 6a. The stool is mentioned to provide a sense of Aḥmed Pasha as a public storyteller (*i.e.*, a liar).

³⁷⁹ “bir delik mi ḳodı ḥabbāz ki pür eylemeye | cā-be-cā ḥānesiniñ künc [ü] der ü bāmında || baña vērünler inanmazlar ise teftiṣin | bir define bulayın ‘avretiniñ amında”; *ibid.*, 15b.

This—yet another implicit call for confiscation of Aḥmed Pasha’s wealth—follows what is, in many ways, the typical discursive structure of an invective quatrain: the first distich serves as the setup, introducing the target(s) or some aspect thereof, and the second distich delivers the punchline. The brevity and tight structure of quatrains made them by far the most preferred form for invectives: much as in the case of the strategic scattering of distichs through Nef’ī’s long poem as mentioned above, quatrains were relatively easy to recall in full and thus would have been able to spread orally, allowing for better distribution of the rumors (not to mention insults) that they contained. Very often, as in the case above, a quatrain’s “punchline”—*i.e.*, its relatively self-contained second distich—would indeed constitute a real blow, as it often either threatened the target with further invective or even real assault, or verbally transformed the target’s image in the same manner as, but more aggressively than, caricature.³⁸⁰ In either case, however, it was a declaration and verbal enactment of power over the target on the part of the invective’s producer. This quatrain’s first distich, however, constitutes the actual rumor, and it is framed precisely as such: he has reportedly acquired such great wealth through corruption that he is secreting it in specially designed concealed caches in his home. Moreover, Nef’ī’s use of the term “inspection” (*teftīṣ*), although utilized in the context of the violent threat of the last hemistich, still introduces the notion that this is a matter that requires looking into. And finally, the employment not of Etmekçizāde’s

³⁸⁰ While caricature, one of the basic tools of the writer of invective, is often imagined to be simply the exaggeration of certain features of a given target, Kenneth T. Rivers has shown definitively that caricature in fact has more to do with transforming or transmutating a target’s features in such a way as to make him or her an object of ridicule, a process that often may but does not *necessarily* involve exaggeration. See Kenneth T. Rivers, *Transmutations: Understanding Literary and Pictorial Caricature* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1991).

patronymic but rather of the word “baker” (*ḥabbāz*) has a belittling effect, reminding the poem’s audience that, while Aḥmed Pasha may indeed be the chief treasurer, in terms of where he comes from he is fundamentally no more than a mere baker and son of a baker.

These same areas of attack are utilized in another of Nef‘ī’s quatrains against Aḥmed Pasha:

what impertinent favor is this, o vile baker? | you waltzed into viziership when [you were just] a tax collector for Gypsies || now you’ve turned the whole treasury to your own profit | when [you were just] a miserly seller of second-hand goods³⁸¹

Here, Aḥmed Pasha’s origins as a “vile baker” (*ḥabbāz-ı dūn*) is used as ammunition against him, as is his initial commercial career in the marketplace of Edirne, which the quatrain reduces to the phrase “miserly seller of second-hand goods” (*eski püski şatıcı bir cimrī bāzırgān*). Also utilized against the pasha is the rather undistinguished commencement of his official career in the Ottoman state as a collector of taxes from the Roma (*‘āmil-i Çingān*), in which the negative stigma attached to the Roma is in a sense transferred to the target Etmekçizāde.³⁸² All of these elements make it apparent that the circumstances of the chief treasurer’s background were comparatively well known—yet here, the nascent social mobility that they evince is used to denigrate the target’s rise to his position and, specifically, to viziership (*şadr*). On the one hand, this intimates that Aḥmed Pasha’s background makes him unfit for his position and title: he is an outsider (*ecnebī*) and consequently unqualified (*nā-ehl*). On the other hand, the chief treasurer’s

³⁸¹ “bu ne küstāḥāne himmetdir eyā ḥabbāz-ı dūn | bī-tekellūf şadra geçdiñ ‘āmil-i Çingān iken || eylediñ sermāye şimdi beytü’l-mālī hep | eski püski şatıcı bir cimrī bāzırgān iken”; ULLWCO 662, 5b.

³⁸² The abundant use of “Gypsy” (*Çengān, Kıbtī*) as a derogatory epithet in the early 17th-century Ottoman invective corpus will be further explored in Chapter 5, which focuses in part on the invectives written against Nef‘ī.

background is also indirectly linked to the charge of corruption leveled in the quatrain's third line: the structure and discourse of the poem strongly imply that Aḥmed Pasha's imputed misuse of his position for personal profit is a consequence of his low, and unaccustomed, origins.

Returning to Nef'ī's *terkīb-i bend*, this is an issue that is taken up in the third stanza, where the focus moves from complaints of corruption to the even more fundamental matter of claiming that Aḥmed Pasha is neither qualified for nor suited to his position as chief treasurer owing to an ascribed lack of education and culture. Significantly, Nef'ī's argument on this matter advances along highly essentialist lines to depict Aḥmed Pasha as an upstart whose very social background effectively disqualifies him from his post:

what was this pimp's pride in his prosperous state? | what was his joy in ruining everyone's honor? || he had in this world no trace of name or claim to fame | so how'd he just appear like that in one or two days? || his mother's a slave-girl cook, his father a baker | so what could he possibly know of affairs of state?³⁸³

These lines present Etmekçizāde as someone who has effectively bypassed the supposedly customary slow rise through the ranks to power. Furthermore, while the insinuation of such a rapid rise was not necessarily accurate, what is more fundamentally imputed here is that the chief treasurer had a very *different* path to the power and influence of viziership, being a former merchant and *sipāhī* of Muslim rather than *devşirme* origin. With the elevation of the position of chief treasurer to the rank of vizier and the title of “pasha,” the composition of viziership was changed, and the fact that this

³⁸³ “g'idiniñ devletle 'aceb ğurūrı ne idi | herkesiñ 'ırzını yıkdıkça sürūrı ne idi || dehrde zerre kadar nām u nişānı yoğiken | bir iki ğünde gelüp böyle zühūrı ne idi || [...] || anası aşçı kenīzek babası etmekçi | kendünñ devlet umūrında şu'ūrı ne idi”; *ibid.*, 5a.

was ostensibly first effected with someone like Aḥmed Pasha indicated a changed *social* component of viziership as well. Nefī also goes on to reinforce this aspersion by implicitly presenting the pasha’s “lowly” background in terms of his having a deficient education, a claim presented through the sheer materiality—*i.e.*, something akin to Aḥmed Pasha’s *habitus* or embodied cultural capital³⁸⁴—of his supposedly poor handwriting: “and his abominable handwriting resembled his own features | whatever he wrote on his own was full of flaws in spelling.”³⁸⁵ These lines also, however, buttress another aspect of Nefī’s attack by pointing out the chief treasurer’s sheer physical ugliness, a prominent aspect of the poem that will be explored further below.

In connection with Nefī’s ascription to Aḥmed Pasha of a lack of education and culture, there is also criticism of the pasha’s apparently grand ambitions, which are implicitly presented as being misplaced owing to Nefī’s overall discourse and manner of attack. These ambitions are most fully detailed in the poem’s fourth stanza, whose first two distichs again introduce the matter of how the pasha’s common origins, ignorance, inappropriate companions, and ugliness make him unfit for office: “a common nobody and enemy to the people of the heart (*ehl-i dil*) | a dog lying beside those rushing about in vain and ignorant to boot || all who see his filthy face revile him | so loathsome and

³⁸⁴ Bourdieu himself likens the particularities of an individual’s handwriting to his or her *habitus*; see Pierre Bourdieu, *La noblesse d’état: Grandes écoles et esprit de corps* (Paris: Les éditions de minuit, 1989), 387. In this, he may have been prompted by a similar analogy made by Norbert Elias, whose own concept of *habitus* had an influence on Bourdieu’s articulation of this notion; see Norbert Elias, *The Society of Individuals*, ed. Michael Schröter and trans. Edmund Jephcott (New York and London: Continuum, 1991), 182. In an admittedly entirely different genre, mode, and context, not to mention with wholly different ends, Nefī does much the same here.

³⁸⁵ “ḥaṭṭ-ı müstekrehi de şekline beñzerdi hemân | yazsa başdan başa imlâda kuşûrı ne idi”; ULLWCO 662, 5a.

incapable is he.”³⁸⁶ From here, Nef‘ī goes on to outline the apparent rumors that Aḥmed Pasha had his sights set on obtaining the grand vizierate:

so let the sultan’s treasurer come to the grand vizierate | when he was [just] a
disgraced collector of revenues from the Gypsies || such is destiny’s custom, to drag
up | to the grand vizierate many vile men content with their place || of course more
such tyrants will be seen | who draw a veil to block [their view of] the smoke from
the sighs of the poor || with all his success he himself will no longer fit in Istanbul |
though his father was a wandering beggar in the city of Edirne³⁸⁷

Although, as outlined above, the chronicle of Ḥasan Beyzāde points out that Aḥmed Pasha had developed designs on the grand vizierate by 1615, while serving as the deputy grand vizier, Nef‘ī’s poem—which was composed sometime between 1609 and 1613—reveals that either these designs had in fact emerged several years earlier, or that there was a desire to create and spread the rumor that he had designs on the post. Given the enmity between Aḥmed Pasha and the grand vizier at the time, Murād Pasha, both possibilities appear equally likely, and in any case neither possibility renders the other impossible. In fact, considering how around this time Nef‘ī produced two panegyrics in praise of Murād Pasha—one of them specifically praising him for his actions against the Celālī rebels,³⁸⁸ which as related above protected him in the sultan’s estimation against the machinations of Aḥmed Pasha and the chief black eunuch—it is not unreasonable to suspect that Nef‘ī was hoping to shore up his own position by building relations with the

³⁸⁶ “ehl-i dil[e] düşmen bir mübtezel-i bâtil iken | yeler oñmazlara hem-sāye köpek cāhil iken || her gören çehre-i murdārını şetm eyler iken | ya nī şol mertebe müstekreh-i nā-ķābil iken”; *ibid.*, 5b.

³⁸⁷ “pādişāhıñ gele şadra ola defterdārı | Kıbtıyān mültezimi nikbeti bir ‘āmil iken || feleğıñ ‘ādetidir bir nice böyle dūnı | şadr-ı a lāya çeker ol yērine ķā’ il iken || böyl[e] bir zālīmı elbette görür gözi yine | dūd-ı āh-ı [fuķarā] perde çeküp hā’ il iken || kendi İslāmbol’a şimdi şıgmaz devletle | babası Edirne şehrinde gezer sā’ il iken”; *ibid.*

³⁸⁸ “Iskandar built a wall to repel Ya’jūj, but you | shattered myriad walls and drove the enemy from the land || [...] || you drove out the bandits and restored order to Anatolia | you brought tumult and turmoil to the land of Persia” (*Sikender def’-i ye’cūc etmeğē sedd yaptı ammā sen | bozup bir niçe seddi memleketden sürdüñ a dāyı* || [...] || *çıkarduñ eşkıyāyı mülk-i Rūm’a vērduñ āsāyiş | düşürdüñ kişver-i Īrān-zemīne şūr* [u] *gavğāyı*); Nef‘ī, [*Dīvān*], 64.

grand vizier via striking out against the latter's rival. In effect, then, this long invective by Nefī can be viewed as part of a smear campaign, whether planned or not, that was launched against the chief treasurer.

This is precisely why the discourse with which Nefī chose to attack Aḥmed Pasha is so significant: if it be assumed, as it must, that the ultimate audience for this invective and its accusations was the sultan, the only one capable of directly putting a stop to Etmekçizāde's rise by nonviolent means, then it provides insight not simply into Nefī's views concerning the sort of social mobility that allowed him to advance to the post of chief treasurer (if indeed it tells us anything of those views at all, given that public-oriented slander like this may well involve adopting an outraged satiric persona), but more importantly into the variety of claims that could reasonably be used to indicate a given figure's unfitness for a given post in the eyes of, at least, the Ottoman administrative elite. Here, Aḥmed Pasha's unfitness for the position of chief treasurer, not to mention that of grand vizier, is specifically framed both in terms of his pride and corruption ("with all his success [*i.e.*, ill-gotten gains] he himself will no longer fit in Istanbul") and his oppression of the sultan's subjects ("draw[ing] a veil to block the smoke from the sighs of the poor"), *and* in terms of his own undistinguished background as "a disgraced collector of revenues from the Gypsies" and the offspring of an ostensibly poor commoner (who was, of course, not in fact a commoner but a *sipāhī*). The implication is, at the least, that such social mobility is tolerable only in conjunction with proven talents (*i.e.*, the aforementioned problem of the spread of the unqualified or *nā-ehl*) and at the most—which is what Nefī's discourse and argumentation point

toward, even setting rhetorical issues aside—that such a broad range of social mobility from low-ranking *sipāhī* to, potentially, grand vizier represents a danger for the maintenance of the state.

Social mobility, or at least the perception and/or presentation thereof, was also one of the key issues animating the contemporary advice literature.³⁸⁹ Prompted by the gradual changes occurring in the Ottoman elite military-administrative class under the pressures of the time—changes that were interpreted as a fracturing indicative of “decline”—this literature approached the matter of social mobility by means of an insistent discourse of otherization. Moreover, it is a discourse shot through with a palpable resentment about the consequences of social mobility of various kinds, which—as the authors of this literature framed it—was creating “others” within the ranks and circles of the administrative, military, and even cultural elite. Though presented as a threat to the established Ottoman order and even the empire’s integrity and continuance, these others were in fact above all a threat to the positions and aspirations of the advice literature authors.

Frequently, the social mobility decried by the authors of the advice literature was framed in terms of the idea of mixture. For instance, in his 1581 *Nuṣḥatü’s-selāṭīn* (Counsel for Sultans), Nef’ī’s mentor Muṣṭafā ‘Ālī compared the process to the dessert of mixed grains, fruit, and nuts called *‘aṣūre* (sometimes called “Noah’s pudding” in English):

The intrusion of the various classes into the different careers, and the permissiveness and accom[m]odating attitude of the highly-esteemed vezirs for these developments cause a complete disintegration and a dispersal of the people. It unfailingly has the

³⁸⁹ For a good overview of this literature, see Öz, *Kanun-ı Kadimin Peşinde*.

effect that the food on the tables of government must become mixed up like the dish called *'ashūrā* and the nourishment of the tribes of perfect living becomes—God forbid!—disgusting like vomited matter and utterly confused.³⁹⁰

Muṣṭafā 'Ālī directly posits this social and professional “mixture” (*iḥtilāt*, here translated as “intrusion”) as a cause of disturbance and disorder (*iḥtilāl*, here translated as “disintegration”) in the empire’s social fabric. Moving between career paths in the hopes of earning money is thus a mixture that, as he goes on to elaborate, corrodes the system from within. The specific example he chooses is moving from a judicial career to the more lucrative financial one by accepting bribes that could be used to buy a position as a director of finance (*māl defterdārī*) by “lay[ing] down the money they have [thus] brought together through extortion and exaction.”³⁹¹ Thus, in Muṣṭafā 'Ālī’s conception, there was a degree of competition, if not outright rivalry, between the Ottoman religiojudicial and financial branches, just as there was between the administrative and financial branches, as mentioned above. The problem, as conceptualized at the time, seems to have been laid at the feet of the rising power and influence of the financial branch, which was in effect an “upstart” field within the Ottoman administrative apparatus that was framed as a drain on the other branches. Significantly, at the time he wrote the *Nuṣḥatü 's-selāṭīn*, Muṣṭafā 'Ālī had not only just begun to serve in the

³⁹⁰ Muṣṭafā 'Ālī, *Counsel for Sultans*, 66, 163: “[E]cnās-ı muhtelifenüñ ṭuruḡ-ı mütenevvi‘eye iḥtilāṭı ve vüzerā’-i ma‘ālī-miḡdāruñ bu maḡüle umūra ruḡṣat u inbisāṭı iḥtilāl-ı tām̄ma ve infiṣāl-ı enāma bā‘iṣ olup ni‘met-i simāṭ-ı devlet ‘āṣūrā aṣı gibi maḡluṭ olmaḡ ve ‘iṣret-i ‘aṣāyir-i mükemmel-ma‘iṣet ḡāṣā ḡusındı gibi müstekreh olup ḡariṣ murıṣ bulunmaḡ bi‘z-zarūreti lāzım gelür.” Translation by Andreas Tietze. Please note that Tietze’s transcription of Muṣṭafā 'Ālī’s text has been slightly adjusted to accord with the style used in this volume.

³⁹¹ “[H]uṣūṣā cevr ü ta‘addī ile ferāhem eṭdükleri derāhimi vērüp”; *ibid.*, 66, 164.

financial branch himself, but had also begun to experience the first of the setbacks and disappointments that would go on to plague much of the rest of his career.³⁹²

A similar claim regarding money-driven social mobility was put forth in the anonymous *Kitāb-ı müstetāb* (The Agreeable Book), which was likely composed around the year 1620 and presented to Sultan ‘Osmān II.³⁹³ The author—who was probably of *devşirme* origin and educated in the palace—details the ways in which the grand vizier’s annual departure from Istanbul on campaign results, due to the relative vacuum of strict control, in a veritable orgy of buying and selling revenue administrative and military positions:

Ever since the campaigns against Persia conducted in the happy time of Sultan Murad Khan [III, r. 1574–95], on the very day when the commander-in-chief crosses over to Üsküdar [for a campaign in the east] or goes out through the Edirne gate for a campaign in Rumelia, the provincial governors and district governors and other such office holders immediately begin taking bribes, that curse brought down on the world, to make transfers and reassignments and dismissals and new appointments, and so many revenue positions—such as butlers, miscellaneous officers, heralds, cavalry posts (*sipāhīlik*), wardens, artillerymen, waggoners, and armorers—are distributed and so many advancements made that it is not clear who has bestowed them and who has bought and sold them. It is such a busy buying and selling and back-and-forth exchange that it is impossible to fully describe. As a result, by the time the commander-in-chief returns from campaign, so many revenues and offices have been bought and sold that the public treasury lies in ruins. From among the subjects, Turks and Kurds and Gypsies and *Ṭat*³⁹⁴ and Persians and, in sum, anyone who wants can come right up, whether it be on campaign or in the capital, and use *aķçes* to obtain a

³⁹² For the definitive account of this time in Muṣṭafā ‘Ālī’s life and an appreciation of the *Nuṣḥatü’s-selāṭīn* as a groundbreaking work of Ottoman advice literature, see Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, 90–108.

³⁹³ For an introduction to the *Kitāb-ı müstetāb*, see Yaşar Yücel, ed., *Osmanlı Devlet Teşkilâtına Dair Kaynaklar: Kitāb-ı Müstetāb, Kitabu Mesālihi’l Müslimīn ve Menāfi’i’l-Mü’minīn, Hurzü’l-Mülūk* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1988), XIX–XXIII.

³⁹⁴ It is difficult to identify the precise referent of the term *Ṭat*, which originally meant “non-Turk” but soon assumed the primary meaning of “Persian” in a largely derogative sense. It seems unlikely to refer strictly to Persians here owing to the simultaneous use of the term *A’cām*. It could be meant to refer to people of Persian/Iranian extraction resident in Ottoman Anatolia, though given the suspicion that was typically laid on such people *Ḳızılbaş* might be the more expected term were this the case. Ultimately, it seems likely that *Ṭat* is here being used either as a paired tandem with *A’cām*, or that it is meant as a sort of catch-all phrase for outsiders similar to the term’s original meaning. For more on the term, see C.E. Bosworth, “Tat,” *EF*, Vol. 10, 368–369.

revenue position. In this manner, outsiders have mixed with the slaves of the Porte and brought turmoil and chaos.³⁹⁵

Here, as in Muştafâ 'Ālî, bribery is presented as opening the floodgates to a “mixing” (*karışmak*); that is, to an influx of, especially, non-*kul* individuals into governmental positions. One significant difference, however, lies in the author’s emphasis not on switching career branches *per se*, but rather on the social mixing to which this “busy buying and selling and back-and-forth exchange” (*bir alış-veriş ve bir alım-şatım*) leads. The military and administrative branch that is under discussion here was once supposedly the nearly exclusive purview of *kuls* of *devşirme* origin, like the author himself, who due to the process of their “collection,” education, and training were ideally considered to be more loyal to the state than to any familial or regional ties.³⁹⁶ Now, however, the ability to potentially purchase one’s way into the elite military and administrative class (as, indeed, Etmekçizâde Aḥmed Pasha did) means that this class is open via the free flow of money to Muslims and others—here initially termed “tax-paying subjects” (*re 'āyā*)—who had not typically been members of this branch of the government. Corruption thus leads to what is effectively an actual contamination of the

³⁹⁵ “Sultân Murâd Hân hazretlerinin zamân-i sa'âdetlerinde vâki' Acem seferlerinin ibtidâsından bu âna gelince serdâr olanlar hemân Üsküdâr'a geçtikleri gün veyâhûd Rûm-ili seferi ise Edirne-kapusundan taşra çıktıkları günden hemân beğlerbeğleri ve sancak beğlerini ve sâ'ir mansıb nâmında olanları âleme belâ nâzil olan rüşvet sebebiyle tebdil ve tagyîr ve azl ve nasb itmeye mübâşeret iderler ve sâ'ir dirlikler hûd meselâ çâşnîgîrlik ve müteferrika ve çavuş ve sipâhîlikler ve kapucu ve topçu ve arabacı ve cebeci dirlikleri virmek ve terakkîler virilmek gibi ne viren bellü ve ne alan ve ne satan bellü, hemân bir alış veriş ve bir alım satım idinmişlerdir ki ta'bir ü tahrîri mümkün değüldür. El-hâsıl bir serdâr sefere varub gelinceye değîn dirlikler ve mansıblar bu vechile alınmak ve satılmak ile beytü'l-mâl-ı müslimîn berbâd olub ve re'âyâ olanlardan Etrâk ve Ekrâd ve Çingâne ve Tât ve A'câm el-hâsıl her isteyen ilâ'l-ân varub eğer seferlerde ve eğer Âsitânede akça ile dirliklere geçmek ile Kul tâ'ifesine bu sebab ile ecnebî karışub herc ü merc olmuşlardır.” Yücel, *Osmanlı Devlet Teşkilâtı*, 3–4.

³⁹⁶ As Metin Kunt has shown, this was indeed an ideal, as in reality many *kuls* did retain close familial and regional ties throughout their lives; see Metin Kunt, “Ethnic-Regional (*Cins*) Solidarity in the Seventeenth-century Ottoman Establishment,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 5, no. 3 (June 1974), 234–37.

state's elite by “outsiders” (*ecnebī*) who, in a sense, serve as the others of the ideal state elite envisioned by—and in fact often personally represented by—the authors of the advice literature.

This is a point upon which Muşţafā ‘Ālī expounded in some detail in another passage from the *Nuşhatu’s-selāṭīn*, specifically in relation to Kurds and Turks, the latter of which refers ostensibly to nomadic and semi-nomadic Turkmens, but implicitly to Anatolian villagers as well:

[T]here are certain nations among the various races that are definitely not suitable for an administrative position and do not have capability and qualifications enough to become a refuge of the people. [...] One of these (nations) are the perfidious Kurds whose character is nothing but obstinacy and stubbornness. The other is the disunited Turks whose hearts are full of malice and mischief. That is why under the previous sultans the office of a *beglerbegi* was never given to Kurds or Turks, and even the office of a *beg* was not seen [as] proper to be given to any of them but to the son of a *beg* whose ancestors had been holding the title for many generations. But at our time such an observation of class distinctions is totally abandoned. Turks and Kurds, if they possess silver and gold coins, are rated higher even than the champions of the Hashimites.³⁹⁷

Here, Muşţafā ‘Ālī conflates classes (*tabakāt*) and cultures in a manner that necessarily posits a more closed group—namely, the *kul* class, comprising the so-called “slaves of the Porte,” or what Cornell Fleischer rather more accurately calls “the ‘Palace’ class of true Ottomans”³⁹⁸—as the only one capable of being relied upon to rule.

³⁹⁷ Muşţafā ‘Ālī, *Counsel for Sultans*, 63, 158: “Ve ṭavāyif-i muḥtelifeden ba‘zı mil-el-i mütenevvi‘e vardur ki mutlakā ḥükümete lāyık olmazlar ve melaz-ı nās olacaqlayın devlete liyākat u istiḥkāk bulmazlar. ... Ol zümreden biri Ekrād-ı bed-nihāddur ki cibilletleri maḥz-ı lecc u ‘ināddur. İkinci Etrāk-ı kalīlü’l-ittihāddur ki ḥilkatleri maḥz-ı şirret ü fesāddur. Bā‘iş budur ki selāṭīn-i sâbıka zamānlarında Ekrād u Etrāk’a beglerbegilikler verilmezdi ve eben ‘an ced bezādelerinden ğayrisine beglik bile lāyık görölmezdi. Ammā fī zamānīnā ol gūne ṭabakāt ri‘āyeti meslūbdur, Etrāk u Ekrād mālik-i sīm ü dīnār olduĝı taḳdīrce dilīrān-ı Hāşimīden bile mergūbdur.” Translation by Andreas Tietze.

³⁹⁸ Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, 209.

The same trepidations and much the same approach are also apparent in the treatises of Kocı Beğ, himself a *kul* of *devşirme* origin, as was the author of the *Kitāb-ı müsteṭāb* that likely served as his inspiration. However, like that work and somewhat unlike Muṣṭafā ‘Ālī’s *Nuṣḥatu’s-selāṭīn*, which was produced nearly half a century earlier, Kocı Beğ casts a very wide net over who is to be considered an outsider. In his first treatise, for instance, which was composed in 1630 and presented to Sultan Murād IV, he focused in particular on how a degeneration based in social mobility was infecting the *devşirme*-based janissary corps, and he did not stint on precise identification of these outsiders:

People of unknown origin and religious affiliation like urban riffraff (*şehir oğlanı*),³⁹⁹ Turks, Gypsies, *Tat*, Kurds, outsiders, Laz, Yörüks, muleteers, camel drivers, porters, body waxers, bandits, pickpockets, and all sorts of other types have all joined different ranks [of the janissaries] and the traditions and ways have been corrupted and the customary laws and rules done away with.⁴⁰⁰

The declinist tendencies of the early 17th-century advice literature were intimately linked to the elite background—*i.e.*, highly educated and trained for government service, and primarily but not exclusively *kuls*—of that literature’s producers, as they perceived or constructed in their works a novel social mobility that threatened the status quo. Yet in comparison to Muṣṭafā ‘Ālī, whose *Nuṣḥatu’s-selāṭīn* had laid the groundwork for pieces like the *Kitāb-ı müsteṭāb* and the treatises of Kocı Beğ, the authors of these later

³⁹⁹ The *şehir oğlanları* appear to have been unaffiliated lower-class young men in urban environments, particularly Istanbul, who had received some education and were literate but often engaged in a variety of criminal activities; see Marinos Sariyannis, “‘Mob,’ ‘Scamps,’ and Rebels in Seventeenth-century Istanbul: Some Remarks on Ottoman Social Vocabulary,” *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 11, nos. 1–2 (2005), 4–8.

⁴⁰⁰ “Ve bi’l-cümle her zümreye [...] millet ü mezhebi nâ-ma’lûm şehir oğlanı ve Türk ve Çingâne ve Tat ve Kürd ve [e]nebî ve Laz ve Yörük ve katırcı ve deveci ve hammâl ve ağdacı ve kuttâ’-ı tarık ve yan kesici ve sâ’ir ecnâs-ı muhtelif mülhak olub âyîn ve erkân bozuldu ve kânûn ve kâ’ide kalkdı.” Kocı Beğ, *Kocı Bey Risâlesi*, ed. Yılmaz Kurt (Ankara: Akçağ Yayınları, 2011), 168.

works were from a *devşirme* background in the palace and their characterization of the outsiders entering the military and administrative ranks was framed in radically sociocultural terms, with the excluded groups being primarily Sunni Muslim (Turks, Kurds, Yörüks, Laz), Shiite Muslim (Persians), or outsiders of more fluid identity (Gypsies, *Tat*). Moreover, in the above passage from *Çoçi Beğ*, these elements are placed in a matrix that equates them with, on the one hand, criminal and indeed seditious actors such as bandits (*kuṭṭā ʿ-ı ṭarīk*) and pickpockets (*yan kesici*), and on the other hand socially low professions like muleteers (*katırcı*) and body waxers (*ağdacı*). Thus, as was common in the advice literature genre as a whole, the tendency is to view and present outsiders of various stripes as vulgar and immoral elements whose entrance into the military and administrative class necessarily corrupts it from within. While authors like the anonymous writer of the *Kitāb-ı müsteṭāb* and *Çoçi Beğ* frame this issue mostly in the context of the janissary and *sipāhī* soldiery of Istanbul, Muṣṭafā ʿĀlī and especially his student Nefʿī extend this outsider discourse to encompass the administrative branch as well, as Nefʿī’s long invective against Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha makes clear.

Recent historiography has begun to reveal that, quantitatively speaking, the notion of such social mobility as a phenomenon new to the late 16th century and onward, and even as a real phenomenon at all, is historically inaccurate.⁴⁰¹ With this caveat in mind, however, the very proliferation during this period of advice literature emphasizing the influx of “outsiders”—that is, of others—is by no means coincidental and is in fact quite revealing. It suggests that the administrators and bureaucrats—*kuls* like *Çoçi Beğ* and

⁴⁰¹ See, e.g., Linda Darling, “Nasihatnameler, İcmal Defterleri, and the Timar-Holding Ottoman Elite,” *Osmanlı Araştırmaları / The Journal of Ottoman Studies* XLIII (2014), 203–9.

the anonymous author of the *Kitāb-ı müsteṭāb*, as well as disillusioned men of letters like Muṣṭafā ‘Ālī—not only penned their treatises from a center that was conceptual if not necessarily geographical in nature, but also, and more importantly, projected what they were experiencing and seeing around them, or at least what they feared to be the case at the center, out onto the periphery on an empire-wide scale, and especially onto the military classes that were in many ways the state’s primary concern. In the center, at the highest administrative levels as well as within the cultural elite (including patrons), there were in fact new actors and factional configurations emerging.⁴⁰² Accordingly, the “old guard” that the authors of the advice literature presumed to represent did in fact, as their works make abundantly clear, feel threatened by what they saw as a process of peripheral others “contaminating” the center that they had considered to be largely their own prerogative.

Returning to Nef‘ī’s long invective against Etmekçizāde, the third area on which it touches is Aḥmed Pasha’s association with disreputable and ignorant people; *i.e.*, with precisely the sort of people whom the *Kitāb-ı müsteṭāb* and Kōçī Beğ’s treatise would later rail against. It had long been a significant part of the Islamicate mirror for princes genre—which was the predecessor to the variety of advice literature discussed above—to advise that rulers, as well as other important figures, should surround themselves with able, qualified people of high moral standing, lest their own morality be corrupted and

⁴⁰² For a detailed study of the factional changes occurring at this time, see Günhan Börekçi, “Factions and Favorites at the Courts of Sultan Ahmed I (r. 1603–17) and His Immediate Predecessors” (Ph.D. dissertation, The Ohio State University, 2010).

with it their ability to rule, carry out their duties, and guide others.⁴⁰³ In the fifth stanza of Nef'ī's *terkīb-i bend*, however, Aḥmed Pasha's circle of friends and companions is described as follows: “and the vile scoundrels with whom he spends time and drinks | are a procession of base and wicked nobodies like him || [...] || some of his people are ridiculous, some are quick sexual fixes | some are catamites, some of these inveterate and others just worn out.”⁴⁰⁴ This paints a rather unflattering picture of the chief treasurer's home as a literal house of ill repute, one where a series of pederastic relations are hosted. Although the rest of the *terkīb-i bend* does not dwell on this matter, two other longer invectives written against the pasha by Nef'ī in the *kaşīde* form actually center around this particular conceit.

One of these pieces begins with reference to Etmekçizāde's undistinguished origins, insinuating that he sold his body to a low clientele in the entertainment district of Tahtakale⁴⁰⁵ in Istanbul: “he was a cheap catamite with scarcely a place to stand | and all his clients were in Tahtaḳal'a.”⁴⁰⁶ Considering that Aḥmed Pasha appears to have been almost exclusively based in Edirne until his appointment as chief treasurer in 1606, this is clearly a fanciful version of the pasha's life story intended as slander plain and simple,

⁴⁰³ See, e.g., Kaykāvus b. Iskandar b. Qābus, *Le Cabous Namè, ou Livre de Cabous*, ed. and trans. A. Querry (Paris: Imprimerie Marchessou Fils, 1886), 247–254, 358–363 and Nizām al-Mulk, *The Book of Government, or Rules for Kings: The Siyāsat-nāma, or Siyar al-Mulūk of Nizām al-Mulk*, ed. and trans. Hubert Darke (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960), 92–96.

⁴⁰⁴ “hem-dem ü hem-ḳadeḫi olan erāziller de | bir alay kendü gibi dūn u ḫabīs [ü] mühmel || [...] || kimisi muḫḫik anıḡ kimisi mu'arres-i ma'ak | kimi puşt kimisi epşet kimisi müsta'mel”; *ibid.*, 6a. The collocation translated as “quick sexual fixes” is the novel combination *mu'arres-i ma'ak*, literally meaning “a late-night resthouse for rubbing leather,” which in context appears to signify a place to stop to have a quick sexual encounter.

⁴⁰⁵ Tahtakale, located in today's Eminönü district along the Golden Horn and extending inland, was especially known for its taverns; see İpekten, *Divan Edebiyatında Edebî Muhitler*, 244–245.

⁴⁰⁶ “mübtezel ḫız idi bir yerde ḳararı yoḡidi | Tahtaḳal'a'da idi müşterīsi hep anıḡ”; Millet Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi AE Mnz 1028, 19.

a view reinforced by the subsequent lines depicting the pasha coming to Istanbul on occasion and being “initiated” into sexual relations with the chief stabler (*mīr-āḥūr*) of the Ottoman palace.⁴⁰⁷ The poem goes on to suggest that, as Aḥmed Pasha rose toward his present position, his degeneracy grew increasingly advanced, eventually reaching its zenith (or rather nadir) in such a way as to prompt Nefī to frame this assertion as follows: “that haughty accursed one did such devilish things | that now he is a brother to the devil in conceit.”⁴⁰⁸ Aḥmed Pasha’s degeneracy and conceit are thus depicted as developing hand in hand, and into the subsequent descriptions of what occurs at the pasha’s home and whom he has gathered around him, Nefī inserts a distich that insinuates the suggestion of political (and cultural) treachery owing to whom he was associating with: “and in short, they even drank and dined with the Kızılbaş | and their food and drink, and the shit they shat, was the Christians’.”⁴⁰⁹ Considered in the light of the likely oral distribution of discrete distichs mentioned above, the mere utilization of terms such as “Kızılbaş” and “Christian” (*tersā*) would serve to severely discredit Aḥmed Pasha in the eyes of those who may, like Sultan Aḥmed I, already have been toeing the line regarding his fitness for his post. Finally, the invective concludes with a curse: “o God, it is my wish that he and his followers be damned | this indeed is what the whole world prays for, day and night.”⁴¹⁰ This serves to generalize the entire matter of the trouble with Etmekçizāde: it is not, Nefī states, simply a personal grudge that has

⁴⁰⁷ “mīr-āḥūr idi Kīrlī Aḡa şākird êtdī | altun üsküfle tamām kīrini yēdi anıḡ || her kaçan gelse ger İstānbül’a üsküfçioḡlı | altuna yatur idi o kerīmü’ş-şānıḡ”; *ibid.*

⁴⁰⁸ “şol kadar şeyt[ā]net êtdī mütekebbir mel’ün | şimdi ‘ucbile tamām kardeşidir şeytānıḡ”; *ibid.*

⁴⁰⁹ “hem Kızılbaş ile el-kışşa dem ü laḡm idiler | yēyüp içdikleri şıçdıkları bok tersānıḡ”; *ibid.*

⁴¹⁰ “yā ilāhī dilerin kaḡr ola enbā’ı ile | rüz u şeb cümle du’āsı bu durur dünyānıḡ”; *ibid.*

driven me to produce this poem (and others), but there are in fact many who know of the chief treasurer’s disreputable reputation and feel that something must be done about it.

The second invective in the *kaşīde* form that Nef‘ī produced against Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha focuses largely on the same claim; namely, that the chief treasurer is engaged in extensive degeneracy. His home is likened to a place of pagan worship filled with young boys,⁴¹¹ compared to Cairo’s notorious Bāb al-Lūq vice district,⁴¹² and described as making the people of the neighborhood laugh due to the moans emerging from within at night, as if “a herd of cattle has come to be slaughtered.”⁴¹³ However, this invective also—much like the longer *terkīb-i bend*—links this scandalous degeneracy directly back to the pasha’s corruption⁴¹⁴ and indirectly back to his ostensibly sudden and undeserved rise to power from a low position, wishing that “in the end they should clap him in a dungeon like a bankrupt tax collector,”⁴¹⁵ alluding to Etmekçizāde’s initial post as a collector of taxes from the Roma. In fact, the poem’s opening distich sets the stage for this connection by making clear that one of Aḥmed Pasha’s stripe—whether because of his degeneracy or because of his undistinguished origins—has no business

⁴¹¹ “şöyle naqs eylemiş ol ḥānesine ṭayr-miṣāl | ṭolu hep içi civānān sanasıṣ pūthāne”; *ibid.*, 20.

⁴¹² “şan Bābu’l-lūq idi puştıṣ evi odayāna”; *ibid.* For Bāb al-Lūq, see Michael Winter, *Egyptian Society under Ottoman Rule, 1517–1798* (London: Routledge, 1992), 223 and Hanan Hammad and Francesca Biancani, “Prostitution in Cairo,” in *Selling Sex in the City: A Global History of Prostitution, 1600s–2000s*, ed. Magaly Rodríguez García, Lex Heerma van Voss, and Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2017), 239.

⁴¹³ “ḥalk dērlerdi gülüp, ‘Geldi şıṣır kurbāna’”; Millet Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi AE Mnz 1028, 20.

⁴¹⁴ “ḡıce gündüz yēdiṣi rüşvet ü içdiṣi şerāb”; *ibid.*

⁴¹⁵ “tez biten tez yiter ‘ālemde meşeldir bu kim | müflis-i ‘āmil gibi āḥir ḳoyalar zindāna”; *ibid.*

being a member of the imperial council: “o fate! who said to shit such a turd out upon the world? | to bring such a shit-filled madman to the council?”⁴¹⁶

To return to the *terkīb-i bend* against Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha, the fourth aspect through which Nefī frames his attack is the chief treasurer’s unpleasant physical appearance. This is drawn up in some detail at various points in the poem, and consistently the effect is to otherize him not only through outlandish caricaturization, but also through the accustomed slights on his lineage as well as comparisons to marginalized groups. Thus, there is the line, “his face is as yellow as shit, and the reason is | his mother cooked and ate shit while pregnant,”⁴¹⁷ while another line reads, “he resembles not one of the seventy-two peoples⁴¹⁸ | I would call him a Gypsy if there were wan Gypsies.”⁴¹⁹ The main concentration of lines on Aḥmed Pasha’s appearance, however, is in the fifth stanza, which begins:

never before has one come to our city [*i.e.*, Istanbul] | with such a heathen figure and such a bizarre form || what *are* those unclean features, that grotesque face? | he’s not the toast of the town but the laughingstock of the times || with those plucked brows and that crooked saddle of a nose | those Persian blue eyes and that [yellow] arsenic beard || [...] || anyone who sees him with that wan face and shit-smearred mouth would say, | ‘It’s just like a burnished copper chamberpot’⁴²⁰

⁴¹⁶ “ey felek kim dedi böyle boḳı şıç meydāna | böyle boḳlı deliyi getüresiñ dīvāna”; *ibid.*

⁴¹⁷ “çehresi boḳ gibi zerd olduğununun aşılı budur | boḳa aş yerer imiş vālidesi ḥāmīle iken”; ULLWCO 662, 5b.

⁴¹⁸ In Judeo-Christian tradition, it was asserted that when human beings were scattered after the destruction of the Tower of Babel, they divided into 72 (or in some cases 70) peoples on the basis of language. Thus, reference to the “seventy-two peoples” effectively means “all of humanity.”

⁴¹⁹ “benzemez hiç birine yetmişiki milletden | Çingene dērdim eğer olsa şarı Çingāne”; *ibid.*, 6a.

⁴²⁰ “gelmedi şehrimize olmağa bundan evvel | böyle tersā-yı şekil böyle ‘acāyib-heykel || nedir ol turfa-şemā’il nedir ol ‘ucbe-liḳā || şöhre-i şehre deḡil suḡre-i dehr olsa maḥal || o yoluḳ қаşlar ile ol semerī eḡri burun | o ‘Acem mā’īsi gözlerle o zirniḡi şaḳal || [...] || dēr gören çehre-i zerdī ile boḳlı aḡzın | bir baḳır ḥāvruza güyā ki olmuş şayḳal”; *ibid.*, 5b–6a.

The stanza's very first line sets up an implicit opposition between "our city" Istanbul, the capital and Ottoman center, and everywhere else: regardless of Aḥmed Pasha's origins in Edirne, a central city in its own right, he is nevertheless cast as an outsider and verbally branded as such through Nef'ī's description. This description deploys key terms to maximize the stigmatization of the chief treasurer: "heathen" (*tersā*),⁴²¹ "bizarre" (*'acāyib*), "unclean" (*turfā*), "grotesque" (*'ucbe*), and "Persian blue" (*'Acem mā'īsi*). There is on the one hand an emphasis on lack of health or sickness through "wan face" (*çehre-i zerd*), and on the other a hint of a lack of virility or even a feminization through the "plucked brows" (*yoluḡ kaşlar*). Lying at the root of all this is the pseudoscience of physiognomy (*firāsa*), which asserted that a person's character and psychology might be divined from external indications, including physical features, particularly those on the face.⁴²² While Nef'ī's ridiculing of Aḥmed Pasha's appearance is, of course, hardly to be taken as a physiognomical treatise and it is quite unlikely that he himself had much more than a cursory familiarity with physiognomy, it nevertheless was a well-established field of endeavor that provided him with yet another weapon with which to mount his attack on the chief treasurer. The poem's heavy emphasis on what is pale and yellow (*i.e.*, blond) is also telling, especially when considered in connection with another invective quatrain that Nef'ī produced against Etmekçizāde:

⁴²¹ Other manuscript versions of this poem use the word *rūstā'ī* ("villager; boor") in place of *tersā*; see, *e.g.*, IUNEK TY 511, 65b.

⁴²² For more on Islamicate and Ottoman physiognomy, see Toufic Fahd, "Firāsa," *EF*², Vol. 2, 916–917 and Süleyman Uludağ, "Firāset," *DĪA*, Vol. 13, 116–117. For a fuller account of *firāsa* in connection with pre-Islamic and Islamicate divinatory traditions, see Fahd, *La divination arabe*, 369–430.

look at Etmekçi with his yellow beard and sallow face | couldn't he find a son-in-law⁴²³ of the same stripe as himself? || in the end, if anyone breaks the prosperity of Islam, it will be him | he is Dajjāl and his children will be the Banī Aşfar⁴²⁴

Dajjāl, meaning “deceiver,” is an eschatological being who will come to tyrannize the world before the day of judgment, and thus his coming serves as a signal of the end times.⁴²⁵ Much the same is true regarding the Banī Aşfar: literally meaning, “the children of the yellow (ones),” in the context of early Islam this term referred first to the Romans and then the Byzantines against whom the Muslims struggled, and later came to signify Europeans in general.⁴²⁶ In the Ottoman context, the Banī Aşfar came to be popularly interpreted as a people who would invade Anatolia before the end of the world, with the actual identity ascribed to them changing according to the political situation of the empire.⁴²⁷ Thus, just as Nef'ī's *terkīb-i bend* had commenced with a cosmological and eschatological description addressing how the advent of Aḥmed Pasha signaled calamity, this quatrain also presents him as a sign of the end: Nef'ī is utilizing the chief treasurer—whose background, corruption, degeneracy, and even appearance make him unfit for such power—to feed off of and further feed fears, such as those that abound in the era's advice literature and its consciously imposed notions of decline, that the empire is in dire straits and must be righted.

⁴²³ I have been unable to uncover the identity of Aḥmed Pasha's son-in-law, alluded to in this line.

⁴²⁴ “rīş-i zerd ü ruḥ-ı aşferle görüñ Etmekçi | kendi renginde ‘aceb bulmadı mı dāmādı || ‘ākıbet devlet-i İslām'ı yıkarsa bu yıkar | kendi Deccāl u Benī Aşfer olur evlādı”; ULLWCO 662, 15b [marginal].

⁴²⁵ See A. Abel, “Al-Dađıđjāl,” *EF*², Vol. 2, 76–77.

⁴²⁶ See Ignaz Goldziher, “Aşfar,” *EF*², Vol. 1, 687–688.

⁴²⁷ See Stefanos Yerasimos, *Kostantiniye ve Ayasofya Efsaneleri*, tr. Şirin Tekeli (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1993), 204–208 and John Tolan, Gilles Veinstein, and Henry Laurens, *Europe and the Islamic World: A History*, trans. Jane Marie Todd (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2013), 209–210. An early 15th-century example of the apocalyptic tradition associated with the Banī Aşfar can be found in Yazıcıoğlu Aḥmed Bīcān, *Dürr-i Mekkün (Tıpkıbasım) (İnceleme – Çevriyazı – Dizin)*, ed. Ahmet Demirtaş (Istanbul: Akademik Kitaplar, 2009), 211ff.

Yet another quatrain by Nef'ī against the chief treasurer also touches upon his physical appearance, this time to directly state—in line with the tenets of physiognomy mentioned above—that such a person is a stain on the purity of viziership:

for lack of bread you will kill the [bread] seller | you're on one side, o yellow dog,
and viziership is on the other || who, seeing that face, would say, 'You are a vizier'? |
viziership was a pure gem and now is turned to shit⁴²⁸

This bears a high degree of similarity to the “Veliyyü'd-dīn” report discussed in the previous section, which, it will be recalled, spoke up against the practical problem of corruption attendant upon the granting of viziership to the chief treasurer. Nef'ī's quatrain, of course, is a much more visceral take that looks at the other side of the coin, stating that viziership is not a privilege that should be granted to just anyone, particularly one with Aḥmed Pasha's background (not to mention unsuitable appearance).

3.3.1 Nef'ī's invectives against 'Abdu'l-bāḳī Pasha

While Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha's fall from grace in 1616 and subsequent death in 1618 effectively marked the end of Nef'ī's invective war against him,⁴²⁹ it would be instructive to also examine some of the poet's attacks upon one of Aḥmed Pasha's successors to the office of chief treasurer, 'Abdu'l-bāḳī Pasha, Etmekçizāde's close companion from his days in Edirne. These are all quatrains, and for the most part they center on very much the same issues as the invectives produced against Aḥmed Pasha. In

⁴²⁸ “bir etmeğin eksik satıcı öldüreceksin | sen ḳande eyā sarı köpek ḳande vezāret || kim görse bu şüretle vezīr olduḡıñ dēr | bir cevher-i pāk idi boḳa düşdi vezāret”; ULLWCO 662, 15b.

⁴²⁹ There was at least two occasions after the pasha's death, however, when Nef'ī did bring him up as a subsidiary target: both were produced at around the same time, in the spring of 1624, with the first being a quatrain written against 'Abdu'l-bāḳī Pasha, examined below, and the second being a longer invective aimed, at least ostensibly, at the recently executed grand vizier Kemānkeş 'Alī Pasha, mentioned in section 2.1 above.

fact, Nef'ī presented 'Abdu'l-bāḳī as a kind of spiritual successor to Etmekçizāde in terms of their overall qualities (or lack thereof), as indicated in a quatrain produced in the spring of 1624, when 'Abdu'l-bāḳī was appointed chief treasurer for the third time, this time being granted viziership.⁴³⁰ The quatrain refers directly back to Nef'ī's earlier one regarding how Aḥmed Pasha's entitlement as vizier had sullied the "pure gem" (*cevher-i pāk*) of viziership:

first, it was with Etmekçi[zāde] that viziership turned to shit | now ['Abdu'l-]Bāḳī's
finally dropped out stinking || and when Bāḳī goes may that catamite's soul be merry |
I don't know who it [will fall] to then, it's gone from shit to shit⁴³¹

Though this is hardly a development on or deepening of Nef'ī's earlier assault on Etmekçizāde, the *Le roi est mort, vive le roi!* situation that it stresses does indicate that the poet was presenting a vision of the empire's financial branch as effectively rotten from the top down. For one thing, in another quatrain Nef'ī implies that 'Abdu'l-bāḳī only achieved whatever prosperity and position he had through his long-term close association with Etmekçizāde, which is expressed in the customary sexual terms used in invective discourse: "['Abdu'l-]Bāḳī the catamite would not have gained such success | had he not eaten the balls of that mainstay of the state [*i.e.*, Etmekçizāde]."⁴³² Moreover, just as with the invectives against Etmekçizāde, Nef'ī also consistently implies corruption on 'Abdu'l-bāḳī's part: he terms him, for instance, a "pickpocket" (*tarrār*) and insinuates that "in your time the treasury [is] filled with counterfeit money" (*n'ola*

⁴³⁰ Ḥasan Beyzāde, *Tārīh*, Vol. 3, 989. Interestingly, Ḥasan Beyzāde not only notes that 'Abdu'l-bāḳī was appointed and made a vizier at this time, but also pointedly describes him as "brazen and shameless" (*bī-perhīz ü 'ār*).

⁴³¹ "evvel boḳa Etmekçi'de düşmişdi vezāret | Bāḳī de nihāyet bir uğurdan boḳa düşdi || Bāḳī de gidince kekeziñ rūḥı ola şād | bilmem kime düşdi hele boḳdan boḳa düşdi"; ULLWCO 662, 16a.

⁴³² "bu kadar devlete erişmez idi Bāḳī-yi puşt | yemeseydi ol 'umde-i devlet taşağın"; *ibid*. The phrase 'umde-i devlet might also be read as "mainstay of prosperity or success."

devriñde hazîne olsa kalb akçeyle pür),⁴³³ and when ‘Abdu’l-bākī is about to be sent out on campaign as the military treasurer, he warns him “set aside your thievery and be just a little satisfied” (*ko be hırsızlığı bir pāre kanā ‘at eyle*).⁴³⁴

However, the main thrust of Nef‘ī’s invectives against ‘Abdu’l-bākī Pasha centers, again as in the case of Etmekçizāde, around his undistinguished lineage. In many ways, his career mirrored that of Aḥmed Pasha: the son of a merchant from Aleppo, himself born in Edirne, he later enrolled as a janissary and subsequently entered the financial branch of the Ottoman bureaucracy and proceeded to advance steadily.⁴³⁵ Thus, his origins and rise provided Nef‘ī with fundamentally very similar ammunition, and Nef‘ī, apparently quite familiar with ‘Abdu’l-bākī’s background, used this ammunition in a very similar way, as in this quatrain:

isn’t all this boasting a bit much for you, [‘Abdu’l-]Bākī, you catamite of catamites? |
come, let’s step aside and have some reasoned discussion || your father [was] a
Aleppan outsider and you, the delicate one from Edirne, are his shit | and as for the
father of your line, catamite, he was a Jew from Ashkelon⁴³⁶

Apart from the same variety of insults seen in the invectives against Etmekçizāde, including otherizing the target as a possible crypto-Jew, here Nef‘ī also refers to ‘Abdu’l-bākī’s “boasting” (*nāz*), which in context gives the impression that the latter has been vaunting, or even directly lying about, his lineage. This impression is confirmed by two other quatrains. In one, Nef‘ī again mocks ‘Abdu’l-bākī’s apparent boasting and

⁴³³ *Ibid.*, [marginal].

⁴³⁴ IUNEK TY 511, 72b.

⁴³⁵ For a brief summary of his career, see Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*, 15.

⁴³⁶ “çok değil mi saña ey Bākī-yi epşet bunca nāz | gel seniñle baḥs-i ma’kūl edelim tenhā biraz || bir Ḥaleb Tātu babañ sen poḥı zarīf-i Edirne | ceddüñ ise ‘Aşkalānī bir Yehūdī’dir kekez”; ULLWCO 662, 16a [marginal].

putting on airs: “hey [‘Abdu’l-]Bākī, catamite of catamites, stop with this boasting manner | people know what an ‘honored personage’ you [actually] are.”⁴³⁷ Still more telling, however, is the following quatrain:

hey [‘Abdu’l-]Bākī, you catamite, don’t start trying to prove your [distinguished] lineage | with all your odiousness even a Jew is better than you || o you catamite, may it really hit the spot every time your father farts | your most distinguished enemy is some flatulent *beğ*⁴³⁸

There is no reason to believe that Nefī would impute a falsehood regarding ‘Abdu’l-bākī Pasha somehow playing up his lineage, as such an imputation would in and of itself do little to nothing in the way of damaging the pasha’s reputation. And if indeed, then, ‘Abdu’l-bākī Pasha *was* engaging in such boasting (whatever it may have consisted in), it could only have been in an attempt to shore up his reputation, and hence potentially the stability of his position. This, especially in connection with Nefī’s assaults on the actual background and lineage of both Etmekçizāde Aḥmed and ‘Abdu’l-bākī Pasha, indicates that there was some sense among members of what might be called the “new” Ottoman administrative elite—of which these two men were among the early and most prominent examples—to provide a kind of legitimization of their position in the face of criticisms coming at them from several sides at once.

3.4 Conclusion

Earlier in this chapter, reference was made to the figure or character or concept of the “outsider” (*ecnebi*). In much of the early 17th-century advice literature, such as the

⁴³⁷ “ey [‘Abdu’l-]Bākī-yi eṣet ko be bu şiv[e]-i nāzı | ne zāt-ı şerīf olduğunu halk bilürler”; *ibid.*

⁴³⁸ “düşme isbāt-ı neseb kaydına ey Bākī-yi puşt | bu ḥabā’isle Yehūdī daḥı senden yeğdir || her oşurduqça babañ cānına değsün a kekez | eñ güzide ḥaşmın işte oşurğan beğdir”; *ibid.* [marginal].

Kitāb-ı müsteṭāb and the treatises of Ƙoçi Beğ, the outsider was conceived of, or at least discussed, in relation primarily to the military, to the janissaries and *sipāhīs* whose numbers had been swelling for some time, leading to some degree of financial difficulty due to the need to pay them regularly. It was this difficulty—prompted by the changing composition of the military that was in turn prompted by and further reinforced the changing identity of the increasingly commercially oriented soldiery in the Ottoman capital—that formed one of the fundamental concerns of the era’s advice literature.

At the same time, the outsider was also construed in the literature as a corrupt and morally bankrupt figure who, it was posited, was sapping the soldiery of their loyalty and strength.⁴³⁹ It was this contemporary conception of the outsider that, though the term *ecnebī* itself may not have been used, saw a wider application, being utilized beyond the military to cover the Ottoman administration as well.⁴⁴⁰ While there are hints toward this

⁴³⁹ Rifa‘at Ali Abou-El-Haj situates this concept in terms of the advice literature’s implicit opposition between the abstract characters of the loyal *sipāhī* and the self-interested retainer; see Rifa‘at Ali Abou-El-Haj, “The Ottoman Nasihatname as a Discourse over ‘Morality’,” in *Mélanges Professeur Robert Mantran*, ed. Abdeljelil Temimi (Zaghouan: Centres d’Etudes et de Recherches Ottomanes, Morisques, de Documentation et d’Information, 1988): 17–30. This article will be discussed further in the following chapter.

⁴⁴⁰ Although the military and administration were loosely conceived of as the same branch, the ‘*askerī*, of the state hierarchy, particularly in terms of their initial training in the palace, examination of the advice literature—not to mention more official state documents—makes clear that, as one would in any case expect, they were in fact rather sharply distinguished. An example of this can be seen in the *Kitāb-ı müsteṭāb*: “Once, in days of old, the palace servants (*iç oğlanları*) were gifted [to the palace] from the *devşirme* or from among valid relations of *ķuls*. Yet in the current situation, most of them are urban riffraff (*şehir oğlanları*) of Istanbul or else the sons of Turks or Armenians or Gypsies, and not one in ten of them are validated [as being] from the *devşirme* or from relations of *ķuls*. Thus, when servants (*oğlanlar*) of this sort leave the palace and become aghas over the *ķuls* or become governors over a certain region, what they are is known and is no secret to people of discernment. Examples of this have been seen and will continue to be seen.” ([E]vvelâ *iç oğlanları kadîmü’l-eyyâmdan devşürme ve yâhûd sahîh kul cinsi pişkeş ola gelmişdir. Şimdiki hâl ise ekseri İstanbul’un şehir oğlanları ve Türk ve Ermeni ve Çingâne oğlanları olub on oğlanda bir sahîhce devşürme ve yâhûd kul cinsi yokdur. Bu takdîrce ol maķûle oğlanlar taşraya çıkub Kul tâ’ifesine zâbit olub ağa oldukda ve yâhûd bir memlekete vâlî olduklarında ahvâlleri ma’lûm ve ehl-i basîret katında hafî değildir. Nümüneleri dahî görülmüş ve görüliir.*) Yücel, ed., *Osmanlı Devlet Teşkilâtı*, 26.

broader application in the advice literature, particularly in Muṣṭafā ‘Ālī, the invectives of Nef‘ī against Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha—and to a lesser extent ‘Abdu’l-bāḳī Pasha as well—make it crystal clear: Etmekçizāde, the son of an urban *sipāhī* baker and himself a *sipāhī* and merchant, was unfit for the post of chief treasurer, and especially for viziership, owing *precisely* to this background, which meant that he was too uneducated and too immoral to serve the Ottoman state at such a high level. In other words, he was an “outsider” (*ecnebi*) in all but name, an unwelcome novelty in a long established system of recruitment and promotion.

But was this simply a rhetorical strategy on Nef‘ī’s part? The inherently extreme rhetoric of the discursive mode of invective makes this impossible to determine, a difficulty that is compounded by the fact that Nef‘ī’s assault on Aḥmed Pasha was prompted by, on the one hand, personal animosity and, on the other, by Nef‘ī’s apparent utilization of these invectives to shore up his standing with the grand viziers Murād and Naṣūḥ as well as with Sultan Aḥmed. This was an opportunistic assault. Nevertheless, just as the equally opportunistic advice literature of the time sometimes elided strict accuracy in favor of making a point and, in the process, exposed the authors’ underlying conceptions of how the ideal Ottoman state should look by appealing to and attempting to shape their audience’s (*i.e.*, the sultan’s) preconceptions, so does the extreme rhetoric of Nef‘ī’s invectives against Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha reveal the poet’s awareness of *what might work* to most effectively diminish the chief treasurer’s esteem and reputation, given the possible preconceptions and prejudices of *his* audience, which was ultimately his own patrons, the grand vizier and the sultan.

These invectives, though, were produced in a relatively stable period: there was no active war with either the Safavids or the Habsburgs, though there were some small-scale clashes with the former; rebellions in Anatolia had been in abeyance for several years; the sultan sat secure on his throne; and, despite a certain degree of administrative transformation and economic hardship, the center was holding. By the time Nef'ī launched his next extensive assault on a prominent administrative figure—Gürçī Meḥmed Pasha, who served as grand vizier for a few short months between September 1622 and February 1623—all of this had changed.

CHAPTER 4

“A GIANT DEMONIC HERMAPHRODITE”:

NEF‘Ī vs. GÜRCĪ MEḤMED PASHA

On November 22, 1617, Sultan Aḥmed I died after several months of illness, not yet 30 years old. His death set in motion a series of events that would lead the Ottoman Empire, along with the capital of Istanbul, into a tumultuous period that would extend throughout much of the 1620s. Because Aḥmed’s eight living sons were all considered too young for the throne, the leading figures of the state, apparently led by the grand mufti Es‘ad Efendi (1570–1625), decided upon his half-brother Muṣṭafā for the sultanate.⁴⁴¹ But Muṣṭafā had spent most of his 26 years confined in the palace, and, as İbrāhīm Peçevī phrased it, “the length of this period of confinement may have been the cause of his lightness of brain.”⁴⁴² His strange behavior became a cause of great concern, and thus on February 26, 1618, the chief black eunuch Muṣṭafā Agha locked him in his room and

⁴⁴¹ Kâtib Çelebi, “Fezleke,” 630.

⁴⁴² “Belki zamān[-i] ḥabsinüñ ṭül-i müddeti ‘aqlınuñ bā’iṣ-i ḥıffeti olmuşdur.” Peçevī, “Peçevī Tarihi: 284–317,” 136.

had Aḥmed's eldest son 'Oṣmān, all of 13 years old at the time, enthroned in his place,⁴⁴³ the first time that such a palace coup had effected a change of ruler. Despite his youth, 'Oṣmān appeared to be determined to restore power to the sultanate, and he immediately set about asserting his prerogatives by replacing the grand vizier and taking away the right of the grand mufti—the same Es'ad Efendi who had originally arranged for Muṣṭafā to take the throne rather than 'Oṣman—to make appointments in the empire's religiojudicial hierarchy, a right that 'Oṣmān now gave to his personal tutor, 'Ömer Efendi.⁴⁴⁴

Throughout the rest of his short reign, 'Oṣmān would continue to assert his power, yet it was still far from absolute, and, as Tezcan summarizes, “to strengthen his political standing, he really needed a conquest that would boost his charisma, which in turn would make him powerful enough to eliminate alternative loci of power in the capital.”⁴⁴⁵ This would come with an ultimately rather ill-fated campaign against the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1621, which was nevertheless framed as a great victory.⁴⁴⁶ Upon his return from the campaign, 'Oṣmān announced that he would undertake the pilgrimage to Mecca, another unprecedented action for a sultan, but the rumor among the soldiery in Istanbul, who were already upset with the fruitless Polish campaign, was that he planned to use this as a pretext for recruiting a new army from

⁴⁴³ *Ibid.*, 138.

⁴⁴⁴ For an account of 'Ömer Efendi's life and significance, see Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*, 121–128.

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 131.

⁴⁴⁶ Kâtib Çelebi, “Fezleke,” 669.

among the mercenary soldiers (*segbān*) in Anatolia, Syria, and Egypt.⁴⁴⁷ The pilgrimage announcement thus proved to be the last straw, and on May 18, 1622—as ‘Osmān prepared to leave the capital—a military insurrection broke out that led to the sultan being captured by the army and briefly imprisoned before being strangled to death on the order of the grand vizier Dāvūd Pasha (d. 1623).⁴⁴⁸ Muṣṭafā, much to his own astonishment, was brought back to the throne, and there commenced a period where the Ottoman capital was effectively under the control of the soldiery, as described by the resident English diplomat Thomas Roe: “The goverment [*sic*] is here yet so unsettled, that the soldiours take what they will from any in the streetes, and upon refusall kill, without punishment; for no man dares complaine, or if they did, they know not to whom; wee live all in perill, where there is no awe of the magistrate.”⁴⁴⁹

These words were written in November 1622, soon after the elderly statesman Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha had assumed the grand vizierate. For reasons to be detailed below, the Istanbul soldiery stood firmly against Meḥmed Pasha’s presence in this post—as, for reasons both personal and opportunistic, did Nefī, who produced two long invectives against the grand vizier that will be examined in section 4.2 below. First, however, a look at the life and career of Meḥmed Pasha is in order.

⁴⁴⁷ Hüseyin Tuğī, *Musibetnâme: Tahlil – Metin ve İndeks*, ed. Şevki Nezihi Aykut (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2010), 8–22 and Thomas Roe, *The Negotiations of Sir Thomas Roe, in His Embassy to the Ottoman Porte, from the Year 1621 to 1628 Inclusive* (London: Samuel Richardson, 1740), 43–44.

⁴⁴⁸ For contemporary accounts of the deposition and execution of ‘Osmān, see Hüseyin Tuğī, *Musibetnâme*, 31–106; Peçevī, “Peçevī Tarihi: 284–317,” 20–28; Roe, *Negotiations*, 42, 45–48; Hasan Beyzāde, *Târih*, Vol. 3, 938–950; and Kâtib Çelebi, “Fezleke,” 670–688.

⁴⁴⁹ Roe, *Negotiations*, 108.

4.1 Life and career of Gürcî Meḥmed Pasha

Gürcî Meḥmed, as his epithet meaning “the Georgian” makes clear, was originally from Georgia in the Caucasus. As is the case with many who entered the Ottoman palace system either by way of the *devşirme* or as prisoners of war, Meḥmed’s early years are something of a mystery: he was said to have been presented to the Ottoman palace as a gift, either by the grand vizier Semiz ‘Alî Pasha (d. 1565)⁴⁵⁰ or by Hüsrev Pasha, the provincial governor of Erzurum during the reign of Sultan Selîm II (r. 1566–1574).⁴⁵¹ Given his apparent age, it also seems possible that he may have been captured during the course of the grand vizier Lala Muştafâ Pasha’s (d. 1580) campaign in the Caucasus in the late summer of 1578. In any case, he came to Istanbul as a slave and was castrated, as indicated by another of his common epithets, *Hâdım* or “the eunuch.”⁴⁵² He entered the service of the aghas of the inner palace (*Enderûn*), and at the beginning of the year 1604 he was promoted to the position of royal household attendant (*hâs odabaşı*) in place of Muştafâ Agha, who according to Kâtib Çelebi had become too old to perform his duties.⁴⁵³ In fact, however, Muştafâ Agha’s dismissal and Gürcî Meḥmed’s appointment were part of a wholesale restructuring of the palace staff initiated by Ḥandân Sultân (d. 1605), the mother of the young and newly enthroned Sultan Aḥmed,

⁴⁵⁰ Ak, “Gürcü Mehmed Paşa,” 509.

⁴⁵¹ Meḥmed b. Meḥmed, “Nuhbetü’t-Tevârih ve’l-Ahbâr ve Târîh-i Âl-i Osman,” 40 [*Târîḥ-i âl-i ‘Osmân*].

⁴⁵² For more on the recruitment and developmental process of Ottoman eunuchs, particularly white eunuchs like Gürcî Meḥmed, see A. Ezgi Dikici, “The Making of Ottoman Court Eunuchs: Origins, Recruitment Paths, Family Ties, and ‘Domestic Production’,” *Archivum Ottomanicum* 30 (2013): 105–136.

⁴⁵³ Kâtib Çelebi, “Fezleke,” 457.

in an effort to clear out clients of the previous queen mother, Şāfiye Sulṭān (d. 1605) and “shape the nucleus of the royal household by appointing loyal and able men.”⁴⁵⁴

In any case, Gürcī Meḥmed’s time in this position was not to last long. By September of the same year, the restructuring of the government by the new sultan’s regents—the queen mother Ḥandān and the royal tutor Muṣṭafā Efendi (d. c. 1608)—led to the viziers in the capital being assigned to military fronts, ostensibly to have them lead campaigns but effectively to get them out of the capital and away from their power bases. This led to a vacuum in the imperial council that prevented meetings from being held, and as a result Meḥmed was assigned to the rank of third vizier (*vezīr-i sālīs*), with two other high-ranking members of the palace service also being promoted to viziership at the same time.⁴⁵⁵ Just a month after this, Meḥmed received a highly significant reassignment. In Egypt, the provincial governor Ḥācī Ibrāhīm Pasha (d. 1604) had been attempting to reinstitute central authority in the face of the local *sipāhīs*, who were imposing an unauthorized levy called the *ṭulba* in rural areas of the province and generally asserting their own local authority as much as possible. In September 1604, they killed Ibrāhīm Pasha and several of his attendant janissaries when they left the citadel in Cairo, placing their heads on display in a place usually reserved for the display

⁴⁵⁴ Börekçi, “Factions and Favorites,” 130.

⁴⁵⁵ Ak, “Gürcü Mehmed Paşa,” 509; Kâtib Çelebi, “Fezleke,” 489; Ibrāhīm Peçevî, “Peçevî Tarihi: Edisyon Kritiği Bağdat Nüshası (284–317 Metin, Dizin, Özel Adlar Sözlüğü),” ed. Melek Metin (M.A. thesis, Marmara University, 2006), 80; Ḥasan Beyzāde, *Hasan Bey-zāde Târîhi*, Vol. 3, 832; Meḥmed b. Meḥmed, “Nuhbetü’t-Tevârih ve’l-Ahbâr ve Târîh-i Âl-i Osman,” 576 [*Nuḥbetü’l-tevâriḥ ve’l-aḥbâr*]. Börekçi, “Factions and Favorites,” 146–147 makes the significant point that these appointments from within the palace service “circumvent[ed] traditional patterns of promotion.”

of the heads of executed criminals.⁴⁵⁶ In response, Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha was appointed as the governor of Egypt on October 22 and sent there with the express purpose of suppressing the *ṭulba* and tracking down Ibrāhīm Pasha's killers. While he would serve in this post for a year and a half, he ultimately proved unable to do more than find and execute a few of those responsible, in addition to obtaining a rather empty promise of allegiance to the Ottoman state from the soldiers stationed in Egypt.⁴⁵⁷

Subsequently, in the spring of 1606, Meḥmed was dismissed as the governor of Egypt and assigned to the provincial governorship of Bosnia, also being charged with the duty of defending the city of Belgrade and its fortress in the neighboring province of Budin.⁴⁵⁸ He served in this capacity for several years, until he was recalled to Istanbul in late 1609 to serve as a vizier on the imperial council.⁴⁵⁹ The following summer, when the grand vizier Murād Pasha departed on campaign for the east, Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha was appointed and took up duties as deputy grand vizier,⁴⁶⁰ the first of several times he would hold this prestigious position. He continued to serve as the deputy grand vizier for over two years, as in the interim Murād Pasha died while on campaign and Naṣūḥ Pasha

⁴⁵⁶ For more on this seminal event in the early modern history of Ottoman Egypt, see Michael Winter, "Ottoman Egypt, 1525–1609," in *The Cambridge History of Egypt, Volume 2: Modern Egypt from 1517 to the End of the Twentieth Century*, ed. M.W. Daly (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 17–20; Winter, *Egyptian Society under Ottoman Rule*, 18–19; and Adam Sabra, "The Second Ottoman Conquest of Egypt": Rhetoric and Politics in Seventeenth Century Egyptian Historiography," in *The Islamic Scholarly Tradition: Studies in History, Law, and Thought in Honor of Professor Michael Allan Cook*, ed. Asad Q. Ahmed, Behnam Sadeghi, and Michael Bonner (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011): 149–177.

⁴⁵⁷ See Kâtib Çelebi, "Fezleke," 555–558 and Winter, "Ottoman Egypt, 1525–1609," 18.

⁴⁵⁸ Kâtib Çelebi, "Fezleke," 523 and Peçevî, "Peçevî Tarihi: 284–317," 107.

⁴⁵⁹ Ak, "Gürcü Mehmed Paşa," 509.

⁴⁶⁰ Kâtib Çelebi, "Fezleke," 563 and Ḥasan Beyzāde, *Hasan Bey-zāde Târîhi*, Vol. 3, 882. Cf. Nev'îzāde 'Atā'î, *Hadâ'iku'l-Hakâ'ik*, Vol. 2, 1548–1549, where Meḥmed Pasha is said to have been appointed in November 1609 and again in June 1610. The former date is when the grand vizier crossed over to Üsküdar in preparation for the next year's campaign, while the later was a reconfirmation of his position while the grand vizier remained out of the capital.

took up the grand vizierate as well as serving as commander-in-chief, remaining in the field and not returning to Istanbul until the autumn of 1612.⁴⁶¹ Upon the grand vizier's return to the capital, Meḥmed Pasha once again became a vizier on the imperial council, remaining there for some time despite the fact that Naşūḥ Pasha, considering him a threat to his position, attempted to have him appointed as the provincial governor of Erzurum so as to distance him from the capital; this reassignment was only prevented through the sultan's own intervention.⁴⁶² Moreover, when the sultan relocated to Edirne for the winter of 1613/1614—the same winter when Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha was removed from his post as chief treasurer—Meḥmed Pasha was charged with the defense of the Ottoman capital.⁴⁶³ The next year, following the execution of Naşūḥ Pasha and the ascension of Ḳara Meḥmed Pasha to the grand vizierate, Gürcī Meḥmed was advanced to the position of second vizier (*vezīr-i şānī*) and appointed deputy grand vizier for the second time when Ḳara Meḥmed Pasha departed on a campaign to take Yerevan from the Safavids.⁴⁶⁴ However, he somehow managed to earn the ire of Sultan Aḥmed at this time, and was subsequently dismissed both from the imperial council and from his position as deputy grand vizier,⁴⁶⁵ with Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha, at the time the governor of Aleppo, being sent back to Istanbul by the grand vizier to replace him.⁴⁶⁶

⁴⁶¹ Ak, "Gürcü Mehmed Paşa," 509 and Kâtib Çelebi, "Fezleke," 563, 574.

⁴⁶² Ak, "Gürcü Mehmed Paşa," 509.

⁴⁶³ Kâtib Çelebi, "Fezleke," 595 and Ak, "Gürcü Mehmed Paşa," 509.

⁴⁶⁴ Kâtib Çelebi, "Fezleke," 611 and Ak, "Gürcü Mehmed Paşa," 509. See also Adam Wenner, *Tagebuch der kaiserlichen Gesandtschaft nach Konstantinopel, 1616–1618*, ed. Karl Nehring (Munich: Finnisch-Ugrischen Seminar an der Universität München, 1984), 89.

⁴⁶⁵ Ak, "Gürcü Mehmed Paşa," 509; Kâtib Çelebi, "Fezleke," 619; Hasan Beyzāde, *Hasan Bey-zāde Târîhi*, Vol. 3, 889; and Peçevî, "Peçevî Tarihi: 284–317," 121. See also Wenner, *Tagebuch*, 51.

⁴⁶⁶ See section 3.2.1 above.

In the late spring of 1617, Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha was reinstated as a member of the imperial council, as third vizier, and over the next several years—through the end of the reign of Aḥmed I, the first reign of Sultan Muṣṭafā I (r. 1617–1618), the reign and subsequent murder of ‘Oṣmān II (r. 1618–1622), and the first half of the second reign of Sultan Muṣṭafā (r. 1622–1623)—Meḥmed would remain on the imperial council, now rising up to the rank of second vizier and now falling back to that of third vizier.⁴⁶⁷

While he thus appears to have gone initially rather unaffected by the events surrounding the 1622 regicide of ‘Oṣmān II, this would not long remain the case, as the fallout from that event would ultimately go on to dramatically impact his career, both for better and for worse.

In July 1622, two months after ‘Oṣmān II’s death, Gürcī Meḥmed very nearly became grand vizier as a result of the high tensions that reigned in the Ottoman capital and among the soldiers stationed there.⁴⁶⁸ At this time, the grand vizier Mere Ḥüseyin Pasha

⁴⁶⁷ Ak, “Gürcü Mehmed Paşa,” 509. Cf. Kâtib Çelebi, “Fezleke,” 669.

⁴⁶⁸ It is important to note certain distinctions regarding the capital’s standing *sipāhīs* and janissaries in connection with the concept of the *kul* (“slave” or “servant”). The term *kul* in fact serves as a truncated form of the phrase *kapu kulları* (“slaves/servants of the Porte”), who were the salaried soldiers that made up an important part of the Ottoman army. They were divided into two main groups, foot soldiers and cavalry. The foot soldiers were divided into seven corps called *ocaks* (“hearths”), which included most prominently the janissaries, as well as the young recruits in training (*‘acemis*), the armorers (*cebecis*), the artillerymen (*topçus*), the artillery gun carriage operators (*top arabacıs*), the bombardiers and mortar operators (*humbaracıs*), and the sappers (*lağımçıs*). The cavalry, on the other hand, were divided into six divisions (*bölük*), and were often termed the “people of the six divisions” (*altı bölük halkı*) in order to distinguish them from the timariot *sipāhīs* who held the revenue grants or fiefs known as timar throughout the empire. In the case of the events in the capital described in this chapter, all mention of *sipāhīs* refers, unless otherwise specified, to these “people of the six divisions.” As will be seen, there was a significant rivalry between the capital’s foot soldiers (primarily the janissaries) and its cavalry, as they frequently, and for a variety of reasons, supported different factions in the palace and administration. On occasion, though, they were also known to act in concert to put pressure on the government. The most comprehensive description of the *kapu kulları* is İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devleti Teşkilâtından Kapukulu Ocakları I: Acemi Ocağı ve Yeniçeri Ocağı* and *Osmanlı Devleti Teşkilâtından Kapukulu Ocakları II: Cebeci, Topcu, Top Arabacıları, Humbaracı, Lağımçı Ocakları ve Kapukulu Suvarileri* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1988).

(d. 1624)—who had assumed the position less than a month before, following the dismissal of Dāvūd Pasha for his role in the death of ‘Osmān—was pushed out of the office: he had removed the Agha of the Janissaries, ostensibly appointing him as the provincial governor of Karaman but in fact sending him secretly away from the city. This led to rumors that he had been killed, which prompted a group of janissaries and *sipāhīs* to bring a petition to the palace stating that they now feared for their own positions and lives, and requesting that Mere Hüseyn be deposed and executed. As related in the highly dramatized account of the chronicler and janissary veteran Hüseyn Tuğī (d. between 1623 and 1640), Sultan Muştafā drafted an imperial writ regarding the matter:

The chief black eunuch brought out the writ and read it to the [assembled] janissaries and *sipāhīs*. The substance of the writ was as follows: “My *sipāhī* and janissary sons! May God the Almighty bind you to the state and to the faith. I have been informed of the substance of your petition. I have three honest viziers: Dāvūd Pasha, Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha, and Lefkeli Muştafā Pasha. All three are fine men, but Muştafā Pasha is rather disconnected [from affairs]. Whichever of them you wish, [to him] I grant the vizierate.” When the writ had been read and its contents become known, from within the crowd Dāvūd Pasha’s men (*tevābi’ler*) said, “We want Dāvūd Pasha!” and Meḥmed Pasha’s men said, “We want Meḥmed Pasha!” and Muştafā Pasha’s men said, “We want Muştafā Pasha!” When this occurred, since the answers of the [different pashas’] men led to confusion, the *sipāhī* and janissary elders stepped forward and requested that the chief black eunuch once again go to the sultan with a petition. They said as follows: “It is not our place to tell the illustrious sultan to make so-and-so the [grand] vizier. Whichever of his servants from among these three viziers he wishes, let him grant the grand vizierate [to him]. We will accept this. [But] Mere Hüseyn Pasha should be removed from the vizierate and killed!” The chief black eunuch once again went into the sultan’s presence with their petition, upon which the royal favor swerved toward Muştafā Pasha, and [so] the illustrious sultan graced Lefkeli Muştafā Pasha [...] with the grand vizierate.⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶⁹ “Dârü’s-sa’âde Ağası dahı, sa’âdetlü Pâdişâh’un hatt-ı şerifin getürüp, Yeniçeri ve Sipâh tâ’ifesi’ne okudılar. Mefhûm-ı hatt-ı şerif, bu idî kim: ‘Benüm Sipâh ve Yeniçeri oğullarım! Hakk te’âlâ, sizi dîn <ü> devlete bağışlasun. Mefhûm-ı arzunuz, ma’lûmumuz oldı. Üç müstakîm Vezîr’üm vardur: Dâvud Paşa ve

This passage not only gives some sense of the divisive and turbulent environment that gripped the Ottoman capital in the months after Sultan ‘Osmān’s death, when the janissaries and *sipāhīs* were continually exerting their influence to pressure Sultan Muṣṭafā and/or the government into removing officials with whom they were dissatisfied, but it also shows the highly partisan nature of much of the chronicles composed at the time or soon after. As a janissary himself, Tuġī crafts his account of the incident to present the soldiers in as positive a light as the situation permits, depicting them as subservient to the sultan even as they rise up against the grand vizier. Moreover, the sultan’s final decision in the matter is not questioned, but presented as an unproblematic *fait accompli*.⁴⁷⁰ This contrasts with, for example, the later account of Kâtib Çelebi, who clearly draws on Tuġī’s detailed story but also dramatically shortens it while openly claiming that the real reason the sultan’s “royal favor” (*mezîd-i ināyet-i pâdişâhî*) fell upon Lefkeli Muṣṭafā Pasha (d. 1648) was because the latter was the husband of the sultan’s childhood nursemaid.⁴⁷¹ Such sharp discrepancies in contemporary chroniclers’ accounts and attitudes will be seen coming to the fore again

Gürci Mehmed Paşa ve Lefkeli Mustafa Paşa. Üçi de, eyü âdemlerdür; ammâ Mustafa Paşa, bî-garaz âdemdür. Her kangısın dilersenüz, Vezîrlîği virdüm’ diyüp buyurmuşlar. Hatt-ı şerîf, okınup, mefhûm, ma’lûm olduka, cem’iyyet içinden, Dâvud Paşa tevâbi‘leri: ‘Dâvud Paşa’yı isterüz!’ didiler ve Mehmed Paşa tevâbi‘leri: ‘Mehmed Paşa’yı isterüz!’ didiler ve Mustafa Paşa tevâbi‘leri: ‘Mustafa Paşa’yı isterüz!’ didiler. Söz, bu minvâl üzre olıcak, tevâbi‘lerin cevâbları bâ‘is-i ihtilâl olmağın, zümre-i Sipâh ve Yeniçeri’nün ihtiyârları, ilerüye gelüp, tekrâr, Dârü’s-sa‘âde Ağası’ndan recâ eylediler kim, Pâdişâh’a bir dahı varup, arz eyleye. Cevâbları bu idi kim: ‘Biz, sa‘âdetlü Pâdişâh’a fülân kimseyi Vezîr eylesün diyemezüz. Bu üç Vezîr’den her kangı kulin dilerse, Sadr-ı a‘zamlığı virsün. Bizim makbûlümüzdür. Hemân, Mere Hüseyin Paşa’yı Vezîrlikten ma‘zûl idüp, katl eylesün!’ didüklerinde, Dârü’s-sa‘âde Ağası, tekrâr, sa‘âdetlü Pâdişâh nazarına varup, arz eyledüklerinde, Mustafa Paşa hakkında, mezîd-i ināyet-i Pâdişâhî zuhûra gelüp, sa‘âdetlü Pâdişâh, Vezîr-i a‘zamlığı, [...] Lefkeli Mustafa Paşa’ya sadaka buyurdılar’. Hüseyin Tuġī, *Musîbetnâme*, 143–145.

⁴⁷⁰ For a comprehensive account of the variants and compositional history of Tuġī’s chronicle, see Baki Tezcan, “The History of a ‘Primary Source’: The Making of Tuġī’s Chronicle on the Regicide of Osman II,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 72, no. 1 (February 2009): 41–62.

⁴⁷¹ Kâtib Çelebi, “Fezleke,” 692.

below, in relation to the story of how Gürcî Meḥmed Pasha was himself deposed from the grand vizierate. In any case, soon after the removal of Mere Ḥüseyin Pasha, the Agha of the Janissaries whose deposition and disappearance had supposedly provoked the whole incident was found and reinstated.⁴⁷²

Nevertheless, Lefkeli Muştafa's term as grand vizier was not to last long, as complaints soon arose against him from within the *sipāhīs*.⁴⁷³ As is to be expected, the different chronicles recording what happened next, which this time would actually result in Gürcî Meḥmed Pasha being granted the grand vizierate, relate the story differently. Kâtib Çelebi writes as follows:

On the eleventh of Shawwal [1031; August 19, 1622], the sultan traveled to [the] Dāvūdpaşa [palace], and on the fifteenth a group of *sipāhīs* came to him with a petition stating, "The grand vizier is worthless and corrupt," and requesting his dismissal. The aforementioned [Lefkeli Muştafa Pasha] was dismissed and the seal of the grand vizierate was granted to Gürcî Meḥmed Pasha.⁴⁷⁴

The chronicle of Ḥasan Beyzāde presents a fuller, and much more critical, account:

While [Lefkeli Muştafa Pasha] was summoning the council [*i.e.*, serving as grand vizier] and gathering power and strength [around himself], he became extremely notorious among people both high and low for his brazen covetousness, and his lack of determination became obvious just as his complete stupidity became clear and evident, *like the sun at the hottest hours of the day*. As a result, some *sipāhīs*, saying they had some service to perform, went to the sultan's court, [where they] complained of the aforementioned vizier, said that he was corrupt, and requested that

⁴⁷² 'Abdu'l-kādir Efendi, *Tarih*, Vol. 2, 767.

⁴⁷³ Tuḡī's account—perhaps unsurprisingly, as Tuḡī was himself a janissary—specifically absolves the janissaries of involvement in the deposition of Lefkeli Muştafa, as it relates how the janissaries were questioned as to whether or not they had approached the sultan demanding his removal, to which they replied, "We have no complaint regarding our [grand] vizier, and none of our comrades went [to complain and demand his removal]" ("*Bizüm, Vüzerâ'dan şikâyetümüz yokdur ve yoldaşlar'umuzdan dahi, kimse varmamışdur*"); Ḥüseyin Tuḡī, *Musibetnâme*, 162.

⁴⁷⁴ "Şevvâlin on birinci günü pâdişâh Davud-paşa'ya göçüp on beşinci günü sipâh tâ'ifesi varup, '[V]ezîr-i a'zam hemec ve mürteşidir' diyü 'arz-ı hâl virüp ref'ini taleb itdiler. Mezbûr ma'zûl olup mühr-i sadâret Gürcü Mehmed Paşa'ya virildi." Kâtib Çelebi, "Fezleke," 692.

he be removed from his post. Upon this [request], the grand mufti Yahyâ Efendi was invited to that garden for consultation about who should be appointed, and when he arrived in the presence of the Shah of the World at the garden of Dāvūdpaşa, he held an audience with the queen mother (*vâlîde sultân*), and when they deliberated regarding the aforementioned matter, they made it known regarding Gürcî Meḥmed Pasha that there was no doubt whatsoever that he was supremely qualified and worthy of the post of grand vizier, and so the seal of the grand vizierate was conferred upon the aforementioned Gürcî [Meḥmed] Pasha, who immediately set about performing his duties.⁴⁷⁵

This version by Ḥasan Beyzâde is similar to Kâtib Çelebi's in terms of how it conveys the parties opposed to Lefkeli Muştafâ and what they complained of, but it provides much more detail about how Gürcî Meḥmed was selected; namely, through consultation by the grand mufti Yahyâ Efendi and the queen mother Ḥalîme Sultan. Yet considering Sultan Muştafâ's deficiencies—such as, for instance, the slightly farcical exchange that had led to the appointment of Lefkeli Muştafâ as grand vizier in the first place—this was scarcely an unreasonable method of selection, and in any case was not entirely unprecedented insofar as, throughout both of this sultan's brief reigns, the state was largely being run through, or at least under the auspices of, the grand mufti and the queen mother.

On the other hand, a very different approach is seen in 'Abdu'l-ḳâdir Efendi's account of the deposition of Lefkeli Muştafâ and the appointment of Gürcî Meḥmed:

⁴⁷⁵ “Ol dahı, akd-i Dîvân ve bezl-i tâb u tüvân iderken, tama' -ı hâm ile beyne'l-havâss ve'l-avâm, iştiḥâr-ı tâmm bulup, tasarrufa adem-i kudreti zâhir ve kemâl-i belâdeti, *-ke'ş-şemsi fi evkâti'l-hevâcir-*, rûşen ü bâhir olmağın, bir gün, zümre-i sipâh, ba'zı hıdmet bahânesiyle, âzim-i dergâh-ı Pâdişâh olup, Vezîr-i mesfûrdan iştikâ ve 'Mürteşîdür' diyü mesnedinden ref'ini recâ eyledüklerinde, 'Kimi nasb idelüm?' diyü meşveret için, Müftî-i zamân Yahyâ Efendi'yi ol bâğçeye da'vet eyledüklerinde, Mevlânâ-yı mezbûr, [Dāvūdpaşa-bâğçesi'nde, Şâh-ı âleme] varup, mûmâ-ileyhâ vâlîde sultâna mülâkât idüp, husûs-ı merkûmî müşâvere itdüklerinde, Gürci Mehemmed Paşa için, 'Sadâret-i uzmâ mesnedine elyak u ahrâ idüğü cây-ı iştibâh u imtirâ degüldür' diyü bildürmeğın, mühr-i vezâret ve hâtem-i sadâret, merkûm Gürci Paşa'ya inâyet buyurılıp, hıdmete mübâşeret eyledi.” Ḥasan Beyzâde, *Hasan Bey-zâde Târîhi*, Vol. 3, 952–953.

[T]he retainers (*tevābi* ‘) of the vizier Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha the Eunuch told [him], “Now is your opportunity. From here on out the grand vizierate is due to your majesty,” and said, “The current grand vizier Muṣṭafā Pasha has produced a whole troop of retainers who are outsiders (*ecnebi*).” Some of [Gürcī Meḥmed’s retainers] got together and [...] ⁴⁷⁶ came with great commotion to the Dāvūdpaşa palace and complained of the [grand] vizier Lefkeli to our felicitous sultan. [Thus] one group of retainers managed to get the grand vizierate granted to the vizier Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha the Eunuch. The command was conveyed to Aḥmed Agha, the marshal of the guards (*kapıcılar kedḥüdāsı*), [who] received the honored seal [of the grand vizierate] from the aforementioned Muṣṭafā Pasha, and [...] the vizier Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha the Eunuch took up the grand vizierate. ⁴⁷⁷

This version’s differences from those of Kâtib Çelebi and Ḥasan Beyzāde—regardless of the truth value of any of the versions—are striking. Here, unlike in the two other accounts, it is not explicitly *sipāhī* soldiers who are presented as the complainants and the efficient cause of the dismissal of Lefkeli Muṣṭafā and the appointment of Gürcī Meḥmed. Instead, the complainants are Meḥmed’s very own retainers, who have cajoled him toward allowing them to make their complaint in the first place. The text’s use of the word *tevābi* ‘ makes it uncertain who these instigators were. On the one hand, it is possible that they were *sipāhīs*, as the earlier text by Tuḡī regarding the appointment of Lefkeli Muṣṭafā Pasha to the grand vizierate uses the same word to refer to *sipāhī* partisans of the various candidates for grand vizier. In context, however, it seems much more likely that the word is being used to members of Gürcī Meḥmed’s own personal vizieral retinue. But regardless, the use of the phrase “retainers who are outsiders”

⁴⁷⁶ The dates given in the text have been removed in the translation (though not in the transcription, given in the following footnote), as they are clearly inaccurate in that they clash with those given in all other accounts, a common problem encountered in ‘Abdu’l-ḳādir Efendi’s chronicle.

⁴⁷⁷ “Vezîr Gürcü Hâdim Mehmed Paşa’nın tevâbi’i: ‘Fursat vaktidir. Şimden sonra Vezîr-i a’zamlık hazretinüze lâyıkdır’ deyü ‘Hâ[l]â Vezîr-i a’zam olan Mustafa Paşa bir alay ecnebi tevâbi’ peydâ etdi’ deyü ba’zılar ittifâklar edüp, bin otuz iki mâh-ı muharremü’l-harâmında guluvv ile Dâvud-paşa Sarayı’na varılıp, sa’âdetlü Pâdişâhımıza Vezîr Lefkeli’den şikâyet etdiler. Bir gürûh tevâbi’, Gürcü Hâdim Vezîr Mehmed Paşa’ya Vezîr-i a’zamlığı sadaka etdüdüler. Kapucular Kethudâsı olan Ahmed Ağa’ya fermân olunur. Hâtem-i şerîfî mezbûr Mustafa Paşa’dan taleb edüp, mâh-ı muharrem’in ibtidâsında, Gürcü Hâdim Vezîr Mehmed Paşa sadrda karâr ed[er].” ‘Abdu’l-ḳādir Efendi, *Tarih*, Vol. 2, 768–769.

(*ecnebī tevābi* ‘) indicates that ‘Abdu’l-ḳādir Efendi’s account is appealing to a binary distinction between the virtuous *sipāhī* and the corrupt and corrupting “other” (in this case, the “retainers” or *tevābi* ‘).

This was a distinction that Rifa‘at Ali Abou-El-Haj pointed out as an animating feature of the contemporary advice literature corpus.⁴⁷⁸ Within the declinist and even alarmist discourse of the advice literature authors,⁴⁷⁹ the timar *sipāhīs*—a career description that involved functions military, economic, political, and social in nature and that went back to the beginnings of the Ottoman imperial project—were envisioned as the Ottoman *ḳul par excellence* and placed in opposition to the newly specialized group of “merchant-investor”s who were supposedly transforming Ottoman lands “into mobile or liquid property” and “a source of revenue” rather than an inalienable possession of the state.⁴⁸⁰ In Abou-El-Haj’s analysis, these two figures, however much they may bear echoes of some of the changes occurring in the empire, were fundamentally little more than “literary invention[s] or reinvention[s]” meant to highlight a posited decline in morality from the self-sacrificing *sipāhīs* of old to the avaricious new others whose immorality was weakening the state.⁴⁸¹

While this binary opposition was quite common in the openly polemical advice literature of the period, it is relatively little seen, or at least not so apparent, in the chronicles, whose agenda and thus approach are of a very different sort—as are the backgrounds of

⁴⁷⁸ See Ali Abou-El-Haj, “The Ottoman Nasihatname.”

⁴⁷⁹ Abou-El-Haj focuses in particular on Muṣṭafā ‘Ālī and Ḳoçī Beğ.

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 21, 23.

the authors themselves. In this context, it is significant that ‘Abdu’l-kādir Efendi was himself of a military background: he had begun as a clerk for the artillery corps, hence his common appellation of *Topçular Kâtibi*, before being promoted in succession to captain of the artillery corps, clerk of the left wing cavalry corps (*şol ‘ulūfeciyān*), and clerk for the office of the barley comptroller (*arpa emīni*).⁴⁸² Thus, just as Hüseyn Tuğī was a janissary with a very particular stance, so was ‘Abdu’l-kādir Efendi a *sipāhī*, and both were quite dissimilar from Hasan Beyzāde and Kâtib Çelebi, whose backgrounds and training lay primarily in the Ottoman bureaucracy. Also especially noteworthy is the fact that ‘Abdu’l-kādir Efendi, in having Gürcī Mehmed’s retainers describe their supposed objection to Lefkeli Muştafā, pointedly uses the term *ecnebi tevābi* (“retainers who are outsiders”), which—while not clear exactly whom it might be referring to in this situation—nonetheless takes advantage of a contemporarily pregnant term that, as mentioned in the above discussion of Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha, effectively became a euphemism for the degeneration of Ottoman institutions. The “outsiders” or “others” (*ecnebi*) were effectively signals for anyone whom the author imagined, or presented, as being a new variety of social being whose position, manner, and approach—not to mention their personal background—made them lack the vaunted moral fiber of Ottoman *kuls* of an earlier era.

In the end, regardless of whether it was due to the dissatisfaction of *sipāhīs* or the machinations of his own personal retainers, or something else entirely, Gürcī Mehmed Pasha was now the grand vizier, having clearly come to the position in a manner

⁴⁸² Ziya Yılmaz, “Abdülkadir Efendi, Topçular kâtibi,” *DİA*, Vol. 1, 233.

contested among different groups in the palace and the capital, as the widely differing accounts of his appointment indicate. During Meḥmed's brief period in the post, one of the first pressing issues to arise was the capture and punishment of those responsible for the murder of Sultan 'Oṣmān. Quite apart from the interests of justice, this process was triggered by what was happening to *sipāhīs* and janissaries both in the capital and around the empire: they, as a class, were held responsible for the sultan's murder, and as a result had begun to be openly accosted. Toward the end of June 1622, for instance, an apparently crazed man had attacked and wounded several *sipāhīs* gathered in the Sultanahmed Mosque, denouncing them for what had been done to 'Oṣmān.⁴⁸³ Later, in January 1623 after Gürcī Meḥmed had assumed the grand vizierate, a group of *sipāhīs* came to the imperial council to complain that, in much of the provinces of Anatolia and Karaman, both judges (*kādī*) and ordinary subjects would harass them in the streets, shouting that they were 'Oṣmān's murderers. As a result, the *sipāhīs* demanded to the council that those who had killed 'Oṣmān should themselves be killed.⁴⁸⁴ Only a few days later, another group of *sipāhīs* rode from the vicinity of the palace to the Fatih Mosque and requested the grand mufti Yaḥyā Efendi to issue a fatwa to the effect that Sultan 'Oṣmān's murderers should be caught and killed, to which Yaḥyā Efendi responded that the issue required a *fermān* from the sultan.⁴⁸⁵ Under such pressures as these coming from the highly volatile army, there was effectively no choice but to act in the matter: within a week, the five men considered most responsible for 'Oṣmān's murder, including the former grand vizier Dāvūd Pasha, were all apprehended and

⁴⁸³ Hüseyin Tuḡī, *Musibetnâme*, 131–134 and Kâtib Çelebi, "Fezleke," 690–691.

⁴⁸⁴ Hüseyin Tuḡī, *Musibetnâme*, 186–187.

⁴⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 188–189.

executed. The chronicles once again differ, however, in terms of who is presented as the main actor in bringing these five to justice. As might be expected, Hüseyn Tuğt's account, which includes a long *meşnevî* poem in rhymed couplets describing the men's capture, shows the army itself as the ones initiating and completing the process with the blessing of the sultan, with the grand vizier playing almost no role whatsoever.⁴⁸⁶

Similarly, 'Abdu'l-kâdir Efendi also makes no mention of Gürcî Mehmed Pasha in his brief account of the execution of 'Osmân's murderers, instead ascribing the process to the grand admiral Halîl Pasha working alongside a few other state officials and senior army officers.⁴⁸⁷ On the other hand, Hasan Beyzâde explicitly states that it was Gürcî Mehmed Pasha, acting in line with the wishes of the populace, who had the men hunted down and killed.⁴⁸⁸ İbrâhîm Peçevî also directly attributes the men's executions to the grand vizier, describing one by one how he had them captured and killed and concluding with the phrase, "may God have mercy on the late Gürcî Mehmed Pasha" (*Allâh rahmet eylesün merhûm Gürcî Mehmed Paşa'ya*).⁴⁸⁹ Kâtib Çelebi's account makes no mention of the grand vizier in connection with this incident, but his later obituary for Mehmed Pasha makes his high opinion of the man clear, calling him "a benevolent vizier, pious and stable and constant" (*vezîr-i hayır-ḥ'âh, dîn-dâr ve merkezinde şâbit ü ber-ḳarâr*).⁴⁹⁰

The positive interpretation of Gürcî Mehmed Pasha, particularly as a grand vizier, was to

⁴⁸⁶ See *ibid.*, 189–203.

⁴⁸⁷ 'Abdu'l-kâdir Efendi, *Tarih*, Vol. 2, 769.

⁴⁸⁸ Hasan Beyzâde, *Hasan Bey-zâde Târîhi*, Vol. 3, 953.

⁴⁸⁹ İbrâhîm Peçevî, "Peçevî Tarihi: 317b–351a," 28.

⁴⁹⁰ Kâtib Çelebi, "Fezleke," 772.

be the narrative that won out in the end, going on to influence Na‘īmā’s later depiction of the man and continuing on well into the 20th century.⁴⁹¹

Whatever his qualities may or may not have been, however, Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha—like most of the grand viziers during this tumultuous period—was not to serve very long, and the major incident that would occur during his short time in the post, and ultimately indirectly lead to his removal, began in October 1622, just a month after his appointment. This was the uprising of Abaza Meḥmed Pasha (d. 1634), the governor of the province of Erzurum—and the husband of Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha’s niece, who was the daughter of Gürcī Meḥmed’s brother Hüseyn Pasha. Like many, especially in the provinces, Abaza Meḥmed appears to have considered the *kul* soldiers in Istanbul, and particularly the janissaries, responsible for the death of Sultan ‘Osmān, and so, ostensibly to avenge the regicide, he recruited an army of local *segbān* mercenaries, expelled the janissaries resident in the fortresses of Erzurum, and began to extend his control out into neighboring areas.

Initially, once the news of Abaza Meḥmed’s uprising had come to the capital, nothing was done to suppress it apart from officially reassigning the pasha to the province of Sivas. While this was a tactic rather typical of the time,⁴⁹² it was perhaps unsurprisingly ineffective, especially given the extent of the uprising and the high passions that reigned in the wake of the regicide—and it appears to have been the undoing of Gürcī Meḥmed

⁴⁹¹ For instance, İsmail Hami Danişmend mentions Gürcī Meḥmed as someone who “gained renown for getting revenge for [Sultan] ‘Osmān [II’s death],” and describes him as an “experienced and able vizier.” See Danişmend, *Osmanlı Devlet Erkânı*, 32.

⁴⁹² For more on contemporary state tactics of controlling rebellious elements through appeasement and consolidation, see Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats*, 189–228.

Pasha.⁴⁹³ The shortest and barest account of what happened next comes from ‘Abdu’l-kādir Efendi:

As one, the janissaries did not eat their soup and at the [imperial] council they requested [an audience with] the vizier Ḥasan Pasha. They demanded the grand vizierate. An imperial writ was issued. In a rush, the chief sergeant-at-arms (*çavuşbaşı*) went from the council with the order and the auspicious news [to the new] grand vizier Mere Ḥüseyin Pasha, whom he brought from his mansion with his [new] title to the imperial council. He was seated in the place of honor, and the illustrious seal was taken from the [now] deposed vizier Gürcü Meḥmed Pasha the Eunuch.⁴⁹⁴

No reasoning is given here for Meḥmed Pasha’s removal: all we get is that the janissaries were dissatisfied, as indicated by their refusal to eat, a traditional sign of discontent at the official ritual of the janissaries gathering together in the palace.

Tuḡī’s account,⁴⁹⁵ on the other hand, is much more forthcoming:

The former grand vizier Mere Ḥüseyin Pasha, out of a desire to [once again] possess the seal [of the grand vizierate], took the *sipāhīs* under his wing and secretly sent off a few pouches of florins. And [...] every night he would summon the janissary ward officers (*odabaşı*) to the residence of Aḥmed Çelebi of Tophane, and a distribution [of money] was made [as follows]: 25,000 *akçes* to each of the wards, 5,000 *akçes* to each of the ward officers, and to the chiefs of these thugs went 200 florins each, and more to some, and florins to some of the heads of the [janissary] wards, 5,000 gold pieces to just four people, and to the two senior aghas, who will not be named, went

⁴⁹³ Also worth noting here is that the rumblings regarding the Ottoman government’s inaction in this matter reached even to the English ambassador Thomas Roe. In November 1622, he wrote laconically, “In Asia are some rebellions, of which the court dares take no notice.” Roe, *Negotiations*, 108. One month later, he was more expansive: “In Asia are three open rebellions: one at Babilon [*i.e.*, Baghdad]; the other at Arzerum the border of Persia, by Tauris; and the third in Mesopotamia. The viziers here dissemble it, and dare take no knowledge, nor so much as to send a command thither, for feare to blow the fire, and putt all into combustion.” *Ibid.*, 114.

⁴⁹⁴ “[Y]eniçeri, Dîvân’da çorpa yemeyüp, ittifâkla Vezîr Hasan Paşa’yı taleb ederler. Vezîr-i a’zamlığı recâ ederler. Hatt-ı şerîf sâdir olur. Elbetde ‘ale’l-‘acele Çavuş-başı, Dîvân’dan fermân ile ve müjde haberi ile Vezîr-i a’zam olan Mere Hüseyin Paşa’yı sarayından ‘üvân ile Dîvân-ı hümâyûn’a getürdüler; sadrda karâr etdi. Ve ma’zûl Gürcü Hâdim Vezîr Mehmed Paşa’dan hâtem-i şerîf alın[dı].” ‘Abdu’l-kādir Efendi, *Tarih*, Vol. 2, 770.

⁴⁹⁵ The account given by Kâtib Çelebi is based on Tuḡī’s version, though it is quite a bit more concise. See Kâtib Çelebi, “Fezleke,” 702.

10,000 gold pieces each. Then, one day, they did not eat soup, and in the council it was asked, “What is the reason for this?” The response was, “We do not want Gürcî Mehmed Pasha!” To this the sultan said, “So what shall it be, then? [Whatever it is,] let that be!” And they said, “Now we want Mere. He must come to the council right now, at once. If he does not come... But of course he will come!”

And on Sunday [*sic*], 4 Rabî‘ al-Ākhir [February 5, 1623], the council was held, and some thirty to forty prudent *sipāhīs* as well as many of the janissary ward officers approached the Agha of the Janissaries and said, “Illustrious agha! A [grand] vizier is needed who will be diligent about the betterment of [the affairs of] the world. The world is in ruins, and this [grand] vizier has never been diligent.” The Agha of the Janissaries informed the grand vizier Mehmed Pasha of this matter. When he realized what was happening, Mehmed Pasha took out the imperial seal, surrendered it to the marshal of the guards, [and thereby] resigned from the vizieral office. The marshal of the guards took the seal, brought it to the Gate of Petition (*‘arz kapısı*), and surrendered it to the head of the private treasury (*hazînedârbaşı*), who took the seal and conveyed it to the sultan. The illustrious sultan said, “Whomever the servants wish, I grant the vizierate [to him]!” The head of the private treasury took the seal back out and said to the [assembled soldiers]: “Whomever you wish for the vizierate, the illustrious sultan has given [it to him]!” At this, all the *sipāhīs* and janissaries cried out, “May Mere Hüseyn Pasha be the grand vizier, it is him we want!” When they said this, the marshal of the guards took the seal and sent it to Mere Hüseyn Pasha. That very day, Hüseyn Pasha came to the council and was seated in the place of honor. Subsequently, the janissaries ate their soup. Gürcî Mehmed Pasha rose from the place of honor and went and cleansed himself (*âbdesthâneye girüp*), and then, before his horse could even arrive, he mounted a guardian’s horse and left.⁴⁹⁶

⁴⁹⁶ “Sadr-ı a‘zamlıktan ma‘zûl Mere Hüseyn Paşa, mühri almak ârzûsiyle Sipâh tâ‘ifesi’ni kolına alup, hufyeten, bir kaç kîse, filori gönderüp [...] Tophânelü Ahmed Çelebi’nün evine, her gice, Odabaşılar’ı çağurdup, her odaya yigirmibeşerbin akçe ve Odabaşılar’un her birine beşerbin akçe ve zorbabaşılar’a ikişeryüz filori ve ba‘zına dahı ziyâde ve Ocak Ağaları’ndan ba‘zına filori ve ancak, dört kişiye, beşerbin altun ve iki Büyük Ağa’ya, adı dinilmez, onarbin altun, tevzi‘ olunup, hemân, bir gün, Dîvân’da, şorba yimeyüp: ‘Nedür aslı?’ dinildükde: ‘Gürci Mehmed Paşa’yı istemezüz!’ dinildi. ‘N’ola? Olsun!’ diyü Pâdişâh, cevâb virdükde: ‘İmdi, biz Mere’yi isterüz. Hemân, şimdi, Dîvân’a gelmek gerekdür. Gelmeyince, olmaz, elbette gelür!’ didiler.

“Ve yine, mâh-ı Rebî‘u’l-âhır’un dördinci, <Yek>şenbe günü, Dîvân olup, zümre-i Sipâh’dan otuz, kırk nefer müdebbirler ve Yeniçeri Odabaşıları’ndan niçeler, Yeniçeri Ağası’na varup, eyitdiler: ‘Devletlü Ağa! Islâh-ı âlem ile mukayyed olur, bir Vezîr gerekdür. Âlem, harâba vardı, bu Vezîr, aslâ, mukayyed olmadı’ didüklerinde, Ağa, bu husûsı Vezîr-i a‘zâm Mehmed Paşa’ya i‘lâm eylediler. Mehmed Paşa, kazıyyeye vâkıf olıcak, mühri Pâdişâhîyi çıkarup, Kapucılar Kethudâsı’na teslîm idüp, kendüsi mesned-i Vezâret’den ma‘zûl eyledi. Kapucılar Kethudâsı, mühri alup, Arz-kapısı’na getirüp, Hazînedârbaşı’ya teslîm eyledi. Hazînedârbaşı dahı, mühri alup, Pâdişâh cânibine ilettiler. Sa‘âdetlü Pâdişâh: ‘Kul, kangısın isterse, ben, Vezîrliğî ana virdüm!’ diyüp, buyurdılar. Hazînedârbaşı, mühri taşraya çıkarup, Kul tâ‘ifesi’ne: ‘Vezîrliğe kimi istersenüz, sa‘âdetlü Pâdişâh, virdi!’ didüklerinde, zümre-i Sipâh ve Yeniçeri’den fi’l-cümle, çağrışup, ‘Mere Hüseyn Paşa, Vezîr-i a‘zâm olsun, biz, anı isterüz!’ didüklerinde, Kapucılar Kethudâsı, mühri alup, Mere Hüseyn Paşa’ya ilettiler. Ol gün, Hüseyn Paşa, Dîvân’a gelüp, Sadr’da, karar eyledi. Ba‘dehü, Yeniçeri, şorba yidiler. Gürci Mehmed Paşa, Sadr’dan

While this account is detailed almost to a fault—likely owing to the fact that Tuğ̃ī’s text was intended for oral recitation⁴⁹⁷—it still does not provide much concrete reasoning for specific dissatisfaction with Meḥmed Pasha as the grand vizier, instead resting content with the *sipāhīs*’ and janissaries’ joint yet imprecise claim that he lacked diligence in carrying out his duties and making it abundantly clear that they preferred Hüseyin Pasha in the post, with the money he handed out doubtless having swayed their opinion to some extent. However, elsewhere in Tuğ̃ī’s text, he *does* in fact give some idea of why the army was dissatisfied, and it was in specific connection with Abaza Meḥmed Pasha and his uprising. On December 23, 1622, shortly after news of the events in Erzurum had reached the capital, a group of Istanbul janissaries went to the grand vizier’s mansion:

The Agha of the Janissaries, Muṣṭafā Agha, went to the home of the grand vizier Meḥmed Pasha, and when he [and the janissaries accompanying him] were inside the mansion, the janissaries created tumult and said to the vizier, there in his mansion, “In the province of Erzurum, Abaza Pasha has rebelled against the sultan: he took the possessions of our comrades serving as the fortress garrison and expelled them from the fortress, and he [also] put the senior local janissaries in the area under house arrest [so that] they cannot leave their homes. The whole of the reason behind Abaza’s rebellion lies in Istanbul with the grand vizier Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha and rests in his patron (*babalık*) the grand admiral Ḥalīl Pasha,⁴⁹⁸ [and that is why] he refuses to leave the sultan’s fortress. For Abaza Pasha married the daughter of Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha’s brother Hüseyin Pasha and is still with her. That is why Abaza Pasha insults

kalkup, abdesthâneye girüp, oturup, ba‘dehû, atı dahı yitişmedin, bir çâvuş’un atına binüp, gitdi.” Hüseyin Tuğ̃ī, *Musibetnâme*, 205–207.

⁴⁹⁷ For more on this view of Tuğ̃ī’s text, see Piterberg, *An Ottoman Tragedy*, 73–77 and Tezcan, “The History of a ‘Primary Source’,” 47.

⁴⁹⁸ Abaza Meḥmed had originally been a soldier in the rebel army of Canbuladoğlu ‘Alī Pasha in the first decade of the 17th century before being captured. While on the verge of execution, Ḥalīl Pasha, who was a commander in the anti-rebel campaigns in Anatolia at the time, took him into his personal retinue, which was what began Abaza’s rise through the ranks. See Piterberg, *An Ottoman Tragedy*, 175.

us so!” And with that, [the janissaries] created an uproar. Constables (*zâbıt*) intervened to prevent a quarrel and [then] dispersed [the crowd].⁴⁹⁹

Thus, the Ottoman army—or at the very least the janissaries—apparently believed that the grand vizier’s family connection with Abaza Meḥmed Pasha, as the latter’s wife’s uncle, kept him from acting against the uprising, prompting the janissaries to later, according to Tuḡī’s account, demand Gürcī Meḥmed’s removal for neglect of duty; that is, of the specific duty to suppress the uprising in Erzurum, which was specifically aimed at avenging the death of Sultan ‘Oṣmān on the janissaries. Once again, then, Ḥüseyin Tuḡī’s account presents the grand vizier’s resignation as, through and through, a justified act on the part of the soldiery who forced Gürcī Meḥmed’s hand in this affair.

In this, Tuḡī’s version of events is the polar opposite of the versions presented by both Ḥasan Beyzāde and İbrāhīm Peçevī. The former’s account of the grand vizier’s deposition begins, pointedly, with a kind of introduction offering high praise for Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha’s qualities and accomplishments:

For several months [*i.e.*, during his time as grand vizier], [Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha] dealt with matters of importance. *In none of his actions was there any fault, and in his person there was no lack of zeal.* According to the widespread desire, he had Dāvūd Pasha—who had wrongfully spilled the blood of Sultan ‘Oṣmān and removed him from the face of the earth—killed, along with the former governor of Vidin, Meydān Bey, and others who had contributed to the killing [of ‘Oṣmān] [...]. *He grew famed*

⁴⁹⁹ “Yeniçeri Ağası Mustafa Ağa, Vezîr-i a’zâm Mehmed Paşa kapusına varup, dâhil-i sarây oldukda, Yeniçeri tâ’ifesi, gulüvv idüp, Vezîr<’e>, sarâyında, eyitdiler: ‘Vilâyet-i Erzurum’da, Abaza Paşa, Pâdişâh’a âsî olup, kal’a muhâfazasına me’mûr olan yoldaşlar’umuzun mâlın alup, kal’adan ihrâc eyledi ve ol cânibde olan yirlü ekâbir-i Yeniçerileri, göz habsine koyup, evlerinden taşra çıkartmaz oldu. Hep, Abaza’nun isyânına sebep, Âsitâne’de, Vezîr-i a’zâm olan Gürci Mehmed Paşa’ya dayanur ve babalığı Kapudan Halîl Paşa’ya istinâd idüp, Pâdişâh’un kal’asından çıkmağa inâd ider. Zîrâ, Abaza Paşa, hâlâ, Vezîr-i a’zâm olan Gürci Mehmed Paşa’nun birâderi Hüseyin Paşa’nun kızını evlenüp, almış idi. Ol sebebden, Abaza Paşa, bize bu hakâreti ider!’ diyüp, ziyâde şamatalar eylediler. Zâbıtlar, araya girüp, gavgayı men’ u def’ eylediler.” Ḥüseyin Tuḡī, *Musibetnâme*, 184–185.

for his excellent name and was much mentioned by the tongues of men. And as his office required, he also had Kelender Uğrısı executed.⁵⁰⁰

Not only does this paint Gürcî Meḥmed as personally without fault, it also depicts him as the perfect servant of the Ottoman state, going about his duties with efficiency and dedication. And this passage is immediately followed by the entrance of the antagonist, Mere Ḥüseyin, and his partners in crime:

The tyrant named Mere Ḥüseyin Pasha was determined to be grand vizier once again. He dispensed valuable gifts to [the *sipāhīs*] through Süleymān the Albanian, a *sipāhī* thug (*zorba*), and other malevolent persons. And thus one day, that group known for its villainy came together as one with a common purpose and went to the illustrious [imperial] council. They descended upon the grand vizier [Gürcî Meḥmed Pasha], saying, “Once you made some of our innocent comrades disappear, spilling their blood unjustly. We do not want you in the grand vizierate, and we do not wish for some eunuch to occupy the post of grand vizier.” And they said, “If he is not removed [from office], we will draw daggers and make his body disappear.” And so, of necessity, [Gürcî Meḥmed] was removed and the seal of the grand vizierate was granted to Mere Ḥüseyin by all the [other] viziers [on the council].⁵⁰¹

Here, three significant new elements are introduced into the story: first, an accusation is made that the grand vizier had had some, presumably *sipāhīs*, killed, although nothing else recorded regarding Gürcî Meḥmed’s life seems to indicate such an action on his part; second, Meḥmed’s eunuchism is explicitly presented as a cause of the army’s discontent with him, despite this being by no means unprecedented, since several grand

⁵⁰⁰ “[B]ir kaç ay, tedbîr-i umûr idüp, *cümle-i ef’âlinde aslâ, kusûr ve zâtında fütûr yoğ iken* ve Sultân Osmân’un hûn-ı nâ-hakkını isâle ve arsa-i âlemden izâle itmeğe sebep olan Dâvûd Paşa’yı ve ümerâdan sâbıkâ, Vidin beyi Meydân Bey’i ve sâ’ir katle mübâşir olanları, [...] taleb-i cumhûr ile katl itdürüp, *nâm-ı nik ile meşhûr ve elsine-i enâmda mezkûr olmuş iken* ve Kelender Uğrısı’nı dahı muktezâ-yı riyâset üzre, siyâset itdürmüş.” Ḥasan Beyzâde, *Hasan Bey-zâde Târîhi*, Vol. 3, 953; emphasis added.

⁵⁰¹ “Mere Ḥüseyin Paşa didükleri zâlim, yine, vezîr-i a’zam olmağa âzim olup, sipâh zorbalarından Arnavud Süleymân, dahı ba’zı bed-gümân kimesneler vesâtatı ile tâ’ife-i mezbûreye bezl-i mâl-i firâvân eylemeğin, bir gün, ol ta’ife-i şakâvet-unvan [dahı, yek-dil ü yek-zebân olup,] cem’iyyet ile Dîvân-ı âlî-şâna varup, Vezîr-i a’zam-ı sâlîfû’l-beyâna, ‘Sen, bir zamânda, [bî-günâh,] ba’z-ı yoldaşlarımızı izâle ve hûn-ı nâ-haklarını isâle itdürmüş idün, biz, seni bu sadrda, istemezüz ve tavâşî kısmının sadâret-i uz mâ makâmında olduğunu dilemezüz’ diyü hüçûm ve ‘Eger, ref’ eylemezlerse, hançer üşürüp, vücûdın ma’dûm iderüz’ diyü kelîmât eyledüklerine binâ’en, [bi’z-zarûre, kaldurup,] girü, Mere Ḥüseyin’e hâtem-i vezâreti teslîm ve cümle-i vüzerâ üzerine takdîm eylediler.” *Ibid.*, 953–954.

viziers throughout the 16th century had also been eunuchs;⁵⁰² and third, the *sipāhīs*—here, significantly, the janissaries are not mentioned—openly threaten to kill the grand vizier if he is not removed or does not step down. Considered together, these additions to the story paint a picture of the Ottoman center being held under the thumb of partisan and capricious army thugs during the tense period following the murder of Sultan ‘Osmān II, a picture that is entirely at odds with the one created by Hüseyin Tuğī. Tuğī, it should be noted, does not always depict the capital’s *sipāhīs* and janissaries as justified or even innocent: on several occasions, such as the account of Mere Hüseyin’s distribution of money quoted above, he too describes soldiers as thugs. However, he nearly always tends to be quite careful to avoid generalization by indicating that such behavior is in the minority, whereas Hasan Beyzāde, by contrast, tends to be rather more slapdash about making such fine distinctions. This approach not only reflects the authors’ own backgrounds and attitudes, but also reveals the fissures that had begun to open among the various classes (*i.e.*, the soldiery, the administration, and the bureaucracy) and only been exacerbated by the traumatic murder of Sultan ‘Osmān and the events that followed in its wake.

Ibrāhīm Peçevī relates the grand vizier’s deposition on similar lines to Hasan Beyzāde’s account:

[Though] he had [previously] been well informed of affairs and cautious to act, [now] Mere Hüseyin Pasha conspired with thugs who came to the [imperial] council and said, “A false pasha cannot be our vizier” and falsely accused [Gürcī Meḥmed

⁵⁰² Of course, it should also be noted that this is the historian’s 20/20 hindsight: the revolting soldiers can hardly be expected to have been familiar with the backgrounds of grand viziers from half a century and more before.

Pasha], saying, “Once he had one of our men killed.” And immediately they had Mere brought [to the imperial council] and removed Gürcî [Meḥmed] Pasha and sat Mere in his place. But this time he removed all justice and law (*şerʿ*). There was no end to his bizarre conduct.⁵⁰³

While more concise than Ḥasan Beyzāde’s version, the first two additional elements are still there, albeit rather than being directly denigrated as a eunuch, this time Gürcî Meḥmed is termed a “false pasha” (*sāḥte paşa*), which may in fact be meant as an indirect swipe at his eunuchism, though it seems more likely to be an accusation that he is a person considered unfit for viziership, and particularly for the grand vizierate. Moreover, Peçevî’s version also showcases the process of vilification of Mere Ḥüseyin, as against the praise for Gürcî Meḥmed, that was to become the standard narrative: as already mentioned above, this narrative typically presented Meḥmed as a loyal servant who did all he could to clean up the mess that followed upon the murder of ‘Oṣmān II, while Ḥüseyin Pasha, over time, came to be presented as a tyrant who rose to the heights of power on the backs of thuggish soldiers.⁵⁰⁴

All of these subtly differing accounts of the deposition of Gürcî Meḥmed Pasha feature nuances—in terms of the particular actors involved, the reasons advanced, the threats made—that indicate the respective authors’ favoring different factions among all those at play during the tumultuous period following the death of ‘Oṣmān II. The trauma of this regicide effectively split the capital apart, and Meḥmed Pasha’s rise to the grand

⁵⁰³ “[A]ḥvālden ḥabîr ve ḥüsn-i tedbîre kâdir âdem iken Merre Ḥüseyin Paşa zür-balar ile yek-dil olup dîvâna vardılar ve ‘Bize sâḥte paşa vezîr olmaz.’ didiler ve ‘Muḥaddem bizden bir âdem ḳatl itdürmişdür.’ diyü bühtân itdiler ve fi’l-ḥāl Merre’yi getürtdiler ve Gürci Paşa’yı ḳaldurup yirine Merre’yi oturtdılar. Ammâ bu kerre ‘adl ü şer’i ḳaldurdu. Evzâ’-ı ğarîbesine nihâyet yok.” İbrâḥîm Peçevî, “Peçevî Tarihi: 317b–351a,” 30.

⁵⁰⁴ This perception and/or presentation persisted into the 20th century, and can be seen in, *e.g.*, Danişmend, *Osmanlı Devlet Erkânı*, 32.

vizierate and near immediate fall therefrom are emblematic of this split, showing that, whatever his talents may or may not have been, his inability to play the changed political game required during this period only hastened his deposition.

Once Gürcü Meḥmed Pasha had been deposed, Hüseyn Pasha took the grand vizierate, though he would only hold the post for six months before his own deposition at the hands of the capital's soldiery. Meḥmed Pasha, in the meantime, was exiled to Bursa, where he would remain for several months.⁵⁰⁵ He returned in the fall of 1623, and soon afterwards was back on the imperial council, this time as the second vizier.⁵⁰⁶ When, a month later, the new grand vizier Çerkes Meḥmed Pasha crossed over to Üsküdar to depart on a campaign against Abaza as well as the Safavids, who had captured Baghdad and reignited war, Gürcü Meḥmed Pasha was appointed deputy grand vizier for the third, and what would prove the final, time.⁵⁰⁷

In the end, it was the failure of Çerkes Meḥmed Pasha and his successor, Hāfız Aḥmed Pasha (c. 1564–1632), to carry out a successful campaign against the Safavids and recapture Baghdad that would lead to the death of Gürcü Meḥmed Pasha. The fullest account of the pasha's death is provided by the English ambassador Thomas Roe, who was active in Istanbul between 1621 and 1628, and was himself on good terms with Gürcü Meḥmed, whom he clearly admired. Roe's account runs as follows:

⁵⁰⁵ According to an anonymous Hebrew chronicle of the period, he was exiled on April 1, 1623—nearly two months after he was deposed—and returned to Istanbul on October 16, by which time Mere Hüseyn himself had been deposed in favor of Kemānkeş 'Alī Pasha (d. 1624). See Nuh Arslantaş and Yaron Ben Naeh, eds. and trans., *Anonim Bir İbranice Kroniğe Göre 1622–1624 Yıllarında Osmanlı Devleti ve İstanbul* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2013), 52, 61. At the same time, the simultaneously deposed grand admiral Hālīl Pasha was also exiled, to Malkara. See Kâtib Çelebi, “Fezleke,” 702.

⁵⁰⁶ *Anonim Bir İbranice Kroniğe Göre*, 68.

⁵⁰⁷ Kâtib Çelebi, “Fezleke,” 725 and *Anonim Bir İbranice Kroniğe Göre*, 69.

Upon the 3 of this moneth [*i.e.*, July 3, 1626], the Spahees assembled in the Hippodrome, and mutinously came to the Mufti, and demanded of him sentence of death against the good old chimacam Georgi Mehmet, bassa; and that hee would rise and enforme the grand signor of their will; which, if hee refused, they threatened a generall revolt, and to do their own justice. There was no remedy, and the emperour being informed, was pleased to displace him, and to give the office to Regeb, capten-bassa [*i.e.*, Topal Receb Pasha], and his to the Imroh-or-bassi, hoping thus to quiett all matters; but this gave them no satisfaction: in greater fury, they aske his life. The poor chimacam retired into the grand signors protection, who used all meanes (by offering to confine, or banish him) to appease them; but nothing would content and separate them, untill hee was strangled, and throwne out naked; over whose dead body they barbarously trampled, cutting off his nose and eares.⁵⁰⁸

As for the ostensible reason for Gürcî Mehmed's execution, Roe states the following:

“The occasion taken up against him was, that hee did conceal the yll estate of the army at Babilon [*i.e.*, the siege of Baghdad]; flattering the grand signor [...]; and certeyne letters, written part in bloud, as from the camp, were produced to accuse him.”⁵⁰⁹ This reasoning accords with that given by Kâtib Çelebi, the only Ottoman chronicler of the time to devote space to the issue, who, however, states that it was not *sipāhīs* alone who rose up, but janissaries as well, with this group demanding an imperial edict for Mehmed Pasha's death and then, once they had obtained it, continuing to his home and strangling him there, with Kâtib Çelebi pointedly describing the pasha as “the unfortunate one” (*derdmend*).⁵¹⁰ Subsequently, Topal Receb Pasha (d. 1632)—who was the grand admiral at the time—was appointed deputy grand vizier in Mehmed's place. Kâtib Çelebi's claim that janissaries were also involved in Gürcî Mehmed's death, however, is lent more nuance by Roe's account of what happened in subsequent days: as he tells it, a

⁵⁰⁸ Roe, *Negotiations*, 532. A similar account is given in another of Roe's letters; see *ibid.*, 524, where Roe points out that the pasha's strangulation and subsequent mutilation occurred the following day (*i.e.*, July 4), when the *sipāhīs* also demanded, unsuccessfully, the lives of a few others.

⁵⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 532.

⁵¹⁰ Kâtib Çelebi, “Fezleke,” 767–768.

group of janissaries—“either envious that they had no part in [this] last sedition, or being innocent, unwilling to participate in the infamy, or rather it was their turne to doe somewhat”⁵¹¹—came to the sultan’s private seaside residence by night not only to proclaim their own innocence, but also to request that revenge be exacted upon those who they blamed for the incident, which included several higher-ranking janissary and *sipāhī* officers “who held councells together, and were become heads of factions,” with the chief actor being the senior deputy (*segbānbaşı*) to the Agha of the Janissaries and with the newly instituted deputy grand vizier Receb Pasha being party to their plans, possibly with the intent of usurping Gürcī Meḥmed’s post.⁵¹² Ultimately, over the coming days, the young Sultan Murād IV (r. 1623–1640) had the accused parties hunted down and executed, though Receb Pasha, not having been openly incriminated by the accusing janissaries, continued in his post.⁵¹³

Having weathered the storm of the more grievous days following the murder of Sultan ‘Osmān and managed to get out of the grand vizierate with his life, Meḥmed Pasha thus nevertheless fell victim to yet another uprising by the Istanbul soldiery. Upon his death, the poet Veysī composed an invective chronogram to mark the occasion:

that ass and enemy of the people of culture, the dog Gürcī who, | murdered, has
found his station in the deepest depths of hell || Hāṣimī stuck his dick in [Gürcī’s] ass
thrice | and said his chronogram, “The massive pig has died”⁵¹⁴

⁵¹¹ Roe, *Negotiations*, 532–533.

⁵¹² *Ibid.*, 533.

⁵¹³ *Ibid.*, 533–534.

⁵¹⁴ “ehl-i dil düşmeni ḥar ya‘nī köpek Gürcī kim | katl olup қа‘r-ı cehennemde maḳāmın buldı || Hāṣimī kīrini üç kere şokınca götine | dedi tārīḥini anıḡ ḳoca ḥinzīr öldi”; IUNEK TY 511, 64b [marginal]. The chronogram’s date, given in the words *ḳoca ḥinzīr öldi*, adds up to AH 1032, corresponding to November

The Hāšimī mentioned in the chronogram is the pen name of Baḳḳālzāde Seyyid Meḥmed Çelebi (d. 1627), a poet who was especially renowned for his chronograms.⁵¹⁵ Whatever Veysī’s quarrel with Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha may have been, and at one point the pasha seems to have been on good terms with him,⁵¹⁶ it seems clear that this oddly polarizing figure—whom the English ambassador Thomas Roe once described as “a very wise man, that knows all the state and canons of this goverment [*sic*], [...] a man, if there be any remedy sufficient to cure this broken and diseased monarchy, best able to find, and apply it”⁵¹⁷—made numerous enemies high and low. It was Nef‘ī, though, who had launched the most sustained verbal assault on him, an assault that, though in word only, was every bit as violent as Meḥmed Pasha’s final end.

4.2 Nef‘ī’s invectives against Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha

There is an anecdote that records, likely with a good deal of license and dramatic flair, an encounter between Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha and the poet Nef‘ī. Preserved in a miscellany (*mecmū‘a*) that was apparently compiled by the historian Muştafā Na‘īmā (d. 1716),⁵¹⁸ the anecdote begins with the arrival in Istanbul of a Safavid envoy bearing tribute:

5, 1622–October 24, 1623, is incorrect, though it does correspond to the year in which Meḥmed Pasha resigned from the grand vizierate.

⁵¹⁵ See Baḳḳālzāde Seyyid Meḥmed (Hāšimī) Çelebi, “Hāšimī, Hayatı, Edebi Kişiliği ve Dîvânı’nın Tenkidli Metni,” ed. Ayşe Bulan (Master’s thesis, Selçuk University, 1993).

⁵¹⁶ This, at least, according to Veysī’s own foe Nef‘ī, who accused Meḥmed Pasha of “laughing uproariously at Veysī’s ridiculous statements” (*kaḥḳahā mīzanad az-yāva-e ṭab‘-e Vaysī*); IUNEK TY 511, 64b [marginal].

⁵¹⁷ Roe, *Negotiations*, 90.

⁵¹⁸ An inscription on the front flyleaf of this manuscript—University of Michigan, Isl. Ms. 409, of which I am currently preparing an edition and analysis—reads as follows: “Exquisite miscellany in the hand of the late and laudable Na‘īmā of superior virtue, [may] God’s mercy [be upon him]” (*mecmū‘a-i nefise bā-ḥaṭṭ-ı merḥumu‘l-mebrūr Na‘īmā-yı bāhirü‘l-fezā‘il, raḥmetü‘l-lāh*).

When Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha was the grand vizier, a learned envoy came from Persia. His eminence the grand vizier prepared for the envoy a gathering in the style of a banquet, arranging for and having laid out all the foods and other necessities. The poet Nef'ī—who was from Ḥasanḳal'ası near Erzurūm—was present at the grand vizier's gathering, and he began to talk at such great length that no one else was able to say a word. Finally the pasha demeaned him by saying, “Now that you've found your long-lost sister (*hem-şireḡ*), you're not giving anyone a chance to speak,” upon which Nef'ī expiated the embarrassment by replying, “My lord, while my father may have been a Kızılbaş, my mother was a Georgian.”⁵¹⁹

The exact dating of the anecdote recorded here is difficult. As is, with Meḥmed Pasha explicitly named as the grand vizier, it would seem that the encounter—assuming it actually occurred, though there is no reason to doubt that it or something like it did, even if the actual details are somewhat fanciful—took place in or soon after October 1622, when an envoy by the name of Agha Rezā came to Istanbul bearing an immense tribute from Shah Abbās I (r. 1588–1629), just a few short months before war erupted once again between the Ottomans and Safavids.⁵²⁰ However, the encounter may also have occurred several years earlier. In one of his studies of Nef'ī, Abdülkadir Karahan briefly mentions a different version of what is undoubtedly the same anecdote.⁵²¹ Karahan reports that he saw the anecdote in a miscellany in the collection of the bookseller Raif Yelkenci, and says that it describes Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha as being the deputy grand vizier, naming the Safavid envoy as “Burun Qāsim Ḥān” or “Yādigār-ı 'Alī Sultān.”

This was an envoy who initially came to the Ottoman capital in late 1615 and remained

⁵¹⁹ “Laṭīfe: Gürcī Meḥmed Paşa şadr-ı a'zam iken 'Acem'den bir ferzāne elçi gelüp şadr-ı 'ālī ḥazretleri elçiye ziyāfet şeklinde tertīb-i meclis-i ta'ām, temhīd-i levāzım u ikrām edüp şā'ir Nef'ī, ki Erzurūm kurbunda vāḳi' Ḥasanḳal'ası nām mevzi'den idi, ol meclis-i 'ālīde bulunup elçi ile dūr u dirāz mükālemeye āgāz edüp kimseye söz düşürmez. Paşa daḡı ta'rīzen 'Hem şireḡi bulunca kimseye fırsat-ı kelām vermez oldun' dedikde 'Sultānım, gerçi babam Kızılbaş idi lakin vālidem Gürcī idi' dēyü cevāb edüp def'-i ḥicālet eylemişdir.” Muştafā Na'imā (?), *Ulāletü'l-mecālis, mecmū'ātu'n-nefā'is*, University of Michigan Isl. Ms. 409, 62. R. Aslıhan Aksoy-Sheridan and I are currently preparing an edition and analysis of this miscellany.

⁵²⁰ Hüseyin Tuḡī, *Musibetnâme*, 165, 169–170 and Kâtib Çelebi, “Fezleke,” 693.

⁵²¹ Karahan, *Nef'i: Hayati, Sanati, Şiirleri*, 11.

there for approximately two years (including a short stint imprisoned in the Yedikule fortress in 1616).⁵²² The beginning of the envoy's period in Istanbul coincides with Gürci Mehmed Pasha's second deputy grand vizierate, before he was replaced by Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha, and so this dating—*i.e.*, late 1615 or early 1616—for the encounter between Mehmed Pasha and Nefī seems just as plausible.

In any case, there are a few significant points that the anecdote raises. For one thing, the phrasing of the anecdote carefully emphasizes Nefī's origins in Hasankale (now Pasinler) in eastern Anatolia. At the time, this was not especially far from the border with Safavid Persia, particularly when considered from the vantage point of the Ottoman center in the capital of Istanbul. On a basic level, this emphasis on Nefī's place of origin serves as a simple background to or explanation for Mehmed Pasha's insulting suggestion that Nefī may be a Kızılbaş; that is to say, a Safavid sympathizer at a time when tensions between the two polities were once again beginning to mount. On another level, though, the anecdote's parenthetical reference to Nefī's origins in the empire's east highlights his alterity: he was neither from Istanbul nor from the central imperial lands of western Anatolia and Rumelia. This alterity is precisely the quality that the grand vizier's insult plays upon, relying on the fundamental binary opposition between the Sunni Ottomans and the Shiite Safavids that was present in contemporary discourse both official and literary. The grand vizier also belittles the Safavid envoy, likely as a show of superiority, by feminizing him through the word "sister" (*hem-şīre*). As for

⁵²² Though Karahan claims, *ibid.*, that this envoy's mission occurred in the year AH 1028/1619 CE, he is mistaken about the date; see 'Abdu'l-kādir Efendi, *Tarih*, Vol. 2, 687–689 and Kātib Çelebi, "Fezleke," 611, 620, 638–640.

Nef'ī's response, although at a glance it might seem almost to flatter the Georgian grand vizier, in fact it throws Meḥmed Pasha's *own* alterity as a slave of non-Muslim origin back in his face. What is more, by implying that Nef'ī's supposedly Kızıldaş father took a Georgian woman and sired a son on her, the response also implicitly sets up a hierarchy of power whereby the Georgians are placed conspicuously below the Kızıldaş/Safavids. This was not an empty statement: at the time, whether it was in 1615 during the Ottoman-Safavid war or in 1622 just a few years after it, Georgia and the eastern Caucasus were firmly under Safavid control. Thus, Nef'ī's brief response to Meḥmed Pasha's simple otherization of him proves to be a more multilayered and indeed more complete otherization.

If the banquet described in the anecdote above was indeed held in late 1622, then it was only a short time later that Nef'ī produced his first invective against Meḥmed Pasha. Written in the *kaşīde* form and extending over nearly sixty distichs, this invective begins with much the same approach as Nef'ī's earlier *terkīb-i bend* against Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha; namely, introducing the target by providing an eschatological sense of the broad, empire-wide disaster he portends. Unlike in the case of Aḥmed Pasha, however, this time Nef'ī immediately trains his gaze on the grand vizier's body:

alas! it's the ruin of religion and state and shame of Islam | that a giant demonic hermaphrodite holds the seal of Solomon || not a giant but a packhorse with an elephant face | if he just had a cheap saddle I'd call him Dajjāl's ass || [...] || fate would not have shat such a turd out into this era | had Saturn's⁵²³ massive cannonball

⁵²³ In Islamic astrology, the planet Saturn (*Kaywān*) is regarded as especially maleficent and boding great ill; see, e.g., al-Bīrūnī, *The Book of Instruction in the Elements of the Art of Astrology*, ed. and trans. R. Ramsay Wright (London: Luzac & Co., 1934 [reprint: Bel Air: The Astrology Center of America, 2006]), 26–27.

not torn its ass askew || fate shat blood right up till it defecated on the grand vizierate | whoever sees the blood cleaving this era's ass will think it's the dawn⁵²⁴

Just as had been the case with the long invective against Etmekçizāde, the advent of Mehmed Pasha is depicted as a calamitous event orchestrated by fate, though here, in keeping with Nef'ī's focus on the grand vizier's actual physical body, fate is also described in violently scatological terms. As regards Mehmed Pasha himself, in bodily terms there are two main points of attack in these lines.

The first of these, and indeed the more prominent, is the insult leveled at Mehmed Pasha for his physical size, calling him a “giant” (*dīv*)⁵²⁵ and a “packhorse” (*bārgīr*) and likening his face to that of an elephant.⁵²⁶ Throughout the invective, in fact, the grand vizier's size and girth is one of the elements most consistently returned to, and indeed, to judge from a contemporary miniature depicting Mehmed Pasha (see Illustration 3),⁵²⁷ he appears not to have been a small man. Significantly, just as in these opening lines, throughout the poem the grand vizier's size is typically mentioned by way of comparison to either a mythical being or an animal: for the first, in addition to *dīv* he is

⁵²⁴ “zehī hūsran-ı dīn [ü] devlet [ve] neng-i Müslimānī | ki ola bir dīv-i hūṣṣā mālik-i mühr-i Süleymānī || ne dīv efsārī yok bir bārgīr-i fīl-peyker kim | ḥar-ı Deccāl'dır dērdim eğer olaydı pālānı || [...] || felek bir böyle boğ şıçmazdı fark-ı rūzgāra [ger] | götün kec yırtmasaydı gülle-i kūpāl-ı Keyvānī || felek kan şıçdı tā yestehleyince şadr-ı dīvāna | şafağ şanur gören hūn-ı şikāf-ı kūn-ı devrānı”; ULLWCO 662, 2b.

⁵²⁵ In Persian mythology, *dīv* refers to a kind of demon or monster; see Mahmoud Omidasalar, “Dīv,” *Encyclopædia Iranica*, December 15, 1995, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/div> and Clément Imbault Huart and Henri Massé, “Dīv,” *EF*², Vol. 2, 322–323. The word also came to mean “giant” in Turkish.

⁵²⁶ The elephant comparison is also used in one of the distichs not quoted, where Nef'ī writes: “like Nev'izāde [‘Atā’ī], he would assume the shape of an inverted elephant | if the long trunk in his ass were a donkey dick” (*dönerdi Nev'izāde gibi şekl-i fīl-i ma'kūsa | götünde kīr-i ḥardan olsa ger ḥortūm-ı fūlānī*); ULLWCO 662, 2b. The reference to Nev'izāde 'Atā'ī refers to an invective quatrain Nef'ī had written against him, calling him a water buffalo (*cāmūs*) being sodomized by an unidentified figure whom Nef'ī calls “Camel Lips” (*Üştürleb, Şütürleb*), with the latter's penis being likened to an elephant's trunk; see IJNEK TY 511, 79a.

⁵²⁷ I would like to thank Tülün Değirmenci for drawing my attention to this miniature, located in Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi H. 1263, 259b. See Tülün Değirmenci, *İktidar Oyunları ve Resimli Kitaplar: II. Osman Devrinde Değişen Güç Simgeleri* (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2012), 257.



Illustration 3

Miniature depicting the presentation of a book
 to Gürci Mehmed Pasha (center)

also termed an “insatiable ghou” (*ġül-ı ŧehvānı*),⁵²⁸ a “torpid demon” (*‘ifrīt-i girān-cān*),⁵²⁹ and a “monster” (*cānever*);⁵³⁰ for the second, he is likened in turn to a “dropsical crocodile” (*timsāh-ı müstesķī*),⁵³¹ a “Georgian dog” (*köpek Gürcī*),⁵³² a “massive mastiff” (*koca samsun*),⁵³³ a “forest bear” (*hırs-ı çengelistan*),⁵³⁴ a “pig” (*hınzır*),⁵³⁵ and a “fool-deceiving ass” (*har-ı ebleh-fırīb*).⁵³⁶ The cumulative effect is clear: Gürcī Mehmed Pasha, the grand vizier, is not only not human, but evil. This is only emphasized through the invective’s occasional more detailed descriptions, one of the key themes of which is the pasha’s ambition, often likened—in keeping with the emphasis on his weight and the comparisons to evil beings and animals—to a gluttonous appetite, eating, and defecating. Thus, for instance, the following passage:

that cursed one’s covetousness is to some extent within his self, for out of ambition | he would swallow a wild pig [whole] from the tail down, if he found one || and out of ambition he snapped off and swallowed his own testicles, for why else | would they bother castrating such a torpid demon || who, if he shat, would cover the mountains of the seven climes in his shit | and, if he farted, would set the domes of the seven vaults [of the heavens] trembling?⁵³⁷

These dehumanizing and demonizing elements are provided with a concise summation in the distich that concludes the invective’s first section: “he’s the solid frozen fart of the

⁵²⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵²⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵³⁰ *Ibid.*, 4a.

⁵³¹ *Ibid.*, 3a.

⁵³² *Ibid.*, 3b.

⁵³³ *Ibid.*

⁵³⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵³⁵ *Ibid.*, 4a.

⁵³⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵³⁷ “‘tama’ bir meretebe zātında mel’ ünüñ ki hırsından | yudardı kuyruğundan bulsa [ger] hūk-ı beyābānı || kōparmıŧ kendü yudmuŧdır řaŧağın hırs ile yoħsa | nice hādım ēderler böyle ‘ifrīt-i girān-cānı || ki ŧıçsa baŧdırır boķa cibāl-ı heft iķlīmi | oŧursa lerze-nāk eyler kıbāb-ı heft eyvānı”; *ibid.*, 2b–3a.

demon of Mount Damāvand⁵³⁸ | the bodily curdled turd of the patriarch of the Christians.”⁵³⁹ With these lines, Meḥmed Pasha is doubly otherized, being presented as the waste product of beings—the demon Žaḥḥāk and the Christian patriarch—who are already others in the context of Persian Islamicate mythology and the Sunni Muslim Ottoman Empire. The Christian connection, in particular, is one that Nef‘ī will return to again.

The second point of bodily attack introduced in this long invective’s opening lines is the grand vizier’s status as a eunuch, which is introduced using the word “hermaphrodite” (*ḥünṣā*), thereby effectively denying the grand vizier the long since legitimate status of palace eunuchs and presenting him instead as a freak of nature. On one level, attacking Meḥmed Pasha for his eunuchism—especially by framing it in terms of hermaphroditism—is yet another means of demasculinization, which was among the standard tactics in the Islamicate and Ottoman invective traditions, dating all the way back to pre-Islamic invective in Arabic: this was an especially effective tactic in a highly masculinized and homosocial society such as that which pertained in the Ottoman Empire. On another level, however, this attack had profound political implications insofar as it suggested that a eunuch had no business governing the empire. Moreover, this assault on Meḥmed Pasha’s eunuchism seems not to have been a personal preoccupation for Nef‘ī alone: as related in the previous section, one of the accounts of

⁵³⁸ Mount Damāvand is a mountain south of the Caspian Sea near Tehran that, in Persian mythology, was where the hero Farīdūn was said to have chained the malevolent figure Žaḥḥāk; see Bernard Hourcade and Aḥmad Tafāzzoli, “Damāvand,” *Encyclopædia Iranica*, November 14, 2011. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/damavand>.

⁵³⁹ “mücessem žarṭa[-yī] yaḥ-beste[-yī] dīv-i Demāvendī | muṣavver-beste[-yī] efs[ü]rde[-yī] batrīk-i Naṣrānī”; ULLWCO 662, 3a.

Mehmed's later removal from the grand vizierate relates that the soldiery who rose up against him explicitly stated that a eunuch was not fit to be grand vizier. Although Mehmed Pasha was by no means the first eunuch to serve in this position, he was the first to be forcibly removed from the post and, more importantly, to have his very identity as a eunuch put forward as a reason for his deposition.⁵⁴⁰

The upshot of Nef'î's introducing his long invective with a focus on Gürcî Mehmed Pasha's body is his ultimate presentation of that body, and hence of the man himself, as a blight on the position of grand vizier. This, it will be noticed, is an echo of the similar discourse that had posited that Etmekçizâde Aḥmed Pasha was not fit for viziership owing to, among other things, his physical appearance. In the invective against Gürcî Mehmed Pasha, however, the grand vizier's body is made even more culpable, and is used to impute "faults" that are even more blameworthy:

look at what he's done! look at the sedition that has arisen | since he soiled the grand vizierate with his very body || so what if he was educated in the imperial harem | his unprecedented body still has no like in this world || can someone like him be a worthy vizier of the land of Islam, | this pigherd of a Georgian Armenian Laz Gypsy? || it's a rebuke to all Georgia if he is [really] Georgian | may the succor-granting sovereign not hear of his oppression and calumny⁵⁴¹

In the first distich, by removing any reference to actual actions (or lack thereof) on the part of the grand vizier, Nef'î presents Gürcî Mehmed Pasha's already described body as

⁵⁴⁰ It should be noted here that anti-eunuch sentiment appears to have been on the rise among the Ottoman soldiery for some time. In a 1603 uprising, for instance, the *sipāhīs* and janissaries had claimed that the eunuch Hüsrev Pasha had been appointed as a military commander by the chief black eunuch and the deputy grand vizier, also a eunuch, solely because of his eunuchism. Thus, palace eunuchs appear to have been viewed by the soldiery as something of a corrupting faction of sorts. For the uprising, see Kâtib Çelebi, "Fezleke," 417–418. For analysis of the uprising, see Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites," 54–63.

⁵⁴¹ "neler ê[t]di ne deñlü fitne peydâ oldu 'âlemde | édince tâ vücūdiyla mülevves şadr-ı dīvānı || tütalım kim ḥarīm-i muḥteremde perveriş bulmuş | vücūd-ı bī-naẓīri kim bulunmaz aḡa bir sâñī || vezīr-i mülk-i İslām olmaḡa lâyıḡ mıdır andan | toñuz çobanı Gürcī Ermenisi Lazkī Çingānı || sitemdir cümle Gürcistān'a Gürcī olursa bu | meded-güs[t]er melik işitmesün bu zūlm [ü] bühtānı"; ULLWCO 662, 2b.

if it were the efficient cause of “sedition” (*fitne*) in the empire. This is a veiled reference to the uprising of Abaza Meḥmed Pasha in Erzurum, which, it will be recalled, had begun soon after Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha’s appointment as grand vizier and whose instigator was in fact married to the new grand vizier’s niece. Ultimately, of course, Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha’s dismissal from office would come about as a result of Istanbul janissaries who, convinced that the grand vizier was reluctant to suppress Abaza Meḥmed’s rebellion owing to their family connections and incited by the former grand vizier Mere Hüseyn Pasha, rose up and demanded he be removed from his post. This gives one a clear sense that Nefī, just as ten years earlier he had written against Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha as part of what was in essence a smear campaign, was now also taking part in another such campaign against this man who, despite being in ostensibly the most powerful post in the empire, was in fact extremely vulnerable during a particularly volatile period in the empire’s history. As will be seen below, a number of other signs in both this invective and the second long invective Nefī produced against Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha indicate that this was in fact the case.

But to return to the grand vizier’s supposedly inauspicious body, the second distich quoted above reinforces the first one’s implication that his body itself was effectively a curse on the grand vizierate. Significantly, in this distich—quite in line with the discourse that animates Nefī’s *Sihām-ı każā* and indeed the majority of the early 17th-century invective corpus—nature trumps nurture: regardless of the fact that Gürcī Meḥmed received the excellent and thorough education afforded by being brought up in

the palace,⁵⁴² his “unprecedented” (*bī-nazīr*) body nevertheless makes him unfit to be grand vizier. While Nef‘ī, later in this same poem, later backtracks on this point to instead present Gürcī Meḥmed as something of an uncultured ignoramus, the fact that he openly makes this point here in the midst of his opening salvo against the grand vizier is especially telling.

Equally telling is the following distich, where Nef‘ī explicitly sets up the Ottoman Empire as “the land of Islam” (*mülk-i İslām*) and places it, and its primary administrator the grand vizier, in stark opposition to a series of “outsiders” who, strictly speaking, are hardly outsiders at all. In the matrix that Nef‘ī establishes, what makes Meḥmed Pasha not “worthy” (*lāyık*) to administer to the Islamic Ottoman state is his identity as a Georgian, which the second hemistich here lumps together with Armenians, Laz,⁵⁴³ and Gypsies, subsuming them all under the epithet “pigherd” (*toḡuz çobanı*)—a shorthand reference to being a Christian. The implication is that there is a possibility that the grand vizier is a crypto-Christian, and thus unfit to serve the Ottoman state, whose administrators were, particularly after the Sunnitization process enacted in the mid-16th century, expected to be Sunni Muslims. Within the invective discourse utilized by Nef‘ī, Meḥmed Pasha’s mere origin as a Christian slave is enough to suggest that he may still

⁵⁴² For a brief overview of the organization of the inner palace (*Enderūn*) and its education, see İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devletinin Saray Teşkilâtı* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1988), 300–339.

⁵⁴³ In Metin Akkuş’s supposedly critical edition of portions of the *Sihām-ı każā*, he chooses the word “Turk” (*Türki*) for this line, despite the fact that it appears in only one of the manuscripts that he consults; see Nef‘ī, *Hicvin Ankâları*, 150. This is not only a highly misleading choice, but it can also serve to highlight the problems of putting together critical editions, which—especially for a work with as much variation from manuscript to manuscript as the *Sihām-ı każā*—effectively creates a pastiche of a text that in fact does not exist in reality. For a good critique of the assumptions behind the creation of critical editions of texts in the Ottoman context, see Ahmed Ateş, “Metin Tenkidi Hakkında,” *Türkiyat Mecmuası* 7–8 (1942): 253–267.

be a Christian, just as, in one of the quatrains Nef'ī produced against 'Abdu'l-bāḳī Pasha described in the previous chapter, the mere fact of the latter's place of birth in Aleppo was enough to rhetorically associate him with a fanciful ancestry among the Jews of Palestine: in this era, once you are far enough away from the Ottoman center, whether in terms of location or sociocultural origin or both, anything may serve as ammunition for rhetorical otherization.

Another point that emerges from this distich of Nef'ī's has to do with the specific groups he associates with Meḥmed Pasha—the Georgians (*i.e.*, the pasha's actual origin), Armenians, Laz, and Gypsies—and the origin of the man who, at the time, was the grand vizier's staunchest opponent; namely, Mere Ḥüseyin Pasha. Ḥüseyin Pasha was an Albanian, presumably a Christian by birth, who had been taken into service as a cook for Saṭırcı Meḥmed Pasha, commander of the Ottoman forces in Europe between 1597 and 1599, before enrolling with the *çavuş* corps, after which he entered into personal service under Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha and the chief black eunuch Muştafā Agha, connections that subsequently enabled him to advance steadily through the palace ranks all the way up to the grand vizierate, being appointed to this post in June 1622, during the aftermath of the death of Sultan 'Oşmān II.⁵⁴⁴ As will be recalled from the previous section, it was Ḥüseyin Pasha who was instrumental in getting Meḥmed Pasha to step down from the grand vizierate, which he did by organizing a group of *sipāhīs* to rise up and demand his removal. At least some of these *sipāhīs* appear to have been, like

⁵⁴⁴ For a full summary of Ḥüseyin Pasha's career, see Meḥmed b. Meḥmed, "Nuhbetü't-Tevârih ve'l-Ahbâr ve Târih-i Âl-i Osman," 39–40 [*Târiḥ-i âl-i 'Oşmān*].

Hüseyin Pasha, of Albanian origin.⁵⁴⁵ This points to a significant aspect in relation to Ottoman palace servants, one that was first described in a brief overview by Metin Kunt.⁵⁴⁶ As Kunt points out, “there are indications that Ottomans from slave origins retained various elements of their early background other than merely in the sphere of religion. They remembered their birthplace and exhibited a special tie to it.”⁵⁴⁷ But beyond this, there was at the same time a kind of factionalization occurring in the early 17th century, with the “two *cins* factions [seeming] to have been [...] the Albanians and the Bosnians on one hand, the ‘westerners’ as it were; on the other hand [were] those from the Caucasus region, Abazas (Abkhaz), Circassians, and Georgians, making up the ‘eastern’ group.”⁵⁴⁸ This divide is clearly visible not only in the machinations of the Albanian Hüseyin Pasha to have the Georgian Meḥmed Pasha removed from the grand vizierate with the assistance of a certain cadre of Albanian *sipāhīs*, but also in the line by Nef‘ī where he inserts Meḥmed Pasha into a matrix of Armenians, Laz, and Gypsies. The former two groups, while they were not a source of slaves in the manner of Georgians, who were a largely separate polity, were in fact peoples of a broad “eastern” group, which as Kunt points out was beginning in the early 17th century to fall by the wayside in favor of the “western” group.⁵⁴⁹ This would eventually, by the early 18th century, lead to “the tendency on the part of some Ottoman writers to deride the ‘easterners’ ruthlessly,” with Kunt specifically naming the historians Na‘īmā and

⁵⁴⁵ See, for example, Ḥasan Beyzāde, *Hasan Bey-zāde Tārīhi*, Vol. 3, 953–954, quoted above.

⁵⁴⁶ See Kunt, “Ethnic-Regional (*Cins*) Solidarity,” 233–239.

⁵⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 235.

⁵⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 237.

⁵⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

Silāhdār Meḥmed Agha (d. 1726/27).⁵⁵⁰ As we can see from Nef'ī's invective against Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha, however, this derision had begun well before that and was in fact largely coincident with the ascendancy of the Albanians and Bosnians.

As for Nef'ī's use of "Gypsies" (*Çingān*) within this matrix, this will be a matter explored in more detail in Chapter 5 in connection with the reciprocal invectives between Nef'ī and a coterie of *'ālim*-littérateurs, an exchange in which this epithet is extensively used. For the time being, suffice it to say that insult via the appellation "Gypsy" was a kind of wild card of otherization and verbal ostracism. In relation to Nef'ī's line against Meḥmed Pasha, then, it works almost as a way of underlining and emphasizing the grand vizier's alterity, which in turn reinforces the fact that this so-called "eastern" group of palace servants was forcibly on the wane.

Apart from his focus on the body of Meḥmed Pasha in this invective, Nef'ī also devotes a great deal of space to establishing the reason why he is writing against the grand vizier. As he makes clear, the initial trigger, at least, was personal: "God damn this cursed one! this is the third time | he has dismissed me [from my post] for no reason, though I had been his panegyrist."⁵⁵¹ While it is unclear what post(s), or when, Nef'ī was dismissed from that he attributed to the machinations of Meḥmed Pasha, we do know that he produced a panegyric to him while he was serving as deputy grand vizier, and thus between either 1610 and 1612 or 1615 and 1617.⁵⁵²

⁵⁵⁰ *Ibid.* 238.

⁵⁵¹ "üçüncü def'adır bu Hakk belâsın vère mel'ünî | ki yok yère beni azl êtdi olmuşken senâ-h'ânî"; ULLWCO 662, 3a.

⁵⁵² See Nef'ī, [*Dīvān*], 134–136.

But whatever Nef'î's personal animosity may have been, the poem subsumes his ire within the framework of a long *fakhr*, or self-praise, section that takes up the entire middle of the work and emphasizes Mehmed Pasha's apparent neglect of the grand vizier's cultural duty to support poets and artists, which, similarly to his invectives against Etmekçizâde Ahmed Pasha, Nef'î connects to a fundamental ignorance on the grand vizier's part. Thus, this *fakhr* section—which lauds previous viziers' and sultans' granting Nef'î gifts and favors in return for his praise—concludes with the following lines linking Mehmed Pasha's unfitness for his post with the injustice he has inflicted on the poet personally:

an ignorant Georgian ass has become grand vizier | I did not begrudge him the
splendor of praise || he gladly begrudged me in the distribution of posts | like a
massive mastiff he snatched the bread from my hand || if he apologizes saying, 'Who
heeds a *sipâhî*? it's a lie | why, then, did he take such a parade of inane beasts under
his wing? || this is difficult for me, but in truth it is justice | why did I, like an ass, sing
the praises of such an ignoramus || who has no intelligence, maturity, or morality? |
why would anyone praise such a bear of the forest?'⁵⁵³

While this contains all the standard elements seen earlier in Nef'î's invectives against Etmekçizâde Ahmed Pasha—*viz.*, the target's ignorance, greed, association with unworthy or disreputable people, and sheer ugliness—what is especially significant is the claim that the grand vizier took from Nef'î a financial opportunity. Unlike in the earlier case of his apparently having dismissed Nef'î from a post on three separate occasions, this is a claim that can in fact be identified. As surmised by Özer Şenödeyici, this refers to an action taken by Mehmed Pasha whereby he attempted to clear Istanbul's

⁵⁵³ “vezîr-i a'zam oldu bir hâr-ı Gürcî-yi nâ-dân | aña çok görmedim ben ol kadar dârât-ı 'unvânı || o çok gördi baña devletle yağma-yı menâşıbdâ | koca samson gibi kapdı elimden bir dilim nânı || sipâha söz geçer mi dëyü 'özü eylerse kizb eyler | niçün êtdi himâyet bir alay beyhüde hayvânı? || baña bu güc gelür ammâ hâkîk[at]da 'adâletdir | niçün hârlık êdüp medh eyledim bir böyle nâ-dânı? || ki ne idrâkı var ne rüşdi var ne hüsni ahlâkı | hiç insân medh eder mi böyle hîrs-ı çengelistânı?"; *ibid.*, 3b.

sipāhī corps of elements that were not conducive to the peace and security of the city.⁵⁵⁴

However, Şenödeyici's statement is somewhat weakened by a lack of detail attendant upon failing to look at contemporary sources. The action in question, though, is described in detail in Hüseyin Tuğî's account of the death of 'Osmân II and its aftermath, when the Ottoman capital was descending into chaos. The ground was laid during the grand vizierate of Hüseyin Pasha, who, as will be recalled, put forth a great deal of effort to win over the capital's *sipāhīs*. Hüseyin Tuğî's description of what Hüseyin Pasha did immediately upon taking office is concise: "And in the final third of the month of Sha'bân [July 1–10, 1622], the grand vizier Mere Hüseyin Pasha took the *sipāhīs* under his wing and bestowed the trusteeships and guardianships of all the waqfs in the Ottoman state upon the *sipāhī* corps."⁵⁵⁵ 'Abdu'l-kâdir Efendi provides considerably more detail:

The [newly appointed] grand vizier Hüseyin Pasha distributed services in his own mansion. To the *sipāhīs* (*bölük halkı*) he distributed all the sultanic and vizieral waqf trusteeships together with their conditions, as well as the rights to collect revenue (*voyvodalık*) and all their services. Throwing caution to the wind, he distributed [these] to inappropriate [people] and to certain outsiders who did not know the meaning of service [to the state], as well as to immoral [people]. [...] With no consideration for veterans, a whole parade of retainers [*tevâbi*] and troublemakers said, "This is an opportunity!"⁵⁵⁶

⁵⁵⁴ See Özer Şenödeyici, "Nef'î ve Gürcü Mehmed Paşa Mücadelesinin Tarihi ve Edebî Boyutları," *Gazi Türkiyat* 6 (Spring 2010), 324–325.

⁵⁵⁵ "Ve yine, mâh-ı Şa'bân'un aşer-i âhırında [1031], Vezîr-i a'zam Mere Hüseyin Paşa, Sipâh tâ'ifesin kolına alup, Devlet-i Osmâniyye'de, cemî'-i evkâfların tevliyetler ve nezâretlerin zümre-i Sipâh'a bahş eylediler." Hüseyin Tuğî, *Musibetnâme*, 139–140.

⁵⁵⁶ "Vezîr-i a'zam olan Hüseyin Paşa kendü sarayında hizmet tevzî' ederler. Cemî'-i evkâf-ı selâtîn tevliyetlerin ve vüzerâ tevliyetlerin ve meşrûtları ma'an ve dahi voyvodalıkları ve cemî'-i hizmetleri bölük halkına tevzî' ederler. Sû'-i tedbîr edüp, nâ-mahalle ve ba'zı ecnebiyye hizmet nâmın bilmezlere ve bî-edeblere tevzî' ederler. [...] Emekdârlara bakmayup, bir alay tevâbi', bir alay müfsid kavm: 'Fursatdur' de[r]." 'Abdu'l-kâdir Efendi, *Tarih*, Vol. 2, 766. Cf. Roe, *Negotiations*, 114: "The mutined soldiour, even in this city, the head of the empire, is growne to that height of insolency, that they demand in troopes, at

Essentially, so as to get the capital's *sipāhīs* on his side, Hüseyin Pasha opened the floodgates to give them and all who might join them access to the revenue sources of waqfs and *voyvodalıks*. While 'Abdu'l-kādir Efendi does strike the typical notes here of how this led to the "inappropriate" (*nā-maḥalle*) and "outsiders" (*ecnebī*) joining the *sipāhī* divisions, it is Hüseyin Tuḡī who proves more forthcoming on what this process led to, an account that he provides when describing how Meḥmed Pasha later attempted to rectify the situation:

And on the twenty-second day of the month of Dhū'l-hijja [October 28, 1622], the honorable *ulemā* and the esteemed viziers and the Agha of the Janissaries and the aghas of the [*sipāhī*] divisions and various aghas of the [janissary] units all held consultation regarding [how to] bring order to the faith and the world and bring the bandits under control. For in the city of Constantinople, many bandits had emerged and made it a habit to rob people at night. This was why they held consultation. And also, some of the *sipāhīs* who had been appointed as waqf trustees had come to think that waqf income was an untroubled treasure, latching on with covetous hands and gluttonous teeth and getting involved in hashish and halwa, journeying thirstily to the sweet [red] water in the valley of wine, and busying themselves [only] with eating and drinking. For this reason, [at the consultation] it was said, "Let those *sipāhīs* who are unable to behave responsibly not be made waqf trustees!" For some council scribes (*dīvān kâtipleri*) and others from other positions had seen the *sipāhīs* behaving so notoriously and become *sipāhīs* themselves. Furthermore, these new *sipāhīs* had come to the gates of the aghas and, without ever having received any salary (*ulūfe*), had been made waqf trustees without even being officially enrolled, simply joining the ranks even though most of them had never even been among those who had crossed over to Üsküdar with the intention of [engaging in] battle. The grand vizier Meḥmed Pasha looked into the statutes that had come down [from the past] and declared, "Let the veteran *sipāhīs* serve; [the privilege of] service belongs to the veteran!" Those experienced *sipāhīs* who had served acceded to the vizier's statement, but the aforementioned new *sipāhīs* did not accede.⁵⁵⁷

this court, all offices of gayne, to be stewards to the revenues of churches, which are great; to take the farms of customes, and there committ those outrages that are unsufferable."

⁵⁵⁷ "Ve yine, mâh-ı Zü'l-hicce'nün yigirmiikinci günü [1031], Ulemâ'-i kirâm ve Vüzerâ'-i izâm ve Yeniçeri Ağası ve Bölük Ağaları ve sâ'ir Ocak Ağaları, nizâm-ı dîn ü dünyâ için ve eşkiyâ zabt olması için, müşâvere eylediler. Zîrâ, şehri Kostantiniyye'de, niçe eşkiyâ zuhûr eylemiş idi kim, gicelerde, âdem soymağı âdet idinmişler idiler. Ol sebebden, meşveret eylediler ve hem, tevliyet alan Sipâh'un ba'zısı, mâl-ı evkâfi genc-i bi-renc zann idüp, hırs eliyle yapışup, dendân-ı tama' birle, bengî, helvâya girişdüği ve

Nefî, it appears, was one of those who did not accede, and his invective against the grand vizier was his response: especially given this passage's specific mention of Ottoman scribes, of which Nefî had long been one, it is possible—albeit still uncertain—that Nefî was indeed among those “new *sipâhîs*” who joined with the intention of deriving extra income from the waqfs, before Mehmed Pasha shut down this possibility. While Şenödeyici thus characterizes the reason behind Nefî's invective as “not actually personal,”⁵⁵⁸ it would in fact be more accurate to call it personal vengeance prompted by a specific set of historical conditions unique to that period.

All this of course raises the question of whether or not Nefî, who was so staunchly opposed to Mehmed Pasha, was at the same time a supporter of Hüseyn Pasha and his varied machinations. Unfortunately, there is no definitive answer to this question. When Hüseyn Pasha first became grand vizier in June 1622, Nefî was confirmed in his position as comptroller of mines, despite the fact that there was, as always on such occasions, some amount of reshuffling of posts.⁵⁵⁹ Additionally, Nefî also wrote a panegyric to Hüseyn Pasha, and indeed this work contains clear references to the invective he produced against Hüseyn Pasha's foe Mehmed Pasha. For one, the panegyric, like the invective, begins with the interjection *zehî*, which is used to mean

vâdî-i şarâbda, teşne-dîl, âb-ı zülâle irişdüğü, ekl ü şürbe meşgûl olmuşlar idi. Ol sebebden: ‘Zümre-i Sipâh’un, uhdesinden gelmeğe kâdir olmayanlar[ın]a tevliyet virilmesün!’ diyüp, söylediler. Zîrâ, zümre-i Sipâh’un bu iştihârın görenlerden ba‘zılar, Dîvân kâtibleri’nden ve gayrı tarîklardan dirliklerin bıragup, Sipâhî oldılar. Dahı, Ağa’ları kapularında, ulûfe almadın, mülâzemet idüp, tevliyet aldılar ve ru’ûsları kayd olmadık yeni Sipâhîler, mülâzım olup, hıdmete tâlib oldılar kim, ekseri, gazâ niyyetiyle Üsküdar’a geçmeyenlerden idi. Vezîr-i a‘zam Mehmed Paşa, evvelden olageldüğü kânûna bakup, ‘Emekdâr Sipâhîler, mülâzemet eylesünler, hıdmet, emekdârundur!’ dirdi. Vezîr’in bu sözüne umûr-dîde ve kâr-âzmûde olan ihtiyâr yoldaşları, kâ’il idiler; lâkin, zikr olınan yeni Sipâhîler, kâ’il degüller idiler.” Hüseyn Tuğî, *Musibetnâme*, 171–172.

⁵⁵⁸ Şenödeyici, “Nefî ve Gürcü Mehmed Paşa Mücadelesi,” 324.

⁵⁵⁹ See ‘Abdu’l-kâdir Efendi, *Tarih*, Vol. 2, 765.

“alas!” in the latter but “hurrah!” in the former. Moreover, in this panegyric there is a veiled reference to Meḥmed Pasha in a pair of distichs that castigate the poet Veysī:

many things are said in that place where the poet sells himself | [by] a rumor-mongering, ignorant Turk [*i.e.*, Veysī] who spreads errors in meaning || he knows neither the measure nor the power of speech, that worthless one || he struts about like the Messiah yet is a pair with Dajjal’s ass [*i.e.*, Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha]⁵⁶⁰

However, the rest of the panegyric consists largely of the standard abstractions to be seen in any panegyric in praise of a vizier, featuring nothing in the way of specific references to the period or to any individual favors Ḥüseyn Pasha may have done for Nefī. Even so, some of the similarities in wording to both of Nefī’s long invectives against Meḥmed Pasha—not to mention the opening word *zehī*—indicate that this panegyric was likely written soon after Ḥüseyn Pasha had assumed the grand vizierate after arranging for Meḥmed’s dismissal. Thus, while it offers no clear evidence of prior links between the two, it at least shows Nefī shoring up his position in the midst of this era’s steady parade of highly factionalized grand viziers.

But before Nefī would write this panegyric to the (briefly) triumphant Mere Ḥüseyn Pasha, he was not yet done with Gürcī Meḥmed. The ferocity of Nefī’s attack in the invective analyzed above drove the grand vizier to attempt to have the poet executed, and to this end he may well have requested that the grand mufti, Yaḥyā Efendi (d. 1644), issue a fatwa authorizing the execution—a request that, if it was indeed made, was

⁵⁶⁰ “nice söz söylenür ol yerde kim şā’ir şatar kendin | ğalaṭ-perdāz-ı ma’ nā bir müzevvir Türk-i lā-yefhem || ne miqdārın bilür ne qadr-ı güftārı ‘aceb bāṭıl | Mesīḥā geçinür ammā ḥar-ı Deccāl’la tev’em”; Nefī, [*Divān*], 92.

denied.⁵⁶¹ The intention itself, however, provoked Nefî to seek revenge through the composition of a second long invective in *kaşîde* form, in which he not only again attacked the grand vizier on the basis of his very identity, but leveled much more precise and serious charges against him.

This second invective begins, much like the first, with broad statements regarding how the “pig” (*hinzîr*) and “immense mastiff” (*şamson-ı mu ‘azzam*) Mehmed Pasha is unfit for the grand vizierate, and as a result the empire has fallen into “catastrophe” (*muşîbet*) and “mourning” (*mâtem*).⁵⁶² In other words, it features the standard declinist and alarmist discourse of the era. From there, however, the poem moves on to a specific charge:

here let the Shah of Persia take Baghdad | and let Abaza seize Erzurum as well, you dog! || you two with no balls came together and sold the khanate | and let no one else in on it, you dog! || and you trampled the sultanate’s honor under foot | so many men were slaughtered for nothing, you dog! || how can the khanate just be sold, you immoral traitor! | so let’s say that sedition *wasn’t* so large, you dog || still, let the Khan of the Tatars go to Baghdad and shatter his forces⁵⁶³ | while you still hold the honored grand vizierate, you dog!⁵⁶⁴

⁵⁶¹ No known official document records either the grand vizier’s request or the grand mufti’s refusal. The only evidence comes from Nefî’s own words in the poem in question: “even with so many crimes you are safe and sound, yet I | am deserving of death? you dark curse, you dog! || not even an infidel judge would consent to this order | what has become of true Muslims, you dog?” (*bu kadar cürm ile sen sağ olasın da yine ben | vâcibü’l-kaatl olam ey bahtek-i azlem [a köpek] || hele bu hükme kâfir kâdısı olmaz râzi | kande kaldı ki Müsülmân-ı müselleme a köpek*); ULLWCO 662, 7a.

⁵⁶² *Ibid.*, 6b.

⁵⁶³ I have been unable to find any evidence that the Crimean khan at this time, Cānıbek Giray, was called to serve as an auxiliary force for any planned Ottoman campaign against the Safavids. In fact, during Mehmed Pasha’s grand vizierate, no campaign against either the Safavids or Abaza Mehmed appears to have been planned—which is, of course, the whole point of Nefî’s accusation here. It may well be, given the specificity of the invective’s reference to Crimean forces, that there was talk, now lost to history, of containing the situation in the east by sending the Crimeans there rather than an Ottoman force.

⁵⁶⁴ “bu mahallerde ki Bağdād’ı ala şāh-ı ‘Acem | Erzurūm’ı êde teşhîr Abaza hem [a köpek] || şat[d]ıñuz iki taşaksız bir olup hānlığı | kimseyi êmedinüz bu işe mahrem a köpek || pāymāl eyledinüz salţanatıñ ‘ırzını hem | yok yere oldu telef ol kadar âdem [a köpek] || hiç hānlık şatılır mı hey edebsiz hā’in | tūtalım

As described in the previous section, the beginning of Meḫmed Pasha’s grand vizierate was marked by the uprising of Abaza Meḫmed Pasha—the husband of the grand vizier’s niece—in Erzurum, and ultimately the grand vizier’s failure to suppress this uprising would contribute greatly to his dismissal. At the same time, the Persian shah ‘Abbās I took advantage of the disorder in Erzurum to begin making preparations for the recapture of Baghdad from the Ottomans,⁵⁶⁵ a plan that would ultimately be realized in early 1624.

All of this forms the background for the charges Nef‘ī levels against the grand vizier in these lines, the basic tenor of which is that Meḫmed Pasha is in cahoots with his relative Abaza, thus doing nothing about the latter’s uprising, and together they are allowing Shah ‘Abbās to maneuver unmolested by any significant Ottoman campaign. The former of these charges, of course, was precisely what would be brought against Meḫmed Pasha when he was forced out of the grand vizierate in February 1623. Nef‘ī’s invective thus utilizes the rumors that were undoubtedly swirling around the grand vizier from, at least, the time when the news of Abaza’s uprising reached Istanbul around November 1622, making this invective certain to have been written between December of 1622 and January of 1623.

Given this environment and the pressure steadily building against Meḫmed Pasha, the manner in which Nef‘ī proceeds in the poem from the above charges is especially significant:

olmamış ol fitne mu‘azzam a köpek || gide Bağdād’a kıra ‘askeri ḥān-ı Tātār | olasın sen yine d[ü]stür-ı mükerrerem a köpek”; ULLWCO 662, 6b–7a.

⁵⁶⁵ Kâtib Çelebi, “Fezleke,” 707–713.

pig! could there be any greater enemy of the state than you? | if only I knew what's stopping the possessor of the sultanate, you dog! || if one considers how to bring order to the world | the most vital [thing] of all is to kill you, you dog!⁵⁶⁶

Such a demand, and from a middling bureaucrat no less, for the grand vizier's head increases the likelihood mentioned above that Nef'î could in fact rely on the direct or indirect support of, if not necessarily Hüseyn Pasha himself, then at least the *sipāhî* soldiery who were backing him. The call for grand vizier Meḥmed Pasha's execution on the grounds of treachery in the Abaza affair is further reinforced when Nef'î, just as in the earlier invective but even more directly, accuses the grand vizier of being a crypto-Christian: “you're an enemy of the people of culture, a cursed one devoid of religion | if they kill you may your soul go to hell, you dog! || if there were [even] the tiniest trace of Islam in you | you would not have become such intimate friends with Alamanzāde,⁵⁶⁷ you dog!”⁵⁶⁸

It is at this point, after calling for the grand vizier's execution, that Nef'î's poem shifts into a complaint against Meḥmed Pasha for daring, as mentioned above, to try to have Nef'î executed for his earlier invective against the pasha. This sets up an opposition between right (Nef'î) and wrong (Meḥmed Pasha), as well as between which actions

⁵⁶⁶ “sen kadar düşmen-i devlet mi olur a hınzîr | ne тұрur салтанатıñ şāhibi bilsem a köpek || ‘add olunsa eğer esbāb-ı nızām-ı ‘ālem | seni қатл eylemedir cümleden elzem a köpek”;

⁵⁶⁷ I have been unable to confirm the identity of the *Alamanzāde* (“son of the German”) mentioned here. One's first impression would be that it refers to the Habsburgs, but at this period Ottoman-Habsburg relations were largely nonexistent as the latter had its hands full with the Thirty Years' War. The term could be a reference to the Dutch ambassador Cornelis Haga (1578–1654), with whom Meḥmed Pasha was known to have cordial relations; see, e.g., Bülent Arı, “Early Ottoman Diplomacy: Ad Hoc Period,” in *Ottoman Diplomacy: Conventional or Unconventional?*, ed. A. Nuri Yurdusev (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 62. But perhaps most likely—especially given the discourse of invective and its ability to feed into rumor—is that Nef'î merely meant *Alamanzāde* as a generalization for European Christian powers.

⁵⁶⁸ “ehl-i dil düşmeni dîn yoḥsulı bir mel'ünsın | öldürürlerse eğer cān be-cehennem a köpek || sende İslām eseri olsa eğer zerre kadar | eylemezdiñ Alamānzāde'yi hem-dem a köpek”;

demand punishment (Meḥmed Pasha's neglect) and which do not (Nef'ī's invective).

This opposition is once again framed within the context of possible crypto-Christianity on the grand vizier's part:

why does lampooning you merit death? | if only I knew what you were, you dubious infidel, you dog! || if reviling you is [really] cause for death | then just kill everyone now, what's stopping you, you dog?⁵⁶⁹

This is followed by a declinist lament for the quality of the stewards of the state and an alarmist and even fatalist view of what this portends for the future:

how can the state be left to those without balls? | what happened to the zeal of the great shah of shahs, you dog? || God has taken away the Arab, he has left this world | you're next but I don't know who'll take you away, you dog!⁵⁷⁰

These lines allude to two other figures in such a way as to present an especially dim view of the Ottoman state. Firstly, the second line in the first distich touches directly upon the inability of the ineffectual sultan Muṣṭafā to do anything about what is going on in the empire, which is surprising inasmuch as criticism of the sultan, however light, was hardly done in invective due to the fear of almost certain execution. However, the fact that Nef'ī felt secure enough to produce such a line indicates a confidence that this poem would simply not reach the sultan's ear, or that even if it did, he was not in an intellectual or mental state capable of either understanding or caring about what it meant. Sultan Muṣṭafā, then, was clearly hermetically isolated from the rumor and turmoil surrounding his grand vizier. Secondly, these lines' mention of the removal and

⁵⁶⁹ “seni hicv etmekle katle neden istiḥkāk | sen nesin bilsem eyā kāfir-i mübhem a köpek || saḡa ŧetm eylemek olursa eḡer katle sebep | katl-i ‘ām eyle hemān ṭurma demādem a köpek”; *ibid.*

⁵⁷⁰ “böyle kalur mı ṭaŧaksızlar elinde devlet | n’oldi yā ḡayret-i ŧāhenŧeh-i a ‘zam a köpek || Haḡḡ götürdi ‘Arab’ı gitdi hele dünyādan | kim götürse ‘aḡabince seni bilmem a köpek”; *ibid.*

apparent death⁵⁷¹ of “the Arab” (‘*Arab*) refers to the previous chief judge of the European provinces, ‘Alī Efendi, the black eunuch and scholar who, as mentioned in the introduction, had been the first of his kind to hold this prestigious position. In Turkish, the epithet “Arab” was, and remains today, a quite derogatory way of referring to a black person such as ‘Alī, but even more significant in this line is how Nef‘ī presents ‘Alī—who had in his time gained an amount of power and influence unprecedented for a black eunuch—as representative of corrupt and corrupting officials exercising a pernicious influence upon the state and the sultan. This is an echo of one of Islamicate advice literature’s key recommendations, already mentioned in regards to Nef‘ī’s invectives against Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha; namely, the necessity for the ruler to take care to surround himself with competent and trustworthy advisors and administrators. Yet, in the absence of a competent ruler, as Nef‘ī implies to be the case with Sultan Muṣṭafā, and in the midst of a political and economic situation that was rapidly deteriorating, the state almost inevitably falls into the hands of those whose desire is to serve their own ends and not the state’s—or so Nef‘ī’s discourse, itself prompted by personal and even opportunistic concerns, would have it.

This claim of pernicious influence is reinforced by the next section of the poem, a long (25 distichs) digression expressing Nef‘ī’s view—introduced by the line “and then I heard that whore had incited you” (*şonra tıydum seni ol fāhişe kişkirdüğün[i]*)⁵⁷²—that

⁵⁷¹ ‘Alī Efendi was not in fact dead yet, as he would not die until several months later, toward the end of 1623 or beginning of 1624. However, he had fallen from grace and was residing unemployed in Istanbul. Nef‘ī’s line is likely referring not to death *per se*, but rather to ‘Alī’s sudden and complete loss of power in the wake of the death of Sultan ‘Osmān II. See Tezcan, “Dispelling the Darkness,” 81.

⁵⁷² ULLWCO 662, 7b.

Gürci Mehmed Pasha was goaded into trying to retaliate against him by one of his own rivals, ‘Abdu’l-ğanizāde Mehmed (Nādirī) Efendi. At the time, Mehmed Efendi was the judge of the Galata district in Istanbul.⁵⁷³ Though this section of the poem does not go into detail regarding the two men’s connection or what Mehmed Efendi may have said, Nefī uses it as an opportunity to attack the judge at length, effectively inserting one invective inside another, thereby utilizing a framed structure.⁵⁷⁴

The poem finally concludes with a *fakhr* (self-praise) section wherein Nefī reasserts that he is in the right to attack the grand vizier. This section’s opening distichs emphasize and make especially explicit the discourse that has animated the poet’s attack throughout the poem:

I’ll be damned [lit., ‘I’m an infidel’] if I regret lampooning you | or if I feel shame before you in the presence of God, you dog! || it is my conviction, God willing, that I have waged holy war [*ğazā*] | God knows that I curse no one without cause, you dog!⁵⁷⁵

The word used for God here and elsewhere in the poem is *Ḥaḳḳ*, meaning “the Right” or “the Just” and referring to God’s capacity as the judge of right and wrong. Given the context of Nefī’s accusations of crypto-Christianity, this choice and indeed the diction of these lines as a whole, with their repeated reference to explicitly Islamic conceptions, is telling: Nefī is right and just before the only one who can judge what is right and just, while Mehmed Pasha is wrong and unjust—and possibly a crypto-Christian to boot.

⁵⁷³ Nev’izāde ‘Atā’ī, *Hadā’iku’l-Hakā’ik*, Vol. 2, 1732.

⁵⁷⁴ As an invective by Nefī against another poet, this section of the poem will be examined in Chapter 5.

⁵⁷⁵ “kâfirim ger seni hicv etdüğüme nâdim isem | Ḥaḳḳ ḥuzûrında yâ senden utanursam a köpek || [...] || i’tikâdimca ğazâ eyledim inşâillâh | Ḥaḳḳ bilir yok yere ben kimseyi söğmem a köpek”; IUNEK TY 511, 64a–64b.

In sum, what Nef'ī's invectives against Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha show is the use of the invective discourse to otherize the grand vizier through an assault on his body, his lack of culture, and his doubtful religion.⁵⁷⁶ This otherization is a manner of presenting Meḥmed Pasha as an “outsider” (*ecnebī*), though this time in a sense different not only from that term's use in the contemporary advice literature, but also from the utilization of a similar notion in regards to Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha. Here, Meḥmed Pasha is presented as an outsider not because there is anything worryingly novel about the appointment of a white Georgian eunuch to the grand vizierate, as the advice literature authors might have presented the situation: in fact, Meḥmed Pasha's rise to the position followed all the traditional channels, with the one exception of his actual appointment to the grand vizierate under pressure from the Istanbul soldiery (and/or his own retainers), which was a consequence mainly of the turbulent atmosphere in the capital at the time. Instead, Nef'ī depicts Meḥmed Pasha's unfitness for the post, evidenced by his allowing the political situation to get out of hand, as a direct consequence of his origins as a eunuch from Georgia—much as Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha had been deemed unfit for viziership as a direct consequence of his origins as a *sipāhī* merchant.

⁵⁷⁶ Edith Gülçin Ambros has written about the use of invective to otherize, stating that it was “common [to satirize] a *Muslim* Ottoman by addressing him with the appellations of non-Muslim Ottomans, and much more rarely of non-Muslim non-Ottomans. Such a practice had the collateral effect of *indirectly* satirizing the non-Muslims and non-Ottomans, thereby attributing to them a quality of ‘Otherness.’ It must be stressed, however, that the main object of this sort of satire was not the creation of an ‘Other’ but the censure or mockery of a *Muslim* Ottoman.” Edith Gülçin Ambros, “‘The Other’ (Non-Muslim, Non-Ottoman) in Ottoman Literary Humour,” *Journal of Turkish Studies / Türklük Bilgisi Araştırmaları* 44 (December 2015), 85. While this is an accurate and excellent point, it seems to overlook the possibility—which I believe an overall consideration of the early 17th-century invective corpus shows—that there was no need to create an other of non-Muslims because they already *were* an other, which is precisely why they could be utilized as tools to effect an otherization of Muslim targets.

Yet this otherization of the grand vizier was of course no more than a means to an end, with the end being to reduce Meḥmed Pasha's esteem by creating and/or spreading rumor about him and thereby contributing to his downfall—a downfall that, of course, would have potential benefits for Nef'ī. Invective of this sort is, in effect, the instrumentalization of rumor,⁵⁷⁷ a discursive mode in which rumor's vagueness and uncertainty are made potentially more effective, and easier to spread, by enshrinement in verse format, just as was seen in the earlier case of Nef'ī's invectives against Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha.

4.3 Conclusion

In Chapter 2, reference was made to the late 19th-century author and critic Ebū'z-ziyā Tevfik's defense, one of the few, of Nef'ī as a producer of invective verse. This defense was expressed as follows:

Invective is a manner of defending what is right from the destructive might of those who are in power. It is a vilified practice. However, while poison is deadly in and of itself, it may also serve as an immediate remedy for certain ailments. As such, even though Nef'ī lampooned a number of his contemporaries, up to and including figures of importance, he did so because their words or actions compelled him to.

For example, exposing the true nature of such figures as Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha, Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha, Kemānkeş 'Alī Pasha, and Bākī Pasha—to whose evil actions history itself bears irrefutable witness—is not invective, even if the language used is abusive in nature.⁵⁷⁸

Following the extended discussion of Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha in this chapter, as well as of Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha and 'Abdu'l-bākī Pasha in the previous chapter, together with Nef'ī's invectives against them, it should be clear that this assessment by Ebū'z-

⁵⁷⁷ I owe this phrase to Oktay Özel, who coined it during the course of our discussions regarding this dissertation.

⁵⁷⁸ Ebū'z-ziyā [Tevfik], *Nef'ī*, 18–19. For the original Turkish, see Chapter 2, footnote 231.

ziyā Tevfik is a highly idealized one, as was already touched upon in the literature review in Chapter 2. For one thing, to categorically state that these figures’ “evil actions” (*seyyī’āt ef’āl*) are proven by history is, in context, to retroactively justify Nefī’s assessments of these figures and thereby equate his decidedly, and openly, subjective view with historical fact. As this and the previous chapter have attempted to show, Nefī’s invectives put forward just one side of the story, and a highly opportunistic one at that, with the criticisms and charges laid out in them supported by some contemporary accounts and contradicted by others. Thus, to assert, as Ebū’z-ziyā Tevfik implicitly does, that Nefī’s invectives are “speaking truth to power” is to assume a truth that, in fact, the historian can never actually reach—and that indeed may be largely irrelevant. Was Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha “corrupt” or was he a capable financial administrator? There are indications of both the former and the latter. Was Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha praiseworthy for his efforts to restore order in the capital after the murder of Sultan ‘Osmān II, or was he blameworthy for failing to prevent the collapse of state control and order in eastern Anatolia because he did not wish to move against his relative Abaza Meḥmed Pasha? The subsequent historiography has largely stressed the former, while much of the contemporary historiography—as well as Nefī’s invectives—emphasized his culpability in the latter matter. Just as much as the profanity with which they are peppered, it has been the inability to see through the haze of contemporary accounts and arrive at some supposed “truth” that has led to a discounting of Nefī’s invectives, and more broadly of Ottoman invective as a whole, as potential historical sources. But in fact such works present one, albeit versified, account of their era, and even though this account may be highly subjective, it ultimately proves no more or less

subjective than, for example, the contemporary advice literature, chronicles, and histories. This is historiography in a nutshell.

In terms of the relationship between historical actuality and the sort of vertical invectives produced by Nefī, it would be instructive to briefly examine the concept of parrhesia, or “frankness in speaking the truth,”⁵⁷⁹ as formulated at length by Michel Foucault.⁵⁸⁰

Though the term dates back as far as the works of the Greek playwright Euripides (c. 480–c. 406 BCE), Foucault recasts it according to his own notions of power and ethics in such a way as to shed light on the practice of invective in general. He conceives of parrhesia as one of the four basic modalities of telling truth—alongside prophecy, wisdom, and teaching⁵⁸¹—from which it is distinguished by being “the veridiction which speaks polemically about individuals and situations.”⁵⁸² For a speaker (or author) to be a parrhesiast, a number of conditions must be met. Firstly, he or she must “[tell] the truth without concealment, reserve, empty manner of speech, or rhetorical ornament which might encode or hide it.”⁵⁸³ This is the element of frankness that both ancient Greek philosophers and rhetoricians and Foucault himself took to be what distinguished parrhesia from rhetoric. Secondly, there must be “a fundamental bond between the truth

⁵⁷⁹ Joseph Pearson, “Editor’s Preface,” in Michel Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, ed. Joseph Pearson (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2001), 7.

⁵⁸⁰ See Michel Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, ed. Joseph Pearson (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2001); Michel Foucault, *The Government of Self and Others: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1982–1983*, ed. Frédéric Gros, trans. Graham Burchell (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); and Michel Foucault, *The Courage of the Truth (The Government of Self and Others II): Lectures at the Collège de France, 1983–1984*, ed. Frédéric Gros and Arnold I. Davidson, trans. Graham Burchell (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

⁵⁸¹ For more on these other modalities, see Foucault, *The Courage of the Truth*, 15–19, 23–25.

⁵⁸² *Ibid.*, 27.

⁵⁸³ *Ibid.*, 10

spoken and the thought of the person who spoke it.”⁵⁸⁴ That is, the speaker (or author) must believe in and stand by what he or she has spoken (or written). Thirdly, there must be an element of “risk which concerns [the parrhesiast’s] relationship with the person to whom he is speaking.”⁵⁸⁵ In other words, the truths the parrhesiast pronounces will almost of necessity be unpleasant truths for his or her interlocutor. And finally, as a corollary to the third condition, the truth spoken (or written) by the parrhesiast must “[involve] some form of courage, the minimal form of which consists in the parrhesiast taking the risk of breaking and ending the relationship to the other person which was precisely what made his discourse possible.”⁵⁸⁶ That is, as Foucault explains elsewhere, the risk involved is a political one—*i.e.*, in Foucauldian terms, related to power—based on an ethical standpoint that insists on thinking and exposing truth whatever the cost.⁵⁸⁷

Extrapolating from this, it is not difficult to see the connection between a parrhesiast—of whom Foucault gives Socrates (*c.* 470–399 BCE) and Diogenes (412 or 404–323 BCE) and the Cynics as quite different but equally exemplary instances⁵⁸⁸—and an invectivist of the likes of Nefῑ, or more broadly between the modality of parrhesia and the mode of invective. On a superficial level, all the boxes are checked. There is little in the way of reserve in Nefῑ’s vertically oriented invectives, and any rhetorical ornaments are necessarily a function of the fact that these are works produced in literary verse. Nefῑ does appear to believe in and stand by what he writes, as evidenced by statements like

⁵⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁵⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸⁷ See *ibid.*, 68.

⁵⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 26 *et passim*.

“I’ll be damned if I regret lampooning you [*i.e.*, Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha]” (*kâfirim ger seni hicv etdüğüme nâdim isem*)⁵⁸⁹ and “I curse no one without cause” (*yok yere ben kimseyi söğmem*).⁵⁹⁰ And there is most definitely a great degree of risk involved for Nefî, as he could well have been executed in 1622 or 1623—and indeed *was* executed a little more than a decade later, once there was a sultan, Murād IV, with actual power—had the grand vizier’s apparent request for a fatwa on the matter been granted, not to mention the fact that his invectives regularly put his official posts on shaky ground. On these grounds, then, one might be tempted to think that Nefî was indeed a parrhesiast, speaking truth to power and damn the consequences—just as Ebū’z-ziyā Tevfîk had claimed.

But the problem with Foucault’s account of parrhesia and the parrhesiast, instructive and rich as it is, is that it is largely presented in a vacuum: although he frames his discussion within the context of a history of ideas, he takes little to no note of the *social* context within which any so-called parrhesiast might be operating. Thus, he never gets at the question of *why* a speaker or author would engage in parrhesia, but instead takes it as a given that “truth” has a historical essence of its own to which the parrhesiast simply gives voice. This is because Foucault is clearly focused on the notion of the parrhesiast as a variety of “philosophical hero,”⁵⁹¹ and so he largely disregards another sense of parrhesia, one that he mentions only in passing and never returns to. This is the negative sense of the term, which he describes as follows:

⁵⁸⁹ IUNEK TY 511, 64a.

⁵⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 64b.

⁵⁹¹ See Foucault, *The Courage of the Truth*, 209–211.

Used in a pejorative sense, *parrhēsia* does indeed consist in saying everything, but in the sense of saying anything (anything that comes to mind, anything that serves the cause one is defending, anything that serves the passion or interest driving the person who is speaking). The parrhesiast then becomes and appears as the impenitent chatterbox, someone who cannot restrain himself or, at any rate, someone who cannot index-link his discourse to a principle of rationality and truth.⁵⁹²

While this is just as extreme a view as that of the “philosophical hero,” it has the historiographical advantage of admitting that self-interest can drive one’s practice of parrhesia—which, as has been seen, was in many ways the case with Nef’ī’s production of invective. In fact, if one unmoors the concept of “truth” from a discussion of parrhesia (or invective) as being neither here nor there, then parrhesia necessarily becomes what Foucault describes just above. The example that Foucault goes on to give for such a situation is telling:

[I]n Book VIII of [Plato’s] *The Republic* [...] there is the description of the bad democratic city, which is all motley, fragmented, and dispersed between different interests, passions, and individuals who do not agree with each other. This bad democratic city practices *parrhēsia*: anyone can say anything.⁵⁹³

This could as well serve as a description of Istanbul and its highly factionalized and factionalizing sociocultural and administrative elite in the early 17th century, and particularly in the early 1620s when Nef’ī produced his invectives against the grand vizier Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha. Thus, whether it is the moralist modern scholar shunning the *Sihām-ı kazā* for its obscene and blatantly opportunistic *ad hominem* attacks, Ebū’-ẓ-ẓiyā Tevfik presenting Nef’ī as a bold defender of “what is right,” or Foucault dressing the parrhesiast up as a “philosophical hero” rather than a self-interested “impenitent chatterbox,” such an inherently dualistic framework does not hold when one takes into

⁵⁹² *Ibid.*, 9–10.

⁵⁹³ *Ibid.*, 10.

consideration the complexity of contemporary contingencies, not to mention the human factor of the invective corpus, which gives us a glimpse into the subjective emotional experiences and expressions of the figures involved. This will become more clear in the following chapters, where I examine the invectives produced by Nefī against other poets rather than against political figures—as well as the invectives that were produced against him.

CHAPTER 5

“THEY ALL GANGED UP TO LAMPOON ME”:

NEF’Ī AND THE ‘ĀLĪMS

Completed around the year 1621, shortly before the compiler’s death, Ḳāfzāde Fā’izī’s (1589–1622) dictionary of poets, the *Zübdetü’l-eş’ār* (Quintessence of Poetry), was the first example of an Ottoman *tezkire* that was primarily anthological rather than biographical in nature. The 515 poets chosen for the work are described with little more than their name, place of origin, and, where applicable, the date of their death. This information is then followed by a selection of their poetry, either voluminous or sparse according to the compiler’s opinion of the poetry’s value or to what he was able to discover.

Though characteristically brief, Fā’izī’s introduction to his selection from Nef’ī’s poems—consisting of the first three distichs of a ghazal and no more⁵⁹⁴—is revealing:

⁵⁹⁴ The ghazal in question is that beginning with the couplet, “drink a long draft, let the limpid wine fill your eyes | if you get drunk, start to flirting and let sleep fill your eyes” (*bir ıtolı nüş et şerāb-ı nāb gelsün çeşmiye | mest olursañ nāza başla h’āb gelsün çeşmiye*); see Nef’ī, [*Dīvān*], 31 [*gazeliyyāt*].

“Nef‘ī of Erzurum. These distichs are chosen from among his *nonsense*.”⁵⁹⁵ For a work that is of necessity a selection of what the compiler deems worth compiling, and hence canonizing, this is of course an odd way to introduce a choice of a poet’s works. No other entry in the anthology is introduced in such a way, with the standard brief introduction being to point out that the chosen distichs are from a given poet’s *dīvān* of collected poems or simply that they belong to him. However, when one considers that Nef‘ī produced more than 20 invective quatrains lampooning Fā’izī his choice to refer to Nef‘ī’s verses as “nonsense” (*terzīkāt*) acquires a meaningful context.⁵⁹⁶

It is also important to take into consideration the canonization aspect⁵⁹⁷ of Kāfzāde Fā’izī’s work, which is especially significant given that, unlike earlier Ottoman works in the genre, this one is almost purely an anthology. As such, it ostensibly presents a selection of what Fā’izī deemed the finest verse in the Ottoman tradition up through his time, and in this regard his choice of contemporary poets proves especially telling: the bulk of the space given over to his contemporaries goes, perhaps unsurprisingly, to those who are known to have been his friends, patrons, and mutual admirers. This was a circle of poets and littérateurs consisting of ‘Azmīzāde Hāletī (1570–1631), Riyāzī (1572–

⁵⁹⁵ “Nef‘ī Erzurumī [*sic*][.] [B]u ebyāt *terzīkāt*ndan intihāb olındı.” Kāfzāde Fā’izī, “Kāf-zāde Fā’izī’in Zübdetü’l-Eş’ār’ı,” ed. Bekir Kayabaşı (Ph.D. dissertation, İnönü University, 1997), 551; emphasis added.

⁵⁹⁶ Though this dissertation will not be examining Nef‘ī’s numerous invectives (some 20 quatrains in total) against Fā’izī in detail, the following example might be considered fairly typical: “o Kāfoğlı, do not suffer because you suffer from impotence | do not think the only cure is to abstain from catamites || o [you] catamite, my invective will strike such a blow to your ass | when you see how strongly I ejaculate you will be drawn to pricks again” (*çekme ey Kāfoğlı ‘innīn olduğünçün iztırāb | şanma ancak çāre anı ibneden perhīz olur || a [k]ekez hicvim hele bir hamle etsün götiğe | zor inzālī anı görince kīr-engīz olur*); IUNEK TY 511, 77a.

⁵⁹⁷ The definitive study of literary canonization in the Ottoman sociocultural context, in relation specifically to the early and mid-16th century and the rather *sui generis* figure of Zātī, is Sooyong Kim, *The Last of an Age: The Making and Unmaking of a Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Poet* (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2018).

1644), Nev'izāde 'Aṭā'ī (1583–1635), 'Abdu'l-ḡanīzāde Meḡmed Nādiri (1572–1626), Nergisī (c. 1580–1635), and the grand mufti Yaḡyā Efendi (1561–1644), with Veysī (1561–1628) also an erstwhile associate.⁵⁹⁸ All of them were members of the religiojudicial branch (*ilmīyye*) of the Ottoman government; all of them hailed from Rumelia or western Anatolia (*i.e.*, the Ottoman center), mostly from established *'ulemā* families; and most of them wrote panegyrics and parallel poems (*naẓīre*) to, exchanged letters with, and took inspiration from one another.

And all together Nef'ī wrote nearly 100 invectives targeting the “members” of this circle. In turn, several of them—Riyāzī, Nev'izāde 'Aṭā'ī, Ḳāfzāde Fā'izī, and Nādirī—wrote invectives against him. Regarding this relationship, Abdülkadir Karahan writes:

Nef'ī must not have always been on bad terms with all of them. His antagonists also did not hold themselves back from responding to him. Sometimes, probably, they were even friends who suddenly became cross with him. It would be best to recall that in those times, such crude jokes [as seen in invective] were fashionable among poets, and that showcasing one's [poetic] skill through this sort of verse that sometimes contained obscene allusions regarding others was considered a skill in itself.⁵⁹⁹

Karahan is correct to point out that the skillful employment of what might be called obscenity or obscene imagery was seen as a demonstration, albeit generally a minor one,

⁵⁹⁸ While most of Ḳāfzāde Fā'izī's contemporaries have between 1 and 10 distichs selected, among his known circle 'Azmīzāde Ḥāletī has 539 distichs (in addition to 56 *rubā'ī* quatrains) in Fā'izī's anthology, Riyāzī 99, Nev'izāde 'Aṭā'ī 286, 'Abdu'l-ḡanīzāde Meḡmed Nādiri 194, Veysī 44, and the grand mufti Yaḡyā Efendi 395. Nergisī was almost exclusively known as a prose stylist, but is still represented by several distichs “selected from a notebook containing his poems” (*mecmū'a-ı eṣ'ārından intihāb olındı*); Ḳāfzāde Fā'izī, “Zübdetü'l-Eṣ'ār,” 548. In addition, from the previous generation 'Aṭā'ī's father Nev'ī is represented by 219 distichs.

⁵⁹⁹ “Bunların cümlesiyle Nef'ī'nin arası, her zaman açık olmasa gerek. Muarızları da ona mukabeleden geri kalmış deḡillerdir. Bazan, galiba, durup dururken ona çatan ahbaplar da olmuş olmalıdır. Biraz da o devirlerde bu tarz kaba şakaların şairler arasında moda olduğu, birbirlerine hattâ müstehcen telmihler taşıyan bu kabil manzumelerde de kabiliyet göstermenin bir maharet sayıldığı düşünölmek yerinde olur.” Karahan, *Nef'ī: Hayatı, Sanatı, Şiirleri*, 16.

of a poet’s talent. But as will be seen in this chapter, the clash between these poets goes well beyond the friendly rivalry seen in a poet such as Zātī joking to his friend Keşfī, “when the boy they call Keşfī mentioned his wife | saying, ‘She is my joy,’ [I said], ‘Oh! I’ll fuck your joy!’”⁶⁰⁰ It even goes beyond the invective quarrel between the janissary poet Yaḥyā Beğ and the fêted “dervish” poet Ḥayālī, described at some length in the introduction, as their invective exchange never openly inscribed sociocultural differences into its texts, such as those seen in Nef’ī’s invectives against Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha, ‘Abdu’l-bāḳī Pasha, and Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha in the previous chapters. As will be seen in this and the following chapter, such differences appear in abundance in the horizontal invective corpus centering on Nef’ī, and in fact there were even open calls for him to be executed.

This chapter will discuss, in turn, the invectives by and against Nef’ī in relation to three figures from among the circle of ‘*ālim*-littérateurs mentioned above: Riyāzī, Nev’izāde ‘Aṭā’ī, and Nādirī.

5.1 Riyāzī

Riyāzī (1572–1644), whose real name was Meḥmed, came from a western Anatolian ‘*ulemā* family on both his father’s and his mother’s side.⁶⁰¹ He himself became a student of ‘Abdu’l-ḳādir Şeyḫī Efendi (1514–1594) of the Mü’eyyedzāde family,⁶⁰² who served as the Ottoman grand mufti between 1587 and 1589 before being forcibly removed from

⁶⁰⁰ “Keşfī didükleri oğlan anıcaḳ ‘avretini | Devletümdür dir imiş vāy s[ik]eyin devletini”; Çavuşoğlu, “Zâtī’nin Letâiyifî,” 29.

⁶⁰¹ Namık Açıkgöz, “Riyâzî,” *DİA*, Vol. 35, 144.

⁶⁰² *Ibid.*

office during the janissary uprising that became known as the Governor General Incident (*Beylerbeyi Vak'ası*).⁶⁰³ Riyāzī's connections with the now significantly weakened Mü'eyyetzādes did not hold his own career back, however, as he entered into the educational branch of the *'ilmiyye* career track and steadily moved up the ranks until he was teaching at the prestigious Madrasas of the Eight Courtyards (*Şahn-ı Semān*) complex in Istanbul.

Despite his solid career at this point, he seems to have harbored a degree of enmity toward the newly emerging, proto-dynastic Bostānzāde and Şa'de'd-dīnzāde *'ulemā* families, who in the early decades of the 17th century were beginning to exercise a stranglehold over leading religiojudicial positions and the right to make appointments within the *'ilmiyye* hierarchy.⁶⁰⁴ Whether Riyāzī's enmity was more personal in nature or had something to do with these families' eclipse of the family of his own teacher Mü'eyyetzāde 'Abdu'l-kādir Şeyhī is unknown, but is nonetheless evident from an invective chronogram that he wrote. The occasion for this chronogram was the simultaneous appointment, in December 1608,⁶⁰⁵ of Bostānzāde Meḥmed Efendi (1564/65–1625/26)⁶⁰⁶ to the position of chief judge (*kāzī'asker*) of the Asian provinces and of Şa'de'd-dīnzāde 'Abdü'l-'azīz Efendi (1575–1617) to the position of chief judge

⁶⁰³ The name emerged because the governor general (*beylerbeyi*) of Rumelia, Doğançlı Meḥmed Pasha (d. 1589), was accused along with the chief treasurer Maḥmūd Efendi of being behind the currency devaluation against which the janissaries were revolting. Both men were handed over to the janissaries and killed. For a summary of this uprising, the reasons behind it, and its consequences, see İsmail Hami Danişmend, *İzahlı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi*, Vol. 3 (Istanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi, 1972), 111–113.

⁶⁰⁴ For an overview of the rising *'ulemā* families in the 17th century and the privileges they were being granted, see Madeline C. Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety: The Ottoman Ulema in the Postclassical Age (1600–1800)* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1988), 43–80.

⁶⁰⁵ Nev'izāde 'Aṭā'ī, *Hadā'iku'l-Hakā'ik*, 1558–1559.

⁶⁰⁶ This Bostānzāde Meḥmed was, perhaps not coincidentally, the son of the same Bostānzāde Meḥmed Efendi (1535/36–1598) who had replaced Riyāzī's teacher Mü'eyyetzāde 'Abdu'l-kādir Şeyhī Efendi in the post of grand mufti in 1589.

of the European provinces. The invective Riyāzī produced in response to these appointments runs as follows: “well, so much, then, for the ‘ulemā | tyranny’s banged a nail in ‘ilm’s gold || for two catamites now chief judges | this date: White Butt and Black Balls.”⁶⁰⁷ Here, “White Butt” (*Ākdübür*) is Şa’de’d-dīnzāde ‘Abdü’l-‘azīz: in giving him this particular epithet, the poem likens him to a young, beardless catamite, the relatively powerless partner in a pederastic sexual relationship whose skin in general and posterior in particular were ideally depicted as being pale.⁶⁰⁸ “Black Balls” (*Qara Taşak*),⁶⁰⁹ on the other hand, is Bostānzāde Meḥmed, and his epithet, while more obscure in terms of its associations, casts him as the pederast and alludes, at least, to the inauspiciousness and shame connected with the color black. Significantly, the poem reverses the hierarchy of the two appointees: the more powerful European chief judge is presented as the less powerful sexual partner, and in this manner the poem, however obliquely, hints at a world turned upside down.

⁶⁰⁷ “ulemānıñ işi tamām oldı | zer-i ‘ilme kaçıldı zulmle mīḥ || puştlar kâzî asker olduğına | Akdübür’le Qara Taşak târiḥ”; IUNЕК TY 3004, 47b.

⁶⁰⁸ See, for example, Selim Sırrı Kuru, ed. and trans., “A Sixteenth Century Scholar: Deli Birader and His *Dāfi ‘ü’l-ğumūm ve rāfi ‘ü’l-humūm*” (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 2000), 77, 188: “There is one group that love[s] fresh rosebuds of beauties who are modest and immature, with ginger-fresh penises and walnut-hard balls. They claim that prepubescent boys’ crystal bodies and behinds are so soft that whoever sees them get the hots. And their well-known parts are devoid of any body hair” ([*B*]ir tā’ife vardur ki maḥbūbuñ tāzesin ve gönçesin utanacağın ve bunacası zencebıl çukcesin ve ceviz taşaklıcasın sevup puser-i nā-bāliğūñ beden-i billūru ve dünbesi nerm ve anı goren iḥtiyārsız germ olur[.] [*M*]uvażzı-ı ma’ hūdi şāf u laṭīf olup kudūret-i mūdān berī olur dīrler).

⁶⁰⁹ Nef’ī would write an invective against Bostānzāde Meḥmed as well, also utilizing the epithet “Black Balls”; see IUNЕК TY 511, 75b–76a. What is more, Riyāzī was not yet finished with him, either, and upon another occasion when Bostānzāde Meḥmed was appointed as chief judge, he wrote: “so now posts are obtained with bribery and with crudity | people of knowledge and virtue are hidden, the truth unknown || a black and sinister idiot has become chief judge | the grand mufti says ‘Yes, by all means’ and Black Balls trots on in” (*rüşvet ü gılzat ile alınur oldı manşıb | ‘ilm ü fażl ehli nihān oldı bilinmez el-ḥaqq || bir qara cāhil iken kâzı-ı asker oldı | müfti hāy hāy edüp varagele Qara Taşak*); IUNЕК TY 3004, 47b.

This somewhat embittered scholar Riyāzī, author of this invective, was also a poet of some accomplishment, but it was for his biographical encyclopedia *Riyāzu 'ş-şu 'arā* (Gardens of the Poets) that he would become best known. This work was completed not long after the composition of the invective chronogram above, in the year 1610. It was at this time that he was serving at the Madrasas of the Eight Courtyards, though subsequently he would transfer into the judicial branch of the *'ilmiyye*.⁶¹⁰

It appears to have been the *Riyāzu 'ş-şu 'arā* that triggered the clash between Riyāzī and Nef'ī. At some point soon after its completion, the manuscript presumably entered into some degree of circulation, and Nef'ī must have either seen a copy of it or heard about it, and specifically the entry on himself, at second hand. The encyclopedia's entry on Nef'ī is brief, and reads as follows: "Nef'ī is 'Ömer Beğ of Erzurüm. Currently he is the comptroller of mines (*ma 'den muḳāta 'acısı*) in the imperial chancery. He is a painter of meanings and a player of the zither that arranges words in the Persian style in the region of Iraq."⁶¹¹ Though the entry appears quite innocuous, it contains some subtle elements that may have created ire on the part of Nef'ī. Firstly, he may have been piqued by Riyāzī's description of his style as "Persian" (*'Acemāne*), a term that appears nowhere else in the text and thus serves to single Nef'ī out.⁶¹² Considering the fact that the

⁶¹⁰ For a summary of Riyāzī's later appointments in the judicial hierarchy, see Açıkgöz, "Riyâzî," 144.

⁶¹¹ "Nef'î. Erzurumî 'Ömer Beg'dür. Hâlâ dîvân-ı hümayûn-ı sultânîde ma'den mukâta'acısıdır. Me'ânî-i nakş-perdâzi olup semt-i 'Irak'da tavr-ı 'Acemâne üzere nevâzende-i kânûn-ı sühan-sâzîdür." Riyâzî Mehmed Efendi, *Riyâzû 'ş-Şuara*, ed. Namık Açıkgöz (Ankara: T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2017), 319.

⁶¹² Although *'Acemāne* is a purely stylistic term, it is also worth noting that the Arabic word *'Acem* was originally an almost exact equivalent of the Greek term βάρβαροι ("barbarians"), referring to those unable to speak Arabic, which in the original context meant primarily the Persians, hence the word's assumption of that meaning; see Francesco Gabrieli, "'Aḍjam," *ET*, Vol. 1, 206. In the early modern Ottoman context, *'Acem* was used not only for Persia and the Persians, but also occasionally for anyone who came from the

genesis of Nef'ī's style, particularly in his panegyrics, lay partly in the work of such Persian poets as Anwarī and 'Orfī of Shiraz (1555–1591), Riyāzī's claim can certainly be said to have some truth to it. At the same time, though, Nef'ī also consistently and forcefully asserted himself as an Ottoman poet who had equaled or surpassed the Persian luminaries, and thus Riyāzī's direct linking of his work with the Persian tradition might have been interpreted as a slight. Secondly, the phrase “the region of Iraq” (*semt-i 'Irāk*) is particularly odd here given that Nef'ī was well established in Istanbul by this time. It is unclear why Riyāzī might have chosen this phrase, as Nef'ī appears to have had no connection with Iraq throughout his life and career (though admittedly there are gaps in our knowledge of his earlier years, as outlined in Chapter 2). What might be surmised is that this was an indirect way of verbally shifting Nef'ī from the Ottoman center to the periphery as a kind of subtle denigration.⁶¹³ Overall, then, if Nef'ī did indeed take issue with either of these aspects of Riyāzī's characterization of his poetry, then he might have interpreted the entry as a veiled slight on his origins and/or style depicting him, however subtly, as a kind of outsider.

eastern part of the Ottoman Empire; see Filiz Kılıç, *XVII. Yüzyıl Tezkirelerinde Şair ve Eser Üzerine Değerlendirmeler* (Ankara: Akçağ Yayınları, 1998), 29–30.

⁶¹³ Given that the examples from Nef'ī's poetry that Riyāzī gives in his entry are all from among his ghazals, one might be tempted to associate the phrase *semt-i 'Irāk* with the so-called “Iraqi style” (*sabk-e 'Irāqī*) that supposedly dominated Persian poetry between the 13th and the 16th centuries; was exemplified by figures like 'Attār (c. 1145–1221), Sa'dī (c. 1210–c. 1291), and Ḥāfiz (c. 1315–1390); and was characterized by the increasing prominence of the ghazal and a more pronounced tendency toward mysticism and concepts of divine love. This, however, would be anachronistic in that the historical division of Persian poetry into three regional styles—the Khorasani (*sabk-e Khorāsānī*), the Iraqī, and the Indian—was a product of the 20th-century Iranian scholar and poet Moḥammad-Taqī Bahār (1886–1951), who advanced the notion with explicitly nationalistic and ethnocentric ends in mind, yearning for a return to the supposed Persian purity of the pre-Khorasani (*i.e.*, the Sasanid) era. Nothing in Ottoman documents indicates that there was any association made between this era's poetry and the region of Iraq. For a brief overview of Bahār's schema and its conceptual background, see Rajeew Kinra, “Make It Fresh: Time, Tradition, and Indo-Persian Literary Modernity,” in *Time, History and the Religious Imaginary in South Asia*, ed. Anne Murphy (New York: Routledge, 2011), 15–17.

Whatever the reason for Nef'ī taking offense may have been, some time later he responded with an invective quatrain pointing out his displeasure and threatening Riyāzī with further retaliation:

that catamite of a deaf poet, Riyāzī Çelebi | taunted me in his encyclopedia (*tezkiye*)
to get the better of me || damned if I do not strike him with invective's cock | and
turn his ass to his ear and his ear to his ass⁶¹⁴

It remains uncertain whether or not this was the first piece produced in the invective quarrel that erupted between Nef'ī and Riyāzī, and is in any case impossible to verify, though the fact that it offers a direct threat indicates that it may well have marked the beginning. Nef'ī's main point of attack here, the hearing disability from which Riyāzī suffered throughout his life, would be the common motif of his other invectives against him as well, as would the performative element of threatening Riyāzī or daring him to respond. One example of this is the following quatrain, in which Nef'ī, apparently having heard or read an invective against Riyāzī by the poet Kesbī (d. c. 1640),⁶¹⁵ dares the former to strike back:

Riyāzī, Kesbī took offense and lampooned you | if you hear it and don't have the
nerve to respond || where they normally say, "The deaf screws the chatterbox"⁶¹⁶ |
this time they'll say, "The chatterbox screws the deaf"⁶¹⁷

⁶¹⁴ "şā'ir-i puşt-i aşamm ya'nī Riyāzī Çelebi | doğunup tezkiresinde bize olmuş öt[e]ne || lekeyim nisbet için ben de dağı döndürmezsem | kīr-i hicv ile götin gūşına gūşın götine"; ULLWCO 662, 20a.

⁶¹⁵ Kesbī, like Nef'ī, was employed in the chancery around the time this quatrain is likely to have been written (*i.e.*, the 1610s), and despite the somewhat disparaging term *yanşak* ("chatterbox") used for him here, he seems to have at least had some association with Nef'ī inasmuch as another invective, apparently by Nev'izāde 'Atā'ī, links and mocks the two poets simultaneously; see IUNEK TY 511, 89a. Later, however, Kesbī would switch sides, as it were, transferring to the religiojudicial branch and using connections with the grand mufti Yaḥyā Efendi to secure a teaching appointment; see footnote 738 below.

⁶¹⁶ This phrase, *yanşagı şagır siker*, is a proverb extant since at least the second half of the 15th century. It is explicated as follows in the *Ebū'n-naşāyih* (The Father of Recommendations), a late-15th or early-16th century work of personal advice organized around proverbs: "The forefathers said: 'First the deaf person screws the chatterbox.' Strenuously avoid such people [*i.e.*, chatterboxes], for they will tell others all that

In his own invectives against Nef'ī, however—of which he wrote at least eight as against Nef'ī's five—Riyāzī took a somewhat different tack to the same destination, choosing to launch an assault on Nef'ī's identity as a poet by attacking his boastful claims to poetic power and originality.

Such claims are a consistent element throughout Nef'ī's *dīvāns* of collected poetry in both Turkish and Persian. He was, for instance, perhaps the most abundant practitioner in Ottoman poetry of *fakhr* or self-praise, a mode that had roots deep in pre-Islamic Arab culture and had been used in the context of battle, much like *hijā'*, from which it had indeed originally hardly been separable.⁶¹⁸ Most of Nef'ī's panegyrics, up to and including even his *na't* or eulogy of the Islamic prophet Muḥammad, devote considerable space to hyperbolic self-praise, such as this distich from an ode on a mansion of Sultan 'Osmān II: "I challenge today's weighers of words! I do not speak idly | it was I who taught the world seductive style and balanced verse."⁶¹⁹ Boasts of this sort perforce went hand in hand with Nef'ī's frequent claims to be the equal or superior of those poets in the Persian tradition whom he admired and by whom he was influenced. For example, in the following distich from a panegyric on the sons of Sultan Murād IV, Nef'ī sets himself up beside the poets Khāqānī (*c.* 1127—between 1186 and 1199) and 'Orfī of Shiraz: "in eloquence and power my verse is nothing like | [that of]

is shameful about you" (*Nitekim atalar demişlerdür: Yañşağı muḳaddem şağır siker. Anuñ gibi kimesnelerden be-ğāyet perhīz eyle ki seniñ 'aybın dağı āherlere söyler.*); Mustafa S. Kaçalın and Ömer Zülfe, "Muḥammed bin Aḥmed'in *Ebū'n-Naşāyih*'i," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları / The Journal of Ottoman Studies* 38 (2011), 203.

⁶¹⁷ "ey Riyāzī incinüp hicv eylemiş Kesbī seni | işidüp sen de cevāba cür'et etmezseñ eğer | yañşağı şağır siker demek cevāb olurdı līk | bir zamān dēr şimdi ammā şağır yañşak siker"; ULLWCO 662, 20a.

⁶¹⁸ For more on this aspect of *fakhr*, see Ewald Wagner, "Mufākḫara," *EF*², Vol. 7, 309.

⁶¹⁹ "şalādır nükte-sencān-ı zamāne hiç lāf etmem | ben öğretdim cihāna tarz-ı şūḫ u şī'r-i hemvārī"; Nef'ī, [*Dīvān*], 31.

either ‘Orfī or Khāqānī, this is a different style.’⁶²⁰ And inasmuch as Nefī thus claimed to equal or surpass Persian poets, he also inherently, but sometimes explicitly, asserted that his style was novel or unparalleled, as in this concluding distich (*maḳṭa* ‘) of a ghazal: “whatever tropes and valleys you may find and roam, Nefī | let us always see that you have invented a style unique and new.”⁶²¹ This “style unique and new” (*ṭarz-ı ḥāṣṣ u tāze*) was introduced largely under the influence of ‘Orfī of Shiraz, one of the progenitors of a highly complex and even mannerist or baroque style that later came to be called the “Indian style” (*sabk-e Hindī*) and that would dominate Persian poetry through the middle of the 18th century, with Nefī being one of the style’s antecedents in the Ottoman Turkish context.⁶²²

In his invectives against Nefī, Riyāzī takes direct aim at Nefī’s claims, often encapsulating his supposedly new style in the phrase “fresh tongue” (*zebān-ı tāze*).⁶²³ This and similar phrases, such as *tāze-gū* (“who speaks in a new manner”), were used to refer to often unspecified novelties of style in general, of which Nefī’s work

⁶²⁰ “nezāketde metānetde kelāmım beñzemez aṣlā | ne ‘Örfī’ye ne Ḥāqānī’ye bu bir ṭarz-ı āḫardır”; *ibid.*, 46.

⁶²¹ “ne maẓmūnlar ne vādīler bulur seyr eyleseñ Nefī | yine bir ṭarz-ı ḥāṣṣ u tāze icād eṭdiğın görsek”; *ibid.*, 20 [*ğazeliyyāt*].

⁶²² For an overview of the Indian style in Persian poetry, see J.T.P. de Bruijn, “Sabk-i Hindi,” *EL*, Vol. 8, 683–685. For analyses of the style in Turkish poetry, see Ali Fuat Bilkan, *Sebk-i Hindi ve Türk Edebiyatında Hint Tarzı* (Istanbul: 3F Yayınevi, 2007); Ali Fuat Bilkan, “Sebk-i Hindi,” *DİA*, Vol. 36, 253–255; and Hatice Aynur, Müjgân Çakır, and Hanife Koncu, *Sözde ve Anlamda Farklılaşma: Sebk-i Hindi, 29 Nisan 2005 Bildiriler* (Istanbul: Turkuaz Yayınları, 2009).

⁶²³ Nefī’s own *dīvān* of collected poems does not make use of the specific phrase “fresh tongue,” but as already discussed he does very frequently refer to the novelty and excellence of his own poetry, sometimes making use of the telling adjective *tāze*. For instance, one distich in a panegyric to Sultan ‘Osmān II reads, “this is a young (*tāze*) valley of panegyrics and ghazals | a creation of my miraculous, astounding pen” (*hem ḳaṣīde hem ğazel bir tāze vādīdir bu kim | iḥtirā ‘-ı ḥāme-i mu ‘ciz-beyānımdır benim*; Nefī, [*Dīvān*], 29), while the concluding distich (*maḳṭa* ‘) of one ghazal declares, “let he who can, if there be any, come to the square [of competition] with Nefī | such a fresh (*tāze*) and rare style calls for elegance” (*gelsin benimle var ise meydāna Nefīyā | bir böyle ṭarz-ı tāze vü nādīr edā bilir*; Nefī, *Nefī Divanı*, ed. Metin Akkuş [Ankara: Akçağ Yayınları, 1993], 300).

represented one. While Riyāzī’s biographical encyclopedia does not make use of these terms, others do, such as that of Meḥmed Rızā (d. 1672): his entry on Nef’ī in his dictionary, completed in 1640 just a few years after the poet’s death, introduces him by describing him as one who “began in Anatolia by singing unparalleled poems using a fresh tongue,”⁶²⁴ and the phrase is also used twice to describe the poet Cevrī (1595–1654), who was a friend and admirer of Nef’ī’s verse.⁶²⁵ Riyāzī’s use of *zebān-ı tāze* in the context of invective, however, makes it clear that he not only links the phrase with Nef’ī’s style, but also that he views it, at least in the semi-public context of circulating invective, in a negative light. Moreover, the physical aspect of the word *zebān* (“tongue”) allows ample room for Riyāzī to lambast Nef’ī in sexually charged terms, as in the following quatrain:

a catamite poet, much like Nef’ī, *would* be inclined | toward the fresh tongue and
verse without measure || may his fresh [boy]’s member never leave his ass | *that* is
the mouth such a fresh tongue requires⁶²⁶

Much as he had done with Şa’de’-d-dīnzāde ‘Abdü’l-‘azīz Efendi in the chronogram discussed above, here Riyāzī starkly presents Nef’ī as a catamite (*me’būn*), the passive partner in an unbalanced pederastic relationship, thereby verbally stripping him of his poetic power and implicitly denouncing his claims of originality and excellence. But

⁶²⁴ “vilāyet-i Rūm’da ibtidā zebān-ı tāze ile eş’ār-ı bī-hem-tāya āgāze iden”; Seyyid Meḥmed Rızā, *Zehr-i Mār-zāde Seyyid Mehmed Rızā: Hayatı, Eserleri, Edebi Kişiliği ve Tezkiresi*, ed. Gencay Zavotçu (Kocaeli: T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2009), 145.

⁶²⁵ *Ibid.*, 79. At the same time, though, Meḥmed Rızā also uses the phrase *tāze-gū* to refer both to a poet like Nā’ilī (d. 1666) (*ibid.*, 142) whose work was among the most typical exemplars of the complexities of the new style, and to one like Kāfzāde Fā’izī (*ibid.*, 94), who was a patron of Riyāzī and his associates and whose work bears few if any of the hallmarks of the new style. As such, the exact signification of Meḥmed Rızā’s use of the phrase remains somewhat uncertain.

⁶²⁶ “şā’ir-i me’būn olan Nef’ī gibi mā’il olur | hem zebān-ı tāzeye hem şī’r-i bī-endāzeye || tāzesiniñ mehrezi hergiz götünden çıkmasun | böyle bir ağız gerek öyle zebān-ı tāzeye”; IUNEK TY 511, 92a.

Riyāzī also doubles down on this by presenting the one who is penetrating this catamite Nefī as a young, kept boy, indicated by the word *tāzesi*, meaning “his fresh (or young) one.” There is also a verbal linking between the mouth (producer of verse) and the anus (producer of feces), a trope frequently used in the Islamicate invective tradition to denigrate the quality of a poet’s verse. All of this amounts to a way of warning Nefī that he should hold his tongue in regards to invective and temper his claims to poetic novelty and excellence, with the implication that if he does not, there will be consequences. Besides the quatrain’s sexually loaded imagery, however, the poem also casts a more direct aspersion on the quality of its target’s verse: by describing Nefī’s poetry as *bī-endāze*—that is, lacking in proportion, symmetry, and balance—Riyāzī simultaneously emphasizes and criticizes one of the hallmarks of Nefī’s style; namely, the aforementioned bombast and braggadocio that he brought into Ottoman poetry. The implication here is that this “new style” lacks the balance and form of the more established styles utilized by others—among them, one must assume, not only Riyāzī himself but also those western Anatolian *‘ālim*-littérateurs who were his own friends and patrons and with whom he associated.

Indeed, from among this group, the same Kāfzāde Fā’izī who had belittled Nefī in his anthology, as discussed at the beginning of this chapter, also produced an invective quatrain against Nefī criticizing him for his “fresh tongue”:

hey, blasphemous pimp! don't go looking | in vain for fresh poetry off in Tabriz or
Qom or Shiraz || don't let your wife's worn-out clitoris leave your mouth | Nef'î,
that's not the fresh tongue you need⁶²⁷

Here, Fā'izî makes an explicit connection with Persia, not only as a style of or approach to verse, but also as a figurative and, more obliquely, actual location. One might read the specific references to the Safavid cities of Tabriz, Qom, and Shiraz as allusions to Nef'î's origins in the province of Erzurum on the empire's eastern periphery, far nearer to Persia than the capital of Istanbul was. While this aspect of the early 17th-century invective corpus will come to the fore in the examination of Nev'îzâde 'Aṭâ'î in the next section, the dominant stance in Fā'izî's quatrain remains one in which, like Riyâzî, he attacks Nef'î on the basis of his poetic style, in this case suggesting that his work is a mere imitation of Persian verse.

Being imitative is also one of the main bases on which Riyâzî establishes his invective discourse against Nef'î. This is somewhat hinted at in the *Riyâzu 'ş-şu 'arâ*'s description of Nef'î's verse as being “in the Persian style” and Nef'î's reaction, if indeed that was what the invective presented above was reacting to. However, it seems more likely that Riyâzî's use of the phrase *tarz-ı 'Acemâne* there was meant primarily as a descriptor for a certain manner of phrasing and poetic approach. In his invectives, on the other hand,

⁶²⁷ “tâze eş'âr dëyü ey gidi-yi bed-mezheb | gitme gel yok yere Tebrîz ü Kûm [u] Şîrâz'a || gitmesün köhne tılağı karınıñ ağızından | olmaz ey Nef'î saña böyle zebân-ı tâze”; IUNЕК TY 511, 89a. Note that Kortantamer, who quotes only the first distich, misattributes this quatrain to Nev'îzâde 'Aṭâ'î; see Tunca Kortantamer, *Nev'î-zâde Atâ'î ve Hamse'si* (Izmir: Ege Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1997), 412. Nef'î responded directly to this poem by Fā'izî, writing: “hey, son of Kâf! if it's a war of invective you want | come and see the wound the fresh tongue [will inflict] on you || come and press my penis against your wife's clitoris | *this* is the battlefield of words, no need to go to Shiraz” (*ceng-i hicv ise murâdın eğer ey Kâfoğlu | sen de neymiş göresin [z]aḥm-ı zebân-ı tâze || kîrimizle tılağın 'avratınıñ dilleşdür | işte meydân-ı sūhan gitmeyelim Şîrâz'a*); IUNЕК TY 511, 77b–78a.

Riyāzī’s message to Nef’ī is clear: “Nef’ī eats whatever shit he finds⁶²⁸ | what is that shit-eater’s poetry and invective, anyway? || if your aim is to keep him quiet | just shit on that pimp’s tongue.”⁶²⁹ Here again we see Riyāzī establishing a verbal link between the mouth and the anus as a means of belittling Nef’ī’s verse, and again we see a warning or threat against Nef’ī, although in this case it is encoded more in scatological than in sexual terms. Two implications, then, arise from the quatrain: the first distich uses scatology to hint that Nef’ī’s non-invective work is derivative, and even then only of verse of poor quality, while his invective itself is nothing to fear; whereas the second distich advises that the only way to silence him is to respond with invective of one’s own.

Another of Riyāzī’s invectives that charges Nef’ī with being imitative is particularly interesting inasmuch as it directly names—and implicitly denigrates—the imitated author in question; namely, Nef’ī’s mentor, Muştafā ‘Ālī of Gallipoli. Riyāzī, as his biographical encyclopedia makes clear, was hardly positive in his appraisal of Muştafā ‘Ālī’s verse: “[H]is poetry is blameworthy in that it is [like] the camel and cat and its seed is not more eminent than the cotton [itself]; however, some of [his poetry] attained a degree of acceptability.”⁶³⁰ As Namık Açıkgöz explains in the introduction to his edition of the encyclopedia, “the camel and cat” (*şütür-gürbe*) is a reference to the folktale in which a camel brought for sale to the marketplace with a cat tied around its

⁶²⁸ The phrase *bulduğu bokı yemek* (“to eat whatever shit one finds”) can also be used to refer to men who engage in sodomy at every opportunity; see Filiz Bingölçe, *Osmanlı Argo Sözlüğü (Tanıklarıyla)* (Ankara: AltÜst Yayınları, 2011), 41 and cf. Kuru, “A Sixteenth Century Scholar: Deli Birader,” 61, 173.

⁶²⁹ “yér imiş bulduğu bokı Nef’ī | şi’ri ne hicvi ne o bokyédiniñ || ağzımı tütmağ ise maqşüdiñ | şıç zebān vukū’ına gidiniñ”; IUNEK TY 511, 92a.

⁶³⁰ “[E]ş’ârı şütür-gürbe olup dānesi penbenden mümtâz olmaduğı cihetden medhûldür; lâkin ba‘zısı derece-i kabûle mevsûldür.” Riyāzī, *Riyâzû’ş-Suara*, 216.

neck was priced exceptionally cheaply at just one dinar—but the seller also stipulated that the cat must be sold together with it, and the cat’s cost would be 1,000 dinar. In Açıkgöz’s words, this alludes to “the confounding of the valuable with the worthless, presenting the worthless as if it were valuable and the valuable as if it were worthless.”⁶³¹ In other words, there is some good and some bad in Muṣṭafā ‘Ālī’s verse, but in Riyāzī’s estimation what has been thought good is not so, while what has been thought bad may deserve reappraisal. The cottonseed and cotton comparison, on the other hand, is glossed by Açıkgöz as showing that Riyāzī believed that Muṣṭafā ‘Ālī’s poetry was deficient in terms of content (the cottonseed) but fine in terms of form (the cotton).⁶³² In the invective quatrain where Nef‘ī is linked with Muṣṭafā ‘Ālī, Riyāzī moves from the scatological to the sexual to present the former’s verse as if it were mere recycling of the latter’s already—as the *Riyāzu’-ṣ-ṣu’arā* emphasizes—quite inferior verse:

‘Ālī would take your tongue in his mouth and keep on sucking | Nef‘ī, while still young (*tāze*) you gave it up to that ass-fucker || since all you do is take [your verse] from his mouth and sell it | how can your poetry be known for its ‘fresh tongue’ (*zebān-ı tāze*)?⁶³³

Poetic derivativeness is framed as Nef‘ī, the catamite, being granted whatever verse he may have through cataglottism with Muṣṭafā ‘Ālī, the pederast. As a result, nothing about it can be considered original or novel.⁶³⁴ Yet this quatrain also goes one step further by bringing in the economic dimension, depicting Nef‘ī as someone who not

⁶³¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁶³² *Ibid.*

⁶³³ “diliñ ağzına alup dā’im emerdi ‘Ālī | Nef‘īyā tāze iken rām idiñ ol kün-bāza || çünki kâriñ anıñ ağzından alup şatmaqdır | şı’riñiñ nāmı n’ola olsa zebān-ı tāze”; IUNEK TY 511, 92a.

⁶³⁴ As mentioned in Chapter 2, Nef‘ī’s style of invective verse also owes much to that of the understudied invectives that Muṣṭafā ‘Ālī scattered throughout his prose works.

only imitates Muṣṭafā ‘Ālī’s work, but then sells his imitations to obtain material benefits. As discussed in the introduction, within the Ottoman patronage system and the Islamicate tradition as a whole, poetry was indeed often used as part of an exchange, effectively becoming a commodity that could provide the producer with economic and/or social gains. Nevertheless, while this was not merely an accepted practice but indeed a virtually essential one for many, it remained a practice that went mostly unacknowledged within the formal confines of literary works: poets’ own introductions to biographical encyclopedias and collected poems, for example, consistently stress poetry’s status as a high and even supreme form of art.⁶³⁵ And no doubt it was, and was considered by poets themselves to be primarily just such an art. Even so, panegyrics and even sometimes ghazals were written, even if only implicitly, so as to gain some variety of capital (economic, social, or cultural), and in fact were sometimes even explicitly produced for the purpose of “obtaining goods and/or services from would-be elites in non-governmental occupations from doctors and wealthy merchants to calligraphers,”⁶³⁶ thus providing the producer with a material need and the consumer with an item of cultural caché. All this, however, was the *de facto* rather than the *de jure* side of poetic practice, and as a result Riyāzī’s accusation that Nef‘ī was effectively selling second-hand goods procured from Muṣṭafā ‘Ālī takes on added force.

Though Riyāzī wrote several other invectives against Nef‘ī, perhaps the most vitriolic is a quatrain that openly declares that his target ought to be executed:

⁶³⁵ For a collection of several introductions written by poets for their *dīvān* of collected poems, see Tahir Üzgör, ed. *Türkçe Dīvān Dībâceleri* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, Yayınları, 1990).

⁶³⁶ Andrews, “Speaking of Power,” 288.

let us establish Nef'ī's blasphemy through Sharia law | bring that foul-mouthed heretic before the council || hang that dog's profane curses from his neck | and burn that foul one on a fire of dogshit⁶³⁷

The fact that this quatrain hints at an already somewhat sizeable body of “profane curses” (*küfriyyāt*; *i.e.*, invectives) shows that it is likely to have been written well after the advent of the clash between Nef'ī and Riyāzī. One point that especially bears discussion here is the quatrain's addressee, or rather addressees: whereas the previous invectives treated here were aimed at the actual target, either directly addressing him in the second person or defaming him in the third person in such a way that he would read or hear the poem and perceive it as a slight, this particular quatrain is in the first person plural and so openly addressed to an ingroup, to a particular “we.”⁶³⁸ The identity of that ingroup is of course vague, and though it may initially be considered simply as “those who stand against Nef'ī,” the fact that Riyāzī brings up the possibility (even if only discursive and theoretical) of using Sharia law (*şer'*) to obtain a formal injunction against him for blasphemy or apostasy (*küfr*)—the most extreme charge that could be brought against a Muslim, even if here it is used primarily as a term of abuse⁶³⁹—gives

⁶³⁷ “şer'le küfrini işbāt edelim Nef'ī'nin | götürüp meclise ol mülhid-i bed-güftarı || bağlayup ol köpeğin boynuna küfriyyātın | it bokıyla yaçalım âteşe ol murdârı”; IUNEK TY 511, 92a.

⁶³⁸ The concept of ingroups and outgroups was initially formulated in 1906 by sociologist William Graham Sumner, who wrote, “a differentiation arises between ourselves, the we-group, or in-group, and everybody else, or the others-groups, out-groups. The insiders in a we-group are in a relation of peace, order, law, government, and industry, to each other. Their relation to all outsiders, or others-groups, is one of war and plunder, except so far as agreements have modified it.” William Graham Sumner, *Folkways: A Study of Mores, Manners, Customs and Morals* (New York: Cosimo Classics, 2007), 12.

⁶³⁹ Another instance in which Nef'ī was directly “charged” with blasphemy or apostasy was a quatrain by another occasional opponent, the grand mufti Yaḥyā Efendi: “among the multitude of today's eloquent men | is there any poet like unto Nef'ī || his words are the Seven Hanging Odes | and that blasphemer himself is Imru'l-Qays” (*şimdi ḥayl-i suhenverân içre | Nef'ī mânendi var mı bir şâ'ir || sözleri Seb'a-i Mu'allaka'dır | İmrü'l-Keys kendidir kâfir*); Ebū'z-ziyā [Tevfīk], *Nef'ī*, 20. The odes referred to are seven celebrated pre-Islamic poems, the so-called *Mu'allaqāt*, thought to have been hung in public on the Ka'ba in Mecca, with Imru'l-Qays being the author of the earliest of the odes; see Gérard Lecomte, “Al-

us some clue as to who this invective was meant to be heard by; namely, those who had especial familiarity with Sharia law and its application, or in other words, members of the *‘ulemā*.

While we cannot know exactly to whom Riyāzī primarily meant this quatrain to speak, it is highly likely that it was the particular group of like-minded *‘ālim*-littérateurs with whom he was closely affiliated. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, this group included high-ranking members of the *‘ulemā* such as ‘Azmīzāde Hāletī, ‘Abdu’l-ganīzāde Meḥmed (Nādirī), and Yaḥyā Efendi, as well as more middling figures like Kāfzāde Fā’izī, Nev’izāde ‘Aṭā’ī, Nergīsī, and Veysī.⁶⁴⁰ Significantly and not coincidentally, all of these men with the exception of Nergīsī concentrated on poetry in their literary endeavors, and all of them—again with the exception of Nergīsī—were targeted by Nef’ī’s invective verse. Aslı Niyazioğlu describes this coterie of *‘ālim*-littérateurs as follows:

Apart from a common social background, similar literary tastes and preferences, especially an interest in the *meşnevīs*, seem to have united this group. Almost all of the members of this group composed a *sāḳīnāme* [...] which suggests a poetry contest among friends. It is also significant that members of this group seem not to have participated in some newly emerging trends in the literary scene of Istanbul at the time, such as the *Sebk-i Hindī* poetry.⁶⁴¹

The commonality of these men’s social backgrounds, it should be added, refers not only to their common profession in the Ottoman religiojudicial hierarchy, but also to their

Mu‘allaḳāt,” *EF*, Vol. 7, 254–255. Through these allusions, Yaḥyā implicitly links Nef’ī with pre-Islamic and hence non-Muslim poets, thereby justifying the use of the word *kāfir*.

⁶⁴⁰ The affiliation among these figures is examined in some detail in Aslı Niyazioğlu, *Dreams and Lives in Ottoman Istanbul: A Seventeenth-century Biographer’s Perspective* (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2017), 22–30.

⁶⁴¹ Niyazioğlu, “The Very Special Dead,” 230.

pedigrees and places of origin: they were all from *'ulemā* families of varying degrees of distinction; they were all of western Anatolian provenance (though Riyāzī was born in Mecca because his grandfather was serving as judge there at the time of his birth, his family in fact hailed from Birgi); and many of them studied under the same teachers and built up their initial networks in this manner.

While the issue of this coterie's social background will be explored in more detail below, the vital importance of what Niyazioğlu rightly calls these men's "similar literary tastes and preferences" must be kept in mind as well. Pierre Bourdieu, in discussing how authors write "not only for a public, but for a public of equals who are also competitors,"⁶⁴² hints at the profound cultural significance the sharing of tastes and preferences can have:

Any act of cultural production implies an affirmation of its claim to cultural legitimacy: When different producers confront each other, it is still in the name of their claims to orthodoxy or, in Max Weber's terms, to the legitimate and monopolized use of a certain class of symbolic goods; when they are recognized, it is their claim to orthodoxy that is being recognized. As witnessed by the fact that oppositions express themselves in terms of reciprocal excommunication, the field of restricted production [*i.e.*, effectively, "high art"] can never be dominated by one orthodoxy without continuously being dominated by the question of orthodoxy itself, that is by the question of the criteria defining the legitimate exertion of a certain type of cultural practice.⁶⁴³

Considering this, it can be said that the coterie of *'ālim*-littérateurs of which Riyāzī was part viewed itself as a, or rather *the*, orthodoxy of Ottoman poetic production. On the other hand, Nefī, as well as those few younger poets associated with him or under his

⁶⁴² Bourdieu, "The Market of Symbolic Goods," 18. It should be noted here that Bourdieu was discussing modern print culture with its more widely available distribution of literary and intellectual works. As such, the broad public to which he refers was, in the context of early modern Ottoman manuscript culture, in fact largely limited to the public of competitors (*i.e.*, other poets) of which he also speaks.

⁶⁴³ *Ibid.*, 19.

tutelage,⁶⁴⁴ claimed his own work—which, as will be recalled, he rather aggressively self-promoted as new and unparalleled—to be an emerging orthodoxy in conscious opposition to the orthodoxy being put forward by the *‘ālim*-littérateurs.

What Bourdieu says concerning “reciprocal excommunication” also helps to at least partly explain why Riyāzī went so far as to pen an invective calling for Nef‘ī’s execution. And he was not the only one, as another of Nef‘ī’s opponents from the same group, Kāfzāde Fā’izī—whose rather dismissive anthology entry on Nef‘ī was discussed at the beginning of this chapter—produced the following Persian couplet doing just the same: “that poet of invective who goes by the name Nef‘ī | his death, like the death of a viper, is called for by the four schools [of Islamic jurisprudence].”⁶⁴⁵ However, unlike in the case of Riyāzī’s quatrain, this one in fact prompted a response by Nef‘ī that is extant today:

son of Kāf [*i.e.*, Kāfzāde],⁶⁴⁶ listen to this word of advice from me | be aware of the degree of your knowledge, do not touch the people of culture (*yārān*) || his venom is absolutely fatal, so next time | go touch the viper, do not dare touch Nef‘ī’s member [*i.e.*, penis]⁶⁴⁷

⁶⁴⁴ Among these poets were Hüseyn ‘Ālī of Edirne (d. 1640 or 1648), Ünsī (d. 1664), Cevrī (c. 1595–1654), and Şehrī of Malatya (d. 1660). Of these, it may have been Ünsī, whose real name was ‘Abdu’l-laṭīf, that was closest to Nef‘ī: a member of the judicial branch of the *‘ilmiyye*, Ünsī passed most of the 1620s in Istanbul without receiving an appointment, and he was linked to Nef‘ī in numerous invectives by Nev‘izāde ‘Aṭā’ī as well as one by Riyāzī; see IUNЕК TY 511, 88a, 90a, 90b, 92a. For more on Ünsī’s life, see İbrahim Halil Tuğluk, “Ünsī, Abdūllatīf,” *Türk Edebiyatı İsimler Sözlüğü*, October 1, 2014. <http://www.turkedyatiisimlersozlugu.com/index.php?sayfa=detay&detay=4602>.

⁶⁴⁵ “An şاعر هجا گو کاور است نام نفعی | قتلش بچار مذهب واجب چو قتل افعی”; Tulga Ocak, “Nef‘ī İçin Söylenmiş Bir Hiciv Beyti Üzerine,” *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 1, no. 1 (1983), 19.

⁶⁴⁶ The patronymic of Kāfzāde Fā’izī, whose real name was ‘Abdu’l-ḥayy, comes from his grandfather, Kāf Ahmed Efendi.

⁶⁴⁷ “Kāfoğlı naşihatdır işit bu sözi benden | bil rütbe-i ‘irfānını yārāna ulaşma || zehri katı mühlikdir anın bir dağı zinhār | ef‘iye ulaş mehrez-i Nef‘ī’ye ulaşma”; IUNЕК TY 511, 78a. The use of “penis” (*mehrez*) here alludes to the likening of the act of writing invective to sodomizing, and hence getting the upper hand over, the target.

In addition to the threat of further invective offered by this response, it also makes careful use of the term *yārān*, which literally means “friends” but in the context of the field of Ottoman poetry also refers to people of education and culture who are familiar with the poetic tradition, poetic composition, and the “rules of the game” of gatherings where poetry was performed.⁶⁴⁸ By, to use Bourdieu’s term, excommunicating Fā’izī through the accusation that his “degree of knowledge” (*rütbe-i ‘irfān*) is insufficient for him to be considered one of the true *yārān*, Nef’ī draws a line in the sand and implicitly stakes a claim on the poetic orthodoxy against the similar claim put forward by the ‘*ālim*-littérateurs—one of whose most vehement proponents was Nev’izāde ‘Aṭā’ī, whose exchange of invectives with Nef’ī constitutes the topic of the next section.

5.2 Nev’izāde ‘Aṭā’ī

Among the coterie of ‘*ālim*-littérateurs to whom Nef’ī stood opposed, it was Nev’izāde ‘Aṭā’ī (1583–1635) who most forcefully attempted to stake his own claim to the Ottoman poetic orthodoxy of the early 17th century. Son of the distinguished scholar Nev’ī (Yaḥyā) Efendi (1533/34–1599) from Malkara in eastern Thrace, the Istanbul-born ‘Aṭā’ī initially followed in his father’s footsteps: after his graduation in 1601, ‘Aṭā’ī sought appointments in the educational branch of the ‘*ilmiyye*, and was finally able to secure one at a small madrasa after sending a pleading quatrain to the poet and future grand mufti Yaḥyā Efendi,⁶⁴⁹ who was then serving as the chief judge of Istanbul and was among ‘Aṭā’ī’s strongest poetic influences. Within a few years, however, he

⁶⁴⁸ The “rules” of poetic gatherings, which shape the discourse used in poetic production, are laid out in detail in Walter G. Andrews, *Poetry’s Voice, Society’s Song: Ottoman Lyric Poetry* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1985), 165–173.

⁶⁴⁹ Kortantamer, *Nev’i-zāde Atāyi ve Hamse’si*, 111.

had grown dissatisfied, and, switching over to the judicial branch, he managed to obtain an appointment as a judge in Lofça (the modern-day Lovech, Bulgaria) in 1608. For the next two decades until just before his death, with only short stints in Istanbul now and then, ‘Aṭā’ī would serve as a judge at a wide variety of different places, all in Rumelia and all of relatively middling prestige, while continuing to keep up ties with friends and important figures in the capital.⁶⁵⁰

Apart from his biographical dictionary of shaykhs and ‘ālims, the *Hadā’ikū’l-hakā’ik fī tekmlētū’ş-Şakā’ik* (Gardens of Truths in the Completion of the *Peonies*⁶⁵¹) and his *dīvān* of collected poems, ‘Aṭā’ī’s major work and in many ways his real claim to fame as a poet was his *khamṣa* (“quintet”), or collection of five long *meṣnevī* poems. The *khamṣa* tradition had begun in the 13th century, when the five *meṣnevīs* of the Persian poet Niẓāmī of Ganja (1141–1209) began to be collected together as a group,⁶⁵² and subsequently numerous poets, writing in both Persian and Turkish, would undertake to produce their own *khamṣa* either as full or partial parallels to Niẓāmī’s or independently. As this was a substantial compositional endeavor, it often served as a kind of crowning achievement to a poet’s career, as well as a locus for him to put his aesthetic and cultural views into their fullest practice. ‘Aṭā’ī was no exception in this regard in that he used his work to mount a direct challenge to the Persian poetic tradition, specifically in the narrative mode of the *meṣnevī* form upon which he was embarking:

⁶⁵⁰ Niyazioğlu, *Dreams and Lives*, 25, 41.

⁶⁵¹ The work is so named because it was composed as an addendum to Ṭaşköprizāde Aḥmed’s (1495–1561) Arabic biographical dictionary *al-Shaqā’iqu’-n-nu’ māniyya fī ‘ulamā’i’ d-dawlati’ l-’Uthmāniyya* (Red Peonies of the ‘*Ulemā* of the Ottoman State).

⁶⁵² Domenico Parrello, “*Kamsa* of Neẓāmī,” *Encyclopædia Iranica*, November 10, 2010. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/kamsa-of-nezami>.

in poems of praise and lyrics, Rūmī [*i.e.*, Ottoman Turkish] words | have been victorious over the mages of Persia || when the bloodthirsty swords of the Ottomans | emerged with the excellence of the Turkish language || and yet in the mode of the *meşnevî* | the word of the Persians has remained the stronger || if only it were said, “This jewel-scattering verse | whose every couplet is an auspicious unity || grants power to the authors of *khamsas*” | if only a response were given on the highest level⁶⁵³

These lines are from ‘Aṭā’ī’s *sāḳīnāme* entitled ‘*Ālemnümā* (World-scryer), the first of the five *meşnevîs* he wrote, completing the work in 1617 when he was serving as the judge of Tırhala (today’s Trikala in central Greece). The desired “response” (*cevāb*) mentioned is, of course, the *khamsa* that ‘Aṭā’ī was commencing with this work. Thus, the entire project of the *khamsa* was, from the start, conceived of as an aesthetic and thus implicitly cultural challenge to the Persian tradition, one that ‘Aṭā’ī clarifies was specifically requested by his friend and patron Ḳāfzāde Fā’izī.⁶⁵⁴ As Kortantamer points out, the *fakhr* section at the ‘*Ālemnümā*’s conclusion does much the same: “In boasting of [the ‘*Ālemnümā*], [‘Aṭā’ī] claims that Nizāmī would weep from jealousy and that Zuhūrī had not shown the skill that he had; however, when ‘Aṭā’ī begins to speak of the Turkish poets Nevā’ī and Revānī, he suddenly changes his tone: he (*i.e.*, ‘Aṭā’ī) has written in a new style like Nevā’ī and has pleased Revānī’s spirit with his work.”⁶⁵⁵

What Kortantamer neglects to discuss, however, is how extremely telling this choice of poets is: Nizāmī is of course used as the originator and exemplar of the *khamsa*; Revānī (d. 1523/24) was the first to compose a *sāḳīnāme* in Turkish; Nevā’ī (1441–1501) was a Chagatay poet at the court of the Timurid sultan Ḥusayn Bāyqarā (r. 1469–1506) in

⁶⁵³ “ki medh ü tegazzülde Rûmî kelâm | olup gâlib-i sâhirân-ı ‘Acem || çü şemşîr-i hunrîz-i ‘Osmâniyân | zuhûr étîdî rüchân-ı Türki-zebân || velîkin kalup şîve-i mesnevî | sözi anda A‘camuñ oldı kavî || deñilseydi bu nazm-ı gevher-nisâr | ki her beyti bir müfred-i rûzgâr || olup hamse erbâbına nice tâb | vêrilseydi âlâya tenhâ cevâb”; Kortantamer, *Nev’î-zâde Atâyî ve Hamse’si*, 411–412.

⁶⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 162–164 and Niyazioğlu, *Dreams and Lives*, 23–25.

⁶⁵⁵ Kortantamer, *Nev’î-zâde Atâyî ve Hamse’si*, 412.

Herat who wrote a treatise, the *Muḥākamat al-lughatayn* (Judgment of the Two Languages), mounting a defense of the (Chagatay) Turkic language as superior to Persian; and Zuhūrī (d. 1616) was a poet active in the sultanate of Bijapur in India's Deccan who had composed the most recent Persian *sāḳīnāme* and who was just very recently deceased. Taken all together, then, the lines are not simply a declaration of the superiority of the Turkish language and poetry (Nevā'ī and Revānī) over the Persian *tradition* (Nizāmī), but also over *recent* Persian productions as represented by Zuhūrī—who composed largely, albeit not in his *sāḳīnāme*, in the complex so-called “Indian style” from which Nef'ī drew much of his inspiration.

Despite his ambitious claims in this regard, 'Aṭā'ī appears never to have attacked Nef'ī for being imitative of Persian poetry, as Riyāzī and Ḳāfzāde Fā'izī did. Instead, he would narrow the scope of his attack on Nef'ī in such a way as to effectively cast Nef'ī out not simply of the field of poetry, but of Ottoman high culture and indeed—via notions of what a “real Ottoman” might be—of the Ottoman enterprise itself. And for his part, Nef'ī would do the same with 'Aṭā'ī—occasionally attacking him in conjunction with others in his circle.

One of the primary areas of attack in this regard related to the two poets' respective lineages. It will be recalled that, where 'Aṭā'ī was the scion of the distinguished scholar Nev'ī, who had served as tutor to the sons of Sultan Murād III (r. 1574–1595), Nef'ī was, as detailed in Chapter 2, the son of a district governor named Meḫmed. While neither of these were by any means positions to laugh at inasmuch as they both wielded a significant degree of power and influence, there was nevertheless a center-periphery

opposition involved: ‘Aṭā’ī, even regardless of the fact that he never himself advanced beyond relatively middling positions in the *‘ilmiyye* hierarchy, was a skilled poet with a circle of important friends and patrons whom he had gained to a great extent through his father’s connections in the capital, whereas Nef’ī was an unknown quantity, a provincial upstart aggressively building and promoting his name in an environment of elites occupying the sociocultural center. Hence ‘Aṭā’ī, in a number of instances, launched an assault on Nef’ī’s father as a means of discrediting the son’s very presence in, at the highest levels, the sultan’s own private gatherings. One of these assaults can be seen in the following quatrain:

Nef’ī, you dark vessel of blackest pitch, we know your father | a vile commoner and
a disgraced and miserly *beğ* || before [you] took Vaḥdetī’s⁶⁵⁶ shit in your mouth and
chewed | it would have been best for Pendī⁶⁵⁷ to drink a laxative and shit on your
head⁶⁵⁸

The poverty in which Nef’ī was raised was likely known to ‘Aṭā’ī and his circle as a result of Nef’ī himself describing it at length in the long invective, mentioned in Chapter 2, where he lambasted his own father Meḥmed Beğ for apparently leaving the family to serve in the court of the Khan of Crimea: “since [my] father has happily been companion to the Khan | I have seen nothing of either lentils or *tarkhana* || poverty is my calamity, I wonder if I should | like my father show myself a beggar to the Khan?”⁶⁵⁹ Yet where Nef’ī situates the poverty he once knew within a set of specific circumstances, ‘Aṭā’ī’s description of him as “disgraced and miserly” (*nikbetī, cimrī*)—a seeming reference to

⁶⁵⁶ For Vaḥdetī, see section 6.1.4.

⁶⁵⁷ For Pendī, see Chapter 2, footnote 176.

⁶⁵⁸ “bilürüz babaṅı Nef’ī koyu kârdânlığı kim | bir dūniñ ‘āmmı ve hem nikbetī cimrī beğ idi || Vaḥdetī bokımı ağzıña alup çinemeden | Pendī bir müşil içüp başıña sıçmaq yeğ idi”; IUNEK TY 511, 89a.

⁶⁵⁹ “sa’âdet ile nedīm olalı peder ḥāna | ne mercimek görür oldı gözüm ne tarḥana || züğürtlük âfetim [o]ldı ‘aceb midir êsem | peder gibi buradan ben de ‘arz-ı cerr ḥāna”; ULLWCO 662, 1b.

how Mehmed Beğ left his family to serve the khan of Crimea, as compared to ‘Aṭā’ī’s own father, who served in the Ottoman palace itself—posits these as inherent faults of character attendant upon his identity as “a vile commoner” (*bir dūniyā ‘āmmu*), an identity that is implied for Nef‘ī as well, in addition to the latter’s being otherized on account of his dark skin through the phrase “dark vessel of blackest pitch” (*koyu kār dānlık*).

Considering their dissimilar backgrounds, Nef‘ī’s own assault on ‘Aṭā’ī’s lineage is necessarily of a different character. Owing to Nev‘ī’s scholarly and poetic output—according to his son, he produced over thirty works in both verse and prose⁶⁶⁰—as well as ‘Aṭā’ī’s own, Nef‘ī was able to link father and son in a visceral manner. In one quatrain he writes, “how, oh how, could the son of a doltish poet | like Nev‘ī ever be a woman to a lion like me?”⁶⁶¹ That is to say, with a father of such poor quality, ‘Aṭā’ī, a chip off the old block and a woman (*zen*) to boot, is scarcely even worth lampooning. Overall, a not insignificant portion of the invective exchange between Nef‘ī and ‘Aṭā’ī alludes to their respective fathers. It would seem that, in this regard, both of them found the other’s soft spot and exploited it. We know from his own works that ‘Aṭā’ī had a deep respect for his father Nev‘ī, and it is also known that it was through his father that ‘Aṭā’ī made his initial connections in the scholarly and literary worlds that enabled him to launch his career.⁶⁶² Nevertheless, as discussed at the beginning of this section, ‘Aṭā’ī’s own career, particularly in terms of judgeship posts, never achieved the heights of his father’s, and for Nef‘ī to pour salt on this wound through aspersions on ‘Aṭā’ī’s

⁶⁶⁰ Nev‘īzāde ‘Aṭā’ī, *Hadā’iku’l-Hakā’ik*, Vol. 2, 1142.

⁶⁶¹ “Nev‘ī gibi bir şā’ir-i gū-sāleniñ oğlu | bir bencileyin şire niçe niçe zen olsun”; IUNEK TY 511, 78b.

⁶⁶² For a fuller examination of the relation between father and son, see Niyazioğlu, *Dreams and Lives*, 35–39.

deceased forebear must have been especially vexing, prompting him to reply on the same grounds.

One quatrain by Nef'ī makes the connection between father and son particularly stark:

Nev'izāde, from your father you inherited gibberish | for your father spent his life
spouting gibberish || come, judge how much drivel the departed consumed | as to shit
out behind him a turd as coarse as you⁶⁶³

As Niyazioğlu points out in regards to this quatrain, here “Nef'ī targets the self-image

‘Aṭā’ī tries to promote as [...] ‘poet son of a poet’ and turns it upside down,”⁶⁶⁴ a self-

image that she points out is quite consciously expressed in a distich from a panegyric

that ‘Aṭā’ī addressed to the grand vizier Naṣūḥ Pasha: “That poet I, that poet’s son,

before whose verse today | The cultured of the world have bowed the head low.”⁶⁶⁵

While Nef'ī’s invective quatrain does indeed attack ‘Aṭā’ī’s manner of presenting

himself, as well as his using his deceased father’s reputation to attempt to further

himself, what is especially important to note for the context of my argument here is that

the discourse of Nef'ī’s invective presents ‘Aṭā’ī’s imputed lack of talent and

intelligence as an inheritance (*mīrās*), thereby implying, if not necessarily that this lack

is inherent in the family line, then at least that ‘Aṭā’ī was merely aping his father’s work.

From the perspective of one promoting his own originality as aggressively as Nef'ī, it is

not difficult to understand why he might make such a claim. After all, the *khamṣa* on

which ‘Aṭā’ī would build his reputation as a poet was explicitly based on the earlier

example of Niẓāmī’s *khamṣa*, however different and “Ottoman” he was attempting to

⁶⁶³ “Nev'izāde saṅa mīrās-ı pederdir yāve | ‘ömri zīrā pederiṅ yāve demekle geçmiṣ || var kıyās ét ne kadar yāve yemiṣ kim merhūm | yèrine sencileyin bir kaba yesteh şıçmıṣ”; ULLWCO 662, 21a.

⁶⁶⁴ Niyazioğlu, *Dreams and Lives*, 28.

⁶⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 37. The Turkish is “benim ol şā’ir oğlu şā’ir kim | baş eḡdi nazmıma dünÿā”; *ibid.*, 45.

make it. And in connection with Nev'î specifically, the son's *Heft H'ân* (Seven Banquets) *meşnevî* was inspired not only by Nizâmî's *Haft Paykar* (Seven Portraits), but also by his father Nev'î's *meşnevî* entitled *Hasb-i hâl* (Discussion).⁶⁶⁶ Moreover, as Saadet Karaköse details in her edition of 'Aṭā'î's *dīvān* of collected poems, many of the son's verses are directly modeled on those of the father.⁶⁶⁷ Nef'î was undoubtedly well aware of such similarities and adaptations, and in a manner similar to how Riyāzî attacked him for not being so novel as he claimed, Nef'î attacked 'Aṭā'î for putting nothing new on the table but simply reproducing his father's work, which is itself denigrated for being inspired by or modeled on less than excellent "drivel" (*yāve*) that produced the "coarse turd" (*kaba yesteh*) of 'Aṭā'î. The entire process of poetic influence that led to 'Aṭā'î's advent is thereby reduced to consumption, digestion, and defecation.

'Aṭā'î responded to this attack by Nef'î with a quatrain of his own:

you are outside your home, your wife inside [engaged] in pleasure | and listening is roundly condemned by all mankind || hey Nef'î, no one can [really] reproach you, it's your inheritance | pandering was your father's work, getting fucked your mother's art⁶⁶⁸

Here, the first distich disgraces Nef'î via familial honor (*'ird*) by transforming him into a cuckold, further disempowering him, both personally and socially, by presenting him as

⁶⁶⁶ See Kortantamer, *Nev'î-zâde Atâyî ve Hamse'si*, 363–364 and Niyazioğlu, *Dreams and Lives*, 35–36.

⁶⁶⁷ Nev'îzâde 'Aṭā'î, *Nev'î-zâde Atâyî Dîvânı*, ed. Saadet Karaköse (Ankara and Malatya: T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1994), 21–26.

⁶⁶⁸ "sen tışarda qarın içerde şafâ üzre eviñ | dikilmek ise ne deñlü halk-ı 'âlem la'neti || Nef'îyâ hîc kimse ta'n etmez saña mîrâsdır | gidilik babañ işi sikilmek anañ şan'atı"; IUNEK TY 511, 89b. Another quatrain against Nef'î by 'Aṭā'î begins with the same image—*i.e.*, Nef'î outside his house while his wife is engaged in sexual intercourse inside—but lacks reference to the target's lineage; see IUNEK TY 3004, 49b.

standing outside listening as his wife engages in sexual intercourse. The poem's second half, however, alters this perception somewhat, revealing that he is not simply a cuckold but a pimp who has prostituted his wife. What is more, he directly links this personal and social shame to Nef'ī's lineage: his father engaged in pandering (*gidilik*) his mother, and such disgraceful behavior has been passed down to Nef'ī as his inheritance (*mīrās*), suggesting that pimping is his inherited career. However, by referring also to the mother, 'Aṭā'ī's quatrain goes beyond Nef'ī's—which, because it dealt directly with 'Aṭā'ī's art, had at least left open the possibility that the inheritance was a matter of artistic choice—and suggests that an intrinsic lack of breeding has been passed down: Nef'ī is of necessity the way he is—he could, in fact, be no other way. Indeed, the second distich also mounts a subtle assault on the practice and quality of Nef'ī's poetic art. If the mother (or, alternatively, the wife) is imagined as the poet's work, then the implication of pandering becomes that Nef'ī produces poetry merely for sale and material gain, while the “art” (*şan'at*) of “getting fucked” (*sikilmek*) could refer either to his failure to obtain that gain owing, presumably, to the poor quality of his work relative to his peers, or to being defeated in the practice of reciprocal invective, a practice which was often likened to penetration with “the penis of invective” (*kīr-i hicv*).

'Aṭā'ī's attack on Nef'ī's lineage also alludes to the latter's place of origin in the empire's east so as to slander him in a manner with potentially serious political implications:

hey Nef'ī, don't say "*ayrancı*"⁶⁶⁹ or "outcast" (*ğurbet*) to anyone | as both of these things are contained in you || your father once served as the shah's Chief *Ayrançı* | and you've been cast out (*merdūd*) for constantly bugging yourself⁶⁷⁰

Here, in addition to the garden variety depiction of Nef'ī as a catamite,⁶⁷¹ the reference to the shah serves as a way of situating Nef'ī's origins as a person not from the center but from the periphery, specifically the empire's eastern regions bordering Safavid Persia. In this, it echoes the comment made by Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha in the anecdote related in the previous chapter, where the pasha referred to the Safavid envoy as Nef'ī's "long-lost sister" (*hem-şīre*) as a means of belittling both him and the envoy who was hanging on his every word. And here as well, the assertion that Nef'ī's father, an Ottoman district governor, had served the shah in some capacity—while primarily simply an offensive slander revolving around the unidentified slang meaning of *ayrancı*—also insinuates that he was effectively betraying the empire and the Ottoman way. It will be recalled from Chapter 2 that Nef'ī's grandfather, Mirzā 'Alī, had in fact served the Safavids before coming out in support of the Ottomans; if 'Aṭā'ī was aware of this through the circulation of rumor if nothing else, then his insinuation that Nef'ī's father Meḥmed Beğ had secretly gone back to the Safavid side might well be interpreted as something that Meḥmed Beğ's own son could do as well. Additionally, in line with the poem's claim that being an *ayrancı* is also something present (*mevcūd*) in Nef'ī, as if

⁶⁶⁹ *Ayrançı* literally means "maker or seller of *ayran*," a variety of buttermilk. Here, it clearly has a slang meaning that I have been unable to determine, though it seems likely to be intending either a low-class profession or a sexual innuendo, or alternatively, as suggested by Oktay Özel in personal communication, a reference to one who reduces the quality of something, since *ayran* is essentially yoghurt that has been watered down. No extant invectives by Nef'ī feature the term *ayrancı*, though he did use *ğurbet* ("outcast") on several occasions.

⁶⁷⁰ "Nef'iyā kimseye ayrancı ve ğurbet dēme sen | ikisi dāhı bu kârıñ yine sende mevcūd || babañ ayrancıbaşısı idi evvel şāhıñ | sen kaṭı mīde-hedd olmağ ile olduñ merdūd"; IUNEK TY 511, 88b.

⁶⁷¹ Here the term used is *mīde-hedd*, literally meaning "demolishing the stomach" and referring to the act of being anally penetrated by a penis.

it were an inherited profession, the implication is that *he* cannot be fully trusted, either: his origins, in terms of both lineage and place, cast doubt on his identity as an Ottoman.⁶⁷²

Perhaps the height of ‘Aṭā’ī’s vehement assault on Nef’ī’s origins is found in a quatrain that moves from denigrating his parents to directly cursing both his lineage and his future descendants:

Nef’ī, you catamite, shit has dribbled from your mouth | now that Sāmī the strong has squeezed you with invective || may your descendants be damned down to Dajjāl | may your ancestors be cursed back to Abū Jahl⁶⁷³

Alluding to an unknown invective by the *sipāhī* poet Sāmī (d. 1645/46),⁶⁷⁴ the first distich reveals that ‘Aṭā’ī had either read this invective or heard about it, and the fact that he mentions it in this quatrain points to invective’s function as a form of media spreading, in either oral or manuscript form, what might be called cultural news: by framing Sāmī’s invective as a successful one, regardless of what the actual case may or may not have been, ‘Aṭā’ī is contributing to the devalorization of Nef’ī’s art and person. Subsequently, the second distich—which is connected to the first only very loosely⁶⁷⁵—adds to this devalorization via a direct curse. The quatrain as a whole, then, in its very disjunction sheds some light on how invectives were circulated orally: just as particular

⁶⁷² In this period, what I refer to as “identity” involved praxis more than essence, though part of my argument is that the early 17th-century invective corpus hints that this conception may have been beginning to change, as will be seen in the conclusion to this chapter.

⁶⁷³ “geldi boğuş ağızından eyā Nef’ī-i me’būn | hicv ile seni Sāmī-i pūr-zūr şıkınca || evlādına nefrīn ola Deccāl’a varınca | ecdādına la’netler Ebū Cehl’e çıkınca”; IUNEK TY 511, 89b.

⁶⁷⁴ For Sāmī, see İsmail Hakkı Aksoyak, “Sâmî, Mustafa Sâmî Bey,” *Türk Edebiyatı İsimler Sözlüğü*, March 19, 2014. <http://www.turkedebiyatiisimlerozlugu.com/index.php?sayfa=detay&detay=2105>.

⁶⁷⁵ The connection comes through the potential secondary meanings of “Semite” for *Sāmī* and “full of lies” for *pūr-zūr*—the latter here translated as “the strong”—which thereby links up, albeit very loosely, with the evil Dajjāl and the Semitic figure Abū Jahl mentioned in the second distich.

distichs in ghazals were recalled and circulated as individual units, as their abundant illustrative use in variants in biographies of poets reveals, so were individual invective quatrains or, failing that, individual distichs within invective quatrains intended to travel in much the same way, as has already been briefly discussed in connection with Nefī's invectives against Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha.

But returning to the discussion at hand, 'Aṭā'ī's pithy curse in this quatrain raises doubt not simply about Nefī's identity as an Ottoman, but indeed as a Muslim: Dajjāl—with which name, it will be recalled, Nefī had also slandered Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha—is an eschatological being whose advent is among the signals of the end times, while Abū Jahl, meaning “father of ignorance,” is a moniker applied by Muḥammad to 'Amr b. Hishām (c. 570–624 CE), who fought against the early Muslim community and to whom numerous persecutions of Muslims were attributed.⁶⁷⁶ 'Aṭā'ī thus directly links Nefī's lineage with the notorious 'Amr b. Hishām, using a slanderous genealogy to imply that his belief and Muslim identity are in doubt. Given the close association of the Ottoman state and identity with Islam and specifically Sunni Islam that had begun to be consciously planned from the mid-16th century under the auspices of Ebū's-su'ūd Efendi, and to some extent in response to the Safavid threat,⁶⁷⁷ this was a particularly damning implication by 'Aṭā'ī—though, as will be seen, there was much more to come in this regard.

⁶⁷⁶ See W. Montgomery Watt, “Abū D̲jahl,” *EP*, Vol. 1, 115. The “ignorance” (*jahl*) attributed in the epithet is a result of 'Amr b. Hishām's refusal to accept Islam.

⁶⁷⁷ Recent years have seen a burgeoning number of works produced in the area of Ottoman sunnitization; for a good recent overview and interpretation, see Derin Terzioğlu, “How to Conceptualize Ottoman Sunnitization: A Historiographical Discussion,” *Turcica* 44 (2012–2013): 301–338.

A very similar quatrain by ‘Aṭā’ī traces Nef‘ī’s ancestry to a different source, though to much the same effect:

hey, Nef‘ī the Gypsy, shit streams from your mouth | when they squeeze with
invective one with a vile disposition like you || [you are] just an evil person of
wicked and malicious behavior | a curse on your ancestors all the way back to
Pharaoh⁶⁷⁸

The first distich here presents an almost identical image as that found in the previous invective, though this time without providing any names, and again the second distich constitutes a curse linking the target with a non-Muslim, or more strictly a non-monotheist. This similar content and structure hints that the two quatrains may have been written around the same time, although the differences between them are telling. In this case, the imputed ancestor is not “Abū Jahl” but rather Pharaoh (*Fir‘awn*), the oppressor of the Israelites and foe of Moses, whose story is told in the twentieth sura of the Qur’ān. Though the Qur’ānic story is derived largely from the Book of Exodus, it is reinterpreted in terms of Islam, with “the history of Pharaoh [being] seen in relation to Muḥammad’s own mission—the determined rejection of the divine message by the unbelievers who in the end are severely punished, while the believers among them are saved.”⁶⁷⁹ That is to say, ‘Aṭā’ī’s linking of Nef‘ī with Pharaoh is functionally identical to the other quatrain’s connecting him with ‘Amr b. Hishām: both cases serve to cast doubt on his identity as a Muslim. Moreover, this quatrain also imputes to Nef‘ī an inherent wickedness or evil, one that is implied to have been passed down to him by Pharaoh.

⁶⁷⁸ “bir boğ çıkar ağzından eyā Nef‘ī-i Kıbtī | hicv ile seniñ gibi denī ṭab‘ı şıkınca || bed-zāt u bed-evzā‘ vu bed-endīş-i şerr ancak | ecdādına la‘net hele Fir‘avn’a çıkınca”; IUNEK TY 511, 88a.

⁶⁷⁹ Arent Jan Wensinck and Georges Vajda, “Fir‘awn,” *EF*², Vol. 2, 917.

However, it is the fact that Nef'ī is here called a “Gypsy” (*Ḳıbtī*) that proves to be most characteristic of ‘Aṭā’ī’s method of attack. As with nearly all the varieties of slander that animate the invective corpus of this period, this is of course not to be taken literally: there is nothing to indicate a Roma background for Nef'ī, and in any case, in Ottoman society the deck was stacked so firmly against any possibility of Roma social advancement that it would have been rather astonishing for him to rise as far as he did if he were Roma.⁶⁸⁰ In any case, in this quatrain the reference to Nef'ī as a “Gypsy” is rhetorically linked with the claim that he is descended from Pharaoh: it was a widespread belief that the Roma were originally from Egypt, a cursed people who had originated among the people of Pharaoh.⁶⁸¹ This was not the only occasion when ‘Aṭā’ī linked Pharaoh and the Roma to a target of invective, either, as a long poem that he wrote against the aforementioned chief judge (whether of Rumelia or Anatolia at the time is uncertain) Bostānzāde Meḥmed Efendi refers to its target as “an enormous Gypsy sorcerer for that Pharaoh.”⁶⁸² When connected with Pharaoh in regards to lineage, the term used for the Roma was typically *Ḳıbtī*, which literally referred to the Christian

⁶⁸⁰ For approaches of the Ottoman state toward Roma as seen through court records of the 18th century, see Eyal Ginio, “Neither Muslims nor Zimmis: The Gypsies (Roma) in the Ottoman State,” *Romani Studies* 5, vol. 14, no. 2 (2004): 117–144. For a more generalized account of the same, but in relation to the 15th and 16th centuries, see Faika Çelik, “Gypsies (Roma) in the Orbit of Islam: The Ottoman Experience (1450–1600)” (Master’s thesis, McGill University, 2003) and Faika Çelik, “Probing the Margins: Gypsies (Roma) in Ottoman Society, c. 1450–1600,” in *Subalterns and Social Protest: History from Below in the Middle East and North Africa*, ed. Stephanie Cronin (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2008): 173–199.

⁶⁸¹ See Dimitrie Cantemir, *Sistemul Sau Întocmirea Religiei Muhammedane*, in *Opere Complete*, Vol. VIII, Book II, ed. Virgil Căndea (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1987), 527. Note that the practice of referring to Roma as *Ḳıbtī* continued into the republican era as well, with national identification cards even referring to citizens of Roma ancestry as “Kıpti,” as testified to by my late father-in-law, Nazım Aksoy (1928–2006), who served as a judge until the mid-1990s.

⁶⁸² “O Fir‘avnuñ hemān bir ḳoca Ḳıbtī sāḥiri”; Suat Donuk, ed., “Nev’ī-zāde Atāyī’nin *Hezliyât*’ı,” *Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi / The Journal of International Social Research* 8, no. 39 (August 2015), 108.

Copts of Egypt but later took on the sense of “Gypsy” owing to the popular association of the Roma with Egypt. However, there is more to ‘Atā’ī’s use of “Gypsy” than just a reference to a cursed people descended from a villainous character in the Islamic mythos, and this is revealed especially in his uses of the other derogatory term for the Roma, *Çengāne*.

For one thing, as ‘Atā’ī’s discourse makes clear, this term was used as a descriptor for someone with dark skin, since it is often used in conjunction with things that are black in color. One invective, for instance, mentions Nef’ī’s “coal-rat face” (*kömür şıçanı çehre*),⁶⁸³ while another calls him a “black dog” (*kara köpek*) and says that “his essence is a Gypsy, his temperament a coal ax” (*özi bir Çengenedir tab’ı kömür balçasıdır*).⁶⁸⁴ This last description, in particular, points to a physiognomical discourse in which physical appearance reflects character and vice versa, a concept seen in Chapter 3 in connection with Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha. The fact that Nef’ī is depicted as a dark-skinned Gypsy already serves to visually set him off from and cast him out of the community of cultured figures working in the high Ottoman poetic tradition. Yet by asserting that his very “essence” (*öz*) is a Gypsy, ‘Atā’ī also emphasizes the point made in regards to Nef’ī’s lineage; namely, that he is inherently low-born and lacking in culture and breeding, and thus can hardly be expected to participate meaningfully in that tradition.

⁶⁸³ IUNEK TY 511, 88a.

⁶⁸⁴ IUNEK TY 3004, 49a.

This, in some ways, is a reaction to the aggressive self-promotion—not to mention the aggressive invective—in which Nef‘ī engaged, a reaction that can be gauged from a distich that may have been produced in response to the quatrain, mentioned above, in which Nef‘ī referred to ‘Aṭā’ī’s father’s work as “gibberish” or “drivel” (*yāve*). This sort of attack, ‘Aṭā’ī’s response suggests, is itself gibberish, driven by Nef‘ī’s own vulgar nature: “Nef‘ī, [even] you do not understand the nonsense (*yāve*) you spout | you’re a stranger to skill, to reading, to writing.”⁶⁸⁵ The ascription of illiteracy to Nef‘ī in the second hemistich, especially in conjunction with the first hemistich’s suggestion that his natural disposition is impulsive and overly precipitate, is a further means of marking him off from ‘Aṭā’ī and his cohorts: where repeatedly calling Nef‘ī a “Gypsy” served to physically set him apart by means of his (apparently) dark skin, that label in fact carried a plethora of sociocultural associations that ‘Aṭā’ī’s invectives utilized to ostracize Nef‘ī.

Yet ‘Aṭā’ī’s verbal ostracism of Nef‘ī was by no means limited to calling him just a “Gypsy.” He is also, for instance, termed a “kike pimp” (*Cıfit gidi*)⁶⁸⁶ and a “Yid Gypsy” (*Cehūd Çengānesi*),⁶⁸⁷ taking advantage of the Islamic tradition’s long history of negative characterizations of Jews,⁶⁸⁸ with the “Yid Gypsy” example doubly otherizing Nef‘ī much as Nef‘ī himself had otherized Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha by terming him a “pigherder of a Georgian Armenian Laz Gypsy” (*toḡuz çobanı Gürcī Ermenisi Lazkī*

⁶⁸⁵ “Nef‘ī yāveñ anlamazsın söyledüğüñ yāveniñ | ma‘rifetden okumağdan yazmadan bī-gānesin”; IUNЕК TY 511, 88a.

⁶⁸⁶ IUNЕК TY 3004, 48b.

⁶⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸⁸ See Norman Arthur Stillman, “Yahūd,” *EF*², Vol. 11, 240–241.

Çengānī).⁶⁸⁹ In another instance, ‘Aṭā’ī states that anyone who sees Nef’ī’s aforementioned “coal-rat face” will react by saying to him, “you’re a Shiite, or Chinese, or some outcast Gypsy” (*Rāfiẓī yā Çīnīsin yā ğurbet-i Çengānesin*).⁶⁹⁰ Just as with Nef’ī’s concatenation of othering terms for Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha, here ‘Aṭā’ī utilizes carefully chosen weapons from the invective arsenal to paint a picture of his target as someone beyond the pale. The “Gypsy” appellation—here modified with the adjective *ğurbet*, which in this case may refer simultaneously either to an unaccustomed physical appearance or to the idea of being cast out or exiled—has already been covered above. The “Chinese” (*Çīnī*) appellation appears to be used as a negatively charged exotic element: while the Ottoman poetic tradition, following the Persian, sometimes used the Chinese as one of the types of exotic beauty,⁶⁹¹ the invective context in question here makes any such positive charge highly unlikely. Finally, the hemistich refers to Nef’ī as a Rāfiḏī (*Rāfiẓī*), here translated as “Shiite.” While this term strictly denotes a follower of so-called Twelver Shiism, etymologically it means “one who rejects” and, though initially a derogative that evolved among opposed Shiite groups, it came to serve as a general derogative for Shiites among Sunni Muslims as well.⁶⁹² In this sense, it once again shows ‘Aṭā’ī casting doubt on Nef’ī’s identity as an “orthodox” Sunni Muslim conforming to the Ottoman identity of the center.

⁶⁸⁹ ULLWCO 662, 2b

⁶⁹⁰ IUNEK TY 511, 88a. Note that *ğurbet* is read incorrectly as ‘*uzbet* (“celibacy”)’ in Hikmet Feridun Güven, “Klâsik Türk Şiirinde Hiciv” (Ph.D. dissertation, Gazi University, 1997), 147.

⁶⁹¹ See Djalal Khaleghi-Motlagh, “Chinese-Iranian Relations X: China in Medieval Persian Literature,” *Encyclopædia Iranica*, December 15, 1991. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/chinese-iranian-x>.

⁶⁹² See Etan Kohlberg, “Al-Rāfiḏa,” *ET*, Vol. 8, 386–389 and Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, “Türk Heterodoksi Tarihinde ‘Zindik,’ ‘Hâricî,’ ‘Râfiẓî,’ ‘Mülhid’ ve ‘Ehl-i Bid’at’ Terimlerine Dair Bazı Düşünceler,” *Tarih Enstitüsü Dergisi* XII (1981–1982), 514–516.

In ‘Aṭā’ī’s discourse, as well as Riyāzī’s, the representatives of this center’s poetic culture were, of course, themselves and their cohorts. It was this coterie of ‘*ālim*-littérateurs who envisioned and presented themselves as the poetic orthodoxy and as the standard bearers of the Ottoman iteration of the Islamicate poetic tradition. This was something ‘Aṭā’ī had made clear in the introductory material to his ‘*Ālemnümā*, as discussed above, but it was also integral to the argument mounted against Nef’ī in his invectives. Just as in the case of Riyāzī’s invectives, with their denigration of Nef’ī’s “fresh tongue,” so too in ‘Aṭā’ī’s do we see him building a list of Nef’ī’s faults in terms of poetic approach and performance—which, given that these faults are consistently paired with aspersions on Nef’ī’s identity, transforms this corpus from a narrowly cultural attack to a broader sociocultural one. This is especially apparent in the following quatrain:

hey Nef’ī, we know well the land of the fortress of beauty | henceforth we must
 expose you to the people of culture (*yārān*) || for you’re a catamite, you converted
 Armenian pimp | it’s the poets’ compliment to call you a Gypsy⁶⁹³

The string of insults animating the second distich here—which, interestingly, sets up a hierarchy in which “Gypsy” is effectively the best of the worst—is specifically framed in terms of the first distich’s implied poetic community. Whatever he may claim to the contrary, it is not Nef’ī but rather “we” (*biz*), presumably the coterie of ‘*ālim*-littérateurs with whom ‘Aṭā’ī associated, who understand poetry—*i.e.*, “the land of the fortress of beauty” (*hüsn kal’ası semti*)—and thus “we” who represent the standard or orthodoxy of

⁶⁹³ “biz hüsn kal’ası semtin bilürüz ey Nef’ī | lâzım oldı seni şimdengerü yārāna dèmek || çün civānsın sen eyā Ermeni’dèn dönme gidi | iltifāt-ı şu’arādır saña Çengāne dèmek”; IUNЕК TY 3004, 49a.

the Ottoman tradition. In this manner, ‘Aṭā’ī explicitly articulates his own group as the guardians of that tradition, with Nef‘ī the would-be usurper thus framed as “heterodox.”

Exactly what that heterodoxy consists of is hinted at in other invectives and involves primarily the same aggressive self-promotion and grandiose claims of excellence that had irked Riyāzī to the point of calling for Nef‘ī’s execution. Thus, the same quatrain that mentions Nef‘ī’s “Gypsy” essence and “coal ax” disposition also declares, “he should not praise himself saying, ‘The sword of my tongue!’,”⁶⁹⁴ a collocation (*tīg-i* and the alternative *şemşīr-i zebān*) that is used abundantly in Nef‘ī’s *dīvān* of collected poems.⁶⁹⁵ In another invective—namely, the one in which he terms his target a “kike pimp,” in addition to once again attacking his honor (*‘ird*) by stating, “everyone’s busy fucking your wife right before your eyes”⁶⁹⁶—‘Aṭā’ī takes aim at Nef‘ī’s penchant for engaging in invective: “hey, Nef‘ī with the Gypsy face, hold your tongue! | why do you pursue everyone and eat all the shit you find?”⁶⁹⁷ The phrase used here, *buldığın boğı yemek* (“eat the shit one finds”), is—as was also the case with its use in a poem by Riyāzī examined above—meant to signify both that Nef‘ī is a catamite and that his constant stream of invective is so far out of order that he is making a laughingstock of himself.

This latter claim echoes the later historian Na‘īmā’s claim that writing “invective is a deplorable and shameful act, and to expend one’s creativity and time on it is especially

⁶⁹⁴ “medh edüp kendisini tīg-i zebānım demesün”; *ibid*.

⁶⁹⁵ See, e.g., Nef‘ī, [*Dīvān*], 3, 10, 18, 22, 23, 24, 27, etc. It is also worth noting that ‘Aṭā’ī himself did not exactly shy away from the term, as it appears in his *dīvān* as well; see Nev‘īzāde ‘Aṭā’ī, *Dīvān*, [*kaşīde* #11, #12].

⁶⁹⁶ “her kişi gözün öñünde qarınjı sikmededir”; IUNEK TY 3004, 48b.

⁶⁹⁷ “dilinjı tutsaşa ey Nef‘ī-i Çengāne-liķā | buldığın boğı yemek herkese ardınca neden”; *ibid*.

reprehensible and improper.”⁶⁹⁸ Nevertheless, the fact that ‘Aṭā’ī is here, as was Riyāzī, fighting fire with fire—*i.e.*, using invective against invective, thereby providing an emic view as opposed to Na‘īmā’s etic one—tells us a good deal about poets’ own attitude toward invective. This seems especially true when considered in the light of Kâtib Çelebi’s claim that Nef‘ī’s *Sihām-ı kazā* was “held in esteem by the wits of Anatolia because it is agreeable to their sinister temperament.”⁶⁹⁹ It was clearly not Nef‘ī’s language or approach *per se* that was galling to poets like ‘Aṭā’ī or Riyāzī, who employed essentially the same discourse against him as he used against them and others. This was to be expected, as the only possible responses on the part of poets to Nef‘ī’s attacks would be the high road of silence—a route that was largely followed by ‘Abdu’l-ganīzāde Meḥmed (Nādirī), as the next section will show—or the confrontational path of answering back. The confrontational path, as the multiplicity of responses to Nef‘ī’s invective show, was not seen as an act that must be avoided. Thus, the problem was not Nef‘ī’s invective *itself*, but rather the *person* who was producing that invective and the *claims* this person was making with that invective. This is why the quatrain that sets off the “we” who are familiar with poetry continues with the assertion that it is “our” duty to “expose [Nef‘ī] to the people of culture” (*yārān*); in other words, not only to attack his poetry and poetic claims, but also to essentially call a spade a spade and slander him as a “Gypsy,” a “Jewish Gypsy,” a “Jewish pimp,” an “Armenian pimp,” and so on—briefly, to ostracize him via otherization from the(ir) imagined community of representatives of the elite Ottoman sociocultural tradition.

⁶⁹⁸ Na‘īmā, *Târih*, Vol. 2, 800.

⁶⁹⁹ Kâtib Çelebi, *Lexicon Bibliographicum et Encyclopaedicum*, Vol. 3, 631–632.

The particular means of otherizing Nef'ī, especially in 'Atā'ī's invectives, proves to be especially revealing of early 17th-century sociocultural tensions and realities. Ottoman and, more broadly, Islamicate invective had always made liberal use, for example, of sexual slander to demasculinize and thereby figuratively disempower its target: by verbally depicting a male poet—and it was almost always male—as a pimp (*i.e.*, one who prostitutes his wife), a catamite (*i.e.*, the young and less powerful, penetrated half of a pederastic relationship), or even directly as a woman (as will be seen in the following section with Nef'ī's invectives against Nādirī), the producer of a given invective achieved the upper hand by attacking the target's imputed sexual practices and/or gender identification. Yet the denigration of a Muslim target in terms based on their ethnoreligious identity (*i.e.*, in Ottoman terms, their *millet*), religious affiliation, place of origin, and social “class” (for lack of a better term) was a phenomenon little seen before the early 17th century.⁷⁰⁰ There is one quatrain by 'Atā'ī that makes the terms of his objection to Nef'ī particularly clear:

your invective has made you infamous in the city of Istanbul | Nef'ī, excuse your actions, you're an obdurate catamite || nothing is known of either your *millet* or your *madhhab* (*i.e.*, school of Islamic jurisprudence) | if you're *not* a catamite, pimp, or pander, then what the hell are you?⁷⁰¹

The quatrain begins with a declaration that Nef'ī, by ceaselessly engaging in invective, has overstepped his bounds and disgraced himself, going on to demand that he offer up apologies or repent for his behavior. But then, in the second distich, again 'Atā'ī indicates that at least part of the problem lies in Nef'ī's origins: his *millet* is unknown, as

⁷⁰⁰ For a consideration of this matter with examples, see Ambros, “‘The Other’,” especially 95–96.

⁷⁰¹ “şöhre-i şehri-i Sitenbül eyledi hicvini seni | Nef'iya ma'zür tut vaz'ın katı hīzānesin || milletin hem mezhebin bilinmedi gitdi seni | puşt değil gidi değil pāzenk değilsin yā nesin”; IUNЕК TY 511, 88a.

is his affiliation to one of the four schools of Islamic jurisprudence. Nef'î is an unknown quantity—in short, a nobody. The fundamental problem with Nef'î, as related by 'Aṭā'î's discourse, is that he comes from bad stock, and he certainly is not one of the coterie of western Anatolian *'ālim*-littérateurs who saw themselves as the guardians of Ottoman poetic culture in the early 17th century. He is, in a word, an “outsider” (*ecnebi*) whose very identity as such makes him, in the terms of 'Aṭā'î's discourse, unqualified to join the orthodox poetic community of true *yārān*—and yet he has the gall to attack them unceasingly and unsparingly by way of invective verse.

For his part, though Nef'î might slander 'Aṭā'î's lineage through denigration of his father, it was impossible for him to attack him—a scholar and judge, son of a scholar and judge—as an outsider. Thus, the focus of his attacks centered on two primary areas: firstly, 'Aṭā'î's imputed lack of qualification for his vocation; and secondly, demasculinization via sexual slander. One example of the first method of attack was already seen earlier, with Nef'î's reference to 'Aṭā'î inheriting gibberish from his father; that is, to his being a poor poet. Another quatrain of Nef'î's boasts that, since he is the superior poet, he has already bested 'Aṭā'î in the battle of invective and will do so again:

that catamite Nev'îzāde passes himself off as a poet to me | even as he eats up all
sorts of nonsense yet again, he's fucked || I've [already] turned his ass to his mouth
with invective's penis | he can say nothing, and if he does he'll eat shit, he's
fucked⁷⁰²

⁷⁰² “Nev'îzāde o kekez hem bize şā'ir geçinür | hem yine herzeyi sözde katı çok yer sikilür || kîr-i hicv ile götin ağzına döndürdüm anı | daḥı söz söyleyemez söylese boḡ yer sikilür”; *ibid.*, 21a.

But in denigrating ‘Aṭā’ī’s talents, Nef‘ī did not confine himself to the field of poetry, even attacking him in regards to his position as a representative of the ‘*ulemā* and a judge. Thus, one quatrain reads as follows:

Nev‘īzāde, how can you serve as a judge? you who | know nothing of Sharia matters, you pimp, nothing at all! || would those who fucked you in the ass find it full of shit at first? | if so, then [surely] you know the matter of washing after defecation (*istincā*)⁷⁰³

For Nef‘ī—a bureaucrat who, in ‘Aṭā’ī’s view, was a provincial *parvenu*—to attack ‘Aṭā’ī on the basis of his qualifications (or lack thereof) as a scholar and judge, and in such harsh terms, was particularly aggressive.

The quatrain just quoted deals, in addition to lambasting ‘Aṭā’ī’s imputed lack of qualifications as a judge, with Nef‘ī’s second common point of attack against him; namely, sexual slander. Many of these, six all told, depict ‘Aṭā’ī as the passive sexual partner, and even as the young boy catamite,⁷⁰⁴ of a certain Şütürleb (“Camel Lips”). I have been unable to determine the identity of this Şütürleb; however, given that Nef‘ī’s invectives sometimes call him by the title *beğ*, it is clear that he was a member of the administrative branch of the Ottoman hierarchy, rather than being an ‘*ālim*. In fact, one quatrain makes explicit, if mocking, reference to this:

⁷⁰³ “Nev‘īzāde nice kâzîlîğ edersin sen kim | şer‘ī bir mes‘ele bilmezsiñ eyā puşt aşlā || evvelā boklı bulur mıydı sikenler götiñi | olsa ma‘lūmıñ eğer mes‘ele-i istincā”; *ibid.*, 21a.

⁷⁰⁴ Thus, in the long *kıt‘a* mentioned earlier, the distichs: “who would fuck a giant like you [*i.e.*, ‘Aṭā’ī], let donkeys fuck you | o [you] catamite, my member is not like Şütürleb’s prick, you know || if your ass is itching again, Camel Lips is ready, you know | not every member is suitable for such a raw hairless ass [as yours], you know” (*kim siker sencileyin dīvi eşekler siksün | a kekez hādiseimiz kīr-i Şütürleb değıl e || gicidiyse büzüğün yine Şütürleb hāzır e | öyle taşlak göte her hādise enseb değıl e*); *ibid.*, 14b.

hey, Camel Lips Beğ! o Governor of Slosh-slosh!⁷⁰⁵ | let's say you've made a habit of fucking very important people || why, thanks to Nev'izāde, don't you do some invective, too? | how grand it is for you to fuck a poet!⁷⁰⁶

While this is directed primarily at Şütürleb, insinuating between the lines that he is something of a social climber, it nonetheless mocks 'Aṭā'ī not simply through depicting him as the (potential) passive partner, but also through the sarcastic use of the words “very important people” (*ekâbir*) and “poet” (*şā'ir*), implying that 'Aṭā'ī is in fact neither. Furthermore, given that Şütürleb is depicted as being honored by this opportunity, a hierarchy is implicitly set up wherein the religiojudicial branch that 'Aṭā'ī represents is on a higher plane than the administrative branch. Even so, if we consider the mockery inherent in *ekâbir* and *şā'ir*—almost as if they were within scare quotes—then the quatrain can also be read as a subtle dig on 'Aṭā'ī's pretensions as a poet and even his insignificance as a judge of middling rank.

There are two more sexually-based quatrains Nev'ī directed at 'Aṭā'ī that pair him not with someone like Şütürleb, whoever he may have been, but rather with other members of the group of 'ālim-littérateurs with whom he associated. The first pairs him with Kāfzāde Fā'izī:

Nev'izāde, first you and Kāfoğlı will be fucked [together] | how dare you pass yourselves off as poets and say a quatrain against me? || now I will press such a cock in your ass that they'll say | “The heavens struck one great blow on those catamites' asses”⁷⁰⁷

⁷⁰⁵ The phrase used here is *hor hor*, an onomatopoeiac term for moving water or water being drunk. Here, while it may refer to gluttony on the part of Şütürleb, it likely has sexual connotations as well.

⁷⁰⁶ “ey Şütürleb Bêg eyā mîr-i livā-yı horhor | 'âdet olmuş şutalım şaṅa ekâbir sikmek || Nev'izāde sebep ile n'ola girseñ hicve | ne bālā idi seniñ başıña şā'ir sikmek”; IUNEK TY 511, 78b.

⁷⁰⁷ “Nev'izāde sen [ile] evvel sikilür Kāfoğlı | ne demekdir bize şā'ir geçinüp kıt'a demek || ben de bir sik başayın götiñize kim dēyeler | kekezātı[ñ] götine yek şelken urdı felek”; ULLWCO 662, 21a.

Here, of course, because he is mounting a threat against both men for producing invective against them, it is Nef'ī himself who is the active partner in the imagined sexual power scenario, stating in effect that he will rebalance the situation by lampooning them and, in the process, demasculinizing them—but this threat itself is performative.

While such performative invective is rather standard in the tradition, what is of special interest here is the clues that it provides about how invective was practiced against Nef'ī at this time. The first distich strongly implies that both 'Aṭā'ī and Fā'izī themselves produced invectives around the same time, which in turn opens up the possibility that there was, to some extent, a semi-organized effort among this group of poets to attack Nef'ī and destroy his reputation. In return, then, Nef'ī's invective would occasionally target them in pairs, thereby marking them off as a specific clique and, in a sense, picking them off two by two rather than one by one. Another, albeit somewhat different, example of this method is the following quatrain:

Nev'izāde got all heated up like a catamite and put one out [*i.e.*, an invective] where
| right away he put the tax of sodomy on me again || I would be no man if I didn't
transform his ass, | with a blow from invective's penis, into Kīrli Nigâr's vagina⁷⁰⁸

This is another response to an invective in which 'Aṭā'ī sexually slandered Nef'ī, and is a performative boast and threat more than a direct attack, stating that he will effectively castrate 'Aṭā'ī with what he will produce against him. In this case, however, there is a metareference to another set of invectives by Nef'ī; namely, those against Kīrli Nigâr.

⁷⁰⁸ “germ olup hîzâne bir vaz' êtdi Nev'izāde kim | dër dëmez koydı bizi yine livāṭa ḥarcına || ben de nā-merdim eğer döndürmez isem künümü | ḍarb-ı kīr-i hicv ile Kīrli Nigâr'ın fercine”; IUNЕК TY 511, 78b.

This is an epithet meaning, effectively, “the beautiful woman (*Nigâr*) with a penis (*Kîrli*),” and was the name Nefî applied consistently to the topic of the next section, ‘Abdu’l-ġanîzâde Meġmed Efendi, whose pen name was Nâdirî and who, in terms of his rank within the religiojudicial hierarchy, was the most powerful member of the group of ‘âlim-littérateurs with whom ‘Aṭâ’î associated.

5.3 ‘Abdu’l-ġanîzâde Meġmed (Nâdirî)

Nâdirî was the son of ‘Abdu’l-ġanî Efendi (d. 1587), who held prestigious posts as the chief judge of Damascus, Cairo, and Istanbul, in addition to being an author and poet. Born in Istanbul in 1572, Nâdirî was initially educated by his father and then the influential Şa‘de’d-dîn Efendi, from whom he graduated in 1591. He steadily advanced up the madrasa teaching hierarchy and, in 1602, was about to enter into the judiciary via an appointment as the chief judge of Thessalonica when the posting was officially stopped at the behest of the grand vizier, Yemişçi Ĥasan Pasha (d. 1603): the grand vizier had developed a grievance with and twice would dismiss the grand mufti Şun‘u’l-lâh Efendi (1553–1612), who happened to be Nâdirî’s father-in-law, and the aspiring judge’s way was blocked by Ĥasan Pasha as a show of spite.⁷⁰⁹ After Ĥasan Pasha’s deposition and execution in October 1603, Nâdirî, still unemployed, wrote a chronogram to mark the occasion: “Ĥasan’s deposition is agreeable and his execution approved | so let there be the chronogram, ‘Yemişçi’s execution is the best.’”⁷¹⁰ Nâdirî subsequently utilized a rather calculated program of pleading panegyrics to get himself reinstated in

⁷⁰⁹ Meġmed b. Meġmed, “Nuhbetü’t-Tevârih ve’l-Ahbâr ve Târîh-i Âl-i Osman,” 96 [*Târîh-i âl-i ‘Osmân*]; cf. Nev‘îzâde ‘Aṭâ’î, *Hadâ’iku’l-Hakâ’ik*, Vol. 2, 1730.

⁷¹⁰ “Ĥasan’uġ ‘azli Ĥasen katli daġı müstaĤsen | düşse târîhi n’ola katl-i Yemişçi aĤsen”; ‘Abdu’l-ġanîzâde Meġmed (Nâdirî) Efendi, “Dîvânı ve Şeh-nâmesi,” 294.

Thessalonica in March 1604.⁷¹¹ From this point on, he would proceed to advance steadily up the judiciary hierarchy until, in September/October 1612, he was appointed as the chief judge of the Asian provinces,⁷¹² one of the the most prestigious positions in the *‘ilmiyye* hierarchy.

Given his high status within this hierarchy as well as the poetry he had been producing since at least the 1590s, and considering what was seen in the previous section regarding Nef’ī’s approach toward Nev’izāde ‘Aṭā’ī, it should come as no surprise that Nādirī was attacked by Nef’ī on the very same grounds. Perhaps the most concise summation of this is the following quatrain:

if the son of Ğanī says, ‘I’m a man of knowledge, I’m a poet’ | if he unequivocally proves what he says, then all is well || [but] if he has knowledge, why doesn’t his Qur’ānic commentary come out? | if he’s a poet, what the hell is that nonsense poetry full of foolishness?⁷¹³

As in some of the invectives against ‘Aṭā’ī, this is what might—along the lines of the term “rhetorical question”—be called a rhetorical challenge: the target, in the eyes of the aggressor, is already defeated beforehand, since within Nef’ī’s discourse it is a given that he is neither a scholar nor a poet.⁷¹⁴ The Qur’ānic commentary mentioned in the

⁷¹¹ Nev’izāde ‘Aṭā’ī, *Hadā’iku’l-Hakā’ik*, Vol. 2, 1730–1731. For the panegyrics in question, see ‘Abdu’l-ğanīzāde Mehmed (Nādirī) Efendi, “Dīvānı ve Şeh-nâmesi,” 167–169, 191–193, and 194–195.

⁷¹² Nev’izāde ‘Aṭā’ī, *Hadā’iku’l-Hakā’ik*, Vol. 2, 1731.

⁷¹³ “ehl-i ‘ilmim şā‘irim dërse eđer İbn-i Ğanī | hoş kabül êdiniş sözün isbât êderse bî-ḫilâf || ‘ilmi var ise niçün tefsîri çıkmaz ortaya | şā‘ir ise yâ nedir ol yâve şî‘r-i pür-güzâf”; IUNEK TY 511, 75b.

⁷¹⁴ A similar distich from the long *kıt‘a* directed at Nev’izāde ‘Aṭā’ī and several others in his circle, which was mentioned in the previous section, addresses Nādirī’s *dīvān* of collected poems: “if he says, ‘I’m a poet,’ [then] prove that skill to a poet [*i.e.*, to Nef’ī] | a *dīvān* isn’t put together just from *nasta‘līq* calligraphy, you know” (*şā‘irim dërse eđer şā‘ire isbât-ı hüner | ḫaṭṭ-ı ta‘līk ile dīvān müretteb deęil e*); ULLWCO 662, 15a. The reference to *ta‘līq* refers to the *nasta‘līq* style of calligraphy, a cursive style that was developed in Persia. Nādirī’s *dīvān* began to be put together at an early date and exists in several early recensions that Nef’ī could well have been aware of, including a copy illustrated with miniatures, for which see Deęirmenci, *İktidar Oyunları*, 153–171.

third hemistich is a reference to Nādirī’s attempt to gloss the earlier Qur’ānic commentary (*tafsīr*) of the medieval scholar Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Bayḏāwī (d. c. 1286), which was entitled *Anwār al-tanzīl wa asrār al-ta’wīl* (The Lights of Revelation and the Secrets of Interpretation).⁷¹⁵ Nādirī’s father had also begun to gloss this standard commentary, and his son’s plan was to add his own glosses to his father’s to complete the work—yet, as Nef’ī’s invective points out, he never managed to finish it.⁷¹⁶ The same point was also made in Nef’ī’s second invective against the grand vizier Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha, where, as mentioned in Chapter 4, he inserted a long invective against Nādirī into the piece against the grand vizier because he believed Nādirī had pressured Meḥmed Pasha to try to have a fatwa for his execution issued. There, Nef’ī writes: “it’s been over fifteen years that whore’s been writing his commentary | has even one person seen even one letter of it, you dog?”⁷¹⁷

Similarly, in the long invective *kaṭ’ā* that Nef’ī produced against ‘Aṭā’ī and those in his circle, as mentioned in the previous section, when the subject turns to Nādirī⁷¹⁸ his claims and qualifications as a scholar and a judge are directly denied:

if he says, “I’m a man of knowledge [*i.e.*, an ‘*ālim*],” he can have his damned knowledge | other people of the word (*erbāb-ı suḥen*) are not ignorant of ink, you

⁷¹⁵ See James Robson, “Al-Bayḏāwī,” *EL*², Vol. 1, 1129.

⁷¹⁶ Nev’īzāde ‘Aṭā’ī, *Hadā’iku’l-Hakā’ik*, Vol. 2, 1733.

⁷¹⁷ “kaḥpe on beş seneyi geçdi ki tefsīr yazar | hiç bir ḥarfını görmüş mü bir ādam a köpek” ULLWCO 662, 8a.

⁷¹⁸ Though this invective begins with Nev’īzāde ‘Aṭā’ī, it is labeled under the rubric *Der ḥaḳḳ-ı cumhūr, Nev’īzāde ve niceşi* (“On everyone, Nev’īzāde and many more”), with the mention of ‘Aṭā’ī added later in a different hand. The subject switches to Nādirī in the tenth distich, where the word *kaḥpe* (“whore”) is used; in Nef’ī’s invective vocabulary, this epithet is used almost exclusively to refer to Nādirī, for reasons that will be discussed below.

know || if he says, “I’m a judge,” what courts of law need | isn’t some drunken pretty boy and a glass filled to the brim, you know⁷¹⁹

Here, it is not only his intellectual fitness for a religiojudicial post that is called into question, but his moral fitness as well, terming him a drunk (*bāde-keş*; literally, “wine drinker”) and a “pretty boy” (*dilber*), with the latter implying sexual deviance by hinting that he is a catamite.

While such imputed moral degeneracy is, on one level, a way of feeding slander into the rumor mill, another quatrain against Nādirī hints that he may in fact have been involved in some variety of scandal:

hey, you whore Kīrli!⁷²⁰ don’t think my invective’s in vain | what the hell, you betrayed the canonically lawful fatwa || come and see my temperament’s connection with God’s divine power | through invective he has taken Sharia’s wrath out on you⁷²¹

What the nature of Nādirī’s “betrayal” (*ihānet*) may have been remains uncertain, but this incident appears to have taken place in the summer of the year 1614, when he was removed from his position as the chief judge for the Asian provinces.⁷²² In a panegyric that Nādirī addressed to Sultan Aḥmed I at this time, he writes:

o shah of shahs, cast the gaze of mercy upon your servant | do not believe [my] enemies, in the name of God the unparalleled || I committed no treachery whatsoever in serving you | the majesty of God the Just is witness to this claim || the wheel of fate

⁷¹⁹ “ehl-i ‘ilmim dēr ise başına çalsun ‘ilmin | sâ’ir erbāb-ı suhen cehl-i mürekkeb değil e || kâdîyim derse eğer mahkemeye lâzım olan | dilber-i bāde-keş ü cām-ı lebāleb değil e”; *ibid.*, 14b.

⁷²⁰ Nef’ī’s previously mentioned epithet of “Kīrli (Nigâr)” for Nādirī will be discussed below.

⁷²¹ “bī-hūde şanma hicvimi ey Kīrli fāhişe | fetvā-yı şer’ e n’eydi seniñ ol ihānetiñ || gör tab’ımıñ ‘alākasını feyz-i Haḫk’la | hicv ile aldı kīnini senden şer’ atıñ”; IUNEK TY 511, 74b.

⁷²² Nev’izāde ‘Atā’ī, *Hadā’iku’l-Hakā’ik*, Vol. 2, 1731.

has fettered my virtue to the steed of my disposition | is it any wonder that a lowly ass
has passed me by?⁷²³

While Nef'ī's quatrain quoted above refers to a betrayal of Sharia law, implying that something moral was involved, other invective quatrains by Nef'ī allude to more serious political treachery. These allusions center around Meḥmed Efendi (d. 1622/23), known as 'İtrī, a man from Shiraz in the Safavid Empire who served as Nādirī's amanuensis due to the fact that his calligraphy was very fine.⁷²⁴ As might be expected given what we know of Nef'ī's invective discourse by now, several of his pieces targeting Nādirī and 'İtrī together focus on sex and the power involved therein, depicting the former as the passive partner and the latter as the active:

hey, you whore Kīrli! are your cunt and ass itching again?⁷²⁵ | what happened to your
boys? did their cocks break? || forget about lusting after their dicks and hammers,
since that heretic | 'İtrī's syphilitic balls are enough for you⁷²⁶

Here, the epithet *Kīrli*, meaning “possessed of a penis,” is used. Elsewhere,⁷²⁷ as already seen at the end of the previous section, this epithet is given in its full form as *Kīrli*

⁷²³ “şehenşehā kuluḡa eyle merḡamet nazarın | inanma ḡaşma bi-ḡaḡḡ[in] ḡudā-yı bī-hem-tā || ḡıyānet eylemedüm ḡıdmetünġe zerre ḡadar | cenāb-ı ḡazret-i ḡaḡḡ'dur bu müdde'āya ḡüvā || semend-i ḡab'uma ḡarḡ ētdi faḡlumı pā-bend | 'aceb deḡül beni geḡdiyse bir ḡar-ı ednā”; ‘Abdu'l-ḡanīzāde Meḡmed (Nādirī) Efendi, “Dīvānı ve Şeh-nāmesi,” 144.

⁷²⁴ Meḡmed Rızā, *Tezkiresi*, 122.

⁷²⁵ The reference to itching (*gicimek*) refers to the theory in medieval Islamic medicine that the urge to be sodomized is the result of being born with the testicles inside the body, which causes an itch in the anus that, in turn, creates the sense that anal penetration will soothe the itch. This theory was first put forward in embryonic form by the physician Muḡammad ibn Zakariyyā al-Rāzī (d. 925), but was most extensively explored by the scholar al-Tifāshī (1184–1253) in his book *Rujū' al-shaykh ilā şibāḡ fi'l-quwwa 'alā'l-bāḡ* (The Rejuvenation of the Old Man in His Powers of Copulation); see Aḡmad b. Yūsuf al-Qaysī al-Tifāshī, *Les délices des coeurs; ou, ce que l'on ne trouve en aucun livre*, ed. and trans. René R. Khawam (Paris: Phebus, 1981), 258–259.

⁷²⁶ “ey Kīrli ḡaḡpe ger gicidiyse amıḡ götiḡ | oḡlanlarıḡ kırıldı mı n'oldı yaraḡları || ḡo ḡırş-ı kīri bālyosı zīrā yeter saḡa | 'İtrī-i mülhidiḡ o Fireḡi ḡaşaḡları”; ULLWCO 662, 17a.

⁷²⁷ An example of this is another quatrain in which Nādirī is again indirectly (*i.e.*, through sexual association) accused of treachery, this time with Celālī rebels: “when the Celālī boy mounted Kīrli Nigār | his long dick in his hand was enough of a lance for him || he thrust it in his ass and pulled it out his vagina | and his underpants flew as a flag atop that lance” (*binince Kīrli Nigār'a Celālī oḡlamı | elinde kīr-i dirāzi*

Nigâr.⁷²⁸ The Persian word *nigâr* refers etymologically to sight or observation, but in poetry came to mean a portrait or idol and, by extension, a beautiful person, either a young boy or a female. Yet as a name, which is how Nef'î employs it, it refers to a woman. Thus, the epithet *Kîrli Nigâr* demasculinizes Nâdirî as, essentially, a woman who happens to have a penis, although—as in the quatrain just quoted—Nef'î refers exclusively to this character's vagina and anus as sexual loci.

To return to that quatrain, on the one hand it alludes to the others in that coterie of *'âlim-littérateurs* with whom Nâdirî associated, referring to them as “your boys” (*oğlanlar*) and severely disempowering him by suggesting that he is their catamite, despite the fact that, in terms of actual status in the *'ilmiyye*, Nâdirî was by far the most powerful among them. But more significantly, the quatrain suggests that these “boys” have abandoned Nâdirî, at least for the time being. This is likely because the rumors of treachery mentioned above have begun to swirl around him, causing them to temporarily disassociate themselves from him—and the reason for those rumors is Nâdirî's amanuensis 'İtrî, with whom he is close but who comes from Safavid territory.

In this quatrain, the accusation of treachery is veiled, residing only in the description of 'İtrî as a “heretic” (*mülhid*; *i.e.*, a Shiite). Another quatrain, though, is significantly more direct:

yeter aña mizrak || şokup götine çıkardıkca anı fercinden | tonu o mizrağı olur ucında bir bayrak); IUNEK TY 511, 73b.

⁷²⁸ For the identification of “Kîrli Nigâr” as Nâdirî, see Halil Erdoğan Cengiz, “Nef'î'nin Kîrli Nigârı,” *Tarih ve Toplum* 16, no. 93 (1991): 39–43 [167–171].

now some whorish woman poet [*i.e.*, Nādirī] has appeared in Rūm | *for his pander is a Persian spy* || no such whore will ever be seen again | for his penetrated ass is his inverse vagina⁷²⁹

‘İtrī is here directly named as a “Persian spy” (*‘Acem cāsūsı*), and by presenting him within that context as the “whore” (*kaḥpe*) Nādirī’s “pander” (*pāzenk*), Nefī quite clearly implies that ‘İtrī has prostituted him to the Safavids; *i.e.*, that Nādirī is serving not the Sunni Ottoman cause, but the Shiite Safavid one.

Whether Nefī was one of the “enemies” (*ḥaşm*) referred to by Nādirī in his 1614 panegyric to Sultan Aḥmed is impossible to determine with certainty, but given Nefī’s relative closeness to the sultan at this time—not to mention the fact that around the same period he was utilizing invective to help bring about the eventual downfall of the chief treasurer Etmekçizāde Aḥmed—it is a distinct possibility. In any case, Nādirī’s plea to the sultan was not entirely heeded: in February 1615, he was granted the right to the revenues of the judicial district of Provardia in Varna—but he was granted no post. Thus, he again produced a panegyric to Sultan Aḥmed toward the end of the latter’s reign, where he wrote:

God knows I have committed no sin deserving of punishment | but hostile people have made accusations || [my] Qur’ānic commentary is being written in your honored name | is it not strange for them to call me a second-rate judge? || observe my virtue, my sovereign, and take pity [on me] | do not forget your servant, do not make his weeping eyes cry⁷³⁰

⁷²⁹ “şā’ire bir kaḥpe peydā oldı şimdi Rūm’da | *kim aḡa pāzenk olan zīrā ‘Acem cāsūsıdır* || böyle bir ġayr-ı mükerrer fāḥiše olmaz daḡı | kün-ı me’būni anıḡ zīrā kūs-i ma’kūsıdır”; ULLWCO 662, 16b; emphasis added.

⁷³⁰ “Ḥudā bilür ki sezā-yı cezā günāhum yoḡ | eġerçi ehl-i ġaraz ètdi niçe bühtāni || yazılmaḡ üzredür ism-i şerīfiḡe tefsīr | ‘aceb deġül baḡa dèrlerse kādī-yi şānī || kemāl[-ı] fazluma baḡ şefkat eyle ḡünkārüm | unutma bendenī aġlatma çeşm-i ġiryāni”; ‘Abdu’l-ġanīzāde Meḡmed (Nādirī) Efendi, “Dīvāni ve Şeh-nāmesi,” 149.

One can certainly imagine that Nef'ī was among the “hostile people” (*ehl-i ġaraž*) of whom Nādirī complains here. Furthermore, the fact that he directly uses his unfinished Qur'ānic commentary and his status as a judge as a shield goes some way to explaining Nef'ī's mockery of Nādirī's inability to finish the commentary and of his unfitness for the judiciary.

Sultan Aḥmed still did not permit Nādirī to be granted a post, and after his death in November 1617, with the ascension to the throne of Muştafā I, he wrote another panegyric pleading for the favor (*iltifāt*) of a post⁷³¹—to no effect. Thus, several months later when 'Osmān II was made sultan as a result of a palace coup in February 1618, came another panegyric imploring, “Nādirī, your aged slave, is your hereditary servant | would it be so wrong for you to free him from the chains of trouble?”⁷³² This appears to have created, or to have had an influence in bringing about, the desired effect, as Nādirī was reinstated to his post of chief judge of the Asian provinces in October 1618.⁷³³ He would continue to serve at significant posts for several years, until his death in February 1626.⁷³⁴

If indeed, as seems probable, Nef'ī's invectives—not to mention whatever may have been actually said in words and thus lost to history—played some part in Nādirī's temporary fall from grace,⁷³⁵ then it serves as another example of how invective, in the

⁷³¹ See *ibid.*, 151.

⁷³² “Nādirī eski kuluḡ bende-i mevrūsuḡdur | n'ola kurtarsaḡ idi bend-i belādan anı”; *ibid.*, 154.

⁷³³ Nev'izāde 'Atā'ī, *Hadā'iku'l-Hakā'ik*, Vol. 2, 1731.

⁷³⁴ *Ibid.*, 1732.

⁷³⁵ Nādirī himself appears to have confined his responses to Nef'ī primarily to his panegyrics. There is only one invective he is known to have written against Nef'ī, and that is more of a throwing in the towel—one that he may, in fact, have produced as a word of caution to his 'ālim-littérateur associates—than an

environment within which it was produced and disseminated, functioned as an instrumentalization of rumor. Nefî may not have just been whistling “Dixie” when he stated, “don’t think my invective’s in vain.”⁷³⁶

5.4 Conclusion

Whether the ‘*âlim*-littérateurs discussed in this chapter were working in any degree of concert against Nefî must remain an open question. Given their collaborations and mutual influence in other poetic (as well as career) ventures, however, it is quite plausible that they did do so. Perhaps more to the point, Nefî himself perceived them as doing so, as he made clear in one invective quatrain:

they all ganged up to lampoon me | they all ate a pile of shit, some openly and some
in secret || let them buy and sell their drivel, they’ll still eat shit | none of them are
worth a penny, those poetaster pimps⁷³⁷

While this might of course refer to others⁷³⁸ besides the ‘*âlim*-littérateur group, another quatrain leaves little doubt that Nefî is referring exclusively to this group:

invective proper: “would one who is wise lampoon Nefî the shameless? | if you call him a pimp or a catamite, he does not deny it || in short, the swords of the poets have become weak | he is truly a monster and swords have no effect on him” (‘*ârif olan Nefî-i bî-‘ârî hicv eyler mi hiç | puşt dersen ibne dersen kendi inkâr eylemez* || ‘*âciz oldı hâşılı şemşir-i tab ‘-i ehl-i dil | güyiyâ bir câneverdir tîgler kâr eylemez*); IUNEK TY 3004, 49a. Incidentally, ineffectual as it may be, this invective does put the lie to Numan Külekçi’s claim that “[Nefî’s] obscenities, invectives, and [black] humor have no presence in [the works of] Nâdirî.” ‘Abdu’l-ganîzâde Mehmed (Nâdirî) Efendi, “Dîvânı ve Şeh-nâmesi,” 83.

⁷³⁶ “bî-hüde şanma hicvimi”; IUNEK TY 511, 74b.

⁷³⁷ “ittifâk eylediler hep bizi hicv eylemeğe | kimi zâhir kimi bâtın bir alay boğ yédiler || ne alur var ne şatar yâvelerin boğ yêrler | alayı bir pula değmez müteşâ‘ir gidiler”; IUNEK TY 511, 79b.

⁷³⁸ Few poets outside of the group of ‘*âlim*-littérateurs (*i.e.*, Riyâzî, Nev‘îzâde ‘Atâ‘î, Kâfzâde Fâ‘izî, etc.) are known to have produced invectives against Nefî, and none of them as extensively as, for instance, Nev‘îzâde ‘Atâ‘î. Two of these others, ‘Ankâ and Vaḥdetî, will be discussed in Chapter 6. Another is Tıflî (Ahmed Çelebi) (d. 1659/60), a storyteller and entertainer (*meddâh*) in the court of Sultan Murâd IV, and a fourth is Kesbî (d. 1640), who was originally a scribe but later trained as a lecturer (*müderris*) under Yahyâ Efendi and so might be considered an ancillary member of the group. For their invectives, one quatrain each, against Nefî, see Ağâh Sırrı Levend, *Divan Edebiyatı: Kelimeler ve Remizler, Mazmunlar ve Meşhumlar* (Istanbul: İnkılâp Kitapevi, 1943), 511. For Tıflî, see Bekir Çınar, ed. “Tıflî Ahmed Çelebi:

God knows I am a servant and sacrifice to the people of knowledge (*ehl-i 'ilm*; i.e., the *'ulemā*) | hey catamites! go ahead and prove your knowledge then! || but you've gone astray and wander the road of nonsense verse | you've fallen in an old toilet of words and eaten shit⁷³⁹

This echoes Nef'ī's aforementioned statement against Nev'izāde 'Atā'ī, “he can have his damned knowledge,”⁷⁴⁰ as well as those against Nādirī where he asks the rhetorical questions, “what is that ridiculous catamite's knowledge and virtue anyhow?”⁷⁴¹ and “if he has knowledge, why doesn't his Qur'ānic commentary come out?”⁷⁴² Now, though, the claims are extended so as to cover the entire group, not merely daring them to prove their knowledge of *'ilm*—and hence, questioning their ability to serve the Ottoman state in the capacity of *'ālims*—but also making it clear that he views these men as a degradation in the quality of the *'ulemā*, in addition to being poets unfit to continue the Ottoman literary tradition.

This takes us back to Nef'ī's mentor, Muşţafā 'Ālī, who himself had some very choice words about what he presented as happening to the Ottoman *'ulemā*. In the *Nuşhatü's-selāṭīn*, he wrote:

[W]henver offices in [the *'ilmiyye*] career, judiciary or scholastic positions, become vacant, qualification and priorities are disregarded and the offices are not given to the right person, for one says: “This one is one of such and such person's men,” “This one recommends himself as being the *khōja* of such and such pasha, whereas that one is tainted with the blemish of industry and seclusion, and since he neglects the

Hayatı, Edebî Şahsiyeti, Eserleri ve Dîvânı'nın Tenkitli Metni” (Ph.D. dissertation, Fırat University, 2000). For Kesbî, see İsmail Hakkı Aksoyak, “Kesbî/Kisbî, Kesbî Mehmet Efendi,” *Türk Edebiyatı İsimler Sözlüğü*, January 31, 2015. <http://www.turkedebiyatiisimlersozlugu.com/index.php?sayfa=detay&detay=6845>.

⁷³⁹ “ehl-i 'ilmün kulu kurbāniyüz Allāh bilür | ey kekezler hele siz 'ilmünüz isbāt ediniz || herze-gird-i reh-i nazm oldunuz ammā yol azup | düşdünüz köhne helā-yı suhene boğ yediniz”; *ibid.*, 76b.

⁷⁴⁰ “başına çalsun 'ilmin”; ULLWCO 662, 14b.

⁷⁴¹ “öyle yāve kekeziñ 'ilmi nedir fazlı nedir”; *ibid.*, 8a.

⁷⁴² “'ilmi var ise niçün tefsiri çıkmaz ortaya?”; IUNEK TY 511, 75b.

occupation of visiting us (*üslüb-ı mülâzemetümüz*) the fulfillment of his wish is out of [the] question.⁷⁴³

This passage could as well be a summary of how Nef'î envisioned, or at least presented, the 'ālim-littérateurs against whom he stood and who in turn stood against him. Muştafâ 'Ālî stresses how favoritism and/or nepotism have led to a decline in the intellectual and moral standards of the 'ulemā, with the supposed decline in merit-based appointments paving the way for people of inferior learning to enter the ranks of the madrasa system and the judiciary. For 'Ālî, this in turn meant that even those 'ālims of superior learning had to neglect the pursuit of knowledge so as to protect their positions against this new type of 'ālim:

[T]he frequent visits of the 'ulemā in the houses of the vezirs and their zeal in wandering from reception to reception in order to prevent the ignorants from overtaking them and becoming their superiors through the intercession of the great detains them from their studies and prevents them from rising up through books and works.⁷⁴⁴

In regards to the clique of 'ālim-littérateurs lined up against Nef'î, their voluminous writings indicate that they can hardly be said to have neglected studying and writing, though they did concentrate primarily on verse rather than on works of scholarship *per se*. But as Nef'î frames them, of course, they are not 'ālims of superior learning, but rather the “ignorants” (*cühelā*) against whom Muştafâ 'Ālî's fundamental complaint is directed.

⁷⁴³ “[T]arıklarında menāşıb u każā vu medārise müte'allik merātib hāl olunduğça liyākat u istiḥkāk gözedilmeyup bu fülāna mensūbdur ve bu fülān paşanuj ḥocalığıyla merğūbdur, bu ise şuğl u inzivā ile me'yūb ve üslüb-ı mülâzemetümüzde taqşir etmek ile ḥuşul-ı merāmı meslūbdur dinilüp manşablur ehline vērilmeme[kte].” Muştafâ 'Ālî, *Counsel for Sultans*, Vol. 1, 75, 175. Translation by Andreas Tietze.

⁷⁴⁴ “[T]ā'ife-i mezbūrenūj [*i.e.*, the 'ulemā] vūzerāya keşret-i mülâzemetleri ve cühelā ekābir vāsıtasıyla bize taşaddür ü tefevvuk etmesün dēyü kapu kapu gezmeğe muvāzebetleri tevağgullerine māni' ve āşār u teşānif ile tereffu'larına dāfi'dür.” *Ibid.*, 75, 174–175. Translation by Andreas Tietze.

Such “ignorants” are described in some detail by the anonymous author of the *Hırzu'l-mülūk* (Stronghold of the Kings), a work of advice literature that was roughly contemporaneous with Muştafā ‘Ālī’s *Nuṣḥatü’s-selāṭīn*, apparently being intended for presentation to Sultan Murād III (r. 1574–1595): “The majority of the teachers in the higher madrasas, having no allotment of knowledge or virtue and no renown for perfection and wisdom, have become teachers through connections (*intisāb*) or through giving money or through being the son of a mullah, and lecturing and learning have been done away with.”⁷⁴⁵ The same author goes on to detail the fundamental problem that this leads to:

The wonder is that now they appoint some *çelebis* [*i.e.*, those who can read and write] as teachers at the Madrasas of the Eight Courtyards and at 60-*aķçe* madrasas solely because of the esteem of their pedigree—“He is the son of so-and-so”—or owing to their connections (*intisāb*) with a great household. [The appointees], shamelessly and knowing nothing at all of reading and writing [*i.e.*, apart from basic literacy], strut forward and say, “We teach,” coming and going with wrongheaded lies on their lips. Can the salary they receive for this be lawful (*helāl*)?⁷⁴⁶

We saw earlier, in Chapters 3 and 4, how much of the late 16th- and early 17th-century advice literature, as well as Nef‘ī, evinced a deep concern with “outsiders” (*ecnebī*) of various sorts entering into the Ottoman military and administrative hierarchy. With the religiojudicial branch, however, the inclusive and theoretically egalitarian nature of the madrasa education that lay at its foundation largely precluded complaints along these

⁷⁴⁵ “‘Ālī medreselerde olan müderris efendilerden ekserinüñ ‘ilmi ü fażīletten behresi ve kemāl ve ma‘rifet ile şöhresi yoğ-iken kimi intisābla ve kimi māl vërmeğle ve kimi molla-zāde olmağla müderris olup ifāde ve istifāde ber-ṭaraf olmışdır.” Yücel, *Osmanlı Devlet Teşkilātu*, 197. For more on the issue of the addressee of the *Hırzu'l-mülūk*, see *ibid.*, 148.

⁷⁴⁶ “‘Acebdir ki şimdiki zamānda: ‘Filān-zādedir’ dëyü maḥzā şeref-i nesebi ḥasebiyle ve yāḥūd bir ‘aẓīm āsītāneye intisābı sebebiyle ba‘zı çelebileri Şemāniyye Medreseleri’ne ve altmış aķça medreselere müderris ederler. Anlar daḥı utanmayup kat‘a oķumak yazmak ne ëdügün bilmezler iken gāhī ikdām ëdüp varup: ‘Ders dëruz’ dëyü yalan yanlıř bir kaç söz söyleyüp gelüp giderler. Andan aldıkları vazīfe ḥelāl mıdır?’” *Ibid.*, 197.

lines. A careful consideration of the above passages from the *Nuṣḥatü 's-selāṭīn* and *Hırzu 'l-mülūk*, for example, reveals that the perceived problem outlined there is not one caused by an influx of “outsiders” strictly speaking. Instead, the degeneration of the *'ulemā* that they describe results, on the contrary, from an influx of “insiders”: that is, teaching positions at madrasas—which were the essential initial stepping stones to a career in the judiciary—would be given not on the basis of knowledge and accomplishment, but rather on the basis of whose son someone was, who someone was connected to through *intisāb* relations, or how much money someone was able to procure to effectively buy a position.⁷⁴⁷ This situation bears a distinct similarity, of course, to the group of *'ālim*-littérateurs to whom Nef'ī stood opposed. In the final analysis, the upshot of the argument laid out in the contemporary advice literature is that favoritism and/or nepotism in the assignment of scholarly and judicial posts creates a network of friends, acquaintances, and affiliates that is, somewhat paradoxically, ever widening yet ever more insular: essentially, the *'ulemā*—or at least their upper echelons in the capital of Istanbul⁷⁴⁸—were in danger of becoming a negative feedback loop.

Although he nowhere puts it in quite the same terms as Muṣṭafā 'Ālī or the author of the *Hırzu 'l-mülūk*, this is one of the fundamental ideas underlying Nef'ī's invectives against the *'ālim*-littérateurs, and it emerges in the discourse and imagery that animate his verse.

We saw in the previous section, for example, how Nef'ī mocked Nādirī when his

⁷⁴⁷ It should not be thought that such complaints were new; see, e.g., Halil İnalçık, “A Report on the Corrupt Kaḏīs under Bayezid II,” *Studia Ottomanica* 47 (1997): 75–86.

⁷⁴⁸ For evidence that this was not the case at lower levels of the *'ilmiyye* hierarchy, see Denise Klein, *Die osmanischen Ulema des 17. Jahrhunderts: Eine geschlossene Gesellschaft?* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2007).

associates were apparently unable to assist him during the period after he had been dismissed as chief judge of the Asian provinces. Another quatrain by Nef'ī against Nādirī also takes on significance in the light of the former's clash against the group of which the latter was a part:

a few catamites gathered around Kīrli Nigâr | and pulled at their hair and curls
crying, “Why don't you lampoon [Nef'ī], too?” || yet they have come to war with a
sorcerous poet | [and] have been defeated by [my] sorcery like an army of witches⁷⁴⁹

It will be recalled that Nādirī wrote only one invective against Nef'ī, and that even that seemed more in the nature of an admonition to his fellow *'ālim*-littérateurs than a direct attack on Nef'ī. Given this situation, this quatrain's “a few catamites” (*bir kaç kekez*) can only be interpreted as Nev'īzāde 'Aṭā'ī, Riyāzī, Ḳāfzāde Fā'izī, and the rest, goading him to join their efforts. Nef'ī's response is to allude all the way back to *hijā*'s, and poetry's, pre-Islamic origins in magical efficacy, as discussed in the introduction, to declare that there is, in any case, nothing that the likes of them can do against the likes of him.

Where Nef'ī's assault on the *'ālim*-littérateurs rests on a sense of their lack of qualifications and quality as well as their “insiderism,” their attacks on him are framed in terms of his “outsiderism” as reflected in his origins as the son of a district governor in eastern Anatolia, in his dark skin, and in what they saw as his imitation of contemporary Persian poetry. As the discourse and imagery of their invectives against Nef'ī evinces, this was a case of a provincial upstart—perhaps talented, perhaps not—

⁷⁴⁹ “cem' olup Kīrli Nigâr'ın başına birkaç kekez | sen de hicv ét dëyü saçın pürçeğin hep yoldılar ||
girdiler bir şâ'ir-i sâhîrle cenge 'ākıbet | leşker-i cādū gibi sihr ile mağlûb oldılar”; IUNEK TY 511, 75b.

poking his nose in where it was unwanted, even to the point of presuming to weigh in not only on their status as poets, but on their qualifications as *‘alims* as well. What is more, he was doing this in an aggressively confrontational manner, and as a result the invective battle that developed began to utilize weapons drawn from the sociocultural armory.

What emerges, then, from a consideration of this portion of the early 17th-century invective corpus is that what was at stake for those involved was nothing less than the elite Ottoman sociocultural identity itself. It is in this regard that this corpus proves so radically different from the “friendly” invectives of *Zāī*, and even from the exchange of invectives between *Yaḥyā Beğ* and *Ḥayālī* discussed in the introduction, where the clash was based in janissary-*sipāhī* conflict and/or in *Ḥayālī*’s own *parvenu* status: in both of those cases, the invectives themselves neither reflect sociocultural clashes openly, for the most part, nor do they take on burdens as broad as those seen in the clash between *Nefī* and the *‘ālim*-littérateurs.

From the perspective of the invectives produced by the latter, the Ottoman identity can be envisioned of as a series of concentric circles with its sociocultural center in western Anatolia and Rumelia (*i.e.*, in *Rūm*)⁷⁵⁰ and invested in the circle of *‘ālim*-littérateurs who all hailed from that region, who knew and associated closely with one another and their families, and who took related stances toward poetry and the poetic tradition. Their group identity developed in accordance with such connections, and became identified by

⁷⁵⁰ The concepts of *Rūm* and *Rūmī*—corresponding respectively to the Ottoman sociocultural (and, to a lesser extent, geographical) center and those who represented it—will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

themselves with what it meant to be “Ottoman,” which in turn led to attempts to exclude those who did not or would not fit, as evidenced not only by the invective corpus but also by such canonization efforts as Ḳāfzāde Fā’izī’s poetic anthology and Nev’izāde ‘Aṭā’ī’s *Ḥadā’ikū’l-hakā’ik*.

As for Nef’ī, his own invectives against this coterie of *‘ālim*-littérateurs reveals that he, too, considered himself a, or perhaps *the*, exemplary representative of elite Ottoman sociocultural identity. That his conception thereof was in many ways just as exclusive and shot through with “insiderism” as that of his opponents is something that will be explored in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

“STOP COMING TO ISTANBUL”:

NEF‘Ī, THE PERSIANS, AND RŪM

The previous chapter discussed how the poet and calligrapher ‘Iṭrī from Shiraz in south-central Persia appeared, in connection with his benefactor ‘Abdu’l-ġanīzāde Meḥmed (Nādirī) Efendi, in a number of invectives produced by Nef‘ī. In those pieces, ‘Iṭrī was not the primary target, but rather, as Nādirī’s amanuensis, was used as a vehicle for Nef‘ī to undermine Nādirī’s esteem and question his loyalty to the Ottoman state. Other poets whose origins, like ‘Iṭrī’s, lay in Safavid Persia or its sphere of influence did not escape so lightly.

Nef‘ī’s invectives against such figures of Persianate origin in Ottoman lands were, like some of those of the ‘*ālim*-littérateurs against him, predicated on a dichotomy between the (Sunni) Ottomans and the (Shiite) Safavids. The latter were, of course, most typically termed *Ḳızılbaş* in the contemporary literature, though several other terms (all derogatory) were used as well, among them such already discussed terms as *Rāfiżī* and

mülhid. The problem from a historiographical standpoint, though, is what the Ottomans called themselves, or rather—to limit the scope somewhat—what the particular Ottomans actively involved in the early 17th-century clash of invective called themselves, and more to the point how they saw themselves as they engaged in the construction of a self-image built in contradistinction to those whom they attacked as “others.”

The term “Ottoman” (*‘Osmānī*) is of little use in this matter during this period: while it is often blithely used—including (as a matter of custom and convenience) in this dissertation—to refer to anyone within the bounds of the Ottoman Empire, such a conception is based in modern ideas of the nation-state and has little to no applicability to an empire in the early modern period. For figures like Nef’ī or Nev’īzāde ‘Aṭā’ī, the meaning of “Ottoman” ranged between a limited signification referring to the royal dynasty (*āl, neseb, silsile*) descended from Sultan ‘Osmān I (r. c. 1299–1323/24) and a broader one referring to the land, army, and state structure that were considered inviolable possessions of and under the control of the head of that dynasty. That is to say, they neither considered nor termed themselves “Ottomans.”

Examples abound, but the selection from ‘Aṭā’ī’s previously discussed work the *‘Ālemnümā* might be seen as particularly illustrative of this: “in poems of praise and lyrics, Rūmī words (*Rūmī kelām*) | have been victorious over the mages of Persia (*‘Acem*) || when the bloodthirsty swords of the Ottomans (*şemşīr-i hūnrīz-i ‘Osmānīyān*)

| emerged with the excellence of the Turkish language (*Türkî-zebân*).”⁷⁵¹ This is a perfect storm of all the troublesome terms involved in any discussion of “Ottoman” identity. To focus, firstly, on simply the phrase “the bloodthirsty swords of the Ottomans,” this is manifestly a reference to the army, albeit in a metaphorical context, as the backbone of the sultan’s empire: it was the military and political dominance of the sultan’s army and state over the Safavids that paved the way for subsequent “Ottoman” domination in the cultural, or specifically literary, realm.

What, though, to make of the simultaneous use of the phrases “Rûmî words” and “Turkish language”? The short answer is that they are not, in fact, so different: “Rûmî” words are articulations or literary works expressed via the Turkish language, and the Turkish language is the vehicle for the expression of “Rûmî” words. But the phrasing of the second clause there hints at the larger answer: where “Turkish” or *Türkî*—which must be strictly distinguished from “Turk” (*Türk*)⁷⁵²—is a word for the language alone, “Rûmî” refers to a sociocultural phenomenon that might be termed a sense of belonging or even, with some reservation, an imperial identity. When Nefî, for instance, equates himself with one of his poetic influences, he states, “all of the eloquent [men] of Persia (*A‘cām*), should they see this panegyric | will admit that I am the ‘Orfî of Rûm.”⁷⁵³ The “Rûm” here does not refer to, for instance, Anatolia or even to the combined “region” of western Anatolia and Rumelia: as is intimated by the use of “the eloquent” (*bülegâ*),

⁷⁵¹ “ki medh ü tegazzülde Rûmî kelâm | olup gâlib-i sâhirân-ı ‘Acem || çü şemşîr-i hunrîz-i ‘Osmâniyân | zuhûr étîdî rüchân-ı Türkî-zebân”; Kortantamer, *Nev‘î-zâde Atâyî ve Hamse’si*, 411–412.

⁷⁵² As has already been seen in connection with Muştafâ ‘Âlî’s *Nuşhatü’s-selâîn*, *Türk* was a derogatory word used exclusively to refer to uneducated rural and/or pastoralist people; the stigma attached to it did not, however, inherently accrue to the word *Türkî* as used for the language.

⁷⁵³ “‘Urfî-i Rûm idiğim cümle ederler teslîm | görseler ger bu kaçîdem bülegâ-yı A‘cām”; Nefî, [*Dîvân*], 122.

referring to those trained in eloquent rhetoric (*belāġat*), what is in play here is a particular sociocultural sense of belonging to the tradition of high Ottoman literary and artistic culture in contradistinction to the Persian version thereof. Thus, just as ‘Aṭā’ī admitted “Rūmī” dominance over Persia(n) in the lyrical and panegyric modes but not the narrative mode of the *mesnevī* form, so did Nef’ī assert the equality of his own iteration of panegyric with that of ‘Orfī of Shiraz. By implication, then, *he* is the representative of Rūm and Rūmī culture.

These concepts and their specific relation to the question of “Ottoman identity” will be further discussed in section 6.2, but first I will look at the approach taken toward individuals of Persianate origin in Nef’ī’s *Sihām-ı kaza*. There are neither many such figures nor many invectives produced against them, with one exception (Vaḥdetī). Nevertheless, much of the discourse animating this relatively small sample is remarkably similar to that seen in the invectives produced against Nef’ī by the ‘*ālim*-littérateurs discussed in the previous chapter, as well as echoing certain aspects of Nef’ī’s attacks on Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha and Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha as seen in Chapters 3 and 4. As such, it will help in revealing some nuances of the early 17th-century clash over “Ottoman” identity that forms the basis of the rest of the chapter.

6.1 Persian targets in the *Sihām-ı kaza*

For the most part, the Persian figures against whom Nef’ī produced invective and who are covered in this section—*viz.*, Ḥāfiz, Meḥmed (Zamān) Efendi, Mullah Ḥusayn (‘Ankā), Muṭahhar Efendi, and Zamān—appear to have been targets relatively early in his career, very likely up through around the year 1615 or so. If this is indeed the case, it

must be assumed that during this period when Nef'ī was carving a place for himself within the tradition of high Ottoman literary and artistic culture—a place that was at least partly predicated on an agon with the Persian version thereof—he was simultaneously making a claim against those emerging from the Persianate cultural sphere into the very center of the Ottoman one where Nef'ī dwelt.

6.1.1 Hāfız and Zamān (Meḥmed Efendi)

The poets known as Hāfız and Zamān are often, though not exclusively, mentioned together in Nef'ī's invective. While both were originally from Persia, there is very little biographical information available about either in contemporary sources produced within the Ottoman context. Regarding the former, there is only the anthologist Kāfzāde Fā'izi's laconic entry: "Hāfız of Persia. This distich is his: 'within a terrible love that name and image will not be one | what great fame it is to lay down stories of madness and leave'."⁷⁵⁴ The cited verses' use of eastern Turkic elements—*e.g.*, *bolğay*, *kılmas*, *ni*—indicates that this Hāfız, which is actually not a pen name but a title used for someone who has memorized the Qur'ān, was likely of Turkmen origin. As for Zamān, the only extant information comes from the much later biographical encyclopedia of Meḥmed Süreyyā, where he states that Zamān Meḥmed Efendi was originally from Nakhchivan but came to Istanbul in 1591/92, where he died in 1613 while serving as a lecturer (*müderris*); inasmuch as Meḥmed Süreyyā points out that he was young when

⁷⁵⁴ "Hāfız-ı 'Acem[.] [B]u beyt anuñdur[:] Fenā 'aşk içre ol bolğay ki ism u resm hem kılmas | Cünün birle hikāyetler koyup kitmek ni şöhetdür." Kāfzāde Fā'izi, "Zübdetü'l-Eş'ar," 221.

he died, one might speculate that he had been born around the 1580s.⁷⁵⁵ Given the apparent date of Zamān’s death, as well as his frequent association with Hāfız in Nef’ī’s invectives, one can assume that these invectives were relatively early works written between roughly the years 1605 and 1615, a contention supported by the fact that Hāfız is also referenced in one quatrain produced against Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha, against whom Nef’ī was actively writing between the years 1609 and 1617 and who the quatrain hints was a retainer or associate of Etmekçizāde.⁷⁵⁶

Nef’ī’s invectives targeting Hāfız, whether by himself or in conjunction with Zamān, amount to eight quatrains. These typically make no mention of his origins, but instead allude to his apparently close relationship with Zamān—and occasionally another unidentified figure called Hekīm (“the physician”)—via sexual innuendo. In these poems, Hāfız is consistently and very explicitly presented as the passive sexual partner, as he is in another quatrain that, without reference to Zamān, openly mocks Hāfız’s claims to piety:

the esteemed Hāfız Efendi claims to be highly pious (*zūhd*) | and considers himself a perfect man in that matter || he himself says, “I have never turned my face from the qibla” | but the backside of the one screwing [him] is in the mihrab⁷⁵⁷

⁷⁵⁵ Mehmed Süreyyā, *Sicill-i Osmanî*, Vol. 5, ed. Nuri Akbayar and Seyit Ali Kahraman (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1996), 1705.

⁷⁵⁶ “his excellency Etmekçi’s ass is itching again | that accursed whore desires a prick || so why don’t I take the penis of invective in my hand | and fuck that pimp’s ass like [I fucked] his Hāfız’s bum” (*gicidi yine künü ḥazret-i Etmekçi’niñ | ḥādise istedi ol kaḥpe me’būni gibi || kīr-i hicvi alayın ben de ele n’ola gerek | sikeyin gidi göti Hāfız’ınıñ künü gibi*); ULLWCO 662, 15b.

⁷⁵⁷ “ḥazret-i Hāfız Efendi da’vā-i zūhd eyleyüp | merd-i kâmil ‘add edermiş kendü[s]in ol bābda || kendü dermiş kıbleden döndürmedim aṣlā yüzüm | arkası ammā ki larḫ edenin mihrābda”; ULLWCO 662, 25b.

The second distich implies that, though Hāfız may go to the mosque, his vaunted piety is no more than show, captured in the final hemistich's image where the sexual position described requires that he in fact face away from the qibla.

The matter of false piety was one that was a very common throughout the Ottoman poetic tradition, encapsulated in the character of the *zāhid* or ascetic religious literalist,⁷⁵⁸ which in this quatrain is explicitly referenced through the word *zūhd* (“piety”) in the first hemistich and further supported by “perfect man” (*merd-i kāmīl*)⁷⁵⁹ in the second hemistich. In the cast of characters that animate much of Ottoman poetry, the *zāhid* was opposed by the *‘āşık* (“lover”) or *rind* (literally, “hedonist” but implying one who adopts a positively charged emotional approach to life). The *‘āşık* or *rind* was the protagonist persona adopted by the poet in his verse, especially in lyric ghazals, with this persona's pursuit of the beloved (*ma‘şūk*) and of rich emotional experience being opposed by the *zāhid* or by other antagonists, often referred to using terms that mark them as enemies or rivals (*düşmān*, *‘adū*, *rakīb*) or as outsiders (*ağyār*, *bīgāne*).⁷⁶⁰ The basic triangle of beloved-lover-rival that populates the ghazal corpus is a concept whose traces can be seen in the invective corpus as well. The difference is that, in invective, the figure of the beloved is effectively removed from the discourse, thus being present (if at

⁷⁵⁸ For more on the figure of the *zāhid*, see Ahmet Talāt (Onay), *Eski Türk Edebiyatında Mazmunlar*, ed. Cemāl Kurnaz (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 1993), 443–444.

⁷⁵⁹ The notion of the “perfect man”—here used in the Persianate form *merd-i kāmīl* but most widely known in its Arabic equivalent, *al-insān al-kāmīl*—is derived from a long philosophical and spiritual tradition concerning the most advanced realization in human form of the reflection of divine qualities. See Roger Arnaldez, “Al-Insān al-Kāmīl,” *EF*, Vol. 3, 1239–1241.

⁷⁶⁰ For a fuller discussion of some of these characters, see Andrews, *Poetry's Voice*, especially 133–135 and 162.

all) only in absentia⁷⁶¹ while the lover or protagonist addresses the rival or antagonist directly and oppositionally. A particularly clear example of this can be seen in a distich from Nef'ī's attack on 'Abdu'l-ġanīzāde Meḥmed (Nādirī) inserted into his long invective against Gürcī Meḥmed Pasha, as discussed in the previous chapter. There, in the course of describing how the judge Nādirī has deceived and harmed numerous other members of the religiojudiciary establishment in the course of his career, Nef'ī writes: "I am no mufti or mullah that he can make an ass of me | I will fuck him again, I am a fierce *rind*, you dog!"⁷⁶² Whereas, in the lyric ghazal with the beloved serving as an active element, the protagonist persona emerges as a character showing some weakness owing to his emotional attachment to the beloved, in invective the absence of the beloved allows, even demands, that he assert absolute dominance over all possible rivals or antagonists.

The other primary difference in invective, of course, is that the figures involved are actual individuals,⁷⁶³ however caricatured they may be as a result of the rhetorical demands of the verse tradition. Thus, for Nef'ī to liken Ḥāfīz's false piety to his getting sodomized in the mihrab of a mosque is to use verse to attempt to create real effects against the target or targets via slander fed into the rumor mill of oral circulation. In one

⁷⁶¹ In the context of many invectives, the "beloved" would in fact best be conceived of as the patron figure in whose eyes the author is attempting to damage the target's reputation. Thus, for example, if Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha were the "rival" and Nef'ī the "lover" in the latter's invectives against the former, then the "beloved" might be considered Sultan Aḥmed I, who the poet hoped would heed the rumors about his chief treasurer and act accordingly.

⁷⁶² "değilim müftī vü mollā ki beni de ḥar ēde | sikerim ben yine anı katı rindim a köpek"; ULLWCO 662, 8a.

⁷⁶³ While this was also the case with many ghazals, where beloveds are sometimes named (though rivals are not), it was an exception to the rule.

quatrain where Nef'ī attacks Ḥāfiz and Zamān together, he creates a dialogue between the two regarding how the former lost his anal virginity to the latter:

Zamān's Ḥāfiz⁷⁶⁴ recalled when he was yet young and fresh and said, | “The dick's strike made blood flow from my ass” || and [Zamān] let loose a melancholy sigh and said, | “Ah, those were the days!⁷⁶⁵ and that was the time (*zamān*)!”⁷⁶⁶

Given the little that is extant regarding the lives of these two men of Persian origin, we do not know what their relationship to one another may have been. Nonetheless, it must be assumed that they were friends or associates, in the same manner as the group of *‘ālim*-littérateurs discussed in the previous chapters; otherwise, Nef'ī's invectives pairing them would have no effect. What is more, a quatrain like that above indicates that Zamān was the senior or superior figure in whatever their relationship may have been, which in turn may hint that Ḥāfiz attached himself as a subordinate to Zamān in some variety of *intisāb*.

Another quatrain puts the two men in the same sort of hierarchy as the previous one:

hey Ḥāfiz, the dissolute, the delicate, with the torn ass | truly, you are the absolute catamite of this era (*zamāne*) || is it any wonder that you cross paths with that ass (*ḥar*) Zamān | truly, if he is Zamān, you are Miss Zamān (*Zamāne*)⁷⁶⁷

⁷⁶⁴ Here, Nef'ī uses the Persian genitive construction *Ḥāfiz-ı Zamān*, which can have both the meaning of “the eminent *ḥāfiz* or *Ḥāfiz* of this era” (intended mockingly) and the meaning of “Ḥāfiz, who belongs to Zamān,” with this latter indicating sexual possession in the context of the quatrain.

⁷⁶⁵ Here, Nef'ī uses the phrase *demler o demler idi*, with the word *dem* having multiple meanings, several of which are likely intended; *viz.*, “time” (here translated as “days”), “blood” (referring to the breaking of Ḥāfiz's anal virginity), and possibly “breath; sigh; exclamation” (referring to the cries Ḥāfiz made during intercourse).

⁷⁶⁶ “Ḥāfiz-ı Zamān tazelğin yād edüp demiş | darb-ı meçükle kan büzüğümünden revān idi || hün-ı ciğerle ol daḥı bir āh edüp demiş, | ‘Demler o demler idi, zamān ol Zamān idi’”; ULLWCO 662, 25b. The final instance of the word *zamān* (“time”) in this quatrain is meant to signify that it was indeed Zamān Meḥmed Efendi who broke Ḥāfiz's anal virginity.

⁷⁶⁷ “ey Ḥāfiz-ı seffih ü zarif ü deride-kün | ḥakḳā budır ki ḥaylice puşt-ı zamānesin || düşse Zamān-ı ḥarla ‘aceb mi mu’āmelej | ḥakḳā ki ol Zamān ise sen de Zamānesin”; IUNЕК TY 511, 80a.

Nef'î's description of Hâfiz here, particularly in the first hemistich, is a play on the stereotypes associated with Persians in the Ottoman popular social imagination, where they were presented as being sexually degenerate and sometimes absurdly elegant men given to excessive drinking.⁷⁶⁸ Thus, Nef'î presents Hâfiz as a “dissolute” (*sefîh*), “delicate” (*zarîf*), and sexually worn out (*derîde-kûn*; literally, “torn ass”) catamite (*puşt*). His latest sexual patron is Zamân, whose patronage represents a further demasculinization for Hâfiz represented by Nef'î's use of a feminized form of the name *Zamân* as *Zamâne*, here translated as “Miss Zamân.” As Nef'î presents it, theirs is an affiliation that recalls the one Nef'î presents between Nâdirî and his amanuensis 'İtrî, another Persian, in such lines as “'İtrî the heretic fled like a jinn from the sword of my invective | and all for nothing he went in and out of Kîrli Nigâr's vagina.”⁷⁶⁹

But while such verses primarily present Hâfiz as the figure of ridicule rather than Zamân, there are others that single the latter out as well. One of these, moreover, calls particular attention to Zamân's status as an outsider:

that worn-out hedonist (*köhne kalender*) whose ear is cleft | the people of culture (*yārân*) know his essence for one of two things || some call him a Persian and some

⁷⁶⁸ An example of this can be seen in a short poem by the early 16th-century poet Faqîrî (d. 1526): “Did you know who the Persians in this world are? | They live it up all the time at parties. || They are the leaders of the herd of Shiites; | Some are *Şâhîs*, others are *Hayderîs*. || They've sunk to every deception and trickery, | For a *Kâf* and a *Nûn* [*i.e.*, the Persian word *kûn*, ‘ass’] they hand over the soul's currency” (*nedür bildiñ mi 'âlemde 'Acemler | sürerler dâyimâ 'işretde demler || Revâfîz haylinüñ ser-leşkeridür | kimi Şâhî kimi Hayderî'dür || düşüpdürler kamu mekr ü füsûna | vèürler naqd-ı cânı kâf u nûna*”; see Edith Gülçin Ambros, “Six Lampoons out of Faqîrî's *Risâle-i ta 'rifât*,” *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 82 (1992), 33–34. Translation by Ambros.

⁷⁶⁹ “İğ-i hicvimden kaçup 'İtrî-i mülhid cinn gibi | girdi girdi fercine Kîrli Nigâr'ın yok yere”; IUNEK TY 511, 74a.

call him a Georgian | in any case, his disgraced black face (*yüzi kara*) has not been cleared (*beyāza çıkmadı*)⁷⁷⁰

Here, the tenor of the quatrain’s conceit is Zamān’s imputed sexual deviance: he is “worn out” (*köhne*), implying that he has been sexually used—just as he was, in Nef‘ī’s conception, using Hāfız—and that this disgrace continues to follow him.

Here, however, the vehicle for Nef‘ī’s conceit is a significant concatenation of otherizing images and terms. *Zamān* is also likened to wandering antinomian *kalender* dervishes, who were often linked—both in Ottoman poetry and in the popular imagination—with immorality of various sorts; were depicted in a very particular costume that included rings in the ears (hence, perhaps, the reference to a cleft ear in Nef‘ī’s quatrain); and furthermore were frequently associated with the eastern Anatolian and Persian sphere.⁷⁷¹ *Zamān* is thus openly excluded from the people of culture (*yārān*)—*i.e.*, representatives of the high Ottoman cultural tradition—and said to be either Persian or Georgian, which would seem to lend support to Mehmed Süreyyā’s statement that *Zamān* was from Nakhchivan, which is located in the region of Armenia not far from the Caucasus and on the western edge of the Persian sphere of influence. And finally, the last hemistich’s phrase *yüzi kara*, an idiom that literally means “his face has been blackened” and refers primarily to being socially disgraced, is clearly used here to also imply darkness of skin, an implication balanced and buttressed by the phrase *beyāza çıkmak*, another idiom that literally means “to become white” but refers mainly

⁷⁷⁰ “ol köhne kalender ki anıñ güşü yarıkdır | māhiyyetini bilmede yārān iki şıkkdır || kimisi ‘Acem’dir dēr aña kimisi Gürcī | çıkmadı beyāza ne yüzi kara ışıkdır”; ULLWCO 662, 26a.

⁷⁷¹ For more on the figure of the *kalender*, see Tahsin Yazıcı, “Kalander,” *EP*², Vol. 4, 472–473 and Onay, *Eski Türk Edebiyatında Mazmunlar*, 236–238.

to having one's name cleared after being accused of something. The upshot is that, as an outsider from the east, Zamān has not managed to, and perhaps even cannot, assimilate with the Ottoman center and its culture.

Thus, this quatrain against Zamān—far more than those that focus on Ḥāfız—utilizes sociocultural elements both explicit and implicit to cast the target out from any potential claims to being “Ottoman,” in a move that is not just analogous with what the *‘ālim*-littérateurs discussed in Chapter 5 did toward Nefī, but in fact fundamentally identical to it. As will be seen below, such efforts at ostracism form the basis of the majority of Nefī's attacks on figures whose origins were in Persia or the Persian sphere of sociocultural and political influence.

6.1.2 ‘Anḳā (Mullah Ḥusayn)

Originally from Shiraz in south-central Persia, the poet ‘Anḳā, whose real name was Ḥusayn, left his home with the aim of traveling and arrived in Istanbul in the year AH 978 (1570/71 CE).⁷⁷² According to the biographer Kınalızāde Ḥasan Çelebi (1546–1604), whose biographical encyclopedia of poets was completed in 1586, “since that year, he has been an affectionate friend to the noble [Ottoman] dynasty and the throat of his heart and soul have been adorned with this household's collar of devotion to God.”⁷⁷³ This suggests that he may have used the currency of his poetry in both Persian and Turkish, whose quality Ḥasan Çelebi praises, to obtain entry into the gatherings of the sultan,

⁷⁷² Kınalızāde Ḥasan Çelebi, *Tezkiretü’ş-Şu‘arâ*, ed. Aysun Sungurhan-Eyduran (Ankara: T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2009), 118–119.

⁷⁷³ “Ol zemândan berü muhibb-i hânedân-ı ‘alî ve gerden-i dil ü cânı bu dûdmânun tavr-ı ‘ubûdiyyeti ile mütehallidür.” *Ibid.*, 119.

certainly Murād III if not also his predecessor Selīm II. Nothing is known of how he earned his living apart from poetry, but the biographer Riyāzī refers to him as “Mullah Ḥusayn of Shiraz” (*Şīrāzī Monlā Ḥüseyn*),⁷⁷⁴ so he would have been well educated in the religious field. By the year 1609, when Riyāzī’s biographical encyclopedia was completed, he had left Istanbul and was serving as the retainer of an unknown person in Egypt,⁷⁷⁵ presumably Cairo, which is where he died in either AH 1023 (1614/15 CE)⁷⁷⁶ or AH 1025 (1616/17 CE).⁷⁷⁷ Inasmuch as Nefī produced invectives against ‘Ankā, and considering that the former seems not to have begun writing invective till at least the start of the reign of Sultan Aḥmed I, the timeframe for these two poets’ exchange of invectives can be assumed to have occurred between about 1603 and about 1608.

Nefī wrote two invective quatrains aimed at ‘Ankā, which, given that timeframe, may rank among his earliest. One of these is a fairly standard attack, though with quite vivid imagery, on the alleged poor quality of the Persian poet’s verse.⁷⁷⁸ But it is Nefī’s other invective that, in sociocultural terms, proves more damning:

if you observe the visage of ‘Ankā with the eye of admonition | that pimp’s eyes are askew, not just his eyebrows || anyone who sees him looking like that will say, “This pimp is in fact | Persia’s Gypsy, not its Kızılbaş”⁷⁷⁹

⁷⁷⁴ Riyāzī, *Riyāzū’ş-Şuara*, 245.

⁷⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷⁶ Kāfzāde Fā’izī, “Zübdetü’l-Eş’ār,” 434.

⁷⁷⁷ Meḥmed Rızā, *Tezkiresi*, 60.

⁷⁷⁸ “‘Ankā the vile, that spouter of nonsense whose | every word is dust in the grove of his life || he speaks his meaningless poetry, eating shit [*i.e.*, embarrassing himself] till it seems | his mouth is a chamberpot and his pierced ears its handles” (*jāj-ḥāy-ı yāve-gū[-yı]* ‘*Ankāu’l-esfel kim anıñ | her kelāmi şāhsār-ı ‘ömr için bir durbıdır || şı’r-i bī-ma’nā dēyüp boklar yedikçe şanasın | ağızı bir ḥāvrüz delikli gūşı anıñ kulbıdır*”); ULLWCO 662, 27b.

⁷⁷⁹ “‘ayn-ı ‘ibretle bakşan çehresine ‘Ankā’nıñ | gidiniñ gözi de eğri yalnız kaşı değil || o kıyāfetle gören dēr gidi ve’l-ḥāşıl | ‘Acem’iñ Çingenesi’dir bu Kızılbaşı değil”; *ibid.*

Here, as was also the case in his first invective against Gürcî Mehmed Pasha, we see Nefî utilizing the same “Gypsy” epithet that was used quite frequently against him, as seen in the previous chapter. Against Nefî, the epithet was, in terms of the physical, generally used as an allusion to his dark skin, while here Nefî uses it to refer to slanted or crooked eyebrows and to what may be a case of strabismus, though another variant of the poem⁷⁸⁰ replaces *gözi* (“eyes”) with *béli* (“waist”), indicating a stooped posture. In any case, “Gypsy” is here used to represent a generalized ugliness, further indicating that the Roma were a go-to element for indicating alterity, with a variety of negative qualities able to be attached thereto.

But it is Nefî’s direct use of the term “*Ƙızılbaş*” that is especially damning, a very deliberately ostracizing term. Though the verse actually states that he is *not* a *Ƙızılbaş*, the implication of course is that it is a given that he is. As he hailed from Safavid territory, ‘Ankâ’s origin was fodder for Nefî’s attack, and this was an especially severe insult with potentially dire consequences were it to be believed, especially given that, at the time the invective was produced, the Ottomans and Safavids were at war. Even so, it will be recalled that, according to the anecdote related at the beginning of Chapter 4, Gürcî Mehmed Pasha had also implied that Nefî was a *Ƙızılbaş* as a result of the poet’s own origins in eastern Anatolia near the Safavid border, as well as his ability to communicate in the Persian language. Thus, on one level, the epithet “*Ƙızılbaş*” could be seen as a sort of all-purpose and particularly powerful defamation in the manner of “Gypsy,” but unlike the latter term, which could be applied to anyone hailing from

⁷⁸⁰ Millî Kütüphane 06 Mil Yz A 5379, 96b [marginal]. This is the variant written in conjunction with ‘Ankâ’s response.

anywhere, this was a localized defamation: it implied that the target was, at least, from the eastern Anatolian periphery, if not actually from Safavid territory itself. There is, though, much more lying behind Nef'ī's own use of "Kızılbaş," as will be discussed later in this chapter.

In response to Nef'ī's defamation, 'Ankā composed a piece in the *rubā'ī* quatrain form:

so my dear friend called me a Kızılbaş | no one, Nef'ī, is a fellow traveler to me | I'll
dispatch you to a "Kızılbaş" [lit., "crimson head"] who | will be the span of a hand
and whose head is like my own⁷⁸¹

While the first two lines here constitute 'Ankā's denial that he is a Kızılbaş, along with an implicit claim of superiority over Nef'ī, he also simultaneously insinuates that he and Nef'ī are in fact from the same place, and thus subtly hints that Nef'ī may himself be a Kızılbaş. The second two lines constitute a threat: the "Kızılbaş" mentioned there is a literal use of the word's meaning, "crimson head," to refer to 'Ankā's penis, with which he threatens to sodomize Nef'ī—which in the context of back-and-forth invectives, as has been seen before, refers to defeating someone in a poetic contest. On one level, then, this poem operates on the same plane as Nef'ī's other invective against 'Ankā, alluding to the poetic sphere. On a more profound level, however, 'Ankā refuses and refutes the sociocultural alterity to which Nef'ī's verse has attempted to confine him, instead claiming that the two are fundamentally no different in terms of their social origins.

Among the figures of Persianate origin whom Nef'ī attacked in his invective, 'Ankā was the only one to have responded in such a manner, one that is indeed reminiscent of, for

⁷⁸¹ "çün baña Kızılbaş dedi benim hāldaşım | hiç bir kimse değil Nef'ī benim yoldaşım | bir Kızılbaş'a havāle eylerim ben seni kim | kendi bir qarış ola başı benim başdaşım"; Millî Kütüphane 06 Mil Yz A 5379, 96b [marginal].

instance, Nev'izāde 'Aṭā'ī's clash with Nef'ī. We will see below how the poet Vaḥdetī responded to Nef'ī, but utilized a very different discourse. First, however, there is the case of Muṭahhar Efendi, against whom Nef'ī produced one of his most openly exclusionary invectives.

6.1.3 Muṭahhar Efendi

Muṭahhar Efendi was originally from Shirvan,⁷⁸² which was taken by the Ottomans in 1578, at the beginning of the Ottoman-Safavid war of 1578–1590. At some point he enrolled as a *sipāhī*, but then began to study the religious sciences (*'ilm*) and literature and, coming to Istanbul, became a student of the scholar Ṣa'de'd-dīn Efendi (1536–1599) and his sons. He was present and provided unspecified services during the enthronement ceremony and celebration of Sultan Meḥmed III (r. 1595–1603), so it can be assumed that he came to the Ottoman capital sometime during the 1580s. Having studied under Ṣa'de'd-dīn, he would later go on to periodically serve as a writer of memoranda (*tezkiireci*) and secretary (*müsteşār*) to his sons Meḥmed (d. 1615) and Es'ad (d. 1625). Initially entering into the teaching branch of the *'ilmiyye*, Muṭahhar advanced steadily up the madrasa hierarchy to the prestigious Madrasas of the Eight Courtyards complex, where he was appointed in May 1613. After a few more equally prestigious appointments, in December 1616 he moved into the judicial branch, being made judge of Mecca. He remained outside of Istanbul for several years, first in Mecca and then Cairo

⁷⁸² Nev'izāde 'Aṭā'ī, *Hadā'iku'l-Hakā'ik*, Vol. 2, 1715. The biography provided here is a summary of 'Aṭā'ī's biographical entry.

and Edirne, before being made judge of the capital's Galata district in October 1624. It was while serving in this position that he died a year later, in October 1625.⁷⁸³

Nef'î wrote little against this rather esteemed *'ālim*, only two quatrains, but one of these directly addresses the matter of Muṭahhar's origins in Shirvan:

stop coming to the city of Istanbul from the east | some new catamite's appeared who
they call Muṭahhar || if I use the pen of invective to add just a dot | then in the land of
the east⁷⁸⁴ they'll call that catamite Muḏahhar⁷⁸⁵

The conceit in the second distich imagines Nef'î placing a dot over the letter ط in the name Muṭahhar (مطهر)—which means “one who has been cleansed”—to produce the name (or word) *muḏahhar* (مظهر), which means “one who has been mounted.” In other words, Nef'î is renaming him as a catamite or passive sexual partner, which, given the typical significations of such a figure in the early 17th-century Ottoman invective corpus, could be a slur on Muṭahhar's education and writing ability, but inasmuch as he does not appear to have produced poetry, this is more likely simply a verbal disempowerment via demasculinization.

In the first distich, the phrase “some new catamite's appeared” (*bir yeḡi puṣt zuhūr etdi*) might suggest that this poem was written quite early, as Muṭahhar was in Istanbul in the 1590s when Nef'î was also there, at least for a time. It is more plausible, though, that this piece was written between roughly 1606, when Nef'î is back in Istanbul and definitely producing poetry, and 1616, when Muṭahhar left the capital; in this case, the

⁷⁸³ *Ibid.*, 1768.

⁷⁸⁴ In place of this early variant's *şarḑ* (“east”), another variant has *garb* (“west”); see IUNEK TY 511, 80b.

⁷⁸⁵ “şarḑdan gelme yine şehr-i Sitanbül içre | bir yeḡi puṣt zuhūr etdi Muṭahhar dërler || ḡāme-i hicv ile bir nokṡa ḑosam aḡa eḡer | puṣta çün şarḑ diyârında muḏahhar dërler”; ULLWCO 662, 20a.

“new” would simply indicate that Nef‘ī has just newly taken notice of and decided to lampoon him. Alternatively, it may have been produced upon Muṭahhar’s return to Istanbul in 1624.

In any case, the quatrain’s very first line is an attack on Muṭahhar’s origins in the furthest eastern reaches of the Ottoman polity, and, reading it more broadly, a general complaint about the tendency of some in the Persian sphere of influence of the empire—or indeed from Safavid territory itself—to come to Istanbul to take advantage of the opportunities of the Ottoman capital.⁷⁸⁶ This, however, is precisely what Nef‘ī himself had done, and at a later date to boot: here, then, we have a case of a *parvenu plus tard* railing against a *parvenu plus tôt*, a case of the pot calling the kettle black. Of course, Nef‘ī’s home province of Erzurum had been a part of the Ottoman polity since the Battle of Chaldoran in 1514, when Sultan Selīm I (r. 1512–1520) had roundly defeated the Safavids, while Muṭahhar’s home of Shirvan was a recent addition to Ottoman territory, and was in fact lost to the Safavids again in 1607. This factor may have played some role in Nef‘ī’s complaint. More likely, though, this invective emerges from Nef‘ī’s conception of himself as a representative of the Ottoman poetic and cultural orthodoxy: *he* is an Ottoman or Rūmī, while Muṭahhar is not. In the case of the western Anatolian

⁷⁸⁶ During this broad period, the vast majority of emigrants from Iran, especially *littérateurs* and artists, went to the Mughal Empire in India, where they were generally more welcome than they were in an Ottoman Empire that was carrying on military and ideological wars with the Shiite Safavids; the so-called “Indian style” (*sabk-e Hindī*) of which Nef‘ī was an early proponent in Turkish literature was a direct consequence of these mass emigrations. For a broad overview of Indo-Iranian relations during the early modern period, see Richard M. Eaton, “India, VI: Political and Cultural Relations (13th–18th centuries),” *Encyclopædia Iranica*, December 15, 2004. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/india-vi-relations-from-the-13th-to-the-18th-centuries>. For an interesting examination of some of the figures who thus emigrated around this time, see Masashi Haneda, “Emigration of Iranian Elites to India during the 16–18th Centuries,” *Cahiers d’Asie centrale* 3/4 (1997): 129–143.

‘ālim-littérateurs discussed in the previous chapter, Nef‘ī framed his claims against them in this matter primarily in terms of education and literary production; that is, in terms of the tangible results of their own claims. Here in the case of Muṭahhar, however, the accusation is leveled at the target’s origins, hinting not so subtly that he is an opportunist like many others who have “com[e] to the city of Istanbul from the east.” In the next section, we will see both this allegation and the claims regarding literary production combined in the invectives Nef‘ī produced against Vaḥdetī, who was himself a poet.

6.1.4 Vaḥdetī

Almost nothing is known of Vaḥdetī apart from the fact that he was from Baghdad.⁷⁸⁷

Nev‘īzāde ‘Aṭā’ī mentions that Vaḥdetī wrote the following chronogram upon the death of ‘Aṭā’ī’s father Nev‘ī on June 24, 1599: “Nev‘ī resides in the rosegarden of death.”⁷⁸⁸

This indicates that Vaḥdetī was already in Istanbul on that date, and likely had been there for some time already. Thus, it was Ottoman Baghdad that he was coming from, since the city and province were in Ottoman rather than Safavid hands between 1534 and 1623. The chronogram quoted by ‘Aṭā’ī is also, together with the single distich

⁷⁸⁷ Both Ḳāfzāde Fā’izī and Nev‘īzāde ‘Aṭā’ī refer to him as “Vaḥdetī of Baghdad”; see Ḳāfzāde Fā’izī, “Zübdeṭü’l-Eṣ’ār,” 589 and Nev‘īzāde ‘Aṭā’ī, *Hadâ’iku’l-Hakâ’ik*, Vol. 2, 1141.

⁷⁸⁸ “‘Adem gülzârını cāy itdi Nev‘ī”; Nev‘īzāde ‘Aṭā’ī, *Hadâ’iku’l-Hakâ’ik*, Vol. 2, 1141. Apparently not pleased with the word *‘adem* (“death” or “nothingness”), ‘Aṭā’ī then “corrects” (*ıslâh*) the chronogram to “Nev‘ī resides in the rosegarden of paradise” (*cinân gülzârını cāy itdi Nev‘ī*); *ibid.*

quoted in Ẓāfzāde Fā'izī's anthology,⁷⁸⁹ one of the few extant specimens of Vaḥdetī's verse.⁷⁹⁰

The third definite specimen, however, is this invective quatrain written by Vaḥdetī in response to Nef'ī's invectives against him:

hey Nef'ī, don't eat the shit off your own poetry's arrow again | my fart was small
[but] you went on and on and blew it up || may no one fall to your mouth as a
laxative,⁷⁹¹ for | my fart fell in your mouth and you swirled it round and turned it to
shit⁷⁹²

This is, as has been seen before, the conceit wherein poetic contests of invective are framed in scatological terms. It is difficult to know exactly which of Nef'ī's invectives against Vaḥdetī is being responded to here, but it is more than likely a broad response inasmuch as the poem's rubric—"Vaḥdetī on Nef'ī" (*Vaḥdetī der-ḥakk-ı Nef'ī*)⁷⁹³—is a general one rather than being labeled *cevāb* ("response"), which is what would be expected were this an answer to any specific invective. Moreover, Vaḥdetī's quatrain itself indicates a general response by claiming that Nef'ī has stretched something small—a fart (*zarḫa*), referring to a bad poem or reading of a poem, or possibly some sort of social *faux pas*—out into something big by bringing it up repeatedly.

⁷⁸⁹ "let's say fate pulls you from all sides and bends your posture low | caught in the hands of liars whirling round and down" (*ḳadd-i ḥam birle seni ḳo her taraf çeksün felek | zūr-bāz eline girmiş döndürür bir yaña dūn*); Ẓāfzāde Fā'izī, "Zūbdeṭü'l-Eṣ'ār," 589. The distich looks to be from an invective, though without more context this must remain uncertain.

⁷⁹⁰ There are dozens of miscellanies (*mecmū'a, cōnk*) containing poetry by a poet named Vaḥdetī, but as there were several other poets of this pen name, none can be attributed with certainty to Vaḥdetī of Baghdad.

⁷⁹¹ Reading *mūshil* for *muḥaṣṣal* or its colloquial pronunciation *maḥṣal*, which does not suit the context.

⁷⁹² "kendi ṣi'riṅ oḳı poḫ yeme yine ey Nef'ī | az iken zarḫamı sürdüṅ yürüdüṅ çok êtdiṅ || düşmesün kimse deheniṅe [mūshil] ki benim | ḳavaram aḫzıṅa düşdi çevirüp boḳ êtdiṅ"; IUNEK TY 511, 90b.

⁷⁹³ *Ibid.*

This was in fact the case: against Vaḥdetī, who appears to have been a very minor poet at best, Nefī produced a total of 29 quatrains targeting either Vaḥdetī on his own or in tandem with others. What is more, all of these poems make reference to flatulence on Vaḥdetī’s part, consistently depicting Vaḥdetī as a poetaster (*müteşā‘ir*) and likening his verse to farts. The following may serve as representative examples:

hey Vaḥdetī! you’ve caused a strange din throughout the world | with one fart you’ve caused a quake in the nine heavens | in the end you couldn’t put your *dīvān* together | you just farted out its pages and they scattered in that wind⁷⁹⁴

hey Vaḥdetī! come display your talent, what are you waiting for? | come and sit and stay a while with the people of wisdom | yet there is no difference between your ass and your mouth | for whenever we say, “Read a ghazal,” all you do is fart⁷⁹⁵

your words have nothing to them, Vaḥdetī | the [spiritual] meaning is gaunt despite your corpulence || a *zurna* player heard your fart and said, | “A drum full with sound [yet] empty inside”⁷⁹⁶

So extensive was Nefī’s invective crusade against Vaḥdetī’s poetic ambitions that even Nev‘izāde ‘Aṭā’ī entered the fray. In a quatrain against Nefī that was quoted in the previous chapter, and may even have been produced around the same time as Vaḥdetī’s quatrain given above, he wrote, “before [you] taking Vaḥdetī’s shit in your mouth and chewing | it would have been best for Pendī to drink a laxative and shit on your head.”⁷⁹⁷

Another quatrain ‘Aṭā’ī produced against Nefī in this context reads as follows:

⁷⁹⁴ “ey Vaḥdetī dünyāya ‘aceb velvele vèrdiñ | bir zarta ile nüh feleğe zelzele vèrdün | dīvānıñı tertibe mecāl olmadı āḥir | evrāk-ı perīşānı oşurdiñ yèle vèrdiñ”; ULLWCO 662, 23a.

⁷⁹⁵ “ey Vaḥdetī ‘arz-ı hüner èt gel ne turursuñ | erbāb-ı ma‘ārifle turursuñ oturursuñ | ammā götüñüñ ağıñla fark[ı] yok ancak | zīrā ki gazel oķu dedikçe oşurursuñ”; *ibid.*, 23b.

⁷⁹⁶ “sözleriniñ ma‘nāsı yok Vaḥdetī | *lāghar-e ma‘nā ba-hama farbihī* || zartañ işidüp dedi bir zurnazen | ‘*Ṭabl-e pur-āvāza-ye bāṭin tahī*’”; IUNEK TY 511, 83a. This quatrain’s second and fourth hemistichs are in Persian, which language—presumably Vaḥdetī’s native tongue—was utilized by Nefī on several occasions as an implicit way of declaring his own linguistic superiority and Vaḥdetī’s sociocultural alterity.

⁷⁹⁷ “Vaḥdetī boķını ağıñıñı alup çinemeden | Pendī bir müşhil içüp başıñı şıçmak yeğ idi”; *ibid.*, 89a.

the breath of your life (*nefs*) is not so different than Vaḥdetī's fart | Nef'ī, he knows his measure and has nothing new to say || but if invective is the issue, you disgrace, a [literary] conceit is called for | for with all the shit you've eaten there's no meat there at all⁷⁹⁸

'Aṭā'ī's verses do not appear so much to support Vaḥdetī *per se*—after all, as mentioned above, he was apparently rather displeased with the Persian poet's chronogram on his father's death—as to call Nef'ī out for going overboard, which suggests that there was an unspoken limit regarding how much one poet could lampoon a single target, particularly if the invectives in question all used the same conceit. That is to say, 'Aṭā'ī used Nef'ī's quarrel with Vaḥdetī as yet another weapon with which to strike the former. Some of Nef'ī's invectives, however, point to ambitions beyond poetry on the part of Vaḥdetī, thus providing not only some insight about the latter's otherwise unknown life, but also revealing more about Nef'ī's perceptions of individuals coming to Istanbul from the empire's periphery to seek their fortune. One of these is among the many in which Vaḥdetī is lampooned together with Fırşatī⁷⁹⁹:

so what if that ass Fırşatī becomes Vaḥdetī's sweetheart? | one of them's a peasant and one a runaway peasant (*çiftbozan*) || so what then if there's harmony between them? | for one of them's a beggar and one an outcast Gypsy (*gurbet uzan*)⁸⁰⁰

Keeping in mind the resolutely subjective nature of invective, the appellation of "peasant" (*fellāḥ*) for Vaḥdetī still gives some idea about Nef'ī's perception and/or

⁷⁹⁸ "Vaḥdetī zartasına gerçi yakındır nefsiñ | Nef'iyā bildi o miqdārını nevgüftesi yok || hiev olursa daḥı ey nikbeti maẓmūn gerek | yediğın boķın içinde hele hiç köftesi yok"; *ibid.*, 89b.

⁷⁹⁹ The identity of "Fırşatī"—an epithet apparently created by Nef'ī and meaning "Opportunist"—remains uncertain. However, based on dating and Nef'ī's descriptions in other invectives, particularly the fact that he is mentioned as being from Karesi (*i.e.*, Balıkesir), there is a possibility that "Fırşatī" was in fact the preacher Kādizāde Şeyḫ Mehmed Efendi (d. 1636); see Şeyḫi Mehmed, *Vekayii'l-Fudalā*, Vol. 1, 59–60.

⁸⁰⁰ "yār olsa ne ğam Vaḥdetī'ye Fırşatī-yi ḥar | anıñ biri fellāḥ ve biri çiftbozandır || olsa ikisiniñ n'ola mā-beyni düzenlik | güyā biri dileñci biri gurbet uzandır"; IUNEK TY 511, 82b.

presentation of his target’s origins: even if Vaḥdetī was not an uneducated commoner, the invective treats him as such, indicating how Nef’ī—as a representative of high Ottoman poetic culture—felt Vaḥdetī deserved to be seen. Furthermore, the description of Vaḥdetī as a “beggar” (*dileñci*) alludes to an approach whereby he goes about attempting to extract money or position from those with the wealth or authority to provide them.

Other quatrains by Nef’ī against Vaḥdetī hammer home this point. One of them reads as follows:

hey Vaḥdetī! go back to Baghdad, you’ve stunk up Anatolia | the food here has proven poison to you || if your goal is [to gain] an appointment befitting your reputation | go be the Chief Farter for Aḥmed Şubaşiođlı⁸⁰¹

The identity of Aḥmed Şubaşiođlı is uncertain, though he appears to have been a figure of some note in Baghdad.⁸⁰² Regardless, for Nef’ī, someone of Vaḥdetī’s ilk would be a disgrace to any position in the Ottoman hierarchy at the center, and thus he ought to return to the periphery, to Ottoman Baghdad, and seek his fortune there. A clear hierarchy is set up: not everyone is fit for the center, particularly if they are from the periphery, and the integrity and dignity of the center must be preserved.

⁸⁰¹ “ey Vaḥdetī Bađdād’a çekil Rüm’ı kođutduñ | şimdengêrũ zehr oldu saña bu yeriñ aşı || mađşũduñ eđer mañşib şāniña lāyık | Aḥmed Şubaşiođlına ol zartacıbaşı”; ULLWCO 662, 23a. Another quatrain uses the same exhortation for Vaḥdetī to leave Istanbul: “hey Vaḥdetī! not even a kettledrum would sing so loud | your fart has shattered the ear of the world || if you are wise, go back to Baghdad, for | ‘to hear the drum’s sound is pleasant [only] from a distance” (*ey Vaḥdetī kũs olsa bu deñliũ ötmez | vêrdi kıvarañ sāmi ‘a-ı dehre şikest || Bađdād’a çekil ‘ārif iseñ sen yine kim | āvāz-e duhul şanīdan az dũr khoshast*); IUNEK TY 511, 83b.

⁸⁰² His name means “son of the police superintendent (*şubaşı*),” a position that had some sway in Ottoman Baghdad, as evidenced by the fact that, in 1623, the local *şubaşı* Bekir was able to organize an uprising that took hold of the city, ultimately allowing the Safavid shah ‘Abbās I to capture the city and ignite a war with the Ottomans. For the Bekir Şubaşı uprising, see Kātib Çelebi, “Fezleke,” 707–713.

Two more quatrains seem to indicate, albeit in the typically mocking tone of invective, that at some point Vaḥdetī may indeed have managed to obtain some variety of salary and/or position with the Ottoman state. The first runs as follows:

Vaḥdetī, fortune has smiled upon you | your fart has opened the gate of [your] desire
|| they have enfeoffed you (*tīmār vèrdiler*) with the windmills | that’s a fine living,
sir, congratulations!⁸⁰³

Windmill is *yèl deġirmeni*, with the word *yèl* (“wind”) also having the meaning of flatulence; thus, holding the timar of the windmills (which is not an actual timar) is this poem’s equivalent to the previous one’s “Chief Farter.” Of course this poem can hardly be said to reveal that Vaḥdetī was granted some variety of timar or salary; more likely than not, it is simply a barb aimed at mocking his ambitions in that regard. At the same time, however, it may also serve as an allusion, albeit a derisive one, to some bestowal received by Vaḥdetī. The other invective mentioning the granting of revenues (*dirlik*) and timars imagines Vaḥdetī losing what he has been granted:

hey Vaḥdetī! if the revenues and fiefs coming from farts | are destroyed by the
winds, don’t let it harden your heart || there’s a famous saying that you must know,
too | “It came with the wind and it’s gone with the wind”⁸⁰⁴

This is just as likely to be a trope as a reference to actuality, but the gist of both this and the previous quatrain is that Vaḥdetī has what are, in Nef’ī’s view, aspirations that are far too grand for someone of his ilk: even were he to gain some post or stipend, his incompetence would be sure to lose it for him before long.

⁸⁰³ “Vaḥdetī ṭāli’ün küşāde imiş | kavarañla açıldı bāb-ı murād || vèrdiler yèl deġirmenin tīmār | eyü dirlik beġüm mubārak bād!”; IUNEK TY 511, 82b–83a.

⁸⁰⁴ “ey Vaḥdetī zartayla gelen dirlik ü tīmār | ger yèlle yuf oldıysa yine ṭutma diliñ saht || meşhūr meseldir bunı sen daḥı bilürsün | az bād-e havā āmad va bar bād-e havā raft”; *ibid.*, 83a. The final hemistich is in Persian.

What links Nef'ī's copious invectives against Vaḥdetī back with those produced against Muṭahhar Efendi, 'Ankā, and Zamān (though not Ḥāfız) is their common ground of railing against, as Nef'ī's discourse would have it, these upstarts who come from the east to the Ottoman capital of Istanbul and make a pretense of belonging there. They are, as Nef'ī takes pains to highlight in a variety of ways, Persians, or even Kızıldaş, and hence not only are they not fit for the Ottoman center, but they are also in some cases not even to be trusted.

In essence, they are outsiders from the Ottoman periphery, or even from outside the Ottoman polity altogether, trying to pass themselves off as representatives of the Ottoman, or rather Rūmī, culture. And this approach toward them taken by Nef'ī is, as the discussion in Chapter 5 made clear, fundamentally no different than the approach taken by the 'ālim-littérateurs toward, and against, Nef'ī. Therefore, before addressing the issue of why this is the case in the conclusion of this chapter, a discussion of what it meant to be a "Rūmī" in the early 17th century is in order, as this was in fact the elite sociocultural "Ottoman identity" that was being contested among the two sides involved.

6.2 Rūm, the Rūmī, and Ottoman identity

The word *Rūm* is, quite simply, the Arabic word for Rome, though originally also applied to the people associated therewith (*i.e.*, the Byzantines). The word *Rūmī*, adding the adjectival suffix, refers specifically to people or concepts connected to *Rūm*. But in order to understand "where" Rūm is and "who" the Rūmī are in their relevant contexts, it is necessary to look at the rather radical changes of signification that these words

underwent over the centuries, particularly in the Turkish-speaking sociocultural and political context.

6.2.1 Where is Rūm?

The earliest known use of the term *Rūm* in the Islamic period comes from the Qur'ān, where it is in fact used to refer to a people: “The Romans have been defeated in the nearest land.”⁸⁰⁵ These verses, referring to Sasanian victories over the Byzantines in Syria, utilize *Rūm* to mean the Byzantines in what was the standard Arabic usage in early Islamic and medieval times; namely, a people and an empire—the Eastern Roman Empire—rather than a geographical location *per se*. But of course the politico-geographical and the sociocultural go hand in hand, and the word soon developed a more explicitly geographical denotation as well, being used to refer to “the Greek lands of the Byzantine empire beyond the Taurus-upper Euphrates frontier zone.”⁸⁰⁶ That is to say, *Rūm* came to mean the Eastern Roman Empire considered as an integral political, cultural, and religious unit. Such a usage became standard throughout the Islamicate cultural zone up through at least the late 11th century CE.⁸⁰⁷

After the Seljuk Turkish incursion into Asia Minor following their defeat of the Byzantines at the Battle of Manzikert in August 1071, *Rūm* gradually began to assume a rather different signification. When the Seljuk Empire split apart after the death of Malik Shāh I (r. 1072–1092) in 1092, Kilij Arslan I (r. 1092–1107) seized power in the

⁸⁰⁵ “خَلَيْتِ الرُّومُ فِي أَدْنَى الْأَرْضِ”، Qur'ān 30: 2–3; translation mine.

⁸⁰⁶ Clifford Edmund Bosworth, “Rūm: 2) Relations between the Islamic powers and the Byzantines,” *EI²*, Vol. 8, 606.

⁸⁰⁷ For a visualization of this conception, see Map 1 in Appendix.

empire's Anatolian domains and, over the next century, the dynasty he established began to expand its territories to both west and east. At least one of the Seljuk rulers, Ghiyāth al-Dīn Kaykhusraw II (r. 1237–1246) had himself, in an official inscription, styled the “Sultan of the Land of Rūm, of the Armenians, of Syria, of Diyarbekir, and of the Franks” (*Sulṭān bilād al-Rūm wa 'l-Arman wa 'l-Shām wa Diyārbakr wa 'l-Afranj*).⁸⁰⁸ While much of this claim is wishful thinking, the first part seems to indicate Rūm being considered as both the geographical region of central Asia Minor and as the Byzantine lands already annexed together with those desired to be taken.⁸⁰⁹ Whatever the exact signification intended may have been, Rūm now suggested not only a politico-geographical and sociocultural unit, but also a political claim, a marker of victory both achieved and potential, and a signifier of legitimacy.

When this so-called “Sultanate of Rūm” effectively collapsed following the Mongol invasion in the 1240s, this political claim endured in the memory of the rulers of the independent principalities that came to succeed Seljuk rule in Asia Minor. It was in the mid-14th century that the Ottoman principality emerged as the region's chief power, helped greatly by their conquest of a large swath of territory in Europe across the Dardanelles. Following one important victory by Bāyezīd I (r. 1389–1402) over a united Christian force at the Battle of Nicopolis in September 1396, the sultan was sent a sword by the Abbasid caliph in Cairo, Mutawakkil 'ala'l-lah (r. 1362–1406), and addressed by

⁸⁰⁸ Paul Wittek, *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire: Studies in the History of Turkey, Thirteenth–Fifteenth Centuries* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), 81–82, note 28.

⁸⁰⁹ See Map 2 in Appendix.

the title “Sultan of Rūm” (*sulṭān al-Rūm*).⁸¹⁰ Owing to the fact that it may not have been Bāyezīd’s own claim, but was bestowed from outside, it is next to impossible to know precisely what this title intended. Nonetheless, the Ottoman assumption of primacy in the region, coupled with their secure and extensive presence on both sides of the Dardanelles, suggests that Rūm’s geographical scope had shifted to the west while still retaining at least some of the political claim it had developed under the Seljuks.⁸¹¹ Geographically, this is more or less where Rūm would henceforth remain, though one step still remained regarding the term’s connotations of political legitimacy. Following Sultan Mehmed II’s (r. 1444–1446, 1451–1481) conquest of Constantinople on May 29, 1453—effectively eliminating the Eastern Roman Empire—one of the titles he assumed was “Caesar of Rum” (*Kayser-i Rūm*), thereby proclaiming himself the legitimate successor not simply to the Byzantines, but to the Roman Empire itself.⁸¹²

6.2.2 Who are the Rūmī?

Turning from the term “Rūm” as a physical, sociocultural, and even aspirational place to the corresponding descriptor “Rūmī”—literally meaning “of, from Rūm”—in pre-Ottoman times, we can speak of *Rūmī* as a predominantly geographical signifier whose referent follows the slightly shifting course of Rūm itself. Thus, in the early Islamic

⁸¹⁰ Abdülkadir Özcan, “Kılıç Alayı,” *DİA*, Vol. 25, 408. Cf. Halil İncalcık, “Periods in Ottoman History,” in *Essays in Ottoman History* (Istanbul: Eren, 1998), 21, where the author claims that Bāyezīd himself applied to the caliph to be granted this title.

⁸¹¹ See Map 3 in Appendix.

⁸¹² For an overview of the titlature of Ottoman sultans, including Mehmed II’s claim over the Eastern Roman heritage, see Halil İncalcık, “Osmanlı Sultanlarının Unvanları (Titülâtür) ve Egemenlik Kavramı,” in *Osmanlılar: Fütuhât, İmparatorluk, Avrupa ile İlişkiler*, ed. Halil İncalcık (Istanbul: Timaş, 2010): 115–123.

period we find the companion of Muḥammad known as Ṣuḥayb al-Rūmī,⁸¹³ who was either of Greek Christian origin himself or else a slave raised in Byzantine lands before escaping; this is “Rūmī” in the sense of “from the Eastern Roman Empire.” Later, there was the celebrated mystic Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Rūmī (1207–1273), originally from the region of Balkh in what is now Afghanistan but who migrated to the Seljuk capital of Konya in the mid-13th century; this is “Rūmī” in the sense of, roughly, the Seljuk-controlled lands of central Anatolia.

However, once the Ottomans had become the dominant polity in the region, and particularly after Mehmed II’s conquest of Constantinople removed the Byzantines as a political entity, Rūmī began to assume a more exclusively sociocultural character. In the 15th and 16th centuries, this was most clearly articulated in the field of literature.

Concerning the literature, primarily poetry, of this period, Selim S. Kuru writes:

“Although [...] poets who composed their poetry in Turkish are today generally called ‘Osmanlı’ or ‘*divan*’ poets, this had not been the case until the nineteenth century.

Before that time, they were distinguished among other local and foreign cultures by the title ‘*ṣuara-yı Rum*’ (poets of Rum).”⁸¹⁴ In terms of what the geographical scope of this peculiarly “Ottoman” Rūm was, Kuru points out that, for the 16th-century biographers

⁸¹³ See Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *The History of Al-Ṭabarī, an Annotated Translation, Vol. XV: The Crisis of the Early Caliphate*, ed. and trans. R. Stephen Humphreys (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 3.

⁸¹⁴ Selim S. Kuru, “The Literature of Rum: The Making of a Literary Tradition (1450–1600),” in *The Cambridge History of Turkey, Volume 2: The Ottoman Empire as a World Power, 1453–1603*, eds. Suraiya N. Faroqhi and Kate Fleet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 549.

Sehī Beğ (d. 1548/49) and ‘Āşık Çelebi, “Rum stood for western Anatolia and Rumeli, with Istanbul constituting its centre.”⁸¹⁵

Likewise, Cemal Kafadar draws up the same boundaries, again rightly associating Rūm with both geography and culture: “Rum was a cultural space inhabited by a community that shared a literary language, Turkish [...] [T]he lands of Rum as a cultural zone had two parts in Ottoman usage: what is now Anatolia and what used to be Rumelia.”⁸¹⁶

While I would argue (*cf.* Map 3 in Appendix) that Kuru’s delineation of western Anatolia as opposed to all of Anatolia is more accurate, the essential point is the same: the poets of Rūm, or the Rūmīs who were poets, had from at least the early 15th century⁸¹⁷ begun to consciously present themselves as representatives of an elite Ottoman literary culture, one that was deliberately set up against the already established literary cultures in the Arabic and, especially, Persian languages. This effort gained even more significance in the context of the developing political and ideological clash with the Safavids through the 16th century, in a sense culminating with Nev‘izāde ‘Aṭā’ī’s aforementioned declaration of Rūmī victory in panegyric and lyric poetry and imminent victory in the narrative mode of the *meşnevī*.

⁸¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 548.

⁸¹⁶ Cemal Kafadar, “A Rome of One’s Own: Reflections on Cultural Geography and Identity in the Lands of Rum,” *Muqarnas* 24 (2007), 15, 17. See also Cemal Kafadar, *Kendine Ait Bir Roma: Diyar-ı Rum’da Kültürel Coğrafya ve Kimlik Üzerine* (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2017).

⁸¹⁷ See, *e.g.*, Şeyhī’s (d. c. 1431) narrative poem *Hüsrev ü Şirîn* (Khusraw and Shīrīn), where he writes, “he removed the Persian clothing from the beloved | and immediately put Rūmī garb in its place || taking from her shoulders those worn-out rags | he arranged her clothes of Rūmī satin” (‘*Acem tonundan ol mahbūbı soydı | hemān dem Rūmī üslūbına koydı || soyup eġninden ol köhne pelāsın | düzetdi Rūmī atlasdan libāsın*); Şeyhī, *Şeyhī: Hayatı ve Eserleri, Eserlerinden Seçmeler*, ed. Faruk K. Timurtaş (Istanbul: Edebiyat Fakültesi Basımevi, 1968), 122.

The term “Rūmī” was thus one pole in a binary system of terminology pitting Rūmī against non-Rūmī. In literature as well as in much political discourse, the non-Rūmī *par excellence*—initially in literature and then in political and religious ideology as well—was the Persians, as indicated not only in ‘Aṭā’ī’s claims from the *‘Ālemnümā* but also, implicitly, in Nef’ī’s demands that figures such as Muṭahhar Efendi and Vaḥdetī return whence they came. Yet the fact that ‘Aṭā’ī and others among the group of *‘ālim-littérateurs* to whom Nef’ī stood opposed could utilize what was effectively the same discourse against *him* calls for more thorough explanation: it was not merely a matter of Persian literary influence, but rather of sociocultural Persian spheres of influence that were intimately linked, in the invective corpus, with place of origin and background.

To examine this sociocultural opposition, it is actually most useful to initially examine how the notion of “Rūmī” operated *within* Turkish-speaking sectors of the empire. As Kafadar points out, from at least the early 14th century onward, “Rūmī” grew associated with Turkish-speaking urbanites, in contradistinction to “Turk” with its “associations with ethnicity-not-transcended and attachment to tribal ways and cultural codes.”⁸¹⁸ Because of this process, “‘Rumi vs. Turk’ [...] resonated with a social class distinction and had connotations similar to ‘bourgeois vs. rustic’.”⁸¹⁹ In order to better understand how this distinction arose and assumed broad significance, it needs to be even more firmly situated in the historical development of the Ottoman polity during that time in the mid-15th century when it was transitioning from a state to an empire.

⁸¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁸¹⁹ *Ibid.*

In observing the process of how this transition occurred, what is particularly striking on an internal administrative level is a series of dualisms whose poles became increasingly distant, and estranged, as time wore on. The Turkic peoples who would eventually become the “Ottomans” (in the word’s broader, non-dynastic sense) were originally just one of many frontier groups under the Seljuks’ rather loose authority. When even this quite lax authority was shattered by the Mongol invasion, Anatolia became a patchwork of principalities with no semblance of a center. As the Ottomans expanded and asserted power in western Anatolia and then Thrace and beyond, the decentralized structure initially remained intact, but with the large territorial gains of Murād I (r. 1362–1389) and Bāyezīd I in the second half of the 14th century, the state necessarily grew more centralized: the bureaucracy and administrative class of *kapu kulları* (“slaves/servants of the Porte”) emerged alongside the janissary standing army, all situated both physically and symbolically beside the sultan at the palace. This development, though, marginalized the frontier *beğs* who had been the main engine behind both conquest and the maintenance of stability on the marches. Tension inevitably developed,⁸²⁰ finally erupting at the Battle of Ankara in 1402, when the Ottoman army’s frontier Turkmen elements deserted to join the forces of the conqueror Timur. While this spelled Bāyezīd’s doom in the short term, in the long term—once the subsequent interregnum period had come to an end with Meḥmed Çelebi’s assumption of the throne as Sultan Meḥmed I (r. 1413–1421)—it meant still more severe marginalization of the now

⁸²⁰ As Halil İnalçık points out, in the anonymous *Tevārīḫ-i Āl-i ‘Oṣmān* chronicles dealing with Bāyezīd’s period, “we find [...] quite a violent expression of the reaction of the classes upholding the traditions of the *Ucbeyligi*—the Principality of the Marches—against the imperial centralist policies of the Sultan,” including “bitter criticisms of the elaboration of the court ceremonial and the development of a centralized administration.” İnalçık, “Periods in Ottoman History,” 15.

distrusted frontier elements. Under Murād II (r. 1421–1444, 1446–1451) and his son Meḥmed II, full centralization was effected with the implementation of the centrally trained and controlled ‘*askerī*’ ruling class. Especially after the conquest of Constantinople, the Ottoman dynasty no longer represented the Turkmen frontier elements, instead standing for nothing other than itself and the governing machine that it had put into place. Considering the Rūmī-Türk dichotomy in light of this long process of centralization, it emerges not only as a divide in terms of the culture represented by each element, but also as, to some extent, a political divide: if Meḥmed II was now the “Caesar of Rum,” it was the Rūmīs rather than the Turkmens who became the officials and soldiers (‘*askerī*’) with the authority to exert that Caesar’s power.

In the cultural realm, this marginalization of the Turkmens eventually had its effects on the vocabulary and discourse of the early 17th-century invective corpus as well. Nef’ī, for instance, used the term *Türk* against ‘Abdu’l-ġanīzāde Meḥmed (Nādirī) when he wrote:

Kīrli Nigār, that bitch from Gerede,⁸²¹ that Turk bride | appears to the world as a mighty mullah || but can there be a court of law in that house with | both a den for fucking and a lodge for drinking, you dog?⁸²²

His most extensive attack in this regard, however, was launched against Veysī, against whom he produced a long invective in the *kaşīde* form whose opening salvo is a barrage of the word *Türk* used as an insult:

⁸²¹ ‘Abdu’l-ġanīzāde Meḥmed had been born in Gerede, near Bolu in northwestern Anatolia.

⁸²² “Gerede orfanası Türk gelini Kīrli Nigār | görünür ‘āleme mollā-yı mu‘azzam a köpek || evvelā maḥkeme olur mı ol evde kim ola | hem sikişhāne hem maştaba-i Cem a köpek”; ULLWCO 662, 8a.

God bless! Excellent! Exalted be the power of God the Just! | what the hell is that trickster Turk with his ludicrous words? || a Turk like that shouldn't have rhetoric's reed of precedence (*kaşabi's-sebķ-i belāġat*)⁸²³ | what his hand needs is a peasant's club (*zer-deste*)⁸²⁴ or shepherd's flute || a Turk like that needn't have with him for use | a pouch with a notebook of poems but some old sack⁸²⁵

The picture Nefī paints of Veysī, who was originally from Alaşehir east of İzmir, can serve as a concise description of the typical Rūmī conception of the Turk; namely, an uneducated rural pastoralist. Yet it is also a picture of this Turk playing at being a Rūmī, carrying around a notebook of poetry and fancying himself skilled in rhetoric. While the early 17th century is, of course, quite temporally distant from the marginalization of the Turkmen frontier *beġs* that occurred in the 15th century, the image of the Turk that crystallized during that period, and continued to be reproduced in the interim, had persisted.

The division between Rūmīs and non-Rūmīs took on new dimensions after Sultan Selīm I's conquests of Syria, the Holy Land, and Egypt and Süleymān the Magnificent's conquests in what is now Iraq. The imperial domain had now expanded to encompass a vast population of Arabs, Bedouins, and Persians. With the introduction of this vast periphery so distant from the palace and capital of Istanbul, as well as the subsequent clarification and consolidation of the imperial ideology under Süleymān, to be Rūmī was

⁸²³ The phrase “reed of precedence” (*qaşab al-sabq*) comes from an old Arab tradition wherein a reed is stuck into the ground and then two horsemen race to try to be the first to pull it out.

⁸²⁴ The word *zer-deste* refers to a kind of club or wooden stick that was carried by some in Thrace, as well as by Bektashi dervishes; see Evliyā Çelebi, *Evliyā Çelebi's Journey from Bursa to the Dardanelles and Edirne, from the Fifth Book of the Seyāhatnāme*, ed. Hakan Karateke (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013), 74, 139 and Evliyā Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi in Bitlis: The Relevant Section of the Seyahatname*, ed. and trans. Robert Dankoff (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1990), 351, note 1.

⁸²⁵ “*bāraka 'l-lāh zehī kudret-i Haķķ jalla jalāluhu!* | nedir ol Türk[-i] müzevvir sühen-i turfa-maķāl || öyle Türk'ın ħaşabi's-sebķ-i belāġat yerine | kef-i destinde y[ā] zer-deste gerekdir yā kaval || öyle Türk'ın yaraşur ħande ise yanında | kīse-i defter-i ma'nā yerine eski çuval”; ULLWCO 662, 11b. Another figure whom Nefī attacked as a “Turk” was the aforementioned Fırşatī, who was from Ķaresi (Balıkesir) in western Anatolia; see ULLWCO 662, 12b–13b, 24a–24b.

more than ever not a matter of geographical origin, but rather of being trained in the geographical, administrative, and cultural center of the empire (Rūm) and serving and remaining loyal to that central system.⁸²⁶

However, even as the broad and rapid territorial expansion of the empire began to crystallize the meaning of Rūmī, it put strains on the system that was constituted of Rūmīs, making that system's potential risks more acute. It was in the crucible of political, economic, and social pressures and consequent changes that resulted from this that there emerged the variety of “declinist”—or, to use what is perhaps a better term, reactionary—advice literature initiated by Nefī's mentor Muṣṭafā 'Ālī and continued by the anonymous author of the *Kitāb-ı Müsteṭāb* and Kōçī Beğ, as discussed in Chapter 3.

Concerning this literature, Cornell Fleischer makes the following point:

It is of considerable interest to note [...] that the central government, as well as Ottoman historians, to some extent identified Ottomanism and Ottoman loyalty with the geographical hinterland of Rum, and viewed with suspicion those who, Muslim Turks though they might be,⁸²⁷ were not themselves identifiable as Rumi.⁸²⁸

In other words, there was a perceived danger of a watering-down of the Rūmī identity, which in practice meant a centrifugal pull on the ideology and resources of the administrative center. As Şerif Mardin has explained in connection with the “two very

⁸²⁶ A succinct description of this can be understood from Norman Itzkowitz and Max Mote's definition of “Ottoman” (for which, here, read “Rūmī”): “The term Ottoman [...] is used to signify those who qualified for first-class status in that society by serving the religion (being Muslim), serving the state (holding the position that gave them a state income and a privileged tax status), and knowing the Ottoman Way (using the Ottoman Turkish language and conforming to the manners and customs of the society that used Ottoman Turkish).” Norman Itzkowitz and Max Mote, *Mubadele: An Ottoman-Russian Exchange of Ambassadors* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 11.

⁸²⁷ Earlier in his analysis, Fleischer had noted—I believe somewhat more accurately—that it was not necessarily Turks who were putting a strain on the system, but that the problem was created by “the influx of Muslim natives of the newly conquered eastern provinces into the *kul*-dominated Ottoman military establishment.” Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, 155.

⁸²⁸ *Ibid.*, 157.

loosely related worlds”⁸²⁹ of the Ottoman center and periphery, “the style of state domination and of official status and culture together made up a cluster, an institutional code [wherein] the set of principles which kept officials alert to the erosion by the periphery of the achievements of the center occupied an important place.”⁸³⁰ This potential weakening of central control at the periphery was something the state—in a process akin to that of the “seizure and binding” (*zabt u rabt*) that would follow every Ottoman conquest of territory—was careful to try to curtail by means of what were effectively enclaves of Rūmī authority and culture spread throughout the empire, but concentrated particularly in urban spaces.⁸³¹

By the late 16th and early 17th centuries, when Muṣṭafā ‘Ālī was bemoaning the empire’s state and Nef‘ī was launching his assault on “Turks” like Veysī and Fırṣatī and telling everyone from the periphery to “stop coming to Istanbul,” the situation in the capital was to a certain extent the opposite, as the Rūmīs felt—or at least feigned to feel, for opportunistic reasons—that their hold on the center was slipping. Throughout the 16th century, the economic opportunities to be had in the center combined with increasing economic deprivation and social pressures in its mainly eastern peripheries to attract increasing numbers of people to Istanbul.⁸³² For the capital’s and center’s Rūmīs, this was the harbinger of a potential dilution and consequent degradation of the elite

⁸²⁹ Şerif Mardin, “Center-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics?”, *Daedalus* 102, no. 1 (Post-Traditional Societies, Winter 1973), 171; <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20024114>.

⁸³⁰ *Ibid.*, 173.

⁸³¹ See Map 4 in Appendix.

⁸³² For a concise overview of Istanbul demographics, see J.H. Mordtmann, Halil İnalçık, and Stefanos Yerasimos, “Istanbul (al-Ḳuṣṭanṭīniyya, İstanbul). IX: The Inhabitants: Repopulation; Religious Minorities; The Court and Military Personnel; Epidemics; Population Statistics,” in *Historic Cities of the Islamic World*, ed. C. Edmund Bosworth (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007), 202–211.

sociocultural status of which they—whether it was Nef‘ī or the western Anatolian *‘ālim*-littérateurs opposed to him—viewed themselves as the representatives.

6.3 Conclusion

The cases of horizontal invective exchange between Nef‘ī and the *‘ālim*-littérateurs in the previous chapter and between Nef‘ī and individuals of Persian origin in this chapter nowhere make use of the term “Rūmī.” Nevertheless, the discourse and parameters of the conflict as revealed through their invectives make it very clear that this was a clash over elite literary and sociocultural identity, and in the Ottoman context, as explored in the previous section, this identity was not “Ottoman” but in fact Rūmī.

It is established that the late 16th and early 17th centuries were a period of increasing factionalization within both the Ottoman palace and the broader administrative and military systems around it. What the examples of invective examined in this chapter and the previous one reveal is that the literary sphere was growing just as factionalized.

Moreover, as the discourse of this invective makes apparent, it was by no means simply differences of literary taste, style, and approach that outlined the contours of these factions. On the contrary, sociocultural background and pedigree were explicitly mapped onto what stylistic differences there were and then used as weapons with which to attack the opposing faction. This was a consciously elitist and implicitly reactionary endeavor.

From the perspective of *‘ālim*-littérateurs such as Riyāzī, Ḳāfzāde Fā’izī, and Nev‘izāde ‘Aṭā’ī, the aim was for this relatively small faction to concentrate cultural capital in their hands and forge an identity that they could control—a control that, as their close and

carefully nurtured network evinces, they averred could be achieved at least partly through a control over social capital. This factionalized elitification was simultaneously an active canonization process, one that can be traced in, for example, the changes occurring in the encyclopedic works produced at the time: it is no accident that three of the most central members of this coterie of *‘ālim*-littérateurs—viz., Riyāzī, Nev‘īzāde ‘Aṭā’ī, and Kāfzāde Fā’izī—were also the most significant biographers of the era. On the other side, Nef‘ī’s aim was very much the same as theirs, though in his case, lacking the paternal networks that were already in place for the *‘ālim*-littérateurs at the very start of their careers, he concentrated on asserting dominance in cultural production and lashed out at the socially (and politically) dominant figures conglomerating around him. To some extent, this bears all the hallmarks of being a kind of defense mechanism, especially when considered in the light of his invectives against Nev‘īzāde ‘Aṭā’ī and individuals of Persianate origin (whether poets or not), such as Zamān Meḥmed Efendi, ‘Ankā, Muṭahhar Efendi, and Vaḥdetī.

In the end, the factionalization of Ottoman high poetic culture would prove a moot point as the sociocultural landscape changed even more extremely later in the 17th century. Yet for a period of some forty years, it produced a rich invective corpus where nearly all those involved put their most deeply seated predilections and prejudices on full display.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION: AN AGE OF RAGE

*As all historians know, the past is a great darkness, and filled with echoes. Voices may reach us from it; but what they say to us is imbued with the obscurity of the matrix out of which they come; and, try as we may, we cannot always decipher them precisely in the clearer light of our own day.*⁸³³

The invective corpus that has been examined in this dissertation shows that, in a way, the early 17th-century Ottoman elite cultural field might be characterized as an age of rage. The figures involved—on one side Nef‘ī, on the other ‘ālim-littérateurs like Riyāzī and Nev‘īzāde ‘Aṭā’ī, arrivals from the Persian sphere of influence like Muṭahhar Efendi and Vaḥdetī, and statesmen like Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha and Gürcī Mehmed Pasha—were all attempting to navigate systems of patronage and of career advancement that were increasingly unstable under the pressure of contemporary circumstances; as Rifa‘at ‘Ali Abou-El-Haj emphasized in regards to the transitional period of the late 16th and the 17th centuries, there was “intensifying competition within the ruling elite for access

⁸³³ Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid’s Tale* (New York: Anchor Books, 1998), 311.

to resources and revenues,” ultimately contributing to “social mobility, fluidity of practice, and flux in fortunes.”⁸³⁴ In retrospect, given the instability of the era, it hardly seems surprising that factionalization became a dominant factor governing relationships between different groups not only within the Ottoman palace but also, as this dissertation has shown, within one of its nearest peripheries, the literary and scholarly elite. The invective verse that emerged from within this factionalized environment not only reflected the tensions and passions that were involved, but also further fed into them: just as, on an administrative or political level, the grand vizier Murād Pasha’s attempts to have the chief treasurer Etmekçizāde Aḥmed Pasha dismissed and killed demanded a response in kind, so did the invective assaults of someone like Nef’ī demand a response in kind—as was, indeed, dictated by the very beginnings of the Islamicate poetic tradition itself, where any attack on individual-cum-tribal honor (*‘ird*) called for retaliation and demanded restitution. And the discourse animating the invective corpus that emerged from this shows both that these factions were propped up by something very much resembling tribal honor and that there was more than a little rage pent up within the varied individuals involved.

There is much about this invective corpus that remains in the dark. On a superficial level, the very identities of some of the figures involved remain a mystery in that all we have, for the moment, is the epithet with which Nef’ī chose to brand them for posterity: “Opportunist” (*Fırşatī*), “Camel Lips” (*Şütürleb*), “Belly” (*Şikem*). But more significantly, this corpus and the figures involved in it—whether as producers or as

⁸³⁴ Abou-El-Haj, *Formation of the Modern State*, 59.

targets or both—await an even fuller integration into their diachronic and synchronic contexts, both within the Ottoman polity and without. The remainder of this conclusion will address these areas of further inquiry point by point.

Diachronically and within the Ottoman polity, the early 17th-century invective corpus still needs to be situated into the historical literary trajectory of Ottoman invective as a whole. As was discussed in Chapter 2, not even literary scholars, not to mention historians, have even begun to touch on the topic of invective in an Ottoman context, due partly to moral trepidations regarding the profanity and obscenity that is a virtual *sine qua non* of the mode and partly to dismissal of its utility in historical studies. About the former nothing can be done. As for the latter, however, this dissertation has been an initial attempt to show that invective can in fact add something to our historical understanding, not despite the mode's inherent and explicit subjectivity but precisely *because of it*.⁸³⁵ Yet once this has been admitted, work must be done to more closely link, for instance, Nef'ī's *Sihām-ı kazā*, the invective verse written against Nef'ī, and other contemporary invectives (such as Riyāzī's attack on "White Butt" and "Black Balls") with the invective that came before. A key question in this regard is this: was this

⁸³⁵ Classicists and those working in early modern English studies have long since begun to recognize the value of invective for historical analysis. For some key studies relating to the field, see Nicolino Applauso, "Curses and Laughter: The Ethics of Political Invective in the Comic Poetry of High and Late Medieval Italy" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oregon, 2010); Phebe Lowell Bowditch, *Horace and the Gift Economy of Patronage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Dermot Cavanagh and Tim Kirk, eds., *Subversion and Scurrility: Popular Discourse in Europe from 1500 to the Present* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000); Thomas Cogswell, "Underground Verse and the Transformation of Early Stuart Political Culture," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 60, no. 3 (1997): 303–326; Corbeil, *Controlling Laughter*; Adam Fox, "Ballads, Libels and Popular Ridicule in Jacobean England," *Past & Present* 145 (November 1994): 47–83; Andrew McRae, "Satire and Sycophancy: Richard Corbett and Early Stuart Royalism," *The Review of English Studies, New Series* 54, no. 215 (June 2003): 336–364; Rose A. Zimbaro, *At Zero Point: Discourse, Culture, and Satire in Restoration England* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1998); and also the special issue of *Huntington Library Quarterly* 69, no. 1 (March 2006).

period's invective corpus really as *sui generis* as I have claimed it to be? At the moment, this seems to be the case—hence, to a great extent, the very existence of this dissertation. However, it must be kept in mind that invective verse is often tucked away into miscellanies and even recitation notebooks (*mecmū`a, cönk*), media that have only barely begun to be studied in the Ottoman context, and so the size and significance of earlier corpora from, say, the 16th century may well be awaiting a complete reevaluation, especially if we consider that not all the producers of a given piece of invective are (or were) known and identifiable figures like Nef`ī in the 17th century or Zāī in the 16th. To give just one example from just one miscellany that has already been used in this dissertation, there is a verse beginning with the line, “suddenly Ḳalaylıkoz became a vizier | everyone said he would shatter the honor of viziership.”⁸³⁶ This appears—judging from the time periods of the invective verses collected with it—to be a reference to Ḳalaylıkoz `Alī Pasha (d. 1587), a governor of various provinces in the 1580s who also married Sultan Selīm II's daughter. But who wrote this piece, in what context, and why? There are almost undoubtedly scores of pieces like this inscribed in other miscellanies or scribbled down in margins, and until they are brought out into the historian's view no comprehensive analysis of the trajectory of the Ottoman invective tradition from, say, the 15th through the early 19th century can even begin.

In terms of further synchronic (*i.e.*, the early 17th century) study of invective within the Ottoman polity, there is similarly a need to discover what more works there may be from this particular period, not to mention the need to produce a full and uncensored edition

⁸³⁶ “bağteten Ḳalaylıkoz gelüp oldı vezīr | her gören dedī, ‘Vezāret `ırzını eyler şikest’”; IUNEK TY 3004, 48b.

of Nef'ī's *Sihām-ı kazā* together with the invectives produced against Nef'ī.⁸³⁷ But even once this has been done, this invective corpus and the divisive discourse that drives it ought to be still more closely analyzed in connection with other contemporary sources. This dissertation, making use primarily of contemporary chronicles and advice literature as ancillary sources, is just a first step: there is also much to be gleaned from the anecdotal evidence of registers of important affairs (*mühimme defteri*) and, especially, court records (*şer'iyeye sicili*), and even such empirical (or ostensibly empirical) records as cadastral surveys (*tahrīr defteri*) might be used to shed light on the contemporary invective corpus, as well as vice versa, in such a way as to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the historical period in question in terms of the sociocultural and political clashes emerging under the pressure of contemporary changes and transformations. Another important yet neglected area of study is the issue of how invective verse was circulated and performed in the Ottoman context, and thus how it worked to contribute to the rumor mill of the slander and defamation that were its primary functions. Beyond this, the particular variety of elite invective examined in this dissertation could also benefit from comparison and contrast with analogous traditions in, for lack of a better word, "popular literature"; e.g., the *taşlama* and *atışma* traditions of folk literature; the social criticism, stereotypes, and uninhibited language of the *Karagöz* and *Hācivād* shadow theater; and the performative traditions of *meddāh* storytellers. Moreover, to speak of the Ottoman polity is to speak not only of the Turkish language but also the empire's other languages and traditions: Arabic and Persian in this

⁸³⁷ This, together with English verse translations of the works in question, is a project on which I am currently engaged.

period have analogous invective traditions dealing with similar issues to those addressed in the invective corpus examined here, but is there anything of a similar nature in, for instance, Armenian or Greek? And how aware were the producers in all these different linguistic traditions of the producers and productions of other linguistic traditions? This is a broad area of study that is still in its infancy, but the field of invective verse, not to mention prose, as a discursive mode commenting on and critiquing contemporary society and politics through *ad hominem* and *ad tribum* attack may well have something to offer in this regard.

Moving beyond the Ottoman polity, further diachronically oriented research would entail a more comprehensive investigation of what was only barely begun in this dissertation; namely, situating the Ottoman invective tradition within the broader scope of the Islamicate invective tradition as a whole. As was touched upon briefly in the introduction, my preliminary research has indicated that certain historical periods marked by a greater degree of sociocultural, political, and/or economic upheaval coincide with a proliferation in the amount of invective produced (or at least preserved): the early 17th-century Ottoman center was one such period, as was the transitional period from pre-Islam to Islam in the mid-7th to mid-8th centuries CE. There is, though, much more work to be done in this regard. For instance, how did the highly performative aspect of the reciprocal *naqā'id* poetry produced in Basra's market and literary center of al-Mirbad by al-Farazdaq (c. 644–c. 728), Jarīr (c. 650–c. 728/729), and al-Akḥṭal (d. c. 710) affect the discourse and diction of invective, and what effect did this ultimately have on the discourse, diction, and performativity of Ottoman invective? In the Persian

tradition, what was the effect of the highly uninhibited discourse of poets like Anwarī or Sūzanī, or of the socially oriented satire of ‘Obayd Zākānī (d. c. 1370)? All of these producers of invective were plying their trade in periods of major change and/or instability—the *naqā’id* poets in the urbanizing and gradually detribalizing Mesopotamia of the late Umayyad period; Anwarī in the early years of the breakdown of the Seljuk Empire; Sūzanī in a Samarqand that had just been lost by the Seljuks; ‘Obayd Zākānī in the period when the Ilkhanate collapsed into a number of petty states—and all of them were known of by Ottoman authors, as evidenced by references in the biographical literature of the 16th century. Furthermore, the matter of the effect of such figures and their work on the producers of Ottoman invective is not simply a matter of literary style: since, as was discussed in the introduction, invective is a mode resolutely discursive in nature and inherently topical in content, the issue of particular influence can also serve as a reflection, albeit a distant one, of how authors viewed the historical period in which they worked.

Finally, moving to the area of synchronic study of invective outside the Ottoman polity, it is important to note that many of the same troubles that beset the Ottoman Empire in the late 16th and early 17th centuries—the price revolution and attendant economic hardship triggered by the influx of gold and silver from the New World, growing social mobility and its effects on sociocultural stability and the mentalities of the elite, new ways of waging war and the concomitant change in the composition of armies, internal unrest and rebellion exacerbated by all these transformations—were all troubles by which western Europe was afflicted as well. And not coincidentally, in Europe this same

period was also one in which there was a massive proliferation in the production of personal (*ad hominem*) and social (*ad tribum*) invective, both elite and popular and in both manuscript and the burgeoning medium of print. England, for instance, saw a sea-change in the size and composition of the nobility during the early Stuart period—and a veritable explosion in the production of libels. Subsequent years saw the revolution of the puritan Commonwealth in the 1650s followed by the notoriously libertine Restoration—which gave birth to a figure such as John Wilmot, the 2nd Earl of Rochester (1647–1680), whose works straddle the line between the harshest personal invective, both vertical and horizontal, and the broadest human satire. In Spain, the slow decay of the internal Spanish economy was accompanied by a long invective quarrel between Luis de Góngora (1561–1627), proponent of the complex stylings of *culteranismo* with its many commonalities to the so-called “Indian style” of which Nefī was an antecedent in Ottoman lands, and Francisco de Quevedo (1580–1645), whose *conceptismo* attempted to pare poetic language down to its simplest, often localized forms. Both men represented different variants of the Spanish nobility, the urban and the rural, and each mercilessly attacked the other in verse, sometimes disguising their sociocultural differences behind aesthetic arguments and sometimes simply directly accusing one another of dissolution and homosexuality—much as has been seen in this dissertation in connection with the clash between Nefī and the coterie of *‘ālim-littérateurs*. And in France, the scars of the 16th-century Wars of Religion left a mark on such figures as Charles-Timoléon de Beauxoncles, Sieur de Sigogne (1560–1611) and Jean Auvray (1580–1624), whose abundant satires marked a transition between

personal invective of figures both named and unnamed, high and low, and social criticism of the most pessimistic variety.

What all such abundant examples reveal is that contemporary changes in state formation processes and their trickle-down effect on rising tensions within the sociocultural and literary environment led to a proliferation in the production of invective within many widely varying yet also radically similar contexts. Ultimately, then, more in-depth, contextualized research into the field of invective production during the early modern period can provide us with a deeper understanding of the involved actors' mentalities and motivations and how these came to receive expression under, and further feed back into, the enmities and hostilities that arose during this age of rage.

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APPENDIX

CHANGING CONCEPTIONS OF RŪM

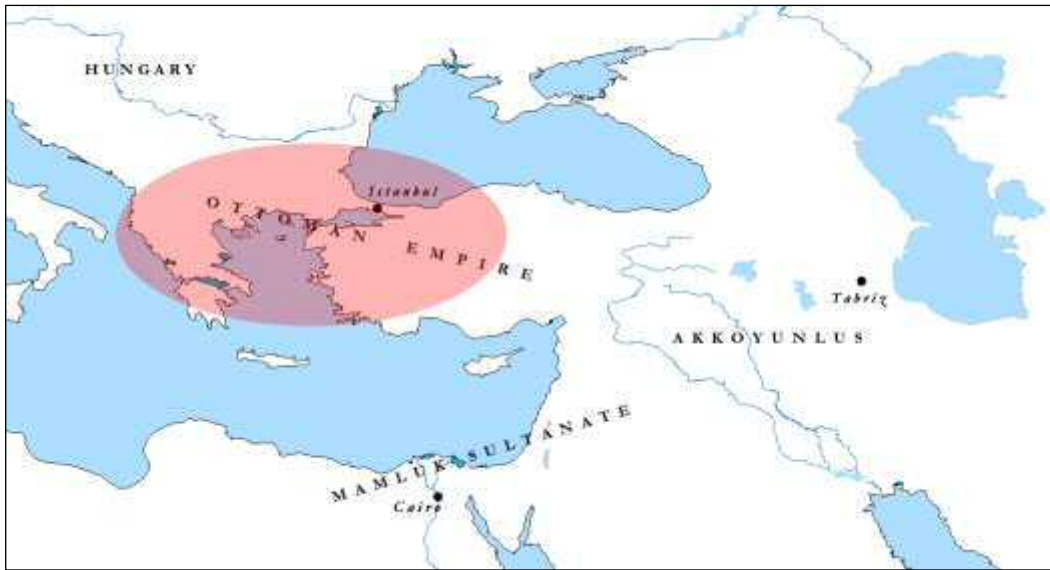
Map 1: Rūm as generally conceptualized c. the late 11th century CE



Map 2: The two Rūms as conceptualized c. the early 13th century CE (with Christian/Byzantine Rūm in purple and Muslim/Seljuk Rūm in green)



Map 3: Ottoman Rūm as conceptualized c. the late 15th century CE



Map 4: Conception of Ottoman Rūm as the center dispatching Rūmīs to enclaves of the center located at various peripheries

