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A Mirror for Princes, A Fiction for Readers: The *Habnâme* of Veysî and Dream Narratives in Ottoman Turkish Literature¹

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The following study aims to reconstruct the ways in which an early seventeenth-century text composed by one of the prominent literary figures of his age, Veysî Efendi (d. 1628), was constructed and consumed. While this widely circulated text—both in manuscript and print forms—is usually known as the *Habnâme*, extant copies exist with different titles as well, such as *Vakıanâme*, *Rüyanâme*, and *Düşnâme*. Throughout this study, I will discuss the historical and personal contexts under which this text was penned and the ways in which it was received by its readers. In this respect, this article aims at combining two different strands of analysis. On the one hand, I will examine the content of the text, its distinctive stylistic features, the immediate historical circumstances in which it was produced, and the authorial intentions shaped by Veysî's career expectations. On the other hand, in light of reader responses to the narrative we have available, the work's textual adventure in manuscript culture, and the relative success it achieved throughout the nineteenth-century print world, where a new dream-utopia literature pioneered by the works of Ziya Pasha and Namık Kemal was gaining ground, I will argue that, unlike current scholarly tradition, which tends to see the *Habnâme* as a mere example of Ottoman advice literature, it is indeed an unequivocally imaginative and inspiring “story”.

I. INTRODUCTION

The following article will attempt to reconstruct the story of a “story” written in the early seventeenth century by one of the greatest prose writers in Ottoman Turkish literature, Veysî Efendi (d. 1628). It is the story of how and why the text in question was written, and the ways in which it was received and read by its readers. I intend to approach the text from two different, yet interrelated angles: one approach will focus on the author and the content of the work, while the other will imagine the reader and his/her experience reading the narrative.

The text in question is generally known as the *Habnâme* (“Book of Sleep”) of Veysî, but there also are other ways it was entitled, which we hope to address in detail

when its reception by the audience will be discussed. The *Habnâme* was relatively well-known to Ottoman readers, and remains so among modern scholars. It must have enjoyed some popularity among readers in manuscript culture, for there are more than one hundred handwritten copies catalogued so far in Turkish libraries and abroad. Its fame carried it into the nineteenth century, when it was published by at least five different publishing houses. Finally, the text has received the attention of twentieth-century scholars, including both historians of literature and those working on the history of intellectual and political thought.

Despite the relatively significant scholarly attention this work has attracted, it is quite surprising that scholars have either consistently placed it within the boundaries of Ottoman advice literature and have neglected to focus on Veyis's efforts in forcing the literary conventions of this genre, or have simply referred to its literary qualities without contextualizing it historically and politically.² In that regard, this article aims at combining these two strands together. While there are important sections in the text that could be interpreted as advice to the reigning Sultan Ahmed I (d. 1618), once these are contrasted with the generic features of Ottoman advice literature, the *Habnâme* stands as an aberrant, if not an anti-example of this genre. First, the dream frame that Veyis uses in his text deserves special attention for the possibilities this "dream" factor might have created in both the narration and reception of the text. Second, in transmitting his message, Veyis does not simply juxtapose his points, but rather creates a fictional setting in which real historical figures such as Sultan Ahmed I and Alexander the Two-Horned act as imaginary characters. And third, the message purported in the *Habnâme* does not follow the conventions established by the declinist sensibilities widespread among contemporary Ottoman men of letters. In the pages to follow, this article will attempt to reveal the ways the *Habnâme* is different from other canonical examples of Ottoman advice literature. Moreover, this article will try to build the ground upon which it is possible to read this text not merely as a mirror for princes, but also as a creative and exemplary work of fiction.

II. THE AUTHOR AND THE TEXT

Veyis is a well-known scholar (*âlim*) and judge (*kadi*) who gained fame through his writings in prose, among which his *Habnâme* and his unfinished *Sîyer* [The Life of the Prophet] should be mentioned.³ He is often referred to as the greatest prose writer in pre-nineteenth-century Ottoman literature, along with his contemporary Nergisî. He was born in Alaşehir, Manisa in 969/1561–1562 to a *kadı* and was the nephew of a poet, Makâlî. He finished his *medrese* education in Istanbul and immediately established

patronage ties with high-ranking individuals in order to obtain a position in the bureaucratic framework. During his youth, his literary skills must have grasped the attention of contemporary *tezkiye* writers like Kınalızâde Hasan Çelebi, who we know considered Veysî to be a promising poet.⁴ Thanks to his literary gifts, he did not wait too long for the opening of a post, which was a significant problem at that time for new graduates. He was granted a judgeship in a small Egyptian district by the chief military judge of Anatolia, Molla Ahmed Efendi.

Throughout his career, Veysî held various judgeships and some minor bureaucratic posts in several districts of Egypt, Anatolia, and especially Rumelia. He is most famous for his position as judge of Üsküp [Skopje], where he was assigned a total of seven times. Even a cursory reading of his letters (*miinşeat*), along with his panegyric *kasides*, clearly indicates that in every part of his career Veysî was attempting to establish close connections with the reigning sultans, grand viziers, shaykhu'l-Islams, chief military judges, and other high-ranking bureaucrats who could bestow imperial favor upon him.⁵ One can easily extract from these writings the image of a self-assured yet frustrated man consistently depicting himself as an exceptional but disillusioned writer who was never met with what he really deserved.

There is little doubt that the *Habnâme* was composed with similar intentions in mind. In the introductory passages of the text, Veysî expresses his own desire to reach the sultan. That is probably the reason why, in the current scholarship, the text is usually considered to have been presented to the Sultan Ahmed I in the year 1608. Nevertheless, contemporary sources like Nevizâde Atâî (d. 1635), an important figure from Veysî's own intellectual circle, indicate that it was instead submitted to the grand vizier Nasuh Paşa (d. 1614).⁶ Nasuh Paşa held the office of grand vizier between 1611 and 1614, and thus the date of the *Habnâme*'s composition must be put somewhere between these years.⁷ This assumption is further corroborated by a short note added next to the colophon of a copy of the *Habnâme* dated 1034/1624–5 and saying that the original text was first composed in the year 1022/1613–14.⁸

The significance of this date lies in the political and psychological atmosphere in the capital at the time. There must have been a relative feeling of relief after the Celâlî revolts were finally repressed in 1610 and the long war with the Safavids came to an end by a treaty signed by Nasuh Paşa in 1612.⁹ However, Veysî prefers to open the narrative with a lively description of his psychological mood, disturbed by recent violent incidents the Celâlîs were causing. As the narrative maintains, whenever he pondered these distressing affairs, he “plunged into the sea of melancholy” and was imbued with the desire to talk to the sultan in person in order to pour out all his complaints.¹⁰ Veysî is

quite explicit in revealing his motivations, as he says that his desire is to present the sultan his recommendations regarding the necessary measures to take for the restoration of the country. Following one of the leitmotifs common in advice literature, Veyis casts himself as the able, erudite counselor who is ready to provide the knowledge a sultan needs.

Veyis follows a path different from that found in other mirrors for princes. Instead of continuing with his advice in a straight way, he shares his visionary experience that came to him in his sleep. In his dream, Veyis runs across a group of distinguished people as they head towards a paradise-like garden. Once they arrive at the garden, each member of the group sits on a seat of honor and Veyis, along with other servants, stands waiting to serve. Upon the order of the man occupying the chief seat at the social gathering, Veyis sits upon the grass. He suddenly realizes that it is Alexander the Two-Horned and surrounding him are the late Ottoman sultans. At that moment, Sultan Ahmed I appears on the scene along with his troops. The sultan dismounts and finds a seat close to the throne of Alexander. Later, Sultan Ahmed I and Alexander begin a conversation which Veyis carefully heeds.¹¹

The dialogue turns to issues regarding state affairs, and Alexander states that the position of a ruler is like that of a heart and the world is its body; accordingly, a body gets injured if the heart is not on the right course. He adds that justice, equity, and mercy are the properties a ruler must have; otherwise, tyranny and injustice cause the ruin of the subjects.¹² Upon hearing this, Sultan Ahmed I first takes a very deep sigh as a sign of his sorrow and then begins on a long speech explaining that he is already aware of how justice and equity are important for the ruler. The problem for him, as he states it, is having risen to the throne at a time when the world is in ruin. He then implicitly blames his grandfather Murad III for the almost four-decade-long wars on two fronts; for it is Murad III, he maintains, who had sent thousands of soldiers to fight against the enemies of religion. The wars did not cease for even a year, and so the need for new funds and personnel eventually emerged, which later led to recruiting inept individuals for the armed forces. Those outsiders recruited for emergency needs betrayed the sultan and joined the Celâli rebels. As a result, the inherited domains of the empire and the houses of its subjects were all ruined.

Sultan Ahmed I concludes his speech by asking:

If the *kulls*, who are mine indeed, refuse to obey me, how am I to protect my subjects with the sword of justice and equity, and control the country? Had God entrusted the Ottoman sultanate to me when the world was prosperous and thriving, I could have shown everyone how to keep the country in order and run the state's affairs.¹³

In return, Alexander says that, if one were to listen to Ahmed, one would think that the world was prosperous and thriving before his time and that it was only during his reign that the world began to witness such suffering and wickedness. He then reminds the young sultan: “The world has never been all prosperous during the reign of any ruler, nor have the people been able to escape from its evil”, and asks, “When was the world that we call ruined today ever prosperous and thriving?”¹⁴ This rhetorical question is a literary device repeated by Alexander at the end of each story that he narrates regarding the agony, cruelty, and destruction witnessed throughout history.

Beginning with the story of Adam and Eve and ending with a narration of the decimation of Muslims by the Mongols at the time of the Khwarezmid, Alexander recounts thirty-four stories in order to prove that the world is not the sort of place Sultan Ahmed I imagines it to be. About half of the stories recounted are Qur’anic in origin, such as the murder of Abel by Cain, the fight among Hud and the people of Ad, the struggles between Saleh and Thamud, and the story of Moses and Pharaoh. It is worth noting that—unlike the general tendency in Islamic *belles lettres*, which sees the age of the Prophet as the “Golden Age”—Veysî does not refrain from including this era in his gallery, and asks whether “the world was prosperous and thriving when the swords of Muhammad’s companions turned coral red from enemy blood as they converted to Islam the tribes that worshipped creatures.”¹⁵

After the anecdotes recounted by Alexander comes the concluding section, where the intentions of Veysî in the *Habnâme* become self-evident. Here, Alexander sums up his anecdotes, saying that it is futile to attempt to tell the story of each and every day from the time of Adam onwards, for similar incidents are always taking place. “It is the *reaya*’s vicious intentions”, says Alexander, “that has engendered evil and calamity in every era. It has, thus, nothing to do with the kings”.¹⁶ In this context, he cites a Qur’anic verse, one that is also frequently used by other Ottoman mirror writers of the time: “[S]urely God does not change the condition of a people until they change their own condition”.¹⁷ Alexander recommends that what should be done is to remain faithful to Islamic law and to grant posts to deserving men only. He also states that the appointment of judges (*kadi*) should be carefully arranged with respect to their adherence to Islamic law.¹⁸

When Alexander is finished speaking, Ahmed first thanks him, as all the stories that he has recounted have “swept away all the dust of troubles in his mind and provided great relief”. Nonetheless, he continues to wonder about the details of each episode, and asks Alexander whether it is possible to keep their records. Alexander, mentioning Veysî, tells Ahmed that “all the details of these events, which are full of

valuable lessons, are very well known by your servant Veyisî, who has dedicated his entire life to learning. Upon your order, he will gladly compose his account". At just this moment, the rooster's crow is heard and Veyisî awakens.¹⁹

III. DECLINIST SENSIBILITIES IN EARLY MODERN OTTOMAN POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

With its manifest intention to give advice to the sultan and share the author's observations on the current situation of the empire, it would not be incorrect to consider the *Habnâme* as an example of the genre of mirrors for princes, which flourished in the Ottoman Empire in the late sixteenth and throughout the seventeenth century. These works, epitomized by Mustafa Âli's *Nasihatü's-Selâtin* ("Counsel for Sultans"), were long considered to be "objective" first-hand sources indicating the empire's sociopolitical and financial status. The "decline paradigm" of Ottoman history, typified by the approach of Bernard Lewis and many Turkish scholars, takes these texts at face value, using them as explanatory models of Ottoman decline.²⁰ For the purposes of this article, there is no need to grapple with the decline paradigm, concerning which there is an abundance of studies, especially in the last three decades. My aim here is rather to discuss the importance of this genre for understanding less tangible and often ignored aspects of the empire; *i.e.*, the literary and intellectual climate of the post-Süleymanic era.²¹ In parallel with this question, I will delineate the *Habnâme*'s contribution in expanding the stylistic features of the genre.

What the genre of Ottoman mirrors for princes demonstrates, first and foremost, is an increased intellectual and literary activity among men of letters. The authors of mirrors not only contributed to the flourishing of a new political language and historical consciousness, but also created, in Cemal Kafadar's words, a "public forum, in which intellectuals and bureaucrats could openly criticize institutions and policies, as well as the personalities and actions of the sultans".²² Given the lack of studies regarding the intertextuality of these texts, it would be disingenuous to argue that these authors were definitely reading and reacting to each other; we may still claim, however, that the quantity of compositions, as well as their content—which was largely shaped by these authors' responsiveness toward their time—testify to the intellectual endeavors of that particular milieu. It was also in this particular intellectual context that Ibn Khaldun's historical vision of the rise and fall of dynasties found a warm reception, for they were contemplating more or less similar issues and concepts.²³

This strong presentist attitude, accompanied by a sense of decline, is in fact one crucial distinguishing feature of the Ottoman mirrors for princes. It is true that they

convey certain topoi articulated throughout the long tradition of medieval Islamic mirrors for princes and ethical literature, such as the centrality of justice for the harmony of society, the need for the ruler to uphold the law, and the use of medical/Galenic metaphors.²⁴ Nevertheless, we should not underestimate the fact that, in the Ottoman case, the old/traditional issues gained a “new garb”.²⁵ As loyal Ottomans who believed in Ottoman superiority, the authors did not question the legitimacy of the dynasty; instead, they cast doubt on the legitimacy of certain individuals and the propriety of certain administrative practices. Thus, in the hands of Ottoman mirror writers, the genre evolved into a vehicle for voicing direct criticism and referring to current examples of institutional failure, injustice, social disruption, and corruption.

The opening remarks of Ottoman mirrors—where the authors dedicate passages to the testimony of a disastrous time, unprecedented hardship, and wrongdoing by reiterating concepts such as sedition (*fesad*), turmoil (*tezcelzül*), disruption (*infial*), disorder (*ihtilal*), and decline (*inkıraz*)—crystallize their declinist attitude. This seems, though, to be a literary strategy. In many Ottoman mirrors, the organizational framework involves the authors first pointing out an overall disorder and decline that they have recently discerned, which enables them to then list the essential causes of these problems, blame certain individuals, and finally suggest their detailed solutions in line with their own personal agendas.

In such a context, to remind the sultan and eminent statesmen to maintain justice and preserve the hierarchy by putting every individual in his deserved position is not merely a continuation of a theme popular in medieval Islamic political literature, but, beyond that, an articulation and manifestation of the authors’ stress regarding the “dissolution” of the “ideal” system they imagine. In many contemporary mirrors, admonitions regarding the notion of justice are presented as the predominant theme. Mustafa Âli, for instance, begins his work by stressing the importance of putting everything and everyone into their proper places.²⁶ In a similar vein, Hasan Kâfi Akhisarî holds injustice and the disruption of hierarchy to be the first and most important cause of the empire’s deterioration.²⁷

Another dimension of such anxieties is the conception of time prevalent in many mirrors. One can speak here of a three-dimensional categorization of time: the “present” is depicted as the source of distress and trouble while the “past” serves as refuge from the suffering present and stands, although quite implicitly, as the repertory of righteous acts and deeds upon which the “future” can be modeled. This “golden age” rhetoric is another thematic and stylistic characteristic of mirrors, whose idealized or

“classicized” ages might differ within the range of the Mehmed II-Süleyman the Magnificent axis, depending on the author’s selection.

In the *Habnâme*, we see Veyis touching upon many of the characteristic themes of Ottoman mirrors for princes, such as the testimony to an anxiety-producing present, the importance of justice and Islamic law, the use of history for didactic purposes, and the suggestion of solutions that directly address the authors’ own promotion. Nevertheless, Veyis differs from contemporary commentators in three major ways.

Firstly, he never comes up with a detailed scheme of practical solutions. One cannot find in the *Habnâme* any comprehensive set of reform proposals, such as the reinforcing of naval technology mentioned by Lütü Pasha,²⁸ the keeping of registers of office appointments advised by the anonymous writer of *Hırzu’l Mülûk*,²⁹ the improvement of military equipment and techniques discussed by Hasan Kâfi Akhisarî,³⁰ the reforming and improving of the conditions of Kurdish beys suggested by Aziz Efendi,³¹ the training of newly recruited boys (*acemi oğlanları*) directly by Janissaries or sipahis instead of Turkish peasants offered by the anonymous author of *Kitâb-ı Mesâlihi’l-Müslimîn*,³² or the reduction in the number of salaried soldiers demanded by Koçi Beg.³³ The set of solutions recommended by these authors is, of course, related to their own educational and occupational backgrounds. Similarly, Veyis, too, takes a route with which he is most familiar as a prominent writer, choosing to tell a series of stories picturing how the world has been filled with pain, discord, and sedition ever since the time of Adam.

Secondly, Veyis’s text is less concerned with details related to actual politics and the picture of his contemporary society than with didactic tales of earlier times. This didacticism is, however, not based upon the rhetoric of a “golden age” as the criteria of an ideal state and society, but rather upon a sharply realistic portrayal of the past meant to show the normalcy of distressing circumstances. In this sense, it is best to label the *Habnâme* as an anti-declinet narrative.³⁴

Finally, Veyis’s concerns and opinions regarding contemporary state and society are not communicated directly by the author, but conveyed through words put into the mouths of Sultan Ahmed I and Alexander in a dream setting, which eventually “fictionalizes” the text. In all these respects, the *Habnâme*’s real task seems to be to console and even entertain the young sultan in order to acquire his imperial favor. As he implies in a self-serving passage at the end of his narrative, he is ready to produce a full-fledged politico-historical account, so long as he attains the gift of the sultan. Thus, the *Habnâme* amounts to nothing but a trailer for his forthcoming work.

IV. DREAMS, AUTHORIAL INTENTIONS, AND THE SEARCH FOR PATRONS

It is unlikely that Veysî received the favor of Sultan Ahmed I after presenting his work to the palace. It is even doubtful that the sultan ever saw the text. As Nevizâde Atâî recounts, the work was presented to the grand vizier Nasuh Paşa. At first, the grand vizier enjoyed reading it, but, when he found in its pages the story of the Abbasid vizier Ibn Alkami, who is blamed for betraying the caliphate in collusion with the Mongol emperor Hulagu, he began to suspect that it was a satire of him. He therefore decided to “close the gate of endowment”.³⁵ Should we interpret this anecdote in such a way as to read the *Habnâme* as being in fact a harsh political criticism of the time? Or does the way Nasuh Paşa read the text rather represent his own psychology?

The dream nature of the *Habnâme* is interpreted by some scholars as a literary tool employed by Veysî for the sake of covering his critical statements. According to this interpretation, in this way he found a chance to avoid being accused of the things he said in the text.³⁶ However, such scholars never discuss what is in Veysî’s dream story that is actually critical. Surprisingly, the most severe criticisms expressed by Veysî are found in the text before the dream begins, when he implies that he holds the sultan responsible for the destruction of the empire. As the dream develops, however, his remarks—put in the mouth of Alexander—become less critical and more consolatory. The fundamental reason for the *Habnâme*’s reception as a political criticism in the current literature is the false attribution to him of a harsh *keaside*, “*Nasîbat-ı İslâmbol*” (Admonition to Istanbul), which includes several denunciatory remarks regarding the contemporary situation of the empire.³⁷ The poem was in fact written by another seventeenth-century poet, Üveysî, and, as Baki Tezcan has substantially demonstrated, these two figures could not have been the same person owing to their totally disparate style and *Weltanschauung*.³⁸ Since Veysî is erroneously assumed as the writer of this *keaside*, the *Habnâme* is easily associated with such an unsubstantiated critical stance.

There is still a need here to explain in what terms Nasuh Pasha interpreted the story as a political satire of himself. It is true that the image of Nasuh Pasha as reflected in contemporary sources resembles the story of Ibn Alkami. Both Ottoman and non-Ottoman sources express rumors that Nasuh Pasha—who was highly ambitious and arrogant even aiming at the throne—was in collusion with the Safavids, and the discovery of this betrayal caused his death in 1614.³⁹ It might be the case that Nasuh Pasha was already preoccupied with such rumors when he was presented with the *Habnâme*. If this is the case, then his interpretation of the story reflects more his own anxiety than Veysî’s intentions to attack him. Otherwise, why would Veysî have presented his text to Nasuh Pasha if he had composed it as a political satire of the grand

vizier? Interestingly, in the collected poems of Veyis there are two panegyric odes written to Nasuh Pasha; unfortunately the date of their composition is unknown. Nonetheless, in one of these two odes, Veyis disavows the remark that had been attributed to him by his enemies and asks for Nasuh Pasha's mercy.⁴⁰ Though speculative, this remark may well be related to the aforementioned misunderstanding of Nasuh Pasha.

It is likely that Veyis did not achieve what he expected to in the composition and presentation of the *Habnâme*. Although Evliya Çelebi says that the judgeship of Üsküp was permanently assigned to him upon his presentation of the *Habnâme*⁴¹, Nevizâde Atâî, who had the daily registers (*rużnamçe*) at his disposal, does not point out any such sudden promotion of Veyis.⁴² Moreover, though he committed himself to composing a detailed treatise on condition that he be bestowed an imperial favor, we do not see Veyis writing such an account in the later part of his career.

A comparison of the case of Veyis with his contemporary Mustafa Sâfi is illuminating. As Günhan Börekçi relates, in 1609 Mustafa Sâfi completed and presented a translation of a fifteenth-century mirror for princes in Persian, *Dāstān-e Jamāl u Jalāl*. In this translation, Sâfi also tells the story of why that particular work was selected by the sultan. As he says, Sultan Ahmed I valued histories and works on past rulers, for such works could give him important lessons on how to become a just ruler. The sultan's advisors recommended him that particular work because it was written in a very elaborate style and was full of lively anecdotes about kingly virtues.⁴³

At the end of his translation, Sâfi adds a short note in passing that his wish was to be employed in the inner palace service, so long as the sultan regarded him as worthy of it. He was indeed given employment as the sultan's personal prayer leader upon completing his translation, and was later commissioned to compose the chronicle of the sultan's reign, and so, until his death in 1616, Sâfi was able to be present in the sultan's inner circle as his chronicler, political advisor, and confidant.⁴⁴

Veyis's intentions in composing the *Habnâme* become more evident when his own passing notes in the text are read together with Mustafa Sâfi's remarks on the sultan's reading preferences. Yet another important question remains to be posed: why did he choose to present his narrative in a dream? Or, to put it another way, in what ways could this dream function?

It would not be out of place to say that the anticipated influences of the text on its intended audience and the reception of it by a contemporary readership are directly related to the dream nature of the *Habnâme*. It is not rare in Islamic *belles lettres* to make use of dreams, visions, or other mystical experiences as rhetorical devices.⁴⁵ Many

authors insert some sense of otherworldliness by including an element of arcane and privileged knowledge in order to enhance the meaning and give authority to their own writings. It is even possible to find such examples in Ottoman mirrors for princes. For example, at the beginning of his *Nasihatü's-Selâtin*, Mustafa Âli emphasizes how he began to write his account upon “the instruction of certain holy men that appeared to him in his dreams”.⁴⁶ In a similar fashion, Hasan Kâfi Akhisarî attempts to stress his prophetic authority by describing how all in his work was inspired to him by God. As he describes it, one night he entreated God to be informed about the causes behind the current corrupted state of the empire, and God put the ideas in his mind.⁴⁷ In this way, Akhisarî was enabled to explore the reasons of the decline and finish his composition.

The narrations of dreams with prophetic content to enhance the meaning and, more importantly, secure the favor of the addressee are not found only among the writings of Ottoman literati. Quite interestingly, a set of scattered documents from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries hitherto unnoticed in the Ottoman state archives reveal the fact that certain individuals, including women, wrote their dreams to the reigning sultan as a harbinger of imminent auspicious events like military victories or recovery from illnesses. In return for these dreams sent to the palace, some of these individuals express their own expectation to be favored, and in some cases they really were given a symbolic amount of money.⁴⁸ It would be going too far to suggest here an “economy of dreams”, but such pieces of information hinting at a culture of dream writing for material benefit should nevertheless be taken into account.

If books on history and the deeds of past rulers were one preoccupation of Sultan Ahmed I, dreams were certainly another one. However, he was neither the first nor the last Ottoman sultan to be interested in the spiritual power of dreams. For instance, Ahmed’s grandfather, Murad III, was famous for the dreams he wrote and sent to his Sufi sheikh, Şüca Efendi, for interpretation.⁴⁹ Sultan Ahmed I had a similar relationship with an influential Sufi sheikh of his time, Aziz Mahmud Hüdâî (d. 1628), who was not only a competent dream interpreter but also a composer of his own dreams and mystical visions.⁵⁰ Hüdâî is equally important for Veysî himself, for some scholars argue that Veysî was a member of his Celvetiyye order.⁵¹ Although his formal connection with the order is not certain, his closeness to the Sufi sheikh is attested by Evliya Çelebi. In the fifth volume of his *Seyahatnâme* (“Book of Travels”), where he mentions the city of Üsküp, Evliya tells us that he first had the pleasure to meet with Veysî in the presence of Aziz Mahmud Hüdâî. However, Evliya’s story does not show Veysî as a disciple of Hüdâî. On the contrary, he depicts them as two close friends, talking together like equals.⁵²

The curiosity of the sultan with regard to dreams might have been a potential hook for Veyisî to allure him and secure his patronage. There is no need here for a thorough discussion of the special status of dreams in Islamic culture. Suffice it to say that, in Islamic dream lore, “true dreams”—*i.e.*, dreams that are God-given—are of great importance, especially dreams in which a deceased person appears to the dreamer and delivers a message, which can be found in many different forms of writing, such as biographical dictionaries, historical works, and mystical accounts.⁵³ Dreams in which the dreamer sees the prophet Muhammad, who provides the dreamer with guidance and/or forewarning, are the most important examples. Muhammad is, however, not the only source of guidance in helping the dreamer escape from his or her perplexity. As manifested in one of the sayings attributed to Ibn Sirin, the legendary founder of the Muslim tradition of dream interpretation, “whatever the deceased tells in sleep is truth, for he stays in the world of truth”.⁵⁴ In this regard, dreams of the dead and the souls of the sages of the past are considered as signal, for the deceased bears true knowledge from the world of truth (*dârü'l-ḥaqq*) into the world of the living. Besides the prophet Muhammad, guidance can also originate from deceased relatives, friends, teachers, and especially from saints and Sufi sheikhs.

That there was great interest in dreams in early modern Ottoman culture can easily be deduced from the abundance of manuals on dream interpretation, personal dream accounts kept in diaries, separate dream logs exchanged among individuals, and narratives of visionary experiences scattered in chronicles, travelogues, biographical dictionaries, and hagiographies.⁵⁵ Although the *Habnâme* does not at first seem similar to these sub-genres of dream writing, being a “fabricated dream”, it should still be treated in terms of a cultural context that highly esteemed dreams and dream writing.

Veyisî must have had a familiarity with the Islamic dream discourse, for he demonstrates his knowledge in his other major book, *Sîyer*. In one part of this work, in which he narrates how the first message of God was revealed to the prophet Muhammad, he discusses the famous hadith that says that the true dream is one forty-sixth part of prophethood.⁵⁶ In yet another section, where he recounts the story of Muhammad’s ascent to heaven, he examines theologically and linguistically whether this experience of the Prophet occurred in sleep or in wakefulness.⁵⁷ Veyisî must have gathered such scriptural information during his education at the *medrese*, but, apart from this formal training, the Sufi connections mentioned above might have also influenced his familiarity with Islamic dream lore.

V. NARRATIVITY OF THE TEXT BASED ON ITS DREAM NATURE

As a learned man of dream discourse, Veysî may have also been familiar with another famous hadith: “He who lies about his dream will have to tie a knot in a small barley corn on the Day of Judgment”.⁵⁸ This further complicates how his dream text should be interpreted. Is there any possibility that what Veysî narrates in the *Habnâme* is his own actual dream experience?⁵⁹

As Peter Burke reminds us, “[h]istorians need to bear constantly in mind the fact that they do not have access to the dream itself but at best to a written record, modified by the preconscious or conscious mind in the course of recollection and writing”.⁶⁰ Since all dreams can only exist as narratives based upon real or fictional visual experiences, and no one can attest to the actual dreaming experience except the dreamer, it is not easy to make a clear-cut division between a “real” dream and a “fabricated” one. Therefore, one sound method to treat dreams is to focus upon their narrativity; that is, how the story is constructed by the dream teller and in what ways the dream story is interpreted by the audience.

Let us begin with the impact of dream nature on the dream’s narration. In building his dream narrative, Veysî might have enjoyed the literary freedom of putting in the same setting historical characters who could never come together in real life. This is one crucial advantage of dreams, which may constitute “a unifying device tying together seemingly unrelated material”.⁶¹ Alexander’s presence in this dream is not coincidental, as it serves well the purposes of the narrative. First of all, Alexander is quite a popular figure in Ottoman literary production and is accorded great respect on the grounds of his political wisdom and heroism.⁶² Although there is some controversy over whether the name Alexander the Two-Horned implies the great Macedonian king or the Qur’anic figure Dhu’l-Qarnayn, in Ottoman literary culture the two are mostly intended as one and the same.⁶³ Therefore, it is more appropriate to treat Alexander the Two-Horned not as the real historical Alexander, but rather as his legend for matters political.

The way that Alexander functions in the *Habnâme* as a tool of narrativity is similar to those dreams in which the dreamer receives messages from an influential deceased person. His role in providing guidance is, however, transformed from a spiritual task into a more mundane, if not secular, one. More specifically, Alexander stands in the *Habnâme* as a paragon giving guidance not in pious terms, but in terms of such earthly concerns as politics, statecraft, and the philosophy of history. Although the use of Alexander as the ideal ruler is common in many other mirrors for princes, Alexander is utilized in the *Habnâme* not only as a role model on whose admired rule the author can juxtapose edificatory stories, but also as an animated character coming to the

fore of the narrative. This probably makes what Alexander says, or rather what is put in his mouth by Veyisî, more special and striking than simply an ordinary reference to him as an ideal ruler.

In this discussion of the impact of the dream form on the narration and reception of the text, studies on the narrative structure and generic features of dream visions in medieval European literature may give additional insight. The genre of dream visions is considered by many scholars as the “genre of the middle ages”.⁶⁴ Among the most prominent examples, one should mention the anonymous *Roman de la Rose*; Geoffrey Chaucer’s *The Book of the Duchess* and *The Parliament of Fowles*; John Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress*; and William Langland’s *Piers Plowman*. Surprisingly enough, it was Bernard Lewis who first brought to the attention of the scholars that Veyisî’s *Habnâme* could be the Ottoman version of Langland’s *Piers Plowman*.⁶⁵

The dream vision is a first-person account of a dream. The narrative is introduced by presenting the dream teller as a character, and usually concludes with a description of his or her moment of awakening, thus serving as a complete reminder to the reader that all the stories, dialogues, and characters that they have read were in the mind of the dreamer.⁶⁶ One important motif common in most of examples is the anxious state of the dreamer before falling asleep. In the prologue section of these narratives, the reader learns that the dreamer has been distressed about some problem. This is, however, not directly recounted, but rather projected through a depiction of the dreamer’s seclusion and solitude. As stated by Peter Brown, “a dreamer is by definition alone, solitary, and separated from social activity”.⁶⁷ The sources of the dreamer’s suffering may vary from the pain of love to a deeper spiritual kind of depression. In any case, this anxiety forms the stepping stone for the entire dream narrative.

The moment of transition from this state of anxiety to the refreshing atmosphere of the dream landscape is the key literary mechanism of this genre. Turning to sleep thus embodies a “fictionality path” whereby the author invites the reader into a complicated literary game in which reality and dreams (or fact and fiction) are intertwined.⁶⁸ In other words, the dream is presented to the reader not as pure fabrication; rather, the reader is encouraged “to regard certain events and narrative strategies as possible, but by no means everything in the account as true”.⁶⁹

Many of these features of dream narratives—such as the dreamer’s pre-dream anxiety, his solitude and seclusion, and his awakening at the end—can also be seen in the *Habnâme*. More important than the impact of dream nature on the narration of the text, we should question in what ways this dream nature may have affected the reception of the work by its readers. Fortunately, we have a number of different interpretations of

the text extracted from the available responses of *Habnâme* readers. This multifarious reception of the *Habnâme* might be attributed to the dream nature of the text, which ultimately creates a blurring effect in the minds of readers.

One possible way to reconstitute readers' responses is to follow the work's dissemination in manuscript culture. The information to be found in available catalogs clearly shows that the text was quite popular, with many individual copies being found in several libraries,⁷⁰ and that is not including lost copies or copies lying undiscovered in personal miscellanies (*mecmua*). An exploration of these manuscript copies gives a hint as to how the text was read by its readers, for the way a copyist reproduces a text, whether on behalf of his or her reading experience or in consideration of the tastes of the book market, may reflect the ways in which it is consumed.⁷¹

Veysi's text was reproduced under the titles *Vakıanâme*, *Habnâme*, *Rijyânâme*, *Rijyetnâme*, and *Düşnâme*, all of which demonstrate the association of the text with the dreaming experience. It is not certain whether all these different names were regarded as a single phenomenon or whether there were important technical nuances. Here, the word *vakıa* is important, as the word in Arabic originally means "incident" or "episode", and it is specifically in Sufi terminology that it has acquired a new meaning describing the experience of the dreamer/seer when he is absent to the world of the senses.⁷²

Unfortunately, the autograph copy of Veysi's work is unknown, and so it is impossible to know what Veysi himself called his account. Moreover, the narrative itself, in the available copies, does not include any of this terminology, nor does it declare a title selected for the work. What the narrative says in the introduction is that one night, when Veysi was in seclusion in a depressed and exhausted manner, "the veil of somnolence" (*perde-i gaflet*) fell over his eyes, and he later found himself among a group of distinguished people in his sleep-led experience. Such a lively portrayal of the moment of separation from the state of consciousness and the entrance into a new form of (dreamt) reality may have sounded familiar to many contemporaries. Considering the fact that dreams and their interpretation were a major part of early modern Ottoman culture, there is a greater possibility that Veysi's narrative created a real dream effect upon its readers.

Related to its dream association, there are at least two copies where the copyist/reader thinks that the text deserves the title *bikâye* ("story"). In the first instance, a version copied in a relatively late period, 1255/1839–1840, is named *Hikâye-i İskender-i Zülkarneyn* (The Story of Alexander the Two-Horned).⁷³ In the dateless second one, the copyist writes down the title in red ink, saying that the name of the book is *Hikâye-i*

Veysî der Menâkıb-ı Mazîyye (Veysî's Story of the Tales of the Past).⁷⁴ In only one instance was the text reproduced under the title *Nasîhatnâme-i Veysî* (Admonition of Veys).⁷⁵

Nasuh Pasha's full reading experience is also worth noting. As far as Nevizâde Atâî's short anecdote is concerned, Nasuh Pasha in fact enjoyed reading the work in the beginning. He even teased Veysî with good intentions, saying that "the best (literary work) is the most lying one" (*ahsanuh akzabuh*). The stress upon "lying" in this context must be associated with Nasuh Pasha's appreciation of the stylistic features and imaginative qualities of the *Habnâme*, for the flow of Nevizâde Atâî's entry definitely implies a positive meaning. In the relevant passage, Nevizâde Atâî says:

He [Veysî] has a *Vakıanâme* which is a comforting and aesthetic work similar to the story of Joseph [*kıssa-i Yusuf*]. It deserves to be named as the best of the stories [*ahsenü'l-kasas*] in consideration of its invention of a whimsical literary stratagem [*bîda-i ihtirama*]. When he [Veysî] presented [it] to the grand vizier Nasuh Pasha, the grand vizier teased him with good intentions, saying "the best is the most lying one" [*ahsanuh akzabuh*]. But later, when he came across in the remaining parts [of the story] the episode on the betrayal of Ibn Alkami, the vizier of the Abbasid caliph al-Mustasim, he suspected that it was a satire of him. Hence he closed the gate of endowment [*der-i ihsanı berkitmişlerdi*].⁷⁶

Nevizâde Atâî's continuous stress upon "story" and literary creativity, as well as Nasuh Pasha's initial positive response regarding the text's "fictionality", are noteworthy reader reactions, giving a colorful picture of how the *Habnâme* was welcomed in its own time as a remarkable piece of imagination. Although Veysî is remarked in current scholarship for his flowery prose style and extreme use of Arabo-Persian vocabulary, the *Habnâme* stands as a relatively simpler text. This is also testified to by Evliya Çelebi, who says nothing negative about the *Habnâme*'s stylistic features while expressing his concern about the *Sîyer* as a work that definitely requires the reader to consult dictionaries.⁷⁷

Another question that is, in a way, related to the reception of the *Habnâme* is why, in the nineteenth century, the work attracted a growing interest, indicated by the number of publications it received. It is true that some examples of Ottoman works of politics and ethics—such as Kâtib Çelebi's *Düsturü'l-Amel li-İslabi'l-Halel*, Hasan Kâfi Akhisarî's *Usûlü'l-Hikem fi Nizâmi'l-Alem*, and Kınalızâde's *Ahlâk-ı Alâî*—were also published in this period.⁷⁸ Furthermore, when Şerif Mardin's remarks on the intellectual heritage of the Young Ottomans are recalled, this interest in "classical" advice literature is not surprising.⁷⁹ However, none of these works enjoyed as many publications as the *Habnâme*. The text was first printed by the Bulaq publishing house in February 1837 and sold in the market for three piastres.⁸⁰ Ten years later, in February 1847, it was published for the first time in Istanbul by the state-owned publishing house Matbaa-i Amire. Its

third edition was completed in the year 1284/1868 by a private publishing house called Vezir Hanı. The company must have obtained a relative success, for they decided to reprint the text in 1286/1870 as part of a collection of Veysi's oeuvre. In the year 1293/1876, the *Habnâme* was published once more by another private publishing house, Şeyh Yahya Efendi. Finally, in 1303/1886, the *Habnâme* was selected by the Mehmed Cemal Efendi printing firm as part of a collection called *Münşeat-ı Azîziye fi Asar-i Osmaniye*.

The wide circulation of the *Habnâme* in the nineteenth century has a mutual relationship with the cultivation of a new genre of dream writing represented especially in the works of Ziya Pasha and Namık Kemal. It is not clear whether Ziya Pasha had a copy of Veysi's *Habnâme* at his own disposal when, in 1869, he was composing his own "*Rûyâ*" ("Dream"), but, when the striking similarities between the two works are taken into consideration, it seems likely that he did.

Like Veysi, Ziya Pasha begins his narrative with a description of his anxiety, caused by the calamitous news he had just read in the newspapers regarding the recent situation of the Ottoman Empire. He is in London when he sees (or writes?) this dream, and, as he tells the story, he goes to Hampton Court and sits on a bank alone. Similar to Veysi's declaration of his desire to talk to Sultan Ahmed I, Ziya Pasha expresses his own long-held wish to speak to Sultan Abdülaziz. Suddenly, the landscape changes, and Ziya Pasha finds himself in Dolmabahçe Palace, where the sultan is walking out in the garden.⁸¹ Ziya Pasha begins to have a conversation with Abdülaziz and tells him why he (Ziya Pasha) was dismissed from office and compelled to go to Europe. In a manner reminiscent in a way of classical advice literature, Ziya Pasha here articulates his own views on actual politics and recommends the measures necessary for improving the current depreciated status of the empire. Just as he convinces the sultan to do, Abdülaziz decides to dismiss the grand vizier Âli Pasha, entrusting Ziya Pasha with informing Âli about this dismissal. Ziya Pasha then goes to Âli's home and apprises him of the sultan's decision. It is at just this moment that he is awakened by the call of the gatekeeper at Hampton Court and realizes that all he has just seen was only a dream.

The *Habnâme* of Veysi and Ziya Pasha's "*Rûyâ*" share much in terms of their introductory descriptions of the dreamer's anxiety, the expression of the desire to meet and talk to the sultan in person, and the declaration of thoughts on the political conditions of the state. Interestingly, Ahmed Hamdi Tanpınar describes Ziya Pasha's "*Rûyâ*" as the first modern "story" in Ottoman Turkish literature and praises its achievement in portraying the psychologies of the characters.⁸² He does not compare

the work to Veysi's *Habnâme*, but the striking similarity between the two works was later indicated by such scholars as Bernard Lewis.⁸³

Ziya Pasha's "*Rûyâ*" not only stimulated such figures as Namık Kemal and Ayetullah Efendi to compose similar dream narratives of their own, but also seems to have aroused some sense of interest by literati toward Veysi's *Habnâme*. For example, in a letter where he vehemently criticizes Ziya Pasha for his "*Rûyâ*", Namık Kemal asks his friend to purchase Veysi's *Habnâme* and send it to him immediately.⁸⁴ Namık Kemal's familiarity with Veysi is of course not due to Ziya Pasha's dream narrative: he admits that, when composing his first prose works, he was under the influence of Veysi's style. Although he later developed a critical view regarding Veysi's wordy expressions, he always appreciated Veysi's prose. He even recommended that the anthology of literature that he suggested for publication for college students include examples from Veysi's works.⁸⁵

Namık Kemal's demand for Veysi's *Habnâme* must originate from Kemal's intellectual responsibilities, as he wanted to review the work before he composed his own "*Rûyâ*" in 1871. The similarity between the two works is limited, and in fact, from Namık Kemal's "*Rûyâ*" onwards, there is a new way of utilizing dreams in Ottoman Turkish literature as a frame to convey the author's utopian ideals. This novelty stems from the fact that the dream now begins to be associated more with progress, futurism, and materialism.

There is no need here to discuss at length the content of Namık Kemal's "*Rûyâ*".⁸⁶ Many renowned figures of late nineteenth- and twentieth-century literary culture, such as Yahya Kemal, Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, and Necip Fazıl, say that Namık Kemal's "*Rûyâ*" was a true legend in their own time. It was banned before 1908, and thus had to be distributed secretly, which might have boosted its popularity. The range of its influence can be deduced from the number of similar dream narratives written in the period. Thanks to studies by M. Kayahan Özgül and Engin Kılıç, we know that such figures as Mizancı Murad, Abdullah Cevdet, Hüseyinzade Ali Bey, Hüseyin Cahid, Hasan Ruşeni, Kılıçzade İ. Hakkı, and many others were involved in this trend of composing utopia-like dream accounts. The work was also influential on some Iraqi writers after being translated into Arabic following the restoration of constitutional monarchy in 1908.⁸⁷

It is difficult to claim that the *Habnâme* was a direct source of inspiration on each and every dream narrative written in this period. However, it is true that, especially for the earlier works of Ziya Pasha and Namık Kemal, it initially set the stage for the development of the genre, and thus that Veysi's creativity may have been instrumental.

Of course, one must acknowledge the inevitable differences between the *Habnâme* and these dream narratives in view of the fact that the content and the linguistic and thematic baggage of the texts, as well as the political positions of their authors, are shaped by distinct historical, sociopolitical, and intellectual realities. Yet, no matter how obsolete the *Habnâme* may have been to some readers, Veysi's narrative survived in the book market up until the turn of the twentieth century.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to provide a literary-historical analysis of a single text written in the early seventeenth century by one of the most prominent literary figures of the time. Although I have analyzed a single literary piece, I have tried to address wider dimensions which are crucial to contextualizing the text and making sense of its many-layered structure. Since Veysi's *Habnâme* stands at the crossroads of several strands of the political, cultural, and literary atmosphere of its time, any study based on its analysis requires taking each dimension into account.

Such a task is not only meaningful to better understanding the text, but also rewarding, as it provides a picture of the intellectual climate of the post-Süleymanic era. In the current historiography of the Ottoman Empire, this era has largely been referred to as a sea change, no matter which term—"decline" or "transformation"—is preferred. While most recent studies tend to point out the transformation the empire experienced by utilizing a careful mixture of first-hand sources, the remnants of the conventional approach inclined to depict the decline of the empire through an exploitation of the writings of contemporary Ottoman literati continue to exist.

Without neglecting the value of early modern Ottoman political writings in portraying the contemporary sociopolitical and financial situation of the empire, this paper's intention has been to show that these writings can best reveal the intellectual and psychological climate, discursive preferences, and literary strategies prevalent at the time they were composed. Thus, individual studies on particular pieces are all the more important in answering the questions of why and how each author wrote. Did he perpetuate the widespread declinist discourse of his age? What repertoire of features and literary conventions did he follow? In what ways did he deviate? What was the role of "invention" in this genre of Ottoman political treatises? What about the role of career expectations, factional positions, and patronage ties of the authors? How might these factors have influenced the representation of each author in his writings?

The dream frame and the extraordinary message based upon a sharp historical realism are two remarkable features that distinguish Veysi's narrative among its peers.

By means of this dream frame, the *Habnâme* acquired a fictional status whereby the author felt free to combine together unrelated materials within a coherent narrative structure. The dreams' authoritative power might also have been instrumental in obtaining the attention of a wider readership. However, this study does not claim to provide satisfying answers regarding how dreams were used and perceived in the early modern Ottoman cultural and political milieu. The tradition of dream writing and its distinct sub-genres certainly requires careful scholarly attention. Nevertheless, the scholars of dreams in Ottoman Turkish culture are often inclined to focus more on the aspect of "experience" than the aspect of "narrative". It is my belief that the narrativity of dreams—*i.e.*, the ways dream stories are constructed and the ways they are interpreted—is a better unit of analysis, one which can give surprising insights about how Ottoman individuals craft and respond to their own stories.

NOTES

¹ Earlier versions of this paper were presented at the 24th Middle Eastern History and Theory Conference at the University of Chicago on 9 May 2009 and the Annual Meeting of the Middle East Studies Association (MESA) on 23 November 2009. I am greatly indebted to all moderators, co-panelists, and other commentators for their constructive observations and commentary. I am also grateful to Prof. Cornell H. Fleischer and Prof. Hakan Karateke for their invaluable comments, and to Basil Salem for proofreading this paper. Needless to say, all shortcomings belong to the author.

² For those studies that view the *Habnâme* as an example of an Ottoman mirror for princes, see: Ağâh Sırrı Levend, "Siyasetnameler", *Türk Dili Araştırma Yıllığı-Belleten* (1962): 167–194; Bernard Lewis, "Ottoman Observers of Ottoman Decline", *Islamic Studies* 1 (1962): 71–87; Pal Fodor, "State and Society, Crisis and Reform, in the Fifteenth-Seventeenth Century Ottoman Mirror For Princes", *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 40 (1986): 217–240; Coşkun Yılmaz, "Osmanlı Siyaset Düşüncesi Kaynakları ile Yeni Bir Kavramsallaştırma: İslahatnameler", *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi* 2/2 (2003): 299–337; Mehmet Öz, *Osmanlı'da Çözülme ve Gelenekçi Yorumları: XVI. Yüzyıldan XVIII. Yüzyıl Başlarına*, (İstanbul: Dergah, 2005, 2nd ed.); Baki Tezcan, "From Veyis to Üveysi: Ottoman Stories of Decline in Comparative Perspective", unpublished paper, The Vienna Conference on Aspects of Imperial Decline and Resistance, 11–13 April 2008. I am indebted to the generosity of Baki Tezcan, who has kindly shared with me his unpublished paper. Apart from these studies, the *Habnâme* has been the subject of at least three monographs. While Hayriye Devran's thesis completed at Istanbul University only provides a transliteration of Veyis's narrative, Nuran Öztürk's article gives an overall assessment of the text's literary features. The work in Russian includes both an analysis and edition of the text but, due to linguistic barriers, I could not use this study in detail. See: Hayriye Deryan, *Habnâme-i Veyis* (unpublished senior thesis, Istanbul University, 1960–61); F.A.Salizvanova, *Khab-name (Kniga Savidenija)*, (Moscow: Nauka, 1976); Nuran Öztürk, "Habnâme-i Veyis", *Bir: Türk Dünyası İncelemeleri Dergisi, Prof. Dr. Kemal Erarslan Armağanı* (1998): 650–669

³ For a detailed biography, see: Ahmet Tunç Şen, *The Dream of a Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Intellectual: Veyis and His Habname* (unpublished M.A. thesis, Sabancı University, 2008), 24–47.

⁴ Kınalızâde Hasan Çelebi 1051–2.

⁵ Veyis, *Münşeat*, in *Siyer-i Veyis: Mekeki ve Medeni* (İstanbul: Vezirhanı Matbaası, 1869); Toska, *Veyis Divanı*.

⁶ Nevizâde Atâi 715.

⁷ Gökbilgin.

⁸ Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi Esad Efendi MS. 3384, 21a.

- ⁹ For the period in question, see: Mustafa Akdağ, *Türk Halkının Dirlik ve Düzenlik Kavgası: Celali İsyanları*, (İstanbul: Barış Yayınevi, 1999) and Bekir Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı-İran Siyasi Münasebetleri: 1578–1612* (İstanbul: İstanbul Fetih Cemiyeti Yahya Kemal Enstitüsü, 1993).
- ¹⁰ Veysi, *Habnâme*, İstanbul: Şeyh Yahya Efendi Matbaası, 1876, 3. Hereafter *Habnâme*.
- ¹¹ *Habnâme*, 4.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, 5–6.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, 6–8.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 8.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 23.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 44.
- ¹⁷ *İnnallahu la yugayyiru mâ bi-kavmin hatta yugayyiru mâ bi-enfisibim*, Qur'an 13:11, retrieved from *The Holy Qur'an* [the electronic source], tr. by M.H. Shakir. The same verse is quoted also by Mustafa Âli and Hasan Kâfi Akhisari in their own mirrors. See: *Mustafa Âli's Counsel for Sultans*, (hereafter *Counsel for Sultans*), 22; İpşirli 248.
- ¹⁸ *Habnâme*, 45.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 45–46.
- ²⁰ Lewis, "Ottoman Observers of Ottoman Decline". Resonances of this old narrative are still prevalent in scholarship, especially that written in Turkish. See: Ejder Okumuş, "İbn Haldun ve Osmanlı'da Çöküş Tartışmaları", *Dîvân İlmi Araştırmalar* 6 (1999): 183–209; Orhan M. Çolak, "İstanbul Kütüphanelerinde Bulunan Siyasetnameler Bibliyografyası", *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi*, 1/2 (2003): 309–378; Yılmaz, "Osmanlı Siyaset Düşüncesi Kaynakları ile Yeni Bir Kavramsallaştırma: Islahatnameler"; Öz, *Osmanlı'da Çözülme ve Geleneği Yorumları*.
- ²¹ In this sense, this article attaches itself more to the approach represented by the recent studies of Cornell H. Fleischer, Cemal Kafadar, and Douglas Howard, who basically argue that the political treatises in question can best reveal the intellectual and psychological climate, discursive preferences, and literary strategies prevalent at the time they were written. See: Cornell H. Fleischer, "From Şehzâde Korkud to Mustafa Âli: Cultural Origins of the Ottoman Nasihatnâme", in *3rd Congress on the Social and Political History of Turkey*, Princeton University 24–26 August 1983, Eds. Heath W. Lowry and Ralph S. Hattox, (İstanbul: The Isis Press, 1990): 67–77 and "Royal Authority, Dynastic Cyclism, and 'İbn Khaldunism' in Sixteenth Century Ottoman Letters", *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 3/4 (1983): 198–220; Cemal Kafadar, "The Question of Ottoman Decline", *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review*, Vol. 4, No. 1-2 (1997–98): 30–75; Douglas Howard, "Ottoman Historiography and the Literature of 'Decline' of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries", *Journal of Asian History*, 22 (1988): 52–77.
- ²² Kafadar, "The Question of Ottoman Decline", 47.
- ²³ Veysi is the first Ottoman intellectual who we know to have adopted the historical vision of Ibn Khaldun after he purchased, in 1598, a copy of the *Muqaddima*. See: Fleischer, "Royal Authority, Dynastic Cyclism, and 'İbn Khaldunism' in Sixteenth Century Ottoman Letters", 198.
- ²⁴ Marlow, Louise. "Advice and advice literature". *Encyclopedia of Islam*. 3rd ed.
- ²⁵ Fleischer, "From Şehzâde Korkud to Mustafa Âli: Cultural Origins of the Ottoman Nasihatnâme", 74.
- ²⁶ *Counsel for Sultans*, Vol. 1, 17.
- ²⁷ *Usûlü'l-Hikem*, 249.
- ²⁸ Kütükoğlu 88–90.
- ²⁹ Yücel 171.
- ³⁰ *Usûlü'l-Hikem*, 267–8.
- ³¹ Murphey 12–18.
- ³² Yücel 93.
- ³³ *Koçi Bey Risalesi* 35.
- ³⁴ Baki Tezcan is of the same opinion; namely, that the *Habnâme* is an anti-declinet treatise. Tezcan, "From Veysi to Üveysi: Ottoman Stories of Decline in Comparative Perspective".
- ³⁵ Nevzâde Atâi 715.
- ³⁶ Öztürk, "Habnâme-i Veysi"; Toska, *Veysi Divanı*

- ³⁷ Kut, Günay. "Veysî'nin Divanında Bulunmayan Bir Kasidesi Üzerine". *Türk Dili Araştırmaları Yıllığı-Belleten* (1970):169–178.
- ³⁸ Tezcan
- ³⁹ Franz Babinger, "Nasuh Paşa", *Encyclopedia of Islam*. 2nd ed.; Tayyip Gökbilgin, "Nasuh Paşa", *MEB İslam Ansiklopedisi*.
- ⁴⁰ Toska, *Veysî Divanı*, 107.
- ⁴¹ Evliya Çelebi 301.
- ⁴² The *rużnâme* registers are records containing short biographical information about all appointees in the upper echelons of the *ilmiyye* [the religious-judicial hierarchy] including the positions of *kadı* [judge], *müderris* [professor], and *muftı* [jurist]. See: Halil İnalcık, "The Ruznâme Registers of the Kadiasker of Rumeli as Preserved in the İstanbul Müftülük Archives", *Turica*, 20 (1988): 251–275.
- ⁴³ Börekçi, Günhan. *Factions and Favorites at the Courts of Sultan Ahmed I (r. 1603–17) and His Immediate Predecessors*. Unpublished dissertation. Ohio State University, 2010: 103.
- ⁴⁴ Börekçi 105.
- ⁴⁵ There is a wide scholarship on the various roles dreams play in Islamic culture, and it is impossible to cite here all these important studies. For an introduction, see: Annemarie Schimmel, *Halifenin Rüyalari: İslamda Rüya ve Rüya Tabirleri*, Tr. from German, *Träume des Kalifen: Träume und ihre Deutung in der islamischen Kultur* (İstanbul: Kabcacı, 2005) and Louise Marlow (ed.), *Dreaming Across Boundaries: The Interpretation of Dreams in Islamic Lands* (Boston, Mass.: Ilex Foundation distributed by Harvard University Press, 2008).
- ⁴⁶ *Counsel for Sultans*, 24.
- ⁴⁷ *Usûlü'l-Hikem*, 249.
- ⁴⁸ The document speaking of a dream of a certain Mehmed Edhemzade, who saw in his dream the conquests of various castles in the Balkans, can be found in BOA, C.Askeriyeye, #501/20932, dated 1737. In another document from the same period, a certain Ayşe Şerife Hatun was gifted eight *akçe*s for her auspicious dream. See: BOA, C.Dahiliye, #142/7081, dated 1739.
- ⁴⁹ Özgen Felek, *Re-creating Image and Identity: Dreams and Visions as a means of Murad III's Self-Fashioning* (unpublished dissertation, The University of Michigan, 2010).
- ⁵⁰ H. Kâmil Yılmaz, *Azîz Mahmud Hüdai ve Celvetiyye Tarikatı*, (İstanbul: Marmara Üniv. İlah. Fak. Yay., 1984); Terzioğlu, D., 139.
- ⁵¹ Bursalı Mehmed Tahir, *Osmanlı Müellifleri*, Vol. 2, 424; Yılmaz, *Azîz Mahmud Hüdai ve Celvetiyye Tarikatı*, 140.
- ⁵² Evliya Çelebi, 301.
- ⁵³ Kinberg, Leah. *Morality in the Guise of Dreams: A Critical Edition of Kitab Al-Manam (Ibn abi al-Dunya)*. Leiden: Brill, 1994.
- ⁵⁴ Sirriyeh 2000, 63.
- ⁵⁵ See: Cemel Kafadar, "Self and Others: The Diary of a Dervish in Seventeenth Century Istanbul and First Person Narratives in Ottoman Literature", *Studia Islamica*, 69 (1989): 121–150; Üsküplü Asiye Hatun, *Rüya Mektupları*, Ed. Cemel Kafadar. (İstanbul: Oğlak, 1994); Cornell H. Fleischer, "Secretaries' Dreams: Augury and Angst in Ottoman Scribal Service", in *Armağan: Festschrift für Andreas Tietze*, Ed. Ingeborg Baldauf, Suraiya Faroqi, and Rudolf Vesely (Praha : Enigma Corporation, 1994): 77–88 ; Mustafa Tatçı and Halik Çeltik, *Türk Edebiyatı'nda Tasavvufî Rüya Tabirnameleri*, (Ankara: Akçağ Yay., 1995); Orhan Şaik Gökyay, "Tabirnameler", *Seçme Makaleler vol.III*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2002), 151–168; Elizabeth Sirriyeh, *Sıfî Visionary of Ottoman Damascus: Abd al-Ghanî al-Nâbilusî, 1641–1731*, (London, New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005); Aslı Niyazioğlu, "16.yy. Sonunda Osmanlı'da Kadılık Kabusu ve Nihani'nin Rüyası", *Journal of Turkish Studies – Türklük Bilgisi Araştırmaları*, 27/1 (2007); 133–143; Aslı Niyazioğlu, "Dreams, Ottoman Biography Writing, and the Halveti-Sünbülî Şeyhs of 16th-Century Istanbul", in *Many Ways of Speaking About the Self: Middle Eastern Ego Documents in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish (14th-20th century)*, Ed. Ralf Elger and Yavuz Köse (Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010): 171–185 ; Felek, *Re-creating Image and Identity*.
- ⁵⁶ Öztürk, Nuran. *Siyer Türri ve Siyer-i Veyî: Diürettü't-Tâc fî Sîreti Sâhibi'l-Mî'râc*. Unpublished dissertation. Erciyes Üniversitesi, 1997: (hereafter *Siyer-i Veyî*) 176–7.
- ⁵⁷ *Siyer-i Veyî*, 250–251.

⁵⁸ Kinberg, Leah. "Literal Dreams and Prophetic Hadiths in Classical Islam: A Comparison of Two Ways of Legitimation". *Der Islam* 70 (1993): 286.

⁵⁹ A surprising example within this context is a mid-eighteenth century text, entitled *İntisâbî'l-Mîlîk* but widely known as the *Habnâme* of Haşmet due to its extremely similar style and content with that of Veysi. In this short piece, Haşmet tells his dream story, in which he sees himself in the court of the reigning sultan, Mustafa III, and receives his praise and favor before several important men, including the kings and monarchs of various European and Asian countries. At the end of this text, Haşmet goes on to say that his dream story is a mannered and ornamented [*sabte ve perdabte*] version of his actual dream. See: Haşmet, *İntisâbî'l-Mîlîk*, in *Haşmet Külliyyatı*, Ed. by Mehmet Arslan and İ. Hakkı Aksoyak, (Sivas: Dilek Matbaası, 1994), 456–470.

⁶⁰ Burke, Peter. "The Cultural History of Dreams". *Varieties of Cultural History*. New York: Cornell University Press, 1997: 28.

⁶¹ Hieatt, Constance B. *The Realism of Dream Visions: The Poetic Exploitation of the Dream Experience in Chaucer and his Contemporaries*. The Hague; Paris: Mouton & Co., 1967: 11.

⁶² Caroline Goodwin Sawyer, *A Study of Ahmedî's 14th-Century Ottoman İskendernâme* (unpublished dissertation, Columbia University, 1997); A. Abel, "İskandarnâme", *Encyclopedia of Islam*. 2nd ed.

⁶³ Pala, İskender. "İskender mi, Zülkarneyn mi?". *Journal of Turkish Studies-Türkîlik Bilgisi Araştırmaları* 15 (1991).

⁶⁴ Lynch, Kathryn L. *The High Medieval Dream Vision: Poetry, Philosophy, and Literary Form*. Stanford University Press, 1988: 2.

⁶⁵ Lewis, "Ottoman Observers of Ottoman Decline", 74.

⁶⁶ Russell 128.

⁶⁷ Brown, Peter. "On the Borders of Middle English Dream Visions". *Reading Dreams: The Interpretation of Dreams from Chaucer to Shakespeare*, Ed. Brown. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1999: 29.

⁶⁸ Bachorski, Hans-Jürgen. "Interpreting Dreams in Medieval Literature". *Dreams & History: The Interpretation of Dreams from Ancient Greece to Modern Psychoanalysis*. Ed. Daniel Pick and Lyndal Roper. London; New York : Routledge, 2004: 60.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ In retrieving this data, two online catalogs were used in comparison to one another: < <http://www.yazmalar.org>> and Türkiye Kütüphaneleri Veri Tabanı, available at <<http://ktp.isam.org.tr/>>.

⁷¹ Marginalia, the notes of readers and/or copyists, are another important source for reconstructing the way a text is received. Unfortunately, among over thirty copies I was able to locate in the Süleymaniye library, I could not find any substantial marginal note that could be illuminating of that particular reader/copyist's reading experience.

⁷² Sirriyeh, *Sufi Visionary of Ottoman Damascus*, 62.

⁷³ Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi Yazma Bağışlar, MS.1459.

⁷⁴ Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi Yazma Bağışlar, MS.5351/2.

⁷⁵ Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi Arslan Kaynardağ, MS.135/5

⁷⁶ Nevizâde Atâî, 715. I thank Prof. Karateke for helping me decipher the real meaning of the term "*der-i ihsanı berkitmişler idi*".

⁷⁷ Evliya Çelebi, 301.

⁷⁸ See the reference works followed in retrieving this data: Jale Baysal, *Müteferrika'dan Birinci Meşrutîyet'e Kadar Osmanlı Türklerinin Bastıkları Kitaplar, 1729–1875 (Kitapların Tam Listesi ile)* (İstanbul: Hiperlink, 2010); *Millî Kütüphane Eski Harfli Türkçe Basma Eserler Bibliyografyası*.

⁷⁹ Mardin, Şerif. *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought: A Study in the Modernization of Turkish Political Ideas*. New York: Syracuse University Press, 2000 (especially chapter III).

⁸⁰ Bianchi 48.

⁸¹ Ziya Paşa 109–110.

⁸² Tanpınar 306–7.

⁸³ Lewis, Bernard. *Modern Türkiye'nin Doğuşu*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1984, 2nd ed.: 139.

⁸⁴ Zeynelabidin Reşad, *Edebiyat Kumkumusu* (Haleb: Haleb Vilayeti Matbaası, 1326), 25. Quoted in Özgül 28.

⁸⁵ Yetiş 14.

⁸⁶ For a summary and analysis of the narrative, see: Özgül, *Türk Edebiyatında Siyasi Rüyalar*, 59–73; Engin Kılıç, “Tanzimat’tan Cumhuriyet’e Edebî Ütopyalara Bir Bakış”, *kitap-lık* 76 (2004): 73–88.

⁸⁷ Erol Ayyıldız, *Arapça Bir Rü’ya Fantezisi, Tercemesi ve Nâvî Kemal’in “Rü’ya”sı ile Mukayesesi*, (Bursa: Uludağ Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi, [t.y.]).

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