

Berat Aıl (ed.), *Ottoman Book Culture: Cârullah Efendi's Library and Marginal Notes [Osmanlı Kitap Kültürü: Cârullah Efendi Kütüphanesi ve Derkenar Notları]*, Ankara: Nobel, ILEM Library, 2015. 398 pages. ISBN: 978-605-3200-57-4.

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Berat Aıl, who is known for his studies on Ottoman classical literature and cultural history, edited the work entitled *Ottoman Book Culture: Cârullah Efendi's Library and Marginal Notes [Osmanlı Kitap Kültürü: Cârullah Efendi Kütüphanesi ve Derkenar Notları]*. This book, comprising fourteen articles by thirteen writers, examines Cârullah Efendi's (d. 1151/1738) life, books, book collection, and his marginal notes. As the first study to examine almost all of his collection's books and the marginal notes that he wrote in them, it is a valuable contribution to the history of Ottoman thought and culture in general and to the history of manuscript books in particular. Opening a new window into this scholar's world of science and thought, the articles enable us to directly examine his views on books, book ownership, libraries, and copyright as well as on such other topics as Islamic studies, rational sciences, and language-literature sciences.

The book consists of an introductory section and three major parts. In the introductory part's first article, Aıl gives a general summary of the modern studies on book culture. In the second article, Muhammed Usame Onuř presents Cârullah Efendi's biography and a list of the books that he authored. By examining the marginal notes in the books of his collection, Onuř brings many unknown details of his life to light.

The book's first part consists of eight articles on Islamic sciences. İbrahim Halil Üer evaluates the scholar's collection of Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsir*) works and puts forth his noteworthy observations on the manuscript culture in the Islamic world. Seyfullah Efe discusses Cârullah Efendi's notes on Qur'anic recitation (*qirā'a*) in the collection, showing that he had special interest in this field and knew its main approaches and debates. Abdullah Taha İmamođlu's article, which examines the books of prophetic tradition (*hadith*), indicates that Cârullah Efendi did not have any special interest in this science, even though his collection includes major *hadith* books. After perusing the collection's legal theory (*uřul al-fiqh*) works, Asım Cüneyd Köksal states that Cârullah

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Efendi had a special interest in the Ḥanafī works of this field, especially that of Al-Pazdawī's (d. 482/1089) *Uṣūl* and Al-Itqānī's (d. 758/1357) commentary upon it.

Özgür Kavak, who examines 350 jurisprudential (*furū' al-fiqh*) books in the collection, asserts that Cārullah Efendi had an extensive knowledge of this field and meticulously read and made notes on its important books. The scholar inserted the greatest amount of marginal notes in Muḥammad Kūhistānī's (d. 962/1555) *Jāmi' al-Rumūz* and later compiled them in the form of a separate super-commentary (*ḥāshiya*). After this particular book, he read and wrote the most notes on Burhān al-Dīn al-Bukhārī's (d. 616/1219) *Al-Dhakhīrah*, Zayn al-Dīn ibn Nujaym's (d. 970/1563) *Al-Ashbāh wa al-Nazā'ir* and Ḥākīm al-Shahīd's (d. 334/945) *Al-Kāfi* in sequence. Kavak draws attention to an important point: Cārullah Efendi used the term *tartīb* to signify an author's transcription and rewriting of a text originally written by someone else.

Pehlül Düzenli, who analyzes seventy *fatwā* books in the collection, opines that an examination of Cārullah Efendi's notes, preference of jurisprudential views, and their justifications can help reveal his thoughts regarding the hierarchy of Ḥanafī sources. Düzenli also shows that the scholar rejected the idea that the gate of *ijtihād* (independent reasoning) had been closed.

In the article on the collection's books on Sufism, Sami Arslan details Cārullah Efendi's efforts to ensure the reliability of each manuscript and discusses his preferences when writing notes in the margins. One noteworthy feature of this article is the assertion that Cārullah Efendi's reading practices were influenced by the fact that he had founded a library. The list of cited books at the article's end shows his great interest in Sufism.

The last article in this part, by Tuba Nur Saraçoğlu, looks at the collection's prophetic biographies (*siyar*), history books, and biographical dictionaries (*ṭabaqāt*). Saraçoğlu draws attention to the fact that the collection contains no prophetic biographies written in verse, a very popular category under the Ottomans.

The second part, which consists of two articles, deals with the rational sciences. In the first article, Hasan Umut concentrates on the books related to the mathematical sciences (e.g., theoretical astronomy, arithmetic, and geometry), indicating that Cārullah Efendi was careful to include the major books of these fields. In the second article, which relies on the collection's acquisition records, Fatih Usluer shows that Cārullah Efendi began acquiring books on *al-jafr* and medicine after 1698. These two articles insinuate that he was more interested in Islamic studies than in these aforementioned fields, for he made few, if any, notes regarding the content of these latter books.

The third part contains two articles on language and literary sciences. Ali Benli relates that Cârullah Efendi's marginal notes made in his books on rhetoric, morphology, syntax, and dictionaries reveal that he was a skilled reader and writer in the sciences of language. In addition, Benli thoroughly examines Cârullah Efendi's notes regarding the features of manuscript copies of books.

In this part's last article, which is also the last chapter of the book, Açıl investigates the change in patronage patterns of the Ottoman palace for literature after the last quarter of the sixteenth century. According to him, the rise of the *darussaada aghas* to prominence as patrons "resulted in the production of less valuable, especially in the palace environment, in comparison to previous periods" (p. 341). In addition, Açıl's quantitative analysis of the acquisition records of the collection's first 1,000 books enables him to conclude that Cârullah Efendi acquired 80 percent of his books during the last twenty years of his life. In other words, we can assume that he acquired most of his collection's literature books at the start of his life. In the article's last section, Açıl examines literary works such as *diwân*, *mathnawî*, and *akhbâr* within the collection and the marginal notes on them. According to him, the books and most of the notes are written in Arabic, some in Persian, and very few in Turkish. Almost all of the poems quoted are related to Sufism.

The writers who examined these books agreed upon several conclusions about Cârullah Efendi's relationship with them. For example, this was not a simple reader-book connection, but rather an interwoven process of reading and writing, for the scholar would at the same time both read a manuscript copy of a book and intervene in it from a writer's perspective. Sometimes he would write down a word's correct pronunciation, explain ambiguous words, refer to other sources that contained discussions of similar matters, or provide detailed explanations. Unlike his contemporaneous reader-writers, Cârullah Efendi indicated his own contributions to the manuscript copies by signing every note he inserted.

The contributors also agree that Cârullah Efendi worked systematically to establish and ensure the reliability of each manuscript in his collection. His notes on *zahriya* (the front side of the first folio of manuscript books) and marginal notes show that he was very well informed of his era's world of books and libraries. He specifically mentioned each autographed copy of any book in his possession. He compared some of his copies with autographed copies, those that had been read to the authors, and those that had been compared with the autographed copies or with copies of scholars living in Istanbul or elsewhere who were knowledgeable about the concerned topics. He recorded all this information in the front pages of the copies in his collection. If a copy was not reliable, he mentioned this openly (e.g., p. 327).

Arslan and Aıl draw our attention to how Cārullah Efendi's decision to set up a library affected his practices of reading and inserting marginal notes. In his marginal notes, Cārullah Efendi frequently refers to the books found in his library and sometimes even directs the reader to them by giving its name and page number. Here, we may ask why this scholar established a library. Saraođlu and Aıl posit that he set it up as a madrasa library to help students, which is a plausible reason. Another idea is that he wanted to make his marginal notes available to the public, for they were meticulous, detailed, extensive, and scattered throughout the many copies in his possession. Establishing a library would allow him to gather all of his books, including his notes, in one place.

Most of the contributors to *Ottoman Book Culture* assume that Cārullah Efendi was his period's typical high-class *ilmiye* bureaucrat. The fact that he worked as a judge in Aleppo, Galata, and Edirne toward the end of his career supports this opinion. However, his education and the start of his career show qualities that are not so typical. For instance, he lived during a time when scholars from Istanbul, and especially those who had been educated there, were increasing their influence on the *ilmiye* bureaucracy.

Cārullah Efendi left the city when he was in his twenties. Before returning there some twenty years later, he studied with many scholars in Egypt, the Hijaz, Syria, and Iraq who were most likely unknown to their peers in Istanbul. The available information about his career does not allow us to speak in definitive terms. Nevertheless, it appears that when he returned to Istanbul he could not find a job that was appropriate for his age and level of education. For a long time he had to teach at the Feyzullah Efendi Madrasa, which was not one of the highest-grade madrasas. His marginal notes reveal that he knew Arabic as a language of science and literature very well and that he did not show much interest in Persian and Turkish.

Considering all of this, we can say that Cārullah Efendi developed a scholarly identity that was fairly different from that possessed by the scholars of the high-class *ilmiye* bureaucracy of his time. Thus, it is worthwhile to examine to what extent he shared the scholarly interests of his *ilmiye* colleagues. For example, a study on Cārullah Efendi's interest in Al-Itqānī's *Al-Shāmil* on legal theory and Kūhistānī's *Jāmi' al-Rumūz* on jurisprudence, instead of such books as *Al-Hidāyah* and *Multaqā al-Abḥur*, would most likely provide interesting results. I think that comparative studies will help reveal both his typical and atypical sides.

Ottoman Book Culture did not examine the collection's books on theology and philosophy. If there is a new edition of this book, it would be appropriate to add such articles. Also, new chapters could be added to make it easier to read. While this

book has made a great contribution to revealing the important stages of Cârullah Efendi's life, it also forces the reader to really pay attention while reading the articles. A chronological table of his biography would significantly help them follow the connection between his life and his production while reading the articles.

Almost all of the contributors use terms pertaining to the study of manuscripts. While some of these are known to experts, others may have been used for the first time in this book. Due to the fact that the same terms are sometimes used to express different meanings (e.g., *matlab* and *kıraat kaydı*), a glossary may be prepared to ensure that the terms' meanings are standardized and can be referred to while reading the book. In my opinion, such a glossary would make this book easier to read and be an important contribution to manuscript studies. Lastly, using only the *hijrî* or the Gregorian calendar will make it far easier to follow the relationship between Cârullah Efendi's life and the story of his collection.

Ottoman Book Culture is an important study that will lead studies on Ottoman intellectual history and the culture of manuscripts in new directions. Thoroughly examining this scholar's life, instead of just describing systems, depicting great transformations, and making generalizations, has the potential to bring about both satisfying and pretty surprising results. If similar studies are carried out on other library collections and marginal notes, a large gap in those studies related to the Ottoman intellectual history will be filled and thereby help place this field on a stronger foundation.