

Article

Defending the “Backward Civilization”: The Resurrection of a Forgotten 17th Century Text in 20th Century Intellectual Discourse on Islam

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Abstract: It is an irony of history that since texts transcend the intentions and purposes of their authors, their meaning and significance are often contested anew as they enter new historical contexts; even historical texts are thus subject to reading and criticism over time. This article discusses the posthumous fate of Henry Stubbe’s own text on Islamic history, *The Rise and Progress of Mahometanism*—seen by some to represent a Copernican revolution in the study of Islam. The fate of this work is a clear example of the critical contingencies and fluctuating fortunes experienced by a corpus of texts. The continuing existence of a text as an object open to reconfiguration and re-evaluation is termed its after-history (Nachgeschichte) or afterlife (Nachleben). This notion of the afterlife of an object as a period of critical appreciation and political appropriation aptly defines the fate and fame of *The Rise and Progress of Mahometanism*. The present study seeks to explore the narrative surrounding a publication authored by Stubbe in the 17th century and finally published by Hafiz Mahmud Khan Shairani, with the critical support of Ottoman intellectual Halil Halid Bey, nearly two centuries later. Its objective is to investigate how the life and contributions of a figure whose work has transcended generations was resurrected within the political backdrop of the 20th century, as evidenced in the columns of Ottoman newspapers.

Keywords: Henry Stubbe; Hafiz Mahmud Khan Shairani; Halil Halid Bey; the Prophet Muhammad; Pan-Islamism; Islam



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1. Introduction

From the second half of the 19th century onwards, various European capitals, particularly London, hosted Indian Muslims from different parts of the Indian subcontinent. From the time of the Indian Mutiny (1857) to the Partition (1947), these individuals from different backgrounds and professions expressed their views on a wide range of issues and closely followed the political developments of this 90-year period. Founding societies, publishing newspapers, lobbying, and organizing meetings, Indian Muslims tried to influence the policies of European powers on a wide range of topics. From rising racist attitudes against Muslims to the state of the Ottoman Empire, from British colonialism in India to the protection of the holy lands, from the Turkish National Struggle to the Indian National Struggle; Pan-Islamists, loyalists (who supported British imperial rule), and national separatists (who sought to promote a separate Muslim homeland in India) gathered around the same tables in London, Istanbul, Paris, and other important cities to discuss such issues (Garcia 2012, pp. 227–28). The British government, which closely followed these developments and initiatives, ignored the ideological differences between these groups and described them simply as “rebellious revolutionaries in support of the Ottoman caliphate” (Ozcan 1997, p. 144).

One organization founded by Indian Muslims in London was *Anjuman-i Islam* [the Islamic Society]. This Society, which began its activities in 1886, fell silent shortly after

its establishment, but was revived in 1903 by Abdullah Al-Mamun Suhrawardy (1877–1935), a Bengali Islamic scholar and lawyer who had graduated from Edinburgh University. Suhrawardy reactivated the organization under the name The Pan-Islamic Society of London.¹ Following on from Suhrawardy, Syed Amir Ali (1849–1928), a leading political figure of the period, assumed the presidency of this society, overseeing its change of name once again, and continuing its activities as the Central Islamic Society (CIS) (Qureshi 1999).

According to the CIS publication *Muslim Protest*, the aims of Indian Muslims of this period were:

“...to promote the religious, moral, social, and intellectual advancement of the Muslim world; to promote brotherly feelings between Muslims, and to facilitate intercourse between them; to afford a centre of social union to Muslims from all parts of the world; to provide facilities for conducting religious ceremonies in non-Muslim countries; to remove misconceptions among non-Muslims regarding Islam and Muslims; to hold debates and lectures, and to read papers likely to further the interests of Islam; to maintain a library of Islamic books that may be useful for religious research; to publish papers, articles, and books likely to further the interests of Islam; and to collect subscriptions from all parts of the world, in order to build a mosque in London, and to endow it; and to extend the burial ground for the Muslims in London”. (Qureshi 1999, p. 50)

In short, those who supported the “Muslim cause” on the streets of London were in effect demonstrating a determination to fight the anti-Muslim sentiments that had been developing in different regions since the second half of the 19th century.

The aims of the CIS highlight that Indian Muslims were concerned with many issues and carried out their struggles by different channels. However, the Society’s first article is remarkable in highlighting those CIS members seeking to promote “religious, moral, social and intellectual progress” in the Muslim world—an implicit reference to intellectual debates of the period. This emphasis on the idea of “progress” was closely related to Ernest Renan’s (1823–1892) resonant lectures at the Sorbonne in March 1883, *L’Islamisme et la science*—lectures that purported to attribute the “backwardness” of Muslims to their religion (Ali 1873, 1891; Cündioğlu 1996). Many Muslim scholars and intellectuals, including (later) CIS president Syed Amir Ali, responded to Renan. While their texts, which were written with intense emotion and circulated hand-to-hand, exclaimed that Islam is not an obstacle to progress, their responses were not limited to mere refutations. Given the political developments of the period, prominent Muslim figures took action to unearth the contributions of Muslims to world heritage.

Hafiz Mahmud Khan Shairani (1880–1946), who served on the CIS secretariat between 1908 and 1913, was one such scholar to work on this issue. As a poet, linguist, and philologist, Shairani, who played his secretarial role together with Mushir Husain Kidwai (1878–1937), also collected manuscripts for the Luzac company. One such manuscript added to his library during this period was a text about the Prophet Muhammad, attributed to the 17th century writer Henry Stubbe. The publication of this text by Stubbe—a highly remarkable and controversial figure of his time—proved to be a crucial step in advancing the aims of the society. This text, which presented the Prophet Muhammad as a “hero”, offered a wealth of material for curbing anti-Muslim sentiment. How Shairani obtained this work remains a mystery, and the story of its publication in Istanbul remains equally unexplained.

Many different studies have been published on Stubbe. His discussions with members of the Royal Society and his other scientific enquiries have been the subject of various works (Steneck 1982; Cook 1989; Main 1960; Paz 2018). Stubbe’s work on the Prophet Muhammad, however, is his perhaps most enigmatic, with researchers trying to discern why it was written in the first place and then later revived in the 20th century (Holt 1972; Birchwood 2007; Garcia 2010, 2012; Matar 2014; Zaman 2019). Among the studies addressing such enquiries, Garcia and Zaman’s valuable analyses, in particular, have placed Stubbe’s book in the intellectual context of the 20th century, addressing why Muslim intellectuals shuttling between empires sought to instrumentalize it. Despite referring to the fact that the work

was published as a result of donations collected through Istanbul newspapers, Garcia and Zaman fail to mention how a text written in the 17th century was published some two hundred and fifty years later.

This study aims to uncover this neglected issue in the literature, namely how and by whom *The Rise and Progress of Mahometanism* by Henry Stubbe was published. As a contribution to Garcia and Zaman's attempt to intellectually contextualize that work, this study fills in the missing pieces of the story by showing for the first time, with pages from Istanbul newspapers, how Stubbe and his work were published through an Indo-Turkish intellectual partnership. In doing so, the article first briefly focuses on the life and career of Henry Stubbe before going on to introduce his work on the Prophet Muhammad. The final section focuses on the publication process and tells the inspiring story of how the work was finally published in London in 1911 by virtue of an Istanbul-based fundraising campaign.

2. The Enigmatic Scholar: Exploring the Turbulent Journey of Henry Stubbe

Controversy was as much a part of Henry Stubbe's life story at the start as it was throughout his days. Born in England in 1632 as the son of an Anglican clergyman, Stubbe emigrated to Ireland with his family at an early age due to his father's separatist sympathies. His childhood days in Tredagh did not last long, however, and when the Irish rebellion broke out in 1641, he returned to England with his mother, Mary Purefoy, and his brother. His mother, who earned a living as a tailor, wanted her son to get a good education, and so sent him to Westminster School, one of London's prestigious. Stubbe, whose intelligence and diligence marked him out from his cohort, attracted the attention of Richard Busby (1606–1695), one of the school's leading teachers, making Stubbe one of his favorite pupils. Thanks to Busby, Stubbe went on to become a protégé of Sir Henry Vane (1613–1662), also a Westminster graduate. Vane went on to enable Stubbe to study at Christ Church, Oxford, where, having entered in 1649, he completed his studies in 1653, and then went on to Scotland for military service.²

Stubbe's second Oxford period was facilitated by John Owen (1616–1683), dean of Christ Church, with whose help Stubbe secured a three-year post in the Bodleian Library, serving under Librarian Thomas Barlow (1607–1691). During this time, and with the encouragement of his patron Vane, Stubbe began to write political and religious pamphlets. In June 1659, he published his first treatises, attacking Presbyterians and universities, defending the Quakers, and supporting the republican vision of his patron, Vane, whilst criticizing the government's stance on religious matters. Stubbe, drawing strong reactions with his pamphlets and ideas, consequently began to experience some hardship in the last days of 1659, when the Presbyterian Edward Reynolds (1599–1676) was appointed dean of Christ Church. Within four months, the new dean had expelled him from his dormitory and from his position at the library. Stubbe must initially have breathed a sigh of relief upon Reynolds' departure but was nevertheless also subsequently expelled from the university itself after complaints against him mounted.

Following his expulsion from Oxford at age 28, Stubbe moved to Stratford-upon-Avon "to practice the faculty of physics".³ He officially renounced his previous criticism of the Church, possibly because of the difficulties he had experienced, and again took the oath of allegiance. His actions were welcomed by important figures in the Church and the doors of the court were soon opened to him once again. In 1662, he was appointed the king's physician in Jamaica for an expedition. Before the voyage, Stubbe had written a treatise on cocoa beans, which he had been interested in since his Oxford days and presented it to the king.⁴

Stubbe's Jamaica adventure was short-lived due to health problems and two years later he returned to England. Although he wanted to serve as the king's physician in London, this ambition could not be realized, and so he again returned to serve as a physician in Warwickshire. During this period, Stubbe, who was known as a meticulous and careful doctor, could not resist scholarly debate, and thus controversy, in London. In 1666, Stubbe became a protégé of Robert Boyle (1627–1691) and found himself once again at the center

of heated debate. About 1670, Stubbe criticized the views of the Royal Society in London on the profession of medicine. A lifelong polemicist, Stubbe escaped controversy involving the College of Physicians and the Society of Apothecaries by turning to politics. In 1671, writing about a divorce case got Stubbe into trouble once more. He escaped Imprisonment by publishing a text claiming that his country would be victorious in the Third Anglo-Dutch War (1672–1674) that was breaking out at this time. Stubbe, who sided with his king against the Dutch, began to write about the justification and legitimacy of the war. During this time, he spent the summer months in Bath and continued his medical practice. On a hot July day in 1676, on his way to visit a patient, he fell off his horse and drowned. This was not, however, the end for Stubbe—a man whose fame would be resurrected at the beginning of the twentieth century.

3. Henry Stubbe and the Rise and Progress of Mahometanism

Hailed as “the most noted person of his age that these late times have produced” by his contemporary and fellow biographer Anthony Wood, another striking aspect of Stubbe is undoubtedly his “revolutionary” work on the Prophet Muhammad. Stubbe sought to justify the war between England and the Netherlands, and in doing so, to explain that the Dutch were more dangerous than North African Muslims. To this end, Stubbe deepened his studies on Muslims and began writing a work on the Prophet Muhammad. This anonymously completed work, entitled *The Originall & Progress of Mahometanism*, was the manuscript pulled from a library shelf some two hundred and fifty years later by Shairani.⁵

Stubbe’s manuscript, published by Shairani under the title *An Account of the Rise and Progress of Mahometanism with the Life of Mahomet and a Vindication of him and his Religion from the Calumnies of the Christians*, consists of ten chapters (Figure 1). Shairani had added a preface and an introduction at the beginning of the work, as well as an essay by Stubbe and an index at the end of the book. Its first two chapters offer a long introduction to the subject matter by way of Stubbe’s description of Christianity and Judaism, followed by Arabian geography. In the third chapter, Stubbe offers the reader a chronology of the life of the Prophet Muhammad. The Prophet’s birth, his migration to Medina, his wars, his last pilgrimage, his death, his character, the Christians’ imaginary acceptance of him, his miracles, and finally the issue of justice in his wars, are the main topics covered in the third and subsequent chapters (Shairani 1911).

Evaluating this work highlights that instead of simply recreating the perceptions of Islam and the Prophet that inhabited the European imagination at the time of his life, Stubbe chose to present a unique profile of the Prophet Muhammad. Researchers have put forward different reasons as to why this work, which is in many respects a first, was written. According to Jacob, Stubbe’s work was not only a historical study, but also a critique of contemporary religion and government in the eyes of the church (Jacob 1983). Matar, who is prominent for his studies of Stubbe’s work, considers Stubbe to be an exception of his time. While his contemporaries presented the Prophet Muhammad as “a forerunner of the Protestant heresy, an ally of the pope, a proto-Socinian, or an atheist,” Matar argues that Stubbe presented a heroic portrait of the “great prophet” and refuted the “Idiotic” Information written about Islam and the Prophet. Again, according to Matar, Stubbe did this in a simple way, through information gleaned from existing Latin translations (Matar 2014).

Stubbe’s methodology for this work differs greatly from that of his contemporaries. The controversial 17th century thinker set aside European Christian sources and used Arabic history books and various Latin chronicles. Stubbe, who had read most of the works written by his contemporaries, identified the prejudiced anti-Muslim fabrications and slanders in these works, calling them unjustified. Thus, Stubbe attempted to understand the historical position and role of the Prophet by engaging in an endeavour contrary to the established perception of the Prophet in the West, and thus differing significantly from his contemporaries (Shairani 1911).

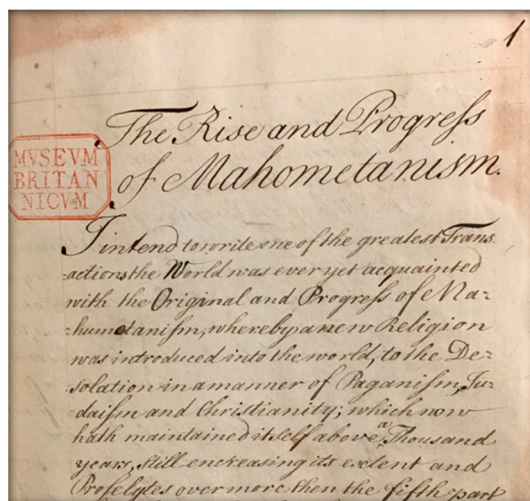


Figure 1. The first page of *The Rise and Progress of Mahometanism*. Source: Stephen Noble, Henry Stubbe: Islam and religious toleration in Restoration England. Available online: <https://blogs.bl.uk/untoldlives/2019/05/henry-stubbe-islam-and-religious-toleration-in-restoration-england.htm> (accessed on 20 October 2023) (Noble 2019).

Constructing a kind of secular historical narrative, Stubbe wrote a comprehensive and lengthy biography of the Prophet Muhammad. This text—the first chronological study of the Prophet’s life to exclude a theological perspective—introduces both the Prophet and his son-in-law and cousin, Ali, ignoring dominant literary and dramatic representations. Contrary to the dominant perception of his time, Stubbe introduced and admired the Prophet Muhammad, and considered the Islamic religion not as the scourge of God for Christians, but rather as a continuation of revelation, a monotheism that triumphed over paganism (Shairani 1911).

In Stubbe’s work, the Prophet Muhammad is above all a successful revolutionary. In Matar’s words, Stubbe had written a work in praise of the Prophet in a way and to an extent that no other Restoration-era writer had done. One of the most striking aspects of this work was his assessment of the Prophet’s wars. Stubbe defended the Muslims and the Prophet, whom Christians for a thousand years saw as the harbinger of the Antichrist and rejected the claim that Islam had spread by the sword. Discussing the Prophet’s wars in detail, Stubbe indicated that he did not start a war until he had attained a certain degree of power and that he was a cautious and prudent commander. Claiming that his successes were not accidental, he stated that his personal experiences had a significant impact on his achievements (Shairani 1911; Matar 2014).

In sum, Stubbe’s work on the Prophet Muhammad was a significant challenge to the contemporary thinking of his day both in content and methodology. P. M. Holt stated that it was not an unknown work, quoting Humfrey Wanley, the cataloguer of the Harleian Manuscripts, as claiming that “the author was Dr. Henry Stubbs the Physician”. At the turn of the 19th century, at least six of Stubbe’s manuscripts on this topic were known to exist, three of which were in the library of the Reverend John Disney, a prominent figure in the history of English Unitarianism (Holt 1972, p. 10). However, in his 1825 work, the writer, antiquarian and topographer John Britton (1771–1857) noted that Stubbe’s works were “almost forgotten” (Britton 1825, pp. 195, 196). It is unknown to what extent Britton’s warning that Stubbe was a name not to be forgotten was heeded by British writers. Regardless, someone remembered him. So, how did this manuscript, languishing on the dusty shelves of select private libraries, come to be published for the first time over two centuries later?

4. The 20th Century Resurrection of Henry Stubbe

In 1907, Halil Halid Bey (1869–1931), an Ottoman citizen who taught Turkish and Persian at Cambridge University, penned an attractive book entitled, *The Crescent Versus The Cross*.⁶ His aim in writing this book was to “defend the cause of the Muslim East” and “to point out the views of some Muslims about Western civilization” (Halid 1907, preface). Halil Halid Bey (Figure 2), who was labeled by British officials as “undoubtedly one of the most important emissaries of Pan-Islamicism”, certainly attracted the attention of Indian Muslims with his activities and views (Ozcan 1997, p. 172). Having increased their contacts with Halil Halid Bey, and following the resignation of Syed Hussain Bilgrami, CIS members in London offered to make him one of the leading ambassadors of the Pan-Islamist cause by appointing him to the CIS presidency. Halil Halid Bey declined this offer citing lack of time, though promised to support the organization in every way (Halid 1909a, *Sabah*).

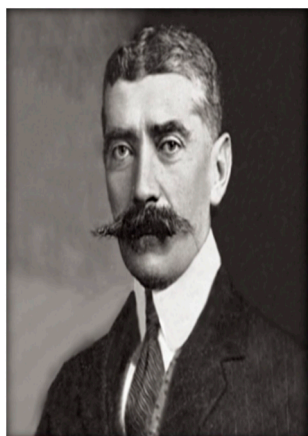


Figure 2. Halil Halid Bey. Source: (Oztürk 2022, Halil Hâlid: Antiemperyalist Bir Osmanlı Aydını).

Following graduation from law school in Istanbul in 1893, Halil Halid Bey started working as a journalist before fleeing to London for fear of arrest by Sultan Abdul Hamid II (r. 1876–1909) for his dissident views. After settling in London with the help of a correspondent from *The Times*, he started writing articles on Ottoman public opinion in British newspapers and was appointed as second consul to the Ottoman embassy in London. However, the salary he received from his position in the consulate was not enough for him and he often wrote to Istanbul about this, finally finding some relief by entering Cambridge University in 1902 through friends he had met in London. He was elected as a member of The Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland and continued his education by starting his master’s degree at Pembroke College, Cambridge (Wasti 1993).

Although we do not know for certain how the work of a 17th century intellectual came to Halil Halid Bey’s attention, it was most likely brought up in meetings between himself and CIS members. The CIS had put the publication of this book on its agenda and established a fund, asking Muslims residing in England to donate (Shairani 1911, p. V). However, according to Halil Halid Bey, sufficient funds could not be collected for the publication of the work. As such, having stated that he would support the CIS in every matter, Halil Halid Bey elected to take action himself by establishing a new fund for the publication.

In the last days of 1909, Halil Halid Bey wrote an article on this subject and sent it to *Sabah*, one of the leading “anti-imperialist Istanbul newspapers of the period” (Ozcan 1997). *Sabah* published this article on 25 December 1909 under the title *From London: Muslims in London [Londra’dan: Londra’da Müslümanlar]* (Halid 1909a, *Sabah*) (Figure 3). At the beginning of the article, the author briefly mentions the history and activities of the CIS, emphasizing that its members enthusiastically supported the Ottoman government.⁷ According to him, the CIS, which performed important duties in London, also published publications defending Islam against religious and political prejudices. At this point, he

indicates that the CIS had decided to publish an important work, introducing Stubbe and his work on the Prophet Muhammad to Turkish readers. After these general explanations, Halil Halid Bey went on to the important issue of the publication of the work, stating with regret that approximately “70 pounds sterling” were needed for this and that, whilst some of this sum had been collected in London, the rest remained outstanding. He announced that those who wished to donate “for this good cause” could send their donations through *Sabah* and that a receipt would be given to donors through the newspaper’s management. Halil Halid Bey’s crucial article was quoted a few days later by another important magazine of the period, *Sirat-ı Mustakim* (Halid 1909b, *Sirat-ı Mustakim*). Thus, Turkish readers first became aware of Stubbe and his work through *Sabah* and *Sirat-ı Mustakim*, which “expressed pro-Ottoman, anti-British sentiments and exerted great influence on the Muslim public opinion in India.” Two separate funds were established through these two newspapers (Garcia 2012, p. 227).

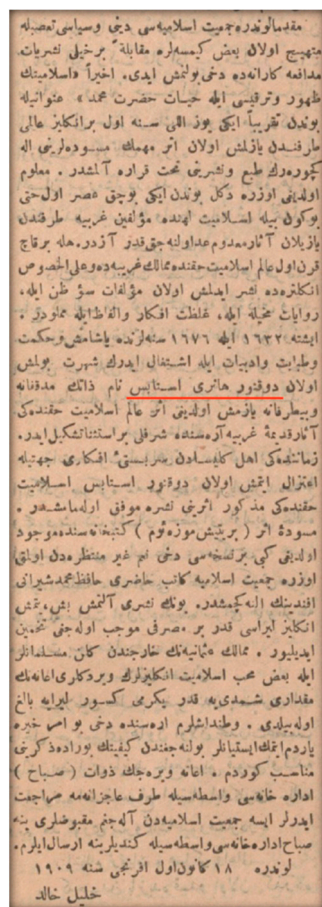


Figure 3. An excerpt from Halil Halid Bey’s letter introducing Stubbe and his work, *From London: Muslims in London*, as published in *Sabah* and *Sirat-ı Mustakim*.

As Turkish donations began to flow in via the call made by these two newspapers, their readers also showed an interest in advancing the cause through their letters to the editor. Just one week after the article’s publication in *Sirat-ı Mustakim*, a letter from a reader called Hüsnü Hilmi defended the important service this campaign was providing, and the newspaper reiterated its call for help (Figure 4). In his letter to the editor, Hilmi thanked the newspaper for being instrumental in this good cause and requested that the money he sent be transferred to the relevant authorized persons (Polat 2018, pp. 414, 415; Hilmi 1910, *Sirat-ı Mustakim*).

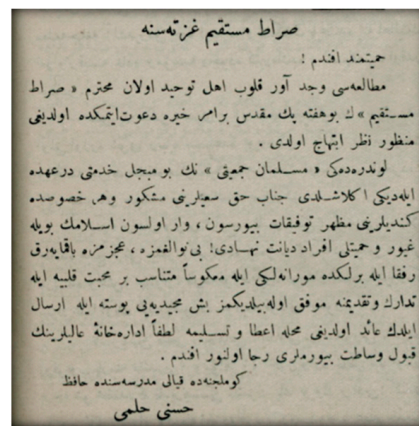


Figure 4. Letter sent to the newspaper by Hüsnü Hilmi. Source: *Sırat-ı Mustakim*.

Halil Halid Bey's initiative calling on Turkish readers to support the publication of Stubbe's important work also gratified the CIS. To share their joy and gratitude with Turkish readers, CIS officials penned a letter of thanks and sent it to *Sabah* newspaper. This letter, which was signed by Secretary Shairani and published in *Sabah* on 17 January 1910, expressed the CIS's gratitude to the newspaper's management for its support of this cause (Figure 5). The letter spoke of having learned of a donation list from Halil Halid Bey, and that a significant amount had been collected in a short period of time—a matter to be gladly announced to members at the next CIS meeting. Stating that the “influential and senior” Ottoman newspaper *Sabah* had undertaken a critical task in being instrumental to cooperation between the CIS in London and Ottoman Muslims, Shairani finally drew attention to their regret over the dismissal of the Consul General of London, Recai Efendi. Following on from this letter, the newspaper's management added a note thanking the CIS for its letter of thanks and announcing that the donations collected to date had reached approximately “888 kuruş”. Restating that the publication of such a valuable work would be a great service to “the world of civilization and Islam”, *Sabah* once again appealed to its readers to donate to the cause (Shairani 1911; Halid 1910c, *Sabah*).

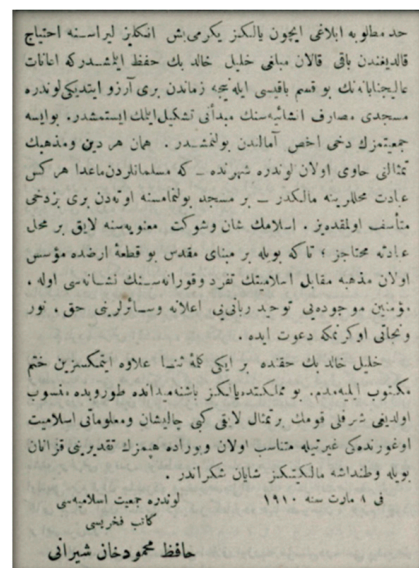


Figure 5. Translation of Shairani's letter of thanks to journal readers for their donations. Source: *Sırat-ı Mustakim*.

As donations continued to be collected for the printing of the book, 7 February 1910, saw Halil Halid Bey write a new article, which he sent to *Sabah*. This long and detailed

article started by outlining the amount of contributions received so far and expressed Halil Halid Bey's pleasure at "the donations sent from different parts of Anatolia and Rumelia upon his call as a person who had been residing in a corner of England for seventeen years" (Halid 1910a, *Sabah*). Noting that the printing of this work was extremely important, he indicated that if the work were printed, "a copy would be sent to scientific and educational institutions and that he would work for the translation of the work into Turkish" (Halid 1910a, *Sabah*).

Compared to the other articles written by Halil Halid Bey for the publication of Stubbe's work, this text has a much more emotional tone and contains emotive elements designed to mobilize the feelings of Turkish readers. As an Ottoman citizen living in England for many years, Halil Halid Bey, who had been struggling to explain that the Ottomans were a virtuous nation, felt vindicated by the donations made. While the Ottoman people were trying to "protect their homeland by helping the families of orphans and martyrs" in turbulent and difficult times, they had not hesitated to support the "printing of a book written in a foreign language" (Halid 1910a, *Sabah*). The purpose of these people, who had not declined to help publish a work in English, was far removed from personal interest or motive, but rather reflected a "generous and hardworking" people on the path of charity. In this way, Halil Halid Bey prepared his readers to be receptive to his main concern by expressing his appreciation for the sensitivity shown for the printing of Stubbe's works, laying the groundwork to then address the core topic of the article (Halid 1910a, *Sabah*).

Halil Halid Bey's main concern was the construction of a mosque in London—a city where Muslims did not yet have a place of worship of their own. The donations collected through *Sabah* and *Sırat-ı Mustakim* and the kindness shown by the outlets' readers had given him hope to realize this dream. In a world of "300 million Muslims", this dream would surely come true one day. However, for this to be realized, Ottoman Muslims, "the true servants of the caliph", needed to be more sensitive to this issue. Having clarified the background to his call for a mosque in London, Halil Halid Bey explained to Turkish readers in short but effective sentences why it could not be built and why it should be. Stating that the mosque was the most important place of shelter and gathering for Muslims living in foreign lands, he stated that the initiatives of prominent members of the community could "move mountains" (Halid 1910a, *Sabah*).

In brief, in his long article, Halil Halid Bey, who was closely involved in Muslim affairs in London, addressed two important issues: the publication of Stubbe's book and the construction of a mosque in London. In both matters, London notables needed the help of Ottoman Muslims and, as he put it, the burden on the "servants of the caliph" was heavier than other Muslims. (Halid 1910a, *Sabah*).

A few weeks after this long and influential article, Halil Halid Bey again picked up his pen. On 24 March 1910, he published an article entitled, "The Enterprise of Islam in England [İngiltere'de Teşebbüsât-ı İslamiyye]" in *Sırat-ı Mustakim* and shared with Turkish readers his happiness at successfully raising the necessary funds in the short period of just three months. He stated that the necessary sum for the printing of Stubbe's work had been collected, and that even some money for the construction of a mosque in London had been raised (Halid 1910b, *Sırat-ı Müstakim*).

In the fall of 1910, Halil Halid Bey published his last article on this topic, announcing some important information about Stubbe's work. This article, also published in *Sırat-ı Mustakim* under the title "Society of Islam in London [Londra'da Cemiyet-i İslamiyye]", touched upon the issue of the mosque to be built in London and included a letter from Shairani informing Turkish readers of important good news. Having thanked the newspaper administration for sending him copies of *Sırat-ı Mustakim*, the CIS Secretary immediately got to the point (Figure 6); thanks to the generous donations made by Turkish readers, Stubbe's work would soon be published and a copy sent to Istanbul (Halid 1910d, *Sırat-ı Mustakim*).

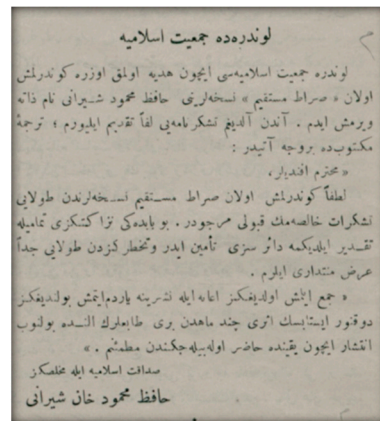


Figure 6. Translation of Shairani’s letter to the readers of the *Sirat-i Mustakim* about the Stubbe publication. Source: *Sirat-i Mustakim*.

In fact, by the time Shairani’s joyous news had reached Turkish readers, parts of Stubbe’s book had already found their way into the pages of *Sirat-i Mustakim*. The book, which had probably been sent to the journal by Halil Halid Bey, was presented to readers between 14 July and 22 September 1910, under the title *The Emergence and Progress of Islam and the Life of the Prophet Muhammad* (Figure 7).⁸ Some parts of the book were translated into Ottoman Turkish for the first time by the former governor of Basra, Mardinizade Mehmed Arif (1852–1920).⁹

A renowned English scholar named Doctor Stubbes wrote a noteworthy work called *The Progress of Islam and the Life of Prophet Muhammad 250 years ago*. However, it was judged impractical to publish because of the biases that were prevalent in England at that time. As a result, this critical work remained preserved and confined within the British Museum Library. It has now been brought to light with the backing of the Islamic Society in England and the generous contributions of our esteemed scholars. The book’s initial copy has been submitted for publication and distribution, thanks to the former governor of Basra, Mardinizade Arif Bey Efendi, who graciously translated it into Turkish and dedicated it to our publication. This work vividly depicts an outsider’s perspective on the virtues of our esteemed Prophet (PBUH) and is indeed worthy of a thorough examination. We now announce the start of its publishing in our journal, beginning this week, to prevent keeping our esteemed readers waiting any longer. (Arif 14 July 1910, *Sirat-i Mustakim*)

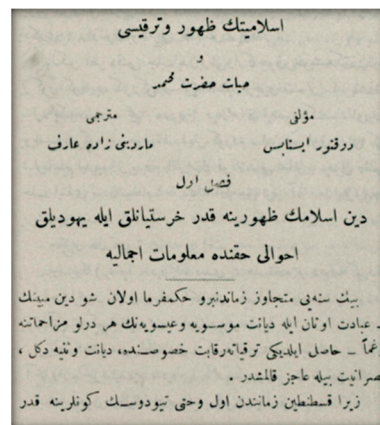


Figure 7. The first page of the translation of “Doctor Stubbes’s book”. Source: *Sirat-i Mustakim*.

Thus ended the Istanbul adventure of Stubbe's work, though its story in London was not yet over. In England, Stubbe's manuscripts were finally published in the early days of 1911 under the title *The Rise and Progress of Mahometanism* by Shairani (Figure 8). After a near 2-year effort, supporters of many names had helped bring to light "the earliest known sympathetic composition [on Islam] in English literature," as Shairani put it. The CIS secretary thanked the Istanbul newspapers, and especially Halil Halid Bey, Muhammad Khairuddin Saggi and Syed Muhammad Arif, sharing the names of donating individuals and institutions at the end of the book (Table 1). Shairani stated that some British friends had also supported him during the process of bringing the book to print, though upon their request, declined to share their names (Shairani 1911).

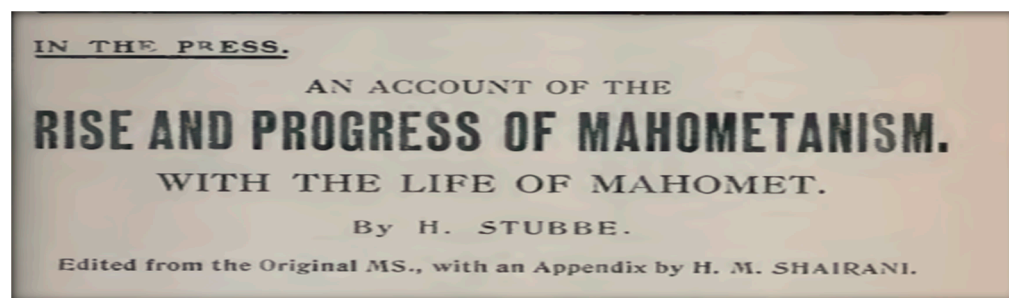


Figure 8. The advertisement for the book. Source: Luzac's Oriental List and Book Review, Vol. XXII, January to December 1911 (Luzac & Co. 1911).

Table 1. The names of subscribers to the publication of *The Rise and Progress of Mahometanism*.

1	Nawab Syed Hussain Bilgrami, C. S. I.
2	Ghulam Mohammad Khan, Esq.
3	The late Mrs. L. A. B. Shiffner
4	Halil Halid Bey
5	Syed Abul Hasan, Esq.
6	Sheikh Mashir Husain Kidwai (India)
7	Rt. Hon. Justice Syed Ameer Ali, C. I. E.
8	M. Khairuddin Saggi, Esq.
9	Aliuddin Ahmed, Esq.
10	Mahdi Hussain Bilgrami, Esq.
11	A. S. M. Anik, Esq.
12	Ali Hikmet Nahid Bey
13	Nedjati Effendi
14	Enver Efendi
15	S. Asaf Ali, Esq.
16	Nazir Mohammed, Esq.
17	Ahmed Khan, Esq.
18	Nizamuddin, Esq.
19	Kasim Raza, Esq.
20	Syed Muhammed Arif, Esq.
21	L. H. T.
22	S. Mahmoodul Hasan, Esq.
23	Mir Zynuddin, Esq.
24	S. Mohiuddin, Esq.
25	Khaja Ismail, Esq.
26	Sabihuddin Ahmed, Esq.
27	Mustafa Ali Khan, Esq.
28	M. Abdul Haq, Esq.
29	Ibni Ahmed, Esq.
30	"Sabah," Constantinople
31	Naziruddin Hasan, Esq.

Table 1. Cont.

32	S. Aneesuddin Ahmed, Esq.
33	S. Anwaruddin Ahmed, Esq.
34	Professor T. W. Arnold
35	Dr. Abdul Hadi Jodat
36	Abdullah Muhammed Omar, Esq.
37	“Sirat-i-Mustakim,” Constantinople
38	The late M. Y. Khwaja, Esq.
39	B. M. Ekram Bey
40	Luzac & Co. (London, UK)
41	Probsthain & Co. (London, UK)

In his preface at the beginning of Stubbe’s work, Shairani emphasized some important and noteworthy points beyond the publication process for the work. He stated that despite being “published under the auspices of the Islamic Society,” Stubbe’s work was not one of the CIS’s own publications, and the author’s views should not therefore be interpreted as those put forward and defended by the CIS (Shairani 1911, p. V). As Garcia points out, these words appear to contradict the list of subscribers enumerated at the end of the work (Garcia 2012, pp. 226, 227). At this point, it is worth mentioning some of the names on this list and drawing attention to their significance. This is because, as mentioned at an earlier stage, subscribers included London-based Muslim political activists with different goals, as well as prominent figures from Turkey and India. For example, Syed Amir Ali (1849–1928), Syed Ahmed Khan (1817–1898), Syed Husain Bilgrami and Mushir Husain Kidwai were prominent figures in the cause of Indian independence, and their activities were closely monitored by the British authorities. The list also included Thomas Walker Arnold (1864–1930), author of *The Preaching of Islam* (1896), and Enver Pasha (1881–1922), the leader of the Young Turk Revolution, who would later occupy the highest positions in the Ottoman Empire. Lastly, it also included Luzac & Company (London, UK) and Probsthain & Company (London, UK), known for their books on Asia, Africa and South Asia (Table 1).

Finally, an appendix added by Shairani at the end of the work is also worth mentioning. In this appendix, he included the views of Western travelers, geographers, playwrights, diplomats and historians on Islamic history and the Prophet. According to Shairani, “people still survive, even in the twentieth century, who most solemnly declare that the Mahometans worship an idol, called Mahomet”, and more work was needed to eradicate such prejudices. Shairani expressed the CIS’s hope that the current work would prove nevertheless useful in breaking down such prejudices (Shairani 1911, p. V).

5. Conclusions

The main purpose of this article has been to uncover the story of Henry Stubbe and how his work on the Prophet Muhammad was revived 235 years after his death. In 17th century England, Stubbe, a practicing physician who shared his views on political and religious issues and briefly gained a place at court, wrote a revolutionary work that valorized the Prophet Muhammad in defiance of the dominant perceptions of the time. As recent research has rightly shown, the theses put forward in the aforementioned work were revitalized in the hands of anti-imperialist Muslim intellectuals at the turn of the 20th century, providing an ideological justification for the Pan-Islamist movement. *The Rise and Progress of Mahometanism* became the main motivation for the idea of “Islamic republicanism”. This was especially important for Indian Muslims clinging to the Ottoman caliphate following the deposition of the Mughal sultan after the 1857 Indian Mutiny and the resulting spread of anti-Muslim sentiments (Garcia 2012).

This article aims to make a humble contribution to studies claiming that “Islam has a positive constructive role to play in the story of Western modernity” by trying to illuminate a neglected topic in the literature, namely the publication process for *The Rise and Progress of Mahometanism*, published for the first time in 1911 (Garcia 2012, p. 230). This book, which

CIS secretary Shairani had been prevented from publishing due to lack of funds, was finally brought into circulation thanks to the efforts of Halil Halid Bey, a prominent political figure of the period. Halil Halid Bey, who resided in London for many years and took it upon himself to address the issues faced by his fellow Muslims, mobilized the Istanbul press with his writings. Expressing his views in *Sabah* and *Sirat-ı Mustakim*, which, like him, were proponents of anti-imperialist ideas, Halil Halid Bey encouraged Ottoman Muslims “for a good cause”, namely the publication of Stubbe’s work. As a result of his influential writings and the funds raised by these two publications, *The Rise and Progress of Mahometanism* was published, and Muslims living in different corners of the world became aware of its content.

Like Halil Halid Bey, Shairani too sought to dispel the racist stereotypes that portrayed Muslims as backward, barbaric, and outdated, and for this purpose, collected and published works that revealed the contributions of Muslims to world history. Stubbe’s work, which attracted Shairani’s interest and was published with international Muslim support, is extremely important because its content as Garcia put it “does not conflict with Western civilization’s democratic values” (Garcia 2012, p. 226). As such, Shairani and his friends were able to instrumentalize *The Rise and Progress of Mahometanism* to their ideological ends.

There are some questions that this study has not been able to answer. These can be posed in further studies. For example, how did this work defending the Prophet Muhammad arrive in Shairani’s hands in the first place? By whom did it get into the hands of newspapers in Istanbul? Whilst it was newspapers in Istanbul that had collected donations for the publication of this work, were there other newspapers on the Indian subcontinent that performed a similar function? Such questions are ripe for further study and would help to discern whether Stubbe’s fame extended beyond Istanbul and his native England.

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Notes

- ¹ For Suhrawardy’s application to the Ottoman sultan in 1907 for a mosque to be built in London, see (BOA.HR.ID.2042.52); for the insignia presented to Suhrawardy, the head and founder of the London Union of Islamic Society, see (BOA.BEO.3006.225394); for the CIS in London see (BOA.Y.A.HUS.508.87).
- ² For Stubbe’s life story, see (Wood 1817); (Jacob 1983); (Hill 1984); (Feingold 2004); (Bennett 2016). For a list of Stubbe’s work, see (Oldfield 1829, pp. 345–52).
- ³ In the dispute that erupted between the College of Physicians and the Society of Apothecaries, some texts mention Stubbe as a member of the College of Physicians. However, according to Clinton, Stubbe’s name does not appear in the membership records. While all sources agree that Stubbe studied medicine, he never held an official title in the field. It was most likely given to him by King Charles II when he was sent to Jamaica and was influenced by the likes of Thomas Willis (1621–1675), Alexander Frasier (1610–1681) and William Quartermain (1618–1667), who served as the king’s physician. See (Bennett 2016).
- ⁴ Published by Shairani in 1911, it was republished in Pakistan in 1954 and 1975. For the background of its publication in Pakistan, see (Garcia 2012).
- ⁵ For Halil Halid Bey’s life, career and activities, see (Wasti 1993).
- ⁶ During this period, Halil Halid Bey met Elias John Wilkinson Gibb (1857–1901), who was working on an anthology of Turkish poetry, and through him he met Edward Granville Browne (1862–1926) and with his help he entered university. See (Uzun 1997).

- ⁷ For translations, see Doktor Stubbes, “İslamiyet’in Zuhur ve Terakkisi ve Hayat-ı Hazret-i Muhammed”, translated. Mardinizade Arif, *Sırat-ı Mustakim* 4/97 (14 July 1910), 326; Henry Stubbes, “İslamiyet’in Zuhur ve Terakkisi ve Hayat-ı Hazret-i Muhammed”, translated. Mardinizade Arif, *Sırat-ı Mustakim* 4/98 (21 July 1910), 341; Henry Stubbes, “İslamiyet’in Zuhur ve Terakkisi ve Hayat-ı Hazret-i Muhammed”, translated. Mardinizade Arif, *Sırat-ı Mustakim* 4/99 (28 July 1910), 357; Henry Stubbes, “İslamiyet’in Zuhur ve Terakkisi ve Hayat-ı Hazret-i Muhammed”, translated. Mardinizade Arif, *Sırat-ı Mustakim* 4/100 (4 August 1910), 371; Henry Stubbes, “İslamiyet’in Zuhur ve Terakkisi ve Hayat-ı Hazret-i Muhammed”, translated. Mardinizade Arif, *Sırat-ı Mustakim* 4/101 (11 August 1910), 384; Henry Stubbes, “İslamiyet’in Zuhur ve Terakkisi ve Hayat-ı Hazret-i Muhammed”, translated. Mardinizade Arif, *Sırat-ı Mustakim* 4/102 (18 August 1910), 405; Henry Stubbes, “İslamiyet’in Zuhur ve Terakkisi ve Hayat-ı Hazret-i Muhammed”, translated. Mardinizade Arif, *Sırat-ı Mustakim* 4/103 (25 August 1910), 424; Henry Stubbes, “İslamiyet’in Zuhur ve Terakkisi ve Hayat-ı Hazret-i Muhammed”, translated. Mardinizade Arif, *Sırat-ı Mustakim* 4/104 (1 September 1910), 450; Henry Stubbes, “İslamiyet’in Zuhur ve Terakkisi ve Hayat-ı Hazret-i Muhammed”, translated. Mardinizade Arif, *Sırat-ı Mustakim* 5/105 (8 September 1910), 8; Henry Stubbes, “İslamiyet’in Zuhur ve Terakkisi ve Hayat-ı Hazret-i Muhammed”, translated. Mardinizade Arif, *Sırat-ı Mustakim* 5/106 (15 September 1910), 25; Henry Stubbes, “İslamiyet’in Zuhur ve Terakkisi ve Hayat-ı Hazret-i Muhammed”, translated. Mardinizade Arif, *Sırat-ı Mustakim* 5/107 (22 September 1910), 434. See https://katalog.idp.org.tr/arama?article_title=islamiyetin+zuhur+ve+terakkisi+ve+hayat%C4%B1+hazreti+muhammed&order_by=match (accessed 30 July 2023).
- ⁸ For a review of *The Rise and Progress of Mahometanism*, see (Goldziher 1911).
- ⁹ Mardinizade Mehmed Arif was born in Mardin in 1855. The son of Shahrendzade Yusuf Sıdkı Efendi, one of the mufti of Mardin, he started his career in the Ottoman judicial bureaucracy after his madrasa education. After serving in various parts of the Ottoman empire, he was appointed governor of Basra in 1909. See (Pakalın 2008, pp. 74, 75).

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