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TEMPORAL AND SPIRITUAL POWER IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY OTTOMAN POLITICS: SHAYKH KHALID, GÜRCÜ NECİB PAŞA AND THE NAQSHBANDIYYA-KHALIDIYYA

Sean FOLEY

Abstract

This study, analyzes (researches) of the questionable relationships in 1820ies between one of the Muslim saint and religious savant Naqshbandiyya Shaykh Khalid (1776-1827) with Mehmed Ali and the loyal political actors of the Ottoman Empire. It criticizes of the point of the view about Khalid of Buturus Abu-Manneh, Hamid Algar and the other researchers. Including to these researchers, Khalid, himself and Khalid's religious order which is Naqshbandiyya-Khalidayya engages in a confederation with Ottoman Empire and Orthodox Sunni Muslim. Instead of this, by using Halid's letters, court decision and Ottoman archives this study discusses those: Shayk Khalid at the basic sought for a follower group and he did not think the Naqshbandiyya-Khalidayya religious order as an Ottoman or Sunni institute. Even though this study finds out some proofs about the relationship between the Sunni Muslims, Ottoman government members and the Naqshbandiyya-Khalidayya, it shows those: Right along with Iranian Shia Muslims, the Arabs in Iraq and Syria who were fighting with the central Ottoman government constantly tied up with this religious order.

Key words: Naqshbandiyya-Khalidayya, Shayk Khalid, Sufi, Ottoman State, 19th Century Political History, Mehmed Ali Paşa.

Ondokuzuncu Yüzyıl Osmanlı Siyasetinde Bölgesel ve Ruhani Güçler: Şeyh Halid, Gürcü Necip Paşa ve Nakşibendi-Halidiyye

Özet

Bu çalışmada Ondokuzuncu yüzyılın önde gelen mutasavvıf bilginlerinden Nakşibendi Şeyhi Halid Hazretleri'nin (1776-1827) Mehmed Ali ve Osmanlı Devleti'ne sadık diğer siyasal aktörlerle olan 1820'lerde soru işareti uyandıran ilişkilerini incelemektedir. Buturus Abu-Manneh, Hamid Algar ve diğer araştırmacıların Halid hakkında ileri sürdükleri bakış açısını eleştirmektedir. Bu araştırmacılara göre Halid'in kendisi ve kendi sufi tarikatı Nakşibendi-Halidiyye başlı başına Osmanlı Devleti ve Ortodoks sünni İslam ile ittifak kurmuştur. Bu anlayışın yerine çalışmamızda, Halid'in mektupları, mahkeme kayıtları ve diğer Osmanlı kaynaklarını kullanarak şu tartışılmaktadır: Şeyh halid olabildiğince geniş bir takipçiler topluluğu oluşturmaya çalıştı ve bu bağlamda Nakşibendi-Halidiye tarikatını ilke olarak bir Osmanlı ya da sünni bir kurum olarak düşünmedi. Çalışmamızda sünni müslümanlarla Osmanlı hükümetinin üyeleri arasında ilişkiye dair kanıt bulunsa da, bu tarikatin Osmanlı hükümeti ile sürekli mücadele eden Suriyeli ve Iraklı Araplar da İranlı Şii Müslümanlar da bu tarikatla ilişki içindeydiler.

Anahtar kelimeler: Nakşibendi-Halidiyye, Şeyh Halid, Tasavvuf, Osmanlı Devleti, 19. yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi, Mehmet Ali Paşa

“The *tarikât* is a religious institution or an institution that translates the needs and ideals of a social organization or movement. We are also able to see the *tarikât*’s beliefs as being in line with social needs and aims since the *tarikât* translated its needs into a social system which differed geographically by urban, rural and nomadic milieu.”

Halil İnalçık¹

“The Nakşbandia was probably the most powerful single social, political, and ideological force shaping the cultural history of Asian Islam, in general, and the Ottoman Empire, in particular, during the nineteenth century.”

Kemal Karpat²

Introduction

Few organizations have had as profound an impact on the development of the Muslim world and the Ottoman lands in particular than the Naqshbandiyya *tariqa*. Founded in Central Asia during the fourteenth century, the order spread rapidly and created a wide network of followers from the Balkans to China. By the sixteenth century, the Naqshbandiyya had assumed three crucial roles in the Ottoman Empire. Firstly, the order provided Ottoman Sunni Muslims with a cultural and political link to Sunni Muslims in other parts of Asia—especially after the rise of the Safavid Empire cut off the natural land route through Iran. Secondly, the Naqshbandiyya *tariqa*, along with other Sufi orders, served as a mediator between the Ottoman government and various linguistic, ethnic, cultural, and regional groupings within the Empire. Thirdly, the Naqshbandiyya often provided Islamic “legitimacy” to government officials who affiliated with the order, which championed strict observance of the shari‘a along with Islam’s tradition of *tajdid* to correct the perceived excesses of syncretistic Islam.

No individual was more important to the success of the Naqshbandiyya in the Ottoman lands in the nineteenth century and beyond than Shaykh Abu al-Baha’ Diy’a al-Din Khalid al-Shahrizuri al-Naqshbandi bin

¹Halil İnalçık, “Tarihsel Bağlamda Sivil Toplum Ve Tarikatlar,” in *Global-Yerel Ekseninde Türkiye*, ed. Fuat Keyman and Ali Yasar Sarıbay (İstanbul: ALFA Press, 2005), 92. The author is solely responsible for all translations in this article. He thanks York Norman for assisting him in writing this article. He also thanks the Institute for International Education and the U.S. Department of Education for providing Fulbright IIE and Fulbright-Hays grants so he could engage in extended research in Syrian and Turkish archives.

²Kemal Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 107.

Ahmad Efendi,³ or Shaykh Khalid. Throughout his life, Shaykh Khalid functioned on the intellectual, social, and political frontiers of the Middle East. He was born around 1776 in Qaradagh,⁴ a village in the district of Shahrizur in Iraqi Kurdistan, and rose over the next five decades to become a leading religious and political figure in the Ottoman Empire. During that time, he had thousands of Sunni Turkish, Kurdish, Arab, and Iranian followers, and his suborder of the Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya, the Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya, spread from Kurdistan to the Arab and Turkish lands of the Ottoman Empire and eventually to Indonesia. Among the adherents of the Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya were the leading ‘ulama and merchant families of Baghdad and Damascus along with prominent Ottoman, Kurdish, and Iranian politicians at all levels of government.

This study examines the importance of Shaykh Khalid’s ties—however tenuous they may appear to be initially—to Muhammad Ali and other political figures whose loyalties to the Ottoman state were in some question in the 1820s. A critical part of the study is a letter Shaykh Khalid sent to one of his most prominent followers in the Ottoman central government in Istanbul, Gürcü Necib Pasha, requesting him to assist ‘Abdullah Pasha, the governor of the Province of Acre (Sayda) and one of Khalid’s leading followers in Greater Syria. The undated letter is part of a previously unknown manuscript collection of Khalid’s Arabic-language letters housed in a private collection in Turkey. It sheds light on Khalid’s complicated relationship with a powerful politician in Greater Syria along with a leading figure in Istanbul in the 1820s. Throughout the letter, Khalid lauds ‘Abdullah’s personal qualities; he also implicitly threatens severe retribution if Gürcü Necib does not heed his request and promises great rewards if he does. The letter is one of the few instances in Khalid’s writings where he uses the term “Jihad.” In addition, the letter raises the possibility that there were ties—perhaps indirect ones—between Khalid and Muhammad Ali, the then governor of Egypt, since Necib and ‘Abdullah worked closely with M. Ali in the 1820s. In the 1820s, Gürcü Necib acted as Muhammad Ali’s official Agent in Istanbul; ‘Abdullah often sought Muhammad Ali’s support in negotiations with the Ottoman central government,

³This extended version of Shaykh Khalid’s name is based on his brother’s probate record in the Damascus archives. For more on this issue, see Sean Foley, “Shaykh Khalid and the Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya, 1776-2005” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Georgetown University, 2005), 79-81 (Hereafter cited as *Shaykh Khalid*).

⁴This is very close to the Turkish word, Karadağ, which means “black mountain”.

and Muhammad Ali helped to restore ‘Abdullah’s position as governor of Acre in 1821. The indirect ties may have extended into the 1830s since Egyptian authorities subsidized Khalid’s followers and family in Damascus during Egypt’s administration of Syria in the 1830s.⁵

This study builds on the groundbreaking work of Albert Hourani, Butrus Abu-Manneh, Hamid Algar, Itzhak Weismann and others on Khalid’s political and socio-religious framework, the factors and motivations that guided his actions during the 1820s, when he lived in Damascus and his political influence was at its peak. Abu-Manneh merits special recognition for identifying critical differences between passages in *Bughyat al-Wajid fi Maktubat Mawlana Khalid*—a collection of Khalid’s letters published by the Ottoman government during World War I—and a manuscript version of Khalid’s letters housed in the Istanbul University Library Rectory. Just as Abu Manneh used differences in the passages to illustrate important aspects of Khalid’s teachings and worldview either abandoned or forgotten by his successors, I use a new set of Khalid’s letters to reconstruct an aspect of Shaykh Khalid’s career which has been so far overlooked: Khalid’s and his followers’ links to Muhammad Ali. In addition, I build on Halil İnalcık’s insight into the role of Sufi tariqas in Ottoman society generally and Kemal Karpat’s understanding of the importance of the Naqshbandiyya in the Ottoman Empire during the nineteenth century.⁶

⁵Muhammad As‘ad al-Sahib (ed.), *Bughyat al-Wajid fi Maktubat Mawlana Khalid* (Dimashq: Matba‘at al-Taraqqi, 1334/1915-16) (Hereafter cited as *Bughyat al-Wajid*); *Maktubat hadarat Mawlana Khalid* (Turkey: Private Collection, 1332/1913-14) (hereafter cited as *Maktubat hadarat Khalid*), and Shaykh Khalid, *Maktubat Khalid Baghdadi* (Istanbul University Library Rectory, AY 728, folios 1-192, N.D.) (Hereafter cited as *Maktubat Khalid Baghdadi*). The only hint of when the Istanbul University Library Rectory collection might have been compiled is a talisman on a cover page for a visitor to the court of Ottoman Sultan Abdülmecid, whose reign began in 1839, more than a decade after Shaykh Khalid died. By contrast, the collection of letters from the Turkish private collection is dated 1913/1914. I thank Müfid Yüksel for providing me a CD-Rom copy of Khalid’s letters from the Turkish private collection.

⁶For examples of these authors’ arguments, see the following works: Butrus Abu-Manneh, “The Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya in the Ottoman Lands in the Early 19th Century,” *Die Welt des Islams* 22 (1-2) (1982): 1-36; Albert Hourani, “Shaykh Khalid and the Naqshbandi Order,” in *Islamic Philosophy and the Classical Tradition: Essays Presented By His Friends and Pupils to Richard Walzer*, ed. M. Stern, Albert Hourani and Vivian Brown (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1972), 89-104; Hamid Algar, “The Naqshbandi Order: A Preliminary Survey of its History and Significance,” *Studia Islamica* 44 (1976): 124-152; and Itzhak Weismann, *Taste of Modernity: Sufism, Salafiyya, and Arabism in Late Ottoman Damascus* (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

A Pre-Syrian Model

From the start of his career in the 1810s in the Kurdish district of Shahrizur on the Ottoman frontier with Iran, Shaykh Khalid maintained close and often friendly ties with regional and central government officials of the Ottoman Empire. The letters in *Bughyat al-Wajid*, a manuscript in the Istanbul University Library, Rare Books Section, and the published writings of Claudius James Rich (1787-1821)—Great Britain's agent in Baghdad in the 1810s—paint a consistent picture: Khalid benefited from his close ties with Mahmud Pasha, the governor of the Kurdish border district of Shahrizur, and with Dawud Pasha, the governor of Baghdad. Mahmud purchased a house for Khalid, built a *zawiya* for him and his followers in Sulaymaniyya, and ordered that the proceeds from several rich agricultural communities in Sulaymaniyya be used to pay for the upkeep of the *zawiya*.⁷ Dawud sought Khalid's support and guidance and provided him with a grant of 30,000 gold pieces, an enormous sum at the time; he also subsidized the upkeep of the Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya's *zawiya* in Baghdad.⁸ Moreover, Dawud reassured Ottoman central government officials as to Khalid's loyalty to Istanbul's interests and insisted that the Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya was not a religious movement akin to the Wahhabiyya in the Arabian Peninsula. Not surprisingly, Khalid's nearly simultaneous falling out with these two men is widely seen as the event which triggered his decision to immigrate to Damascus and to leave his native Iraq forever.⁹

While Khalid's extensive contacts with Ottoman provincial officials during his time in Iraq have rightly received substantial attention from Abu-Manneh and others, little scholarly attention has been given to his contacts with

⁷Mahmud gave Khalid a substantial amount of land. An Ottoman *ferman* completed in 1851 estimated that the grant included the following properties: the arable fields of Gedan, Darko, Furalı and Salme; four units by the rivers of Kürekçıyan and Furalı; land at the lower end of Sulaymaniyya, and another piece of land in Haraciyan. For more on these lands and the *ferman*, see Foley, *Shaykh Khalid*, 117 and 130.

⁸Yusuf 'Izzy al-Din. *Dawud Basha wa-Nihayat al-Mamalik fi al-'Iraq* (Baghdad: Matba'at al-Sha'b, 1976), 49.

⁹For more on these issues, see Foley, *Shaykh Khalid*, 62-126. Khalid's relationship with Dawud Pasha collapsed after Khalid failed to secure an agreement between rival Kurdish politicians in Shahrizur in 1820. Khalid's relationship with Mahmud Pasha also collapsed shortly thereafter when Mahmud's son died from an illness from which Khalid predicted that he would fully recover.

political officials *beyond* the Ottoman governing framework. Here it is important to note that Shaykh Khalid's multi-layered identity—Jaf tribesman, Kurd, Shafi'i Sunni Muslim, and Persian speaker—provided him with multiple ways to forge ties with various populations in the Ottoman Empire as well as in the Qajar Iranian Empire. Although the majority of Iranians were Shi'a Muslims, Khalid shared a common language—Persian—and “cultural” outlook with most Iranians. In the early nineteenth century, Kurds in Shahrizur and other nearby regions adhered to Iranian cultural norms and styles, and Rich records numerous instances of Kurdish elites following the latest Iranian trends, including speaking Turkish in public.¹⁰ According to many biographies of Khalid and to the poems in his *Diwan*, Khalid traveled extensively in Iran, studied there as a young man, and retained close ties with Iranian Sunni Kurdish scholars.¹¹ Modern Iraqi Kurdish oral histories even maintain that one of these scholars, Shaykh Muhammad Qasim of Sindaj, was the first *khalifa*, or deputy, in the Naqshbandiyya *tariqa*.¹²

Other Iranians, such as Abbas Mirza (1788-1833), the son of the Qajar Shah of Iran, and the governor of the Iranian province of Azerbaijan, subsequently affiliated themselves with Shaykh Khalid and the Naqshbandiyya *tariqa*.¹³ Khalid also sent representatives to the Iranian city of Nishapur.¹⁴ Khalid's decision to include Iranian officials in his order suggests that he sought a broad base of followers and that he did not initially envision the Naqshbandiyya *tariqa* as solely a Sunni or Ottoman institution. He may have also been preparing for the possibility that he might wish to ally himself with Iran's Qajar government so that he might flee there to escape political

¹⁰These cultural practices are covered extensively by Rich. Claudius James Rich, *Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan, and on the Site of ancient Nineveh with a Journal of a Voyage down the Tigris to Baghdad and an Account of a Visit to Shiraz and Persepolis* (London: J. Duncan, 1836), Vol. I, 94-95, 117, and 126.

¹¹For more on this period in Shaykh Khalid's life, see Foley, *Shaykh Khalid*, 89-101.

¹²C.J. Edmonds, *Kurds, Turks, and Arabs; Politics, Travel, and Research in North-Eastern Iraq, 1919-1925* (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), 77-78. Another Sindaj shaykh who subsequently joined the order was the Mullah Rasul. Shaykh Khalid's chief disciple in the Hawraman, 'Uthman Siraj al-Din (1781-1867), built on Khalid's success in Sindaj and initiated many new followers into the Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya. Among the new followers was the governor of Sindaj, Rizaquli Khan. Sahib, *Bughyat al-Wajid*, 118-119 and Ferhad Shakely, “The Naqshbandi Sheikhs of Hawraman and the Heritage of Khaliddiyya-Mujaddidiyya in Kurdistan,” in *Naqshbandis in Western and Central Asia*, ed. Elisabeth Özdalga (Istanbul: Svenska forskningsinstitutet Istanbul, 1999), 93.

¹³Khalid, *Maktubat Khalid Baghdadi*, folio 220b. Abbas Mirza was also one of Iran's greatest military generals and reformers in the first third of the nineteenth century.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, folio 68b.

persecution in Iraq, or that Iran might control Shahrizur or other regions of the Ottoman-Iranian frontier and Iraq important to him. It is worth noting that the Qajar government granted one of Khalid's *khalifas*, Shaykh Taha Kelani, the right to receive the revenues from several villages on the Iranian side of the Ottoman-Iranian frontier.¹⁵

Gürcü Necib Pasha and Muhammad Ali

Whatever the reasons for his decision to seek out Qajar officials and other Iranians, Shaykh Khalid remained open to forming close relationships to political figures with socio-economic ties beyond the Ottoman bureaucracy and elites. Even after he moved his base from Sulaymaniyya to Damascus in 1822, he frequently expressed his personal loyalty to the Ottoman government and continued to form close relationships with figures whose allegiance to the Ottoman central government was far from certain. Among the most important of these was Gürcü Necib Pasha (d. 1851). He was of a prominent family in Istanbul of Georgian origin who was promoted quickly in the Ottoman administrative and military bureaucracy. He served as the superintendent for the Ottoman army's armaments; he was also an army official in the Morea during the Greek rebellion and a financial advisor to the commander of the Ottoman army.¹⁶ In addition, Gürcü Necib was Muhammad Ali's agent, or *kapıkahyasi*, who transacted the Wali's business with the central Ottoman government, and frequently corresponded with him on sensitive political, military, and economic issues.¹⁷ This correspondence proved to be invaluable to the governor of Egypt.¹⁸

¹⁵ Abbas al-‘Azzawi, *‘Asha’ir al-‘Iraq*, vol. 2, *Al-Kurdiyya*, 45-48 (Baghdad: Matba‘at al-Ma‘arif, 1937), 233.

¹⁶ Mehmed Süreyyā, *Sicill-i Osmānī (Istanbul, 1308/1890-1315/1897)*, Vol. IV. (Westmead, UK: Gregg International Publishers Limited, 1971), (Hereafter cited as *SO.*), 545-6.

¹⁷ Christine M. Philliou, “Worlds, Old and New: Phanriot Networks and the Remaking of Ottoman Governance in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Princeton University, 2004), 206.

¹⁸ The importance of Necib's work on behalf of Muhammad Ali is illustrated by Khaled Fahmy. He describes him as “Mehmed Ali's agent in Istanbul” throughout his monograph on Muhammad Ali's army: *All the Pasha's Men: Mehmed Ali, his army and the making of modern Egypt*. In one instance, Fahmy notes Muhammad Ali's “agent in Istanbul, Najib Efendi, and other informants, updated him regularly about

When discussing the character and depth of Muhammad Ali's relationship with Necib Pasha, it is worth noting that *Kapukehya* or *Kapukethuda* were traditionally Janissaries who carried the orders of the Grand Vizier.¹⁹ But in the early nineteenth century this term most often meant an agent, which implies that Necib worked on Muhammad Ali's behalf. Given the extensive work that Necib did on Muhammad Ali's behalf and their regular correspondence, it seems hard not to suggest that he was not closely tied to Muhammad Ali. It also suggests that Necib, while he may have been generally loyal to the Sultan, could not be counted on as being completely loyal in every instance, especially given his close work for Muhammad Ali—an individual whose interests were not necessarily the same as the Sultan's. Although Gürcü Necib and Shaykh Khalid corresponded often on a variety of political and socio-religious issues, it is not clear how the two men got to know one another or if they ever met personally. No record has been found suggesting that Necib visited Damascus or any other region in which Khalid resided. Nor do other traditional Khalidi sources indicate that Shaykh Khalid was in Istanbul or Greece with the exception of *Sicill-i Osmānī*, a major Ottoman biographical dictionary. While Khalid's biographies record that he went from Sulaymaniyya to Damascus via Baghdad and Urfa, the *Sicill-i Osmānī* states that he came to Istanbul before traveling to Damascus.²⁰ Since there are no sources beside the biographies and the *Sicill* for this period in Khalid's life, it is virtually impossible to verify the exact route Shaykh Khalid took from Iraq to Syria. But the reputation of the *Sicill* as a credible historical source and Khalid's cooperation with the elites of Baghdad and Sulaymaniyya suggest that he had strong incentives to visit Istanbul. There he could seek the support of senior Ottoman figures and reinvigorate his career by means of the support of Gürcü and other new political patrons, such as Shaykh al-Islam Mekki-zade Mustafa

developments there and looked after his interests in the capital." Khaled Fahmy, "Between Sultan and Vali: Syria and the Nature of Mehmed Ali's Military Expansion," in Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men: Mehmet Ali, his army and the making of modern Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 72 (Hereafter cited as *Pasha's Men*). Caesar Farah also observes that Necib Pasha's association with Muhammad Ali was sufficiently close in the 1810s and 1820s to make the British highly nervous about his intentions as governor of Syria in the 1840s. Farah cites official British diplomatic correspondence in which Lord Palmerston states that Necib Pasha had served Muhammad Ali for many years. For more on these issues, see C.E. Farah, "Necip Pasha and the British in Syria, 1841-1842," *Archivum Ottomanicum* II (1970), 115-153.

¹⁹ *Osmanlı Tarih Lügatı*, 2nd ed., s.v. "Kapukehya" or "Kapukethuda."

²⁰ Süreyyā, *SO.*, Vol. II., 265-266.

Asım (d. 1846), with whom Khalid corresponded and whom he saw as a close friend and supporter.²¹

Perhaps a more perplexing question is why Mekki-zade Mustafa Asım or Gürcü Necib, would wish to affiliate with Shaykh Khalid. One answer may have been the fact that the Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya was already a network of thousands of Muslims in the 1810s throughout the Ottoman Empire. Just as the Ottoman Sultan Mahmud II looked to the Mevleviyya *tariqa* to serve his interests, so the adherents to the Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya may have seen the order as a way to advance their goals.²²

Another reason for Gürcü Necib in particular to seek to a close relationship with Khalid and the Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya was perhaps the desire of Muhammad Ali to extend his power from Egypt and the Hijaz into the Levant and other regions of the Ottoman Empire.²³ The Ottoman governor of Egypt was an emerging political power in the Middle East whose influence and military forces were greater than that of Sultan Mahmud II, his official sovereign. At the same time, he recognized that Egypt was far from self-sufficient in several natural resources he needed in order to maintain his armed forces: various foodstuffs; timber for his ships, fuel, and charcoal; and the coal, copper, and iron used in his gun factories and arsenals. He was also aware that his plans for expansion had already taxed Egyptian finances and human resources. Syria, by contrast, had abundant supplies of the natural resources he needed, a substantial population which could be conscripted, and was the nexus

²¹For an example of their correspondence, see Khalid, *Maktubat Khalid Baghdadi*, folio 50a.

²²For more on this issue, see Uriel Heyd, "The Ottoman 'Ulemā and Westernization in the Time of Selim III and Mahmud II," in *Studies in Islamic History and Civilization*, ed. Uriel Heyd (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press at the Hebrew University, 1961), 68-69 and Foley, *Shaykh Khalid*, 226.

²³For more on Muhammad Ali and Syria in the 1820s, see Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid Marsot, "Expansion to what end?" in Marsot, *Egypt in the Reign of Muhammad Ali* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 196-230 and Khaled Fahmy, *Pasha's Men*, 38-75. Fahmy cites a conversation between Ali and one of his French military advisors in 1820 in which Ali stated "I am now the most important man [*l'homme de jour*] in the entire Ottoman Empire...I will call back my forces, raise [new] conscripts, complete my regiments and then grab the pashliks of Damascus and Acre...I will organize a *grande armee* and I shall not stop except at the Tigris and Euphrates." Fahmy, *Pasha's Men*, 38.

of several rich trade routes. Equally important, Syria, as he later told Gürcü Necib, could serve as a strategic buffer against potential Ottoman advances southward from Anatolia against Egypt or against naval attacks. As the head of a large and politically active *tariqa* based in Damascus with a burgeoning presence in the rest of Syria, Khalid would have been a natural figure for Muhammad Ali and Gürcü Necib to seek to influence or to win over as an ally. Indeed, published Egyptian diplomatic reports suggest that Muhammad Ali received updates on key members of the Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya and the internal dynamics of the *tariqa*.²⁴

Muhammad Ali and Gürcü Necib's interest in the Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya makes even more sense in the light of Khalid's political position in Damascus and his links to senior provincial politicians in the Levant. Not only was Shaykh Khalid the head of a large *tariqa*, but he may have held a socio-religious rank similar to that of a governor—possibly like a Catholic Bishop of an important city. Here it is important to remember an 1827 *ferman* which discusses Shaykh Khalid and “his *qa'immaqam* [or representative] in Damascus.”²⁵ [See appendix.] The term *qa'immaqam*²⁶ may be a way of saying *khalifa*, but it was also a word often used for deputy governors in Syria in the early nineteenth century; this suggests that Shaykh Khalid himself might have held a position similar to or with equal rank to an Ottoman governor. (It is critical to remember that Shaykh Khalid's detractors constantly accused him of having political ambitions.) Certainly the intense interest that the Ottoman

²⁴For a more in-depth overview of these issues, see Muhammad H. Kutluoğlu, *The Egyptian Question (1831-1841)* (Istanbul: Eren Press, 1998), 51-55 (hereafter cited as *The Egyptian Question*) and Asad Rustum, *al-Mahfuzat al-Malakiyya al-Misriyya*, Vol. 1, Second Edition (Bayrut: al-Maktaba al-Bulisiyya, 1986-1987), 44-45 (record #104) and 100 (record #237).

²⁵Awamir Sultaniyya, 24 Dhu'l-Qa'da 1243, 2/232 (June 7, 1828).

²⁶According to the *Osmanlı Tarih Lügati*, a Qaim-maqam, such as the Qaim-maqam of Istanbul, was responsible for administering the capitol when the Grand Vizier was away on campaign (*Osmanlı Tarih Lügati*, 2nd ed., s.v. “Qaim-maqam”). The *Redhouse Dictionary* states Qaim-maqam means lieutenant, representative, or substitute. At the same time, the *Redhouse* notes that a Qaim-maqam could be the head of a district (*Redhouse Yayınevi*, 18th ed., s.v. “Qaim-maqam”). *Kamus-ı Türki* dictionary also states that a Qaim-maqam is a substitute or representative vakil, such as a representative of the qadi naib. But the dictionary notes that the word can mean a public administrative official who runs a district or someone with a rank within the Ottoman military (*Kamus-ı Türki*, 4th ed., s.v. “Qaim-maqam”). The *Hans Wehr Arabic-English* dictionary notes that a *qa'immaqam* is an administrative officer who heads a *qada*, a province or district (*The Hans Wehr Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, 4th ed., s.v. “*qa'immaqam*”). Ultimately, this term is best approximately translated as a “district president,” which could include a religious official or someone who has great religious status.

government had in Khalid's estate after his death in 1827—as evidenced by the 1827 *ferman*—is consistent with the way that Ottoman officials in the 1820s often treated the various assets of Ottoman governors in Syria when they died.

'Abdullah Pasha and Spiritual Power

Khalid had a socio-cultural influence sufficient to earn the considerable support of politicians. Just as Dawud Pasha and Mahmud Pasha sought out Shaykh Khalid's guidance and support in the 1810s, the governor of the province of Acre, 'Abdullah Pasha, solicited Khalid's good will and backing in the 1820s. 'Abdullah became governor shortly before Khalid arrived in Syria and sought to expand his power base from the coast and the Lebanese mountains to Damascus. According to Thomas Philipp, who is the only Western scholar to study the recent history of Acre in depth, 'Abdullah was a pious young man when he became governor and sought guidance from senior ulama and Shaykh Khalid. Citing French diplomatic records, Philipp notes that 'Abdullah Pasha met with other Sufis in the 1820s and participated in *dhikr* [reciting the name of God repeatedly] and other ritual exercises. Philipp also notes that 'Abdullah—to cement his pious public persona—gave up drinking coffee, reintroduced severe dress restrictions on non-Muslims, paid Christians to convert to Islam, and evicted Christians from Acre after Greek nationalists staged an uprising in Morea in 1821.²⁷

Through a variety of letters available in printed and manuscript versions of Khalid's correspondence, we know that Khalid and 'Abdullah discussed a variety of matters, personal, political, and spiritual in nature. The two men touched on subjects as diverse as the proper way for a Muslim ruler to govern, the powers of a Muslim saint (or *wali*), 'Abdullah's desire to have male offspring, *'aqida* (faith), the prevalence of *bid'a* and *fasad* (non-Islamic religious practices and corruption) in Syria, free will, important Sufi religious

²⁷Thomas Philipp, "Acre: the First Instance of Changing Times," in *The Empire in the City: Arab Provincial Capitals in the Late Ottoman Empire*, ed. Jens Hanssen, Thomas Philipp and Stefan Weber (Beirut: Orient-Institut and Würzburg: Ergon in Kommission, 2002), 90-91 and Thomas Philipp, *Acre: The Rise and Fall of a Palestinian City, 1730-1831* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 182-183 (Hereafter cited as *Acre*). Philipp notes in *Acre: The Rise and Fall of a Palestinian City* that "Shaykh Khalid...was a spiritual advisor to 'Abdullah Pasha and corresponded with him from Damascus in the 1820s."

figures, and provincial political and social issues.²⁸ ‘Abdullah was sufficiently confident in Khalid’s powers as a *wali* to specifically request that Khalid intercede on his behalf before the start of major military campaigns and was greatly disappointed when Khalid could not definitely promise him that he would have male heirs.²⁹ What favors ‘Abdullah did for Shaykh Khalid are not touched upon in Khalid’s correspondence, but ‘Abdullah wielded far more power in Syria than any of the four Ottoman governors who were appointed to administer Damascus between Khalid’s arrival in 1822 there and his death in 1827: Ahmad Pasha (1823),³⁰ Salih Pasha (1823),³¹ Mustafa Pasha (1823-1825),³² Wali al-Din Pasha (1825-1826),³³ and Salih Pasha (1826-1828) (for the second time).³⁴ Consequently, Khalid would have had ample reason to do just about everything he could to remain on very good terms with ‘Abdullah—if only to ensure that ‘Abdullah would not use his power to check the growth of the Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya in Syria.

A Special Request

By contrast, Khalid’s letters to Necib Pasha have left us a clearer picture of the two men’s relationship and how each sought to promote the other’s interests whenever it was feasible. Over time this relationship developed into a *quid pro quo* relationship, and Khalid openly acknowledged—but did not specify—Gürcü Necib’s requests and his willingness to carry them out. At the same time, Khalid openly requests Necib’s assistance in a variety of political and administrative matters. While he readily praises his devotion to Islam and the Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya, however, Khalid also leaves the impression that he does not fully trust Gürcü Necib. Strikingly, whenever Shaykh Khalid requests that Gürcü Necib completes a favor on his behalf, he couples it with a combination of potent threats—including ones against Necib’s personal safety—and various powerful incentives to ensure that he carried out Khalid’s wishes.

²⁸Sahib, *Bughyat al-Wajid*, 85-87, 227-228, 228-229, and 244-245.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 85-87.

³⁰Awamir Sultaniyya, 15 Rajab 1239, 3/37 (March 16, 1824) and Awamir Sultaniyya, 11 Ramadan 1239, 2/20 (May 10, 1824). Ahmad Pasha died in Homs en route to Damascus (from Aleppo) and never served as the city’s governor.

³¹Awamir Sultaniyya, 28 Jumada I 1238, 1/78 (February 10, 1823).

³²Awamir Sultaniyya, 15 Shawwal 1239, 2/41 (June 13, 1824).

³³Awamir Sultaniyya, 11 Jumada I 1241, 2/118 (December 22, 1825).

³⁴Awamir Sultaniyya, 21 Jumada I 1242, 166 (December 15, 1826) and Muhammad Muti‘ al-Hafiz and Nizar Abaza ‘*Ulama’ Dimashq wa-A‘yanuha fi al-Qarn al-Thalith ‘Ashar al-Hijri*, 2 v. (Bayrut: Dar al-Fikr al-Mu‘asir; Dimashq: Dar al-Fikr, 1991), 356-357.

Two of Khalid's letters to Gürcü Necib illustrate this relationship well. In the first letter, a copy of which is part of a manuscript collection of Khalid's letters housed in Turkey, Khalid requests him to provide immediate assistance to 'Abdullah Pasha, who had recently been deposed as governor of Acre. Although the letter is undated, we can surmise that it was most likely written between 1822 and 1823—the only period during Khalid's career when 'Abdullah would have required this type of assistance. According to Turkish and Arabic sources of the period, Muhammad Ali sought to expand his influence into greater Syria in the early 1820s by stimulating political and territorial disputes between the governors of the region's provincial centers: Aleppo, Damascus, Tripoli, and Acre. He sought to benefit from the existing rivalries between the governors along with the fact that the boundaries of Syrian provinces were not permanent and that sub-provinces (*livas*) were frequently transferred from one province to another.³⁵

Muhammad Ali in particular fueled the ambitions of 'Abdullah Pasha, who greatly coveted the governorship of Damascus. He also wished to depose the city's Ottoman governor, Darwish Pasha, who lent protection to a noted Jewish family, one member of which, Haim Farhi, 'Abdullah had caused to be executed shortly after coming to power in Acre.³⁶ Confident of Muhammad Ali's backing, 'Abdullah took the audacious steps of fabricating an Ottoman *ferman* nominating him governor of Damascus and ordering his vassal, Emir Bashir, the leader of the Druze of Mount Lebanon to advance on Damascus with his army. The Ottoman government reacted to 'Abdullah's seemingly wanton act of defiance with fury: it ordered that the governors of Aleppo, Damascus, and Adana send their armies to overthrow 'Abdullah Pasha in Acre. The Ottoman government also issued a new *ferman* which announced the deposal of 'Abdullah Pasha, declaring him a rebel. The *ferman* also appointed Darwish Pasha, 'Abdullah's arch enemy, as the governor of both Damascus and Acre. For his part, the Emir Bashir prudently fled to Egypt rather than choose between the Ottoman government and his "regional" master. From July 1822 until

³⁵For more on this issue, see Kutluoğlu, *The Egyptian Question*, 53.

³⁶For more on this controversy, see Mikhayil Mishaqa, *Murder, Mayhem, Pillage, and Plunder: The History of the Lebanon in the 18th and the 19th Centuries*, trans. W.M. Thackston, Jr. (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1988), 105-108 (Hereafter cited as *Murder*).

January 1823, Darwish Pasha led a siege of Acre and sought to capture ‘Abdullah.³⁷

It is within this context of war and rebellion that we can come to understand the significance of Khalid’s first letter to Gürcü Necib requesting that he assist ‘Abdullah. Perhaps aware that Gürcü would be wary of providing any help, Khalid presents a positive case on ‘Abdullah’s behalf. He asserts that ‘Abdullah—despite evidence to the contrary—was a loyal and an obedient servant to the Ottoman state; he had no greater ambition than to promote the Sultan’s interests: ‘Abdullah was well known for his “truthful and obedient devotion to the Ottoman state...especially to the Ottoman Sultan” and that he had no “higher priority—day and night.”³⁸ Not only was ‘Abdullah steadfast in his support of the Ottoman Empire, but he was also a just ruler, dedicated to upholding his responsibilities as a pious Muslim leader: Khalid notes that ‘Abdullah “was always ready for Jihad to defend the people and the state” and was never known for “injustice.”³⁹

If these factors were not incentive enough to intervene on ‘Abdullah’s behalf, Khalid then promises Gürcü Necib that the more he helped ‘Abdullah “the higher you are in my eyes” and that Khalid would watch his actions very carefully.⁴⁰ The final statement is most likely a threat meant to inform Gürcü that failure to help ‘Abdullah could carry serious consequences, not the least of which was Khalid’s anger and disappointment.

Jihad, Din, and Dunya

Overall, the letter illustrates an ongoing *quid pro quo* relationship between Necib Pasha and Khalid in which the former permits the latter to exercise his spiritual authority to rehabilitate the moral and political reputation of a temporal politician, ‘Abdullah. Instead of disputing the facts that led to ‘Abdullah’s fall, Khalid informs Necib that he should help ‘Abdullah for only two reasons: the governor of Acre is both “loyal” to the Ottoman government and morally fit. In his eyes, this is more than enough justification for anyone to support his position, especially an individual as seemingly loyal to the path of the Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya as Gürcü Necib.

Khalid’s use of the term Jihad here is also striking because it rarely appears in his correspondence, or in his works on Sufism, Islamic law, ethics, and philosophy. Nor does the term appear prominently in the works of his close

³⁷Philipp, *Acre*, 91.

³⁸Khalid, *Makutbat Hadarat Mawlana Khalid*, folio 32b.

³⁹*Ibid.*, folios 33a-33b.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, folio 33b.

followers. Determining what Khalid means is thus a difficult task—a task made more complicated by the fact that he does not specify whether he believes that ‘Abdullah adheres to “greater” Jihad (i.e., one’s personal commitment to staying on God’s path), “lesser” Jihad (i.e., transforming the world to conform to God’s path or plan), or some combination of the two. Khalid’s language—“defend the people and the state”—suggests “lesser” Jihad. But as a proponent of personal active participation in the framework of the Shari‘a, he may well have been suggesting in addition that ‘Abdullah was ready for “greater” Jihad. Such a conception would undoubtedly focus on what Khalid saw as the chief cause of the crises afflicting Muslims in the 1820s: their devotion to the temporal world or materiality (“dunya”) over the hereafter or spiritual world (“din”).⁴¹ The conception would also—to paraphrase Halil İnalcık—meet the “aims and needs” of the Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya *tariqa*, and, by extension, those of the Sunni Muslim communities where the *tariqa* operated—Syria, Iraq and the greater Ottoman Empire.

By using the term Jihad, Khalid may have also wished to emphasize ‘Abdullah’s opposition to the Greek nationalist rebellion against the Ottoman rule in the Morea which started in 1821. This would have been an especially prudent message to communicate to Gürcü Necib in the early 1820s. He and other members of the Ottoman elite in Istanbul reacted with fury to the rebellion, which they saw as a betrayal of their centuries-long policy of tolerance and cooperation with the Greeks. Gürcü Necib even played a role in directing the Ottoman military response to the rebellion.

While we lack Necib’s response to Khalid’s letter, it is worth noting that Muhammad Ali was instrumental in winning ‘Abdullah’s subsequent reinstatement as governor of Acre in 1823—a fact which suggests that Khalid’s letter may have carried great weight and that his interests could coincide with those of Muhammad Ali.⁴²

⁴¹For more on Shaykh Khalid’s views of “*din*” and “*dunya*,” see Foley, *Shaykh Khalid*, 258-264.

⁴²For more on Muhammad Ali’s involvement in rehabilitating ‘Abdullah Pasha, see Mishaqa, *Murder*, 142. It is worth noting that ‘Abdullah Pasha and Muhammad Ali had a significant parting of the ways in 1824.

Another Special Request

Khalid's ability to translate his spiritual power into seemingly secular political matters is further illustrated by another letter in which Khalid requests that Gürcü Necib help another Ottoman governor in Syria who, in the 1820s, had fallen out of favor with the Ottoman central government: Wali al-Din Pasha. Khalid's letter is part of the collection of his correspondence contained in *Bughyat al-Wajid fi Maktubat Mawlana Khalid*, but it is not found in either of the two manuscript collections of Khalid's letters housed in Turkey. Although, like the letter regarding 'Abdullah Pasha, the letter is undated, we can assume that Khalid wrote it around December 1826 since he begins the letter by noting that Wali al-Din has been deposed as governor of Syria—an event which Ottoman *fermanlar* housed in Syria's national archives record took place in December 1826.

French diplomatic correspondence from the period indicates that Damascenes and Ottoman central government officials alike were greatly disappointed with Wali al-Din's administration of the 1826 Hajj caravan in which a quarter of the participants had perished, including several leading Damascenes. They blamed him in particular for making inadequate provisions for the journey and for failing to heed the lessons of the Hajj caravans of 1824 and 1825, both of which had ended in disaster as well: reportedly, nearly half of the surviving pilgrims in 1826 were compelled to travel back to Damascus on foot since their camels died of hunger!⁴³

Despite the clear official and popular anger at Wali al-Din Pasha and his incompetence, Khalid urges Gürcü Necib to readily support the former governor of Damascus. To illustrate the sincerity of his convictions, Khalid then orders Necib to "treat him" as you "would treat me."⁴⁴ Perhaps fearful that he might be reluctant to assist the dismissed Wali al-Din, Khalid insists that the former governor is a dignified and morally fit person: "He never hesitated to help the poor, especially the poor on hajj."⁴⁵ Just as in the case of 'Abdullah, Khalid expected his affirmation of Wali al-Din's character to be sufficient—regardless of the other socio-cultural or political circumstances.

⁴³R. Tresse, *Le Pelerinage Syrien Aux Villes Saintes De l'Islam* (Paris: Imprimerie Chaumette, 1937), 253-254. (Tresse cites five different reports from French officials stationed in Beirut, Sidon, and Aleppo in September, 1826). For more on this incident, see Foley, *Shaykh Khalid*, 189-191.

⁴⁴Sahib, *Bughyat al-Wajid*, 181-182.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*

Conclusion

Though the nature of Khalid's remaining requests to his Gürcü Necib is not known, it cannot be ruled out that they might have been indirectly intended for Muhammad Ali or at least related to his plans. Two of Khalid's closest followers in government, Gürcü Necib and 'Abdullah Pasha, had connections with the governor of Egypt, who was determined to dominate Syria, a region where the Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya was establishing a presence in the 1820s. Just because Khalid projected an image in his correspondence and other writings that he was a strong supporter of the Ottoman government and the Sultan does not mean that he would not cooperate with groups or individuals whose interests were separate from or even opposed to those of the Ottoman Empire if that suited his interests or those of the Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya. Nor can we assume that Shaykh Khalid's teachings were incompatible with the goals of Muhammad Ali's program of European-inspired reform and transformation in Egypt. It is worth nothing that Gümüşhanevi (1812-1893) and other Naqshbandi shaykhs were among the earliest Muslim scholars to synthesize the Islamic tradition with that of the West.⁴⁶

But perhaps the best evidence of Khalid's relationship—however indirect—with Muhammad Ali is the actions of his followers and Egyptian government officials after his death in 1827, especially during Egypt's occupation of Syria in the 1830s. Because of Khalid and the Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya's public support and affiliation with the Ottoman government, one would assume that Khalid's family and his supporters would have been among the last of Syria's various communities to receive Egyptian state support. But the opposite appears to be the case. Through published Egyptian diplomatic documents from the early 1830s, we know that Muhammad Ali provided a generous salary to Khalid's family, paid for the maintenance of Khalid's house and *zawiya* in Damascus, and provided funds for his remaining followers in

⁴⁶For more on Gümüşhanevi's ideas, see Foley, *Shaykh Khalid*, 248 and 332-333; Butrus Abu-Manneh, "Shaikh Ahmad Ziya al-Din al-Gümüşhanevi and the Khalidi Suborder," *Bulletin of the Israeli Academic Center in Cairo* (6) (1985): 2-3; and Şerif Mardin, "The Nakshibendi Order in Turkey," in *Fundamentalisms and the State: Remaking Politics, Economies, and Militance: Volume 3*, ed. Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 212-214.

Damascus throughout Egypt's occupation of Syria in the 1830s.⁴⁷ While Muhammad Ali may have been motivated by generosity or a desire to co-opt a traditionally "Ottoman" institution in Syria, it cannot be discounted that he was simply reaffirming an alliance which had been established long before. It is a subject worthy of further research.

Appendix

Text of a *ferman* regarding Shaykh Khalid's estate⁴⁸

To: Mehmed Selim Pasha

From: The Office of the Grand Vizier

[This Edict] concerns the Muslim Pilgrims who began their journey on the 15th day of Zilkade from Ma'an and safely arrived in Medayin-i-Salih.

The deceased Shaykh Khalid has his representative [*qa'immaqam*] in Damascus. The associates and followers of the latter's office were rightfully sent to Damascus after [both] an imperial document and resulting survey were sent. Henceforth, if anything from the above-mentioned companions arrives and comes into possession, it might be claimed that it shall be sent to Baghdad. The deceased Shaykh Khalid has properties, land, a farm, and a house in Damascus. Since there is some connection between Shaykh Khalid's possessions and a future Imperial edict, it ought to be reviewed by those of illustriously correct judgment. This time, upon the arrival of the registration, which has been composed according to the prosperous principles of the Quran, the properties must be pledged truthfully.

In this regard, the Imperial document about the Muslims' safe arrival is sincere. An order from the Imperial throne was issued on that matter. The link made to the illustrious ones this time is not related to the group which was sent from Damascus. Since the abovementioned properties belonged to the Shaykh Khalid, they must be sold by auction to those who want them according to material circumstance and religious law. The names of those who buy the items and the signed court record of the inheritance are to be sent along with the required Imperial orders. In a similar manner, the value and prices of that which was sold to parties in the court register should also duly be recorded and sent.

Recorded [in the "sijill" of Damascus] in Recep, 1244 [January/February, 1829]

Issued by the Grand Vizier 24 Zilkade, 1243 [June 7, 1828]

⁴⁷Imad Ra'uf, *al-Iraq fi Watha'iq Muhammad Ali* (Baghdad: Bayt al-Hikma, 1999), 68 (#46 and #211).

⁴⁸Awamir Sultaniyya, 24 Dhu'l-Qa'da 1243, 2/232 (June 7, 1828).