A Handbook and Reader of Ottoman Arabic

Edited by Esther-Miriam Wagner
3. ON THE ORDER OF THE SCIENCES
FOR HE WHO WANTS TO LEARN THEM

Guy Burak

Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr Sājaqlizādah (Saçaklızade, d. 1732/3) was an influential scholar who devoted a work to the organisation of the Islamic sciences (titled accordingly Tartīb al-ʿulūm, completed ca. 1715). The following passage is the section from this work in which he discusses the training of a scholar. Interestingly, Sājaqlizādah is aware of the different linguistic backgrounds of the students across the Empire and structures the curriculum, which consisted primarily of texts in Arabic, accordingly. It is for this reason that he insists on the memorisation of the Arabic–Turkish dictionary by Ibn Malak (or Ibn Firishta).

Confidence that he is capable of understanding [the material] should be instilled in the novice. If he is young (ṣabi-yan), he should be ordered to study the Qurʾān with a teacher whose transmission [of the Qurʾān] is sound, until he completes [the study of the entire Qurʾān]. Then he should be ordered to study the minutiae of faith, the principles of the creed of the People of the Sunna, the prescribed ability [to comprehend] the science of ethics and the science of prayer.

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1 On Saçaklızade see Özcan (2005); El-Rouayheb (2015, 116–20).
He who masters (mutakaffil) all those [sciences should study] Muhammad Birgivi’s *Turkish Epistle*,\(^2\) which is easy for novices who are not speakers of Arabic (‘ajamī).\(^3\) Then he should be ordered, if he is a non-speaker of Arabic, to study *Lughat Ibn Firishta*\(^4\) and memorise it. If he is mature (bālīgh), after [gaining] confidence in his ability to comprehend [the materials], he should be ordered to study [*Surat*] al-Fātiha and short suras. Then he should be ordered to study that [i.e., Birgivi’s] Epistle or any [other epistle] that will be of use. Then he should be ordered to study the entire Qurʿān. Then he should be ordered to study *Lughat Ibn Firishta* and memorise it. After having studied *Lughat Ibn Firishta*, be he young or mature, he should be ordered to study the science of morphology (ṣarf), then grammar (nahw), then [jurisprudential] practical rulings (‘ilm al-aḥkām), then logic, then disputation (munāẓara), then theology (kalām), then rhetoric (maʿānī), then the fundamentals of jurisprudence and then jurisprudence. By ‘jurisprudence’ I do not mean only the science of practical rulings (al-aḥkām al-ʿamaliyya) without evidence [for this judicial opinion], as in *Mukhtaṣar al-Qudūrī*,\(^5\) but the understanding of [jurisprudence] with [jurisprudential] evidence, as in *al-Hidāya*.\(^6\) As for *Mukhtaṣar al-Qudūrī*, or whatever replaces it in the science of practical rulings, he should study it after

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\(^2\) Birgivi (1898), and Birgivi (1876).

\(^3\) ‘Ajamī can mean ‘Persian’ or ‘speaker of Persian’, though in this context it seems to be a generic term referring to non-Arabic speakers.

\(^4\) ʿIzz al-Din ʿAbd al-Laṭīf ibn Malak’s (also known as Ibn Farishta or Firişteoğlu, d. After 1418) was one of the first Arabic–Turkish dictionaries; see Baktır (1999).

\(^5\) Al-Qudūrī (2005).

\(^6\) Al-Marghinānī (2000).
having studied the science of phonetic forms and grammar. Otherwise, his understanding will remain [at the level of] the principles (qawāʿid) of Fundamental of Jurisprudence, unlike the understanding [required for texts] like al-Hidāya. By ‘theology’ I do not mean only the theological issues (al-masāʿil al-iʿtiqādiyya), but what appears [in works] like al-Maqāṣid7 on essences (jawāhir) and attributes (aʿrāḍ) and theological issues with proofs and responses to opponents. Then, after [having studied that] he should study the principles of hadith, then hadith riwāya, and hadith dirāya, and then Qurʿānic exegesis. As for the study of Qurʿānic recitation (tajwīd) and the Qurʿānic readings (qirāʿāt) and Qurʿānic orthography (marsūm al-maṣāḥif), the student should learn [these sciences] whenever he can, before studying Qurʿānic exegesis. As to arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and the science of metres and rhymes, he should study them whenever he can, but it is recommended to study arithmetic before the study of practical rulings and especially [before the study] of inheritance rules (farāʾiḍ).8

References
Birgivi, Mehmet. 1876. Risale-i Birgivi. Istanbul (?).
———. 1898 [1314]. Vasiyetname. Istanbul (?).

7 Al-Maqāṣid (1989); see also Özen (2011).


