

Was Qutb al-Din al-Razi al-Tahtani a Sunni or a Shi'i?: An Examination of Bio-bibliographical Sources*

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Abstract: Qutb al-Dīn al-Rāzī al-Taḥṭānī (d. 766/1365) was one of a triumvirate of scholars allegedly associated with Shi'ism – the other two being al-'Allāma al-Ḥillī (d. 726/1325) and Badr al-Dīn al-Tustarī (d. 732/1332) – who played an important role in shaping and transmitting Avicennan thought. Through their adjudicative commentaries on Ibn Sīnā's (d. 428/1037) *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbihāt*, al-Taḥṭānī, al-Ḥillī, and al-Tustarī created a narrative that pitted Sunni scholars critical of Ibn Sīnā and Avicennism – exemplified by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210) – in opposition to their Twelver Shi'i defenders and interpreters – exemplified by Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274). This understanding of post-Avicennan Arabic and Islamic philosophy is informed by the assumption that these three scholars were all, in fact, Shi'is. Many bio-bibliographical sources, however, claim that al-Taḥṭānī was not. This article examines the sources for his life, paying particular attention to the question of his sectarian affiliation. It reveals that Sunni and Shi'i scholars relied on different sources for and relayed different information about al-Taḥṭānī's life. Ultimately, it claims that the evidence suggests that he was a Sunni.

Keywords: Qutb al-Dīn al-Rāzī al-Taḥṭānī, Philosophy, Postclassical Era, Avicennism, Biographical Dictionaries

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I. Introduction

Q uṭb al-Dīn al-Rāzī al-Taḥṭānī (d. 766/1365) was best known for his commentary on al-Kātibī's (d. 675/1277) *al-Risāla al-Shamsiyya*¹ and his adjudicative supercommentary (*muḥākama*) on Ibn Sīnā's (d. 428/1037) *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbihāt*.² In fact, due to this latter work, he came to play a prominent role in transmitting Avicennan thought and in creating a narrative of Arabic philosophy and theology in the post-Avicennan era. It is perhaps more accurate to say, however, that al-Taḥṭānī was an important transmitter of Avicennan thought as interpreted by Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274). He was not alone in this endeavor, but was one of a triumvirate of scholars – the other two being al-ʿAllāma al-Ḥilli (d. 726/1325) and Badr al-Dīn al-Tustarī (d. 732/1332) – all of whom wrote adjudicative commentaries on Ibn Sīnā's *al-Ishārāt*, purporting to judge fairly between its two most prominent and influential commentators – the Sunnī Ashʿarī Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210) and the Twelver Shīʿī Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī.³

This is not all that they have in common. They all purportedly were, along with al-Ṭūsī, adherents of Twelver Shīʿism. Furthermore, al-Ḥilli was a student of al-Ṭūsī, al-Taḥṭānī was a student of al-Ḥilli,⁴ and al-Ḥilli and al-Tustarī were colleagues.⁵ Together, they created a narrative that pitted Sunnī theologians, most especially Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, as foolish critics of Ibn Sīnā, in opposition to his Twelver Shīʿī defenders and interpreters, most especially al-Ṭūsī. As Wisnovsky noted recently, this narrative was adopted by Safavī-era Twelver scholars and continues to dominate Iranian historiography of Islamic philosophy.⁶

- 1 On this, see Tony Street, "Kātibī (d. 1277), al-Taḥṭānī (d. 1365), and the Shamsiyya," in *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Philosophy*, ed. Khaled El-Rouayheb and Sabine Schmidtke (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 348-74.
- 2 For al-Taḥṭānī's bibliography, see Ahmed H. al-Rahim, *The Creation of Philosophical Tradition: Biography and the Reception of Avicenna's Philosophy from the Eleventh to the Fourteenth Century A.D.* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2018), 138-43.
- 3 On the *al-Ishārāt's* commentary tradition, see Robert Wisnovsky, "Avicennism and Exegetical Practice in the Early Commentaries on the *al-Ishārāt*," *Oriens* 41, no. 3-4 (2013): 349-78.
- 4 Sabine Schmidtke, "Ḥilli, Ḥasan b. Yusof b. Moṭahhar," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 2012, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/helli-hasan-b-yusof-b-motahhar>; Gerhard Endress, "Reading Avicenna in the Madrasa: Intellectual Genealogies and Chains of Transmission of Philosophy and the Sciences in the Islamic East," in *Arabic Theology, Arabic Philosophy. From the Many to the One: Essays in Celebration of Richard M. Frank*, ed. James E. Montgomery (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 420; Robert Wisnovsky, "Towards a Genealogy of Avicennism," *Oriens* 42, no. 3-4 (2014): 358; Street, "Kātibī (d. 1277)," 268.
- 5 Wisnovsky, "Genealogy," 358.
- 6 Robert Wisnovsky, "On the Emergence of Maragha Avicennism," *Oriens* 46, no. 3-4 (2018): 264, 304. This narrative also bears a resemblance to the traditional telling of the history of Arabic/Islamic philosophy and theology, first developed in nineteenth-century Europe and widely adopted by

This reading of these three scholars' roles in promoting a particular telling of post-Avicennan Arabic/Islamic philosophy and theology rests on the understanding that each one was, in fact, a Twelver Shi'i. Wisnovsky acknowledges that al-Tustari was described as both a Shāfi'i and a Shi'i, having been included in the *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyya* composed by his student 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Asnawī (or al-Isnawī, d. 772/1370),⁷ but maintains that he was Shi'i. Al-Asnawī similarly included al-Taḥṭānī in his *Ṭabaqāt*. Though al-Asnawī explicitly refers to al-Tustari as a Shi'i, calling him a *rāfiḍī*, he makes no explicit statement as to al-Taḥṭānī's sectarian affiliation.⁸ Ahmed al-Rahim has recently argued that al-Taḥṭānī was actually a Sunni.⁹ If this is correct, then we must reassess how we understand his role alongside al-Ḥilli and al-Tustari in transmitting and transforming Avicennism in the post-classical era of Arabic and Islamic scholarship (ca. 1200-1900).

This article examines al-Taḥṭānī's sectarian affiliation based on bio-bibliographical sources. There are abundant sources for al-Taḥṭānī's life. Among modern biographical notices, Kaḥḥāla's entry on him in *Mu'jam al-mu'allifin* and the notice on al-Taḥṭānī in the *Mawsū'at ṭabaqāt al-fuqahā'* both list twenty-one sources, whereas Zirikli's entry on him in his *A'lām* has eleven.¹⁰ For this study, I examined as many of the sources mentioned therein as were accessible. In sum, these amounted to twenty-six sources from the eighth/fourteenth to thirteenth/nineteenth centuries.¹¹

There are certain patterns in the bio-bibliographical sources on al-Taḥṭānī. The main one is that Sunni and Shi'i scholars often relied on different sources

European and North American scholars until roughly the turn of the twenty-first century. Wisnovsky has written about these three scholars and their commentaries on Ibn Sina's *al-Ishārāt* in Wisnovsky, "Genealogy," 349 ff.

- 7 al-Asnawī asserts that not only was al-Tustari a Shi'i (*kāna...rāfiḍān*), but also that he often skipped prayers (*kāna...kathīr al-tark li-l-ṣalāt*). Al-Rahim, maintaining that al-Tustari was a Shāfi'i, dismisses such accusations as a literary topos meant to diminish the authority of Shāfi'is who engaged in philosophy. 'Abd al-Rahim ibn al-Ḥasan al-Asnawī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyya*, ed. Kamāl Yūsuf al-Ḥūt (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1987), 1:204, 154.13; Wisnovsky, "Genealogy," 357, n29; Al-Rahim, *Philosophical Tradition*, 33.
- 8 Given that al-Asnawī considered al-Tustari a Shi'i and included him in his *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyya*, al-Taḥṭānī's mere inclusion in that work is in itself not enough to conclude that he was a Sunni.
- 9 Al-Rahim, *Philosophical Tradition*, 130-41.
- 10 'Umar Riḍā Kaḥḥāla, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifin tarājim muṣannifi l-kutub al-'arabiyya* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risāla, 1993), 3:#15575, 642; al-Lajna al-'ilmiyya fi mu'assasat al-Imām al-Ṣādiq, *Mawsū'at ṭabaqāt al-fuqahā'*, ed. Ja'far al-Subḥāni (Qum: Maktab al-Tawḥīd, 1419 AH), 8:#2831, 226-27; Khayr al-Dīn al-Zirikli, *al-A'lām: qāmūs tarājim li-ashhar al-rijāl wa-l-nisā' min al-'arab wa-l-musta'ribin wa-l-mustashriqin* (Beirut: Dār al-'Ilm li-l-Malāyin, 2002), 7:38.
- 11 This study's findings are tentative and limited by the sources examined. Future research can assess their validity by exploring beyond *ṭabaqāt* and similar works, as well as Qutb al-Dīn's own works beyond his adjudicative commentary on Ibn Sina's *al-Ishārāt*, entitled *al-Muḥākama bayna al-Imām wa-l-Naṣīr*.

and relayed different information about him. Shi'ī scholars were overwhelmingly more concerned with addressing his sectarian affiliation, whereas Sunnī scholars either ignored the question or merely added the *nisba* al-Shāfi'ī. Overall, despite the prominence ascribed to al-Taḥṭānī today, the earliest sources, including those written by his contemporaries and near-contemporaries, are short on detail.

Section II presents a chronological overview of the relevant bio-bibliographical sources, in which I trace the unique and overlapping contributions that each scholar adds to our knowledge of al-Taḥṭānī. This section demonstrates how an abundance of sources actually contains little original information due to the ubiquitous practice among later scholars of copying, paraphrasing, and agglomerating earlier and popular sources. Section III then addresses the patterns in these sources. It reveals that Shi'ī sources – appearing in the seventeenth century and relying on testimonies from earlier Shi'ī scholars – and Sunnī sources – appearing largely before the seventeenth century – are often in debate. They agree on some fundamentals about al-Taḥṭānī's life and career, but disagree on who his teachers and students were and, especially, on his sectarian affiliation. The concluding section, Section IV, presents what we can say with confidence about al-Taḥṭānī, returns to the question of whether he was a Sunnī or a Shi'ī, and ultimately claims that the evidence suggests that he was a Sunnī.

II. The Bio-bibliographical Sources

A. Eighth/Fourteenth-Century Sources

Of the bio-bibliographical sources that I have examined, the first to contain notices concerning Quṭb al-Dīn were written by his contemporaries or near-contemporaries, among them al-Subkī, al-Asnawī, Ibn Rāfi', and Ibn Kathīr. All of them appear to have made entirely original contributions to our knowledge of him in that they did not borrow from each other. Al-Subkī and Ibn Kathīr both refer to their personal interactions with him. I present these notices, as well as all the others that follow, in order according to their author's death date.

The earliest, and at five lines one of the shortest, notice occurs in Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī's (d. 771/1370) *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyya al-kubrā*. Al-Subkī begins by lauding al-Taḥṭānī's mastery of the rationalist disciplines (*al-ma'qūlāt*) and remarking on

his fame.¹² He then notes that Qutb al-Din arrived in Damascus in 763/1361-62, adding that he personally studied with him and found him to have a keen mind. Al-Subki then lists al-Tahtani's publications and date of death (6 Dhu'l-Qa'dah 766/26 July 1365) before moving on to the next entry.¹³

Another contemporary of al-Tahtani, Jamāl al-Dīn al-Asnawī (d. 772/1370), made a similarly concise (about five lines) entry in his *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyya*. Al-Asnawī's entry stands out, however, for erroneously recording this scholar's *ism* as Maḥmūd,¹⁴ for being the sole source to give him the *nasab* Ibn Niẓām al-Dīn; and, more importantly, for telling the story behind his sobriquet al-Tahtani. This name became attached to him while he was studying at a madrasa in Damascus, where another Qutb al-Dīn lived on an upper floor.¹⁵ This story reappears in a number of later sources.¹⁶

The next entry appears in Muḥammad ibn Rāfi' al-Sallāmi's (d. 774/1372) *al-Wafayāt*. Originally from Egypt, Ibn Rāfi' accompanied his father to Damascus in 714/1314-15, though he did not settle there permanently until 739/1338-39.¹⁷ Though it is possible that Ibn Rāfi' could have known al-Tahtani personally, he says nothing of this in his notice. In fact, this truly sparse notice (about seven lines) provides no more than al-Tahtani's name, to which he adds the *kunya* Abū 'Abd Allāh,¹⁸

12 al-Subki was less boastful of al-Tahtani's knowledge of the traditional sciences. While he deemed al-Tahtani an *imām* in the *ma'qūlāt*, he was merely "knowledgeable" of Qur'anic exegesis, stylistics, and rhetoric (*'arīfan bi-l-tafsīr wa-l-ma'āni wa-l-bayān*), and even less so of grammar (*mushārikān fi l-naḥw*). Taj al-Dīn 'Abd al-Wahhāb ibn 'Alī al-Subki, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyya al-kubrā*, ed. 'Abd al-Fattāḥ Muḥammad Ḥilw and Maḥmūd Muḥammad Ṭanaḥi (Cairo: Dār Iḥyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyya, 1964), 9:#1334, 275; trans. modified from Al-Rahim, *Philosophical Tradition*, 34, 135.

13 al-Subki, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:#1334, 274-75. The text provides al-Tahtani's death date as 6 Dhu'l-Qa'dah/26 July 1365, which the editor emends, without explaining why, to 16 Dhu'l-Qa'dah/5 August 1365.

14 Al-Rahim suggests that this is due to the author's confusion with another famous Qutb al-Dīn, i.e., al-Shirāzi; Al-Rahim, *Philosophical Tradition*, 135 n480.

15 al-Asnawī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyya*, 1:155, #296.

16 Abū Bakr ibn Aḥmad ibn Qāḍi Shuhba, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyya*, ed. 'Abd al-'Alim Khān (Haydarābād al-Dakan: Maṭba' Majlis Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif al-'Uthmāniyya, 1979), 3:#674, 283; Aḥmad ibn 'Alī Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalāni, *al-Durar al-kāmina fī a'yān al-mī'a al-thāmina* (Beirut: Dār al-Jil, 1993), 4:#923, 339; 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Suyūṭi, *Bughyat al-wu'āt fī ṭabaqāt al-lughawiyyin wa-l-nuḥāt*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1979), 2:#1981; Aḥmad ibn Muṣṭafā Ṭaşköprizade, *Miftāḥ al-sa'āda wa-miṣbāḥ al-siyāda fī mawḍū'āt al-'ulūm* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1990), 1:275; Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Dāwūdi, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssirin*, ed. 'Alī Muḥammad 'Umar (Cairo: Maktabat Wahba, 1972), 2:#582, 253; 'Abd al-Ḥayy ibn Aḥmad Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt al-dhahab fī akhbār man dhahab* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Kathir, 1992), 8:355-56.

17 Zirikli, *al-A'lām*, 6:124.

18 Several notices give al-Tahtani the *kunya* Abū 'Abd Allāh. Rather than being multiple, independent attestations, however, this seems to be the result of the ubiquitous copying of sources and thus is likely unreliable. Abū 'Abd Allāh appears first in Ibn Rāfi', who is then copied by Abū Zur'a and Ibn Qāḍi Shuhba. The latter is then copied by al-Dāwūdi, Ibn Ṭulūn, and Ibn al-'Imād. While it appears, therefore,

place of death (the outskirts of Damascus) and burial (at the foot of Mt. Qāsyūn), list of works, a note that he moved to Damascus and worked there as a scholar, and a remark that he was pleasant and well-spoken (*kāna ḥasan al-multaqā layyin al-kalima*).¹⁹

Like al-Subkī, Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373) attests to personally meeting al-Taḥṭānī. I could find no reference to Quṭb al-Dīn in Ibn Kathīr's *Ṭabaqāt al-fuqahā' al-shāfi'iyyin* or his *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*. It may be possible, nevertheless, to gain a sense of what Ibn Kathīr allegedly said based on what later scholars attributed to him. Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba and Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī both quote him to the effect that al-Taḥṭānī was wealthy²⁰ and "singular among the *mutakallimīn* in logic and the Greek sciences."²¹ Ibn Ḥajar's quote adds that al-Taḥṭānī was well-spoken but had poor eyesight (*kāna laṭīf al-'ibāra ḍa'īf al-'aynayn*). He then relates an anecdote in which Ibn Kathīr tells of an alleged encounter between al-Subkī's father and al-Taḥṭānī.²² Al-Taḥṭānī is said to have asked Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 756/1355) about the *ḥadīth*, "Every newborn is born with an innate disposition."²³ Al-Taḥṭānī gave a refined and detailed criticism to Taqī al-Dīn's response (*fa-naqaḍa huwa dhālika al-jawāb wa-bālagha fī al-taḥqīq wa-l-tadqīq*), after which the latter let loose in his counter-response (*fa-ajābahū al-Subkī wa-aṭlaqa lisānahū fihī*), proclaiming that al-

that six sources attest to the name Abū 'Abd Allāh, in reality only one source does. Taqī al-Dīn Abū al-Ma'ālī Muḥammad al-Sallāmī Ibn Rāfi', *al-Wafayāt*, ed. Šāliḥ Mahdī 'Abbās and Bashshār 'Awwād Ma'rūf (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risāla, 1984), 2:299; Aḥmad ibn 'Abd al-Raḥīm Ibn al-'Irāqī Abū Zur'a, *al-Dhayl 'alā al-'ibar fī khabar man 'abar*, ed. Šāliḥ Mahdī 'Abbās (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risāla, 1989), 184; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ṭabaqāt*, 3:183; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 2:253; Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn 'Alī Ibn Ṭūlūn, *al-Qalā'id al-jawhariyya fī tarīkh al-Šālihiyya*, ed. Muḥammad Aḥmad Duhmān, (Damascus: Majma' al-Lughā al-'Arabiyya, 1980), 1:341; Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt al-dhahab*, 1992, 8:355. It is worth noting that a different edition of Ibn al-'Imād's entry does not include Abū 'Abd Allāh; 'Abd al-Ḥayy ibn Aḥmad Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt al-dhahab fī akhbār man dhahab* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Qudsi, 1931), 5:207.

19 Ibn Rāfi', *al-Wafayāt*, 2:#831, 299-300.

20 *Wa-lahu māl wa-tharwa*; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ṭabaqāt*, 3:#674, 283; Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *al-Durar al-kāmīna*, 4:#923, 329.

21 *Kāna awḥad al-mutakallimīn bi-l-mantiq wa-'ulūm al-awā'il*. There is a slight variation between Ibn Ḥajar and Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, whose text reads *aḥad* instead of *awḥad*, has *al-'ālimīn* after *al-mutakallimīn*, and has 'ilm instead of 'ulūm. Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ṭabaqāt*, 3:#674, 283; Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *al-Durar al-kāmīna*, 4:#923, 329.

22 I call the encounter "alleged" because Taj al-Dīn al-Subkī does not mention it in his entry on al-Taḥṭānī, despite mentioning that they studied together.

23 *Kullu mawlūdīn yūladu 'alā al-fiṭrati*. This is how the *ḥadīth* appears in Ibn Ḥajar. In one of its versions, the full *ḥadīth* continues: "Its [i.e., the newborn's] parents make him Jewish, or Christian, or Zoroastrian. This is just like how an animal produces [a perfect newborn] animal. Do you find it defective?" (*fa-abawāhu yuhawwidānihi aw yunašširānihi aw yumajjisānihi ka-mathali al-bahimati tuntiju l-bahimata hal tarā fihā jad'ā*); Muḥammad ibn Ismā'il Bukhārī, *The Translation of the Meanings of Saḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī: Arabic-English*, trans. Muhammad Muhsin Khan (Riyadh: Darussalam, 1997), 2:#1385, 267. Subkī's response appears in Muḥammad al-Sayyid Abū 'Ammih, *Kull mawlūd yūlad 'alā al-fiṭra* (Dār al-Šaḥāba li-l-turāth, 1990). Thank you to the reviewer for alerting me to this.

Taḥṭānī was lacking in knowledge of the principles of Islamic law and possessed only a superficial knowledge of logic (*nasabahū ilā 'adam fahm maqāṣid al-shar'ī wa-l-wuqūf ma'a zawāhir qawā'id al-mantiq*).²⁴ Al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505), perhaps quoting Ibn Ḥajar, presents a somewhat truncated version of Ibn Kathīr's notice.²⁵ al-Dāwūdī (d. 945/1538-39) offers the same truncated version.²⁶ Lastly, according to Abū Zur'a, Ibn Kathīr noted al-Taḥṭānī's death date to be 7 Dhū l-Qa'da 766/27 July 1365.²⁷ These few contemporary and near-contemporary sources evidently had very little to say about Qutb al-Dīn.

B. Ninth/Fifteenth-Century Sources

In general, the farther removed we are from al-Taḥṭānī's lifetime, the longer the entries become because they borrow and quote from prior sources. This is not yet the case, however, for the Shāfi'i jurist Abū Zur'a (Ibn al-'Irāqī, d. 826/1423), whose entry amounts to a couple brief paragraphs. Born in Cairo in 762/1361, Abū Zur'a's life straddled the second half of the eighth/fourteenth and the first half of the ninth/fifteenth centuries. He studied in both Cairo and Damascus before beginning his career as a teacher and jurist in Cairo.²⁸ While it would have been impossible for him to have met al-Taḥṭānī, he could have heard about him directly from those who knew him. Nevertheless, he has little to say about him in his *al-Dhayl 'alā al-'ibar fī khabar man 'abar*. He was, however, the first one to refer explicitly to al-Taḥṭānī's sectarian affiliation, including the *nisba* al-Shāfi'i. In contrast to al-Subkī, Abū Zur'a claims that Qutb al-Dīn was known to excel in jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), Arabic, and logic. He quotes Ibn Rāfi' (without reference) to the effect that al-Taḥṭānī was pleasant and well-spoken. He also quotes Ibn Rāfi', together with Ibn Kathīr (this time with reference), about al-Taḥṭānī's death date: either 6 Dhū'l-Qa'dah/26 July or 7 Dhū'l-Qa'dah/27 July, respectively. Abū Zur'a says that Ibn Kathīr is correct, but gives no reason for this assertion.²⁹

24 Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalāni, *al-Durar al-kāmina*, 4:339.7-11.

25 al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-wu'āt*, 2:#1981, 281. Unlike Ibn Ḥajar, al-Suyūṭī does not mention that al-Taḥṭānī was singular among the *mutakallimīn* of his age in logic and the Greek sciences. His account also lacks reference to al-Taḥṭānī's poor eyesight and wealth. The rest, however, matches up with Ibn Ḥajar's.

26 al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 2:#582, 253-54.

27 Abū Zur'a, *al-Dhayl*, 184-85.

28 K.S. Salibi, "Abū Zur'a," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman et al. (Brill), accessed June 5, 2019, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_8279. Hereinafter abbreviated as *EI2*.

29 Abū Zur'a, *al-Dhayl*, 184-85.

The next source, al-Maqrizī (d. 845/1442), was born in the year of al-Taḥṭānī's death and is the first of several Cairene contemporaries to mention him. Al-Maqrizī's terse notice – a mere three lines in his *al-Sulūk li-Ma'rifat Duwal al-Mulūk* – mentions little more than al-Taḥṭānī's age (died sometime in his 60s), that he excelled in logic and grammar, and two of his works: his commentary on al-Kātibī's *al-Shamsiyya* and his glosses on al-Zamakhsharī's (d. 538/1144) *al-Kashshāf*.³⁰

Following al-Maqrizī is the first source born after al-Taḥṭānī's death, Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba (d. 851/1448), a teacher and a judge in Damascus. He included entries on Quṭb al-Dīn in both his *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyya* and his *Tārīkh*. His entries – each almost three times as long as any preceding one – are a compilation of those by al-Subkī, al-Asnawī, Ibn Rāfi', and Ibn Kathīr. Like Abū Zur'a, he explicitly referred to al-Taḥṭānī's sectarian affiliation, adding the *nisba* al-Shāfi'i in the notice of his death. The notices in the *Ṭaqabāt* and the *Tārīkh* are nearly identical. After acknowledging that some say his name was Maḥmūd (without mentioning al-Asnawī by name), Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba praises al-Taḥṭānī (in both notices) as being “among the leaders in the rationalist disciplines” (*aḥadun min a'immat al-ma'qūl*), a line that Ibn Ḥajar (d. 852/1449), al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505), al-Dāwūdī (d. 911/1505), Ibn al-'Imād (d. 1089/1679), and al-Iṣbahānī (d. 1130/1718) all repeat verbatim. Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba was the first to remark that al-Taḥṭānī had studied under the Shāfi'i jurist and Ash'arī theologian 'Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī (d. 756/1355) before moving to Damascus.³¹

A contemporary of Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba and al-Maqrizī, Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī (d. 852/1449), included an entry on al-Taḥṭānī in his biographical dictionary of noteworthy individuals who died in the eighth/fourteenth century, *al-Durar al-*

30 Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn 'Alī al-Maqrizī, *al-Sulūk li-ma'rifat duwal al-mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Qādir 'Aṭā (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1997), 4:280.

31 Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ṭabaqāt*, 3:#674, 183-84; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Tārīkh Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba*, ed. 'Adnān Darwish (Damascus: al-Ma'had al-Faransī li-l-Dīrāsāt al-'Arabiyya, 1994), 3:267. Ibn Ḥajar quotes Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba on al-Taḥṭānī's being a student of al-Ījī. Al-Suyūṭī and Ibn al-'Imād then quote Ibn Ḥajar. Al-Khwānsārī quotes al-Suyūṭī, while al-Ṭabarsī quotes al-Khwānsārī quoting al-Suyūṭī. Al-Dāwūdī and al-Iṣbahānī quote Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba. Despite the many sources, Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba is effectively the only bio-bibliographical source for this detail of al-Taḥṭānī's life. Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *al-Durar al-kāmina*, 4:#923, 339; al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-wu'āt*, 2:#1941, 281; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 2:#582, 253; Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt al-dhahab*, 1992, 8:355; 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Isā al-Iṣbahānī, *Riyāḍ al-'ulamā' wa-ḥiyāḍ al-fuḍalā'*, ed. Aḥmad Ḥusaynī (Qum: Maṭba'at al-Khayyām, 1980), 5:171; Muḥammad Bāqir al-Khwānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt fī aḥwāl al-'ulamā' wa-l-sādāt* (Tehran: al-Maṭba'a al-Ḥaydariyya, 1390 AH), 6:41; Ḥusayn Taqī al-Nūrī al-Ṭabarsī, *Khātimat Mustadrak al-wasā'il* (Mu'assasat Āl al-Bayt li-Iḥyā' al-Turāth, n.d.), 2:360.

Kāmina fī A'yān al-Mi'a al-Thāmina.³² Like the others, the entry is brief; in fact, most of it is a direct quote from Ibn Kathīr. He also quotes Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba (without acknowledgement) on al-Taḥṭānī being a leader in the rationalist disciplines and a student of al-Ījī. He also adds, enigmatically, “and others” (*akhadha 'an al-'Aḍud wa-ghayrih*)³³ and that after arriving in Damascus, al-Taḥṭānī remained in the Zāhiriyya madrasa until his death. The fact that he taught at this madrasa strongly implies that he was a Sunnī.³⁴ As did so many others, he quotes al-Asnawī on the story of Qutb al-Dīn being known as al-Taḥṭānī and on his having mastered many disciplines. The only scholar to follow al-Asnawī in calling him Maḥmūd rather than Muḥammad, he acknowledges that this goes against the opinions of Ibn Kathīr and Ibn Rāfi'.³⁵ In his annalistic history *Inbā' al-Ghumr*, Ibn Ḥajar claims that al-Taḥṭānī was one of Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī's (d. 792/1390) teachers.³⁶

Like Ibn Ḥajar, the Cairene Ibn Taghribirdī (d. 874/1470) also included an entry (amounting to five lines) on al-Taḥṭānī in his history of Egypt, *al-Nujūm al-Zāhira fī Mulūk Miṣr wa-l-Qāhira*. Ibn Taghribirdī is the third of the scholars mentioned thus far to have included the *nisba* al-Shāfi'ī in al-Taḥṭānī's name. He very briefly praises him as being an “ocean of knowledge, especially in the rationalist sciences” (*kāna baḥran fī jami' al-'ulūm lā-siyyamā fī 'ulūm al-'aqliyya*) and lists his compositions. He also mentions one of his teachers, “al-'Allāma Shams al-Dīn al-Aṣbahānī,” asserting that al-Taḥṭānī's works were superior to those of his teacher.³⁷ Ibn Taghribirdī neither cited earlier sources on al-Taḥṭānī nor, as far as I have seen, was cited by later scholars.

32 Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *al-Durar al-kāmina*, 4:339.

33 Ibid.

34 Only Shāfi'ī and Ḥanafī scholars were permitted to teach at the Zāhiriyya. Since nobody has claimed that he was a Ḥanafī, this would mean that al-Taḥṭānī was a Shāfi'ī. My thanks to the reader for pointing this out to me.

35 Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *al-Durar al-kāmina*, 4:339. Ibn Rāfi' does not actually assert that al-Taḥṭānī's name is Maḥmūd.

36 Madelung calls Ibn Ḥajar's notice on al-Taftāzānī unreliable. He argues that while it is possible that al-Taḥṭānī and al-Taftāzānī were at the court of the Golden Horde Khāns at the same time, al-Taftāzānī would have been an established scholar and thus a colleague, rather than a pupil, of al-Taḥṭānī. W. Madelung, “Al-Taftāzānī,” *EI2*, accessed July 24, 2018, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_7296.

37 Abū l-Maḥāsīn Yūsuf Ibn Taghribirdī, *al-Nujūm al-zāhira fī mulūk Miṣr wa-l-Qāhira* (Cairo: al-Mu'assasa al-Miṣriyya al-'amma li-l-Ta'lif wa-l-Tarjama wa-l-ṭibā'a wa-l-Nashr, 1963), 11:87-88. The teacher is Maḥmūd b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Aṣbahānī, also known as Abū al-Thana' (d. 749/1349). He was a scholar first in Damascus, where he impressed Ibn Taymiyya, and then in Cairo. Zirikī, *al-A'lām*, 7:176. Ṭaşkōprizade also mentions him as al-Taḥṭānī's teacher, saying that Ṭaşṭānī studied with him in Cairo in 740/1339-40. Ṭaşkōprizade, *Miftāḥ al-sa'āda*, 2:243.

The last of the fifteenth-century sources is al-Suyūṭī's (d. 911/1505) *Bughyat al-Wu'āt*.³⁸ Its entry on al-Taḥṭānī is a pastiche of other notices. The bulk of it is a quotation from Ibn Kathīr that relates the encounter between al-Taḥṭānī and Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī. In addition to quoting al-Asnawī and Ibn Ḥajar, al-Suyūṭī also quotes his own teacher, Muḥyi al-Dīn al-Kāfiyājī (d. 879/1474), who said that al-Taḥṭānī was wise despite being imperfect in the Arabic sciences.³⁹

C. Tenth/Sixteenth-Century Sources

First is Aḥmad b. Muṣṭafā Ṭaşköprizade's (d. 968/1561) *Miftāḥ al-Sa'āda wa-Miṣbāḥ al-Siyāda*. He opens his notice with what appears to be an original telling (in language, but not detail) of the story behind the name al-Taḥṭānī. He then quotes al-Subkī's entire entry. Ṭaşköprizade next adds, in what may be an original contribution, that al-Taḥṭānī had raised his slave Mubārakshāh from his youth and educated until he became a learned professor.⁴⁰

Al-Dāwūdī's (d. 945/1538-9) entry in *Ṭabaqāt al-Mufasssīrīn* combines the notices in Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba (which includes quotations from al-Subkī, al-Asnawī, and Ibn Kathīr) and al-Suyūṭī (a paraphrastic account of al-Taḥṭānī's encounter with Taqī al-Dīn).⁴¹ He also inserts the same abbreviated version of al-Asnawī's explanation of the *laqab* al-Taḥṭānī that appears in al-Suyūṭī.⁴²

Like al-Dāwūdī, Ibn Ṭūlūn's (d. 953/1546) notice on al-Taḥṭānī in *al-Qalā'id al-Jawhariyya* is a partial copy of Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba's, but with minor deviations.⁴³ Ibn Ṭūlūn does, however, make one original and significant claim: That al-Taḥṭānī was buried below Gabriel's cavern in the Khwārizmiyya mausoleum, as opposed to at the foot of Mt. Qāsyūn, according to Ibn Rāfi'.⁴⁴

38 al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-wu'āt*, 2:#1981, 281.

39 Ṭaşköprizade quotes al-Suyūṭī on this; Ṭaşköprizade, *Miftāḥ al-sa'āda*, 1:193.

40 Ṭaşköprizade, *Miftāḥ al-sa'āda*, 1:275. Al-Rahim identifies the slave as Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Mubārakshāh al-Bukhārī. Al-Rahim, *Philosophical Tradition*, 134. Ṭaşköprizade also reports that while still in Rayy, al-Taḥṭānī desired to meet 'Ubayd Allāh b. Mas'ūd al-Maḥbūbī (Ṣadr al-Sharī'a al-Aṣghar/al-Thānī, d. 747/1346). Though al-Taḥṭānī sent Mubārakshāh to Herat to meet him first, Mubārak Shāh advised against going to meet him. Ṭaşköprizade, *Miftāḥ al-sa'āda*, 2:171.

41 It is the very same paraphrase that appears in Suyūṭī's entry, except that al-Dāwūdī explicitly mentions that Taqī al-Dīn was al-Taḥṭānī's interlocutor.

42 al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 2:#582, 253-54.

43 Ibn Ṭūlūn does not mention that some say al-Taḥṭānī's name was Maḥmūd. He also excises Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba's observation that al-Taḥṭānī mastered the rationalist sciences, had a general knowledge of Islamic religious sciences, was a student of al-Ijī, and that he resided in Damascus until his death.

44 Ibn Ṭūlūn, *al-Qalā'id*, 1:341. On the significance of this claim, see al-Rahim, *Philosophical Tradition*, 137.

D. Eleventh/Seventeenth-Century Sources

Up to this point, the sources that I have examined have all come from Shāfi'i if they have anything to say at all on this and Ḥanafī scholars, all of which say that al-Taḥṭānī was a Shāfi'i. Having arrived in the seventeenth century, we now find sources composed by Shi'i scholars who claim that Qutb al-Dīn was a Shi'i. The first is Qāḍī Nūr Allāh al-Shushtarī's (d. 1019/1610) *Majālis al-Mu'minīn*, which praises al-Taḥṭānī extensively in poetry and prose, mentions that he was born and raised in Warāmin,⁴⁵ and claims that he descended from Āl Buwayh. More significantly, al-Shushtarī is the first one to quote from what he alleges to be al-'Allāma al-Ḥillī's (d. 726/1325) *ijāza* permitting al-Taḥṭānī to transmit his works.⁴⁶ He also quotes what he claims to be a statement by Muḥammad ibn Makki (d. 786/1384)⁴⁷ to the effect that he entered al-Taḥṭānī's service in Damascus and received permission to transmit from him.

Ibn Makki affirms that al-Taḥṭānī was "without a doubt" (*bī shubha*) a Shi'i, averring that al-Taḥṭānī spoke about this unequivocally (*taṣriḥ ba-ān miḥfarmūd*); additionally, his devotion to his teacher al-Ḥillī apparently made this affiliation clear. Ibn Makki also reports that al-Taḥṭānī died on 12 Dhu'l-Qa'dah 766/1 August 1365 and that he was first buried in Ṣāliḥiyya but later moved to an undisclosed location. Beyond this, al-Shushtarī refers to al-Suyūṭī's telling of the encounter between al-Taḥṭānī and Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī, which itself is a truncated version of Ibn Ḥajar's transmission of Ibn Kathīr's account.⁴⁸

Next is al-Tafrishī (d. after 1030/1620), whose short entry in his *Naqd al-Rijāl* adds the *nasab* Ibn Bābawayh to al-Taḥṭānī's lineage.⁴⁹ He even gives al-Taḥṭānī another *nasab*, Ibn Abī Ja'far,⁵⁰ likely a variant of the *kunya* Abū Ja'far.⁵¹ Like al-

45 C. E. Bosworth, "Warāmin," *EI2*, accessed May 24, 2019, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_1338.

46 See the translation in al-Rahim, *Philosophical Tradition*, 132.

47 Known as al-Shahīd al-Awwal. B. Scarcia Amoretti, "Muḥammad b. Makki," *EI2*, accessed June 6, 2019, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_5361.

48 Nūr Allāh ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Shushtarī, *Kitāb-i Mustaqāb-i Majālis al-mu'minīn* (Tehran: Kitāb-furūshī-yi Islāmiyya, 1995), 2:212-13.

49 Only two other scholars refer to al-Taḥṭānī as Ibn Bābawayh: al-Ardabili and al-'Āmili, both of whom copied al-Tafrishī.

50 Muṣṭafā ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Tafrishī, *Naqd al-rijāl* (Qum: Mu'assasat Āl al-Bayt li-Iḥyā' al-Turāth, 1418 AH), 4:311. Copying al-Tafrishī are Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Ardabili, *Jāmi' al-ruwāt wa-izāhat al-ishtibāhāt 'an al-ṭuruq wa-l-asnād* (Qum: Maktabat Āyat Allāh al-'Uzmā al-Mar'ashi al-Najafī, 1403 AH), 2:187, and Muḥammad ibn Ismā'il al-Māzandarāni Abū 'Alī al-Ḥā'iri, *Muntahā l-maqāl fi aḥwāl al-rijāl* (Qum: Mu'assasat Āl al-Bayt, 1995), 6:175. Zayn al-Dīn ibn 'Alī's *ijāza* to al-Ḥusayn 'Abd al-Ṣamad also has "Ibn Abī Ja'far." Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisi, *Biḥār al-anwār al-jāmi'a li-durar akhbār al-a'imma al-aṭhār* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-'Alami li-l-Maṭbū'at, 2008), 105:99.

51 Abū Ja'far appears first in 'Alī al-Karaki's *ijāza* to al-Qāḍī Ṣafi al-Dīn, al-Majlisi, *Biḥār*, 105:49; and later in al-Khwānsāri, *Rawḍat al-jannāt*, 6:380; al-Ṭabarsi, *Khātimat*, 2:351.

Shushtari, he reports that al-Ḥilli was al-Taḥṭānī's teacher and that Muḥammad ibn Makkī was his student. Al-Tafrishī calls Quṭb al-Dīn a luminary among the Shi'īs (*wajhun min wujūhi hādhihi al-ṭā'ifa*) who enjoyed high esteem and rank (*jalīl al-qadr wa-'azīm al-manzila*). Aside from calling al-Taḥṭānī a Shi'ī, al-Tafrishī stands out from everyone I have reviewed thus far in that he neither copied from nor referred to any of them in composing his notice.⁵²

Another scholar to break the mold is Ḥājji Khalifa (Kātib Ḥelebi, d. 1067/1657), who mentions al-Taḥṭānī when discussing Ibn Sīnā's (d. 428/1037) *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*. According to him, al-Taḥṭānī wrote his *Muḥākamāt* supercommentary at the suggestion of Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d. 710/1311). Al-Rahim convincingly argues, however, that we can dismiss reports of al-Rāzī and al-Shīrāzī meeting due to their significant age difference and the vast geographical distance between them at the time when they could possibly have met. Ḥājji Khalifa had nothing else to say here about al-Taḥṭānī.⁵³

The next source, the Ḥanbali Ibn al-'Imād's (d. 1089/1679) *Shadharāt al-Dhahab*, returns to the well-formed mold. The beginning of his notice on al-Taḥṭānī, after stating his name, is the same as al-Dāwūdī's, which was nearly identical to Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbā's. Ibn al-'Imād inserts *kāna shāfi'iyyan*, an explicit assertion of his Shāfi'ī affiliation, after Quṭb al-Dīn's name and the explanation of al-Taḥṭānī as found in al-Dāwūdī. He then quotes Ibn Ḥajar's transformation of Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbā on al-Taḥṭānī's having studied with al-Ījī and others, al-Suyūṭī quoting his teacher al-Kāfiyājī, most of al-Subkī's entry, and Ibn Rāfi' on al-Taḥṭānī's place of burial.⁵⁴

After Ibn al-'Imād comes al-Ardabili (d. 1098/1686-87), who copies his notice in his *Jāmi' al-Ruwāt* verbatim from al-Tafrishī.⁵⁵ Al-'Āmili (d. 1104/1693), in his *Amal al-Āmil*, also quotes al-Tafrishī in full. Additionally, he is the first to quote al-Shushtari's *Majālis al-Mu'minin* on al-Taḥṭānī's *ijāza* from al-Ḥilli.⁵⁶

Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī (d. 1110/1698) follows the path blazed by al-Shushtari. His contribution in his *Biḥār al-Anwār* relies heavily on al-Taḥṭānī's

52 al-Tafrishī, *Naqd al-rijāl*, 4:#686/5042, 311-12.

53 Muṣṭafā 'Abd Allāh al-Qusṭanīnī Kātib Ḥelebi Ḥājji Khalifa, *Kashf al-zunūn 'an asāmi al-kutub wa-l-funūn* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1982), 1:95; al-Rahim, *Philosophical Tradition*, 22-23.

54 Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt al-dhahab*, 1992, 8:355-56.

55 al-Ardabili, *Jāmi'*, 2:187.

56 Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ḥurr al-'Āmili, *Amal al-āmil*, ed. Aḥmad Ḥusaynī (Qum: Dār al-Kitāb al-Islāmī, n.d.), 2:#908, 300-1.

ijāza from al-Ḥilli and on Ibn Makki's statement about his time with al-Taḥṭānī. In similar fashion to al-Shushtari's report of Ibn Makki's statement, al-Majlisi's version claims that al-Taḥṭānī was without a doubt (*bi-ghayri shakkin wa-lā rayb*) a Shi'i, that he had personally heard al-Taḥṭānī unequivocally attest to that (*ṣarraḥa bi-dhālika wa-sami'tuhū minhu*), and that his devotion to the *ahl al-bayt* (rather than al-Ḥilli) was well known.⁵⁷ Unlike al-Shushtari's statement, al-Majlisi's version specifies that Ibn Makki met al-Taḥṭānī in Damascus near the end of Sha'bān 766/May 1365.⁵⁸

E. Twelfth/Eighteenth-Century Sources

Sources from the twelfth/eighteenth century continue the trends of borrowing from earlier sources and relying on the statements ascribed to al-Ḥilli and Ibn Makki. The entry in 'Abd Allāh al-Iṣbahānī's (d.1130/1718) *Riyāḍ al-'Ulamā'*⁵⁹ is a patchwork of earlier notices and information from *ijāzāt*. He copies al-'Āmili's entire notice (which copies al-Ḥilli's *ijāza* as it appears in al-Shushtari), Ibn Makki's statement about meeting al-Taḥṭānī in Damascus,⁶⁰ Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba's notice, an excerpt from Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawānī's (d. 908/1502) *ijāza* to Mīr Ḥusayn Maybudī (d. 909/1503-4), and an *ijāza* from Zayn al-Dīn ibn 'Alī (al-Shahīd al-Thānī, d. 965/1557-58 or 966/1558-59) to al-Ḥusayn 'Abd al-Ṣamad (d. 984/1576).⁶¹ According to al-Dawānī's *ijāza*, al-Taḥṭānī studied the rationalist sciences (*al-'aqliyyāt*) under Qutb al-Dīn al-Shirāzī (d. 710/1311), while al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī (d. 816/1413) studied them under al-Taḥṭānī.⁶²

57 al-Majlisi, 104:378.

58 al-Majlisi's version of Ibn Makki's statement agrees with al-Shushtari's version in that al-Taḥṭānī died on 12 Dhu'l-Qa'dah 766/1 August 1365, was buried at Ṣālihiyya, and then moved to an undisclosed location. Al-Majlisi, 104:377-78. Another less reliable statement ascribed to Ibn Makki, this time in his *ijāza* to Ibn Khāzin, says that he entered al-Taḥṭānī's service in Damascus in 768/1367, after the date by which al-Taḥṭānī is commonly said to have died. Al-Majlisi, 104:406.

59 Iṣbahānī, *Riyāḍ*, 5:168-72.

60 This is the version as it appears after al-Majlisi produces al-Ḥilli's *ijāza* (rather than Ibn Makki's *ijāza* to Ibn Khāzin). Al-Iṣbahānī claims to have seen this in the handwriting of Zayn al-Dīn ibn 'Alī, who claims to have seen it in Ibn Makki's handwriting; al-Iṣbahānī, 5:170.

61 Al-Ḥusayn 'Abd al-Ṣamad was the son of the Imāmi scholar Muḥammad ibn Ḥusayn (Bahā' al-Dīn al-'Āmili, d. 1030/1621). Zayn al-Dīn ibn 'Alī authorizes him to transmit the commentary on *al-Shamsiyya* by al-Taḥṭānī, whom he refers to as "Qutb al-Dīn...ibn Bābawayh;" al-Majlisi, *Biḥār*, 105:99.9. On Zayn al-Dīn, see Etan Kohlberg, "Al-Shahid al-Thānī," *EI2*, accessed May 24, 2019, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_6763.

62 al-Iṣbahānī, *Riyāḍ*, 5:170. Al-Rahim characterizes a meeting between al-Taḥṭānī and Jurjānī as possible but likely legendary. Al-Rahim, *Philosophical Tradition*, 133-35.

Like al-Iṣbahānī, Yūsuf ibn Aḥmad al-Baḥrānī's (d. 1186/1772) entry in *Lu'lu'at al-Baḥrayn* is a compilation of earlier sources: a partial copy of al-ʿĀmilī and a full copy of al-Shushtarī (translated into Arabic). At the end, al-Baḥrānī adds his evaluation of whether al-Taḥṭānī was a Shīʿī: To claim that he was not a Shīʿī because he lived outwardly as a Sunnī when in Syria is far-fetched (*baʿīd ghāyat al-buʿd*), because Syria was then full of Shīʿī scholars who, performing *taqiyya*, lived publicly as Sunnīs.⁶³

Closing out the twelfth/eighteenth-century sources are Muḥammad Bāqir al-Bihbahānī's (al-Waḥīd al-Bihbahānī, d. 1206/1791-92 or 1208/1793-94) *Taʿliqa ʿalā Minhāj al-Maqāl* and Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥāʿirī's (d. 1216/1800-1) *Muntahā al-Maqāl*. Al-Bihbahānī's notice is an unacknowledged reproduction of al-Tafrishī's.⁶⁴ Al-Ḥāʿirī also copies al-Tafrishī's entire entry, but acknowledges doing so. He then copies the part of Ibn Makki's *ijāza* to Ibn Khāzin, in which he mentions entering al-Taḥṭānī's service, and the very beginning of al-Ḥilli's *ijāza* to al-Taḥṭānī.⁶⁵ Al-Ḥāʿirī opines that associating al-Taḥṭānī with Ibn Bābawayh is mistaken, as he is descended from the Āl Buwayh; however, he gives no explanation as to why this is the case.

F. Thirteenth/Nineteenth-Century Sources

The two thirteenth/nineteenth-century sources that I have examined stand out from previous sources in their focus on debating al-Taḥṭānī's sectarian identity; both otherwise rely heavily on copying earlier sources. Muḥammad Bāqir al-Khwānsārī al-Iṣbahānī (d. 1313/1895-96) dissents from his fellow Shīʿīs by forcefully claiming in *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt* that al-Taḥṭānī was not a Shīʿī.⁶⁶ In fact, he was the first scholar to broach seriously the question of al-Taḥṭānī's sectarian affiliation. His entry fills ten pages in the modern printed edition. Its length is largely due to his extensive verbatim inclusion of material from al-Suyūṭī, al-ʿĀmilī, and al-Baḥrānī, which amounts to approximately 60 percent of the entry.

Al-Khwānsārī's strident and prolix entry receives an equally strident and even longer rebuttal from Ḥusayn al-Nūrī al-Ṭabarsī (d. 1320/1902). Before addressing al-Khwānsārī specifically in his *Khātimat Mustadrak al-Wasāʿil*,⁶⁷ he begins with

63 Yūsuf al-Baḥrānī, *Lu'lu'at al-Baḥrayn fī al-ijāzāt wa-tarājīm rijāl al-ḥadīth*, ed. Muḥammad Ṣādiq Baḥr al-ʿUlūm (Manama: Maktabat Fakhrāwī, 2008), #74, 187-92.

64 The only version of Bihbahānī's *Taʿliqa ʿalā Minhāj al-maqāl*, n.d., #2962, 327, <http://shiaonlineibrary.com/کتب>.

65 al-Ḥāʿirī, *Muntahā l-maqāl*, 6:#2849, 175-76. The *ijāzas* that al-Ḥāʿirī quotes both appear in al-Majlisī. Al-Majlisī, *Bihār*, 104:377-78, 406.

66 al-Khwānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt*, 6:#559, 38-48.

67 al-Ṭabarsī, *Khātimat*, 2:351-99.

the familiar sources, reproducing al-Ḥilli's *ijāza* and Ibn Makki's testaments to al-Taḥṭānī's being a Shi'i, as they appear in al-Majlisi. He alludes to the evidence found in al-Shushtari's and al-'Āmili's works, but says that the contemporaneous, eye-witness testimony by al-Taḥṭānī's student Ibn Makki suffices to establish that al-Taḥṭānī was a Shi'i. In a clear, if unacknowledged, response to al-Khwānsārī, al-Ṭabarsī discounts the relevance and credibility of assertions that al-Taḥṭānī never demonstrated, whether in word or deed, being a Shi'i by pointing to the fact that Syria was then controlled by Sunnis. One naturally would have dissimulated one's true beliefs in that situation, he observes.⁶⁸ When he finally addresses al-Khwānsārī directly, al-Ṭabarsī mounts a point-by-point response, encompassing thirty-seven points and thirty-five printed pages (I address this in the end of the next section).⁶⁹

III. Patterns in the Sources

Despite the abundance of biographical sources with entries on Qutb al-Dīn, only a few of them make unique, original claims about him: al-Subkī (d. 769/1368), al-Asnawī (772/1370), Ibn Rāfi' (774/1372), Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373), Abū Zur'ā (826/1423), Ṭaşköprizade (d. 968/1561), al-Shushtarī (1019/1610), and al-Majlisi (1110/1698). In other words, mainly al-Taḥṭānī's contemporaries or near-contemporaries and the first of several Shi'i scholars to cite the *ijāzāt* by al-Ḥilli and Ibn Makki to construct his biography and prosopography. The majority of sources merely copy and repackage what came before them.

The most cited Sunnī scholar is al-Asnawī, who appears in seven later sources.⁷⁰ His notice on Qutb al-Dīn is hardly a paragraph. He was quoted so often due to the later Sunnī scholars' preference for his explanation of Qutb al-Dīn's *laqab*, al-Taḥṭānī; no Shi'i scholar referred to Qutb al-Dīn as al-Taḥṭānī, though al-Işbahānī mentioned the name when he quoted Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, who quoted al-Asnawī. With six scholars quoting his *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyya*, Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba (d. 851/1448) was the second most popular of the Sunnī scholars.⁷¹ The popularity of his work helped prolong the life of some earlier notices on al-Taḥṭānī. Those by al-Subkī and

68 al-Ṭabarsī, 2:355.

69 For a brief summary of some of al-Khwānsārī's arguments, see al-Rahim, *Philosophical Tradition*, 137-38.

70 directly by Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ṭabaqāt*, 3:#674, 283; Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *al-Durar al-kāmina*, 4:#923, 339; indirectly by al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-wu'āt*, 2:#1981, 281; Ṭaşköprizade, *Miftāḥ al-sa'āda*, 1:275; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 2:#582, 253; Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt al-dhahab*, 1992, 8:355; al-Işbahānī, *Riyād*, 5:171.

71 Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *al-Durar al-kāmina*, 4:#923, 339; al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-wu'āt*, 2:#1981, 281; al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 2:#582, 253; Ibn Ṭūlūn, *al-Qalā'id*, 1:341; Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt al-dhahab*, 1992, 8:355; al-Işbahānī, *Riyād*, 5:171.

Ibn Kathir appear in four later sources; however, in three of those instances the later source is actually quoting Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba.⁷² At the other end of the spectrum, no later sources quoted Abū Zur‘a, al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442), Ibn Taghrībīrdī (d. 874/1470), Ibn Ṭulūn (d. 953/1546), or Ibn al-‘Imād (d. 1089/1679).

In addition to revealing who was quoting whom, my survey of the sources on al-Taḥṭānī’s life uncovered some noteworthy patterns. All of the sources prior to the eleventh/seventeenth share certain characteristics and say essentially the same thing. First, almost all of them were written by Shāfi‘ī scholars, the two exceptions being the Ḥanafīs Ṭaşköprizade (d. 935/1529) and Ibn Ṭulūn. Of the fourteen eleventh/seventeenth century sources that I examined, only six comment on al-Taḥṭānī’s sectarian affiliation. Four of those were explicit, meaning they either included a *nisba* (like al-Shāfi‘ī) or declared that he was a Shāfi‘ī in the main text. By implicit, I refer to al-Subkī and al-Asnawī, both of whose works bore the title of *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi‘iyya*, but who did not otherwise comment on his sectarian affiliation. Overall, such implicit assertions are weak evidence for the case that al-Taḥṭānī was a Shāfi‘ī Sunni.

I claim that these works all said essentially the same thing because of the ubiquitous practice of copying and aggregating earlier sources. Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba contributed nothing original to our knowledge of Quṭb al-Dīn, as his entry merely combines what appear to be the only sources from the eighth/fourteenth century: al-Subkī, al-Asnawī, Ibn Rāfi‘, and Ibn Kathir. Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī (d. 852/1449) then repackaged these sources. Both of these scholars account for most of the material that appears in Sunnī sources in the tenth/sixteenth and eleventh/seventeenth centuries.

Major changes happen in the eleventh/seventeenth century, which saw many new claims being made about al-Taḥṭānī, such as Shi‘ī scholars adding the *nasabs* Buwayhi⁷³ or Ibn Bābawayh.⁷⁴ These changes begin with al-Shushtarī (d. 1019/1610), the earliest among the many Shi‘ī sources for al-Taḥṭānī’s life that I have found. Al-Shushtarī was the first to proclaim that al-Taḥṭānī was a Shi‘ī. From this point on, all but two of the sources that I have examined were written by Shi‘īs and make this same claim. The exceptions are the Ḥanbalī Ibn al-‘Imād (d.

72 Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *al-Durar al-kāmina*, 4:339; Ibn al-‘Imād, *Shadharāt al-dhahab*, 1992, 8:355; al-Iṣbahānī, *Riyāḍ*, 5:171.

73 al-Shushtarī, *Majālis*, 2:212; Muḥammad ibn Makki’s *ijāza* to Ibn Khāzin, al-Majlisī, *Biḥār*, 104:406; al-‘Āmilī, *Amal al-āmil*, 2:300; al-Iṣbahānī, *Riyāḍ*, 5:168; al-Bahrānī, *Lu‘lu‘at Bahrayn*, 188; al-Ṭabarsī, *Khātimat*, 2:351.

74 Zayn al-Dīn ibn ‘Alī’s *ijāza* to al-Ḥusayn ‘Abd al-Ṣamad, al-Majlisī, *Biḥār*, 105:99; al-Tafrishī, *Naqd al-rijāl*, 4:311.

1089/1679), who claimed in his *Shadharāt al-Dhahab* that al-Taḥṭānī was a Shāfi'i, and the Ḥanafī Ḥājī Khalifa (Kātib Çelebi, d. 1067/1657), who said nothing about this matter. Only one source written by a Shi'i, al-Khwānsārī's (d. 1313/1895-6) *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt*, disputes this assertion.

More significantly, al-Shushtarī was the first one to go outside the biographical literature for information. He relied instead on what he claimed to be an *ijāza* from al-Taḥṭānī's teacher, al-'Allāmī al-Ḥillī (d. 726/1325), and testimony from one of his students, Muḥammad ibn Makki (d. 786/1384). Later in the eleventh/seventeenth century, al-Majlisī (d. 1110/1698) would do the same, including the *ijāzāt* from al-Ḥillī and Ibn Makki in his massive *Biḥār al-Anwār*.

Qutb al-Dīn's sectarian affiliation only became the subject of debate in the bio-bibliographical literature of the twelfth/nineteenth century – five centuries after his death. Prior to that, however, there are signs that scholars were discussing it. In a statement that first appears in al-Shushtarī and resurfaces in similar form in al-Majlisī, al-Baḥrānī's (d. 1186/1772) *Lu'lu'at al-Baḥrayn*, and al-Iṣbahānī's (d. 1130/1718) *Riyāḍ al-'ulamā'*, Ibn Makki affirms that al-Taḥṭānī “was, without any doubt or uncertainty, of the Imāmī school. He spoke unequivocally about that, something I heard him say. His devotion to the rest of the People of the House is known.”⁷⁵ In al-Shushtarī's and al-Baḥrānī's version, al-Taḥṭānī's commitment to his teacher al-Ḥillī and the purity of his belief are presented as sufficient evidence to prove that he was a Shi'i.⁷⁶ Assuming that this statement is genuine, it suggests that within al-Taḥṭānī's lifetime or shortly after his death, his alleged student Muḥammad ibn Makki felt it necessary to assert in no uncertain terms that al-Taḥṭānī was a devoted Shi'i of pure belief.

At the very least, this statement indicates that this was relevant to Qutb al-Dīn's biography (as written by Shi'i scholars) by the time al-Shushtarī first included it in the late ninth/sixteenth or early tenth/seventeenth century. More broadly, it was relevant to Safavī-era Shi'i scholars engaged in a project of establishing a chain of transmission of philosophical knowledge, connecting prominent Shi'i scholars all the way back to al-Shaykh al-Ra'īs, Ibn Sīnā. To support this chain, al-Taḥṭānī needed to have been a Shi'i and to have met other prominent Shi'a, like Qutb al-Dīn al-Shirāzī.⁷⁷

75 *Wa-kāna imāmiyya al-madhhab bi-ghayri shakk wa-lā rayb ṣarraḥa bi-dhālīka wa-samī'tuhu minhu wa-naqīṭā'uhu ilā baqiyyati ahl al-bayt ma'lūm*; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār*, 104:378.

76 al-Shushtarī, *Majālis*, 2:213; al-Baḥrānī, *Lu'lu'at Baḥrayn*, 190.

77 Al-Rahim, *Philosophical Tradition*, 133-35.

One scholar who disputed Ibn Makkī's statement was al-Khwānsārī. According to him, the source of the confusion about al-Taḥṭānī's sectarian affiliation is Ibn Makkī's declaration that al-Taḥṭānī was an avowed Shī'ī. He asserts that it is no more than an example of prudent dissimulation.⁷⁸ In his response to al-Khwānsārī, al-Ṭabarsī finds this line of argumentation quite strange. He rebuts that observing *taqiyya* "requires considering an Imāmi to be a Sunni [*add al-imāmi mukhālīfan*], not considering the head scholar among them [i.e., Sunnis]...to be a Shī'ī [*muwāfiqan*]." In other words, how could Ibn Makkī, whose sectarian affiliation is not in doubt, be engaging in *taqiyya* by unequivocally claiming that al-Taḥṭānī, who al-Khwānsārī claims was the head Sunnī scholar in Damascus, is a Shī'ī? al-Ṭabarsī asks: Would not *taqiyya* entail claiming that a Shī'ī was a Sunnī? He adds that it would be stupid and laughable to argue that al-Ḥilli was also engaging in *taqiyya* when praising al-Taḥṭānī in his *ijāza* (something which al-Khwānsārī does not actually argue).⁷⁹

What al-Khwānsārī does do, however, is attack the reliability of al-Ḥilli's *ijāza*. He asserts that it is suspicious that its transmission is limited to its appearance in al-Shushtarī's *Majālis al-Mu'minīn*, whose word, he claims, is unreliable.⁸⁰ al-Ṭabarsī responds by claiming the opposite: al-Shushtarī was among the most pious and devoted Shī'ī scholars, one whose word is not suspect in the least. (Neither offers any support for his claim.) Furthermore, he observes that the transmission of al-Ḥilli's *ijāza* is not limited to al-Shushtarī by pointing to its occurrence in al-Majlisī's *Biḥār al-Anwār*. Al-Ṭabarsī adds that even better evidence for al-Taḥṭānī being a Shī'ī is what Ibn Makkī says in his *ijāza* to Ibn Khāzin, which, he notes, appears in *Biḥār al-Anwār* and "other sources." And yet he neglects to name these other sources, acknowledge that al-Majlisī is posterior to al-Shushtarī, or recognize that it is worth asking why the best evidence for al-Taḥṭānī's being a Shī'ī is not widely attested until 250 years after his death.⁸¹

Al-Khwānsārī argues that even if one accepts that al-Taḥṭānī was a Shī'ī while a student of al-Ḥilli, this does not negate the fact that he later converted and became the Sunnis' chief scholar.⁸² al-Ṭabarsī responds by claiming that, to his knowledge, no Shī'ī scholar who had reached the heights of knowledge had ever "left the light for

78 al-Khwānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt*, 6:39.

79 al-Ṭabarsī, *Khātimat*, 2:373-74.

80 al-Khwānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt*, 6:39.

81 al-Ṭabarsī, *Khātimat*, 2:375-76.

82 al-Khwānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-jannāt*, 6:40.

the shadows” – meaning Shi‘ism for Sunnism – just for the sake of worldly benefits, like being a chief scholar. He correctly reiterates that no source claims that al-Taḥṭānī was the Sunnis’ chief scholar in Damascus. Al-Ṭabarsī then suggests that, had al-Taḥṭānī been a Sunnī, he would have appeared in those biographical dictionaries composed by Sunnīs. After observing that al-Taḥṭānī does not appear in al-Kutubī’s (d. 764/1363) *Fawāt al-Wafayāt*, he adds an outlandish claim that is worth quoting in full: “Likewise, Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī did not mention him in his *al-Durar al-Kāmina fi A’yān al-Mi’a al-Thāmina*; nor does his [i.e., Al-Taḥṭānī’s] contemporary, the chief judge in Syria, Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī [mention him] in his *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi’iyya*. I have not come upon these two books. But even if there were an entry for him in either of them, al-Suyūṭī would have mentioned it in his *al-Ṭabaqāt*.”⁸³ As we have seen, both al-Subkī and Ibn Ḥajar have notices on al-Taḥṭānī. Moreover, al-Suyūṭī quotes Ibn Ḥajar (albeit without acknowledgment). Embarrassing as this oversight may be, al-Ṭabarsī’s broader point stands: If al-Taḥṭānī had been the head Sunnī scholar in Damascus, would not his contemporary al-Subkī have said as much?

Overall, neither party makes a convincing argument. Al-Khwānsārī relies heavily on suggestion and provides little actual evidence. Al-Ṭabarsī is often successful at pointing this out, but hurts his own cause by repeatedly making empirical assertions that are easily gainsaid. At the end of their lengthy entries on al-Taḥṭānī, one still lacks a satisfactory answer to the one persuasive piece of evidence marshalled by al-Khwānsārī, namely, that it takes centuries for Ibn Makki’s and al-Ḥillī’s *ijāzāt* to appear in the sources on al-Taḥṭānī.

Even if Shi‘ī scholars, aside from al-Khwānsārī, were certain that al-Taḥṭānī was one of them, they were uncertain as to his lineage: Was he descended from Ibn Bābawayh al-Ṣadūq (d. 381/991), one of the earliest and most prominent Imāmī scholars, or the Āl Buwayh, the Daylamite dynasty that ruled Baghdad from 320/454-932/1062? Proponents of the first lineage claim various evidence to support it. According to al-‘Āmilī, Zayn al-Dīn ibn ‘Alī (al-Shahīd al-Thānī, d. 965/1557-58 or 966/1558-59) stated as much in his *ijāzāt*.⁸⁴ In al-Majlisī, one finds al-Taḥṭānī’s lineage, which indicates his descent from Ibn Bābawayh. The lineage is attributed to Muḥammad ibn

83 *Wa-kadhā lam yadhkurhu ayḍan Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī fi al-Durar al-kāmina fi a’yān al-mi’a al-thāmina wa-lā mu’āshiruhu qāḍī al-quḍāt bi-l-Shām Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī fi kitāb Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi’iyya wa-lam na’thur ‘alā al-kitābayni lākin law kāna lahu tarjamatun fi aḥadhihā la-dhakarahu al-Suyūṭī fi al-Ṭabaqāt*. Al-Ṭabarsī, *Khātimat*, 2:379. That al-Ṭabarsī makes such a wildly incorrect claim underscores the extent to which much of his argument that al-Taḥṭānī was a Shi‘ī is weak and circumstantial.

84 al-‘Āmilī, *Amal al-āmil*, 2:300.

Makkī, who is said to have written it in the colophon of al-Taḥṭānī's copy of *Qawā'id al-Aḥkām*. It goes back only one generation before claiming al-Taḥṭānī's ultimate descent: Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Ja'far ibn Bābawayh. This seems insufficient to support Ibn Makkī's claim that "this shows that he is among the children of al-Ṣadūq Ibn Bābawayh."⁸⁵ The Āl Buwayh camp, which includes al-Shushtarī, claims as evidence statements made to that effect by 'Alī al-Karakī (al-Muḥaqqiq al-Thānī, d. 940/1534) in his *ijāzat*.⁸⁶ In both cases, the evidence is weak. Overall, the question of al-Taḥṭānī's descent veers toward the realm of legend and is far less significant than the question of whether he was actually a Shī'ī or Sunnī.

IV. Conclusion: What We Know about al-Taḥṭānī

Bearing all of this in mind, here is what we know about al-Taḥṭānī.⁸⁷ His name, as it is most commonly attested, was Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāzī al-Taḥṭānī. Not until the tenth/sixteenth or early eleventh/seventeenth century do the *nasabs* Buwayhī and Ibn Bābawayh appear. In the cases of Buwayhī/Ibn Bābawayh and Abū Ja'far/Ibn Abī Ja'far, they only appear in Shī'ī sources. All Sunnī scholars, starting with al-Asnawī, referred to Quṭb al-Dīn with his *laqab*, al-Taḥṭānī.

As his *nisba* al-Rāzī suggests, al-Taḥṭānī was from the city of Rayy. To be more precise, al-Shushtarī claims that he was from Warāmin.⁸⁸ While in Persia he mastered the rationalist disciplines (*al-'aqliyyāt*) and studied law. He studied under the Sunnī 'Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī (d. 756/1356), something mentioned primarily in the Sunnī sources.⁸⁹ This may have occurred at the Il-Khanid court of Abū Sa'īd (r. 716-36/1316-36), who appointed al-Ījī *qāḍī al-mamālik*.⁹⁰ He may also have studied in Cairo under Shams al-Dīn al-Aṣbahānī (d. 749/1349). Among his teachers is the Shī'ī al-'Allāma al-Ḥillī (d. 726/1325), something mentioned only in Shī'ī sources,⁹¹

85 al-Majlisī, *Bihār*, 104:378.

86 al-Shushtarī, *Majālis*, 2:212. For the relevant part of the *ijāza*, see al-Majlisī, *Bihār*, 105:49.

87 In stating what we know about al-Taḥṭānī, I prioritize the accounts written by his contemporaries and near contemporaries as well as all information that has multiple independent sources. I have less confidence in details that appear only in later sources or have only a single source. Some widely accepted details of his life, however – such as his being a student of al-Ḥillī – come only from much later sources.

88 al-Shushtarī, *Majālis*, 2:212; Bosworth, "Warāmin."

89 Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, *Ṭabaqāt*, 3:183. See the section above on Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba for the many later scholars who copied him in this regard. Al-Iṣbahānī's *Riyāḍ al-'ulamā'* and al-Khwānsārī's *Rawḍāt al-jannā* (which is quoted by al-Ṭabarsī in his response to al-Khwānsārī) are the only bio-bibliographical sources composed by Shī'īs that I found to mention that al-Taḥṭānī studied under the Sunnī al-Ījī.

90 J. van Ess, "Al-Ījī," *EI2*, accessed June 6, 2019, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_3486; al-Rahim, *Philosophical Tradition*, 132.

91 al-Shushtarī, *Majālis*, 2:212; al-Tafrishī, *Naqd al-rijal*, 4:312; al-Ardabili, *Jami'*, 2:187 (copying al-Tafrishī); al-'Āmili, *Amal al-āmil*, 2:300; al-Majlisī, *Bihār*, 105:377-78; al-Iṣbahānī, *Riyāḍ*, 5:168 (copying al-'Āmili); al-

which places him in a lineage of scholarly descendants of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274). Al-Iṣbahānī (d. 1130/1718), citing an *ijāza* purportedly by Dawānī (d. 908/1502), claims that he was also a student of Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shirāzī.⁹² This is unlikely to be true, as al-Rahim has recently argued.⁹³ Starting with al-Shushtarī, Shi'i sources commonly claim that al-Taḥṭānī taught Muḥammad ibn Makki⁹⁴; others claim that he taught al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī (d. 816/1413) and Mubārakshāh.⁹⁵

Quṭb al-Dīn left Persia for Damascus, where he continued to pursue the rationalist disciplines. He arrived in 763/1361-62⁹⁶ and remained there, teaching and living at the Zāhiriyya madrasa, until his death.⁹⁷ While in Damascus, he was a colleague of Taj al-Dīn al-Subkī.⁹⁸

According to Ibn Kathīr, al-Taḥṭānī was a leading scholar of the rationalist sciences, as well as a man of wealth who well-spoken and had poor eyesight.⁹⁹ He died on either 6 or 7 Dhu'l-Qa'dah 766/26 or 27 July 1365 in the outskirts of Damascus (*zāhir Dimashq*)¹⁰⁰ and was allegedly buried at the foot of Mt. Qāsiyūn.¹⁰¹

What remains is the question of Quṭb al-Dīn's sectarian affiliation. Of the twenty-six sources I have examined, only six explicitly state that he was a Shāfi'i; one of those was written by a Shi'i, while four were written by Shāfi'is. The earliest one was by Abū Zur'a (d. 826/1423). That the sources contemporaneous (and nearly so) with al-Taḥṭānī make no mention his sectarian affiliation suggests that this was not a question at that time. Nine sources claim that he was a Shi'i. All of these are by Shi'i scholars from the Safavī era or later; the earliest was by al-Shushtarī (d. 1019/1610), nearly 250 years after al-Taḥṭānī's death. If al-Taḥṭānī were a Shi'i, one must ask why it took so long for any source to say so.

- Bahrānī, *Lu'lu'at Bahrayn*, 188 (copying al-Āmili); al-Ḥā'iri, *Muntahā l-maqāl*, 6:175 (copying al-Tafriṣhi); al-Ṭabarsī, *Khātimat*, 2:passim.
- 92 al-Iṣbahānī, *Riyād*, 5:171.
- 93 al-Rahim, *Philosophical Tradition*, 22-23.
- 94 al-Shushtarī, *Majālis*, 2:213.
- 95 Ṭaṣkōprizade, *Miftāḥ al-sa'āda*, 1:275; al-Iṣbahānī, *Riyād*, 5:170.
- 96 al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:#1334, 275.
- 97 Ibn Qāḍi Shuhba, *Ṭabaqāt*, 3:183; Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *al-Durar al-kāmina*, 4:339.
- 98 al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:275.
- 99 Ibn Kathīr, as reported in Ibn Qāḍi Shuhba, *Ṭabaqāt*, 3:184; Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *al-Durar al-kāmina*, 4:339.
- 100 Ibn Rāfi' says the sixth. Ibn Rāfi', *al-Wafayāt*, 2:299. Al-Subkī says the sixth or sixteenth. Al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 9:275. Abū Zur'a, who claims that Ibn Kathīr records his death date as the seventh, agrees with Ibn Rāfi' but gives no explanation for doing so. Abū Zur'a, *al-Dhayl*, 185.
- 101 Ibn Rāfi', *al-Wafayāt*, 2:299; Abū Zur'a, *al-Dhayl*, 184; Ibn Kathīr via Ibn Qāḍi Shuhba, *Ṭabaqāt*, 3:184. Only Ibn Ṭulūn suggests a different burial place. Ibn Ṭulūn, *al-Qalā'id*, 1:341.

Ahmed al-Rahim has recently offered an answer to this question. Arguing that al-Taḥṭānī was a Shāfi‘ī, he bases his conclusion on the strength of 1) al-Taḥṭānī’s having written a popular commentary on Qazwīnī’s *al-Ḥāwī al-ṣāghīr fī al-fatāwā*, asking why a Shī‘ī would write a commentary on Shāfi‘ī *furū’*; 2) what he calls the absurd notion that al-Taḥṭānī could have been a Shī‘ī masquerading as a Shāfi‘ī, although none of his Shāfi‘ī biographers – even those who knew him, like al-Subkī – accused him of such¹⁰²; and 3) al-Taḥṭānī’s final resting place allegedly being among Sunnī scholars in the Khwārizmiyya mausoleum. Al-Rahim sees the effort by Shī‘ī scholars to claim him as one of their own as an attempt to establish a chain of transmission among Shī‘ī scholars from Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī through Safavī-era scholars.¹⁰³

Though persuasive, the upshot of al-Rahim’s argument is that somewhere along the line, certain Shī‘ī scholars forged evidence of al-Taḥṭānī’s having been a Shī‘ī. How else are we to explain attestations to that effect in what purports to be al-Ḥillī’s *ijāza* to al-Taḥṭānī, Ibn Makki’s *ijāza* to Ibn Khāzin, and Zayn al-Dīn ibn ‘Alī’s *ijāza* to al-Ḥusayn ‘Abd al-Ṣamad? This seems as problematic as suggesting that al-Taḥṭānī successfully dissimulated Shī‘ī beliefs for his entire life; both claims are hard to prove. Nevertheless, I agree with al-Rahim’s conclusion. Al-Taḥṭānī’s having taught at the Zāhiriyya madrasa, the absence of any contemporaneous discussion of his sectarian affiliation, and the long gap between his death and the first claim that he was a Shī‘ī suggest that he was a Sunnī, or at least was believed to be so during his lifetime.

Regardless of his sectarian affiliation, however, he acted upon his clear affinity toward al-Ṭūsī and his brand of Avicennism in his commentary on Ibn Sīnā’s *al-Ishārāt*. What is becoming increasingly clear as scholars pay more attention to the postclassical era of Arabic and Islamic scholarship is the significant role that al-Taḥṭānī played, along with al-Ḥillī and al-Tustarī, in developing a narrative of Avicennism that promoted Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī as its most celebrated exponent while simultaneously denigrating Avicenna’s and Avicennism’s Sunni detractors.¹⁰⁴

102 It is worth reiterating that al-Subkī made no explicit statement regarding al-Taḥṭānī’s sectarian affiliation.

103 al-Rahim, *Philosophical Tradition*, 35-36, 137-38.

104 On al-Taḥṭānī’s *Muhākama* and his role in developing a narrative of Avicennism that promoted al-Ṭūsī and denigrated Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, see Michael A. Rapoport, “The Life and Afterlife of the Rational Soul: Chapters VIII-X of Ibn Sīnā’s *Pointers and Reminders*” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, 2018), chs. 6 and 7. It is worth noting that al-Rahim also argues that, like al-Taḥṭānī, al-Tustarī was a Shāfi‘ī. Al-Rahim, *Philosophical Tradition*, 127.

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