

Prince with Daddy Issues Seeks Sisterly Support: Two Ego Documents Penned by Şehzade Korkud

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Babasıyla Problemlî Şehzade Kardeş Desteęi Arıyor: Şehzade Korkud'a Ait İki Ben-Anlatısı

Öz ■ 16. yüzyılın sonlarına doğru Osmanlı hanedan üyelerinin ben-anlatısı yazımının kısaca incelenmesini takiben bu makale, hanedan üyelerinden birinin sahip olduęu iki “ben-anlatısı”nı okuyucunun takdirine sunmadan önce “toplular biyografisi”nin metodolojik bir yaklaşım olarak değerlendirilmesi gereklilięini öne sürer. Şehzade Korkud (ö. 1513) arkasında birden fazla kısa ben-anlatısı örneęi bırakmasının yanında iki belirgin ben anlatısı da kaleme almıştır. Bu anlatılardan biri hacca gitme kararını savunduęu ve babası II. Bayezid’e (ö. 1512) yazdıęı risaledir. Bir dięeri ise kız kardeři Sofu Fatma’ya (fl. 1512) yazdıęı ve siyaseten gerilimli bir taht mücadelesinin ortasında, politik rehberlik talebi içeren kayęı dolu bir mektuptur. Bu makalede, *Wasılat al-ahbâb* isimli risale özetlenip incelenirken mektubun tamamı ise çeviri yazısı da verilerek tercüme edilmiştir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Şehzade Korkud, Hac, II. Bayezid, Osmanlı Tarihi, Sofu Fatma, Ben-Anlatıları, *Selbstzeugnis*.

Defined narrowly, “ego documents” are works characterized as “motivated by the desire to write about oneself,” where the “creator and the subject of the text has to be the same person.”¹ A term coined originally by Dutch scholar Jacques Presser in the 1950s, the study of “ego documents” had grown by the 1980s into

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1 Selim Karahasanoęlu, “Ottoman Ego-Documents: State of the Art”, *IJMES*, 53 (2021), p. 301.

a solid subfield among European Continental historians and social scientists.² Although the term parallels somewhat the later Anglo-American term of “life writing,” the latter is primarily studied from the standpoint of literary criticism, whereas the former is treated primarily as a particular type of primary source by scholars within several disciplines.³ As a category, “ego documents” also parallels the favored term among German scholars, “*Selbstzeugnis*” (self-narrative), which appears to differ only in that it describes the subject of the writing process rather than the resulting written artifact.⁴

There is a widespread and longstanding impression that Ottomans, and Muslims in general, did not write about themselves, at least not until quite recently. While it is true that early modern Ottoman examples of autobiographical writing *for the narrow purpose of autobiography* are exceedingly rare, they do exist.⁵ One prominent example is the 18th century memoir penned by Osman of Timișoara (fl. 1726), an Ottoman diplomat who spent nearly two decades in Habsburg captivity.⁶ Depending on how narrow a category one considers “life writing” or “ego documents” to be, multiple other sources can be considered relevant examples of the genre.⁷

While early modern Ottomans tended not to feature themselves, if one broadens out the category of “ego-documents” to include sources that record actions or describe personal aspects of one individual by another, or sources whose author

2 For introductions to the literature on ego documents, see Kaspar von Greyerz, “Ego-Documents: The Last Word?”, *German History*, 28/3 (2010), pp. 273-282; Claudia Ulbrich, Kaspar von Greyerz, and Lorenz Heiligensetzer, *Mapping the ‘I’: Research on Self-Narratives in Germany and Switzerland* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2014); and Arianne Baggerman, Rudolf Dekker, and Michael Mascuch, *Controlling Time and Shaping the Self* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2011).

3 Leonike Vermeer, “Stretching the Archives – Ego-Documents and Life Writing Research in the Netherlands: State of the Art”, *BMGN – Low Countries Historical Review*, 135/1 (2020), pp. 32-37.

4 Ulbrich, von Greyerz, and Heiligensetzer, *Mapping the ‘I’*, pp. 2-12.

5 Much depends on how one defines “autobiography,” as the TUBITAK inventory of Ottoman Ego-Documents holds upwards of 400 unique sources covering the self. I am grateful to Selim Karahasanoğlu for this clarification.

6 Osman of Timișoara, *Prisoner of the Infidels: The Memoirs of an Ottoman Muslim in Seventeenth-Century Europe*, trans. Giancarlo Casale (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2021).

7 For several examples, see Karahasanoğlu, “Ottoman Ego-Documents”, pp. 301-308.

discusses oneself even when that is not their primary goal, then sources abound. When taken together, such broadly defined sources allow for quite detailed reconstructions of at least certain aspects of individual lives. Almost by definition, the lives covered in such sources are limited to that of the elites, due to the expense involved in amassing sufficient education and writing materials to produce any writings at all. Since most elites did not leave behind a great deal of “ego documents” pertaining to their own experiences, leaving proofs for any individual’s personal thoughts, habits, or psychology fragmentary and reliant in many cases on the writings of other individuals, one alternative might be to think rather in terms of “collective biography.”

The first generation of Ottoman royals to boast a sufficient mass of documents describing such personal details to allow for efforts at “collective biography” was that of Bayezid II’s (d. 1512) nuclear family. Prior to this generation, surviving materials are too fragmentary, derivative, or both to allow for much individual reconstruction, outside of narrative recollections collected by remote authors. However, in parallel with an increased production of Ottoman historical narratives,⁸ during Bayezid’s reign (1481-1512) a noticeable increase in sources allows for just such a “collective biography” to be assembled. Why there is an increase in such documents during this period is not entirely clear, although presumably it is tied primarily to a concurrent rise in bureaucratic record-keeping, correspondence preservation, and general archiving practices which first emerged in the Ottoman case during the late 15th century and exploded during the reign of Bayezid’s grandson, Süleyman I (1520-1566).⁹

One might consider this generation something of a bridge between the reputed silence of medieval individuals and cacophony of post-Enlightenment personalities exploring their individualism. As Gabriele Jancke and Claudia Ulbrich have suggested, we should perhaps examine relationships between “sociocentric” individuals rather than “egocentric” individuals alone, particularly through the medium of households.¹⁰ In our Ottoman case, royal family relationships count the most, as society’s ranking household. Since the individuals in question did not often choose to write about their inner selves, and since a potential research goal

8 Murat Cem Mengüç, “Histories of Bayezid I, Historians of Bayezid II: Rethinking Late 15th Century Ottoman Historiography,” *BSOAS*, 76/3 (2013), pp. 373-389.

9 Cornell Fleischer, “Preliminaries to the Study of the Ottoman Bureaucracy,” *Journal of Turkish Studies*, 10 (1986), pp. 135-141.

10 Ulbrich, von Greyerz, and Heiligensetzer, *Mapping the T*, p. 10, 15-33.

for this transitional period may be to concentrate on household relationships, one might choose to consider these Ottoman royals as individual members within a family corpus of sources, based on what is available.

In the case of Bayezid's family, the most widespread and informative source type is the humble letter, dozens of which remain extant. Such correspondence must be handled with some care, however, since even when such letters are attributed to a royal individual, they were often dictated to or written by assistants, were usually written for what might be considered work reasons, and tended not to reveal much about the person behind the correspondence. As professional correspondence, such letters followed stylistic templates and maintained a strict separation between what we would today describe as the personal and the professional. In 1959 Çağatay Uluçay first used such letters to help reconstruct in some detail the members and lives of Bayezid's nuclear family.¹¹ While most such letters would not meet the narrow definition of "ego documents," some letters flirted with breaching the normally strict divide between the personal and the professional. As a result, several dozen formal letters either directly from or reporting on Ottoman princes' political intrigue or personal challenges provide ample detail concerning royals' political ambitions and personal lives,¹² while letters congratulating Selim on his accession provide clues to political intrigue internal to the royal family.¹³ Self-narrative also intruded on the professional divide in several letters sent to Bayezid II by *harem* mothers either requesting assistance for their son while alive, or for themselves upon their death (often by murder or execution).¹⁴ In one such letter, Hüsni Şah reports on her son Şehinşah's execution, stating that she has been rendered crazy with grief (*mecnûn u mahzûn*) following his execution, while also defending his innocence and requesting that a *türbe* be constructed in his memory.¹⁵ In addition to the few dozen letters which provide such limited glimpses into the self-narratives of Ottoman royals, one letter from Şehzade Korkud (d. 1513) to his sister Sofu Fatma Sultan (fl. 1513)

11 M. Çağatay Uluçay, "Bayezit II'in Ailesi", *Tarih Dergisi*, 10/14 (1959), pp. 105-124.

12 Examples meriting additional investigation include TSA E1023, E2829, E3057, E3062, E5198, E5431, E5483, E5590, E5598, E5877, E5975, E6043, E6366/2, E6815, E7062, E8315.

13 TSA E5544, E5793, E8117.

14 TSA E3058, E3515, E5499, E10518 (Şehzade Ahmed's mother Bülbül Hatun to Selim I).

15 TSA E3058, dated 10 Rabî II 917 [7 July 1511]; M. Çağatay Uluçay, "Yavuz Sultan Selim Nasil Padişah Oldu?", *Tarih Dergisi*, 7/10 (1954), p. 123.

appears to more fully meet the definition of an “ego document,” and will be presented in its entirety below.

One challenge for modern researchers is that early modern Ottomans tended to cultivate public presentation of their private selves. Like modern royals, politicians, celebrities, and social media influencers, these early modern royals exposed only their carefully constructed personality, rather than the fully conscious individual residing behind the personality. As such, one cannot always trust what public sources offer concerning personal matters like the subject’s sense of time, individuality, psychological stress, etc. One such relevant public source is poetry, which also must be treated with care. Bayezid and two of his sons were credited with entire *divans* of poetry, and several princes employed poets to construct suitable verse at their courts. In a sense such poems can be compared to modern pop music, in that their reliability as sources for any individual’s psychology or personality is opaque at best. In early modern Ottoman society, *divans* served as proofs of a poet’s productivity, while *tezkires* demonstrated which poets were considered “winners” by those who assembled such collective biographies. While the success of poems to have survived until today remains largely contingent on the popularity of their authors in their own lifetime and the immediately following decades, such poems can still provide occasional insight into certain high-profile royals. In addition, while the ambiguity of Ottoman *divan* poetry argues against considering such works as “ego documents,” on occasion poets do reference themselves, in a way that would appear to meet the definition. One example, from Şehzade Korkud’s *divan*, arises when he expressed the desire to “someday stand naked having thrown off crown and *kaftan*; [and] someday persist in traveling abroad.”¹⁶

A final relevant source type for constructing “collective biography” is archival documents, which tend to provide useful facts devoid of commentary. The most famous collection of such archival information in this generation is the celebrated “gifts register” assembled late in Bayezid’s reign. While more a comprehensive tally of ad-hoc palace expenses than a register of gifts alone, this source offers a plethora of facts tied to marriages, deaths, and completion of palace-supported cultural output. If letters, poetry, and archival records prove insufficient, one might even consult narrative sources concerning this royal family to help construct their “collective biography.” Though absolutely intentional in the descriptions they offer,

16 “*tâc u kabâyı terk edüp ‘uryân olayım bir zamân, ğurbetde seyrân eyleyüp püyân olayım bir zamân.*” See Yakup Yılmaz, Şahmeran Baltacıoğlu, and Erdal Hamami, eds. *Şehzade Korkud Divanı* (Kırklareli: Rumeliya Yayıncılık, 2021), p. 98; Millet Ktp. MS Manzum 104, f. 12^b.

such contemporary historical narratives at least offer an additional, publicly presented, view of such individuals.

Bayezid II's nuclear family included nine sons, eleven daughters, and over two dozen grandchildren. This group is far larger than the final three succession candidates usually held in the spotlight (Ahmed, Korkud, Selim), although for a number of reasons (fame, longevity, variant volumes), some of these offspring have left behind far more ego documents than others. Our challenge remains to reconstruct Bayezid's family in its own era, based on contemporary records. In spite of the difficulty of direct access, sufficient information has been uncovered by prominent Ottomanists to allow for a fascinating and serviceable reconstruction of these complex royal lives. In terms of personal lives, several examples emerge, ranging from Bayezid's and his son Şehinşah's respective opium addictions to Âlemşah's dissolute behavior to Şehinşah's alleged "bestial" behavior.¹⁷ While these examples do not necessarily spring from "ego-documents," they do provide glimpses into the private lives of royal family members.

Within this family, Şehzade Korkud (d. 1513) provided by far the most self-referential material, including two works which would seem to qualify as "ego documents." Both sources are detailed below, including a 1509 treatise intended as an extended letter from Şehzade Korkud to his father Bayezid II and a ca. 1511 personal letter from the same Korkud to his sister, Sofu Fatma Sultan (fl. 1513).¹⁸

Daddy Issues: Wasilat al-aḥbāb

A consummate "Renaissance Man," Korkud is widely credited with completing a *divan* of poetry, multiple musical compositions, a copy of the Qur'ān, and four extant works in Arabic. In addition, he was said to have completed a *fetva*

17 For Bayezid's addiction, see: TSA E6366/1, and for Âlemşah's dissolute behavior, see: TSA E5499. In a letter to Bayezid, Şehinşah's *lala* Murad and *defterdar* Hacı İvaz described efforts to address the prince's addiction through treatment and prevention of contact with his dealers. İsmail H. Uzunçarşılı, "Sancağa Çıkarılan Osmanlı Şehzâdeleri", *Belleten* 39/156 (1975), p. 669, citing TSA E6366/2. In a 1503 Venetian report from Istanbul, it was stated that: "...Sultan Giansach (Şehinşah), who has his province in the land of Karaman. He is of strange character, and in some of his passions bestial. He is called by our people 'Conza Nasi'", Marini Sanuto, *I Diarii di Marino Sanuto*, V (Venezia: F. Visentini, 1881), pp. 458-459.

18 For more on Sofu Fatma Sultan, see Nabil Al-Tikriti, "Şehzade Korkud (ca. 1468-1513) and the Articulation of Early Sixteenth Century Ottoman Religious Identity" (doctoral dissertation), University of Chicago, 2004, pp. 54-55.

collection, and internally referenced three additional works, all of which appear to no longer remain extant. A question of authorship arises regarding Korkud's Arabic texts. Three of his texts are similar in style, structure, format, handwriting, and intention. They can best be characterized as topically oriented discursive treatises combining aspects of theological disputation and legal argumentation – each advancing a political agenda that can sometimes prove challenging for modern researchers to analyze.¹⁹ These three texts are written in the first person, with the author quoting a series of legal discussions by other scholars and then offering his own conclusion. The author says little about himself beyond sometimes stating, in the first person, his personal conclusion concerning a scholarly debate. The rough draft of *Da'wat al-naḥs al-tāliḥa* and the unique copy of *Ḥall ishḳāl al-afkār* each boast title pages clearly attributing the text to Korkud, with passages that refer to Korkud in the third person via exaggerated scholarly titulature.²⁰ Although none of the texts was internally signed or dated following its conclusion, internal evidence and comparison with certain letters suggest that Korkud himself, a certified calligrapher trained by the leading calligraphic artist of the time, produced these exacting, meticulous, and beautifully copied texts. While the first-person voice does occasionally emerge, these three texts do not properly qualify as “ego documents,” as Korkud does not primarily reflect on himself.²¹ The Arabic in these three treatises, while stylistically less than eloquent, is uniformly correct, with careful and accurate internal citations.

19 The three texts are *Da'wat al-naḥs al-tāliḥa* (which remains extant in at least four copies), *Ḥall ishḳāl al-afkār* (Aya Sofya 1142), and *Ḥāfiẓ al-insān* (Aya Sofya 2289). For additional information on these texts, see Şehzade Korkud, *Siyasetin Ahlākî Eleştirisi: Da'vetün-Nefsi't-Tāliha ile'l-A'māli's-Sāliha*, ed. and trans. Musa Sancak (Istanbul: Timaş Akademi, 2022); Şehzade Korkut, *İslam'da Ganimet ve Cariyelik: Osmanlı Sistemine İçeriden Bir Eleştiri: Hallu İşkālî'l Efkār fî Hilli Emvālî'l Küffār*, ed. and trans. Asım Cünayd Köksal and Osman Güman (Istanbul: İstanbul Araştırmaları ve Eğitim Vakfı (İSAR), 2013); and Nabil Al-Tikriti, “Kalam in the Service of State: Apostasy Rulings and the Defining of Ottoman Communal Identity”, *Legitimizing the Order: Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power*, eds. Hakan T. Karateke and Maurus Reinkowski (Leiden: Brill, 2005), pp. 131-149.

20 *Ḥāfiẓ al-insān* and the presentation copy of *Da'wat al-naḥs al-tāliḥa* (MS Aya Sofya 1763) contain no reference to Korkud whatsoever. The rough draft of *Da'wat al-naḥs al-tāliḥa* is likely to be held in a private collection, and is thus currently accessible only via microfilm.

21 *Da'wat al-naḥs al-tāliḥa* is something of a borderline case, as Korkud occasionally frames political criticism of Ottoman political practice through the prism of his own ethical struggles. In particular, see the text's introduction: Korkud, *Siyasetin Ahlākî Eleştirisi: Da'vetün-Nefsi't-Tāliha ile'l-A'māli's-Sāliha*, pp. 42-46.

The final of Korkud's four extant Arabic treatises stands alone in terms of style, care, and intent. In this case, the prince offered justification for his self-imposed exile in Mamluk Cairo through an extended missive, entitled *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb bi-i'jāz, ta'lif walad ḥarrakahu al-shawq li arḍ al-Ḥijāz* (*The Means of the Beloved for Authorization, Written by a Son whom Desire has Driven to the Land of the Hijaz*).²² Intended as a direct appeal to Bayezid for pardon after abandoning his post in order to go on the ḥajj, most of the text consists of reflections on the religious importance of pilgrimage for one's salvation. Presented as a testimony to the importance of the ḥajj within conventional Islamic theologic norms, this intensely personal and rather sloppy treatise justified the prince's self-imposed exile by articulating the pious viewpoint that it is more important to honor one's heavenly Father by fulfilling the ḥajj obligation than it is to obey one's earthly father. *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb* was completed in Egypt in June 1509, and is the only one of Korkud's texts to be unambiguously signed, stamped, and dated.²³ While the sole manuscript copy contains 143 folios, it is by far the shortest of his four extant works in terms of actual text, as there are only seven columns per page due to the exceedingly large handwriting and relatively small page size. At several points in the text, Korkud insisted that his father reply in his own hand and stamp, or else the resulting order would not be considered legitimate.²⁴ Consistent with its private nature, *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb* remains extant in a single, signed copy. As with Korkud's other treatises, the text was deposited in the royal family's private collection, and remains part of the Aya Sofya collection into which that collection was later absorbed.²⁵

22 MS Aya Sofya 3529. Hereafter referred to as *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb*. For additional details about the context in which Korkud wrote this text, see Nabil Al-Tikriti, "The *Ḥajj* as Justifiable Self-Exile: Şehzade Korkud's *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb* (915–916/1509–1510)", *al-Masāq*, 17/1 (2005), pp. 125–145.

23 Korkud, *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb*. While the sole known manuscript [MS Aya Sofya 3529] contains 143 folios, it is the shortest of his four extant works in terms of actual text, as there are fewer columns per page due to its quite large handwriting. On the final page of the text [*Wasīlat al-aḥbāb*, 143^a], Korkud states that he wrote the text himself, and dates it Friday, 15 Şafar 915 [4 June 1509]. Korkud's *tuğra* (personal signature seal) is on the same page.

24 Korkud, *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb*, 120^a–121^a, 128^b–129^a.

25 The Aya Sofya library, established in 1739 by Mahmud I, appears to have become the repository for texts formerly held in the royal family's private palace collection. John Freely, *Istanbul Blue Guide*, 5th ed. (New York: Norton, 2000), p. 88.

Wasīlat al-aḥbāb is marred by several basic spelling and grammar mistakes, sloppy handwriting, and a far less rigorous and comprehensive argumentation than Korkud's other three works.²⁶ While a personal appeal for paternal pardon in the midst of a stressful exile differs greatly from a public work of religious scholarship, it is hard to believe that the individual who wrote out the extremely sloppy *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb* was the same individual responsible for *Da'wat al-naḥs al-ṭāliḥa*, *Ḥāfiẓ al-insān*, and *Ḥall ishkal al-afkār*. Perhaps the three texts written for public consumption were prepared by a team of scholars under Korkud's direct and active supervision – and then attributed to this scholar-prince whose knowledge of Arabic was sufficient for personal written communication, but not highly advanced enough to support original scholarship in itself. Alternatively, perhaps Korkud authored and copied out all four texts, but produced *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb* in haste as an extended personal letter. He also may have dictated *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb* to a copyist, who was in a rush and/or less qualified than most. Although there is some doubt as to who ultimately generated the scholarship of the three public texts, for our purposes all four works are treated as Korkud's.

Although *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb* is presented here as an “ego document” providing a fair amount of information about Korkud's fears, anxieties, and desires through his own words, that is not the only way to approach the text – Mehmet Dilek has recently analyzed the same text almost solely in terms of its use of *ḥadīths*, tracing where Korkud found all the quotes he used, and confirming the prince's impressive familiarity with that literature.²⁷

Completed on 15 Safar 915 / 4 June 1509, Korkud sent *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb* to Istanbul three days before being allowed by Mamluk Sultan Qansawh al-Ghawrī to proceed to Cairo from Damietta.²⁸ In probable reference to his reception in Damietta, Korkud reported that his initial treatment as al-Ghawrī's guest had been excellent, stating that he had witnessed unbounded respect, honor, dignity, and hospitality from the sultan.²⁹ Korkud sent *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb* with an otherwise

26 Two examples of spelling and grammar mistakes in *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb* include: f. 20^a: *al-rūjū'* for *al-rujū'*, and f. 106^a: *lam ra'aytuhu* for *mā ra'aytuhu* or *lam arahu*.

27 Mehmet Dilek, “Şehzade Korkud'un Hadisçiliği (*Vesiletü'l-Ahbāb* Bi-İcāz Adli Eseri Özeline)”, *Ekev Akademi Dergisi*, 26/90 (2022), pp. 303-330.

28 Korkud, *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb*, 143^a; Ibn Iyās, Abū al-Barakāt Muḥammad b. Aḥmad. *Badā'i' al-zuhūr fī waqā'i' al-duḥūr*, 4 vols., ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā (Wiesbaden-Cairo: 1961-75), IV: 153; İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, “II'inci Bayezid'in Oğullarından Sultan Korkut,” *Belle-ten* 30/120 (1966), pp. 539-601, p. 553.

29 Korkud, *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb*, 24^b.

unknown scholar named Shaykh ‘Abd al-Salām, who was repeatedly referred to as the text’s bearer,³⁰ and was once described as the “trusted *shaykh*, *imām*, *‘ālim*, pious teacher, and ascetic ‘Abd al-Salām, one of the *shaykhs* and *‘ulamā*” of the blessed al-Azhar Mosque.”³¹ This individual, identified elsewhere as one of Korkud’s scribes, appears to have played a significant role in the prince’s scholarly, political and diplomatic activities. Also described by Korkud as an exceptional scholar, a custodian of all disciplines, one of the great al-Azhar scholars from whom Korkud had sought knowledge, and a legist affiliated with one of al-Ghawrī’s commanders,³² this Shaykh ‘Abd al-Salām was probably ‘Abd al-Salām [Ibn?] Muḥammad al-Anṣārī, the copyist – and possible ghost writer – of the draft version of Korkud’s *Da‘wat al-naḥs al-ṭāliḥa*.³³ Such descriptions of ‘Abd al-Salām’s virtues suggest that he played a key intermediary role between the Mamluk sultan’s and Ottoman prince’s courts, in addition to bringing Korkud’s message to his father in Istanbul.

According to Korkud, the Mamluk sultan had sent him a personal invitation to visit Egypt and perform the *ḥajj* – and had even offered to join him on the pilgrimage.³⁴ Referring to al-Ghawrī as “absolutely a lover of the Ottoman dynasty, himself prepared to be one of their sons on account of the greatness of his love,”³⁵ Korkud portrayed his relationship with the Mamluk sultan as an innocent friendship based on mutual respect and a shared piety. Although ostensibly meant to reassure Bayezid of his intentions, Korkud’s choice of envoy and disclosure of prior correspondence with the Mamluk sultan might also have been interpreted as a veiled threat.

Following the invocation,³⁶ Korkud explained his motivations for abandoning his post. As he put it, once craving had moved him to visit Muhammad, a

30 Korkud, *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb*, 25^b–26^a, 103^b–104^a, 119^b–120^a.

31 Korkud, *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb*, 119^b–120^a.

32 Korkud, *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb*, 25^b–27^b.

33 Korkud, *Da‘wat al-naḥs al-ṭāliḥa*, MS Gökbilgin, 423. For a discussion of the draft version of this text, see Cornell Fleischer, “From Şeyhzade [sic] Korkut to Mustafa Ali: Cultural Origins of the Ottoman Nasihatname”, *3rd Congress on the Social and Economic History of Turkey, Princeton University 24–26 August, 1983* (Istanbul, Washington, Paris: Isis Press, 1990), pp. 67–77.

34 Korkud, *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb*, 24^b–25^b.

35 “...*al-muḥibb ila Āl-i [sic] ‘Urthman ‘ala l-itlaq, wa l-mu‘idd naḥsahu bi-annahū wahid min awladihim li-‘izām mahabbatibi.*” Korkud, *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb*, 24^b.

36 In the invocation, Korkud [1^b–2^a] praised God for guiding him to undertake the *ḥajj* and asked God to bless and protect the prophet Muhammad.

vision of the prophet appeared to him repeatedly in his dreams, calling on him to go that year. Having no doubt in – and maintaining no secrecy about – the righteousness of his desires following such dream visions, his determination grew so much that the very “sight of my clan and people was rendered decidedly hateful to my gaze.”³⁷ Neglecting his palaces, camps and provinces, he abandoned the privileges of rulership and companionship in order to pursue his pious calling. This neglect of sovereign duties here refers to an extended scholarly retreat on the Antalya coast which Korkud was later said to have begun the previous year, in May 1508.³⁸ In *Daʿwat al-naḥs al-tāliḥa*, the text which Korkud completed at the very beginning of that retreat, he provided a lengthy defense of the reality of dream imagery and its properly prominent role in human decisions.³⁹ After extolling the experiential virtues of – and his own excitement for – the *ḥajj* ritual, Korkud presented an extended prayer begging God’s intercession and protection while clarifying that his sole intent was to go on the pilgrimage. Having promised to return to his post upon completion of the trip, Korkud urged patience and acceptance upon his father – even as he accepted that God had made it his destiny to disobey his father in this matter. In order to confirm his dynastic loyalty, Korkud promised that while en route he would pray for his father’s increased happiness both in this world and the next, victory over his infidel and profligate enemies, and elevation of his authority throughout the Islamic world. Thus, while admitting that abandoning his post constituted disobedience to both parent and ruler, Korkud claimed that such disobedience was inevitable since Bayezid’s refusal to permit the pilgrimage countered God’s command that each capable believer must participate in the *ḥajj* – one of the five pillars of Islamic belief.⁴⁰

Reminding his father that he had petitioned for permission to retire to his studies prior to the somewhat rash decision to abandon his post for Cairo, Korkud clarified that all he desired now that he had reached Egypt was permission to both complete the pilgrimage and return to his post upon completion of his *ḥajj* obligations.⁴¹ As al-Ghawrī had urged Korkud to obtain his father’s blessings first in

37 “*buḡḡhida hatman li-shshakhisi [sic] ru’yatu ‘ashirati wa ashkhasi*”. Korkud, *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb*, 2^b.

38 Korkud, *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb*, 2^b. According to Şolaḳzade [*Tāriḥ-i Şolaḳzāde* (Istanbul: 1271/1854 & 1299/1881), p. 320], this retreat began in early 914 / May 1508.

39 Korkud, *Daʿwat al-naḥs al-tāliḥa*, Süleymaniye: MS Aya Sofya 1763, ff. 202^a–215^b.

40 Korkud, *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb*, 3^a–11^a.

41 Korkud, *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb*, 16^b–20^b.

order for his pilgrimage to be completely in accordance with *sharī'a* conditions, Korkud now appealed for Bayezid's permission to proceed from Egypt to the Hijaz.⁴²

To strengthen his case, Korkud provided the following pious arguments and historical precedents in favor of royal pilgrimage: innumerable individuals had preceded him on the path; the prophet Muhammad himself had established the *hajj* as a rite of Islam; the original four righteous caliphs had conducted the *hajj* and visitation to Mecca and Medina while in power; and the celebrated Abbasid caliph Harun al-Rashid (170–193/786–809) had fulfilled a personal vow by performing the *hajj* barefoot.⁴³ For all these reasons, rather than being considered a transgression of Ottoman royal custom, Korkud's decision should rather have been viewed as a legitimate performance of compulsory religious duties ordained by God and his prophets.⁴⁴

In an attempt to demonstrate the primacy of divine concerns over worldly concerns of protocol, succession norms, and diplomatic intrigue, Korkud offered several pious references to the value of patience, trust, and benevolence.⁴⁵ By extolling the merits of pilgrimage and explaining the rewards due from God for one who completes the *hajj*, Korkud provided religious justification for his actions and refuted a series of counter-arguments. As Korkud argued, since performing the *hajj* qualifies by consensus as completion of one of the obligatory requirements of Islam, he was simply following God's command as presented through the tenets of the *sharī'a*. For this reason, he could count on completion of his religious duties, pride in its performance before all his associates, and God's reward in the

42 Korkud, *Wasīlat al-ahbāb*, 24^b–27^a.

43 In the passage discussing Harun al-Rashid, Korkud [22^a–23^a] pointed out that the caliph had eased fulfillment of this vow by having mats and rugs laid out on the path, a reference to the many improvements in Mecca and Medina for which he and his consort Zubayda were remembered. This passage counters a statement once made by Suraiya Faroqhi [*Pilgrims & Sultans: The Hajj under the Ottomans* (London: I.B. Taurus, 1994), p. 8] that Ottoman sources never evoked the image of Harun al-Rashid and Zubayda, because "Ottoman official discourse was oriented towards the present and recent past, rather than toward the already very remote history of early Islam."

44 Korkud, *Wasīlat al-ahbāb*, 21^a–24^a.

45 To strengthen this line of reasoning, Korkud [*Wasīlat al-ahbāb*, 27^b–38^a] simply quoted – without commentary – several Qur'anic verses and *hadīth* accounts counseling patience and urging restraint from anger. For more on the *hadīth* accounts, see Dilek, "Şehzâde Korkud'un Hadîşçiliği", pp. 313–314.

form of protection in this life and forgiveness in the hereafter.⁴⁶ To back his argument, Korkud cited Qur'anic verses and *ḥadīth* accounts which verified doctrinally that: the *ḥajj* is obligatory to any Muslim who can perform it; pilgrimage is one of the five pillars of Islamic faith; the *ka'ba* in Mecca is the primary focus of the *ḥajj*; performing the *ḥajj* is rewarded with a place in heaven, while performing the *'umra* (pilgrimage outside of the appointed annual period) provides penance only for all sins preceding that *'umra*; only three mosques merit definitive peregrinations: Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem; and one who circles the *ka'ba* fifty times emerges from the experience as free from sin as the day he/she was born. These *ḥadīth* accounts included several popular accounts. In one, Muhammad was heard to declare that the black rock of the *ka'ba* came down from heaven as white as milk and only blackened due to the sins of humanity. In another, Muhammad said that the *ka'ba* is to be given eyes and a tongue on Judgment Day in order to bear witness for whomever had touched it. In another, Muhammad was heard to say that the "column" and "tomb" were two hyacinths from heaven buried in the ground by God in order to prevent them from constantly illuminating everything from East and West.⁴⁷

In addition to generally justifying pilgrimage as a religiously mandated experience, Korkud marshalled several *ḥadīth* accounts which further justified his specific course of action. According to these accounts, adult children are permitted to perform the *ḥajj* in place of their elderly parents – so Korkud was effectively undertaking the pilgrimage for his father's sake. As one is allowed to conduct business in the course of pilgrimage, Korkud could not be blamed for negotiating with the Mamluks concerning either his own looming succession struggle or joint naval initiatives. As one must bring sufficient supplies to complete the full journey, there was nothing wrong with the ample supplies and sizeable retinue accompanying Korkud.⁴⁸ Finally, since one can hire a proxy to perform the *ḥajj* in one's place if physically incapable to do so oneself,⁴⁹ Korkud had an argument

46 Korkud, *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb*, 39^b–45^b.

47 Korkud, *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb*, 40^a–42^a; Dilek, "Şehzâde Korkud'un Hadîsçiliği", pp. 314–317.

48 Korkud, *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb*, 46^a–52^a.

49 This point is not universally accepted, as Korkud himself pointed out. The Shāfi'i and Māliki *madhhabs* accept the possibility, while the Hanafi *madhhab* rejects it. Korkud backed his own conclusion that *ḥajj* by proxy was acceptable by citing a *ḥadīth* whereby the prophet granted a woman permission to go on the *ḥajj* on behalf of her father. Korkud, *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb*, 48^a–52^a; Dilek, "Şehzâde Korkud'un Hadîsçiliği", pp. 315–317.

ready in the event that he would be unable to complete the journey – as indeed turned out to be the case.

Anticipating debates concerning tomb visitation which played a major role in the rise of Salafi movements in 18th century Najd and beyond, Korkud next engaged with Hanbali, Maliki, and other critics who would reject tomb visitation as an improper, albeit popular, ritual accretion to an originally pure Islam. Regarding tomb visitation, opponents cited *ḥadīth* accounts claiming that Muhammad hated hearing it recommended that people state “our blessing is the prophet’s tomb” (perhaps because he had not yet died), as well as accounts where Muhammad stated that “God curses grave visitation.” Supporters of the practice, on the other hand, cited *ḥadīth* accounts verifying that: the earliest Muslims greeted the prophet’s grave after his death; those who visit his grave receive his intercession with God; and those who visit his tomb receive a wide variety of additional blessings. Included in the accounts Korkud chose to highlight supporting tomb visitation were various recommendations for ritual actions meant to be taken while visiting the tomb, such as lighting candles and reciting certain prayers.⁵⁰

To defend the prophet Muhammad’s status against those – like certain followers of Shāh Ismā’īl – who might put forth rival claims to sanctity, Korkud described several miracles said to have been performed by the prophet. In this section, Korkud cited *ḥadīth* accounts describing the following examples of miraculous events associated with the prophet Muhammad: splitting the moon following popular request for a sign; the sun rising after it had already set so that dusk prayers could be said after they had been forgotten – an event resembling an eclipse; water pouring out of Muhammad’s fingers for ritual washing when no water had been available; feeding 180 men when enough food had previously been available for only two men; trees reciting the confession of faith as well as moving towards the prophet and prostrating before him; and a tree trunk craving Muhammad so much that it creaked and moaned until he finally touched it. As Korkud argued, Muhammad’s unique status explained why he might take comfort in him after abandoning family, ancestors, and other relatives in order to witness his presence in such pure places.⁵¹ As such miracles had demonstrated that the prophet Muhammad is preferred over the rest of created beings, visiting his tomb is allowed.

50 Korkud, *Wasilat al-ahbāb*, 55^b–66^b; Dilek, “Şehzāde Korkud’un Hadīşçiliği”, pp. 317-318.

51 Korkud, *Wasilat al-ahbāb*, 66^b–75^a; Dilek, “Şehzāde Korkud’un Hadīşçiliği”, pp. 318.

As protection against charges of betraying Ottoman Sunni preferences for tomb visitation, in a period when such imperial preferences were just coming into focus, the prince clarified that his arguments favoring visitation of Muhammad's tomb were not to be construed as 'Alid loyalist/Shi'i – then the foremost ideological threat facing the Ottomans. After presenting the pro-Shi'i viewpoint through a Qur'anic verse stating that the role of the "people of the house [of Muhammad]" (*ahl al-bayt*) is to remove the filth and purify society, Korkud quoted a *ḥadīth* account explicitly rejecting the claims of 'Alid, 'Abbasid, and Ja'fari descendants to any special treatment on account of their genealogy.⁵²

In order to justify his additional intent to visit Jerusalem, Korkud also described the merits of performing certain rituals while visiting the Islamic holy sites there.⁵³ According to the *ḥadīth* accounts Korkud cited, a prayer in al-Aqsa Mosque is equivalent to 50,000 normal prayers, while one offered in the Dome of the Rock is worth 100,000 normal prayers. In addition, Jerusalem is the place where: humanity will be sorted out on Judgment Day; prayers, sins, and good deeds are each worth 1,000 times their normal unit; two to four prostrations render one as free of sin as the day one was born; and anyone who dies there dies as if they had died in the skies.⁵⁴ To Korkud, the miracles and merits he presented here justified his intention to perform the *ḥajj* and visit Jerusalem in terms of a search for personal salvation springing from a love of God and the prophet, which took priority over all else in his life.⁵⁵

Korkud addressed standard arguments concerning the necessity of parental obedience to justify his own disobedience. As parental reverence is one of the basic tenets of Islamic belief, Korkud conceded that one owes one's parents benevolence and service. However, for Korkud, primary obedience was owed to one's mother, and one must care for one's other relatives as well as one's father. Citing a Qur'anic verse mandating benevolence to several types of persons, Korkud offered a lengthy interpretation of the verse arguing that: mothers are more deserving than fathers or other relatives; one cannot enter heaven without caring for one's parents in their old age; one must be committed to one's other relatives as well; caring for orphans leads to heavenly reward; believers must honor guests and not

52 Korkud, *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb*, 99^b–102^a; Dilek, "Şehzāde Korkud'un Hadīşçiliği", pp. 321–322.

53 Korkud [*Wasīlat al-aḥbāb*, 54^b–85^a] consistently referred to Jerusalem as "Bayt al-Maqdis."

54 Korkud, *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb*, 77^b–85^a; Dilek, "Şehzāde Korkud'un Hadīşçiliği", pp. 319–320.

55 Korkud, *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb*, 75^a–77^b; Dilek, "Şehzāde Korkud'un Hadīşçiliği", p. 318.

harm neighbors; one must care for one's servants who do not have the same faith; and no one of bad character shall enter heaven.⁵⁶ In effect, through his choice not only of Qur'anic verse citation, but also through his interpretation, Korkud here provided a quietly defiant argument, backed by God's own words, justifying his disobedience of his father.

In an inherent critique of the Ottoman practice of enforcing fratricide amidst succession, Korkud argued that one must not store wealth for use against one's relatives, adding that cutting off one's relatives is akin to cutting off God.⁵⁷ Disobeying parents is one of the three most significant sins, along with ascribing partnership to God and providing false testimony. For this reason, one should fulfill one's parents' agreements after their deaths, maintain their commitment to all kinfolk common to them, and honor their friends as one's own – implying that Korkud was already preparing for his father's imminent demise and promising to carry on his legacy while offering to protect his rival half-brothers.⁵⁸ Korkud concluded his exploration of parental obedience by reiterating that: he could not possibly disobey his parents; his actions did not actually constitute disobedience; and his father should pardon him for attempting to perform the *hajj* as the prince was pursuing it purely out of religious obligation.⁵⁹

Korkud also addressed obligations that fathers must provide their sons – in return for which each son must always obey his father, except when ordered to ascribe partnership to God or pursue sinful acts. Considering that 15th century Ottoman court protocols included bowing down before one's ruling father if he were divine, executing one's brothers in pursuit of sovereign succession, stealing believers' wealth against *shari'a* rules in the form of imperial taxation, and several other customs that a pious Muslim might strenuously oppose, Korkud was in effect providing a vigorous "piety defense" for disobeying his father when fleeing his post for Egypt.⁶⁰ Specific obligations that fathers must provide sons included: educating one with mildness and compassion, protecting one's child from pain until the age of discernment (seven years), fostering the pursuit of worship and reading

56 Korkud, *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb*, 85^a–93^a; Dilek, "Şehzāde Korkud'un Hadīşçiliği", pp. 319–321.

57 Korkud, *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb*, 93^a–97^b.

58 Korkud, *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb*, 96^b–99^b.

59 Korkud, *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb*, 102^a–104^a; Dilek, "Şehzāde Korkud'un Hadīşçiliği", p. 322.

60 To explore Korkud's arguments against Ottoman court customs at the time, see Fleischer, "From Şeyhzade [sic] Korkut to Mustafa Ali".

the Qur'an, and instructing one to carry out God's commands as an adult.⁶¹ In doing so, Korkud appealed to "Veli" Bayezid's renowned image of personal piety while drawing a parallel between the Ottoman custom of fratricide and the parable of Ishmael nearly being sacrificed by his father Abraham.

Korkud argued that Bayezid's heavenly reward would be great because he had obliged Korkud and his brothers to read the Qur'an and learn the *shari'a* disciplines; trained them and taught them good behavior; and turned their thoughts and ambitions away from occupation with worldly distraction. To expand upon these points, Korkud provided several *hadith* quotes concerning the merits of reading and memorizing the Qur'an, including the following: one who reads the Qur'an receives a crown on Judgment Day, along with his parents; one who memorizes the Qur'an receives preference equivalent to ten members of the prophet Muhammad's family; one who repeatedly recites the Qur'an from beginning to end is the most beloved to God; one with no knowledge of the Qur'an is like a house in ruins; every letter read from the Qur'an is rewarded as ten good deeds; one who is proficient in reading the Qur'an belongs among the noble scribes – and one who finds achieving this goal difficult gets double the reward; one who reads the Qur'an and then forgets it will meet God on Resurrection Day as a leper; one who regards as lawful what is forbidden in the Qur'an is not a believer; and one who reads the Qur'an loudly is like one who gives charity publicly – and vice-versa.⁶² As Bayezid had done such an exemplary job raising his children, even if one of his sons were to nourish the father from his own flesh for his entire life, it would not match the service received from his parents for even one hour in the eyes of God. For this reason, like Ishmael, when he was to be slaughtered by his father, the dutiful Korkud would urge his father to do what had been commanded.⁶³ By praising his father's piety and paternal legacy, Korkud had played a powerful guilt card and clearly pointed out the contradiction between Bayezid's public display of piety and his refusal to allow Korkud to pursue his religious duties due to considerations of imperial realpolitik.

Having marshalled numerous pious arguments in support of his decision, Korkud turned to the modalities of personal communication. Stating that a believer's status is measured by one's fidelity to agreements, Korkud reminded his father

61 Korkud, *Wasilat al-ahbab*, 104^a–106^a.

62 Korkud, *Wasilat al-ahbab*, 107^b–117^a.

63 Korkud, *Wasilat al-ahbab*, 106^a–107^b.

of a childhood promise Bayezid had made that his good will towards Korkud would never change. In light of that promise, Korkud was eager to know his father's inclination towards him after receiving *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb*. Expressing frustration with the impossibility of direct contact with his father – and demonstrating the severe psychological stress of court life – Korkud complained that those around his father informed him of nothing more than that his son had disobeyed his command and had opposed him. If he believed that Bayezid could change his opinion about him for a single hour, Korkud would never set foot in Ottoman domains again. On the other hand, if it were confirmed that his father's attitude towards him continued to reflect that childhood promise, then his joy and happiness would be renewed and he would return – especially since no one in this world could possibly oppose Bayezid's command. However, since Korkud refused to place his trust in correspondence emanating from capricious palace officials who misrepresented his father's real intentions, he asked his father to reply secretly with a hand-written message bearing his private seal and handed to 'Abd al-Salam. Once that had been done, Korkud promised to respond with a message bearing a secret stamp and seal.⁶⁴ To expand on his point concerning the sanctity of oaths, agreements, and secrets, Korkud [121^a–128^b] cited a number of Qur'anic verses and *ḥadīth* accounts confirming such sanctity. As was often the case with Korkud's choice of argumentation, three of the accounts cited suggest direct parallels to his own situation.⁶⁵ To emphasize this point, Korkud twice insisted that his father reply in his own hand and stamp – or the resulting order would not be considered legitimate.⁶⁶

The fact that Korkud demanded special channels of communications demonstrates the difficulty of communicating within the royal family with so many intermediaries involved, and implies that the prince believed he had secured some sort of specific promise from his father in the past. Considering that the pre-eminent court officials clearly favored Korkud's half-brother Şehzade Ahmed, while the Janissary ranks favored his other half-brother Selim,⁶⁷ it would appear that Korkud placed great hope in a personal connection to his father.

64 Korkud, *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb*, 117^a–121^a.

65 Korkud, *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb*, 121^a–128^b.

66 Korkud, *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb*, 120^a–121^a, 128^b–129^a.

67 M. Çağatay Uluçay, "Yavuz Sultan Selim Nasıl Padişah Oldu?", *Tarih Dergisi*, 6/9 (1954), pp. 53–90; 7/10 (1954), pp. 117–142; 8/11–12 (1956), pp. 185–200.

Expressing his own sense that death was near for both father and son, Korkud concluded *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb* by warning Bayezid that actions in this world affect one's station in the afterlife. While citing several verses and anecdotes about longevity, justice in the afterlife, and what constitutes good behavior in this world, Korkud applied to his father's situation a lengthy interpretation of the *ḥadīth* account stating that each individual shall be resurrected in the state in which he dies. As Korkud interpreted it, this account meant that one who continuously commits bad acts will be resurrected continuing to carry out that act which he had left off doing at the time of death. On the other hand, one who acts in good faith shall be spared that fate, reunited with other good people, and protected from the calamity of Judgment Day.⁶⁸ Following this stark warning, Korkud offered a rather hollow and perfunctory reassurance that he was certain Bayezid would be rewarded for his personal piety in the afterlife.

As if to accentuate the proximity of death and the afterlife for his solitary reader, Korkud closed the work with a final set of famous *ḥadīth* accounts describing the rewards of heaven. In this final section, Korkud appears to have used *ḥadīth* accounts to make coded statements to his father, with the prophet Muhammad serving as a stand-in for Bayezid. For example, one account referred to an incident where a financial promise made by the prophet Muhammad was honored after his death by his successors, suggesting the possibility that a verbal agreement concerning some sort of financial obligation had been reached between Korkud and Bayezid. Another account referred to the prophet Muhammad's daughter Fatima keeping a very important secret which the prophet had confided in her until well after his death – the secret of his own appointed time of death. As it makes little sense in isolation, the subtext of this specific *ḥadīth* account suggests a sensitive line of communications in place between Bayezid and Korkud's full sister Sofu Fatma Sultan – who on at least one occasion informed Korkud about developments at Bayezid's court. Finally, a third account states that a follower of Muhammad refused to disclose to his own mother a secret mission which had been entrusted to him by the prophet – hinting that Korkud considered himself to be carrying out some sort of secret mission while visiting the Mamluks.⁶⁹

While Korkud chose to address his father largely from behind a mask of Qur'anic verses and *ḥadīth* accounts, a close reading of *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb* reveals

68 Korkud, *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb*, 129^a-140^b; Dilek, "Şehzāde Korkud'un Hadisçiliği", pp. 326-327.

69 Korkud, *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb*, 121^a-128^b.

quite a bit about the prince's own psychology during a time of great stress. He both feared and respected his father. He felt that death was near for both his father and himself (as turned out to be the case). He signalled that he only trusted his sister or his envoy to deliver messages on his behalf, and that he felt unable to communicate directly with his father. For all these reasons, *Wasīlat al-ahbāb* appears to provide a clear example of an Ottoman ego document dating from the early 16th century.

Seeking Sisterly Support: TSA E5587

The second ego document Korkud left is a fearful letter to his aforementioned sister, Sofu Fatma Sultan. Likely dating to 1511, in the midst of the surviving princes' (Ahmed, Korkud, and Selim) succession struggle, the letter's tone seems desperate, with its seemingly rushed handwriting possibly confirming that sense of desperation. The main point of the letter was Korkud informing his sister that since he has heard that Selim has been appointed to Saruhan, he is planning to travel to Tire in order to demand both general concessions and that Saruhan be placed under his own control. He had considered fleeing to Egypt or to the Knights of Rhodes, and is clearly worried for his safety. Korkud's describing his relief to hear that Bayezid is still healthy suggests that rumors of his father's passing away had recently circulated. Selim's appointment to Saruhan may have only been a rumor, as around January 1512 Korkud was himself appointed to Saruhan. This letter suggests that such rumors of Selim's appointment to Saruhan may have kicked off the Şahkulu rebellion and succession struggle, by prompting Korkud to abandon his post. Regarding his own state, Korkud complained about his own constant ill health, and stated that he was traveling by litter "as fast as he is able" (instead of by horse). The prince also appears fairly desperate when he states that he will strive "as long as my soul is in my body," indicating something of an obsession with death (also demonstrated by his prayer for Bayezid's happy time in this world and the next). Finally, Korkud seems both crazy and a bit arrogant about his own intellect at the end of the letter, when he effectively states "don't think I'm crazy, this plan has been thought through carefully by the best intellect."⁷⁰

70 TSA E5587. While I thank Robert Dankoff for checking and correcting this transliteration and translation, any remaining mistakes are entirely my own.

A Prince with Daddy Issues Seeks Sisterly Support: Two Ego Documents Penned by Şehzade Korkud

Abstract ■ Following a brief analysis of self-narrative writing among Ottoman royals towards the turn of the sixteenth century, this article argues for consideration of “collective biography” as a methodological approach before presenting two “ego-documents” by one of those royals. Şehzade Korkud (d. 1513), who left behind several small samples of self-narrative, also wrote two clear examples of ego-documents, a treatise to his father Bayezid II (d. 1512) defending his decision to go on the *hâjj*, and a fearful letter to his sister Sofu Fatma (fl. 1512) seeking political guidance in the midst of a politically tense succession struggle. The treatise, *Wasîlat al-ahbâb*, is summarized and analyzed here, while the letter is transliterated and translated in full. **Keywords:** Şehzade Korkud, Hajj, Bayezid II, Ottoman History, Sofu Fatma, Ego-Documents, Self-Narrative, *Selbstzeugnis*.

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Appendix 1:**TSA E5587: Turkish Transcription**

Hüve'l-ğālibü'l-'azîz

*Hazrete'l-uḥti'l-kübrâ fi'd-dünyâ ve'l-'uẓmâ fi'l-uḥrâ inşâ'allâh te'âlâ
dâme 'ızzühâ fi'l-dâreyin ve 'ısmetühâ beyni'l-şakleyn*

[1] *ba'de't-teḥiyâti'l-mübârekât ve't-teslimâti't-ṭayyibât bi'l-ta'zizât* [2] *ve'l-tekrîmât ilâ cānib*, ma'rûz-ı muḥıbb-ı muḥlış budur ki: [3] mektüb-ı meveddet irsâl edüp ḥazret-i pâdişâh-ı a'zam [4] ve ḥākān-ı mu'azzamın aḥbār-ı meseretlerin beyân etmişsiz. [5] El-ḥamdü li-'llâh te'âlâ elf merre ki evvelâ mizâc-ı mübârekleri ṭayyib olub [6] fütürâtdan müberrâ olmuşlardır. Ve şāniyâ ben benderine ṭib-i [7] ḥâtır-ı 'âṭırla ḥayr-du'âlar etmişler. Allâh te'âlâ anlara daḥi [8] dünyâ ve âḫiret ḥayirler rûzî kıilup ṭül-ı 'ömürle dâ'imâ ziyâde [9] kuvvet-i salṭanetden ḥālî kılmaya, *bi-Muḥammedin ve âlihi ş'l'm* [şalâ'llâhu 'aleyhi ve sellem]. Ve ba'zı [10] daḥi ma'ânı beyân etmişsiz. Ma'lûm oldu ve mefhûm oldu [11] ki Selimşâh karındaşımı Şaruḥân'a götürüp ben za'îfi gine bunda [12] fûrûmânde emrâza mübtelâ terk etmek maḥşûd edinmişler. İmdi [13] mâ-dâm ki cānım gövdededir bu bâbda sa'y ederim. Ben bunda [14] gelelden berü za'f çekerim. Mısır'da iken 'Alâ'iyeyi bile taleb [15] etdigimden ğarâz varup anda ikâmet idi. Bunda gelicek aña [16] 'adem-ı kâbiliyeti ma'lûm oldu. Eyle olıcaḥ ben daḥi bunda [17] ṭurmak ihtimâlî yokdur. İnşâ'allâh te'âlâ bu dört beş günden [18] ḫalkıp taḫt-ı revânla sefere döyebildigim ḫadar ḫareketle 'azm [19] etdim, varup Tire'ye enerim, inşâ'allâh te'âlâ şurayı [20] baña gerekse versinler ve gerekse vermesinler. Şimdi daḥi gine [21] benden ziyâde kiçi karındaşımı benden taḫdîm edüp artıḫ beni [22] ri'âyet etseler gerek. Benim zerre ḫadar idrâkım yok mudur? Buraları [23] fehm etmez miyim? Şimden gerü daḥi ri'âyet etmezlerse varup gine [24] Mısır'a mı gideyim yaḫud Rodos'a mı kaçayın? Cümlesinden [margin] evlâ bu görünür ki varam Tire'de taḫâ'ud edem. Şundan eger istedigim gibi vermezlerse rücu'um yok. İnşâ'allâh te'âlâ 'an-ḫarîb semâ'ınıza erişe, ve's-selâm. Ve bu ma'nâ daḥi vesâvis-i şeyṭāniye yaḫud hevâcis-i nefsāniyeden 'add olunmaya, bel ki 'aḫl-ı ta'aḫḫul etdigi efkâr-ı ṭayyibedendür *kemâ lâ yaḫfi 'inde üli'n-nühâ*.

el-muḥıbb el-aḥ ez-za'îf

Ḳorkud en-naḫıf

Appendix 2:

TSA E5587: English Translation

He is the mighty victor.

To the sister, older in this world and greater in the other, God willing (may He be exalted),

may her renown continue in the Two Abodes [this world and the next] and her purity in the Two Weighty Things [mankind and jinn].

After the blessed salutations and pleasant greetings in support and tribute, putting that aside, the petition of the sincere well-wisher is as follows:

You have sent an affectionate letter in which you related the joyful news of his Majesty, the supreme Padishah and venerated Khaqan. Praise be to God (may He be exalted) a thousand times over that, firstly, his blessed bodily temperament being in good health, he is free from listlessness. Secondly, he has offered benedictions with the scent of fragrant inclination to me his servant. May God (may He be exalted) also grant him this world and the next as his portion of blessings and may He never deprive him of long life and greater sultanic power, by Muḥammad and his family (God's praise be upon him). And you have related some other matters. It has become known and understood that he sent my brother Selim Shah to Saruhān, but he intended to leave poor me still here, exhausted and subject to sickness. Now, as long as my soul is in my body I shall strive in this matter. Ever since I have come here, I have suffered from illness. When I requested Alanya, even while I was in Egypt, my intention was to go and reside there. When I arrived here, I learned that he found the proposal unacceptable. That being so, there is also no possibility of my remaining here. God willing (may He be exalted) setting out within these four or five days, I have resolved to travel by litter as much as I can bear. Upon arrival I shall dismount at Tire, God willing (may He be exalted), whether or not he grants me that place. Now having once again put my younger brother ahead of me, he ought to show me more favor. Have I not even the slightest comprehension? Do I not understand these places? Now if once again he does not show me any favor, should I go to Egypt or should I flee to Rhodes? Of these the best plan seems to be that I should go and reside in Tire. From there, if they do not grant what I desire, I will not return. God willing (may He be exalted) it shall soon reach your hearing. Enough! This matter as well should not be considered either whisperings of Satan or suggestions of the flesh, but rather as sound ideas prompted by the intellect, since it cannot be hidden from those who possess minds.

Your well-wisher and sickly brother,
Korkud the weak.

Appendix 3:

Korkud's Letter to his Sister (ca. 1511):

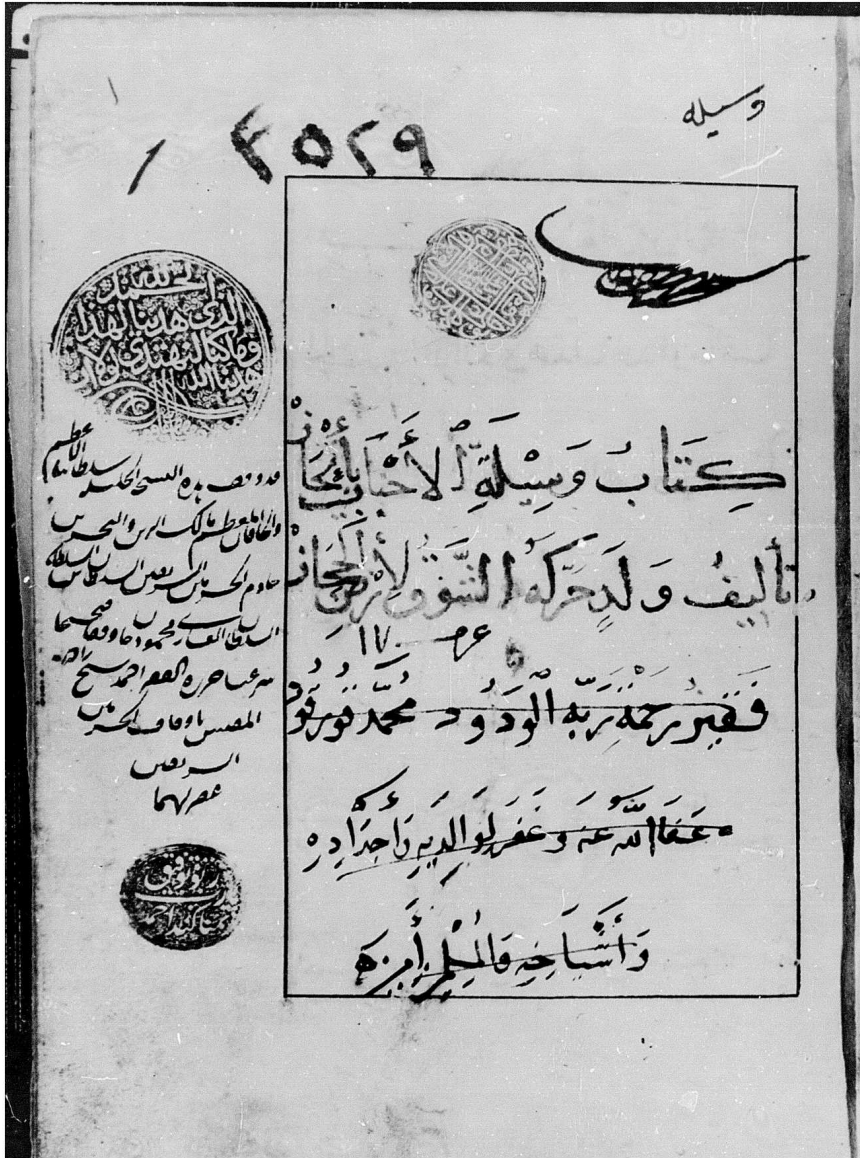
مولفالسبعون

TSA E5587

حصنه الاخت الكبرى في الدنيا والقطعة الاخرى في الدنيا
 دام عزها في الدارين وصحتها في الدنيا
 بعد التحيات المباركات والسلامات الطيبات بالصورة
 والتفكير كات الجانب معروفين بحبكم بوجه
 ما كتب مورث ارسالي اوب حضرت باجناه اعظم
 و خاقان معظمان اخبار من ارباب انفس من
 الحمد لله تعالى الف مرة في اول جناح مباركك كليل
 فتقوتك مني اوكشاد و وثا نيا من بده لرتبه
 خاطر عا طه خير و عا لواتش الله تعالى اناره و
 و نيا و اخوت خبير لروزي قلب طول عمره و ايمان
 قوتك كسلطنتك خالي قلبه بخار و اصاله و بعض
 و حتى معالي بيان انفس من معلوم اولدي و معلوم اولدي
 كه كليم شاه قزلباش صا روخانه كتوب بن صغيف كنه
 فرو ما نده امر اضنه مبتلا ايم انما المقصود او تشاير
 ما و ايم كه جانم كو و ما و در بوباره سخي ا و ايم برن بونده
 كالدين برو صغيف جكرم مقصوده اكن غلايه بار طلب
 ايم كورن عرض و ارب انره اقامت او ك بونده خانه
 عارم تا باينه معلوم اولديك انا و انا ق برن و ك بونده
 طور سوي اصماليه بو قدر انشا الله تعالى بو در شش كورن
 قالقت تحت روفانه سوره و و به بلديم قدر و كنه
 ا ايم قارب تسه يه ايم انشا الله تعالى مشوره
 باه كرسه و در نمار و كرسه و بر منسل ملك و كنه
 بونده زياده سخي قوندا شش بونده بعد اوب ارب
 رعاسته تسه لرك بيم ذره قدر اورا ك بو قدر
 و ايم انفس من ملك كو و سخي رعاسته ارب كنه
 مصلحتي ا كيم با صوره و و سخي قاجين جمله سونده
 الاخر الصغيف مورث مورث

Appendix 4:

Korkud, Wasīlat al-aḥbāb, f. 1^a.



Appendix 5:

Korkud, *Wasīlat al-aḥbāb*, f. 143^a.

