

Istanbul Seen from Cairo

François Déroche

In a recent book on Ottoman calligraphy, Muhittin Serin includes in his bibliography the name of the great lexicographer of the 12th/18th century, al-Zabîdî;¹ strangely enough, since the author is dealing with calligraphy, he only mentions the famous and monumental Arabic dictionary, the *Tâj al-‘Arûs*, omitting a small treatise which al-Zabîdî devoted to calligraphy, covering the history of the art up to his own day. Ottoman literature on the subject is rather well explored, but its perspective is largely centered on the milieu in Istanbul: it may therefore be of some interest to those who are interested in the history of Ottoman calligraphy to discover the point of view of a scholar who was living in a province of the Empire.

Al-Zabîdî was born in the Indian city of Bilgram in 1145/1732, in a family who claimed to descend from ‘Alî through his great-grand-son, Zayd b. ‘Alî Zayn al-‘Abidîn.² At a comparatively young age, he left his country and came to Yemen and Hijâz before reaching Egypt where he settled permanently in 1167/1754. A traditional scholar by formation, he seems to have had a wide-ranging appetite of knowledge as his pupil and friend ‘Abd al-Rahmân al-Jabartî aptly puts it in the note he devoted to his master in his *‘Ajâ’ib*: “al-Zabîdî was the luminary of the most distinguished, the enchanting one, playing with intellects, who traversed every path in language and tradition, and dove into every depth of knowledge, to whom the ways of theology submitted themselves, and pages and pens bore witness.”³ Was he himself a calligrapher? “You

¹ Muhittin Serin, *Hat Sanatı ve Meşhur Hattatlar* (İstanbul, 1999), p. 316.

² Stefan Reichmuth, “Murtadâ az-Zabîdî (d. 1791): Biographical and Autobiographical Accounts. Glimpses of Islamic Scholarship in the 18th Century,” *Die Welt des Islams* 39 (1999), p. 70.

³ Al-Jabartî, *‘Ajâ’ib al-âthâr wa-tarâjîm al-akhbâr*, 3 vol. (Beirut, 1978), vol. II, p. 103.

find him continuously buying and copying against payment” writes a Maghribî witness,⁴ but he does not seem to have been a practitioner of calligraphy in the full sense of the term.

Why then did he write the *Hikmat al-ishrâq ilâ kuttâb al-âfâq*, a short treatise on calligraphy? A first reason is to be found in the person to whom the work is dedicated, Hasan al-Rushdî. He was a slave, probably from the Anatolian part of the Ottoman empire, bought by ‘Alî Agha, an emissary of the Sublime Porte in Cairo. He was educated in Egypt, with a special interest in calligraphy which he learned under ‘Abd Allâh al-Anîs al-Mawlawî; his teacher granted him in 1147/1744–45 a diploma (*ijâzah*) which has been preserved and published by Adam Gacek.⁵ Al-Rushdî later married his teacher’s daughter and became *shaykh* of the calligraphers and *kuttâb* when Ismâ‘îl al-Wahbî, *shaykh al-mukattibîn*, died in 1187/1774. When al-Zabîdî wrote for him the *Hikmah*, he had not yet reached this position—the dictation of the work was completed according to the final note on the 12 *dhû al-hijja* 1184/ 29 March 1770. Both al-Rushdî and al-Zabîdî were to die in 1205/1790.

A second reason might be the deep interest showed by al-Zabîdî in genealogy. Stefan Reichmuth speaks of his approach to hadîth as “a kind of cultural archaeology [...] through which the origins and the legitimacy of the cultural institutions of Islam must be brought to light”:⁶ this remark could be taken in a broader sense as a definition of al-Zabîdî’s method as applied here to Arabic calligraphy. This is by no means a far-fetched statement since the few glimpses we can catch of the treatise’s genesis confirm the extensive approach to the matter by al-Zabîdî. The author was a man of books and various accounts stress the richness of his library; the study of the text, as we shall see later, throws light on its dependence on written sources. But this did not exclude a search for direct knowledge: in the case of calligraphy, it seems that al-Zabîdî became acquainted in 1181/1767 with a *mamluk*, ‘Alî b. ‘Abd Allâh, who had been granted an *ijâzah* by al-Rushdî himself and who in turn taught al-Zabîdî the fundamentals of the art of the pen.⁷

⁴ Quoted in Reichmuth, “Murtadâ az-Zabîdî (d. 1791): Biographical and Autobiographical Accounts,” p. 66.

⁵ Adam Gacek, “The Diploma of the Egyptian Calligrapher Hasan al-Rushdî,” *Manuscripts of the Middle East* 4 (1989), p. 44.

⁶ Stefan Reichmuth, “Murtadâ az-Zabîdî (1732–91): Netzwerk und Lebenswerk eines indo-arabischen Gelehrten des 18. Jahrhunderts,” *Islamische Bildungsnetzwerke im lokalen und transnationalen Kontext (18.–20. Jahrhundert)* (Bochum, 2000), p. 30.

⁷ Al-Jabartî, *‘Ajâ‘ib al-âthâr wa-tarâjîm al-akhbâr*, vol. I, p. 598.

The *Hikma* reflects al-Zabîdî's quest for origins and legitimacy. It is basically a genealogy, linking the present—al-Rushdî—to its roots in the past; the treatise begins with the origins of the Arabic script, includes a digression on the merits of calligraphy and on the implements of the scribe (*qalam*, inkwell, ink) and on scribal practices, then goes on with the history of the art of writing. The part of the text devoted to Ottoman calligraphy, beginning with Şeyh Hamdullah, will detain us;⁸ as suggested previously, the interest of the document lies partly in the fact that it gives the point of view of a peripheral centre of the Empire, whereas Ottoman treatises devoted to this subject tend to be centered on the capital city.

It is no wonder that the short *silsile* which appears in al-Rushdî *icâzetnâme* constitutes the backbone of the pages of the *Hikmah* devoted to Ottoman calligraphy; al-Zabîdî certainly knew this tradition and takes it over into his text. For the same reason, the author only pays attention to the *aqlam-i sitte* tradition, omitting completely other aspects of the calligraphy. Three main developments have then been grafted upon that *silsile*: the first one corresponds to the generation of Şeyh Hamdullah's direct pupils, the second one to those of Dervish Ali. Between the first and the second developments, the *silsile* is limited to the figureheads of Ottoman calligraphy. This situation is largely similar to what is found in classical works about Ottoman calligraphy. Al-Zabîdî is responsible for the third development which is devoted to the late transmission (12th/18th century) of the Şeyh's school in Egypt. The information provided by the author has to be compared with that found in classical sources. It can be conveniently summed up in a table with the names listed in alphabetical order, with the Turkish equivalent in the second column, followed by a reference to Şevket Rado's book (R);⁹ the first column also contains the number of the page(s) in the modern edition (Z) of the *Hikmah* and singles out Egyptian calligraphers (Eg.).

'Abd Allâh (Z 89)	Abdullah Amasî (R 48)
'Abd Allâh ef. al-Qarîmî (Z 91)	Abdullah Kırîmî (R 78)
'Abd Allâh ef. al-Vefâ'î (Z 93)	Abdullah Vefâ'yî (R 133–34)
'Abd Allâh al-Mawlawî al-Anîs (Z 95; Eg.)	
'Abd al-Karîm Khalîfa Wîqâyat zâde (Z 90)	Abdülkerim (Halife) (R 82)
Ahmad Çelebi (Z 91)	Ahmet b. Pîr Mehmet (R 77) ?

⁸ al-Zabîdî, "Hikmat al-ishrâq ilâ kuttâb al-âfâq," ed. 'A.S. Hârûn, *Nawâdir al-makhtûât* 5 (Cairo, 1373/1954), pp. 88–96.

⁹ Şevket Rado, *Türk Hattatları* (İstanbul, s.d.).

- Ahmad ef. al-Darwîsh (Z 93) Dervîş Ahmed (R 122)
 Ahmad ef. Qızqâbân zâde (Z 92) Ahmed Kızkapanzâde (R 93)
 Ahmad ef. Qazanjî zâde (Z 93)
 Ahmad ef. Shaykh zâde (Z 93, 94)
 Ahmad ef. al-Shukrî (Z 96; Eg.) Ahmet Şükrü (R Table 4)
 Ahmad ef. Qarahisârî (Z 90) Ahmed Karahisârî (R 69–72)
 ‘Alî ef. Nafasî zâde (Z 92)
 ‘Alî ef. Qâshiqjîzâde (Z 92) Ali b. Mustafa Kaşıkçızade (R 107)
 ‘Ali b. Yahyâ (Z 88) Ali Sofi (R 46)
 ‘Alî imâm Amîr Akhûr (Z 93)
 Amr Allâh ef. (Z 91) Emrullah b. Mehmet (R 93)
 ‘Anbar Mustafâ aghâ (Z 93) Mustafa Anber Ağa (R 103)
 Dalî Yûsuf ef. (Z 90) Demircikulu Yusuf ef. (R. 85) ?
 Darwîsh ‘Alî efendi (Z 92, 94, 95) Birinci Dervîş Ali (R 100–1)
 Darwîsh Muhammad (Z 91) Dervîş Mehmet b. Mustafa Dede
 (R 80–2)
 Fadl Allâh ef. (Z 93, 94 twice) Fazlullah (b. Mehmet) (R. 103) ?
 Hasan ef. (Uskudârî Hasan Çelebi) (Z 91) Hasan Üsküdari (R 86)
 Hasan b. Hasan al-Diyâ’î (Z 94; Eg.)
 Hasan ef. al-Rushdî (Z 96; Eg.)
 Husâm al-dîn Khalîfa (Z 89) Hüsâmettin Hüseyin Şah (R 79–80)
 Husayn Çelebi Khalîfa (Z 90) Karahisarizâde Hasan Çelebi
 (R 82)
 Husayn ef. al-Jazâ’irî (Z 94, 95; Eg.) Cezairli Hüseyin ef. (R Table 4)
 İbrâhîm ef. b. Ramadân (Z 93) İbrahim b. Ramazan (R 129)
 İbrâhîm ef. Shaykhzâde (Z 94)
 İbrâhîm al-Ruwaydî al-Husaynî, abû al-Fath al-Hammâmî al-Vefâ’î (Z 95; Eg.)
 İsmâ’îl ef. Khalîfa, Ibn ‘Alî (Z 93) İsmail b. Ali (Ağakapılı) (R 118–19)
 İsmâ’îl ef. Turk (Z 92; Eg.)
 İsmâ’îl ef. al-Wahbî (Z 96; Eg.) Mısırlı İsmail Vehbi (R Table 4)
 Jâbî zâde Muhammad efendi (Z 93) Cabizâde Abdullah (R 139–40)
 Jamâl al-dîn al-Amâsî (Z 89) Cemâl-i Amâsî (R 47)
 Khâlid ef. al-‘Azîz (Z 91, 92) Halit ef. (R 93)
 Khalîl ef. al-Hâfiz (Z 92) Halil (Hâfiz) (R 117–18)
 Küçük Darwîsh ‘Alî efendi (Z 93) İkinci Dervîş Ali (R 123)
 Mahmûd ef. Tunçhanelî (Z 90) Mahmud (Tophaneli) (R 99)
 Muhammad (al-Sayyid) b. İbrâhîm al-Maqdîsî al-Nûrî (Z 94, 95 twice, 96; Eg.) Mısırlı seyyit Mehmed Nuri (R Table 4)
 Muhammad ef. ‘Arab zâde (Z 92) Mehmet b. Ömer (R 122)

Muhammad ef. Khwâja zâde (Z 92)	Mehmet ef. (Hocazâde, Karakız) (R 107)
Muhammad ef. küçük ‘Arab zâde (Z 93)	
Muhammad ef. al-Imâm (Z 92)	İmam Mehmet (R 94–96)
Muhammad ef. Naqqâsh zâde (Z 92)	Mehmet (Nakkaşzâde) (R 107)
Muhammad ef. al-Shahiri al-Bostanjî (Z 94 twice)	
Muhyi al-dîn Jalâl-zâde (Z 89)	Muhiddin (Celâlzâde) (R 37, 62)
Mustafâ Dede (Z 90)	Mustafa Dede (R 65)
Mustafâ ef. al-Ayyûbî (Z 92)	Mustafa Eyyubi (Suyolcuzâde) (R 104)
Mustafâ ef. Khalîfa (Z 94; Eg.)	
Pîr ef. (Z 91)	Pîr Mehmed b. Şükrullah (R 77)
Qarâ ‘Alî ef. (Z 90)	
Qarâ Husayn ef. (Z 91, 92)	
Qâsim ef. (Z 94; Eg.)	
Rajab Khalîfa (Z 90)	Recep ef. (R 67)
Ramadân b. Ismâ‘îl (Z 92)	Ramazan b. İsmail (R 102)
Sâlih ef. Hammâmjizâde (Z 94, 95 twice)	Salih Çelebi Hamamcızade (R 121)
Sayyid ‘Alî (Z 95)	Seyyid Ali (Çavuşzâde) (R 133) ?
Shaykh Ahmad, abû al-‘Izz (Z 95; Eg.)	
Shaykh Hamdullah (Z 88–89)	Şeyh Hamdullah (R 49–54)
Shihâb al-dîn Ahmad al-Afqam, abû al-Irshâd (Z 95; Eg.)	
Shukr Allâh Khalîfa (Z 89, 91)	Şükrullah (Halife, Amasî) (R 66)
Sulaymân ef. al-Shâkirî (Z 94 thrice, 95 thrice; Eg.)	
Suyolghu zâde	cf. Mustafa ef. al-Ayyubi
Teknejî Hasan Çelebi (Z 90)	
‘Umar bey Nasûh Pâshâ zâde (Z 92)	Ömer b. Nasuh Paşa (R 99)
‘Umar ef. (Z 93, 94, 95)	Ömer Kâtip (R 129)
Uskudârî Hasan Çelebi	cf. Hasan efendi
‘Uthmân ef. al-Hâfiz (Z 93, 94 twice)	Hâfiz Osman (R 109–14)
Yahya al-Rûmî (Z 88)	Yahya-ı Rûmî/Yahya Sofi (R 46)
Yûsuf ef. (Z 92; Eg.)	

In addition to the names of the calligraphers, al-Zabîdî also provides information about the date of their birth (2), of their death (15), about the duration of their life (8) as well as about their production—in 10 cases indicating the number of Qur’âns they transcribed. The author

usually states the name of the teacher(s). With all these data, it is possible to identify many of the calligraphers—as one can see in comparing the names in the two columns above. In a few instances, the identification required amending al-Zabîdî's text:

- Tunçânelî is evidently a misspelling for Topkhânelî (Mahmûd ef. Tophaneli);
- Husayn çelebi Khalîfa, a pupil of Ahmad Karahisarî, is certainly identical with Karahisarizâde Hasan çelebi;
- Dalî Yûsuf ef., a pupil of the previously mentioned calligrapher, could be Demircikulu Yusuf ef.;
- The name of Jâbîzâde Muhammad ef. is tentatively corrected into Cabizade Abdullah ef., a pupil of Suyolcuzade; it is true that in the *Hikmah* he appears as a student of Dervish Ali, but this is also the case for Muhammad ef. Khwâjâzâde/Hocazade (Karakız) Mehmet ef. who, according to modern historians of Ottoman calligraphy, learned the art with Suyolcuzade.

Other names, like that of Ali ef. Nafasîzâde or Teknejî Hasan çelebi suggested at first sight possible Ottoman equivalents but proved impossible to match satisfactorily with calligraphers known in other sources. These names cannot either be discarded as misspellings or other errors by the author who has information about less known characters (e.g. Ahmad ef. Qizqâbânzâde/Kızkapan or Kazkabanzâde Ahmet ef.), or provides a date for the otherwise seemingly unknown Ahmad ef. Qazânjîzâde. His knowledge of Ahmet Karahisarî's school is different from what is commonly accepted:¹⁰ according to him, and if our identification of Dalî Yûsuf ef. with Demircikulu Yusuf ef. is correct, there are two more representatives after Yusuf ef., Qara 'Alî ef. and Taknajî Hasan çalabî. On other points, al-Zabîdî (or his source) is wrong in relating calligraphers with a teacher: he lists 13 pupils of Dervîş Ali, but out of 11 names we were able to identify only 5 are known by Rado as Dervîş Ali's students. In another instance, he ranks Mahmud Tophaneli as one of Şeyh Hamdullah's pupils,¹¹ whereas this calligrapher lived considerably later.

¹⁰ al-Zabîdî, "Hikmat al-ishrâq ilâ kuttâb al-âfâq," p. 90.

¹¹ al-Zabîdî, "Hikmat al-ishrâq ilâ kuttâb al-âfâq," p. 90.

More puzzling is the confusion which surrounds two names in the list: Darwîsh Muhammad and his son Pîr ef.¹² The latter is described by al-Zabîdî as a grandson of Şeyh Hamdullah; it seems that the author actually refers to Pîr Mehmed b. Şükru'llah. Obviously Darwîsh Muhammad cannot be his father, and his name suggests an identification with Dervîş Mehmet b. Mustafa Dede who was also a grandson of Şeyh Hamdullah. In al-Rushdî's *icazetnâme*, Pîr Mehmet ef. appears in the *silsile* in the position of pupil of Dervîş Mehmet who is in his turn described as the pupil of his father Mustafa Dede; this part of the transmission does not square with the sequence found in our sources on the history of Ottoman calligraphy. As we shall see, al-Zabîdî was probably relying on a written source: he might have found a report which conflicted with the *silsile* and tried to amend this point. Anyhow, this sequence was still found a century later in an Egyptian treatise on calligraphy.¹³

The wealth of details appearing in the *Hikmah* strongly suggests that the author was actually relying on a written account of Ottoman calligraphy while preparing his text. Al-Zabîdî's knowledge of Turkish (he also knew Persian and some Georgian) gives consistency to the hypothesis of such a source for the passage on Şeyh Hamdullah's school. It could have been written slightly later than the 30's of the 12th/18th century, since the last Ottoman calligraphers mentioned by al-Zabîdî died before 1730; the information on contemporary or almost contemporary Egyptian characters could of course be provided orally by local informants from the calligraphers' milieu in Cairo. The layout of the *Hikmah* cannot be of much use in identifying the source: the presentation is obviously closer to that of Nefeszâde İbrahim's *Gülzâr-ı Savâb*,¹⁴ but the conditions in which the author wrote his treatise might have induced him to prefer a text stressing the genealogical link between the origins and al-Rushdî, although he wrote himself a biographical dictionary arranged according to the alphabetical order, like Müstakîmzâde's *Tuhfe*.¹⁵ The use of earlier written accounts by a man who was also a book collector is by no means surprising; that he does not mention his sources should not amaze us: for other parts of the *Hikmah*, Nouredine

¹² al-Zabîdî, "Hikmat al-ishrâq ilâ kuttâb al-âfâq," p. 91.

¹³ Quoted in Serin, *Hat Sanatı ve Meşhur Hattatlar*, p. 198.

¹⁴ Nefeszâde İbrahim, *Gülzâr-ı Savâb*, in Hakkâk-zâde Mustafa Hilmi efendi, *Mizânü'l-hatt*, ed. Abdülkadir Dedeoğlu (İstanbul, 1986).

¹⁵ Müstakîmzâde Süleymân, *Tuhfe-i Hattâtin*, ed. Mahmud Kemal İnal (İstanbul, 1928).

Abouricha has been able to trace the bulk of the information given by the author back to al-Qalqashandî whom al-Zabîdî never quotes.¹⁶

We so far left out the Egyptian extension of the list. Al-Zabîdî names various calligraphers who spent at least part of their life in Egypt, beginning with Ismâ'îl ef. Turk (d. 1085/1674–75) and Yûsuf ef. (d. 1119/1707–8). The bulk of the information is devoted to the later period and answers the purpose of the *Hikmah*, that is to trace back al-Rushdî's calligraphic ancestry. The names are almost unknown to the Ottoman and Turkish sources we investigated, with the exception of Müstakîmzâde who is contemporary with al-Zabîdî and the *Hattatlar Silsilesi* at the end of Rado's book which probably relies on Müstakîmzâde's information; on Table 4, four names (Cezairli Hüseyin ef./Husayn al-Jazâ'irî; Mısırlı seyyit Mehmet Nurî/al-Sayyid Muhammad al-Nûrî; Ahmet Şükrü/Ahmad ef. al-Shukrî; Mısırlı İsmail Vehbi/Ismâ'îl al-Wahbî) can be related to four calligraphers who, according to al-Zabîdî, played a role in the history of Ottoman calligraphy in Egypt.

The Egyptian branch of the Ottoman school of calligraphy mirrors the political importance of İstanbul: even native calligraphers apparently claim their dependance on Şeyh Hamdullah's teachings. Al-Zabîdî, who supported the Ottoman state in many ways, actually tried to show how the calligraphers' milieu in Cairo truly provided a synthesis between an earlier local tradition and the Ottoman one. In the text of the *Hikmah*, Şeyh Hamdullah appears next to the great Egyptian calligrapher of the end of the 8th/14th and beginning of the 9th/15th century, Ibn al-Sâ'igh.¹⁷ The account of his life begins unobtrusively by a rather vague formula suggesting a continuity: "Then, after Ibn al-Sâ'igh and his generation, the improvement and beauty of the script went to the *qiblat al-kuttâb*, to the *shaykh* of this art..."¹⁸ The Şeyh's *silsile* is only mentioned a few lines later. When al-Zabîdî comes to Egyptian calligraphers who were his contemporaries, he does not recall their double connection with the Egyptian tradition on one hand and the Ottoman one on the other. This is particularly clear with Hasan al-Diyâ'î who, as pointed out by Gacek, could boast about his links with the tradition of Ibn al-Sâ'igh.¹⁹

¹⁶ Nouredine Abouricha, *Recherches autour de l'opuscule la "Hikmat al-ishrâq ilâ kuttâb al-âfâq" de Murtadâ al-Zabîdî*, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Paris, 2000, p. 151.

¹⁷ al-Zabîdî, "Hikmat al-ishrâq ilâ kuttâb al-âfâq," p. 88.

¹⁸ al-Zabîdî, "Hikmat al-ishrâq ilâ kuttâb al-âfâq," p. 88.

¹⁹ Gacek, "The Diploma of the Egyptian Calligrapher Hasan al-Rushdî," p. 46.

The pages devoted by al-Zabîdî to the Ottoman school of calligraphy are limited in scope. They are nevertheless interesting for their contribution to the history of this school—adding perhaps a few names to our lists—and of the milieu in Cairo by the middle of the 12th/18th century. They are even more interesting as a witness of the diffusion of the calligraphers' culture throughout the Empire, a culture which is not only centered on the transmission of aesthetics, of techniques or of an official history, but relies also on a code of ethics which constitutes the last chapter of the *Hikmah*²⁰—as they were also part of al-Rushdî's *icâzetnâme*. Al-Zabîdî's provincial point of view is strongly pro-Ottoman and confirms to some extent a famous saying: even in Cairo, the Qur'ân was copied after the fashion of İstanbul.

Right: Table indicating the names of the calligraphers who are clearly identified by al-Zabîdî as masters and pupils. Other names found in the *Hikmah* are only introduced as “contemporaries” and could therefore not find a place on the table.

²⁰ al-Zabîdî, “Hikmat al-ishrâq ilâ kuttâb al-âfâq,” p. 97–98.

M. Uğur Derman Armađanı

Altmışbeşinci Yaşı Münasebetiyle Sunulmuş Tebliğler

M. Uğur Derman Festschrift

Papers Presented on the Occasion of his Sixty-fifth Birthday

Derleyen/Edited by: İrvin Cemil Schick

**Sabancı
Universitesi**