### İBRĀHĪM MÜTEFERRİQA

 $(b. \sim 1670s; d. < 1747)$ 

LIFE

İ.M. was born in the Transylvanian town of Kolozsvár (Cluj) in the early 1080s /1670s. His original Hungarian name is unknown. He appears to have chosen the name İbrāhīm after becoming an Ottoman subject and a convert to Islam. Although several sources, such as letters written by César de Saussure (d. 1783)¹ and Charles Peyssonnel (d. 1790)², shed light on the author's Transylvanian past, these accounts should be characterized as retrospective interpretations of İ.M.'s pre-Ottoman life. The same appears to be true for İ.M.'s autobiographical notes preserved in what is generally accepted as an untitled treatise penned by him in 1122/1710, namely after he had already lived nearly twenty years as an Ottoman subject and a Muslim. Due to its defensive tone regarding Islam and its critical attitude against the Papacy, this work is commonly referred to by the tentative title *Risāle-i İslāmiyye* (Treatise on Islam). Although this treatise is completely silent about when and how its author became an Ottoman subject, İ.M. states that soon after his graduation from theological college, and certainly before becoming a member of the Ottoman milieu, he had found himself much more inclined to believe in Muhammad's prophethood.³

The first to interpret these sources was Imre Karácson (d. 1911), a Hungarian Catholic priest, who, in an effort to make these accounts more comprehensive filled in the narrative gaps with outright inventions. According to Karácson, İ.M. was born in 1085/1674 in Kolozsvár to a poor Calvinist Hungarian family. At the age of eighteen, during Thököly's revolt of 1692-93, he was captured by Turkish soldiers, who failed to collect ransom for their captive, took İ.M. instead to Istanbul, and sold him at the slave market.<sup>4</sup>

Strongly criticizing both Karácson and Saussure, Turkish scholar Niyazi Berkes (d. 1988) argued that İ.M. was taken captive by the Ottomans not as their enemy, but as one of Tököly's supporters who needed protection after the suppression of the revolt by Austrians. According to Berkes, *Risāle-i İslāmiyye* reveals that İ.M. was not simply a Protestant, but a Unitarian, who studied at a Unitarian college. Berkes further suggested that İ.M. converted to Islam by his own volition.<sup>5</sup>

Although İ.M. does not specify his denomination,<sup>6</sup> his Unitarian inclination, seems to be confirmed by his contemporary Charles de Peyssonnel, the French liaison to the Ottoman grand vizier during the war of 1150-1152/1737-1739, which the Ottoman Empire, supported by France, fought against Austria and Russia. In a report dated 1151/1738, which was released after Berkes voiced his argument, Peyssonnel portrays İ.M. as a Hungarian born former minister of religion denying the Holy Trinity and states that he does not know why İ.M. converted to Islam.<sup>7</sup> Peyssonnel's statement that the two were neighbors in a bivouac near Sofia and communicated fluently in Latin lends credibility to his account.

I.M. appears to have adapted to his new milieu quite successfully and enjoyed a successful career at the Ottoman court. Having educated himself in the Turkish language and Islamic sciences, İ.M. entered the *müteferriqa* corps, whose members were especially attached to the person of the sultan and served in various public or political missions. Hence his nickname "Müteferriqa". In 1128/1716 he served as an Ottoman commissioner with the Hungarians who were assembled in Belgrade to promote their struggle for independence, which was supported by the Ottomans. In 1132/1720 İ.M. was appointed liaison officer to the Hungarian prince Ferenc Rákóczi (d. 1735), who, in the aftermath of his unsuccessful revolt against the Habsburgs (1115-1123/1703-1711) had left France for the Ottoman realm (1129/1717) to continue his struggle against Austria. In 1150/1737, İ.M. was dispatched to the Palatinus of Kiev for negotiations concerning the treaty between the Ottomans and the Poles. Between 1150-1152/1737-1739, he served to promote a Turkish-French alliance against Austria and Russia. In that context, in 1151/1738, he conducted negotiations on behalf of the Ottoman government with anti-Austrian Hungarians for the surrender of the fortress of Orsova to the Ottoman forces. Along with Comte de Bonneval, who later converted to Islam and came to be known as Humbaracı Ahmed Paşa (d. 1747), I.M. also played an active role in promoting Ottoman-Swedish cooperation against Russia.

In addition to diplomatic missions, İ.M. also served in the Ottoman bureaucracy, first as scribe at the Ottoman artillery (*top arabacı*) (1151-1156/1738-1743), and later at the imperial council (*dīvān-ı hümāyūn*) (1157-1158/1744-1745). The last position he held was the directorship of the first Ottoman paper mill at Yalova, near Istanbul (1158-1160/1745-1747). İ.M.'s recently discovered inheritance inventory reveals that he passed away at the end of Muharram/January 1160/1747, and not in 1158/1745 or 1159/1746, as previously thought. According to the same document, İ.M. left behind a wife named Ḥadīce, also a convert, and a minor daughter named 'Āyṣe. While some scholars have argued that İ.M. had a son (known as "Little İbrāhīm"), or even five sons, there is no documentary evidence to prove these claims. There are also scholars who suggest that İ.M. might have had a son, or sons, from a previous marriage. Is

Despite a successful Ottoman career, İ.M. does not appear to have been completely detached from his pre-Ottoman and pre-Islamic past. The fact that he wrote a treatise dealing with dogmatic issues concerning the Holy Trinity nearly twenty years after his conversion to Islam is a case in point. İ.M.'s connection with his earlier life facilitated probably his adoption of the ideas of Freemasonry if the claims characterizing him as one of the first Ottoman freemasons are true. <sup>14</sup> In other words, İ.M. remained a person of two cultural worlds.

#### İ.M.'S PRINTING ACTIVITIES

Printing was İ.M.'s main contribution not only to Ottoman, but also to Islamic culture. He was the first to run a state sponsored printing press in an Islamic country

to print books in the Arabic script for the Turkish-speaking audience. His printing house was established in Istanbul in 1138/1726 and was officially recognized a year later, permitted to print secular texts only. İ.M. printed four separate maps between 1131-1141/1719-1729 and eighteen titles in sixteen books of twenty-two volumes (*Kitāb-i Luġāt-i Vanquli*, known also as Ṣiḥaḥii'l-Cevherī, Ta'rīḫ-i Naʿīmā, and Ferheng-i Ṣuʿūrī were two volumes; Ta'rīḫ-i Rāṣid was three volumes; Ta'rīḫi'l-Miṣri'l-Qadīm were included in one volume, while Ta'rīḥ-i Rāṣid and its appendix Ta'rīḫ-i Çelebīzāde Efendi were one book of four volumes) between the years 1141-1155/1729-1742. One of the books, a manual of the Turkish language, was not intended for Ottoman-Muslims but for a Francophone audience. Two out of the remaining seventeen titles were Arabic-Turkish and Persian-Turkish dictionaries, 9 were histories, two included historical and geographical accounts, one was an exclusively geographical work, one was on physical issues, and one focused on political and military topics. Thus, the production of the first Ottoman-Turkish printing press was predominantly historical in nature.

The list of historical works printed by İ.M. consists of Kātib Çelebī's *Tuḥfetü'l-Ki-bār fī Esfāri'l-Biḥār* (Select Gift in Voyages, 1141/1729), Juda Tadeusz Krusiński's *Ta'rīḥ-i Seyyāḥ der Beyān-i Zuhūr-ı Aġvānīyān ve Sebeb-i İnhidām-ı Binā-yı Devlet-i Şāhān-ı Ṣafevīyān* (Traveler's History Concerning the Emergence of the Afghans and the Reasons for the Decline of the State of the Safavi Shahs, 1142/1729), *Ta'rīḥü'l-Hindi'l-Ġarbī el-Müsemmā bi-Ḥadīṣ-i Nev* (The History of the West Indies called The New Revelation, 1142/1730), Naẓmīzāde Efendi's *Ta'rīḥi'l-Miṣri'l-Cedīd; Ta'rīḥū'l-Miṣri'l-Qadīm* (History of New Egypt; History of Ancient Egypt, 1142/1730), Naẓmīzāde's *Gülṣen-i Ḥulefā* (Rose Garden of Caliphs, 1143/1730), Kātib Çelebī's *Taqvīmū't-Tevārīḥ* (Calendar of Histories, 1146/1733), Naʿrīmā's *Ta'rīḥ* (History, 1147/1734), Rāṣid Efendi's *Ta'rīḥ* (History) and its appendix (*zeyl*) written by Çelebīzāde Efendi (1153/1741), and 'Ömer Bosnavī's *Aḥvāl-i Ġazavāt der Diyār-ı Bosna* (The State of Wars in the Province of Bosnia, 1154/1741).

While some of these works were chosen for publication by I.M. himself, others appear to have been recommended by Dāmādzāde Aḥmed Efendi (d. 1154/1741), the grand mufti of Istanbul who was known for his relatively liberal views. The fact that I.M. placed an emphasis on the need of a deeper involvement in rational branches of learning by printing works on history, geography, and physics can be considered an implicit challenge against the traditional Ottoman and Muslim approach to knowledge and its diffusion. <sup>15</sup> His western and Protestant cultural background may have had much to do with this. <sup>16</sup>

The fact that İ.M. specifically chose to print historical texts indicates that he shared the early modern western understanding of history as a science. Ottoman narratives as well as surveys of inheritance inventories from İ.M.'s time reveal that the most popular books among the Ottoman reading public were historical works dealing with the genesis of Islamic religion and statehood (such as al-Ṭabarī's Ta'rīb al-Rusul

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wa'l- $Mul\bar{u}k^{17}$ ) or Persian epics (such as  $\bar{S}ahn\bar{a}me$  and  $\bar{H}amzan\bar{a}me^{18}$ ). Instead of choosing texts which included religious didacticism or entertainment, however,  $\dot{I}.M$ . focused on printing works which revealed historical developments in an objective manner and thus improved the historical knowledge of their readers.

For the 1142/1730 publication of Nazmīzāde's *Gülşen-i Ḥulefā*, a historical work narrating the history of Muslim rulers from the 'Abbasid period up to the time of Aḥmed III, İ.M. composed a preface focusing specifically on the utility of historical knowledge, especially for members of imperial ruling elites. In his *Uṣūlü'l-Ḥikem fī Niṣām'l-Ümem*, a treatise on the necessity of military reforms, İ.M. emphasized once again the importance of history as a science which provides insight and considered it a compulsory guide for governors. I.M.'s understanding of history as a science appears to have been influenced most significantly by Kātib Çelebī and Naʿīmā, themselves influenced by Ibn Ḥaldūn's philosophy of history as revealed in his *Muqaddima*.

İ.M.'s inheritance inventory clearly reveals that the historical texts he printed sold well before his death in 1160/1747. His strategy of printing historical narratives appears to have proven reasonable and successful since most of them were later reprinted: Nazmīzāde's *Ta'rīḫ-i Tīmūr* (1276/1860), Na°īmā's *Ta'rīḫ* (1259/1843, 1280/1863, 1281/1864-65), Rāṣid's *Ta'rīḫ* (1282/1865); Çelebīzāde's *Ta'rīḥ* (1282/1865), Kātib Çelebī's *Taqvīmü't-Tevārīḫ* (1291/1874), "Ömer Bosnavī's *Aḥvāl-i Ġazavāt der Diyār-ı Bosna* (1293/1876), Krusiński's *Ta'rīḫ-i Seyyāḥ* (1277/1860), *Ta'rīḫü'l-Hindi'l-Ġarbī* (1292/1875), and Kātib Çelebī's *Tuḥfetü'l-Kibār* (1293/1876, 1329/1913).

By publishing and promoting historical works, İ.M. not only created for the Ottoman public a new taste for reading, but also gradually changed the traditional Ottoman view concerning history, from a field providing religious knowledge and entertainment to one that could improve the effectiveness of government for the welfare of its subjects. He thus contributed to Ottoman progress, as A. Ubicini noted in the middle of the 19th century.<sup>24</sup>

#### Works

① Usūlü'l-Hikem fī Nizāmi'l-Ümem

In 1144/1732, İ.M. wrote and printed this short (48 folios) but very influential treatise entitled (Reasonable Principles of Public Order).

As stated in his introduction to the book, İ.M.'s purpose was to reveal the reasons of 1143/1730 Patrona rebellion in Istanbul, which involved the Janissaries, and to suggest to the Ottoman authorities pro-European military reforms that would eventually strengthen the state order and the army's discipline. In carrying out his task İ.M. used historical books in Latin and was advised by foreign military officers (not mentioned by name in the text).

The treatise is written in the so-called *naṣīḥatnāme* (book of advice) form, one of the traditional historical genres that leading Ottoman intellectuals and statemen used

to suggest to the sultans reformative measures. In contrast to the preceding *naṣīḥatnāme* authors, İ.M. did not plead for the recovery of the state order in the time of sultan Süleyman I the Magnificent (1520-1566), but insisted for adopting the achievemnets of the leading European countries in the field of state and military organization.

The treatise consists of three parts. In the first part İ.M. dwells in general on the principles of state order and the place and role of the army in it. He points out that in history people, as social beings, united themselves in societies and therefore needed regulative mechanisms prescribed by laws. İ.M. describes in brief the three main form of state order: monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. Then the author emphasizes that the states are in constant conflicts between them to gain new territories or to defend their own domains, and therefore the discipline and the strength of their armies are of crucial importance. With regard to this, İ.M. criticizes the Ottoman authorieties of being totally ignorant about the principles of state order and the military achievements of the enemy Christian countries and suggests them a new order (nizām-ı cedīd) for the Ottoman army in which the military achievements of the Chriastian rivals should be applied.

In the second part İ.M. dwells especially on the importance of geography for the improvement of the state rule and the army. He is convinced that the Muslims should know well the geographical specificities and topography of their Christian enemies. According to him this is a must and prerequisite in the Muslims's Holy war (cihād) and reminds that the geographical discoveries (Christopher Columbus's discoveries, in particular) made the Christian countries stronger and more prosperous. Besides, the more the Muslim states know each other, the better their cooperation would be. Geography, according to İ.M., would be helpful in such a process of mutual acquaintance. Thus geography, and cartography (by means of printing maps), in particular, is destined to play a crucial role in the improvement of state order. In addition, geographical works are helpful for the better understanding of history.

The third part provides a working knowledge of the reforms that could be applied in Ottoman army. The most important novelty, according to İ.M., is the use of firearms as the Christian armies do and the application of their military tactics. İ.M. suggests smaller military units in terms of the soldier number in order to make their commanding and cooperation easier, as well as a military training provided by Christian military specialists, as Russia did.

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In 1729 İ.M. printed his translation of Juda Tadeusz Krusiński's (d. 1751) account of Iranian history under the title 'Traveler's History Concerning the Emergence of the Afghans and the Reasons for the Decline of the State of the Safavid Shahs'. Krusiński himself, however, claimed later on that he is not only the author, but also the translator of this work.

This is a history of Iran under the Safavids from 1499 up to 1727 with a special focus on the 1722 Afghan invasion that terminated the Safavi rule, of which the author (a Jesuit missionary of Polish origin) as a secretary-interpreter to the then Bishop of Isfahan was a witness. The book was first published in Italian, French, and English translations, in Rome (1727), Paris (1728), and London (1728) respectively. The original Latin text, which according to his claims İ.M. translated into Ottoman-Turkish, appeared only in 1731 in Leipzig (Lipsiae) by introduction provided by Johann Christian Clodius, professor of Arabic at the Leipzig University.

#### ③ Risāle-i İslāmiyye

The *Risāle-i İslāmiyye* is a polemical self-narrative and a religio-political tract, which discusses at length the highly controversial topic of the Holy Trinity. İ.M. expresses his conviction that the Ottoman state is the only guarantor of purity of Islam against Papacy and the Habsburg monarchy and foretells that the Ottoman dynasty will rule the whole world and defeat all its enemies, as well as that finally the infidels will be brought to believe in the unity of God.

İ.M. also edited all the texts he printed by including some up-to-date information, illustrations, maps, and sometimes his own interpolations, the foremost being the so-called *Tezyīlü't-Ṭābic* (Printer's Addition) in Kātib Çelebī's (d. 1066/1656) famous geographical work *Cihānnümā* (Mirror of the World), printed in 1144/1732. Some scholars suggest that İ.M. was the author of another proposal for military reform dating from the reign of Aḥmed III (r. 1114-1142/1703-1730).<sup>25</sup>

Furthermore noteworthy are İ.M.'s intellectual activities as a writer and translator of works on specific historical, astronomical, physical, military, and dogmatic issues. All of İ.M.'s translations were from Latin into Ottoman-Turkish. İ.M. wrote a short treatise entitled *Vesīletü'ṭ-Ṭibāca* (The Utility of Printing), thanks to which he managed to persuade the Ottoman authorities about the benefits of the printing press for the Ottoman state and the greater Islamic world. The treatise was included in the first book printed at İ.M.'s printing house in 1141/1729.

In 1144/1732 İ.M. printed a treatise on magnetism entitled Füyūżāt-ı Mıqnāṭɪsiyye (Features of the Magnets), which he compiled and translated on the basis of European works on the subject. Ordered by the sultan in 1733, he translated Andreas Celarius's (d. 1665) astronomical work Atlas Coelestis under the title Mecmū<sup>c</sup>a-i Hey'etü'l-qadīme ve'l-cedīde (Collection of Old and New Astronomy). This translation, however, was not printed.

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<sup>1</sup> Lettres de Turquie (1730-39) et notices (1740) de César de Saussure, gentilhomme de la cour de s.a.s. le prince François Rákóczi II., concernant les derniéres annés, la mort, le testament et les mémoires de ce prince, communiqués en texte original français et en traduction hongroise avec une préface et des remarques historiques par Coloman de Thaly (Budapest, 1909), 93-94.

<sup>2</sup> Bibliothèque Nationale, Département des manuscrits, N.A.F. 7184, f. 64.

<sup>3</sup> Halil Necatioğlu, *Matbaacı İbrahim-i Müteferrika ve Risâle-i İslâmiye* (Ankara, 1982), 6, 12-4, 56-58.

<sup>4</sup> Imre Karácson, "İbrāhīm Müteferriqa," *Ta'rīḫ-i <sup>c</sup>Osmānī Encümeni Mecmū<sup>c</sup>ası*, 3 (1326/1910), 178-185.

<sup>5</sup> Niyazi Berkes, "İlk Türk Matbaası Kurucusunun Dinî ve Fikrî Kimliği," *Belleten* 26/104 (1962), 715-737; Niyazi Berkes, "104 Sayılı Belleten'de Çıkan "İlk Türk Matbaası Kurucusunun Dinî ve Fikrî Kimliği" Adlı Yazı İçin Bir Not," *Belleten* 28/109 (1964), 183; Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* (Montreal, 1964), 36-39; Niyazi Berkes, "İbrahim Müteferrika," *El*<sup>2</sup>, vol. 3 (1971), 996-998; Niyazi Berkes, *Türkiye'de Çağdaşlaşma* (Istanbul, 2002), 50-53.

<sup>6</sup> Coşkun Yılmaz, "Hezarfen Bir Şahsiyet: İbrahim Müteferrika ve Siyaset Felsefesi," İstanbul Armağanı, 4. Lâle Devri, ed. Mustafa Armağanı (Istanbul, 2000), 262.

<sup>7</sup> Gérald Duverdier, "Savary de Brèves et Ibrahim Müteferrika: Deux drogmans culturels à l'origine de l'imprimerie turque," *Bulletin du Bibliophile* 3 (1987), 322-359.

<sup>8</sup> For details of İ.M.'s biography, see Tubor Halasi-Kun, "İbrâhim Müteferrika," *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. V-2 (1950), 896-900; Niyazi Berkes, "İbrahim Müteferrika"; Erhan Afyoncu, "İbrâhim Müteferrika," *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*<sup>2</sup>, vol. 21 (2000), 324-327; Erhan Afyoncu, "İlk Türk Matbaasının Kurucusu Hakkında Yeni Bilgiler," *Belleten* LXV/243 (2001), 607-622.

<sup>9</sup> There is no consensus about the date of İ.M.'s death; arguments have been made for the years 1745, 1746, and 1747. For the latest discussions on this issue, see Orlin Sabev, *İbrahim Müteferrika ya da İlk Osmanlı Matbaa Serüveni (1726-1746). Yeniden Değerlendirme* (Istanbul, 2006), 97-99; Kemal Beydilli, "Müteferrika ve Osmanlı Matbaası. 18. Yüzyılda İstanbul'da Kitabiyat," *Toplumsal Tarih*, 128 (2004), 44-52; Erhan Afyoncu, "İbrahim Müteferrika'nın Yeni Yayınlanan Terekesi ve Ölüm Tarihi Üzerine," *Türklük Arağtırmaları Dergisi*, 15 (2004), 349-362.

<sup>10</sup> A facsimile and transliteration in modern Turkish of the inventory is given in my monograph on the first Ottoman Turkish printing press: Орлин Събев, Първото османско пътешествие в света на печатната книга (1726-1746). Нов поглед [First Ottoman Journey in the World of Printed Books (1726-46). A Reassessment] (Sofia, 2004), 340-351; Orlin Sabev, İbrahim Müteferrika ya da İlk Osmanlı Matbaa Serüveni, 350-364.

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<sup>13</sup> Kemal Beydilli, "Müteferrika ve Osmanlı Matbaası," 50.

<sup>14</sup> Orhan Erdenen, *Lale Devri ve Yansımaları* (Istanbul, 2003), 99; İlhami Soysal, *Dünya ve Türkiye'de Masonlar ve Masonluk* (Istanbul, 1980), 192-194; Kemalettin Apak, *Ana Çizgileriyle Türkiye'deki Masonluk Tarihi* (Istanbul, 1958), 18; Thierry Zarcone, *Mystiques, Philosophes et Franc-Maçons en Islam: Rıza Tevfik, penseur ottoman* (1868-1949), *du soufisme à la confrérie* (Paris, 1993), 187-96; Thierry Zarcone, *Secret et sociétés secrètes en Islam: Turquie, Iran et Asie centrale XIX<sup>e</sup>-XX<sup>e</sup> siècles. Franc-Maçonnerie, Carboneria et confréries soufies* (Milano, 2002), 7-8.

<sup>15</sup> For the traditional Ottoman and Islamic concept of learning, see Fahri Unan, "Taşköprülüzâde'nin Kaleminden XVI. Yüzyılın "İlim" ve "Âlim" Anlayışı," Osmanlı Araştırmaları/The Journal of Ottoman Studies 17 (1997), 149-264.

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<sup>22</sup> See Orlin Sabev, "The First Ottoman Turkish Printing Enterprise: Success or Failure (A Reassessment)," *Ottoman Tulips, Ottoman Coffee. Leisure and Lifestyle in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Dana Sajdi (London-New York, 2007), 63-89.

<sup>23</sup> See Millî Kütüphanede Mevcut Arap Harfli Türkçe Kitapların Muvakkat Kataloğu. Genişletilmiş İkinci Basım, vols. 1-2 (Ankara, 1964-1968), 341, 723, 779, 1155, 1237, 1282, 1480; Seyfettin Özege, Eski Harflerle Basılmış Türkçe Eserler Kataloğu, vols. 1-4 (Istanbul, 1971-1979), 400, 1293, 1719, 1741, 1743, 1750, 1753, 1880, 2004; Türkiye Basmaları Toplu Kataloğu. Arap Harfli Türkçe Eserler (1729-1928)/The Union Catalogue of Turkey's Printed Books. Turkish Publications in Arabic Letters, eds. M. Cunbur and D. Kaya, vol. 2 (Ankara, 1990), 303.

<sup>24</sup> A. Ubicini, Lettres sur la Turquie ou tableau statistique, religieux, politique, administratif, militaire, commercial, etc. de l'Empire ottoman, depuis le Khatti-Cherif de Gulhanè (1839). Première partie. Les Ottomans (Paris, 1853), 243.

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