CHAPTER 3

The Khādimīs of Konya: The Rise of a Scholarly Family from the Ottoman Periphery

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Introduction

Many families of Sufis and other scholars from peripheral provinces played a crucial role in the educational and intellectual history of the Ottoman Empire. One of these was the Khādimī family from the small town of Hadim, near Konya. This family settled in Konya in the late Seljūq period after emigrating from Bukhara (today Uzbekistan), presumably due to the Mongol invasions. Members of this family had a formative influence on the Islamic education of the 18th and 19th centuries in and around Konya, and were eventually greatly respected beyond their own region.1 By the late 18th century, two family members had even assumed high positions within the ʿilmīyye establishment, including the magistracy of Mecca and Medina, which was the highest position after the judge of Constantinople.2

Many other relatives were active as teachers, preachers, or muftis in and around Hadim. This demonstrates a remarkably rapid career advancement by the previously unknown and marginal Khādimīs into the scholarly establishment. Three members of the family in particular played key roles in bringing about this prominence: Muṣṭafā Efendī (d. 1147/1734), his son Muḥammad al-Khādimī (d. 1176/1762), and his grandson Muḥammad Saʿīd al-Madanī (d. 1213/1798). The most influential member of the clan was Muḥammad al-Khādimī, through whom the family obtained the nationwide acceptance and authority that marked the height of their fame in the educational and

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intellectual history of the Ottoman Empire. Muḥammad Saʿīd was the last member of the family to achieve exceptional and transregional fame.³

The progress of this trio can best be revealed by an investigation into the networks of Islamic education in the Ottoman Empire of the 18th century. How did it happen that three scholars from a previously unknown family from a peripheral Ottoman region reached the inside of the elite ʿilmiyye-establishment, which is often described as a closed circle of just a few scholarly families?⁴ And how did they go on to achieve renown as authorities on matters of religion, jurisprudence, ethics, and mysticism beyond the borders of the Ottoman Empire, evolving into a central intersection point of transregional relations? What role did their multiple relations to political leaders and religious authorities play in this development?

These are the questions to be discussed in this contribution, which attempts to demonstrate the activities of each of the three family members: grandfather, father, and son.

Muṣṭafā Efendī (d. 1734): The First Steps of the Khādimīs into Ottoman Intellectual History

The Khādimīs had played no significant part in the Sufi or scholarly educational environment of their new home before Muṣṭafā Efendī. Three significant developments can explain his rise to prominence:

Initiation into the Naqshbandiyya Order

A decisive issue was Muṣṭafā Efendī’s encounter with one of the most influential shaykhs of the Naqshbandiyya brotherhood (tariqa), Muhammad Murād Bukhārī (d. 1141/1729), in Tarsus, near Mersin in southern Anatolia.⁵ Bukhārī came to Istanbul in 1681 after a long journey as khalīfa of Muhammad Murād Maṣūm, the son of Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī (d. 1033/1624), the eponym of the Mujaddidiyya, the Indian branch of the Naqshbandiyya order. There, Sirhindī’s son found many followers in the political and religious elites who helped him

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³ For their work and influence see Yaşar Sarikaya, Abū Saʿīd Muḥammad al-Ḫādimī (1701–1762): Netzwerke, Karriere und Einfluss eines osmanischen Provinzgelehrten (Hamburg: Dr. Kovač, 2005).