

A Preliminary Work on the Intellectual and Civilisational Dimensions of the *Al-Jawaib* Based on Ottoman Sources

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Abstract

This study was an investigation of the relationships between Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq, editor of the *al-Jawaib* (Circulating News), an Arabic newspaper published in İstanbul, his son Selim Faris, and the Ottoman authorities, utilising only Ottoman archival documents, in particular, the Presidential Ottoman Archives (BOA) between 1859 and 1887. Since this paper is the initial one of many, the complete biography of Ahmad Faris and the content analysis of *al-Jawaib* were not discussed, but only the relevant issues within the aforementioned period. And it also explored the partial life of Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq. Although the editor and his newspaper are well-known, certain aspects of the relationship between Ahmad Faris and the Ottoman authorities in the Ottoman archival document have yet to be elaborated on. This brief study examined the correspondences between Ahmad Faris and the Ottoman authorities descriptively without delving into details. Since these archival documents were generally intact, it seemed to be worth analysing in this article. Before studying the journalistic and intellectual contents and contexts of the *al-Jawaib*, it would be valuable to see the development of the relationship between Ahmad Faris and the Ottoman authorities. Several fundamental questions come to mind, and it is believed that the answers to these would be helpful in comprehending other aspects in the later stages of the *al-Jawaib* publication of almost 25 years. This research-based paper applied historical archival study with an interpretative approach.

Keywords: Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq, *al-Jawaib*, Ottoman bureaucracy, reform, social change.

Introduction

Print media or vernacular press is essential in tracing the intellectual progress and development in modern societies. Furthermore, in this modern era, journalist-intellectuals are the frontier groups that are, at the same time, intermediary elites who have emerged and cooperated with the political elites. Since new public spaces open avenues for cross-cultural communication and correspondence even within a single civilisation, newspapers remain a relevant resource for gaining insights into various modern issues. While all these newspaper publications were inclusive, it was also true that their owners and editors had patron-client relationships with state authorities. They aimed to achieve their objectives through collaboration, though this collaboration was not always successful. Nevertheless, this did not necessarily mean that the owners and editors were on the losing end. Instead, they still had strong bargaining power. Similarly, in 19th-century Ottoman reform history, the narrative was also significantly relevant to the developments. An Arabic newspaper called *al-Jawaib* (Circulating News),¹ played a crucial role, under the management of Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq, a doyen journalist and intellectual of Arabic language and literature of calibre, who was undoubtedly one of the shining stars of Ottoman print media.

Beyond merely utilising historical narrative as the fundamental approach towards examining newspapers, studying them provides alternatives in comprehending the changes in certain societies, interactions among the elites, and newly emerging social classes, and their influences upon the creation of new public spaces domestically and globally. *Al-Jawaib* was one of the renowned newspapers published in the *Payi-taht* of İstanbul, and was significantly distributed in traditional Ottoman territories.² Besides that, this newspaper even went beyond the Ottomans' borders, connecting the

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¹ Its Turkish translation is provided in a paper entitled as "Halk arasında dolaşan haberler" See, Atilla Çetin, "El-Cevaib Gazetesi ve Yayını", *İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Dergisi*, 34. Sayı, (1984): 476. Alternatively, "The Traversing News" was suggested by Junge (Christian Junge, "al-Shidyāq, Aḥmad Fāris", *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Modernism*) (2018).

² After 20 years, *al-Jawaib* was supported by the Ottoman government. In fact, this was an order by the Sultan himself. 200 copies of *al-Jawaib* were sent to Hijaz, Syria and Trablus Garb weekly, and that, if needed, more copies would be sent: "*Hicaz ve Suriye ve Trablusgarb*

diverse Muslim societies whose socio-political, intellectual, and civilisational dimensions were yet to be comprehended in all its diverse aspects.³ Among others, the *al-Jawaib* was one of the pertinent Arabic newspapers published in İstanbul—and to a lesser degree in Cairo—from 1861 to almost the second part of the 19th century.⁴ *Jawaib*, meaning “news among the public,” was the second newspaper in the Ottoman lands after *Takvim-i Vekayi* in Ottoman Turkish, also published in İstanbul.⁵

Therefore, this study, which is the initial part of a broader research project, served to comprehend the partial historiography of Ahmad Faris and *al-Jawaib* within the press life of *al-Jawaib* in the almost-last three decades of the Ottomans between 1859 and 1887 (which was when publication stopped), utilising Ottoman archival documents.⁶ This particular period, with the relationships between *al-Jawaib*'s owners and editors, and the Ottoman authorities, was vital to be examined because, during that time, the Ottomans had faced significant domestic and international political and economic crises. There is no doubt that *al-Jawaib* was the spearhead of Arabic newspaper publications under the control of the Ottoman State. The appointment of Ahmad Faris as the Arabic editor of the *Takvimhane* in 1859⁷, and the launch of his newspaper, *al-Jawaib*, in 1861 coincided with the Ottoman *Tanzimat* reform movements, which was a continued attempt since Ahmed III (1703-1730), followed by Selim III's reform programme (1792-1806), successively implemented by Mahmud II (1808-1836), and later Abdülmecid (1839-1861).⁸ 1860 was significant because of the transition from Abdülmecid to Abdülaziz (1861-1876). The reform movement, commencing from the Decree of *Gülhane Hatt-ı Humayun*, or more popularly known as *Tanzimat*, was in line with significant political and civilisational communications with the Western European powers, with it also being under the enforcement or sanctions of those powers at certain times.⁹

The publishing of *al-Jawaib* could be considered a direct result of the socio-political change or pressure at the beginning of the second part of the 19th century. Muslim journalists and intellectuals, including their counterparts in other ethnic and religious groups in Muslim geographies and Europe, were constantly competing to diffuse their ideological stances in order to achieve nationalistic and religious objectives. In contemporary international developments, Muslim communities faced salient political challenges beyond North Africa, Egypt, Central Asia, India, China, and the Malay Archipelago.¹⁰ In this

Vilayeti celilelerine her hafta postasıyla gönderilmek üzere el-Cevaib gazetesinden iki yüz (200) ve kıfayet etmediği takdirde daha ziyade nüshanın ibraz suretiyle ahz ve ıstırası (!) mukteza-ı emr ve ferman ... padişahiden olmağla...” BOA, MB.İ.87.16.09.01.1299 (1 December 1881).

³ In this regard, it may be argued that the role and function of *al-Jawaib*, as an Arabic medium, was one of the latest examples of communication of diverse societies from North Africa, İstanbul, and Egypt sub-continents, and the Malay world through the Arabic language, which took stage historically for the first time in the 8th century C.E. (Himanshu Prabha Ray, “Introduction”, *The Archaeology of Knowledge Traditions of the Indian Ocean*, (ed.). Himanshu Prabha Ray, (Routledge, 2021): 7.

⁴ Geoffrey Roper, “Ahmad Faris al-Shidyāq and the Libraries of Europe and the Ottoman Empire”, *Libraries&Culture*, (Summer), Vol. 33, No. 3, (Orientalist Libraries and Orientalism), (1998): 233. *Al-Jawaib*, an Arabic newspaper, was published by Ahmad Faris (1801/04-20 September 1887) and his son Selim Faris (1826-1906) in the years between 1861 and 1884. (See: Atilla Çetin, ‘el-Cevaib’, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, VII, (1993): 435-436); Çetin, “El-Cevaib Gazetesi ve Yayını”, 476-7). It seems that the earliest date of publication of this newspaper in Cairo was in 1861. See, BOA, Y.PRK.AZJ.18.103.10.09.1308 (19 April 1891). The number of Arabic newspapers increased over time in Lebanon, Syria, and Cairo. Nevertheless, Ahmad Faris's birth year is written as 1804 on his gravestone (Rana Issa, “Carnal Feasting and Literary Scandal-How Ahmad al-Shidyāq Theorized the Literary”, *Hypotheses*, von Forum Transregionale Studien, (14 February), EUME/Issues, (2023): 7.

⁵ Çetin, “El-Cevaib Gazetesi ve Yayını”, 476; Ami Ayalon, “The Press and Publishing”, *Muslim and Modernity Culture and Society since 1800*, The New Cambridge History of Islam, Volume 6, (ed.), Robert W. Hefner, (Cambridge University Press, 2010): 576. (Note: The name of *al-Jawaib* is mentioned in the documents with other distinguished Turkish newspapers, such as *Takvim-i Vekai*, *Ceride-i Havadis*, *Tercüman-ı Ahval*. These newspapers were submitted to ‘*mabeyn-i Humayun*’ in Bab-ı Ali in the early stages but were later requested to be presented directly to the palace. BOA, A.MKT.NZD.402.85.25.08.1278 (25 February 1862). BOA, A.MKT.UM.545.89.04.09.1278 (5 March 1862).

⁶ Selim Faris mentions that *al-Jawaib* was founded by his father, Ahmad Faris Effendi in 1860 (Selim Faris (1887), *The Decline of the British Prestige in the East*, London: F. Fisher Unwin, p. vi). (Note: The study was limited to these years. Although Ahmad Faris passed away in 1887, his activities in the last three years in İstanbul are yet to be discovered. It is also possible to argue that he had strong engagement with the publication process of *al-Jawaib* in its last five years, from 1879 to 1884. It is highly probable that, after the ban of the newspaper was when he rejected publishing a critical review of Hidiv Ismail, ruler of Egypt in 1879.

⁷ BOA, A.MKT.NZD.294.89.11.04.1276 (7 November 1859).

⁸ M. Naeem Qureshi, *Ottoman Turkey, Atatürk, and Muslim South Asia: Perspectives, Perceptions and Responses*, (Oxford University Press, 2014): 58, 59. (Note: As stated by some authors, there was an attempt to print an Arabic newspaper *Takvimhane* before *al-Jawaib*. But without providing any reason, its publication was said to have ceased (Çetin, “El-Cevaib Gazetesi ve Yayını”, 478). For the details of *Takvimhane* institution, See, Necdet Öz, *Tabhane ile Takvimhane'nin Birleşmesi ve Basılan Eserler (1824-1840)*, *Yüksek Lisans Tezi*, (Master Thesis), İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Enstitüsü, Türk Tarihi Anabilim Dalı, Yakınçağ Tarih Bilim Dalı (2012).

⁹ During the reform era after the *Tanzimat*, Reşid Pasha, who was regarded as the mastermind behind the *Tanzimat*, had an inclination to work with the British, but his political disciples, Ali Pasha and Fuad Pasha, were closer to the French. From 1830 till 1870, the reform agenda was under certain directives by both these countries

(Cevdet Paşa, “Metternich'in Türkiye'ye dair sözleri üzerine düşünceler”, *Tezakeri* (1-12), (Yayınlayan: Cavid Baysun), (Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1953): xxi). No doubt the relationships between the Ottomans and these Western countries had become complicated because of the wars against the Russians throughout these decades, such as the Crimean War (1853-1856).

¹⁰ Çetin did not find out the primary sources related to the mentioned geographies himself, but he referred to “some sources and memoir” without providing any details (Çetin, “El-Cevaib Gazetesi ve Yayını”, 477, 478).

context, on the one hand, the Crimean War (1853-56) caused a certain degree of tension in the territorial sovereignty of the Ottomans. On the other, it triggered tangible and intangible collaborations among the Muslims; Indian Muslims faced significant political tension just after the 1857 Sepoy Mutiny, and political restrictions imposed by the British colonial rule; and the expansion of the Dutch military machine at the beginning of the century from the Palembang Sultanate (1659-1823) who gained territorial space and political importance up to North Sumatra by arriving at the borders of the Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam (1514-1903).

This preliminary article is a part of a larger research project. There were several rationales for focusing on the Ottoman archival documents till the year 1887. Ahmad Faris Efendi arrived in İstanbul as a newly converted Muslim, where he lived for the last 28 years of his life (1859-1887); he was first offered employment as a translator, chief/proofreader (*baş/musahhih*), and the editor of *Takvimhane*, and within one year, in 1859, he took the initiative to publish *al-Jawaib*.¹¹ There was an unavoidable limitation because there were multiple documents related to his newspaper, *al-Jawaib*, his son, Selim Faris, and other secondary subjects.¹² This newspaper was important for several reasons. The first is the intellectual calibre of the founding father, namely Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq, who was “a Maronite Lebanese who converted to Islam during his being in Tunisia in 1857”¹³ who contributed to the development of Ottoman journalism and intellectualism with his comprehensive knowledge and experience. He launched the first Arabic newspaper in İstanbul, *al-Jawaib*, which became considerably renown in and out of the Ottoman State.

This study’s guiding questions were: Why did the Ottoman government need to support an Arabic newspaper? How did the Ottoman political and bureaucratic elites perceive Ahmad Faris? Furthermore, how did the Ottoman documents portray Ahmad Faris and Selim Faris, and their newspaper, *al-Jawaib*? The answers to these questions were attempted in this article. These questions, which also implicitly included the objectives of this study, were suggested by Çetin, one of the earliest authors to have written Ottoman Press, and *al-Jawaib* in particular. He emphasised that the relationship between the newspapers and the state authorities could be determined from, for example, the contents of the newspapers, and their impact on Ottoman subjects. These approaches undoubtedly contributed to comprehending the Ottoman social structure.¹⁴

Why did Ahmad Faris Settle in İstanbul?

Ahmad Faris, the owner and editor of *al-Jawaib*, and his relationship with the Ottoman State authorities have yet to be comprehensively elaborated on based on Ottoman archival documents.¹⁵ This is undoubtedly related to his settlement in İstanbul, and the positive and negative conditions he faced in the initial years. In other words, determining why Ahmad Faris settled in İstanbul would be interesting. Even more so as he had chosen to settle in İstanbul after spending many years in Eastern countries, namely Beirut and Cairo, as well as Western ones, such as Malta, England, and France. Some sources emphasise that he was invited by the Ottoman authorities to run an Arabic newspaper in line with the state policies. However, there is another version that explains the reason for his appearing in İstanbul at the end of the 1850s.

There are two fundamental answers to this question, which considers both the international political landscape in the Ottoman State, and Ahmad Faris’s professional career. It could be argued that Ahmad Faris’s decision to continue his life in İstanbul, and his initiation of an Arabic newspaper, *al-Jawaib*, occurred amid emerging political dynamics and drastic events in the late decades of the 19th century within Ottoman societal and political spheres. First, the Ottomans were fighting against the Russian invasion of Crimea between 1853 and 1856. During this process, the Western and the Eastern nations

¹¹ The title of the newspaper was merely written as ‘*al-Jawaib*’. However, after being subsidised by the Ottoman State, there was the logo of the Ottoman State above the name of the newspaper. See: *al-Jawaib*, 14 June 1861 (6 Zilhicca 1277), No. 3, p. 1.

¹² Selim was one of two sons from Ahmad Faris’ first and Maronite wife. The name of his second son was Feyiz. His second wife was a British woman who also converted to Islam in Tunisia in 1857 BOA, HR.MKT.400.71.01.01.1279 (29 June 1862); Çetin, “El-Cevaib Gazetesi ve Yayını”, 477, f.n.2).

¹³ Roper, “Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq and the Libraries of Europe and the Ottoman Empire”, 233; Çetin, “El-Cevaib Gazetesi ve Yayını”, 477, f.n.2). He received invitation from the renown Tunisian statesman, Khary al-Din al-Tunisi (Roper, 1998: 241). Issa said that he received the name ‘Ahmad’ after his conversion, but she did not mention where the conversion had happened or what his previous name was (Issa, “Carnal Feasting and Literary Scandal-How Ahmad al-Shidyaq Theorized the Literary”, 2).

¹⁴ Çetin (1984), “El-Cevaib Gazetesi ve Yayını”, p. 475.

¹⁵ Çetin provides a summary of some portions from these Ottoman archival documents (Çetin, “El-Cevaib Gazetesi ve Yayını”, 480-1).

assisted the Ottomans for different reasons. Second, Ahmad Faris's personality and newspaper were new components of this era. Studying his communications with the political and bureaucratic elites and state departments during that time would be meaningful as they would reflect his relationships with the Ottoman palace and bureaucratic elites.

In the first stage, the international conditions should be discussed. The British and the French, in order to protect their geo-political and geo-economic interests against the expansion policy of the Russians, sided with the Ottomans, and proved their support by sending their troops for active engagement against the Russians. While the war continued, interest in the Ottoman geography in Europe, particularly by England and France, increased. Besides the state apparatus, civil society organisations and missionary groups were interested in operating in Ottoman territories, particularly İstanbul. While this stage of international politics influenced the political conditions in the Ottomans, it is evident that Ahmad Faris, like other individuals -including journalists- and civil organisations foresaw a salient opportunity being in İstanbul. It was obvious that, during the war, there were certain demands for development on the battlefield in public and state institutions.¹⁶ There was a particular infrastructure, such as to advocate for journalistic activities. Since the Crimean War, the British government contributed to developing the Ottoman communication infrastructure by investing in coded signals over distance through wires, making direct telegraphic communication between the Ottomans and the European nations possible.

Regarding the second aspect, Ahmad Faris's obstacles in his career in England were another salient factor in his decision to settle in İstanbul. Although he was known among the missionary and academic circles, he encountered difficulties in getting employment as an Arabic instructor at a university in England. Furthermore, he was not happy to work with the mission institutions anymore. He had intended to focus on his intellectual endeavours in journalism and republishing classical Arabic books primarily related to linguistics and literature that were later regarded as pioneering works in the field in İstanbul.¹⁷ Besides, it could be argued that the influential and intellectual Arab diaspora in İstanbul were hungry to consume Arabic newspapers.

Ahmet Faris's life in İstanbul could be examined in terms of two different periods. The first is during the reign of Abdülaziz (1861-1876), and the second is Abdülhamit II's (1876-1909). Nevertheless, there were certain limitations as the scarce data available did not allow for such a clear division. With Ahmad Faris's passing in 1887,¹⁸ there was no data about his activities in İstanbul during his final three years. In addition, as observed in some documents, his son, Selim Faris, took over responsibility for the *al-Jawaib* newspaper and the publication house in the last almost-ten years because the aged Ahmad Faris was no longer very active. Though this period of Selim Faris's was short, the communications and correspondence between him and the Ottoman authorities, including Abdülhamit II, had become quite frustrating for both sides. Although Selim Faris left for London in 1898, the Ottoman authorities continued to track his activities owing to his engagement with the opposition groups against the government.

Initiation of *al-Jawaib*

¹⁶ For instance, during these three years, *Takvim-i Vekai*, a well-established state newspaper had published 69 issues, and from time to time, printed extra supplements when needed as well. Similarly, *Ceride-i Havadis* also gained fame during this war through news that followed the developments closely (Hüseyin Tüfekçioğlu, *Sosyolojik Açıdan Gazete ve Osmanlı Gazeteciliğinin Temellendirilmesi, Doktora Tezi* (Ph.D. Dissertation), İstanbul Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Sosyoloji Bölümü, (1993): 77, 83).

¹⁷ Some of the early publications of these source were: *al-Bakura ash-Shahiyya nahwa l-lugha al-ingliziyya*, Malta 1836; Its second edition was printed at the *al-Jawaib* publication house in İstanbul (1299 d.H./1881); *al-Lafif fi kulli ma 'na zarif*, Malta 1839; *al-Muhawara al-unsıyya fi l-lughatain al-arabiyya wa-l-ingliziyya*, Malta 1840; *al-Agwiba l-galiyya fi l-usul an-nahawiyya*, Malta 1841. Eine Abkürzung der Forschungsarbeit von Mutran Girmanus Farahat. (For details, see, <https://ibn-rushd.org/wp/de/2002/11/01/abier-bushnaq-3rd-issue-2002-de/>.) This publication venture also included one unique travelogue entitled *Kashf al-Mukhabba* (Unveiling the Hidden Culture of Europe), first published in 1283/1867 in Tunisia. This was al-Shidyay's travel book, containing his experiences in Europe, specifically England and France (Mohammed B. Alwan, "The History and Publications of al-Jawa'ib Press", *MELA Notes*, (May), No. 11, (1977): 4). It is argued that this was a forgotten tradition in the Muslim World, and was revived by the work of Ahmad Faris.

¹⁸ Çetin, "El-Cevaib Gazetesi ve Yayını", 477, f.n.2

Ahmad Faris initiated the publication of *al-Jawaib* on May 31, 1861, and did so for almost one year.¹⁹ *Al-Jawaib* was a weekly newspaper printed in 434x290mm size. It had four pages, which included Domestic News (*al-Hawadith ad-Dahiliyyah*) and Foreign News (*al-Hawadith al-Harijiyyah*). The layout was similar to other newspapers printed during those decades. Besides the aforementioned general titles, the news could be separated from each other based on the references to countries mentioned at the beginning of paragraphs. On page four, sections such as *Hawadith-i Shati* provided the latest news. Furthermore, the advertisement column (*İlân*), as understood from earlier issues, informed about book publications and the like, and there was economic news under the section of “*is’ar al-nukud*” and “*is’ar al-harir*”.²⁰

On the other hand, Domestic News primarily informed about issues relevant to public administration and political subjects, including news about the ruling elite, or the *padişah*. Foreign News was a collection of certain translated news from Western newspapers and wired subscriptions to Western news agencies. It seemed that it was dominated by news from America, France, England, Germany, Russia, Poland, and Italy. Since Ahmad Faris and his son had linguistic capabilities and acquired skills in publication processes, they mostly translated the news from Western news agencies and newspapers. The news was separated from each other by the names of the country in brackets. Besides that, there was constant information and news about the Arab regions of the Ottoman State, including Tunisia, Egypt, Lebanon, and Syria. News and letters emerged from other parts of the Muslim world as well, such as India, Afghanistan, Zanzibar, Madagascar, Sumatra, China, Japan, and Siam.

A general perception was that *al-Jawaib* had become a potent tool for the Ottoman ruling elite to introduce its political ideology on a global scale, and challenge the attacks, in particular, from the Western media. Nevertheless, it could be argued that, beyond the Ottoman elite’s utilising *al-Jawaib* for its purpose, particularly in Arabic-speaking regions in the Ottoman territories, the other Muslim communities in diverse geographies facilitated the growing importance of this newspaper by engaging with it through various mechanisms, such as buying subscriptions, and sending letters and news related to their socio-political conditions. This perspective shed light upon the construction of global communication among the Muslim societies during the decades that *al-Jawaib* was in print.

Although Ahmad Faris had an ambitious venture and dedicated his energy to the publication with his unceasing searching, writing, and publishing, as stated by Roper, “satisfaction and complacency were not among Faris’s characteristics”.²¹ Even though there was a robust Arab community in İstanbul who his core customer group was, Ahmad Faris had to stop publication of *al-Jawaib* because of increasing expenditures, and a reducing number of subscribers. During that critical stage, the Ottoman authorities suggested the translation of certain pieces of news from both domestic and foreign sections into Ottoman Turkish.²² However, this did not seem to help increase the market value of *al-Jawaib* in practice, and the decision for publication closure came in 1862 after 32 issues.²³

It could be argued that the intellectual ambition of Ahmad Faris forced him to reinstate the publication of *al-Jawaib* in the very first weeks of 1863 after he was granted a particular subsidy by order of the Palace (*irade-i seniyye*). This subsidy funded the paper, from which the state bought copies.²⁴ Certainly, during this period, the Ottoman government had political intention to take certain measures against the nationalist movements among the diverse ethnic nationalities at the state’s borders, and the movements

¹⁹ Çetin, “El-Cevaib Gazetesi ve Yayını”, 480. (For details, see: *al-Jawaib*, 21 Zilkade 1277 (21.05.1861), No. 1, p. 1. (Note: Roper states that the publication year of *al-Jawaib* was 1862 (“Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq and the Libraries of Europe and the Ottoman Empire”, 242). In fact, this is wrong based on the very first issue of the newspaper, and the documents in the Ottoman archives.)

²⁰ Çetin, “el-Cevaib”, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, 435. (For details, see: *al-Jawaib*, 6 Zilhicca 1277 (14 June 1861), No. 3, p. 1.)

²¹ Roper, “Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq and the Libraries of Europe and the Ottoman Empire”, 242.

²² Indeed, the Ottoman government ordered Ahmad Faris and Ağah Effendi to translate the “*al-hawadith ad-Dahiliyyah*” and “*al-Hawadith al-Harijiyyah*” into Turkish: “... bazı mebahatı ve emval-i dahiliyye ve hariciyyeden münasib olan havadisı neşr için masarîf ve taksimi (!) kendisine aid olmak üzere emsali mesellî, bir kaç günde bir defa Türkçe ibare jurnal tabını ... resmîyye itası ...” BOA, İMMS. 19.822.06.11.1276 (26 May 1860). The second closure of the *al-Jawaib*’s publication happened after Ahmad Faris rejected publishing an article targeting Hidiv Ismail, the ruler of Egypt in 1879, that was ordered by the Ottoman government (Hüseyin Gazi Topdemir; Polat, İbrahim Ethem Polat, “Türk Matbaacılığının Gelişiminde Bir Sayfa: Cevaib Matbaası”, *Nüsha: Şarkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi*, (Journal of Oriental Studies), IV. Cilt, 14. Sayı, (2004): 88).

²³ Çetin, “el-Cevaib”, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, 435. (Note: Although Ahmad Faris ventured into publishing *al-Jawaib* himself in this first stage, some authors argue that, it was actually initiated by the material support of the Ottoman court on 2 July 1861 (Orhan Koloğlu, *Kebikeç*, Sayı 2. (1995): 130; Çetin, “El-Cevaib Gazetesi ve Yayını”, 477 / f.n.2).

²⁴ The republication of *al-Jawaib* through the state’s material support was on January 3, 1863. Çetin refers to a BOA document coded as follows: *İrade-i Seniyye*, 12 Rajab 1279/3 January 1863 (Ibid). Nevertheless, the BOA document which the author had found mentions a release from the support in February 1862. See: BOA, A.MKT.NZD.397.93.06.08.1278 (6 February 1862).

that had already existed in various cities in Europe materially and morally supported vernacular press published in their own languages in the Ottoman lands.²⁵

The Current Literature about Ahmad Faris and *al-Jawaib*

Indeed, many researchers and academicians have discussed Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq and his intellectual endeavours, including his newspaper, *al-Jawaib*. Nevertheless, two distinct circles focused on this subject emerged. The first is the Turkish writers who discovered *al-Jawaib* and had produced academic papers and theses since the 1980s, mainly in Turkish. These studies considered Ahmad Faris, the editor, and his newspaper within the history of Ottoman journalism.²⁶ Others, based on the current study, included Çetin (1984), Koloğlu (1995), Civelek (1997), Özyer (1997),²⁷ Ergin (2002), Aytaç (2002), Topdemir and Polat (2004), Ülker (2014), Dinçer (2018), Çalan (2018), Uçan (2021), and Erken (2023), though these works are not explored in detail in this article. Nevertheless, the discussion about journalism within the context of Ahmad Faris and *al-Jawaib* during almost the whole second part of the 19th century in Ottoman society should be separated into two distinct studies. The first is the academic work conducted as a thesis, dissertation, or academic article; the second is on individual journalists such as Selim Faris, and general journalism in the Ottoman State.²⁸

Analyses on Ottoman newspapers, and their relationships with international developments, including Muslim societies and geographies, have been relatively new. For instance, Koloğlu, a senior print media historian, referred to only a few authors, such as Korkmaz Alemdar and Ziyad Ebüzziya, who addressed this subject in their articles.²⁹ However, it appears that Koloğlu had missed a few critical documents, such as Çetin's article (1984) and Tüfekçioğlu's thesis (1993). While Çetin briefly informed about *al-Jawaib* utilising a few Ottoman Archive (BOA) texts, Tüfekçioğlu dealt with the Ottoman newspapers from a sociological perspective, including their importance in international relations. In addition, after 1995, there had been some academic writings, including theses and dissertations, written about the Ottoman newspapers. Some of these, at least, could be regarded under the category Koloğlu had emphasised in his article. Koloğlu also noted that the non-Turkish media ventures had been chiefly neglected.³⁰ However, some researchers and academicians have also focused on this area in the last quarter-century. In addition, a few theses have also been produced.

Although the aforementioned works are salient, finding those with solid, critical and interpretative sociological perspectives is challenging. In other words, the academic writings about the Ottoman newspapers, or those printed and supported by the Ottoman state, had adapted mostly a narrative-based approach, except for a few, such as Tüfekçioğlu's (1993). They primarily documented relevant elements without going into significant detailed analysis. However, the subject is addressed from a different vantage point in this article.

The second one is international circles, which mostly revolved on the intellectual activities of Ahmad Faris, particularly his contribution to the Arab Renaissance (*Nahda*) in the context of Arabic language and literature, the process of which was initiated by Rifa'a al-Tahtawi (1801-1873). There were a few works about Ahmad Faris and his newspaper, *al-Jawaib*. For instance, the latest works were theses

²⁵ Çetin, "El-Cevaib Gazetesi ve Yayını", 475, 480; Tüfekçioğlu, *Sosyolojik Açından Gazete ve Osmanlı Gazeteciliğinin Temellendirilmesi*, 69.

²⁶ For instance, Çetin has written two articles to the author's knowledge. The first one was a journal article published in 1984 by *Tarih Dergisi*, İstanbul University, and the second was a brief article in an encyclopedia (DİA, 435, 436). Although he refers to some Ottoman Archival Documents (BOA) in the latter, he did not elaborate in detail, neither did he compare the relevant themes with other sources in the West and East. However, he provides some details in his previous article. Nevertheless, when he refers to the BOA documents, he states that, "There are only a few documents in archive," and he provides them in order, such as *Maarif-i Umumiyye Nezareti*, 24 Jumadil Awal 1279 (17 November 1862) (Çetin, "El-Cevaib Gazetesi ve Yayını", 478). It is highly probable that, after several decades, the efforts in classifying archival materials have improved, and today, there are more materials available. There are almost 30 documents of diverse classifications in existence. It can be argued that the mentioned or similar works of Ahmad Faris and his newspaper, *al-Jawaib*, have yet to be explored utilising different methodologies and sources, especially Eastern sources. In addition, Civelek (1997) wrote a thesis about Ahmad Faris and *al-Jawaib*. However, he focused only on Ahmad Faris's literary aspects, and did not seem to have developed comparative or analytical approaches.

²⁷ The thesis of Özyer is not accessible in the Turkish Higher Education portal. However, considering the title and abstract, it looks similar to the Dissertation completed by Civelek in another university in the same year. (Özyer, Kani, 19. Asır Arap edebiyatında Ahmed Faris Şidyaq'ın yeri (hayatı, ilmi ve edebi şahsiyeti, gazeteciliği / The place of Ahmed Faris as-Shidyaq in 19th century Arabic literature – his life, scientific and literary personality, his journalism), Uludağ Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Temel İslam Bilimleri Ana Bilim Dalı, 1997.

²⁸ Selim Faris passed away in Paris in 1908 (BOA, HR.TH.377.9.23.06.1909).

²⁹ Koloğlu, *Kebikeç*, 127.

³⁰ Ibid.

written by Amro (2020)³¹ and al-Houry Salem (2020). Those that contributed to the understanding of Ahmad Faris's intellectuality were Cachia (1962), Alwan (1977, 1970), Schidiak (1975), Ayalon (2010, 1995, 1992, 1987), Roper (1998, 1988), Agius (1990), al-Bagdadi (1999), Labaki (2020), and El-Ariss (2013).

BOA Texts and Dialogue between Ahmad Faris and the Ottoman Authorities

The correspondence between Ahmad Faris and his newspaper with the various bureaus of the Ottoman government could be considered as dialogue and bargaining processes. To observe these processes, it was necessary to evaluate the available data critically. Classifying these primary documents into themes facilitated understanding of the relevancy of the subject in the eyes of the Ottoman political and bureaucratic authorities, and the manner in which the Ottoman authorities had emphasised the publication and the editor of *al-Jawaib*, among others.³²

The available data showed that the correspondences were mostly Ahmad Faris's professional life and financial issues. These included his salary scheme, payments to his divorced wife, the publication of *al-Jawaib* in Arabic, and promotion of its translation in Ottoman Turkish; some crucial news and articles in *al-Jawaib*, its growing attraction in diverse geographies, and the Ottoman authorities' reactions to it; and Selim Faris's communication with the State authorities in the last few years.³³ In this context, the various bureaus were epitomised in the following. The classifications were based on general themes, such as the owner/editor and manager, and *al-Jawaib*, financial issues, the scope and importance of the newspaper, and Selim Faris between 1859 and 1894.

Sixty-five (66) documents were found from the BOA search portal. The documents were subsequently categorised under the specific themes. Twenty-six (26) documents were related to Ahmad Faris (39,39%). The number of documents about *al-Jawaib* was 25 (37.87%), including issues with requests of *al-Jawaib*, and news translated from European newspapers. Selim Faris was contained in 14 documents (21.21%), and only one document contained both Ahmad Faris and Selim Faris (1.51%). The subdivisions of these documents were as follows: i) his being a proofreader (one document); ii) book publication process (two); iii) journal publications before *al-Jawaib* (four); iv) publication of *al-Jawaib* (four); v) decorations/insignia (*nişan*) awarded to him (three);³⁴ vi) complaints (two); and vii) financial situations (ten).

Between 1859 and 1870, there were 28 documents. However, there were none for six years, between 1871 and 1876. Subsequently, between 1876 and 1887, there were 38 documents. Ahmad Faris was in İstanbul during the last two years of Abdülmecid (1859-1861), witnessing the developments during the reign of Abdülaziz (1861-1876), and the first 11 years of Abdülhamit II's (1876-1887) until he passed away.

Ahmad Faris: His Conversion and İstanbul Experience

The conversion of Ahmad Faris, and his travel to İstanbul seemed to be closely related. However, there is little detail about this, nor is it known when exactly he had arrived in İstanbul. Nevertheless, there have been estimations. While Alwan suggested that he must have been in İstanbul in 1860³⁵ with Roper agreeing,³⁶ based on Roper, Ahmad Faris had been looking for opportunities to settle in İstanbul for a long time.³⁷ Ayalon had a similar point of view, stating that Ahmad Faris had arrived in İstanbul in

³¹ This was an undergraduate work, but is believed to provide some relevant insights.

³² For statistical data see Table 1. And for classification of the documents see Table 2: Document categories.

³³ The details of these documents are provided below, under separate titles.

³⁴ BOA, İ.DH.781.63525.28.02.1296 (21 February 1878); BOA, MB.İ.68.89.9.1.1298 (12 December 1880); BOA, İ.DH.840.67573.09.01.1299 (1 December 1881).

³⁵ Alwan, "The History and Publications of al-Jawa'ib Press", 4.

³⁶ It seems that the earliest reference to the name Ahmad Faris in the Ottoman archival documents was on May 26, 1860. (BOA, İ.MMS. 19.822.06.11.1276 (26 May 1860); BOA, A.MKT.MHM.1873.23.18.12.1276 (7 July 1860). There's no doubt that this was slightly different from Alwan's opinion.

³⁷ Roper, "Ahmad Faris al-Shidyag and the Libraries of Europe and the Ottoman Empire", 233, 242.

1859.³⁸ However, based on other data, Ahmad Faris was already in İstanbul in 1859. There had been a document referring to him, and one of his Arabic books had been printed by *Takvimhane*³⁹ in İstanbul.

The most essential matter is how and under what conditions had Ahmad Faris converted to Islam, as by the time he arrived in İstanbul, he had already accepted Islam. Although the details are yet to be uncovered, this conversion occurred during his brief visit to Tunisia, after his conversations with the local ruler.⁴⁰ A document from his meeting with the Ottoman Shaikh'ul Islam just after he arrived in İstanbul informed about this meeting, referring to Ahmad Faris as *muhtedi* (newly convert): "...geçenlerde Şeyhülislam ile müşerref olan Ahmed Faris Efendi..."⁴¹ Another possible reason why Shaikh'ul Islam had met with Ahmad Faris would be for his Arabic language and literature expertise although it was unclear from the Ottoman documents whether the established madrasahs and high-ranking *ulama* utilised his knowledge and expertise.

In this early stage, another personal issue highlighted in the document was his divorce from his second wife after a few years (1862).⁴² His British wife had also converted to Islam together with him in Tunisia. Nevertheless, further details of Ahmad Faris's personal affairs have yet to be found. His conversion to Islam was observed during this phase, with his being named Ahmad essential to it. However, whether he became Muslim pragmatically to gain the favour of the Ottoman Sultan or palace circles in order to be selected to run the newspaper is still questionable. This conversion was the last proof of his existential stance towards religions, as with his engagement with the Arabic language. As stated by Mende,⁴³ Ahmad Faris had a greater ambition to comprehend language, and this intellectual curiosity was reflected in his exploration of religions from an early age as he sought to find the best one for him.

Ahmad Faris: A Journalist-Intellectual

Ahmad Faris was appointed as the proofreader for the Arabic section of *Takvimhane*, with another document referring to him as the chief proofreader. *Hazine-i Celile*, rather than *Takvimhane*, would also pay his salary.⁴⁴ Furthermore, in a short time, he was given responsibility as the editor of *al-Jawaib* and its Turkish version, or at least the translation of some of its sections. These were published by Ahmad Faris in *Tabhane-i Amire* and submitted to the palace.⁴⁵ In following correspondences, it was noted that the Arabic newspaper published by Ahmad Faris was permitted to be printed in Ottoman Turkish.⁴⁶

His name was referred to in different contexts as *effendi*,⁴⁷ *musahhih*, *başmusahhih*, *muharrir*, *imtiyaz-ı sahibi*, and *nişan sahibi* in the Ottoman archival documents. This data indicates how he was perceived and received by the Ottoman authorities and institutions. Furthermore, it was also stated that the Ottoman government acknowledged Ahmad Faris's expertise and intellectual calibre from the very beginning, calling him "*ulum-u Arabiye'de fazl ve kemal dergah olan Ahmed Farisi ...*"⁴⁸ (... Ahmad Farisi, the epitome of virtue and perfection in the Arabic sciences ...), with his professional qualification described as "*fazl ve kemalden olarak tanzim etmekte olacağı Arabi el ibare jurnal...*"⁴⁹ The newspaper's efficacy was thanks to his appointment as the proofreader (*musahhih*) for the Arabic section of the *Takvimhane-i Amire* (the State Printing House), where an expert of the Arabic language was urgently needed by the authorities (*Takvimhanece Arap musahhihliğine şedit lüzumu müsta'ni*

³⁸ Çetin asserts that Ahmad Faris had arrived in İstanbul in 1857 after he converted to Islam in the same year in Tunisia ("El-Cevaib Gazetesi ve Yayını", 477: f.n.2), whereas Roper states that he came to İstanbul in 1860 and was appointed at "Sultan's press" ("Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaaq and the Libraries of Europe and the Ottoman Empire", 233).

³⁹ BOA, A.MKT.MHM.173.15.19.05.1276 (14 December 1859). *Takvimhane*, which was founded in 1831 to publish *Takvim-i Veka-i*, the first state-sponsored newspaper, was also called *Takvim-i Vekayi'hane-i Amire*, *Takvim-i Vekayi'hane Nezareti* (For details, see Gülden Sarıyıldız, "Takvimhane", *DİA*, Cild Ek-2, (2019): 573).

⁴⁰ A few documents refer to his conversion before coming to İstanbul. See: BOA, HR.MKT.400.71.01.01.1279 (29 June 1862).

⁴¹ BOA, A.MKT.NZD.294.89.11.04.1276 (7 November 1859).

⁴² BOA, A.MKT.NZD.412.7.14.10.1278 (14 April 1862); BOA, HR.MKT.400.71.01.01.1279 (29 June 1862). (Note: Unfortunately his wife's name is not provided in the documents.)

⁴³ Tuğrul Mende, "Christian Junge: On Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaaq and 'Exposing Words'", (December 14), *Arablit*, Arabic Quarterly, (A Magazine of Arabic Literature in Translation), (2019).

⁴⁴ BOA, A.MKT.NZD.360.26.21.01.1278 (29 July 1861).

⁴⁵ BOA, İ.DH.457.30379.06.12.1276 (25 June 1860).

⁴⁶ BOA, MB.İ.16.121.15.06.1278 (18 December 1861).

⁴⁷ BOA, A.MKT.NZD.369.9.26.03.1278 (1 October 1861); BOA, A.MKT.MHM.173.15.19.05.1276 (14 December 1859); BOA, A.MKT.NZD.360.26.21.01.1278 (29 July 1861); BOA, A.MKT.NZD.375.50.25.04.1278. (30 October 1861).

⁴⁸ BOA, A.MKT.MHM.173.15.19.05.1276 (14 December 1859).

⁴⁹ BOA, A.MKT.NZD.360.26.21.01.1278 (29 July 1861).

beyan ve işar bulunmağla). He was granted 2,500 qirsh as his monthly salary (*iki bin beş yüz kuruş maaş ile / with the salary of two thousand five hundred kuruş*).⁵⁰

Ahmad Faris mainly translated and wrote news and articles in *al-Jawaib*. However, there is no detailed information on this because no writers' names appeared in the news or articles of the examined issues. Nevertheless, some documents referred to him as the writer (*muharrir*) of *al-Jawaib*.⁵¹

Once he initiated his journalistic venture in the form of the *al-Jawaib* newspaper, he was called "*imtiyaz-ı sahibi*"⁵², "*sahib-i imtiyazı*"⁵³, and "*el-Cevab gazetesi sahibi imtiyazı Ahmed Faris Efendi*"⁵⁴. The Ottoman government and political elite recognised his contribution to the state through his journalism. A few references supported this stance of the Ottoman State: "*Saltanat-ı Seniyye lehinde yazılarıyla hizmette bulunan el-Cevaib gazetesi imtiyaz sahibinin...*" This was a statement released against a complaint made by the owner of *Semeratü'l fûnun*, a newspaper published in Syria.⁵⁵ "*Semeratü'l fûnun nam gazetede, el-Cevab gazetesi sahibi imtiyazı Ahmed Faris Efendi aleyhinde makaleler yayınlamasından dolayı Ahmet Faris Efendi tarafından vuku bulan şikayet üzerine Semeratü'l-fûnun gazetesi sahibi-i imtiyazının katıyye bir daha böyle uygunsuz yayınlar yapmasının men olunmasının Suriye Vilayeti'ne tebliği...*" which concisely informed about the Ottoman authorities' support of Ahmad Faris.⁵⁶

The Ottoman authorities appreciated his contribution to the state policies, and for that reason, awarded him the Fourth-Class Order of Osmani⁵⁷: "*Ahmed Faris Efendi'ye dördüncü rütbeden nişan-i Osmani ihsan buyurulmasına mebni muamelei lazime ita-i ifası mukteza-i emr ve ferman olunur padişahiden olmağla...*"⁵⁸

Ahmad Faris and Agâh Efendi were assigned to work together on Turkish journals (*ceride* and *jurnal*), as mentioned in two documents⁵⁹, which were dated May and July 1860. Another document stated that Ahmad Faris was permitted to publish a Turkish translation of the *al-Jawaib* in December 1861.

There were four documents referring to Ahmad Faris's financial situation with his divorced wife.⁶⁰ One of them mentioned that his wife's salary document had been burnt, and that 250 qirsh was granted to her: "*Ahmet Faris Efendi'nin zevesine maaş tahsisatından tahsis ve ita ettirilen şehriyari iki yüz elli (250) gurusun sureti tahsisi hıfz (!) olan varakanın mahzen (!) olmasından...*" and "*Ahmed Faris Efendi'nin zevcesine maaş tahsisinden tahsis ve ita ettirilen şehriyari iki yüz elli (250) gurusun sureti tahsisi hakkında olan varakanın mahzen olduğundan...*"⁶¹ Another related document disclosed that the mentioned 250-qirsh salary to his wife was only paid once: "... *zevci sabıkım Ahmed Faris Efendi'nin...cari ahir-i gayesine kadar iki yüz elli (250) gurus maaşımı verecek bu ana kadar bir kere verib(!)*" Since her salary was not paid regularly, she was left in a vulnerable position to the extent that she could not pay the rent, and her landlord was threatening to throw her belongings away: "...*meblağ-ı mezkure gayetle iş'ar-ı ihtiyaç ile muhtaç olup müstecar olduğum hane sahibi kiradan... için eşyalarımı... cariyelerine sokağa atacağından aman efendim bir kimse maaşlarımı merkumu el yevm verilmesi yahud... devletlerinden... ihsan buyurulması...*"⁶²

⁵⁰ BOA, A.MKT.NZD.294.89.11.04.1276 (7 November 1859). This data provides some insight into how Ahmad Faris was a high-calibre scholar in Arabic language and literature. During that time, and even before his arrival in İstanbul, there was a strong Arab community, particularly from Syria and Egypt. However, the Ottoman authorities had not appointed anyone among them, but they did when Ahmad Faris was in İstanbul. His position was also referred to as '*başmusahhih*' (the chief proofreader) in one document: "*Takvimhane başmusahhihi Ahmed Faris Efendi'nin hasletinden mahsus olan iki bin beş yüz (2500) gurus maaş her nasılsa kalmış. See, BOA, İ.DH.479.32240.14.04.1278 (19 October 1861).*"

⁵¹ BOA, İ.DH.781.63525.28.02.1296 (21 February 1878); BOA, İ.DH.483.32515.14.06.1278 (17 December 1861).

⁵² BOA, MB.İ.68.89.9.1.1298 (12 December 1880); BOA, İ.DH.840.67573.09.01.1299 (1 December 1881).

⁵³ BOA, İ.DH.1239.97040.11.01.1309 (17 August 1891).

⁵⁴ BOA, MB.İ.113.182.18.03.1300 (27 January 1883).

⁵⁵ BOA, MB.İ.116.27.02.05.1300 (11 March 1883).

⁵⁶ The name of the newspaper was mistakenly written as "el-Cevab". BOA, MB.İ.113.182.18.03.1300 (27 January 1883).

⁵⁷ BOA, MB.İ.68.89.9.1.1298 (12 December 1880).

⁵⁸ BOA, İ.DH.840.67573.09.01.1299 (1 December 1881).

⁵⁹ BOA, İ.MMS. 19.822.06.11.1276 (26 May 1860); BOA, A.MKT.MHM.1873.23.18.12.1276 (7 July 1860).

⁶⁰ BOA, A.MKT.NZD.412.7.14.10.1278 (14 April 1862); BOA, HR.MKT.400.71.01.01.1279 (29 June 1862). This was the second wife of Ahmad Faris whom he married in England, and she had converted to Islam when they were together in Tunisia. However, the reason why they divorced, and her name is not mentioned in any documents.

⁶¹ BOA, MVL.465.64.11.11.1281 (7 April 1865).

⁶² BOA, MVL.471.66.19.12.1281 (15 May 1865). This text seems to have been written by his wife.

Al-Jawaib

There were 25 documents related to diverse aspects of the *al-Jawaib*, including its popularity and eventual closure by the Ottoman authorities. This category included the publication process of the newspapers, subsidisation by the Ottoman government, its news and opinion writings, temporary suspension and complaint letters sent in by readers.

What Do the Documents of the Ottoman Archives Tell Us about al-Jawaib?

It could be deduced that the Ottoman government utilised the subsidisation programme of *al-Jawaib* in their favour. Although there was no complete subsidy programme, or detailed information about the earliest funding process and subsidy amounts, the later stages showed the growing interference of the European powers and their print media in the Ottoman State's domestic and foreign affairs. When the Ottomans, from the beginning of the Abdülaziz era (1861), decided to subsidise an international newspaper such as *al-Jawaib*, they aimed to equipose the arguments in the Western European press, which caused significant harm to the Ottomans' domestic and international relationships.

There was some news about the Ottoman State, its rulers, and ethnic peoples in international newspapers, particularly the Western European newspapers. Some of these were utilised as a soft power to cause stress among the Ottoman ruling elite. Since the print media reached every corner of the world, including the Ottoman territories and other regions where Muslim communities lived under the yoke of the Western colonialists, the Ottoman rulers, such as Abdülaziz and Abdülhamid II, comprehended the significance of international media. For this purpose, Arabic, an international language, was selected as the medium of communication in the print media. Although some Arabic newspapers had already been in the market, especially in North Africa, Egypt, and Syria, the Ottoman authorities decided to reach international Muslim communities through Arabic newspapers to challenge the false arguments of Western media.

As observed in Ottoman archival documents, the authorities learned of false news about Abdülhamit II, where they stated that he had been assassinated by a secret organisation (*cemiyet-i fesadiyye*). This was disseminated in an article in one of the London-based newspapers, which seemed similar to the assassination issues against the Russian Emperor. However, this organisation, also called the secret ally (*ittifak-ı hafıyye*) in İstanbul, based on allies of various groups, was constituted.⁶³ These types of false news aimed to create political chaos in Russia and the Ottoman State.

Undeniably, the relationship between the editor of *al-Jawaib* and the Ottoman governmental agencies had not been always harmonious, and in fact became precarious from time to time, particularly in the last few years. As such, disputes emerged occasionally, but these were sometimes obvious. The first was in the initial year of financial constraints, when the government could not pay the proposed salary of 2,500 qirsh, as mentioned earlier, to Ahmad Faris. In the Ottoman archival documents, *al-Jawaib* was banned during certain periods, and the subsidisation programme could not run for almost 20 years of publication. Relevant data on the subsidy programme were unable to be found, except for a few documents in the late years. For instance, at nearly the end of this programme, one document mentioned that the amount of around 200 Liras, which was intended to fund all the *al-Jawaib* issues, could not be given to the editor owing to the financial situation in the Ottoman State. Furthermore, the order to subsidise the publication of *al-Jawaib* came from the Palace,⁶⁴ but its extent and duration are not known.

Details about Al-Jawaib

The *al-Jawaib* was published once a week, translated from Turkish and French, and had an annual subscription of 150 qirsh in İstanbul. For foreign countries, there were additional charges for postage. The price of each copy was 3.5 qirsh, and the cost of publishing an advertisement in it was 5 qirsh.

⁶³ BOA, Y.PRK.TKM.15.8.1.15.8; 13.9.1306 (13 May 1889).

⁶⁴ BOA, Y.MTV.13.74; 11.03.1301 (10 January 1884). There seems to be confusion among the authorities who discussed the amount as not 250, but 200 Liras (Ibid.). To comprehend this subsidy amount, one can compare it to the price of a single issue of *al-Jawaib*, which was 3.5 qirsh. ("Tamhidah", *Al-Jawaib*, No. 4, 13 Zilhicca 1277 (21.06.1861), No. 4, p. 1). 100 qirsh was equal to 1 lira. Another example may give a more proper understanding: When Abdul Rasul requested financial support for his Persian paper entitled '*Gayret*', it was stated that he needed 20 Ottoman liras for essential printing materials for six months (BOA, Y.PRK.EŞA.2.54.08.03.1298 (2 February 1881). The proposed monthly salary for Ahmad Faris was 2,500 qirsh when we has appointed as the proofreader for the Arabic section of *Takvimhane* in November 1859. BOA, A.MKT.NZD.294.89.11.04.1276 (7 November 1859).

There was no charge for news that benefitted the public.⁶⁵ It was sold at the flourishing printing house, and with Kamil Efendi, a bookseller in Beyazit. Letters sent from abroad had to have postage fees fully paid. Since this venture had begun as an experiment, agents were not appointed to distribute the newspaper in foreign countries at the time.⁶⁶ This could have been seen as an invitation to the readers to submit any relevant news and developments to the editors of *al-Jawaib*. Indeed, as traced in the Ottoman documents, readers from diverse geographies, such as Morocco, Gazza, and Sumatra, communicated by sending letters and telegrams to the *al-Jawaib*.⁶⁷

Based on the versions we received from Atatürk Kitaplığı, İstanbul, the first issues seemed to have not been professionally printed. Furthermore, the masthead was not entirely completed.⁶⁸

Al-Jawaib became a source material for both the Ottoman State and the Western countries that hoped to understand the international relationships and developments in the relevant geographies, particularly those in Ottoman territories. This was stated in the newspaper's masthead, that "most of the content of *al-Jawāib* is translated from European languages." That means that the content of the news in the *al-Jawaib* transmitted the developments in the European countries. Hence, this was probably the Ottoman government's rationale for closely observing the *al-Jawaib* issues.⁶⁹ Indeed, the Ottoman government intentionally ordered Ahmad Faris and Ağah Effendi to translate the *al-Hawadith ad-Dahiliyyah* and *al-Hawadith al-Harijiyyah* into Turkish.⁷⁰

The correspondences between institutions such as *Maliye*, *Mabeyn*, and *Takvimhane* proved that the print media was under the strict control of the ruling authority. The drafts of the newspapers had to be submitted to certain bureaucrats, but later, they would be reviewed by the Sultan's office. That was not an extraordinary situation; in fact, it had been the norm since the beginning of the newspaper's publication.⁷¹

The state authorities provided a license, and subsidised the publication of *al-Jawaib*, with several documents within the selected period referring to it.⁷² The newspaper was referred to in the documents by different names. This suggests that the current staff in the archive library may have interpreted the writing in the Ottoman language differently, mistaking it for a simple spelling mistake. For instance, 'Cevanib'⁷³, 'Cevaib',⁷⁴ 'el-Cevaib' and elcevaib⁷⁵ were observed in the documents, with the latter mainly used, and considered the correct form in contemporary Turkish.⁷⁶

Complaints

Complaints from various regions, such as Gazza and Zanzibar, were sent to the editor of *al-Jawaib*. The complaints from Gazza were related to the substitution of the Mufti Hüseyinzade Muhyiddin Efendi by someone else.⁷⁷ The second complaint sent in by Sakullahzade Mehmed Efendi, the mufti of Gazza, was in response to a piece of news targeting him in the *al-Jawaib*.⁷⁸ Another example of a complaint against the news published in *al-Jawaib* was from Zanzibar. In particular, the Arab community expressed their frustration about the situation created by the news.⁷⁹

⁶⁵ One may infer that the letters about the history of the Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam and the Dutch War provided by Abdurrahman az-Zahir were published on a philanthropic basis, or in Islamic terminology 'fi sabilillah'.

⁶⁶ See, *al-Jawaib*, 6 Zilhicca 1277 (14 June 1861), No. 3.

⁶⁷ BOA, HR.SYS.405.6.25.06.1882; HR.TO.517.40.21.12.1876.

⁶⁸ For details, See, *al-Jawaib*, 21 Zilkade 1277 (31 May 1861), No. 1. (Note: El-Khoury Salem has also the same observation about the initial issues of *al-Jawaib* (2020: 24, 31-2).

⁶⁹ See, "Tamhidah", *Al-Jawaib*, 13 Zilhicca 1277 (21.06.1861), No. 4, p. 1.

⁷⁰ "... bazı mebahatı ve emval-i dahiliyye ve hariciyyeden münasib olan havadisi neşr için masarîf ve taksimi (!) kendisine aid olmak üzere emsali mesellü, bir kaç günde bir defa Türkçe ibare jurnal tabını ... resmîyye itası ..." BOA, İ.MMS. 19.822.06.11.1276. (26 May 1860).

⁷¹ For instance, the preceding newspapers, such as *Takvim-i Vekai* and *Le Moniteur Ottoman*, were always under the direct influence and structuration process of the authorities including the Sultan himself (Özgür Türesay, "Osmanlı Devleti'nin Fransızca Resmi Gaetesi. Le Moniteur Ottoman (1831-1836)", *Kebikeç*, 53, (2022): 158.

⁷² For instance, BOA, Y.PRK.TKM.4.38. H.02.12.1298 (26 October 1881).

⁷³ BOA, A.MKT.NZD.386.95.19.06.1278 (22 December 1861).

⁷⁴ BOA, İ.DH.483.32515.14.06.1278 (17 December 1861); BOA, MVL.441.96.19.11.1280 (26 April 1864).

⁷⁵ BOA, İ.MVL.531.23827.25.12.1281 (21 May 1865).

⁷⁶ BOA, MVL.439.81.21.11.1280 (28 April 1864).

⁷⁷ BOA, HR.TO.517.40.21.12.1876

⁷⁸ BOA, HR.TO.554.30.26.01.1877.

⁷⁹ BOA, Y.PRK.TKM.4.2.09.01.1298 (12 December 1880).

Towards the end of Ahmad Faris's life, several newspapers and journalists were critical of him as the owner (*imtiyaz-ı sahibi*) of *al-Jawaib*. For instance, in the complaint in *Semeratü'l fûnun*, an Arabic newspaper printed in Syria, he was criticised. However, the reason for this critique was not mentioned.⁸⁰

Turkish Version

An important decision was made by the Palace, which was gathered from the expression “*müsade-i seniyye*”, which meant Ahmad Faris published the *al-Jawaib* through his efforts. The Turkish language version of *al-Jawaib* was published after nearly seven months. Like its Arabic counterpart, the Turkish version was published once a week. This decision was a core part of the document: “... *Ahmed Faris Efendi'nin tab ve neş etmekte olduğu Cevaib nam Arabi gazetenin Türkçe tercümesi dahi leffen tab' hususunda (!) adet-i kadimesi (!) bulunan haftada bir defa neşr olunmasına Müsade-i Seniyye üzerine ...*”⁸¹ It was inferred that the decision made in the previous year, in May 1860, to assign Ağah Efendi and Ahmad Faris to translate only portions of the *al-Jawaib* into Turkish was updated, and consequently, the entire publication of *al-Jawaib* was translated into Turkish. There were two phases. The first was that some Turkish news was printed together with the Arabic news in *al-Jawaib*. The second phase was the separate publication of the Turkish journal, referred to in the Ottoman documents as “*Türkçe ceride ve jurnalın*”,⁸² although information on how long it was sustainably continued is yet to be found. The masthead of the *al-Jawaib* provided some crucial aspects of its institutional structure in the very early stages of its publication.

Reporters of al-Jawaib

A few names were mentioned—Najib Hindiyya Hindiyye reporters who worked at the *al-Jawaib* and *al-Cairo* newspapers in Egypt.⁸³ Furthermore, Selim Faris was also referred to as ‘*muharrir of al-Jawaib*’ in one document.⁸⁴ In addition, Besisi Efendi was mentioned as a representative of *al-Jawaib* in Cairo in 1882.⁸⁵

Publication Ban on the al-Jawaib

There were a few references to the closure of the publication of the *al-Jawaib*. The first was because of financial difficulties that Ahmad Faris faced himself in 1862 in the initial year. The second one was the temporary suspension of publication of it in 1880.⁸⁶

The third one was because of a piece of translated news from the *Times* in London.⁸⁷ However, after the Ottoman authorities cross-checked the publication, probably through the consul of the Ottoman in London, it was determined that it was written by the editor or a member of staff at *al-Jawaib*. It was possible that its content concerned Ottoman policies: “... *iş bu neşriyatını TIMES'dan naklen derç eylediğini gösteriyor ise de, TIMES'da böyle bir fırka görülmemiş ...*”⁸⁸

Internationalisation of al-Jawaib

Ahmad Faris's comprehensive experience made him and his newspaper known in the whole region of the Mediterranean, as observed in the following statement “... *Diyar-ı Mağrib'de fevkal gaye hüsn tesir ve faidesi meşhud olduğundan ...*”,⁸⁹ and including İstanbul, Cairo, and other cultural centres of Muslim societies, including India and Central Asia, as stated by several authors.⁹⁰ At the beginning of 1860, the Ottoman authorities in the central government ordered the provincial rulers in Egypt, Jeddah, Baghdad, Damascus, Aleppo, Musul, Basra, and others to acquire *al-Jawaib*, which was described as relevant because of its scientific and informative content (*ulum-u ve malumatça pek ziyade müfid olarak*), and in this regard, its quality was compared to the *Takvim-i Vekai*, which was a well-known state-sponsored

⁸⁰ BOA, MB.İ.113.182.18.03.1300 (27 January 1883). Since the content of this archival document was not provided in the relevant portal, the main idea behind this critique and complaint against Ahmad Faris could not be obtained.

⁸¹ BOA, MB.İ.16.121.15.06.1278 (18 December 1861).

⁸² BOA, A.MKT.MHM.1873.23.18.12.1276 (7 July 1860).

⁸³ BOA, Y.PRK.AZJ.18.103.10.09.1308 (19 April 1891).

⁸⁴ BOA, Y.PRK.EŞA.11.56.03.12.1307 (21 July 1890).

⁸⁵ BOA, Y.PRK.M.1.114.01.04.1299 (20 February 1882).

⁸⁶ BOA, İ.DH.807.65277.02.07.1297 (10 June 1880).

⁸⁷ BOA, İ.MTZ.24.1151.29.04.1301 (27 February 1884).

⁸⁸ The main reason the newspaper was closed down was that it published the news by presenting it as a lie rather than reporting it from the *Times*. This could be evaluated together with Selim Faris's questioning in connection with the pamphlet published in English in London. The dates and contents of both news items were compared.

⁸⁹ BOA, İ.MVL.531.23827.25.12.1281 (21 May 1865).

⁹⁰ Tüfekçioğlu, *Sosyolojik Açıdan Gazete ve Osmanlı Gazeteciliğinin Temellendirilmesi*, 73.

Al-Jawaib was available in Arabia and India in 1879. See: BOA, İ.DH.781.63548.04.03.1296 (26 February 1879).

newspaper.⁹¹ However, the *al-Jawaib* was itself also well-known in some intellectual circles in the Malay World throughout the second part of the 19th century.⁹²

The quality of its publication; the linguistic aspect, namely Arabic, became a solid expressive tool in the hands of linguists, such as the editor of the newspaper; the strong political dimension in Islamic discourse; the intellectual background of the editor and writers, though their identities are yet to be fully revealed; and robust discourse made *al-Jawaib* known among the Muslim communities in various geographies, not only in the Arab world but also certain regions in Nusantara or the general Malay World,⁹³ such as China and India.⁹⁴

The main reasons for its recognition over a large geography was due to its distribution in Hijaz, India. It is probable that some individual scholars and intellectuals from the Malay World obtained this newspaper from those places and introduced it in their hometowns.

One document mentioned that the *al-Jawaib* had reached areas such as “Arabia, North Africa, and India” in its first five years.⁹⁵ Furthermore, this was also observed by the *Times* in several documents, “... *İstanbul'da tab ve neşr ediliyor ise de, Tunus ve Trablus ve Mısır'da pek ziyade revaç ve itibar bulmuştur...*”⁹⁶

One can assert that beyond the modern mechanisms such as subscription and distribution by the State authorities, the scholars and intellectuals who regularly met during the religious festivals, such as Hajj season in Hijaz, must have been aware of this publication, and brought it back to their home countries. In this regard, considering the limited circulation of the newspaper within the Ottoman geography,⁹⁷ *al-Jawaib* reaching the intellectual and political centres in the Arab regions of the Ottoman territories, as well as Morocco, India, China and possibly the Malay world was a tremendous success.⁹⁸

In this context, in particular, *al-Jawaib* served to implicitly or explicitly counter the Western European countries' narratives and colonial-centric discourses, which were assumed to be a threat by the Ottomans and other Muslim authorities.⁹⁹

⁹¹ BOA, A.MKT.UM.545.89.04.09.1278 (5 March 1862). With this official decree, the Ottoman central government provided 15 sample copies of *al-Jawaib* to those mentioned provinces (Ibid.).

⁹² Selim Faris, the son of Ahmad Faris, reinitiated the publication of *al-Jawaib* in Cairo, and based on the date, the latest year seems to be 1906 (BOA, DH.MKT.1086.57.11.04.1324 (4 June 1906). However, whether this began just after the demise of Ahmad Faris in 1887 has yet to be confirmed by further findings. Since Selim Faris passed away in 1909 (BOA, HR.TH.377.9.23.06.1909), it can be inferred that the publication of *al-Jawaib* must have been stopped after that. In other words, there is a question of how Selim Faris sustainably operated *al-Jawaib* in Cairo between the years 1887 and 1906. After he left for London, he also often travelled to Paris, and during this period, he was under the close surveillance of the Ottoman government through agents and the consulars in both European capitals. He had a strong ambition and interest to follow in the footsteps of his father, and to reinitiate *al-Jawaib* in Europe. To achieve this purpose, he communicated with his friend, a book shop owner, in İstanbul to send for technical equipment from his printing house just one year after his father's death: “...*el-Cavaib matbuasında havadis-i dahiliyye ve hariciyye ve şani (!) levhalarının irsali talebi olunduğu haber alınmış ve bu hal ve hareket orada yeniden gazete çıkaracağını eşrab (!) eylemeğe bulunmuş ise de...*” Since the state authorities were suspicious of this correspondence, and “afraid of his reinitiation of publication of *al-Jawaib* in Europe, the authorities ordered to destroy the equipment: “... *İstanbul'da mahv ettirilmek üzere bunların mabeyn humayuna teslim ettirilmesi daha münasib olacağını...*” (BOA, HR.SFR.3.722.35.21.09.1898). Although he could not publish *al-Jawaib* in Europe, he was able to write articles for some newspapers, such as the *Standart*.

⁹³ While *al-Jawaib* was diffusing news from the Ottoman world and Europe, it also received news about socio-political changes in the Malay World (Laffan, 2007: 689). The communication process happened during the visit of Abd al-Rahman al-Zahir to İstanbul for political talks with the Ottoman Court just before and during the earliest stage of Dutch War in Aceh (For details see: Mehmet Özey, “A Hadhrami Scholar and Islamic Court in Aceh: The Political Biography of ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Zāhir (1864-1878)”, *Studia Islamika*, (UIN-JAKARTA) Vol. 27, No. 1, (2020): 73-102.

⁹⁴ Çetin, “‘El-Cevaib Gazetesi ve Yayını”, 477; Roper, “Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq and the Libraries of Europe and the Ottoman Empire”, p. 233. (Note: Although Western scholarly circles assert that Ahmad Faris propagated the idea of Pan-Islamism, Caesar states that there is little concrete evidence to support such a contention when one scrutinizes issues of *al-Jawaib*” (Farah, “Arab Supporters of Sultan Abdulhamit II: İzzet al-Abid”, 190-191).

⁹⁵ BOA, MVL.441.96.19.11.1280 (26 April 1864).

⁹⁶ BOA, Y.PRK.TKM.4.40.24.12.1298 (17 November 1881).

⁹⁷ Alemdar, “Osmanlı Basınına Genel Bakış”, p. 1.

⁹⁸ The fame of *al-Jawaib* reached diverse geographies, from Morocco to Nusantara or the Malay Archipelago. For instance, Sayyid Abdul Karim Barisha, from a region called Tatvin (!) in Morocco requested for *al-Jawaib* issues (For details, see: BOA, HR.SYS.405.6.25.06.1882). However, it is also difficult to generalise the comprehensive expansion of *al-Jawaib* territorially by just looking at these documents individually.

⁹⁹ For instance, the Ottomans followed the intervention of France in Tunisian affairs through the news published in *al-Jawaib*. (See: Translation of the articles titled ‘The agreement between the French *asakiri* and the Kabaili of Merakeş is a secret regarding the Tunisian issue and the improvement of the current situation in Tunisia’ published in *al-Jawaib*.) BOA, Y.PRK.TKM.4.65.13.02.1299 (04.01.1882).

Selim Faris

Ten documents informed about various issues related to Selim Faris. They detailed his contributions to the newspaper as the manager; his receiving a decoration (*nişan*); his affiliation with opposition groups in Europe; and his attempt to reinstate *al-Jawaib* in Egypt and Europe. It is understood that Selim Faris took over responsibility for the *al-Jawaib* before his father's demise.¹⁰⁰

Though the contents were the same, there were two documents about his receiving Ottoman decorations. The decoration awarded to him was the Fourth-Class Order of Osmani in 1879 and 1882. Furthermore, in these documents, he was also referred to as the manager of the *al-Jawaib*.¹⁰¹ Three documents were about his preferment in 1879 and 1882: "*El-Cevaib gazetesi müdürü Selim Faris(i) Efendi'nin rütbe-i halidiyyesinin evvel-i sınıf-ı saniyyesine terkimi mukteza-ı irade-i seniyye-i cenabı padişahiden bulunmuş olmağla...*" Furthermore, here, he was called *Effendi*.¹⁰² Six documents were about the financial cases in 1882 and 1883. It was inferred that the *al-Jawaib* had difficult times financially. Although the government promised to subsidise the newspaper, they failed to realise this. Furthermore, again, there was an impression that the first two documents released by different departments, namely MB and MB.İ, in two successive days, overlapped without any details.¹⁰³ The third and fourth documents were also quite similar, stating that 200 Lira should be paid to Selim Faris, the manager of *al Jawaib*, for the issues purchased by the Interior Ministry: "*El-Cevaib gazetesi idaresinde dahiliyye neferi celilesinde matlube olacağına beyan etmekte bulunacağı iki yüz aded Osmanlı lirasının idare-i mezkure müdürü Selim Faris Efendiye biao(!) te'diye ve itası muktezası irade-i seniyye mülükanden olacağı...*"¹⁰⁴

One document was about the republication of "*müntahab'ül cevaib fi kenz'ul regaib*" (The Treasure of Desires in Selections from Jawa'ib). Although Ahmad Faris had printed this compilation of articles from *al-Jawaib* before, Selim Faris wanted to republish it in 1881. It became controversial when the Ottoman authorities argued that it contained several articles from a book that had been banned a few times in previous years.¹⁰⁵

One document provided information about the relationship between Selim Faris and the Ottoman government, which had become tense. He left for Egypt and intended to publish *al-Jawaib* as an influential newspaper, inclined to criticise the Ottoman government. The Ottoman government discovered this and seemed to have tried to convince Selim Faris to return to İstanbul and reinstate his newspaper, staying loyal to the Ottomans:¹⁰⁶ "*Mülga el-Cevaib gazetesi imtiyaz sahibi Faris Efendi'nin Dersaadete nakli.*"¹⁰⁷

One document was about the court case of Selim Faris against Emin Efendi, the owner of the *al-Cairo* newspaper in Egypt.¹⁰⁸ All these events were very complicated and occurred after the demise of his father. This was because he had constantly accompanied his father, and later, obtained responsibility for the newspaper, which had referred to him as "*gazetenin sahibi*" (the owner of the newspaper), and "*gazetenin imtiyaz-ı sahibi*".¹⁰⁹ The last document was about the granting of Ottoman decorations to both Ahmad Faris as the writer, and his son, Selim Faris, as the manager of the newspaper. It was stated that the reason for this was their significant contribution to the dissemination of the Ottoman policies, and loyalty to the Ottoman State. However, the type of decoration was not mentioned.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁰ Selim Faris was referred to as 'the owner' (*el-Cevaib gazetesi sahibi...*) in some documents (BOA, MF.MKT.72.123.35.01.1299 (17 December 1881). One can infer that he took over the responsibility of *al-Jawaib* several years before his father's demise. Çetin also states that Selim Faris acquired quality education, and served as the manager of *al-Jawaib* for many years (Çetin, "El-Cevaib Gazetesi ve Yayını", 477, f.n.3)

¹⁰¹ BOA, MB.İ.90.13.23.2.1299 (16 February 1879); BOA, MB.İ.90.2.21.2.1299 (12 January 1882).

¹⁰² BOA, İ.DH.865.69220.24.12.1299 (6 November 1882); BOA, İ.DH.857.68698.19.08.1299 (6 July 1882). According to these two documents, preferment was released by Abdülhamit II. However, since the contents look similar, whether these documents were mistakenly produced or not is yet to be determined. BOA, MB.İ.109.102.25.12.1299 (16 February 1879). The latter is not provided in full detail.

¹⁰³ BOA, MB.109.57.24.12.1299 (6 November 1882); BOA, MB.İ.109.104.25.12.1299 (7 November 1882); BOA, İ.DH.903.71757.05.02.1301 (6 December 1883); BOA, İ.DH.870.69541.04.02.1300 (15 December 1882); BOA, MB.İ.88.152. 4.2.1299 (26 December 1881).

¹⁰⁴ BOA, İ.DH.870.69541.04.02.1300 (15 December 1882); BOA, İ.DH.903.71757.05.02.1301 (6 December 1883).

¹⁰⁵ BOA, MF.MKT.72.123.25.01.1299 (17 December 1881).

¹⁰⁶ BOA, İ.DH.977.77139.19.04.1303 (25 January 1886).

¹⁰⁷ BOA, İ.DH.977.77139.19.04.1303 (25 January 1886).

¹⁰⁸ BOA, DH.MKT.1416.5.02.08.1304 (26 April 1887).

¹⁰⁹ BOA, MF.MKT.72.123.25.01.1299 (17 December 1881).

¹¹⁰ BOA, İ.DH.781.63548.04.03.1296 (26 February 1879).

Conclusion

This paper was the initial stage of a more extensive research activity on the *al-Jawaib* newspaper, and its owner and editor, Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq. This Arabic newspaper's influence was felt not only in traditional Ottoman territories, but beyond it, including India and the Malay Archipelago. Since there was a large amount of data of both primary and secondary sources, the study had to be done in a few stages. Furthermore, as *al-Jawaib* is now considered archival data, this study could likewise be considered vernacular press archaeology.

The study was aimed at unearthing, as much as possible, the hidden context of the strong presence of Ahmad Faris and the *al-Jawaib*, namely the relationships built between Ahmad Faris and the Ottoman authorities. There were overlapping and mutual considerations in Ahmad Faris's engagement with the Ottoman state authorities. It is believed that both parties supported each other in realising the publication of *al-Jawaib* and served it for the more prominent policies of the Ottoman State from the late 1850s till the mid-1880s. Without ignoring the role and function of Selim Faris, the son of Ahmad Faris, because of the limitation of the study at this stage, the issues related to the relationships between Selim Faris and the Ottoman authorities could not be fully addressed.

The second part of the 19th century was unique in that it included the changing policies of the Ottoman State and global politics regarding the colonialism by the Western European powers. Initially, the *Tanzimat* reform began in 1839 and continued till the end of the reign of Abdülaziz, and the very early months of Abdülhamit II (1876). Subsequently, there was the Crimean War with Russia, and toward the end of the century, there were accompanying political pressures and sanctions through the various stages of the interventions of the Western European nations, namely Britain and France, with the latter's colonial ambitions expanding territorial control to the Ottoman lands, such as North Africa, Egypt, and Syria. Besides that, during the reigns of both Abdülaziz and Abdülhamit II, the Ottomans and the Muslim communities in the outer zones of the traditional Ottoman and Arab territories found opportunities to develop close correspondences through various means, including print media and visiting envoys.

Çetin seemed to be one of the earliest Turkish scholars who had highlighted the importance of *al-Jawaib*. While others mentioned *al-Jawaib* in the general discourse of print media in the Ottoman State, Çetin provided further details. He suggested in his article that the Ottoman newspapers' whole collections should have been acquired, at least in the form of microfilm. However, this has yet to be realised. Besides, the works of the newspaper in diverse printed languages during the latter parts of the Ottoman State mostly express nationality, societal change, and modernity. Nevertheless, these newspapers were essential sources for comprehending intellectual discussions and processes.

Among the critical literature read during the initial phase of this study of *al-Jawaib*, the most important one was a statement in one of the BOA documents. This statement provided insight into the quality and quantity of the intellectual activities and the bureaucratic hindrances that had happened during the reform era in the Ottomans in the 19th century. The state authorities (as observed in the unknown sample members in that archival document) disclosed their surprise at "how that initial stage of Arabic newspaper was ended abruptly." It may be strongly asserted that a similar fate occurred after *al-Jawaib*'s 23 years of publication, after focusing on merely the correspondences that had happened between 1859 and 1887. This was one of the crucial objectives of this study. The fate of *al-Jawaib* provided insight into the same fate of the reform movement of the Ottomans. It is worth considering whether Ahmad Faris had significant accounts of this visible decline in the reform perspective. At the same time, he had evaluated his intellectual actions and practical ventures in journalism, which appeared in the *al-Jawaib*. This ethnographic-archival study is believed to ensure a new spectrum of understanding of the Ottoman bureaucracy's Middle Eastern intellectual discourse and developments. These documents were a principal source of information on the history of print media, including the owners, editors, and events.

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