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Mahzar (130455)

Vücûdî (210234)

Dimensions of Transformation in the Ottoman Empire from the Late Medieval Age to Modernity

CHAPTER 8

Making Recommendations: Azmîzâde and the *Mahzar* for Vücûdî Efendi, 1608

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In Memory of Metin Kunt

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Selçuk Akşın Somel

MADDE YAYIMLANDIKTAN
SONRA ÇELİK DOKÜMAN

Bütün araştırması para aşkın yapılmadan
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Among the various letters to friends, colleagues and men of influence in the *münşeât* of Azmîzâde Mustafa Hâletî Efendi (d.1631) is a short item headed "written for the petition in support of Vücûdî Efendi".¹ In format, style and length it is very similar to a *takriz*, a brief document recommending a particular literary or historical work and its author, written to support a bid made by the latter for reward or promotion.² However, the recommendation for Vücûdî Efendi appears slightly unusual, both in its description as *mahzar*³ rather than *takriz*, and with regard to the flexible career of its subject. Over the course of four decades, Vücûdî alternated between two distinct career paths. Having begun as a *müdderris* in the mid-1570s, he subsequently transferred to a military role and spent several years on campaign. In mid-1006/early 1598 he re-entered the scholarly profession as teacher and mufti in a *medrese* in his home region of Larende (present-day Karaman). Following the *mahzar* of 1608 he was also appointed *kadı* and elevated to *mevleviyet* status on an *ad hominem* basis.

While Vücûdî's varying career may be specific in some of its details, it was not unusual, certainly in its earlier stages. It nevertheless serves as a useful example of the kind of professional and social flexibility possible for some in the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries, and contributes to knowledge of the broader context in which the well-known concerns of conservative Ottoman writers about irregularities and falling standards should be set. Vücûdî's career advanced through carefully cultivated patronage links, with members primarily of the *ulema*, in particular the Kınalızâde family, but also of

- 1 "Vücûdî Efendinin mahzarına yazılmışdır" (entitled by the contemporary compiler, possibly by Azmîzâde himself), *Münşeât-i Azmîzâde*, fol. 15b, MS Or. 169, BRIL.
- 2 On a set of six *takriz* written for a historical work c.1620, see Christine Woodhead, "Puff and Patronage: Ottoman *Takriz*-Writing and Literary Recommendation in the 17th Century", in Çiğdem Balım-Harding and Colin Imber (eds), *The Balance of Truth: Essays in Honour of Professor Geoffrey Lewis* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2000), 395–406.
- 3 Defined in Redhouse as "petition, round robin", which could be either positive or negative in nature; *takriz* carries the notion more of an encomium or glowing reference. Cf. Mehmet İpşirli, "Mahzar", *DİA* 27, 398–401.

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