Late Ottoman Origins of Modern Islamic Thought

In this major contribution to Muslim intellectual history, Andrew Hammond offers a vital reappraisal of the role of Late Ottoman Turkish scholars in shaping modern Islamic thought. Focusing on a poet, a sheikh, and his deputy, Hammond re-evaluates the lives and legacies of three key figures who chose exile in Egypt as radical secular forces seized power in republican Turkey: Mehmed Akif, Mustafa Sabri, and Zahid Kevseri. Examining a period when these scholars faced the dual challenge of non-conformist trends in Islam and Western science and philosophy, Hammond argues that these men, alongside Said Nursi who remained in Turkey, were the last bearers of the Ottoman Islamic tradition. Utilising both Arabic and Turkish sources, he transcends disciplinary conventions that divide histories along ethnic, linguistic, and national lines, highlighting continuities across geographies and eras. Through this lens, Hammond observes the long-neglected but lasting impact these Late Ottoman thinkers had upon Turkish and Arab Islamist ideology.

Andrew Hammond is a tutor in Turkish history at the University of Oxford. He formerly worked as a journalist covering the Arab Spring and as a political analyst on Middle East Affairs. His previous books include *What the Arabs Think of America* (2007), *The Islamic Utopia*: *The Illusion of Reform in Saudi Arabia* (2012), and *Popular Culture in North Africa and the Middle East* (2017).

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Turkish and Egyptian Thinkers on the Disruption of Islamic Knowledge

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Preface

The current study began life as a doctoral thesis at the University of Oxford, and its initial question was, what happened to Late Ottoman Islamic thought, beyond its known and extensively researched political, intellectual, and institutional extensions inside modern Turkey? What happens to a centuries-old religious tradition when an elite that believes it has the power to transform, banish, or wish it away in an instant of historical time seizes control of the state to implement a project of radical transformation? The realisation that the major minds of that tradition's final era had in fact decamped to Cairo during the early republican period prompted further questions about their writing, their interactions with intellectuals and religious scholars in Egypt, and their engagement with events back in Turkey. Having co-opted, marginalised, and crushed opposition, Turkey's new leaders had set off on a revolutionary path to discard what they regarded as a corrosive pre-modern tradition in terms of religious belief and practice and embrace a draconian vision of what it means to be 'modern', 'national', and 'rational' that was in equal measure thrilling and horrifying to audiences both regional and global. The study in hand is the result of those investigations, and I would like to thank the various examiners and commentators for helping it wind its way to conclusion. They include Şükrü Hanioğlu, Rosalind O'Hanlon, Christopher Melchert, Laurent Mignon, Ronald Nettler, and Eugene Rogan, as well as the Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilizations editor Chase Robinson and three anonymous readers. I would also like to thank Gerald Hawting with whom I studied early Islam and Owen Wright with whom I studied Arabic, in addition to Oxford's wonderful Turkish teacher Emine Çakır.

Note on Style

Since the religious scholars in question wrote mainly in Arabic, I have used Arabic as the default language for technical terminology, but when discussing Turkish texts or the Turkish public sphere I use Turkish. In footnotes, the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* is abbreviated to *IJMES* and the journals *Sırat-I Müstakim*, *Sebilürreşad*, and *Beyanülhak* to *SM*, *SR*, and *BH*, respectively. Translations of the various languages cited are by the author, except where otherwise indicated, and I have striven to cite from books from the original language in which they were written, in line with the study's key mission to trace the genealogy and trajectory of ideas. Translations of book and poem titles in Arabic and Turkish are given in the main text on first mention, but not in the notes; however, the list of dated articles by Kevseri in the Appendices includes a full translation. This list is intended to help in understanding how Kevseri's thought developed, since the collection of his articles published posthumously in 1953 lacks the original dates of publication. I have followed the *IJMES* system regarding transliteration of Arabic, Ottoman Turkish, and Persian (used also for Urdu), and other questions of style. Most names and titles from languages using the Arabic script today are transliterated in full, while certain commonly cited names and terms are given in the main text according to the *IJMES* recommendation in terms of italics and diacritics (hajj, hadith, shariʿa, ʿulamaʾ, *ʿālim*, ulema, mufti, Wahhabi, Qurʾan, etc.). Names such as Egyptian president Nasser are written with their common English spelling. Dates are usually rendered in the common era (ce) format, but ce dates are given in brackets when the Ottoman Rumi and Hijri calendar is cited. Dates after the 1 January 1918 alignment of the

Rumi with the Gregorian calendar are usually stated directly in ce format. I have only given diacritics with Ottoman-era Turkish terms that are not in use today, according to the *IJMES* style guide, but I use the Turkish Language Institute (Türk Dil Kurumu)'s guidance on use of the hatted diacritical mark (*şapka*); Turkish book titles and author names published in Latin script with the *şapka* and other transliteration marks are left intact. Ottoman-era words such as *taassub* and Mehmed are given their modern spellings only if a modern work prints them that way.