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THE VOCABULARY OF DISORDER IN A LATE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY OTTOMAN REFORM TREATISE: NİHĀLĪ'S *MIRROR OF THE STATE*

Let us picture for a moment the offices of the imperial chancery in Istanbul in the late eighteenth century. Carter Findley estimates that more than 1,000 scribes staffed the offices of central bureaucracy around this time.[1] Most of them were highly-trained and experienced bureaucrats privy to the most important affairs of the Ottoman state. These scribes were well aware of the eminence of their positions, which, by the way, grew more influential during the course of the eighteenth century. Especially those working under the director of the imperial chancery (*re'īsü'l-küttāb*) held particular prestige and were often eventually promoted to top administrative positions. These men created the memory of the empire. They defended imperial ideology and the laws of the state against possible digressions. Some of them were thinkers and theorizers. Were they conservative regarding the administration of state affairs? There is no reason to doubt their passion for fundamental Ottoman values. The glory of the Ottoman state was in all probability central to their professional identity.

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1. Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform*, p. 56.

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Let us then take another moment to imagine how these scribes may have interacted with, and influenced each other in matters relating to the Ottoman state and society. These bureaucrats followed events with uneasy attention, and were probably eager to exchange ideas over coffee and a pipe. Perhaps they did not shy away from lambasting the government's policies with trusted colleagues. No doubt, there were cliques. Disagreements on certain topics naturally took place, as in any group of accomplished ambitious men. Some of them were parties to this or that policy due to their allegiance to a particular grandee – or perhaps out of sincere conviction. One could say that the offices of the central bureaucracy were like a campus housing several smaller enclaves of like-minded men.

Uprisings in the imperial capital had rocked the city in recent times. Did the bureaucrats sense that the Ottoman state and society were falling into ill times around the 1750s? Some certainly did. The real disaster, as we understand from the ink spilled, was the 1768-1774 Russo-Ottoman war. It appears that this defeat profoundly panicked bureaucrats of all ranks, and had the effect of a rude awakening to the dysfunction of the state and society, not to mention the military.

Taking as a starting point the brief remarks in Nihālī's treatise of the 1780s and a few others from the same milieu, it is safe to assume that one of these enclaves of like-minded men in the 1760s-1770s was the "peace party"-"doves," in modern political parlance. The Grand Vizier Rāġıb Meḥmed Paşa (in office from 1757 to 1763), who himself climbed the ladder from the position of scribe in the central bureaucracy, is the only statesman who receives a brief mention in Nihālī's treatise: one obvious reason for the disastrous 1768-1774 Russo-Ottoman war, declares Nihālī, was the fact that no far-sighted statesman was around after the demise of the paşa in 1763. Apparently, the grand vizier strongly advised against the war when Sultan Muṣṭafā III (r. 1757-1773) consulted him about rising tensions with Russia. The paşa further strove through his policies to prevent the state from entering into the war. Unqualified statesmen, says Nihālī, misread the political conjunctures after Rāġıb's demise and entered the war hoping for a quick victory, which turned out to be disastrous for the Ottomans.

Virginia Aksan, and more recently Ethan Menchinger, have pointed to a paradigm shift in the attitude of some bureaucrats towards warfare in the later eighteenth century. Several of these prominent officeholders rationalized the necessity of peace at this juncture. Some had been proponents

of peace before the 1768 war, but no doubt seeing the Ottoman military in tatters made it easier to shift gears from an aggressive foreign policy to a more peace-oriented one. Aḥmed Resmī (d. 1783) was a bureaucrat and statesman who hailed from this background. According to him, warfare was not a political imperative and lasting peace should be the ultimate aim of the state, even if victory is a possible outcome of conflict. Dürrī Meḥmed (d. 1794) and Aḥmed Vāṣıf (d. 1806) were two others who adamantly believed that Ottoman state's entry into the 1768 war was a mistake and that peace would have been preferable. Dürrī postulated that having peace was good for the state.[2]

Being a proponent of peace was only one of the ideological attachments that Nihālī shared with colleagues. He believed that the Ottoman state and society was in complete disarray and indeed on the brink of breaking down altogether much like Dürrī Meḥmed. The latter dealt with similar issues as Nihālī, and frequently from a similar perspective. He composed his *Selected Wishes for Reducing Mischief and Disorder* (*Nuḫbetü'l-Emel fī Tenqīḥi'l-Fesād ve'l-Ḫalel*) just about a decade before Nihālī, in 1774.[3] Just like Nihālī, Dürrī also primarily focused on the disarray in the bureaucracy and the society. He also saw oppression and injustice as the underlying cause of many social ills, and regarded the blurring of social lines as a major problem for society. He, too, believed that there were once competent, effective, and honorable men of state, commanders, officers, whereas these days they were lacking. Dürrī also firmly believed that deviation from time-honored ways of doing things was a primary source of disarray. There were two obvious differences between these two thinkers. First, Dürrī's idealized golden age was specific: the reigns of Meḥmed II (1451-1481) and Süleymān I (1520-1566), much in line with other statesmen who penned reform tracts in the late eighteenth century.[4] Second, there is no indication that Nihālī subscribed to the otherwise popular Ibn Khaldūnian schema of rise and fall of dynasties. Dürrī, on the other hand, did.[5]

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2. See Aksan, *An Ottoman Statesman*; Menchinger, "Peace, Reciprocity;" and Menchinger, *The First of the Modern Ottomans* for the ideas in this paragraph. Also cf. Atik, "Kayserili Devlet Adamı Dürri Mehmed Efendi ve Layihası" and Menchinger's introduction to Ahmed Resmî, *Hulâsatü'l-İ'tibâr*.

3. Atik, "Kayserili Devlet Adamı Dürri Mehmed Efendi ve Layihası." Also see: Sariyannis, Tuşalp Atiyas, *Ottoman Political Thought*, p. 142-143.

4. See Çağman, *III. Selim'e Sunulan Islahat Layihaları*, passim.

5. http://ottpol.ims.forth.gr/?q=el/content/nuhbet%C3%BC%E2%80%99l-emel-selected-wishes (accessed 14 February 2018).

The similarities in ideology and approach of Nihālī and Dürrī Meḥmed are not surprising, as both served as scribes in the chancery. We can assume that some of their information was supplied by the grumbling that circulated in governmental offices concerning the dire state of affairs. Those who found Rāġıb Paşa's policies rational must have felt all the more distressed after the war. It is for modern historians, then, to imagine how the opinions of the high-ranking scribes and bureaucrats of the empire were shaped by new ideas and by developments that might have given a good shake to long-held beliefs. The close quarters of bureaucracy must have facilitated the creation of enclaves of ideas. Intellectual trends and opinions on policy-making no doubt swept through the ranks of bureaucrats who were united in the same ultimate project of bringing glory to the Ottoman state.

I would like to view Nihālī's *Mirror of the State* (*Mir'ātü'd-devle*) in this light. The short treatise was composed circa 1784. The manuscript, which is most likely the autograph copy, comprises eighteen folios, remains unfinished, and survives to date in a unique, but damaged copy. Numerous corrections and comments were written in the margins of the work about ten years after its original composition. In the main text, Nihālī lays out what he had observed as the causes and manifestations of disorder in Ottoman society. Drawing upon years of experience, the author uses emphatic, at times harsh, language. He goes on to offer solutions for the problems identified; some brief, others longer.

First I will establish the context in which this treatise was composed. Next, I explore the ways in which Nihālī describes and labels the broken-down order in different segments of the Ottoman state and society. My aim is to understand the vocabulary, and thereby concepts related to disorder encoded in this bureaucrat's language. One could say that Nihālī's diagnoses are rather conservative: he postulates that disorder stems from disregarding age-old ways of doing things. Yet, his goal-oriented bureaucratic rationality is quickly recognizable, as I will detail below. There are some limitations inherent in examining one author's vocabulary. No doubt, it is prudent to compare Nihālī's vocabulary synchronically and diachronically with other Ottoman thinkers' usage of similar concepts. Only then will we be able to better understand the vocabulary of a very dynamic sphere – namely politics.[6]

6. The evolution of political terminology in the Middle East have been treated by various scholars, e.g., Rebhan, *Geschichte und Funktion*; Lewis, *The Political Language*

Finally, in the last two sections of my essay, I discuss the problems of authorship and provide a detailed summary of the text. As the water-damaged manuscript demonstrates a good many problems, I hope the summary will assist researchers in identifying the topics handled by Nihālī for further study.

Text and Context

Marinos Sariyannis identifies two floresences of reform treatises in the eighteenth century – one during Aḥmed III's reign (1703-1730) in the earlier part of the century, and another during and after the Russian wars in the last quarter of the century.[7] Within the latter group, two further waves are recognizable. The impetus to evaluate the serious state of affairs began during the ongoing war with Russia that ended in 1774 with devastating results for the Ottoman state. Well aware that this was a humiliating blow, several state officials put down their suggestions for reform. The catastrophic defeat became the top item on the agenda and diverted all attention to the need to modernize the military. We shall call these the "first wave" of reform treatises instigated by the events of the unfolding war, and especially by the defeat suffered in 1774.

Before the Ottoman state could fully recover from the aftereffects of the 1768-1774 war, a new conflict with Russia arose in 1787, which occurred simultaneously with the Austro-Ottoman war of 1788-1791. Selīm III ascended the throne in 1789 as both conflicts dragged on. The Russian war ended in 1792 without much positive outcome for the Ottomans. Now that the protracted military occupation of the state had been put on hold, Selīm issued an edict inviting Ottoman bureaucrats to submit treatises to propose reforms. The number of treatises submitted reached some twenty or more, which would constitute the "second wave" of reform treatises. Not surprisingly, the suggestions were overwhelmingly about military reforms.[8] Ottoman thinkers did not see a more pressing issue than modernizing the army.

It is convenient to regard the two wars with Russia – one that began in 1768 and ended 1774, and the second one that broke out in 1787 and

of Islam; Ayalon, *Language and Change*; Doganalp-Votzi, Römer, *Herrschaft und Staat*; Reinkowski, "The State's Security."

7. Sariyannis, Tuşalp Atiyas, *Ottoman Political Thought*, p. 137.

8. Çağman, *III. Selim'e Sunulan Islahat Layihaları*; Öğreten, *Nizam-ı Cedid'e Dair Askeri Layihalar*.

ended 1792 – as a single protracted conflict.[9] However, a few treatises from among the first wave of the late eighteenth-century treatises stand out for their additional emphasis on non-military matters. Canikli ʿAlī Paşa's *Stratagems for Wars* (*Tedābīrü'l-Ġazavāt*), composed in 1776, deals with a variety of topics, such as the vizier's moral qualities, the need for consultation, and a plea to revive the *timar* system, but the problems of the army clearly take up the majority of the booklet.[10] In the same vein, Süleymān Penāh's *History of the Morean Revolt* (*Mora İḥtilāli Ta'rīḫçesi*), composed in 1785, has a wide-ranging reform plan in non-military matters ranging from financial to bureaucratic regulations.[11]

Apart from his ideological attachment to the "peace party" that I outlined above, Nihālī's treatise is well situated within this first wave of late-eighteenth century reform tracts. Its first iteration, that is, the main text, was written some ten years after the end of the 1768-1774 war (the marginal notes updating the text were probably made after Selīm III's request for reform suggestions in 1792). In a short paragraph before the introduction, Nihālī lists the reasons for composing the treatise, namely the deficit in the state treasury and the disorderliness of society. Although Nihālī reserves the introduction to a brief discussion of the Russo-Turkish war of 1768-1774, the treatise is not about the war or failing Ottoman military power. He includes a few general remarks as to why the war could not be prevented and why the Ottoman soldiers were unmotivated during the battles, but unlike many late-eighteenth century authors he does not register criticism of military tactics or propose any military reforms. He does not attempt to analyze the expanding influence of Russia, refer to the well-trained European armies as examples, or lament the loss of Crimea. In fact, his analyses for the causes of the war in the introduction are rather simplistic and naive. However, it is clear that he sees the devastating defeat as a cataclysmic event that caused many existing problems to surface.

Nihālī's primary concern was social disarray caused by injustices committed against ordinary subjects. The topics he deals with were not the

9. Beydilli, "Küçük Kaynarca'dan Tanzimat'a Islahat Düşünceleri," p. 25-26.

10. Özkaya, "Canikli Ali Paşa'nın Risalesi 'Tedâbîrü'l-Gazavât'." Also see Schaendlinger, "Reformtraktate," p. 250f.; Sariyannis, Tuşalp Atiyas, *Ottoman Political Thought*, p. 144. Cf. http://ottpol.ims.forth.gr/?q=content/ted%C3%A2b%C3%Aer%C3%BC%-E2%80%99l-gazav%C3%A2t-expedients-war (accessed 14 February 2018).

11. Berker, "Mora İhtilâli Tarihçesi veya Penah Efendi Mecmuası."

problems of higher echelons of the bureaucracy: his concern is not the disagreements or rivalries between high-ranked bureaucrats or power groups around the sultan. He does not attempt to submit counsels for the ruler.

Following the introduction, he expounds upon the wasteful expenditures on luxury goods as a factor contributing to the economic crisis. The growing deficit of the state coffers are the result of unnecessary spending and large salaries paid to excessive numbers of state employees, some of whom draw more than one. Finally, in the last and longest chapter on the topic of oppression of Ottoman subjects, his points relate to the extra duties levied from the peasantry. He devotes one sub-chapter to each one of the following groups of oppressors: viziers, judges (*qāḍī*), tax farmers (*mültezim*), and overseers (*mübāşir*). The final sub-chapter is dedicated to the migration of peasantry into Istanbul, the overpopulation of the city, and its consequences for the provinces.

Nihālī's observations are brief yet thorough. A goal-oriented pragmatism stands out in his proposed solutions, which include Machiavellian methods – such as resorting to "moles" from inside the janissary establishment to identify anyone who draws more than one salary from the state treasury. Much of what Nihālī puts forth as dysfunctionalities of the Ottoman state appear to be based on firsthand knowledge (*yaqīn taḥṣīl etdigi mertebe*); but he also notes that he has studied the histories and reflected on the political conjunctures of previous generations (*tetebbuʿ-ı tevārīḫ-i selef ve teʾemmül-i aḥvāl-i ḫalef*), although he does not specify his sources. Nihālī does not lay out a theoretical schema for his diagnosis or remedies. This is not to say that his criticisms were not inspired by larger concepts of justice that would have been digested by an Ottoman bureaucrat. His disapproval of people breaching their designated social class through violation of dress codes must have its origins in the idea of a circle of justice. For Nihālī, the orderly and just government of society revolved around the proper management of finances, which would have been achieved by people overcoming greediness and the desire to advance their own interests.

I would not suggest that Nihālī had a unique eye for diagnosing problems. On the contrary, several of the topics he focuses on had either been dealt with in earlier treatises or would be discussed by other authors of his time. What is more interesting is how this particular individual presented the problems he saw around him. Süleymān Penāh, for instance,

has a section on a scheme concerning judges and substitute judges similar to that of Nihālī.[12] Both authors write about a corrupt system wherein an appointed judge would "farm out" his position to a substitute judge. However, Nihālī's depiction is bolder and edgier than that of Süleymān Penāh, and also more pessimistic, one could say, in that he proposes a backup plan if this lucrative business cannot be banned.

Analyzing the contents of later eighteenth-century reform suggestions, Sariyannis further suggests classifying them based on the authors' two primary approaches, either as "innovative traditionalists" or "westernizers," though he emphasizes that the line separating the two groups is blurred. The authors of the late eighteenth-century preferred to pinpoint specific problems in various institutions and offer concrete practical advice for mending them.[13] While all of these authors put the need to revamp the army at the top of their agenda, the "westernizers" advocated a western-style reform, such as forming a new army which would be trained with the European military methods. "Traditionalists" are a bit loosely defined by Sariyannis, but Nihālī would probably fall under that category. I would like to emphasize that upgrading the army was in no way a priority for him, as far as we can glean from his treatise. He is rather blunt in depicting gloomy Ottoman realities from his perspective, which merits a closer look.

The Vocabulary of Disorder

Sultan and state

While the "state" (*devlet*) is omnipresent throughout Nihālī's treatise, the sultan is curiously elusive.[14] He is only mentioned a few times: There are not even the customary praises to the sultan at the beginning of the treatise. To be sure, when mentioned, he is properly given his due attributes of eminence. In a treatise focused mostly on oppression and injustice, the sultan is not presented as the overarching provider of justice or the benefactor of order in society – as he would have been in a mirror for princes in the sixteenth century. Nihālī notes at one point that the oppressors in the provinces should beware that the scourge of the sultan (*ġażab-ı pādişāhāne*) will punish them if they continue with their mischievous

12. Berker, "Mora İhtilâli Tarihçesi veya Penah Efendi Mecmuası," p. 314-317.

13. Sariyannis, Tuşalp Atiyas, *Ottoman Political Thought*, p. 137ff.

14. See Sigalas, "Devlet et État," for the evolvement of the term *Devlet*; cf. also Zemmin's article in this volume.

ways. Equally absent is the vocabulary that had traditionally described the sultan's compassionate and merciful protection of his subjects. Words like *şefqat* or *ḥimāyet* denoting compassionate protection of the people were often used to describe the patrimonial duty of the sultan. Perhaps the final product of the treatise was to be reworked once more by its author. I am, however, inclined to view this absence as the product of a practical-minded Ottoman bureaucrat. Nihālī knew well how things were administered in the central bureaucracy. His observations and solutions were the pragmatic result of years of experience. Virgina Aksan observed a similar attitude in Aḥmed Resmī's political writing and evaluated it as a "break with … sultan-centered cycles of virtue and justice."[15]

The "exalted Ottoman State," (*devlet-i ʿaliyye-i ʿOs̱māniyye*), on the other hand, looms large in the text, and is sometimes given anthropomorphic attributes. The word "*mizāc*," meaning "temperament, disposition, or the state of health," (and commonly used for humans) is regularly used in the work to describe the "character" or "conventions" of the Ottoman state. For instance, Nihālī sees incompetent and inexperienced people as the cause of many problems. In the past, state officials faithfully toiled in a position for 20-30 years. Only after learning about the etiquette (*ādāb*) and the *mizāc* of the state were they appointed to higher, more important offices. Nowadays, laments Nihālī, some ignoble people with evil spirit come to these positions without being aware of the *mizāc* of the state (*mizāc-ı Devlet-i ʿaliyyeden bī–ḫaber bir ālāy heyūlā maqūleleri*). It is absolutely detrimental (*mużırr-ı maḥż*), in his view, that base people (*edānī ve esāfil maqūleleri*) are privy to the secrets of the exalted Ottoman state. In the same line, Nihāli postulates that the *mizāc* of the state would be cured by the medicine of the Prophet's government methods (*Muḥammed ül-Muṣṭafā …, ki edviye-i siyāset-i şerʿiyyesi iṣlāḥ-ı mizāc-ı mülk ü devlete vāqīdir*).

Temporal references

Nihālī was a seasoned bureaucrat, who had seen, in his view, better times. If he was indeed favored by Rāġıb Paşa, his ascendance ended when the latter passed away. He remembers the paşa as an able statesman, and deplores the newer generation of unqualified political figures. In these circumstances, it is perhaps to be expected that Nihālī would see a

15. Aksan, *An Ottoman Statesman*, p. 195.

departure from time-honored customs as one of the underlying causes of disorderliness in the affairs of the state and society. Certainly the injunction to respect "ancient" customs as a reference point for a well-functioning society is not limited to Nihālī or his time. In fact, rhetoric against uncontrolled change is usually more powerful than substantive. What these "age-old" customs actually were often remains unspecified, as they are vaguely identified within the context of their disintegration. In other words, the "age-old" customs are not typically regarded as the sinews that keep an orderly society together until they are perceived to have been lost or degraded, when they become a convenient scapegoat for societal ills.

Nihālī is very clear on the fact that the Ottomans had enjoyed a long-established rule and a fundamental order (*qā'ide-i qadīme ve niẓām-ı aṣliyye*). In order to restore order to society, he wrote, things needed to return to their former state and time-honored order (*keyfiyyet-i sābıqa ve żābıṭa-i qadīme*) – though he does not refer to an idealized period or the specific reign of a sultan. His references are merely to a "previous" time when things functioned properly. For example, all segments of the society need to abide by the dress regulations that were specific to their class since time immemorial (*qadīmden*). Previously *(muqaddemā*), proclaims Nihāli, a dress regulation stipulated that the *'ulemā* and the state officials don the dresses and headgears that their professions required, and that recently (*biraz müddetden–berü*) people have been ignoring that code again. The striving for order shall also not disregard the "necessities of [current] times and [current] conditions" (*muqteżā-yı vaqt u ḥāl*).

Disintegration and its causes

The most striking and richest part of Nihālī's politically inspired vocabulary relates to the dysfunctionality and disintegration of the Ottoman state and society. With a wide array of vocabulary and imagery, the author successfully paints a dreadful picture of a society in distress. Nihālī ordinarily uses *iḫtilāl* to describe the breakdown of an aspect of society: *iḫtilāl-i niẓām*, for instance, is a general disintegration of order; *iḫtilāl u fesād* also denotes an emphatic dissolution of order. New problems and difficulties (*'usret*) surfaced in administering the affairs of the state. Malady is one of the metaphors he uses to portray the condition of the people: The minds of people are full of worry and their hearts are confused (*ḫāṭırları pür–ġam ve dilleri derhem*). They have been struck by a

strange disease (*her kes bir derd-i ġarībe mübtelā ve her bir ferdi bir ʿillet-i ʿacībeniñ istīlāsı*) such that their minds have been afflicted by a defluxion of grief and sadness (*dimāġ-ı kāffe-i enām muḫtell-i zükkām-ı kudūret olup*). In the face of this societal and economic collapse, people have become incapacitated and confused (*ʿāciz ve müteḥayyir*) with regard to the proper course for taking care of their businesses and a variety of [new sorts of] troubles and anxieties have emerged (*ġavāʾil-i gūnāgūn ẓuhūruyla*).

The key terms of the sections on injustice and oppression are *żaʿf u telāş* and *perākende vü perişānlıq*, which Nihālī uses to describe the condition of ordinary tax-paying and tax-exempt subjects (*reʿāyā ve berāyā*). These adjectives denote a weakness, vulnerability, and an ensuing alarm that have been affecting people. Just as often used by Nihālī are the phrases *ẓulm u taʿaddī* and *cevr ü eziyyet* to denote injustice and oppression causing the confused state of the peasantry. All of them indicate various degrees of violation of the rights of subjects. For example, high-ranked state functionaries in the provinces armed with the powers of Holy Law and Sultanic Law have been abusing their powers and committing injustice (*ḥukkām-ı şerʿ u ʿörfüñ teʿaddī ve tecāvüzleri*).

Strikingly, while Nihāli establishes a vast vocabulary for oppression, his lexicon to describe a just rule is meager. Loaded words that are otherwise so prevalent in Ottoman political rhetoric are absent, such as "just" or "justice, equity" (*ʿādil*, *ʿadālet, ʿadl*), "public order" or "security" (*āsāyiş*, *emniyyet*). The only phrase that comes close to this idea is *iʿmār-ı memleket ve istirāḥat-ı raʿiyyet*, which, incidentally, is used by Nihālī to signify a lack thereof: Viziers who are appointed to provinces do not undertake measures to promote the "prosperity of the lands and contentment of the subjects," because they expect to be dismissed from their positions in three or four months.

One of the main causes of unruliness, according to the treatise, is disregard and disrespect for the law. The author postulates that the affairs of the people should be seen to according to laws and regulations (*şerʿ-i şerīfe ve qānūn-ı münīf ve şurūṭ ve quyūda taṭbīq*), but unqualified state functionaries have been in violation of the the sultanic law, the *qānūn*, or the Holy Law, the sharia – (*ḫilāf-ı qānūn ve muġāyir-i şerʿ-i şerīf*). The devolution from a stable past to an unstable present is a consequence of disregard for long-established conventions. According to Nihālī, "people's conditions have changed [for the worse]" (*aḥvāl-i ʿālem müteġayyir*), since the order of the state and society has become unstable.

He describes the increasing disorder in society with well-known metaphors: "Things have moved out of their age-old [designated] circles" (*dāʾire-i qadīmesinden ḫurūc*) and "have taken on new forms" (*ṣūret-i āḫer kesbiyle*). Matters have been disturbed as they fell off of the thread of order (*rişte-i intiẓāmdan ḫurūc*). Curiously, Nihālī accepts that a certain degree of degeneration over time is to be expected (*mürūr-ı eyyām ile muḫtell olan mevādd*), but writes that it must be addressed with the proper measures, and then given time to redress itself (*müsāʿade-i vaqte daḫi muḫtāc*). What he opposes vehemently is the fact that state officials profit from disorder, instead of attempting to restore order.

Groups of people

People from all walks of society have not only transgressed their boundaries (*ḥaddlerini tecāvüz*) and become accustomed to mistreating each other (*ẓulm u ġadr*), they breach the boundaries of Holy Law in their conduct (*cemīʿ-i eṭvārlarında ve ḥarekātlarında ḫudūd-ı şerʿ-i şerīfi tecāvüz*). Excessive expenditures (*keşret-i meṣārifāt*) have become a problem for individuals, and caused a strain on the state coffers (*mużāyaqa-i ḫazīne*).

Nihālī has a rich vocabulary for discrediting groups who abuse their power and oppress common people. While he is a bit reserved on viziers in one of his sub-chapters dedicated to them, he lashes out at substitute judges: They are ignorant sinners, tyrants, cursed ones (*cāhil fesaqa ve ẓaleme*, *melāʿīn*); the tax farmers (*mültezim*) are vile and low people. Unfortunately, these cheaters, oppressors, tyrants (*esāfil, edānī, müflis, ẓālim, cebābir*) number also among the state employees. *Müfsid* or "mischief-maker" is a strong word that Nihālī uses once. Some *müfsid*s, asserts Nihālī, incited and seduced the sultan (*taḥrīk-i iġvā*) to enter the war. Some civil servants have been untrustworthy, breached their contracts with the state, and committed injustice against commoners (*ʿibādullāh ve Devlet-i ʿaliyyeye ġadr u ḫıyānetler*). They have used a variety of tricks and methods to extract money from the common people (*baʿż-ı bidaʿ u meẓālim iḥdāṯıyla*). Members of society should be freed from the long-oppressing hands of the tyrants (*dest-i teṭāvül-i ẓeleme*).

Tradesmen are indistinguishable in their mischief from state officials. They not only dress and live beyond their means (*īrād-ı qadīmleri maṣraflarını iḥāṭa ėtmeyip*), but they employ cheating, fraud, (*baʿż-ı [mekr] u ḥīle irtikābı*) and unlawful methods (*efʿāl-i nā–meşrūʿa*) in order

to cover their expenses. The majority of the population of Istanbul have become indebted (*medyūn*) and, therefore, confused (*müteḥayyir*) in trying to manage their affairs. People have come up with various devices (*ḥiyel-i gūnāgūn iḥtirāʿı*) in their respective trades and crafts, and most of them have joined the party of the treacherous ones (*ḥāʾin zümresi*). In accordance with the meaning of the aphorism "Perfidy brings poverty" (الخيانة تجلب الفقر),[16] Nihālī declares, each one of these dishonest people have been befallen with calamities and difficulties (*muṣī[be]te giriftār ve bir meşaqqata dūçār*).

The ordinary tax-paying and tax-exempt subjects, or the peasantry, are regularly rendered with *reʿāyā ve berāyā* (or just *reʿāyā*). A related compound that he regularly employs is "*reʿāyā* and others" (*reʿāyā ve sāʾirleri*), although it probably refers to the same peasantry. *Tebʿa* or "the subjects" is not in Nihālī's vocabulary. The word *reʿāyā* took on a limited meaning from the late eighteenth century onwards, particularly in European travellers' accounts. It was often used to describe the "oppressed Christian subjects" living under the Ottoman policy. Although a known word, *tebʿa* would become widely used after the first quarter of the nineteenth century, not only to describe the peasantry, but all subjects of the empire.[17] If *tebʿa* carries loose political overtones (as it implies a recognition of, or subjugation to, a political authority), *reʿāyā* "the flock" became an image of a bygone era. Nihālī uses a few neutral words to describe all the subjects living in the Ottoman lands, such as *efrād-ı ʿālem* "people of the world", *ʿibādullāh* (or *ʿibād*) "servants of God", or *kāffe-i enām* "humankind overall."

Āhālī is always used to refer to a designated group of people, such as *āhālī-i İstanbul* "the population of Istanbul;" *ṭaşra āhālīleri* "the populace of the provinces," but also for smaller groups of people as in *āhālī-i dīvān* "the imperial council staff." Traditionally used for ethnic and religious communities, and oftentimes with a bit of a derogatory undertone, the word *ṭāʾife* "group, class, tribe" appears only once, in an example about the rebel groups in Anatolia known as the *ṭāʾife-i Celāliyān*. The

16. Text has "الخيانة تجري الفقر". The version I preferred above is a more common iteration, and occasionally accepted as a prophetic saying in the Shia tradition; cf. Al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī's (d. 1693) *Wasāʾil al-Shīʿa* XIX, p. 76, hadith number 24190; accessed at https://alkafeel.net/islamiclibrary/hadith/wasael-19/wasael-19/19003.html#47 on 15 February 2018.

17. Cf. Doganalp-Votzi, Römer, *Herrschaft und Staat*, p. 239, 249, where the authors demonstrate that *tebʿa* was a neologism of the nineteenth century. Hindoglu, for example, still renders "*reʿāyā*" with "sujets" as late as 1838 in *Ḥazīne-i Luġāt*, p. 248.

word *ümmet* ("umma") "Islamic community, nation" never appears. *Millet* is used once in the marginal notes in the phrase *mülk ü millet*. This term does not seem to denote a religious community either, but "people" in general (*ḥüsn-i idāre cemīʿ-i zamānda mülk [ü] millete ḫayr-ı küllī olup*). While *ʿāmme* "the public" never appears in the book, Nihālī uses once the word *cumhūr* "the public" or "the community at large" to specifically refer to the "affairs of the community" in the following usage: those [officials] charged with "public administration" (lit. "administering the affairs of the community" *tedbīr-i umūr-ı cumhūra meʾmūr olanlar*).

While the impetus for Nihālī to write this treatise may have been his personal observations of injustices committed against ordinary subjects and his desire to rectify the situation, his point of view is completely from side of the state. The actual viewpoints of the common people as to whether things are good or getting better, or they are satisfied, content, or happy never appear as a query. Perhaps, because Nihālī did not see, or at least write about, successful administration or good government, there was no occasion to use such words. According to Nihālī, the contentment of the subjects would only be achieved through the implementation of correct actions by the administration: If injustice was being committed by the high-ranked state functionaries, it needed to be fixed. How the outcome would be perceived by common subjects is completely outside of his interest. This differs from what Maurus Reinkowski found in nineteenth-century official correspondence. Then, words such as contentment, satisfaction, appreciation (*ḫoşnūdiyyet*, *memnūniyyet*, *teşekkürī*) referring to the commoners' responses to governmental interventions would begin to appear.[18]

Authorship

The information we have on Nihālī is sketchy and confusing. Most of what we know comes from the great encyclopedist Meḥmed Ṭāhir's (d. 1925) entry in his 1924 compendium of Ottoman authors, the *ʿOṣmānlı Müʾellifleri*. Ṭāhir's entry on the author is titled "İbrāhīm bin Süleymān Ḫalīfe, Nihālī," who, he says, was the composer of the *Mirror of the State*. The author of the treatise under investigation here, however, refers to himself only with his pen name "Nihālī." This causes some confusion due to the fact that Nihālī was a popular pen name.[19]

18. Reinkowski, "The State's Security," p. 202.

19. Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall included in 1836 in his anthology of Ottoman poets five different individuals with the name Nihālī, only one of whom having lived in the

Ṭāhir further assumes that the author of the mentioned treatise and a separate treatise titled the *Mirror for the Wise* (*Mir'ātü'l-ʿuqalā*), in which the author identifies himself as "İbrāhīm Nihālī bin Süleymān Ḫalīfe," are the same person.[20] The difference in the topics of the two works aside, the conspicuous similarity in the titles, i.e., the *Mir'ātü'd-devle* and the *Mir'ātü'l-ʿuqalā*, and the proximity in dates of their composition brings to mind the possibility of a single author. If it is indeed the case, that is, if both works were composed by the same Nihālī, he cannot have died in 1186/1772-73 as Ṭāhir suggests. The author of *Mirror for the Wise* gives Şaban 1213 (beginning of January 1799) as the date of composition for his book.[21] Ṭāhir claims to have seen the date of İbrāhīm bin Süleymān Ḫalīfe's passing in archival registers (*ferāşet defterleri*).[22] Furthermore, another biographer Şefqat (d. 1826) includes in his dictionary of poets a certain "Nihālī Meḥmed," who he says also died 1186. Apparently, this Nihālī Meḥmed was also one of the scribes of the imperial council.[23] To confuse matters further, Meḥmed Sʿüreyyā (d. 1909) includes an "El-Hāc İbrāhīm Efendi" with a death date of 1186 in his encyclopedia of Ottoman personalities, the *Sicill-i ʿOsʿmānī*.[24] Baġdādlı İsmāʿīl Paşa pushes back Nihālī İbrāhīm bin Süleymān Ḫalīfe's date of death to 1228/1813, which looks acceptable. He ascribes only the *Mirror for the Wise* to this Nihālī.[25]

Were there two Nihālīs, one who died in 1186/1772-73 and another in 1228/1813? If so, were they both scribes? Were there two Nihālīs, one Nihālī İbrāhīm and one Nihālī Meḥmed? Did the works, *Mirror for the Wise* and *Mirror of the State*, belong to the same author? *Et cetera*…

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eighteenth century. The Austrian orientalist quotes a single chronogram composed by the eighteenth-century poet by name of Nihālī for a building at the arsenal in Istanbul, with no further information on the author himself. Hammer-Purgstall, *Geschichte der Osmanischen Dichtkunst* I, p. 313; II, p. 236, 550; III, p. 165; and IV, p. 328.

20. Süleymaniye Library (Istanbul), Bağdatlı Vehbi 1560, fol. 1b.

21. He quotes a chronogram to indicate the date of composition: "Five months shy of [the numerical value of] *Sulṭānü'l-ġālib*" [which gives 1213] (*Sulṭānü'l-ġālib ta'rīḫine beş māh qaldıqda*); Nihālī, *Mir'ātü'l-ʿuqalā,* Süleymaniye Library (Istanbul), Bağdatlı Vehbi 1560, fol. 35b.

22. Meḥmed Ṭāhir *ʿOsʿmānlı Mü'ellifleri* III, p. 155-156. Franz Babinger replicated Ṭāhir's entry, therefore does not add to our knowledge on Nihālī; cf. Babinger, *Die Geschichtsschreiber der Osmanen*, p. 291-292.

23. Şefkat-i Bağdâdî, *Şefkat Tezkiresi*, p. 272-273. Same information is also included in Silahdar-zade Mehmed Emin's *Tezkire-i Silahdar-zade*, p. 231; cf. Esʿad Meḥmed, *Bāġçe-i Şafā–endūz*, p. 181f. *Fatih Tezkeresi* does not list a Nihāli.

24. Meḥmed Sʿüreyyā, *Sicill-i ʿOsʿmānī* I, p. 134-135.

25. İsmāʿīl Paşa, *Hadiyyat al-ʿĀrifīn* I, p. 42.

There are some holes in the information we have about Nihālī that prevent us from making a series of conjectures.

Should we take the details in the treatise as our starting point, there is no doubt that Nihālī was a civil servant of the Ottoman state (*bendegānından maʿdūd olduġumuz Devlet-i ʿaliyye-i ʿOs̱māniyye*). His observations indicate that he had first-hand knowledge of the internal functioning of the bureaucracy. Ṭāhir's account that Nihālī was employed at the scribal offices of the treasury for the two Holy Cities and, later, at the imperial council can be correct. The author's praiseful comments about the Grand Vizier Rāġıb Paşa (d. 1763) suggest that the author was perhaps favored by the grandee.

Manuscript[26]

In 1968, Barbara Flemming described the unique copy of the treatise.[27] Meḥmed Ṭāhir mentioned the treatise in a single sentence in the aforementioned entry in his encyclopedia on Ottoman authors. It is reasonable to assume that Ṭāhir saw a copy of this work in Istanbul, but there is no known copy in Turkish libraries today. The manuscript Ṭāhir saw could of course have been the same copy, before it was purchased by Karl Süssheim (d. 1947). After his demise, the German orientalist's private library was acquired by the Westdeutsche Bibliothek in Marburg which, after the unification of West and East Germanies, was merged with the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz. It is still kept there today under the catalogue number Hs. or. oct. 902.[28] Folio 1a features the ownership seals of "Karl Süssheim," and "Westdeutsche Bibliothek," but also an Ottoman individual by name of "Meḥmed Saʿīd ibn ʿOs̱mān," who is not identifiable. The manuscript is water-damaged in the middle and end parts; the first pages of the manuscript remain intact and legible, but it becomes difficult to decipher subsequent sections in the text, as the ink is dissolved from pages being stuck together.

26. I extend my thanks to Marlis Saleh of the University of Chicago Library for securing a digital copy of the manuscript for me.

27. *Verzeichnis der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland* I, p. 228.

28. I thank Christoph Rauch, the Director of the Oriental Manuscripts section of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, for seeking information about the acquisition of the book by Karl Süssheim. If we knew where and when he bought the manuscript, the problem would be partially solved.

Main text

The main text runs from 1b to 18a and is written in a neat *nesḫ* script of scribal quality, though curiously featuring a good number of misspellings. It is reasonable to assume that the text was transcribed from a draft copy. With only one sentence written down, the conclusion of the book is unfinished. The author might have not composed the conclusion in the draft (if there was one), and perhaps planned to add it subsequently. He indicates at the outset that he designed the book as an introduction, four chapters (*faṣl*), and a conclusion. The author announces at the beginning of the fourth chapter that it will have four sub-chapters (*nevʿ*), but this chapter is in fact divided into five sub-chapters, which altogether constitute almost half of the manuscript. The fifth sub-chapter on "Migration to Istanbul" only loosely aligns with the other four sub-chapters thematically. Each of the first four sub-chapters describes the desperate situation of the peasantry through oppression by a different group of high-ranked state functionaries. The fifth sub-chapter on migration is presented as a consequence of these oppressions. Therefore, the fifth sub-chapter appears to be added as the author was already putting down the text. These indications lead me to believe that this is an autograph copy.

Evidence in the text suggests that the main text was written after the end of the 1768-1774 Russo-Ottoman war. The author refers to Rāġıb Paşa (d. 1763) and Sultan Muṣṭafā III (d. 1774) as *merḥūm*, or "the deceased." He makes a reference to the ruling sultan, but only with his titulature, and not with his name. However, his remark that the sultan "ended the war" must mean that he is referring to ʿAbdülḥamīd I, who ascended the throne in January 1774 and was hard-pressed to end the war in the summer of that year. The information that narrows the time span for the composition date of the treatise is Nihālī's observation that certain tough regulations were put in effect in a matter of a few years ("four-five years" crossed out). If the author is referring to the regulations initiated in 1783 and 1784 in the military, fiefs, and dress codes, among other things, during the term of Grand Vizier Ḫalīl Ḥamid Paşa (term 1782-1785), we can assume that the treatise was written in 1784 or shortly after that date.[29] Although Nihālī praises these recent regulations, he does not mention the paşa's name.

29. For Halil Hamid Paşa's reforms, see Aḥmed Cevdet, *Taʾrīḫ* II, p. 242, 317, 359; III, p. 83; also see Uzunçarşılı, "Sadrazam Halil Hamid Paşa."

Marginalia

Notes of various lengths were written on the margins of several pages. Some notes merely updated the dates or periods of time since the occurrence of an event mentioned in the original text. Others made stylistic tweaks or rectified grammar. The most substantial additions, however, are updates in light of new political realities (on folios 4b, 5a, and 6b). For instance, sections praising ʿAbdülḥamīd I's efforts to end the 1768-1774 war were crossed out, as apparently they were outdated by then, and new comments were added. The note reflects the political situation after the same sultan made the decision to enter into a new war with Russia in 1787, and with Austria one year later (fig. 1, fol. 4b, p. 443).

One of the intricate questions surrounding this manuscript is whether or not the marginal notes were made by the author himself, and if so, when. As opposed to the neatly written main text, the notes were carelessly jotted down in *divani kırması* script, i.e., different from that of the main text, hence it is not clear whether they are by the same hand. There are some stylistic similarities with the main text which lead me to believe they were by Nihālī. If we assume that they were by a later reader, the question would be why anyone would take the trouble to update the treatise so meticulously.

The question of when he made the corrections cannot be answered with certainty either. On folio 1b, the first marginal note starts with a remark that "this treatise is contrary to the current methods" (*bu lāyiḥa şimdi olan uṣūl ile ẓıḍḍ olup*) (fig. 2, fol. 1b, p. 444), and adds that the topic of reducing expenditures would [still] seem beneficial. The note continues for a few more lines on the topic of frugality. The fact that the marginal notes refer to ʿAbdülḥamīd I as "the deceased" indicates that they were taken after his passing in April 1789. There are even secondary degree marks of proofreading on marginal notes: sections or some words in the marginalia are also crossed out. If we assume that the marginal notes and the later proofreading marks were all done by the same person, it would mean that he carried out a gradual editing and copy editing process.

We are able to push the date forward a bit more based on Nihālī's marginal remark about a new sultan's enthronement – his name is not mentioned, but it would clearly be Selīm III in 1789 – and that peace was concluded, which would happen in 1792. These indications bring us to the time when Selīm requested that Ottoman bureaucrats submit treatises

to propose reforms, which I referred to as the "second wave" of reform treatises above. Was Nihālī then motivated to return to his treatise after this request?

My working assumption is that the main text was written between 1774 and 1789, and most probably during or shortly after 1784. The author composed a large part of the treatise, but as he put it down he made some changes to the original format that he had conceptualized, adding a fifth sub-chapter. However, he lacked a conclusion and was thus unable to complete the treatise and put it into circulation. It may also have been a risky endeavor to do so after Ḫalīl Ḥamīd Paşa's dismissal as the grand vizier and his subsequent execution in the spring of 1785.[30] Scholars agree that the paşa must have been accused of conspiring to install Prince Selīm to the throne, and that as a consequence tensions were high in the city. But Ḫalīl Ḥamīd's passive policy towards the Russians' aggression in Crimea had also aroused indignation with the public at large.[31] A treatise promoting peace was unlikely to be received well in this environment. Coincidentally, the grand vizier who replaced Ḫalīl Ḥamīd was nicknamed "Şāhīn," i.e. ʿAlī Paşa, "the Hawk" (or "Falcon," term 1785-1786). If his moniker had nothing to do with the word's modern English political connotation, he was indeed an able warrior, and was appointed to the position due to his service during the 1768-1774 war. He and his successor Yūsuf Paşa (term 1786-1789), but primarily Cezāyirli Ġāzī Ḥasan Paşa (d. 1790) behind the scenes, were all proponents of war. As mentioned above, during their terms a new conflict with Russia arose in 1787 and the Austro-Ottoman war broke in 1788.

Therefore, the manuscript remained a unique copy in Nihālī's possession. He may have been motivated by the request by Selīm III to submit reform treatises in 1792. The author probably reevaluated some of his earlier suggestions, updated them, made some amendments, but must have felt that the overall text did not fit the rapidly changing circumstances. The 1792 call to submit reform proposals primarily brought forth suggestions concerning military matters, on which this author lacked expertise. Therefore, he did not submit it this time either. While these assumptions are speculation, the contents of the treatise are unaffected by questions of authorship.

30. I thank Ethan Menchinger for bringing this last point to my attention.
31. Beydilli, "Halil Hamîd Paşa," p. 318.

In Lieu of a Conclusion

Was Nihālī an original thinker? His vocabulary of disorder reminds us of similar concepts used by the seventeenth-century *nasīḥatnāme* authors. It is often the case that such fundamental administrative vocabularies tend to survive over decades, and even centuries, while their contexts and referents change. In other words, the very same vocabulary takes on subtle new connotations in new environments. Nihālī's examples illustrating the categories of injustice, oppression, and disorder belong to his time. They should be seen as signposts for decoding the period-specific meanings of the political vocabulary he utilizes. Nihālī's attachment to age-old customs or traditional ways of doing things was mentioned above, and it is thus no surprise that he intellectually availed himself of traditional concepts. Understanding concepts of, for example, oppression in the late eighteenth century will require studying the concepts in their changing circumstances synchronically and diachronically. Nihālī was perhaps a mere anxious civil servant – one who wrote down his observations of the dysfunctions in Ottoman administration and society.

A Summary of Nihālī's *Mirror of the State*

Foreword: Reasons for composing the work (foll. 1b-2b)

After submitting his thanks to God and praises to the Prophet, Nihālī dedicates a paragraph to his reasons for composing the treatise. State expenditures have increased and the treasury has been drained. Ordinary tax-paying and tax-exempt subjects (*reʿāyā ve berāyā*) are in a miserable condition; people from all walks of life complain about their situation. Things have moved away from their traditional places, which have caused mischief and disarray. A variety of problems have made state governance difficult and ineffective. The author would like to shed insight on these problems.

Introduction: Reasons for the war with Russia, 1768 (foll. 2b-6b)

The introduction details the reasons for the 1768 Russian war. The war has one obvious and one concealed reason. The fact that no far-sighted statesman was available after the demise of Rāġıb Paşa in 1763 is the obvious reason for the war. When Sultan Muṣṭafā III consulted with the paşa,

the latter voiced concern that even if a few towns could be captured in a military campaign, it would not be possible to defend these positions. As the inhabitants of the localities would be poor and would have nothing to lose, they would engage in ruses and schemes. It would be a waste of resources. The Ottoman soldiers are unwilling to go on a campaign in such circumstances.

After the death of Rāġıb Paşa, unqualified statesmen read the political conjunctures wrong, hoping for a quick victory. Calculating their own benefits, they identified some movements of the enemy as a breach of treaties to the sultan. They presented a plan in which the army would triumph within one year, but then met a crushing defeat. These incompetent political opportunists were later punished by the sultan.

As for the concealed reason, Nihālī mentions diminishing respect for Holy Law. Ottoman officials, and indeed people from all strata of society, are not content with their earned income and are greedy for more. In order to quench their cupidity, state officials seize people's possessions illegally, a situation that angered God. Many of these people were hit by calamities. The war with Russia could only be brought to an end after the current sultan [Abdülḥamīd I] came to power [in 1774]. Regulations within the state organization that would take 30 years to implement, were carried out in the last four-five years (this last sentence was crossed out, and instead, a note was written on the margin about the Ottoman state entering a new war with Austria and Russia [in 1787] and this situation weakening the state even more). After the war ended, the grand vizier conducted an investigation into the common people's circumstances to determine if things were being administered in line with both holy and sultanic laws. Precautions were needed to protect commoners from oppressors, and especially to reinstate order and address issues (rules and regulations) which have been ignored. It is important to take current conditions into consideration. It takes time to restore things that have been degenerating for a period of time. There are civil servants who resist reregulating matters because their illegal incomes would dry up.

Chapter one: Sumptuous clothes, luxurious accessories (foll. 6b-8b)

State officials of all ranks, and indeed all people have become used to splurging on sumptuous dresses and luxurious accessories. The headgear and clothes of religious scholars and state employees had previously been regulated, and people used to shame and warn those who ignored the

dress codes. However, nowadays this is a non-issue. Some people go beyond their means to purchase these items. On top of this, certain European ornaments have become fashionable. Dressing in such a despicable manner is called "elegant" (*ẓarāfet*) these days.

Bureau chiefs did not allow such extravagant expenditures in the past. And yet, nowadays no one denounces lavish dresses, opulent accessories, or garments that are not designated for one's class or position. Moreover, officials have come to be appointed according to their appearance, which has resulted in incompetent people occupying the positions in government offices. As outer appearance came to be instrumental in coming by a position, non-pretentious officials felt compelled to go with the tide and dress sumptuously. In fact, the whole population of Istanbul became affected by this development. Those who did not have enough money to buy extravagant clothing used illegal methods to come by the means. People going beyond their means to dress extravagantly should be punished, or let go. State employees of all ranks should be encouraged to dress according to the codes from 20-30 years ago.

Chapter two: Increase in state expenditures (foll. 8b-10b)

Income for the treasury is insufficient for a few reasons, namely due to the rearrangement of salaries for campaign and other unexpected but necessary expenses. New income streams should be created for the treasury without being punitive on the people, and state spending must be reduced in such a way that it does not delay or obstruct the functioning of affairs. Old and new expense ledgers should be brought from the financial offices. Not only the ledgers need to be examined, but also scribes and other officers from the departments of the treasury should be interviewed. Competent officials should be appointed heads of departments and given some job security and autonomy as to how they manage their tasks.

The easiest way to reduce the expenditure line for salaries is to interview the officers, scribes, and other employees to suss out those who are drawing more than one salary. For instance, during the salary distribution, the officials should match and note the name of the person who receives the salary and the actual record in the register (*icmāl defteri*). Once there is a verified list of salaried personnel, the registers should be rearranged. Many officers in Istanbul actually draw salaries allocated to remote fortresses. Trusted scribes should prepare new salary registers. Those responsible for administering the registers should be guaranteed

their positions for a few years. Since this issue is delicate and not without risk, says Nihālī, he would refrain from offering his other solutions in this treatise, although apparently he had ideas.

Chapter three: Excessive numbers of state employees (foll. 10b-11b)

Gatekeepers, imperial scribes and other palace employees used to stay in their jobs for 20-30 years, gather experience, and thoroughly learn the ways in which the state administration functioned. Nowadays, incompetent people who have no idea about the conventions and practices of the state, find employment as scribes of the imperial council (*ḫᵛācegān-ı dīvān*) or in other offices, due to their success in military campaigns or by giving inducements. These men do not care whether the tasks they perform are in the best interest of the state, or in accordance with the law. If an office has too many employees, there is usually chaos. One should not allow these immoral people to become privy to state secrets. The credentials of such employees need to be checked, and those who do not merit their position should be let go. One should keep meticulous lists and avoid enlisting unnecessary state employees.

Chapter four: The vulnerable and confused state of the peasantry

A: Oppression committed by viziers (foll. 11b-13b)

The viziers are forced to move often and to faraway posts either due to military campaigns, frequent appointments, or because they are demoted and penalized to lower-rank positions; sometimes all the way from Anatolia to Rumelia or Rumelia to Anatolia. These office holders extract their moving expenses and other costs from the local people. They have an income allocated to their position, but they do not expect to collect it for another four or five years. Being convinced that they will be reappointed to a new post in a few months, they do not care to invest time and energy to improve and develop their respective localities. They strive only to collect the income associated with their position.

The viziers should not be allowed to collect more remuneration than they have traditionally been allocated. Sanctions should be put in place to see to people's affairs in accordance with the law. Taking away horsetails and standards, that is, demoting them, is one possible sanction. The imperial palace should make it clear that the sanctions will be implemented without fail. If a complaint is submitted to the imperial council about an

injustice committed by a vizier, they should be punished without mercy. Nihālī also proposes that viziers be assured of longer tenures.

B: Oppression committed by judges[32] *(foll. 13b-14b)*

The next sub-chapter deals with the injustices committed by judges (*qāḍī*) and substitute judges (*nā'ib*). Nihālī describes how some judges "farm out" their positions as if they were fiefs with a fixed monthly payment through the mediation of agents (*qapu ketḫudāları*) to "ignorant sinners and oppressors." The substitute judges even add their own travel expenses and other fees on top of the monthly payment, and levy the amount from ordinary tax-paying and tax-exempt subjects. The local notables and high-ranking officers are also in on these schemes. It is difficult to describe exactly the injustices they commit against the peasantry, but everyone knows about these issues.

To prevent this, all judges must be given an examination in the presence of the chief mufti and the two military judges. According to the outcome of this exam, a new list should be prepared of those who merit the position they hold and those who are actually able to fulfill their duties. Incompetent ones should be crossed out from the rolls. If regulating this issue thoroughly now is not feasible, at least the substitute judges should [only] receive half of ("quarter of" crossed out) actual income. A system based on competence should be put in effect for substitute judges. Bribes, apart from the customary payments, for securing appointments should be prevented. Because there are too many *qāḍī*s, one may only obtain an appointment once in eight or ten years, which is one source of oppression (because judges want to make as much money as possible during their short tenure). However, if it is decreed that someone who resigns from his position this year can obtain another after one year's interval, the judge will not experience difficulty and will see to the affairs of the people in accordance with Holy Law. No new positions should be given to novitiates. Also, judges should not take their families to their places of appointment, but travel with one or two servants. They should be made aware that they will be dismissed if they do not see to the affairs of the commoners in accordance with Holy Law. Things will improve only if a few judges who take bribes or behave contrary to the Holy Law are punished.

32. I am grateful to Akiba Jun of Chiba University for clarifying this section to me. He is also preparing a study on the topic, see his forthcoming "Ottoman Venality."

C: Oppression committed by tax farmers (foll. 14b-16b)

Most tax farmers (*mültezim*) of fiefs (*zeʿāmet ve tīmār ve muqāṭaʿāt*) and trustees of foundations (*evqāf mütevellīleri*) are in debt because of the extra financial contribution demanded from them due to military campaigns, or just because they overspend. In order to take out more loans from debtors, they mortgage their yearly income before it is even collected, and take on more debt with interest. When a subject in their jurisdiction starts to complain about the situation, they silence them with threats. This creates a vicious cycle. In order to obtain cash from ordinary tax-paying and tax-exempt subjects in their jurisdictions, they pressure them to sell their animals or goods, trick them with a promise of future income sources, and bribe the judges and local notables to turn a blind eye to the situation.

Fiefs should not be given to those who pay with cash taken from moneylenders. Fief holders who do not have an active post with the state should personally keep the fief, and others who hold an office should have their representatives administer it. For up to three years, no one should be allowed to take money from third parties to take care of their fief, instead the revenue source should be given to salaried agents to manage (*emānete tefvīż olunup*). Fief holders who oppress the peasantry should be punished and their right to fiefdom should be seized.

While previously the revenue sources (*muqāṭaʿāt*) had been farmed out every year, in order to maintain prosperity in the provinces and to provide income for the salaries of state employees, they have been given for longer periods of time (*mālikāne*) with payment upfront. Yet, with the idea that it is beneficial for the state, for some time *mālikāne*s have been distributed to whomever makes an upfront payment for a *muqāṭaʿa*. As a result, most of the revenue sources went to tradesmen, usurers, local powerholders, and other base people. Their upfront payments are cash from debtors anyway. In order to collect, they oppress the peasantry. Also by giving the revenue sources to these types of people, the salaries of state employees are cut, and cause many more problems.

*D: Oppression committed by overseers (*mübāṣir*) (foll. 16b-17a)*

Administrators and officers in the provinces disseminate unfounded accusations about the local powerholders and others (*aʿyān-i vilāyet ve*

sā'irleri). They incite commoners to submit complaints to the central administration and ask for overseers (*mübāşir*) to investigate the issues. Consequently, central administration orders the provincial governors to send an overseer to the localities where the complaint originates from. Instead of dealing with the sources of the complaints, these agents are more interested in collecting their payments. Everyone knows that the local administrators and officers are also in on these schemes. Most complaints submitted to the central administration are about settling business, i.e., resolving conflicts or finding solutions to debt payments. In many cases, however, there are no real accusers or accused. According to this scheme, the subjects are penalized or their property confiscated by agents who undertake supervisions. Asked about their specific assignments, these overseers do not even have a clear answer.

As a solution, no agent should be charged to investigate trivial complaints. Tax-paying subjects should be protected.

E: Overpopulation of Istanbul (foll. 17a-18a)

This sub-chapter deals with one consequence of the injustices suffered by subjects at the hands of high-ranked state functionaries in the provinces (*ḥukkām-ı şerʿ u ʿörf*). Tax-paying subjects have been abandoning their lands and migrating to Istanbul for some time. Some of these migrants signed up for *medrese*s in Istanbul, others joined the janissary regiments. Still others are employed as carriers, servants, or boatman. The overpopulation of Istanbul by these migrants is neither good for the city, nor beneficial to the provinces. For instance, while the lump-sum tax used to be divided among the 100 inhabitants of a village; with a reduced population, the tax shares have become exorbitant. This situation created a chain reaction, causing more villagers who cannot afford the new tax amounts to migrate to Istanbul. Provinces have become devastated in the last 20 years.

A census should determine the numbers of people in various sections of society. The newcomers should then be sent back to their hometowns. Migration to Istanbul should be forbidden. Janissary regiments need also to be surveyed, and surplus people should be dismissed. Even the numbers of servants for the grandees should be limited. Local registers should be fetched to the central administration in order to determine the number of migrants and regulate migration.

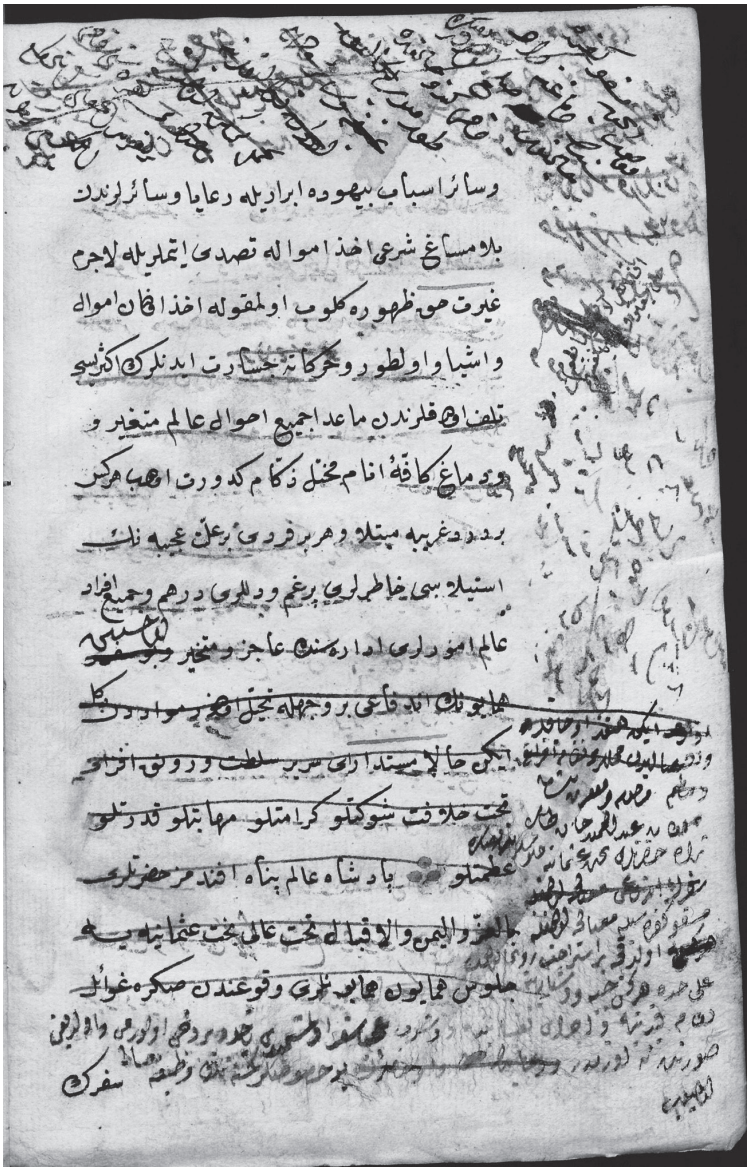

Fig. 1. Fol. 4b: Sections praising ʿAbdülḥamīd I's efforts to end the 1768-1774 war were crossed out (lines 9-15). The marginal note reflects the political situation after the same sultan made the decision to enter into a new war with Russia in 1787, and with Austria one year later.
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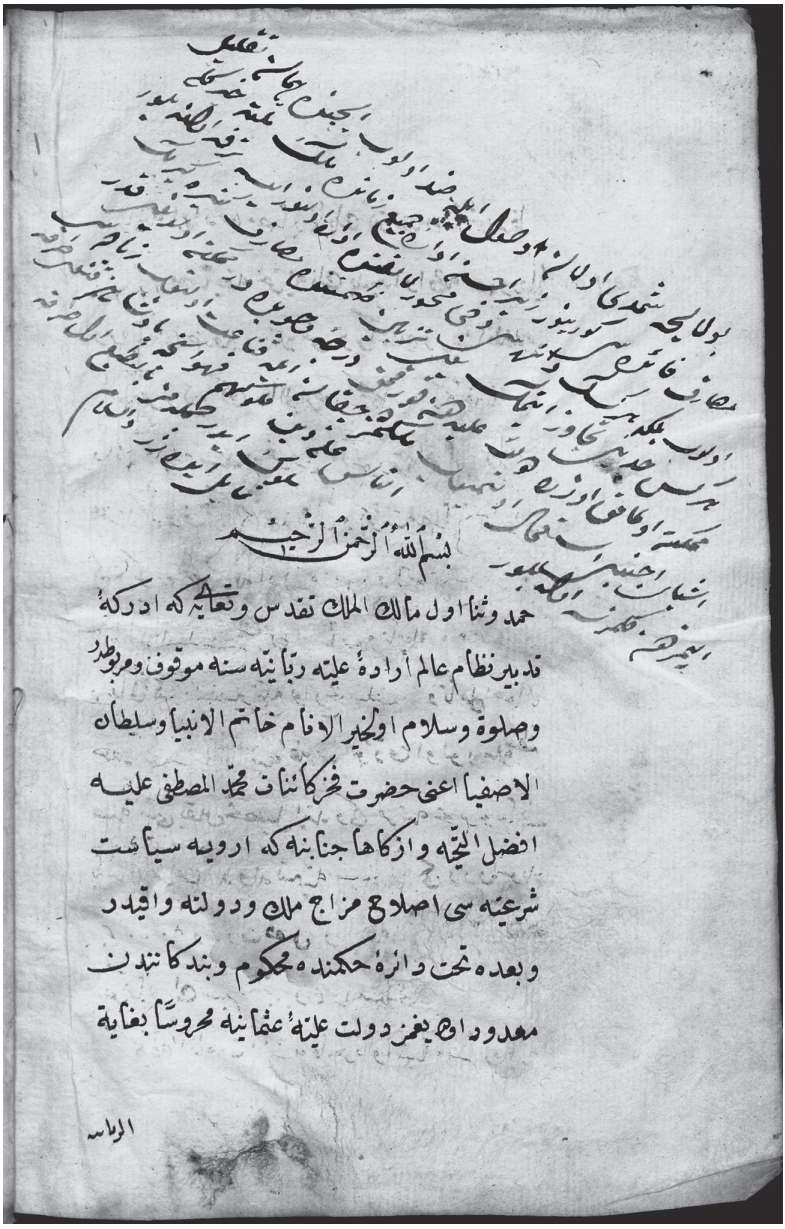
بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

حمد وثنا اول مالك الملك تقدس وتعالى كه ادركه

تدبير نظام عالم ارادهٔ عليه ربانيه سنه موقوف ومربوطدر

وصلوة وسلام اولخير الانام خاتم الانبيا وسلطان

الاصفيا اعنى حضرت فخر كائنات محمد المصطفى عليه

افضل التحيه وازكاها جنابنه كه اردويه سياست

شرعيه سى اصلاح مزاج ملك ودولته واقيدد

وبعده تحت دائرهٔ حكمنده محكوم وبند كا تندن

معدود واو يغمز دولت عليهٔ عثمانيه محروسًا بغاية

الوالسه

Fig. 2. Fol. 1b: The marginal note starts with a remark that "this treatise is contrary to the current methods" (*bu lāyiḥa şimdi olan uṣūl ile ẓıḍḍ olup*). (© Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin - Preußischer Kulturbesitz Hs. or. oct. 902.)

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Hakan T. Karateke, *The Vocabulary of Disorder in a Late Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Reform Treatise: Nihālī's* Mirror of the State

This article investigates the context and circumstances around the composition of a treatise written by a bureaucrat of the central administration at the end of the eighteenth century. The short treatise was written after the 1768-1774 Russo-Ottoman war, but was neither finished, nor did it circulate. The copy studied here is a unique manuscript, probably the autograph copy. Nihālī's observations share a number of similarities with other concerned observers of his time, but also some distinct suggestions. The present article focuses on the vocabulary that the author uses to describe the disarray in Ottoman state and society. A detailed summary of the text is provided at the end of the article, as the unique manuscript is partially water-damaged.

Hakan T. Karateke, *Le vocabulaire du désordre dans un traité sur la réforme ottomane datant de la fin du XVIII^e siècle :* Le miroir de l'État *par Nihālī*

Cet article étudie le contexte et les circonstances de la composition d'un traité écrit par un bureaucrate de l'administration centrale à la fin du XVIII^e siècle. Ce bref traité a été écrit après la guerre russo-ottomane de 1768-1774 mais ne fut ni achevé ni mis en circulation. La copie étudiée ici est un *unicum*, probablement la copie autographe. Les observations de Nihālī présentent un certain nombre de points communs avec celles des autres observateurs de son temps, mais proposent aussi quelques suggestions distinctes. Le présent article se concentre sur le vocabulaire qu'utilise l'auteur pour décrire le désarroi dans l'État et la société ottomans. En outre, un résumé détaillé du contenu du texte est fourni car ce manuscrit unique est partiellement endommagé par l'eau.