# Where Geography, Myth, and Politics Meet: An Interpretation of the Terrestrial Disk of the Ottoman Imperial Scroll[1]

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**Introduction**

According to a well-known prophetic tradition, the Pen was the first thing that God created.[2] God then ordered it to write. When the Pen asked what it should write, He replied that it was to write everything that would happen from that moment onwards until the Day of Judgment. In this way, God ordered the Pen to compose a type of reverse history, registering in this case not past but future events.

A reference to this hadith begins the Ottoman Imperial Scroll, or *Tomar-ı Hümāyun* (TSK, A. 3599). Fethullah Çelebi, or 'Arif, began the preliminary works on the Scroll and Abdullatif Shirvani, or Eflatun, executed the first half of the document in roughly the last decade of Sultan Süleyman's reign (1520-

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1  The research for this article was funded by Barakat Foundation Major Grant for the academic years between 2018 and 2020.

2  Imam Ahmed Hanbali (d. 241 AH, 855 CE) and al-Tirmidhi (d. 279 AH, 892 CE) report this hadith. The hadith has different variations where the creation of the Throne or the Light and Darkness precede that of the Pen prompting discussion concerning the order of creation. For an interesting discussion on the Pen and the Tablet in Islamic cosmology see Samer Akkach, 2005.

1566 CE) (Eryılmaz, 2021 and 2010, especially chapters 1, 2, and 6). To date, this scroll with a width of 80 cm and a length of about 31m remains as one of the most impressive artifacts in the Topkapı Palace Museum library. And it was meant to impress the viewer. Its large size is only part of the reason. Its real impact comes from the geometrical aesthetics of its organization in the first half of the document.

Eflatun, the main author and most probably the unique calligrapher of the first half of the Scroll, reveals his grandiose ambition in the document's introduction with a reference to the hadith of the cosmological Pen mentioned above. He starts by thanking God, who "in the annals that He brought to being, [and] by the transmission of the Pen, had written and registered the creatures in all their generality and the creations in their entirety in accordance with the accustomed felicitous conception [in the Qur'anic verse] 'He has created everything and determined its nature with precise determination'" (TSK, A. 3599; Sura al-Furqan 25: 02). Such a reference to the cosmological story at the very beginning of the document encourages the reader to make comparisons between the pen of Süleyman's dynastic litterateur, or şehnāmeci, and the cosmological Pen. Likewise, one is also tempted to extend the analogy between the giant Ottoman Imperial Scroll and the Divine Tablet, where, according to the well-known hadith tradition, the destinies of all humans were written at the early stages of Creation.

These comparisons are supported by the Scroll's organization, which follows the order of Creation. First the skies are represented with an astrological disk, then the earth with a terrestrial one. After the circular map of the earth, the document continues with a tripartite schematic representation of the genealogical history of humanity from an Islamic perspective.[3] Beginning with Adam and Eve, the prophets of the Islamic tradition are placed in ornamented medallions in the main, central branch. In contrast to the central branch, where until and including Muhammad all of the figures are prophets, the figures in the left and right branches flanking it on either side vary in status as history unfolds in the Scroll's representation. Except for three that will be taken up later in this article, the names of mythical and historical figures (kings, mystics, philosophers) in these two secondary branches are enclosed in smaller and non-ornamented circles, rather than in medallions.

The name medallions of the caliphs succeed that of Muhammad in the central branch and precede the name circles of the twelve imams. Throughout the

document and both in the case of the medallions and the circles, their colors and sizes vary according to a preconceived hierarchical order of importance, one of many significant aspects of the document that fall outside the scope of this article.

The genealogical section of the document is organized in sections visually divided by the representations of significant figures, i.e. Adam-Eve, Noah, Muhammad, the Ottoman dynasty/Osman, and Sultan Süleyman. With the appearance of each of these figures the formal organization changes drastically, suggesting the arrival of a new epoch affecting history and the relationship between humanity and its Creator. After the introduction of the Ottoman dynasty, no other dynasty is represented but the Mamluk dynasty, which continues as the right branch under the Arabic title of "*dawlat at-turkiyya*" until it is integrated into the Ottoman state (*dawlat al-'oṣmāniyya*) and its rulers become Ottoman governors. The left branch of the Scroll is reserved for Ottoman grand viziers.

The textual and visual representation continues with the tripartite organization of the original genealogical scheme until the reign of Sultan Süleyman. After him, the text is resumed most probably by şehnāmeci Lokman, and the tripartite organization is reduced to a single long text on the reigns of each Ottoman sultan following a name medallion to represent his name in the center and his male offspring around it. The grand viziers and governors of Egypt are also represented with little name circles and one or two sentences marking the beginning and final dates of their appointment on either side of the sultan's name medallion introducing the sultan and preceding the text on his reign.

*Tomar-ı Hümāyun* is a unique document that offers many venues of research (Eryılmaz, 2021 and 2010). In this article, I will focus only on the terrestrial disk and argue that in order to understand and interpret the disk meaningfully, we need to switch our hermeneutical register to that of its writer and his intellectual environment and decipher it through the prism of an allegorical language termed as "*zabān-i ḥāl*". Naturally, the importance of the mental adaptation argued here is not only needed to understand the terrestrial map but the entire document, and I hope this short study serves as a vehicle in that direction.

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**3** For more on Islamic genealogical histories, see Binbaş, 2011.

## The scroll and its terrestrial map

Like the astrological disk, the terrestrial map is in the form of a circle and placed within an equilateral octagon (fig. 1). The octagonal shape might reasonably be a reference to the Celestial Throne supported by eight angels mentioned between the 13th and the 18th verses in the 69th chapter of the Qur'an, namely Sura al-Haqqah. Both the line of text following the inner border of the octagon and the body of text outside it were composed in Turkish while the notations around and inside the disk were made in Arabic. The map is not oriented to the south as it is typical in the Islamicate tradition but to the east, an orientation generally attributed to maps made for Christian patrons. Though rare, the disk's eastern orientation is not unique and not necessarily first. A slightly later world map produced in 1570 in the anonymous Arabic treatise titled *Kitāb al-Bad' wa al-Tārīḫ* (*Book of the Beginning and History*), for instance, shares the same unusual orientation.

Continuing our description of the Scroll's map, we see that the four cardinal points are indicated outside the green outmost band. This band resembling a ring forming segmented worm is identified between the names of the cardinal points as the mythical mountain of Qaf (*Jabal-i Ḳāf*). Inside the ring of the mythical mountain, there is another band, that of the Encompassing Sea (*Deryā-yı Muḥīṭ*).

Like the 1570 map of the anonymous treatise oriented to the east, the Scroll's map was also prepared in a mixed style of Medieval Arabic world maps. Its schematic and extremely abstract general outlook approximates it to the maps of the tenth century Balhi school named after Abu Zayd al- Balkhi (d. 322 AH/934 CE).[4] At the same time, like both the famous circular world map attributed to the twelfth century Moroccan geographer al-Idrisi in yet another anonymous work, *Kitāb Ġarā'ib al-funūn wa mulaḥ al-'uyūn (Book of Curiosities of the Sciences and Marvels for the Eyes)*, and the rectangular world map in the same work, the terrestrial map in the Scroll includes the 'Mountain of the Moon'. Here it is represented with a canopy-like figure in the southeast end almost touching the boundaries of the zone of Darkness (*Ẓulmāt*).[5] Like these two world maps, it also makes reference to the mythical and apocalyptical tribes of Gog and Magog, albeit in the northern end in contrast to the northeastern placement we find in the other two maps. In

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**4** See for example the world map from a Persian translation of al-Iṣṭaḫrī's *Book of Routes and Realms (or Kingdoms)* (*Kitāb al-Masālik wa al-Mamālik*) in the Oxford, Bodleian library MS Ouseley 373, fols. 3b-4a; published in Edson & Savage-Smith, 2004, 76.

**5** The manuscript is preserved in Oxford, Bodleian Library (MS. Arab 90). The two maps referred to above are reproduced in Edson & Savage-Smith, 2004, 78-79, 82. The rectangular map indicates only the wall, which was said to be built by Alexander to keep off Gog and the Magog. In addition to Alexander's wall, in the circular map, the Gog and the Magog are named on the other side of the wall. The representation in the Ottoman Scroll is much more schematic and the Alexandrian barrier is not marked specifically.



1. Terrestrial map, *Tomar-ı Hümāyun*, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3599.

the Scroll, instead of Alexander's barrier to keep off the Gog and the Magog (*Yājūj Mājūj*), an entire section is designated to imprison them.

It is in fact these two zones, reserved for the tribes of Gog and Magog (*Yājūj Mājūj*) in the north and for Darkness (*Ẓulmāt*) in the south that make the Scroll's representation of the world clearly distinct from the representations mentioned above. Curiously, these two clearly delineated areas, the one in fiery red, the other in pitch black, also correspond to the North and South Poles. They are the uninhabitable "frigid" zones in the Ancient Greek geographical conception of the world introduced by Parmenides (5th century BCE) and developed by Aristotle (d. 322 BCE).

Why did Eflatun chop off, so-to speak, the northern and southern ends of the Earth in such a way and hence, distance the terrestrial disk from the medieval Islamic tradition of *mapamundi*? Or is it perhaps more relevant to ask the opposite: why in the 1560s he drew a terrestrial image so strongly reminiscent of the medieval visions of the world?

Of course, when Eflatun was working on the Scroll, a large portion of the earth was already explored and the Ottoman elite and seamen were not ignorant of it.[6] Indeed, in 1513, more than fifty years before the production of the Imperial Scroll, Piri Reis had presented his copy of the world map including Cristopher Colombus' discoveries in America to Süleyman's father, Selim I (r. 1520-1520), in Egypt. Later, in 932 AH/1525-26 CE, Piri Reis presented his book on the Mediterranean coastline, *Kitāb-ı Baḥrīye*, to Sultan Süleyman. This royal copy contained 215 maps in color. The Topkapı Palace manuscript library has two other incomplete 16th century copies of the same work in its collection: R. 1633 and B. 337. Of the two, the latter was produced in 1574, during the reign of Süleyman's grandson Murad III (r. 1574-1595). We do not know whether R. 1633, the former, which includes 223 maps, was produced before or after the Scroll. Even if we assume that it is a later copy, the presence of the royal copy of *Kitāb-ı Baḥrīye* and of the maps H. 1823, R. 1633, H. 1824, possibly B. 338 and B. 339 prepared by Piri Reis and others in the royal collection permits us to think that in addition to the scholarly elite with knowledge of geography, at least map artists, navy commanders, the Ottoman ruler, and the closest members of his court members of his court were aware of the advancement of technology in sea travel and map making in the early 1560s, when Eflatun was preparing the terrestrial map. Yet it is clear that the maps that Eflatun possibly took as models were not among the most modern ones of his age.

Here I should also note that as late as 1474, Mehmed II (r. 1444-1446; 1451-1481) had ordered a copy of al-Istakhri's geographical treatise *Kitāb al-Masālik wa al-Mamālik* (Book of Routes and Realms/ Kingdoms), text and maps included. Karen Pinto studied the collection of maps that resulted from the royal order (Pinto, 2011, 155-179) and named them "the Ottoman Cluster". Each of these Ottoman copies consists of a world map and twenty regional maps like the source manuscript. Pinto argues that the differences in the cluster's maps with other Istakhri copies largely result from the changes introduced with reference to the ideological concerns and self-image of the Ottoman ruling house. She claims that "the world map of the 'Ottoman cluster' was adroitly reproportioned to impress upon the viewer the greatness and expanse of the '*Bilad al-Rum*' and '*al-Ard al-Kabira min al-Rum*'—and the Ottoman Empire as successor to Byzantium—in comparison with all other territories of the world" (Pinto 2011, 171).[7] Interestingly, our disk does not repeat the alterations of Mehmed's maps and, as a consequence, resembles the typical and earlier versions of al-Istakhri maps in comparison.

Offering the most advanced information on geography was not the purpose behind the production of the terrestrial disk. As it appears, Eflatun did not take the Ottomanized world map of the fifteenth century cluster as his main reference, either. What was then the function intended for the Scroll's terrestrial map?

In an article on the possible mnemonic function of medieval Islamic maps, Emilie Savage-Smith warns the reader that "maps must be judged on their own terms, within the aesthetic context in which they were produced and in relation to their purpose which ...was as an aid to memory and a means of imposing order on new and complex material and not as a visual model of physical reality" (Emilie Savage-Smith, 2003, 109). She argues that the basic geometrical design of the regional maps in the Balkhi style, where the contemporaneous advancements in mapmaking were not used intentionally—and not out of ignorance—could serve perfectly as "mnemonic aids" and as "route finders accompanying the itinerary lists in the text itself" (Emilie Savage-Smith, 2003, 116-17). Coincidently, the close association between memory and cartographic representation has a pertinent example in the Ur-map of the Ottoman cluster (TSK A. 2830, fol. 4a, for the reproduction: Pinto, 2011, 181) that includes a reference to the more extensive lands of the Roman Empire ('*al-Ard al-Kabira min al-Rum*'), which

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6    For Ottoman cartographic knowledge in this period, see for example, Pınar Emiralioğlu, 2013.

7    Pinto translates '*Bilād al-Rūm*' as 'Byzantium' and '*al-Arż al-Kabīra min al-Rūm*' as 'the Land of Greater Byzantium'. I prefer 'Roman lands' and 'the Greater Roman lands' to avoid confusion between the names of the lands of the Eastern Roman Empire and its capital often referred to as 'Byzantium'. In the same map of—according to Pinto—Akkoyunlu provenance, the city of Rome is referred to as '*Rūmiyye*'.

had ceased to exist physically but remained in collective recollection on the basis of its political, juridical, and cultural legacy.

Savage-Smith's advice in understanding medieval Islamic maps is likewise very relevant in the case of the 'early modern' terrestrial map of *Tomar*. While as a representation of the world and not of a more limited city or region, it would not serve as a typical diagram of routes made easy to remember, it represents a particular way of ordering a selectively significant world. Both the peculiar positioning of the zone for Gog and Magog and the unconventional placement of the 'Mountain of the Moon', which is pushed neatly in order to give the zone of Darkness a space corresponding exactly to the size of the zone of Gog and Magog, for example, help construct a particular terrestrial image. According to this particular representation, the habitable world is trapped in between these two threatening areas in the northern and southern extremes.

Are we faced with a depiction of an apocalyptic world that threatens the viewer with destruction if he travels too far in the north or the south, or, inversely, if the imminent zones of these extremes begin to expand towards the center? Does that leave the east-west direction as the only axis for travel, exploration, or military expansion?

We see a prototype of this particular world where the northern and southern extremes are hostile to life in an earlier world map prepared during the reign of Sultan Murad II (r. 1421-1444, 1446-1451). This south oriented map is one of five circular representations—and the only one in double folios—in a historical calendar (*Takvīm-i Tārīḫī*) of eighteen folios (fig. 2).[8] Like *Tomar*'s map, it also includes the 'Mountain of the Moon' even though its representation is not as schematic. In fact, this earlier map is much more naturalistic in its representation, where rivers do not flow in straight lines and the 'Mountain of the Moon' is depicted as a triangular heap of irregular forms in the far south west. A brief explanation in a peninsula hanging north from the western end of the mountain states that it is where the river Nile originates and that it is a deserted area to which no man goes. Indeed the base of the mountain is placed on a red line drawn above the first line of the first of seven climes that the world is divided. The distance between this line and the line beginning the first clime is about one and a half times the distance between each clime.

To the south and east of the mountain in this map is an area that is empty of any cities. Yet this section is also where most of the explanatory prose text is

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8    Chester Beatty Library T. 402, 12v-13r. It is possible to see the manuscript in the web page of the Chester Beatty manuscript collection at https://cbl01.intranda.com/viewer/object/T_402

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written. The anonymous cartographer of the representation has designated this large section, almost one third of the size of the entire world, as the uninhabitable hot zone of a fiery climate, which does not allow any vegetation or animal life. Inversely, a small black area beyond the seventh clime in the far north is also delineated from the rest and is named Darkness (*Ẓulmāt*). In other words, both extremes of the world is cast off as uninhabitable similar to the Scroll's map. However, in this earlier map, the inhospitably hot zone that corresponds to *Tomar*'s fiery red Zone of Gog and the Magog (*Yājūj Mājūj*) is found in the south and that of Darkness in the north, that is, in reversed order. Moreover, the perfectly equal sizes of the extremes in the later document contrast with the obvious inequality in size of the two in the fifteenth century map.

**2.** Terrestrial map, *Takvīm-i Tārīḫī*, Chester Beatty Library, T. 402, 12v-13r.

This summary comparison between the two images leaves us with more knowledge as well as more questions. The designation of inhabitable zones at the north and south extremes in *Tomar* must be borrowed from an earlier map, possibly the one prepared over a century earlier where the Greek division of climes and categorization of areas hospitable and inhospitable to life are more clearly represented. Nevertheless, the representation of the two zones in the extremes of the Scroll's map is unscrupulously schematic with the usage of straight lines and equal dimensions for both. The typically northeastern placement of the apocalyptic tribes of Gog and Magog might have influenced the position of the zone associated with them in the north while the bright red color used suggests an association with the inhospitably hot zone of the fifteenth century map as well as possibly invoking the burning fires of hell.

All of these unconventional choices distance *Tomar*'s terrestrial disk from cartographic efforts of imitating physical reality. At the same time, the order that the map imposes on the world prioritizes elements related to Gog and Magog. Such choices must also follow a reasoning that fits with the general vision of the document, more accurately said, the first half of the scroll that was produced for Sultan Süleyman.

I believe, a good explanation for the map's peculiarities is found in a passage of *Şāhnāme-yi Āl-i 'Oṣmān*, the universal history of five volumes that Süleyman's first *şehnāmeci*, 'Arif, composed in Persian and finished in 965 AH/1558 CE. The relevant section is in the last volume of this work on the reign of the contemporaneous sultan, titled *Sulaymānnāme*. We read in the section on his first military campaign against the Safavids that the sultan stopped with his army by the ruined Castle of Qasr-i Shirin on his way to meet the Safavid army in 1533. The text describes how the deject state of the renown Castle instigated Süleyman to contemplate on the transitory nature of worldly fortunes. According to the poet, the past glories of mighty kings brought his thoughts to himself, as the last chain in the heroes and emperors of the mythic past. The sultan said,
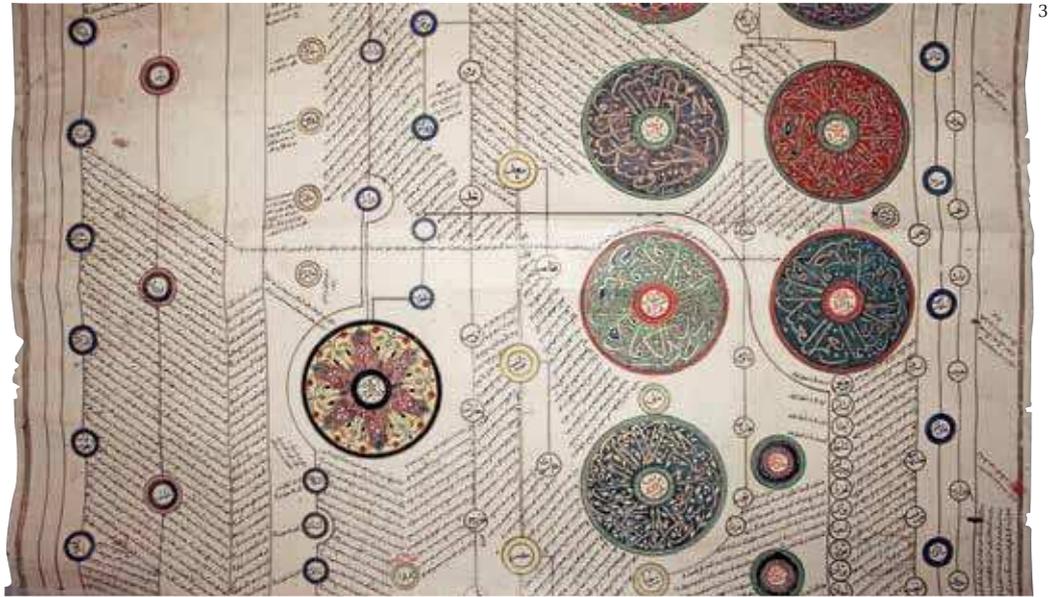
> Endowed with Alexandrian fortune, we opened [regions]
> From the Darkness to the Barrier of Alexander
>
> From the west, we have freed the Earth from enemies,
> Now to the east of the Earth, we hasten
>
> ('Arif, *Sulaymānnāme*, TSK H. 1517, 367b)[9]

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9   *"Goşādīm az baḫt-i Eskandarī/ze Ẓulmāt tā ḥadd-i Eskandarī*
    *Ze maġreb-e zamīn ḫaṣm pardaḫtīm/konūn sūyi maşreḳ-e zamīn tāḫtīm"*

We do not know how much of the Ottoman Imperial Scroll reflects 'Arif's initial conception, but the lines above suggest that its terrestrial disk aligns perfectly with the words he chose for his patron and sultan in expressing his thoughts. At least two of the main episodes of Alexandrian stories in Islamicate culture are clearly referenced in the disk: the first is his looking for the water of life with the saint/prophet Khizir (Al-Khidr) and losing his way in the zone of Darkness; and the second, his confining the destructive apocalyptic tribes of Gog and Magog in their corner of the world and obstructing their access to the rest with a barrier. 'Arif's lines also make it apparent that his Süleyman saw himself as a New Alexander. And as the New Alexander, he had the mission to conquer the world, that is, the habitable regions between Darkness and the Land of the Gog and the Magog, from west to east.

It must have been clear to its immediate audience as it is to us that the terrestrial disk would be of no use in finding one's way in the physical world; but could it function as a mnemonic "route finder" in the mythical world of Alexandrian stories? Not quite. What we have here is not a map similar to the one Robert Louis Stevenson drew for his "Treasure Island". It does not schematize the narrative of the Scroll's text. The fact that there is no mention of Alexander and his legendary stories in the text around the map, where it should be most likely to locate them, confirms this. In their stead, in the rotating text surrounding the map, Eflatun crafted a synthetic prose account of the different regions of the world and the rumors associated with them. Using as his main guide, Ibn Abbas (d. 68/687) to whom the Quranic exegesis *Tanwīr al-Miḳbās* has often been attributed, the second şehnāmeci gives information on the major cities of the world, the religions of their inhabitants, their principal buildings, the geographical features of their surroundings, and their natural resources and fauna. Interestingly, it is not his contemporaneous world that Eflatun writes about, but the medieval Islamic world. The Muslim al-Andalus still exists for example; and there is no mention of the Ottomans.

The frequent associations made between places and buildings on the one hand and prophets on the other; the regular references to strange and marvelous customs, buildings, and phenomena; and the more than occasional mentioning of talismans and magic paint a peculiar mental picture of this medieval world in words. Reading the text, one feels taken by the hand by a tourist guide specialized in fantastic stories; at the end of his presentation almost no place remains dry of fantastical associations. On the contrary, Eflatun's text evokes a sense of marvel at facing a special world infused with magical and religious meaning.

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were prophets (*nebī*) there was much debate against this view. In general, they were accepted as God's righteous servants ('*abd-i ṣāliḥ*). These textual references to the legacy of Alexander in the Scroll's text confirm the association with the terrestrial disk. At the same time, they do not make it a wholesale map of the story or stories related to him.

This brief report of Eflatun's text, also gives a taste of the highly syncretic conceptual language of the Scroll, which, rather than avoiding ambiguity, embraces it. (This language finds its counterpart in the visual idiom of the terrestrial map where both medieval and more recent (the fifteenth century map of Murad's reign?) maps were utilized and manipulated freely.) I contend that part of this style is Eflatun's personal choice and manner of exposition. Partially, it echoes the methodology of hadith reports, or *isnād*, that makes it its task to deliver a plurality of worthy accounts. Still another and more significant reason behind his style is the nature of the intellectual language of those well-versed in theo-philosophy and mystic cosmology. This allegorical language is called "*zabān-i ḥāl*". In order to comprehend how it was used, we should begin by asking what "*zabān-i ḥāl*" meant for the premodern thinkers and writers we are studying.

## Conclusion: Interpreting the Scroll through the Allegorical Language of "*Zabān-i Ḥāl*"

We are fortunate that the Sufi poet Farid ad-Din Attar (d. between 617-632 AH/1220-1234 CE) provides us with a definition for the term in his *Muṣībatnāma* (Book of Adversity). In this Sufi tale, Attar writes of the novice's mystic journey using this allegorical language. The story's wayfarer represents the novice's thoughts as he takes a contemplative journey through different realms in search of the right path and meets beings of common, cosmological, as well as mythological nature. He is accompanied by a guide who explains the answers given to the traveler at each stage of his journey of self-discovery. Finally, he is led to Prophet Muhammad whose answers to his questions enable him to find the right path.

Attar expounds the meaning of his book in the section Ṣarḥ-i Kitāb. Here, he addresses his reader:

> Listen…while I lay down the foundation of this book for you!…if the traveller speaks with the angel, if he seeks an answer from Earth and Heaven, if he visits the Throne and the Footstool, or poses questions to both, has the prophets instruct him and causes every atom to recount experiences to him, all this occurs through "the language of states" (*zabān-i ḥāl*), it isn't "spoken speech" ḳāl (*zabān-i ḥāl*). In spoken speech it would be a lie, but in the language of states it's true (Ritter, 2003, 21).

Going back to Alexander, I should note that he is given an important place elsewhere in the Imperial Scroll. His name appears in a medallion in the genealogical section following the terrestrial disk. This is significant because with very few exceptions, only the prophets are represented with their names in medallions. The exceptions are the three mythological kings, Kayumars, Dhulqarnayn al-Akbar, and Dulqarnayn Iskender (Alexander), who are considered among the principal figures in the Divinely revealed human history that Eflatun formulates. Of the three, it is Alexander whose medallion is placed conspicuously close to the central prophetic line of the genealogical scheme (fig. 3).

Eflatun narrates the previously mentioned legendary stories in the texts corresponding to the medallions of both Dhulqarnayns. We read, for instance, that some writers linked the story of the Zone of Darkness and the barrier to keep off the tribes of Gog and Magog to one, and some to the other of the Dhulqarnayns. Once again Eflatun gives the name of Ibn Abbas as one of these writers. In this way, while the identity of the Dhulqarnayn mentioned in the Qur'an was debated, the essential elements of his lore, such as the two stories associated with our disk, were shared. According to Eflatun's report, God assigned both Dhulqarnayns guiding and civilizing missions. Their political authority was divinely blessed and provided the means for their civilizing missions. Even though some writers thought that they

**3. The medallion of Alexander next to the prophetic line, *Tomar-ı Hümāyun*, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3599.**

When Attar mentions something being true or a lie in the last sentence cited above, he is not talking about the authorial privileges he had at his disposal as the composer of *Muṣībatnāma*. Stories are constructions and their writers have the license to fabricate them. It is not the fictional versus nonfictional quality of the narrative and its relation to reality to which Attar wants to draw the attention of his novice-reader. *Zabān-i ḥāl*, rather, refers to an idiom, which can be used in or outside of fiction and where the actions and incidents represented and described do not necessarily correspond to physical reality. Neither are they obliged to it. In a sense, *zabān-i ḥāl* is an alternative to ordinary spoken speech even if it shares with it the same outer grammatical structure. Both languages have claim to truth yet the correspondence to truth established by their interpretation is different. While spoken speech has a more direct association with physical reality, the language of states operates in the allegorical realm and requires its readers to have *a priori* knowledge of its special vocabulary, where words often signify meanings beyond those of the same sounding words in ordinary speech. In recognition of the mental activity *zabān-i ḥāl* requires from its reader/user, Attar proposes to call this allegorical language 'speech of reflection/meditation' (*zabān-i fekrat*). A comparison between the truths the two idioms represent also hints at a hierarchy between them: *zabān-i ḥāl* is often used to convey deeper and more essential truths than those of the superficial and temporal—hence fickle—physical world expressed by *zabān-i ḥāl*.[10] ḳāl

Let us now go back to the introduction of the Scroll. After the reference to the hadith of the Pen, Eflatun continues that he has written and described the state of the skies and the earth, and delivered, in the form of a scroll, the genealogies, the evident personal qualities, and the life stories of all the prophets who are mentioned in the Qur'an. He has also "said in *zabān-i ḥāl* and recorded in the language of the pen" the duration of their reigns and the length of their lives, how their genealogies are interconnected and arrive at Adam as well as the stories of the lives and reigns of those who had attained the throne of succession and of kingship.

In other words, the Scroll's formulation of universal history, its mixture of religious and mythical Iranian history, as well as its representations of the astrological and terrestrial disks with Alexandrian references were all said and done in an allegorical language of inner truths that do not necessarily correspond to external realities of the physical world. While preparing the document then,

Eflatun was operating in an intellectual environment that was conversant with the allegorical vocabulary of the thirteenth century mystic poet Attar. More importantly, this was an environment that he shared at least with the members of the Ottoman court and scholarly elite, as well as writers and artisans producing textual and visual works using mystical references. His former position as the head of the Safavid prince Alqas Mirza's library strongly suggests that we should at least double the size of this environment to include the sixteenth century Safavid courtly, intellectual, literary, and artistic world.

The close collaboration of litterateurs, artists, and scholars as cultural producers and the overlapping of mystical, philosophical, historical, and pictorial fields of textual and visual representation necessitate our becoming familiar with this allegorical language. Even if we cannot attain fluency, at least we should be able to comprehend it and make translations. Otherwise, what are we to make of it when we read the sixteenth century poet Firaki saying, "every bubble of the wine glass says with the language of states (*zabān-i ḥāl*)/"Time has given many Solomonic thrones away to the wind")?[11]

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10  For a good introductory treatment of Attar's Sufi *masnavi*s including *Muṣībatnāma*, see De Brujin, 1997, 99-108.

11  'Aşık Çelebi, ed. Filiz Kılıç, 2010, 1157; Turan, 1997, 52. Turan cites these lines in his discussion of the events leading to Prince Bayezid's disobedience to his father, Sultan Süleyman. Among the five copies used by Kılıç in her edition of Aşık Çelebi's *Meşâ'irü'ş-Şu'arā*, four has the word "*zabān*" and only one (Süleymaniye library, Pertev Paşa No. 440) includes its synonym in Arabic, "*lisān*" for the term "*zabān-i ḥāl*". Below is the transliterated text of Firaki's ghazel from Kılıç's edition.
"*Ārzū kılmaz kızılbaş āl-i 'Oṣmān taḥtını
Ol hirāsānlıkla terk itmez Ḥorāsān taḥtını
Beklerin begler içinde pādşāhum ben seni
Gönlümüñ ta'mīr iderseñ işbu vīrān taḥtını
Her habāb-ı cām-ı mey söyler lisan-ı ḥāl ile
Yile virdi rūzgār nice Süleymān taḥtını*"

## Özet

### Coğrafya, Mitoloji ve Siyasetin Buluştuğu Yer: Tomar-ı Hümāyun'un Dünya Haritasının Bir Yorumu

*Tomar-ı Hümāyun* (TSK, A. 3599) birçok araştırmacı için Topkapı Sarayı'ndaki en etkileyici belgelerden biridir. Belgenin tasarımına ve büyük olasılıkla yazımına Sultan Süleyman'ın (sal. 1520-1566) 'Arif mahlasıyla tanınan ilk şehnamecisi Fethullah Çelebi başlamıştır. Dev bir rulo seklindeki bu şecereli dünya tarihine 'Arif'in ölümünün ardından, 1560'lı yıllarda, Eflatun mahlaslı şehnameci Abdüllatif Şirvani devam etmiş; hatta çok büyük bir olasılıkla belgenin aşağı yukarı ilk yarısının yazımını ve çizimini tek başına üstlenmiştir.

*Tomar*'ın büyüleyici etkisini yaratan asıl özellik, 80 cm eni ve 30 metreye yakın boyuyla olağandışı büyüklüğünden öte belgenin ilk yarısının hem metin hem de şematik temsillerinde gözlemleyebileceğimiz ve anlam yüklü olduğu belirgin olan geometrik organizasyonudur. Eseri anlamlandırmak, onun ilk bakışta kendini ele vermeyen işte bu şifreli yapısını çözümlemekten geçiyor.

Bu incelemede, sadece *Tomar*'ın daire şeklindeki dünya haritasına odaklanıyorum. Yer haritasının olası anlamlarını *Tomar*'ın genel çerçevesi içinde ve belgenin bir yandan simgesel olarak temsil ettiği Yaratılış'ın İslami mitolojiye uygun öyküsü ve bir yandan da hem Osmanlı Hanedanı hem de onuncu sultan Süleyman'a atfettiği tarihsel konum ve misyonu göz önüne alarak değerlendiriyorum. Bu bağlamda Büyük İskender'in İslam mitolojisinde bilinen öyküleri işlediğim tezin önemli yapısal taşlarından olacak. Ayrıca, 16. yüzyılın ortalarında, çok daha rasyonel ve gerçekçi dünya temsillerinin ve yerel haritaların bilindiği Osmanlı Sarayı'nda böylesine son derece şematik bir dünya temsilinin yapılmış ve kullanılmış olmasını nasıl yorumlayabileceğimizi yanıtlamaya çalışıyorum. Sonuçta savunduğum, bu yer temsilini anlamak ve yorumlamak için kendi algı ayarlarımızı eserin yazıldığı ve kullanıldığı çevrenin zihinsel ayarlarına uydurmanın ve belgenin yazın ve görsel dilini, dönemde geçerliliği olan ve "*zabān-i ḥāl*" terimi ile bilinen simgesel dilin anlam dünyasının aracılığına başvurmanın kaçınılmaz gerekliliğidir.

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