2. FROM MEANS TO GOAL: AUXILIARY DISCIPLINES IN THE OTTOMAN MADRASA CURRICULUM

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1.0. Introduction

The Ottoman Empire established madrasas since its formation. It met the needs of these madrasas, first, by inviting teachers from adjacent regions and, soon after, by employing their students. Thus, students who successfully graduated from the madrasa then became the teachers, who would in turn become the pioneers in systemising the Ottoman madrasa (Āşıkpaşazāde 1332). The curriculum became methodised in a short time. To ensure the continuation of this system, it was continually revised and developed by the Ottoman scholars.

There were many factors that facilitated this constant revision of the Ottoman madrasa system. The most important of these was that the madrasa was an institution in which qualified individuals were produced in every area needed by the Empire. The madrasa curriculum, which had been structured to respond to a wide range of expectations and issues, from bureaucracy to ilmiye institutions, had to be continually developed. That being said, the effort to develop the curriculum does not mean that there were
no fixed disciplines within the madrasa system. On the contrary, in some fields there were books that were taught for centuries throughout the Empire. Therefore, there were constants and variables in the madrasa curriculum; and the variables were shaped according to the needs of each period.

Despite this, we still do not have much knowledge about the books taught in the Ottoman madrasa system, as there has not yet been much scholarly attention by researchers in the field of history and education on the subject. Studies regarding the madrasa mainly focus on its structures, its architecture, its relations with politics, teacher-student relationships, and ilmiye hierarchy. Many issues, such as the curriculum, the range of the courses taught, the differences encountered within different regions, and the reasons for changes to the curriculum have not been elucidated as of yet. The absence of specific scholarship regarding this subject in Western languages, with the exception of a few general studies, has led to a lack of understanding regarding the nature of the Empire’s educational system among modern researchers. Although some Turkish studies partially fill the gap on this subject,¹ a significant number of them provide only general information about the curriculum, and more detailed studies are needed.

The Ottoman madrasa curriculum was structured in different stages, with different disciplines taught at each step. The main aim of the curriculum was to understand the Islamic disciplines and to meet the needs of society. Therefore, the madrasa

¹ For details see Hüseyin 1983; İsmail 1984; Cevat 1997; Murat 2019.
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The curriculum focused on understanding three disciplines. These disciplines are *fiqh* ‘deep understanding’, *kalām* ‘theology’, and *taṣawwuf* ‘mysticism’, which are called *al-ʿulūm al-ʿāliyya* ‘the high disciplines’. However, the discipline of *fiqh* stands in a central place among them. It is not an exaggeration to posit that the madrasa education was designed for the discipline of *fiqh*. There was a preparatory process that trained students for these three disciplines, in general, and *fiqh*, in particular. In this process, the auxiliary disciplines, which are *ʿulūm āliyya*, were taught and the students were provided with the necessary knowledge and sophistication to understand the Islamic disciplines. The preparatory/auxiliary disciplines are mostly Arabic disciplines. The auxiliary disciplines, which serve as the key for students to comprehend texts written in various branches of the Islamic disciplines that emerged in Muslim societies, especially the texts of the Qurʾān and the Sunna, are *ṣarf* ‘morphology’, *nahw* ‘grammar/syntax’, *mantiq* ‘logic’, *ādāb al-baḥth wa-l-munāẓara* ‘dialectic’, *waḏ‘* ‘philosophy of language’, and *balāgha* ‘rhetoric’.

There are many classical sources about the disciplines taught in Ottoman madrasas. Both the divergent sources and the teaching of various works in different centuries in the Empire, which lasted for six centuries, make it difficult to draw a unified picture of the curriculum. However, the fact that the disciplines taught did not undergo much change in these periods, together with the continuity of some of the utilised texts, allows us to make general comments on some points. Three types of sources are available to investigate the taught courses. The first of these
are books dealing with the tartīb ‘organisation’ and tasnīf ‘classification’ of disciplines. I will examine the curriculum based on these sources. The second of these are biographies and autobiographies of scholars. In these sources, the books that a scholar read and taught give a particular idea to the reader about which books were in circulation, accepted, and included in to the curriculum. The third type are ijāza ‘diplomas’. These diplomas reveal to us the lessons and from whom those lessons were taken. Yet, in general, they do not mention the names of the books studied. In this article, I will briefly examine the works taught in the field of auxiliary disciplines in the Ottoman madrasa curriculum. Although different works were taught in different periods and regions, I will focus on the most widely read books.

2.0. Auxiliary Disciplines in the Madrasa Curriculum

Kawākib-i Sab’a Risālesi is an anonymous work authored in 1155/1741 as a response to an inquiry by the French ambassador to Bāb-i Ali (High Porte) about the character of the Ottoman madrasa curriculum. It consists of important material regarding the pre-madrasa education. I will briefly summarise the information about the pre-madrasa process in the risāla. According to this risāla, upon starting his education, a student first learned the Arabic alphabet and then began reading the Qurʾān from ‘amma juz’. Then, under the supervision of a teacher, the student would

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2 A juz’ is one of the thirty parts of the Qurʾān.
read the whole Qurʾān along with a book of *tajwīd*. Later, the process continued with memorising the Qurʾān and Birgili Mehmed Efendi’s (d. 981/1573) ‘*ʿAqāʾid Risālesi*, which was written in Turkish. After the ceremony of completing the memorisation of the Qurʾān, a dictionary—such as the poetic dictionary of Ibn al-Farīshtā (d. after 821/1418)—was taught to impart familiarity with Arabic words. Additionally, in order to get used to Persian, brāhīm Shāhīdī’s (d. 957/1550) Persian verse dictionary *Tuḥfa-i Shāhīdi* was taught. Having completed this process, the student was able to begin the auxiliary disciplines (Cevat 1997).

The disciplines taught in the madrasa were divided into three main parts: the auxiliary disciplines, Islamic disciplines, and *juzʾiyāt* ‘particular cases, details’, such as mathematics, geometry, and astronomy). The main purpose was to learn the Islamic disciplines; the auxiliary disciplines were taught in support of understanding them. Of course, this never demoted the auxiliary disciplines to a secondary position. On the contrary, in some periods and madrasas, they were given equal importance to the Islamic disciplines.

2.1. **Morphology (Ṣarf)**

The first discipline taught in auxiliary disciplines was the discipline of morphology (ṣarf). The *Amthila* (*Amthila-i Mukhtalifa wa-Muttarida*) was the first book read in this discipline. This text examines words and their forms. The students first memorised the text. An interesting feature of this text is that it is an anonymous

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3 *Tajwīd* is a set of rules for the correct pronunciation of the letters with all their qualities.
text/or that its author is unknown. After this, Bināʾ al-afʿāl, also anonymous, was studied. This book was written to afford basic knowledge of morphology based on the sound, structure, and semantic variation of the past and present tenses of Arabic verbs. In this respect, the basic education given in Amthila is deepened in the Bināʾ by taking Arabic verbs as the core of the discussion. The Maqṣūd, which is read at the next stage, is, like Amthila and Bināʾ, also anonymous. In this book, after emphasising the importance of the discipline of morphology, the patterns of verbs, conjugations of verbs and the declension of nouns, the rules to be applied in these conjugations and declensions and their explanations are all expounded upon and the kinds and descriptions of the verbs are elucidated (Khalīfa 2007, 1:255; 2:1078, 1806–7).

Al-ʿIzzī fī l-taṣrīf is one of the five classical works known as the sarf cümlesi and taught in the Ottoman madrasas. It is an important book written by ʿIzz al-Dīn al-Zanjānī (d. 660/1262) on the discipline of Arabic morphology. Because of its importance, scholars like Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī (d. 792/1390), Sayyid Sharīf al-Jurjānī (d. 816/1413), ʿImād al-Dīn Ibn Jamāʿa (d. 819/1416), Niksārī Ḥasan Pasha (d. 827/1424), Khoja Zāda Musliḥ al-Dīn (d. 893/1488), Khatīb al-Shirbīnī (d. 977/1570), and ʿAli al-Qārī (d. 1014/1605) have written commentaries on it. Among them, the commentary by Taftāzānī became famous and dozens of sub-commentaries were written on it (Khalīfa 2007, 2:1139–40). Like other books of morphology, Aḥmad b. ʿAlī b. Masʿūd’s (d. 8th/14th century) comprehensive work Marāḥ al-arwāh was widely taught in Ottoman madrasas. This book consists of seven chapters and provides detailed information first on
infinitives and then on the different forms and types of verbs (Khalīfa 2007, 2:1651).

Ibn al-Ḥājib’s (d. 646/1249) *al-Shāfiya fi l-Taṣrīf*, was written on Zamakhshari’s (d. 538/1144) *al-Mufaṣṣal fi ṣanʿat al-iʿrāb*, which is a summary (*khulāṣa*) of Abū Bishr Sibawayhi’s (d. 180/796) *al-Kitāb*. This was a key text in morphology within the madrasa curriculum. Ibn al-Ḥājib combined the subjects related to morphology in Zamakhshari’s *al-Mufaṣṣal* by making the necessary additions as well as sorting, correcting, and summarising them in his *al-Shāfiya*. This book is considered the first concise work on morphology, covering almost all subjects of the discipline. Another significant feature of this text was that the author, Ibn al-Ḥājib, though based in an Ottoman and Ḥanafi tradition madrasa, was a Mālikī scholar. *Al-Shāfiya* explains the rules of morphology in a concise yet systematic way. It has been taught as a textbook for centuries in madrasas throughout the Ottoman and Islamic world. Many studies from commentaries, sub-commentaries, poeticisation, and translation have been added to it. Moreover, not only the text itself, but also its commentaries were taught in the Ottoman madrasas (Khalīfa 2007, 2:1021).

### 2.2. Grammar/Syntax (*Naḥw*)

The second discipline taught was Arabic grammar/syntax (*naḥw*). The first book that was used as a textbook in Arabic grammar was the *ʿAwāmil*. Although there were several books that bore this title, two of them were widely used for teaching in the Ottoman madrasas over the centuries. The first one was ʿAbd al-Qāhir bin ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Jurjānī’s (d. 471/1078) *al-ʿAwāmil*, which
was called al-ʿAwāmil al-ʿatīq; the second one was Muḥammad Birgiwī’s (d. 981/1573) al-ʿAwāmil, which was referred to as al-ʿAwāmil al-jadīd. However, there are significant differences between these two books in terms of a number of factors (ʿāmilṣ) and the way they were treated. Al-Jurjānī’s al-ʿAwāmil was taught in some parts of Anatolia, though mainly in Arab regions, Iran, and the Indian Subcontinent. As for Birgiwī’s text, it was taught in the madrasas of Istanbul and the Balkans for a long period (Durmuş 1991). After memorisation of Birgiwī’s al-ʿAwāmil, students moved to another book, Iẓhār al-asrār, which was written based on the principles of the Basran language school of grammar, i.e., to teach the main subjects of Arabic grammar in a concise way and in a short time. The grammatical rules that were mentioned only by name and with a single example in the ʿAwāmil were extended in Iẓhār al-asrār by giving their definitions, conditions, and detailed examples (Khalīfa 2007, 1:117).

Ibn al-Ḥājib’s al-Kāfiya is one of the main texts that was used in the Ottoman madrasas. It is, along with Sībawayhi’s al-Kitāb and Zamakhsharī’s al-Mufaṣṣal, one of the three most recognised books written on Arabic grammar. Although Sībawayhi’s al-Kitāb contains rich material and examples, its contents are unclassified. Zamakhsharī classified its subjects and summarised it in his al-Mufaṣṣal. Ibn al-Ḥājib’s al-Kāfiya relied on al-Mufaṣṣal. All of the subjects of nāḥw were studied to allow students to understand complex topics. Thanks to the accomplishment of al-Kāfiya, it was used as a text book in Ottoman madrasas for centuries (al-Zamakhsharī 2004; Khalīfa 2007, 2:1370–76). Ibn al-Ḥājib’s al-Kāfiya was used not only as an independent textbook
in the madrasa curriculum, but also as the main text and subject of commentary by Nūr al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī’s (d. 898/1492) al-Fawāʾid al-Dhiyāʾīyya. Al-Fawāʾid, which is also known as Jāmī or Molla Jāmī. It was one of the main grammar books that was taught at the advanced level. Molla Jāmī was not the only advanced textbook that students studied in madrasa; other books were also taught, such as Ibn Hishām’s (d. 761/1360) Mughnī al-labīb and Alfiyyat Ibn Mālik (Ibn Khaldūn 2005, 5:297–98).

Besides some other features, Mughnī al-labīb is original in terms of its classification of subjects. By that time, grammar books had come to classify subjects based on ʿāmil-maʾmūl-iʿrāb, marfūʿāt-mansūbāt-majrūrāt-majzūmāt, but Ibn Hishām followed a different method, which made his book renowned and one of the most circulated since his time. He divided its eight sub-chapters into two main chapters, which are mufradāt ‘propositions’ and jumal ‘sentences’ (Ibn Hishām 1964; Khalīfa 2007, 2:1751–54). As for the Alfiyyat Ibn Mālik fī l-naḥw wa-l-taṣrīf, it was composed of thousands of grammatical rules explained using examples from Qurʾānic verses, Prophetic traditions, and Arabic poems. It was memorised by students at the advanced level (Khalīfa 2007, 1:151–55).

2.3. Logic (Manṭiq)

After completing grammar, students would study logic (manṭiq). Most of the manṭiq books taught in Ottoman madrasas belonged to the last period of the pre-Ottoman era, which is denominated
the *muta’akhkhirūn* period. The first textbook taught in the madrasa on logic is Asūr al-Dīn al-Abhari’s (d. 663/1265), *al-Risāla al-Āṭirīyya fī l-mantiq*, with a condensed version known as *Īsāgūcī*, along with its commentaries and the glosses written on it. *Īsāgūcī* is an abridgement that contains all the subjects of classical logic. Because of this feature, it became the first textbook taught in the discipline of logic in the madrasa curriculum and many commentaries and sub-commentaries written on it have received the attention of scholars. The first of these commentaries is Ḫusam al-Dīn Ḩasan al-Kāṭī’s (d. 760/1359) Ḫusam-i Kāṭī and Muḥy al-Dīn al-Taḥlishī’s (d. 887/1482) sub-commentary on it are famous. Mullā Fanārī’s (d. 834/1431) *al-Fawāʾid al-Fanāriyya*, which is the second well-known commentary, and its sub-commentary, Aḥmad Ibn Khızir’s (d. 950/1543) *Qūl (Qawl) Aḥmad*, were also central textbooks in the madrasas (İzgi 1997). These two books differ from the other logic books taught in the madrasa in the way that both, especially the latter, employ tight and comprehensive language. By reading these texts, the student not only learned logic, but also had to grapple with difficult phrases of the Arabic language.

At a higher level, students were taught ʿAlī Ibn Omar al-Kāṭibī al-Qazwīnī’s (d. 675/1277) *al-Risāla al-Shamsiyya fī l-qawāʿid al-mantiqiyya* and Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī’s *Tahdhib al-mantiq wa-l-kalām*, with its commentaries and super-commentaries. In the following period, Qutb al-Dīn al-Rāzī’s (d. 766/1365) *Tahrīr al-qawāʿid al-mantiqiyya fī sharḥ al-Risāla al-Shamsiyya*, a famous commentary on al-Qazwīnī’s *al-Risālat al-
Shamsiyya, was taught. Along with Taḥrīr al-qawāʿid al-manṭiqiyya, its sub-commentaries in Sayyid Sharīf al-Jurjānī’s (d. 816/1413) Taḥrīr al-qawāʿid and in Kara Dāwūd Izmitī’s (d. 948/1541) Ḥāshiya ‘alā Ḥāshiya Kuçük (Kuçek) ‘alā Taḥrīr al-qawāʿid al-manṭiqiyya were studied. The student who read and completed these books proved his scientific talent and desire. Finally, in the discipline of logic Qutb al-Dīn al-Rāzī’s commentary, Lawāmiʿ al-asrār Sharh Maṭāliʿ al-anwār fī l-manṭiq on Sirāj al-Dīn al-ʿUrmawī’s (d. 682/1283) Maṭāliʿ al-anwār, was taught (al-Rāzī 1384; Sāçaklīzāde 1988).

2.4. Dialectic (Ādāb al-baḥth wa-l-munāẓara)

After logic, dialectic (ādāb al-baḥth wa-l-munāẓara) was studied to help students avoid inconsistency and contradiction in debate. At the elementary level, Taşkuprizāde Aḥmed Efendi’s (d. 968/1561) Sharḥ ʿalā Risāla fi ʿilm ādāb al-baḥth wa-l-munāẓara, which is his commentary on his own al-Risāla, was taught. After that, students studied Kamāl al-Dīn Masʿūd al-Rūmī’s (d. 905/1499) commentary on Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Ashraf al-Samarqandi’s (d. 722/1322) al-Risāla al-Samarqandiyya fi ādāb al-baḥth, which has around twenty-one super commentaries. At the same time, they were studying Shah Ḥusayn Efendi’s (d. 1130/1718) al-Risāla al-Ḥusayniyya fi fanni ādāb al-baḥth with its commentaries and sub-commentaries. Following this stage, students studied Qādī ʿAḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī’s (d. 756/1355) Ādāb al-baḥth and its commentary Sharḥ Ādāb al-baḥth, written by Muḥammad al-Ḥanafī l-Tabrīzī (d. around 900/1494) and its sub-
commentary, Mīr Abū al-Faṭḥ Muḥammad Ibn Amin’s (d. around 875/1470) Ḥāshiyat al-Mīr (İzgi 1997).

2.5. Philosophy of Language (Waḍʿ)

One of the important disciplines taught in madrasas was ʿilm al-waḍʿ. Waḍʿ, which deals with the origins and nature of language, focuses on the relationship between utterance and meaning and the circumstance/state of indication of utterance to meaning. The subjects of waḍʿ, whose history did not go as far back as that of other disciplines, were examined in the context of the relationship of utterance and meaning in the works of philology, logic, and legal theory before becoming an independent discipline.

ʿAḍud al-Dīn al-İji’s al-Risāla al-waḍʿiyya is the first independent work written on the relationship of words and meaning by focusing on the waḍʿ. Al-Risāla al-Waḍʿiyya became famous soon after it was written, and many commentaries and sub-commentaries were written on it. The discipline of al-waḍʿ reached a certain depth due to discussions between Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī and Sayyid Sharīf al-Jurjānī, in particular on the relationship between utterance and meaning. Alī Kuşçī’s (b. 879/1474) ʿUnqūd al-zawāhir fī l-ṣarf systematised waḍʿ and changed its subjects, shifting the focus from utterance meaning to waḍʿ. The subjects were newly systematised under the chapters waḍʿ, wâdīʿ, mawdūʿ, mawdūʿ lahu, and hikma al-waḍʿ and were made more advanced.

In this way, the process which deals with language from a philosophical perspective was followed at various stages in numerous texts throughout the Ottoman Empire (Kuşçī 2001; Fazlıoğlu 2012).
In the discipline of al-waḍʿ, whilst commentaries and glosses were being written within Ottoman lands, so too were independent works being written and taught within the madrasa. The first commentary on al-Ījī’s al-Risāla al-Waḍʿiyya was Abū al-Qāsim al-Laythī al-Samarqandi’s (d. 888/1483) Sharḥ Risāla al-Waḍʿiyya. It was one of the main texts taught in the Ottoman madrasa. Another commentary written on al-Risāla al-Waḍʿiyya and taught in the Ottoman madrasa was ‘Īṣām al-Dīn al-Isferāyīnī’s (d. 951/1544) Sharḥ Risāla al-Waḍʿiyya, which was known in madrasa circles as ‘Īṣām al-waḍʿ or ‘Īṣām al-waḍʿiyya. This commentary by al-Isferāyīnī was usually taught with the commentary of al-Samarqandi, but found comparatively more space in the curriculum relative to that book. Another work that was studied in this field was Risāla fī l-waḍʿ, which was penned by Ibrāhīm Ibn Khalīl al-Aghīnī (d. 1311/1894), who lived in the last period of the Ottoman Empire (Özdemir 2006, 203, 206, 212; Khalifa 2007, 1: 898).

2.6. Rhetoric (Balāgha)

Rhetoric (balāgha) examines the rules and methods of mot juste and proper speech. It examines the pronunciation of the word in a clear, understandable, and beautiful manner in accordance with the situation required by the interlocutor. It is divided into three sub-sections: ‘ilm al-maʿānī ‘semantics’, ‘ilm al-bayān ‘figures of speech’, and ‘ilm al-badīʿ ‘embellishments’. Rhetoric as a discipline is as old as morphology and syntax. This discipline emerged and was developed in order to cultivate appreciation of the style

In the Ottoman madrasa, Muḥammad Ibn ʿAlī al-Sakkākī’s (d. 626/1228) Miṣṭaḥ al-ulūm was the main text taught. The third part of this work—which examines various disciplines, such as morphology, syntax, poetry—bears the title ʿilmā al-maʿānī wa-l-bayān. In this chapter, Sakkākī expands on the discipline of rhetoric as a discipline, using rational methods of knowledge that were employed in the fields of theology, philosophy, and logic. With this approach, he transformed rhetoric from being an individual experience and pleasure to a discipline with its own rules and principles. In this respect, Sakkākī introduced an innovation no one else initiated before him, and seriously influenced those who came after. Therefore, Miṣṭaḥ al-ʿulūm was the basis for almost all of the books written on balāgha (Ibn Khaldūn 2005).

Khaṭīb al-Qazwīnī’s (d. 739/1338) al-Talkhīs fī ʿulūm al-balāgha comes first among the books taught in the discipline of rhetoric, which has an important place in the madrasa curriculum. This book, which is the summary of Sakkākī’s Miṣṭaḥ al-ʿulūm, is still read in the discipline of rhetoric in today’s madrasas. Because of its importance, numerous studies have been made on Khaṭīb al-Qazwīnī’s al-Talkhīs. Among these studies, two commentaries written by Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī are especially important. Of these, al-Sharḥ al-Mukhtaṣar was short and taught after al-Talkhīs in Ottoman madrasas. He wrote the second commentary, al-Sharḥ al-Muṭawwāl, after examining the books written in the discipline of rhetoric, especially Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī’s (d. 471/1079) Dalāʾīl al-iʿjāz and Asrār al-balāgha (al-
Taftāzānī 2013). In some madrasas, instead of al-Muṭawwal, Khatīb al-Qazwīnī’s ʿIdāḥ al-maʿānī which is the author’s own commentary on the al-Talkhīs fī ʿulūm al-balāgha was studied. In some madrasas, as a final book, Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm Ibn Muḥammad al-Halabī al-Qabāqibī’s (d. 850/1446) al-Alfiyya li l-maʿānī wa-l-bayān was memorised (İzgi 1997).

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