

"ulema and wise people" as well as "history books" (on the "circle of equity") and Yazıcıoğlu's *Muhammediye*, while (unlike Mustafa Ali) he writes favorably of Lütfi Pasha.

In the preface, the author states that he will enumerate the issues that have brought annoyance to the people and disturbed the world order before proposing ways of restoring the situation. The work is divided into twelve chapters, explicitly said to match the number of the months of the year and the signs of the zodiac, and in the first chapter he sets out to expound his general idea on the beginnings and characteristics of decline: until the beginnings of Murad III's reign, the viziers and officials administered justice and respected the Sharia and the *kanun* of the Ottoman dynasty. During Murad III's reign, however, the administrators started to neglect justice and acted contrary to the old laws (*kanun-ı kadim*); this is why villages and cultivated lands became deserted, the peasants dispersed, the expenses of the treasury surpassed its income, and strangers (*ecnebi*) entered the janissary corps. Moreover, viziers and officials turned on each other, started to occupy themselves only with personal affairs, factionalism, and bribery, and more generally abandoned the old laws (Y1-2, A601). After these introductory remarks, the author sets out to describe in detail these departures from the old customs and how to mend them.

To show the logic underlying the treatise, let us examine its "appendix", which poses seven questions the sultan has to ask of the viziers, the ulema, and the sipahi and janissary officials. These questions are: (1) How did the military victories of old turn into defeats and retreat, and is there any relation with the fact that sultans no longer lead campaigns in person? (2) Why can the army not repeat the victories of old, even though the numbers of janissaries and sipahis have increased so much? (3) This increase notwithstanding, in times of campaign very few soldiers appear in battle, since many of them are occupied with trade or other professions; what military use can be expected of such people? (4) In the old days, all military officials participated in the campaigns along with their retinue, which is not the case now; why have the old rules been neglected? (5) How is it that strangers, such as the sons of Turkish, Kurdish, Roma, and Iranian *reaya*, have entered the *kul* class? (6) Is it right that only janissaries get a full salary, while sipahis take false money and other *kuls* have fallen into the hands of Jewish and other infidel tax-farmers? (7) What happened to the sultanly fiefs (*havass-ı hümayun*), which used to yield considerable income, as now their peasants are scattered and their incomes lessened due to the oppression of the appointed agents (*voyvoda*)? (Y36-40, A641-45).<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Interestingly, in a late manuscript (copied in 1652/3) that omits this appendix, the copyist added *hadiths* and other material (A636-41); among them, notes on how Selim II used

*Kitâb-ı müstetâb* can be seen as the link between Ottoman *adab* literature, initiated by Lütfi Pasha and perfected by Mustafa Ali, and the canonization of the "Golden Age" vs. "decline" paradigm that was to follow. The emphasis placed on institutional functions rather than individual virtues and vices, a new stress on social compartmentalization, the sharp polarization between Süleyman's glorious reign and the deplorable past, and the localization of the causes of decline (disorder in the timar system, the intrusion of strangers into the janissary ranks and the swollen numbers and costs of the latter, and the destructive results of bribery at all levels) were all to dominate Ottoman political literature for decades to come.

### 2.1 *Murad IV's Counselors: Koçi Bey and His Circle*

The most famous expounder of the "Golden Age" trend is of course Koçi Bey. At the same time, he was also one of the most famous Ottoman political theorists, since he was translated into European languages very early and thus was much appreciated by early Turkish scholars.<sup>19</sup> In sharp contrast to his fame, very little is known about his life and career: of Albanian origin, he was recruited as a *devşirme* and served in the palace under Ahmed I and subsequent sultans, before he retired to his native city of Gorça (Göriçe) in the late 1640s. He seems to have been a close advisor to Murad IV and to his successor, Ibrahim I, for each of whom he wrote one of his two treatises.<sup>20</sup> Koçi Bey's first *Risâle* ("Treatise")

to perform imperial councils in the open in order for people to see that the sultan was not neglecting their affairs (A639), as well as a note on the classification of social groups (A640) which seems to come from Hasan Akhisari and perhaps resonates an ulema influence on the copyist. According to the note, God divided humanity into five groups, namely (a) kings, who practise justice and equity, (b) the ulema, who explain the Holy Law, (c) the military (*ehl-i silah*), who guard the state (*memleket*), (d) the *reaya*, by whom the treasury is filled, (e) the artisans (*ehl-i sanayi*), by whose work all the world benefits. Eventually this peculiarity must be traced to Mahmud al-Zamakhshari's *Reb' al-abrâr*, Akhisari's main source, as the same classification is described by Hasanbeyzade who also translates Zamakhshari (see above, chapter 4 and cf. Sariyannis 2013, 102).

<sup>19</sup> See Koçi Bey – Çakmakcioğlu 2008, 18 for the various editions and translations. The text was mainly known in the West through Pétis de la Croix's French (1725) and W. F. A. Behnauer's German (Koçi Bey – Behnauer 1861) translations. Cf. Rosenthal 1958, 226-227; Black 2011, 264-265. On Koçi Bey's appreciation by nineteenth-century Orientalists and early scholars of the Turkish republic, suffice it to mention his being named "Turkish Montesquieu" in Hammer 1963, 3:489 (cf. Koçi Bey – Aksüt 1939, 11; repeated in Koçi Bey – Çakmakcioğlu 2008, 9). Hammer even says that Koçi Bey deserves this title just as Ibn Khaldun had been awarded the title of "the Arab Montesquieu". On the use of the treatise in the mid-nineteenth century cf. Abou-El-Haj 2005, 79-80.

<sup>20</sup> The most comprehensive biography is that by M. Çağatay Uluçay in *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, s.v. "Koçi Bey", supplemented by that of Ömer Faruk Akün in *Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*. Rifaat Abou-El-Haj has presented a detailed outline of Koçi Bey's first