

Sufi Genealogy of Shaykh Ahmad Kuftaru:  
Damascene Networking of Naqshbandi Sufi Order in 19–20<sup>th</sup> Centuries\*

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Abstract

This article clarifies the Sufi genealogy of Ahmad Kuftaru as a leading Shaykh of the Naqshbandi Sufi order in modern Syria, through the Damascene networking of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries' Naqshbandi Shaykhs, including his father, Amin Kuftaru. Moreover, this article shows that the networking of the Naqshbandi-Khalidi order established by 'Isa Kurdi before Amin's arrival at Damascus formed the center of contemporary Islamic scholars. This order developed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as the center of the Sufi community committed to political activities as a member of the 'Ulama' League.

Keywords

'Isa Kurdi, Khalidi-Naqshbandi Sufi order, Kurds, Shafi'i School, 'ulama'

1. Introduction

The aim of this article is to clarify the genealogy of Ahmad Kuftaru, a leading Shaykh of the Naqshbandi Sufi order in modern Syria, focusing on the order's Damascene networking from the 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century. Previous research on Ahmad Kuftaru originated in departments of history and political science in the 1980s, and the network of his Naqshbandi Sufi order has attracted particular attention after 2000.<sup>1</sup> Generally, the researches picked up Ahmad Kuftaru as a Damascene Sufi, but those works did not attempt to examine the genealogy as far back as the Naqshbandi network of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This article studies the genealogy from the viewpoint of two linkages. The first is between Ahmad Kuftaru and the Shaykhs of the Naqshbandi Sufi orders of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The other is between the Sufis centering on Naqshbandis since the 19<sup>th</sup> century

and the Islamic scholars, or ‘ulama’. The latter linkage can be expected to shed light on this issue by revealing contact points between the Sufi network and the Muslim Brotherhood formed in the 1940s.

## 2. Ahmad Kuftaru and his Sufi order

Although Ahmad Kuftaru (1915-2004) is known for his serving the Syrian Arab Republic as the Grand Mufti from 1964 until his death, it is also important to consider his lineage. He grew up in a Sufi family in the Kurdish district of Damascus, and he was trained to assume the leading position of the Naqshbandi Sufi order there, a role in which he succeeded his father, Amin Kuftaru (1877-1938), in 1932.<sup>2</sup> The order led by him has often been called “Kaftariyya” (Kaftari-Naqshbandi order), regarded as one of the branches of the Naqshbandi Sufi order spread over the entire world. As the Grand Mufti, Kuftaru tried to strengthen the relationship between Syria and Lebanon through the order’s activities during the 1960–70s, and thus “Kaftariyya” has often been described as a political group serving the Syrian regime.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, most research on Ahmad Kuftaru has not emphasized his Sufi connections as much as his political activities, and in fact we could say that he himself intentionally downplayed his position as a Sufi. This attitude is one that he inherited from his father.

The Kuftaru is a family of Kurdish immigrants who came to Damascus in the age of the grandfather of Ahmad Kuftaru, Musa Kuftaru (?-1894), of the Shafi‘i school and Amin Kuftaru.<sup>4</sup> Since Musa passed away soon after his arrival, Amin had other teachers in Damascus. One was ‘Isa Kurdi (d. 1912), an Islamic scholar of the Shafi‘i school and a leading Shaykh of the Naqshbandi Sufi order in Damascus. Another was Badr al-Din al-Hasani (d.1935/38), an Islamic scholar of the Maliki School and a member of the Qadiri Sufi order.<sup>5</sup> With ‘Isa placing a greater emphasis on Sufism, Amin studied particularly diligently under him. Amin finally succeeded ‘Isa as the leader of the Naqshbandi Sufi order after the latter’s death. Amin moved the center of his order’s Sufi activities to the Abu al-Nur Mosque. The teachings of Amin at the Mosque ranged widely over various Islamic studies such as shari‘ah and hadith, although he emphasized the importance of Sufism. Accordingly, his teachings were called “the rebuilding of Islam based on non-sectarianism”.<sup>6</sup> Ahmad Kuftaru succeeded Amin as the order’s leader in 1932, following his father’s wishes to develop the educational content and the selection of textbooks. Furthermore, he tried to make the Abu al-Nur Mosque the prominent center in Damascus for dealing with various Islamic studies. Ahmad Kuftaru himself admitted that there was a strong linkage between his father and him through the

idea of “the removal of sectarianism,” and he tried to reflect this in his understanding of Sufism.<sup>7</sup> According to him, he and his father intentionally avoided showing Sufism as a strong centripetal force and a presence in Islam with its peculiar names, technical terms, and thoughts. This is because they realized that “Sufism” could be regarded as a sect by its particular features.

As for the circumstances of Damascus at that time, the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw major changes in rulers, from the Ottoman Empire to the Syrian Kingdom and then to the French mandate. Consequently, Amin Kuftaru showed the faces not only of the scholar and Shaykh but also of an activist committed to resistance against the French mandate, declaring the necessity of unity among Syrian citizens and Muslims. As for Ahmad Kuftaru, he avoided acts of directly resisting the French mandate but instead concentrated on educational activities at the Abu al-Nur Mosque, stressing the necessity of unity among people there. This orientation became predominant after the 1940s, and he changed the Abu al-Nur Mosque from a place where Muslims primarily learned Sufism and Islamic studies in preparation for lifelong study to a strategic and social space where political and social leaders in Syria could gather and train the young to be provincial missionaries. Moreover, with support by some Damascene Islamic scholars, he established in the Mosque the Ansar Charity Corporation for supporting orphans in the 1950s. It can be said that this was an event leading to the establishment of the Shaykh Ahmad Kuftaru Foundation and the Abu al-Nur Islamic School in the 1970s. In parallel with these transformations of the Abu al-Nur Mosque, Ahmad Kuftaru himself changed his social position in the public life of Syria by being appointed as a religious scholar in Qunaitrah Prefecture in 1948, as one in Damascus Prefecture, and as the Mufti of Damascus Prefecture. Of course, the climax of his clerical career was his appointment as the Grand Mufti of the Republic in 1964. Although political struggles in Syria had continued after independence until the birth of the Ba‘th regime, such as the coup d’etat by the Kemalists (1949) and the alliance with Egypt (United Arab Republic, 1958-61), Kuftaru maintained collaborative relations with Syrian (especially Damascene) scholars and social leaders and also continued his advancement in the Syrian public sphere.

The strongest reasons why the Sufi aspect of Ahmad Kuftaru has not been emphasized so much are certainly as described above, that is, his personal teachings from his father and his prominent reputation in Syria. In particular, the latter reason contributed to his image as a “kept scholar” under the Ba‘th regime, highlighted by his role as the Grand Mufti. These circumstances effectively made his Sufi background seem comparatively

inconsequential. However, Sufi image of Ahmad Kuftaru has not become a secretive one in the eyes of the people of Damascus, neither was this image denied by them. Ahmad Kuftaru became known under the title “Sufi Shaykh”, a title that classified him as successor of Islamic tradition. Considering this situation, Stenberg declared, “Succession of a spiritual inheritance (from Amin Kuftaru to Ahmad Kuftaru)” is abundantly significant,<sup>8</sup> and the Sufi genealogy of Ahmad Kuftaru increasingly appears to be a necessary research pursuit today.

### 3. Flourish of Naqshbandi Sufi order in Syria

It is clear that the Naqshbandi Sufi order served as a contact point between Ahmad Kuftaru and Amin Kuftaru. This section first gives a brief history of the Naqshbandi Sufi order and its flourishing in Syria and Damascus.

The Naqshbandi Sufi order was derived from a Sufi order called Khwajagan in 13<sup>th</sup> century central Asia, and it was renamed Naqshbandi after Baha’ al-Din Muhammad Naqshband (d.1389).<sup>9</sup> The order puts the prophet Muhammad (d.632) as the origin of its genealogy, and then the genealogy passes to the 1<sup>st</sup> successor (khalifah) of the prophet, Abu Bakr al-Siddiq (d.634), but not the 4<sup>th</sup>, ‘Ali. Therefore, it is often said that the order closely follows Sunni Islam. The order spread after Naqshband to East Turkistan, Anatolia, and the Indian subcontinent by the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and it is now regarded as one of the largest Sufi orders in the world. The branch that introduced the Naqshbandi Sufi order to West Asia as well as Syria is one of the branches called the Mujaddidi-Naqshbandi order. Ahmad Sirhindi (d.1624), founder of the branch, upheld the apocalyptic thought stressing shari’ah, and his deputies expanded networks of the branch in the Ottoman Empire under the leadership of Murad Buhari (d.1720) and others, establishing the order under cooperation with Ottoman representatives.

However, the most expansive and influential Naqshbandi branch in Damascus since the 19<sup>th</sup> century is Khalidi-Naqshbandi,<sup>10</sup> whose founder was Khalid Baghdadi (1776-1827), who studied under Shaykh Ghram ‘Ali (d.1824), a leading figure of Mujaddidi-Naqshbandi. Baghdadi was a Kurdish teacher near Baghdad, who then moved to India and committed himself to the Mujaddidi branch. After India, he arrived in the Ottoman Empire through itinerant travels. The Ottoman Empire at that time was gradually losing territory due to several wars with Russia as well as developments such as the Greek independence movement. At that time, the Empire was attempting reforms, and Baghdadi and the Khalidi-Naqshbandi orders had supported the reforms of the governors along with the Mujaddidi-Naqshbandi orders. But this support by the



Naqshbandi Shaykhs to the governors was more than mere one-sided obedience. This arrangement implied that the Naqshbandi orders in Damascus had some influence on Ottoman policies promulgated from Istanbul. In particular, the Khalidi-Naqshbandi orders at that time were expected by the governors to provide Islamic leadership in the Empire, since it was formed with a centralized structure based on strong relations between the Shaykh and the disciples. Furthermore, since the age of Mujaddidis, it had a strong tradition of exercising and promoting Islamic orthodoxy through respect for shari'ah law. The governors would have regarded the Khalidi-Naqshbandi orders as a potentially aggressive influence or an alternative Islamic movement in place of Wahhabism, which had been spreading from the Arabian Peninsula since the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>11</sup>

This political dynamics was further accelerated through two encounters. One was between Baghdadi and Ibn 'Abidin (d.1836), a Damascene scholar. Ibn 'Abidin originally belonged to the Shafi'i school but came to serve Husain Muradi, a Mufti of the Hanafi school. At the same time, he became a member of the Khalidi-Naqshbandi order through an encounter with Baghdadi, which supported the policies of Sultan Mahmud II (d.1839) as Ibn 'Abidin. This suggests that Ibn 'Abidin would have expected Baghdadi to serve not only as his political ally but also as the spiritual leader of Sufism. Weismann pointed out that Ibn 'Abidin, in his books as exemplified by *Radd al-muhtar 'ala al-durr al-mukhtar*, supported Sufi thoughts such as that of Ghazali, Ibn 'Arabi, and 'Abd al-Ghani' al-Nabulsi, and declared that tariqah (Sufi orders) and shari'ah had the same aim and necessitated each other.<sup>12</sup> Weismann expressed the view that this declaration of Ibn 'Abidin was a "defense" of Khalid Baghdadi against 'Abd al-Wahhab al-Susi, who left and criticized the Khalidi-Naqshbandi order as heterodoxy, as well as the general criticism of Sufism by the Wahhabis. Ibn 'Abidin seemed to appeal to the critics of Baghdadi and Sufism by stressing that the Khalidi-Naqshbandi orders could be regarded as Islamic "orthodoxy" through their respect for shari'ah.

This tendency was accelerated by the other encounter between the Khalidi-Naqshbandi orders and the 'Abd al-Qadir Jaza'iri. Jaza'iri, after his resistance to the French mandate in his homeland of Algeria, migrated in 1855 to Damascus and had gathered several disciples there. These disciples were members of the Qadiri Sufi order from Algeria and the Khalidi-Naqshbandi orders living in Damascus. His activities in Damascus centered around his alliance with members of the Khalidi-Naqshbandi orders as presented by Muhammad Hani (d.1862), a leading Shaykh of the Slayman school (tekke).<sup>13</sup> Through it, Jaza'iri formed and developed the Salafi orientation in the

Khalidi-Naqshbandi orders in Damascus by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century through the “moderate and peaceful reformist attitudes (rather than the Wahhabis)” such as those expressed by Shah Wali’ Allah (d.1762) and Shawkani (d.1834).<sup>14</sup> “Salafism” arose at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as part of Islamic revivalism, and it is still regarded today as Islamic “fundamentalism” or “orthodoxy.” As for the character of “orthodoxy,” the banner of Salafism has become influential since it is difficult for Muslims to deny or criticize it.<sup>15</sup> Consequently, we could say that the Naqshbandi Sufi order started with the Sunni orientation of Shah Naqshband in central Asia and developed with an orientation to shari’ah through the teachings of Ahmad Sirhindi in South Asia, with the integration between Sufism and shari’ah promoted by Khalid Baghdadi in Western Asia. This background prepared the foundation of the “orthodoxy” that would characterize the salafi movement at the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century Damascus.<sup>16</sup>

#### 4. Acts under the name of “‘ulama”

‘Isa Kurdi is one of the most important keys in the genealogy from Khalid Baghdadi to Kuftaru. In common with Baghdadi and Kuftaru, he was a Kurd. As his legacy, the network of Khalidi-Naqshbandi orders, including Damascene Sufis and ‘ulama’, had the characteristic feature of being a group led by Kurds of the Shafi’i school. As mentioned above, Ahmad Kuftaru learned under his father, Amīn, who in turn learned under Badr al-Din and, notably, ‘Isa. Therefore, this section focuses on ‘Isa, and his activities in Damascus.

The Kurdish emigration from Anatolia to Damascus is known mainly as an event caused by the dismantlement of the Ottoman Empire after the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916.<sup>17</sup> However, we could find other, earlier instances such as after the 12<sup>th</sup> century movement under the leadership of Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi, an Armenian Kurd, and emigrations from the 18<sup>th</sup> century due to the Russo-Turkish Wars culminating in the Crimean War. ‘Isa Kurdi was born in Tarham, an urban village of Diyar Bakr in the Northern part of Jazirah, and he migrated in 1877 to the al-Salihyiah district (now called the Rukn al-Din district) of Damascus. This was about 17 years before the Kuftaru migrated and 20 years before his encounter with Amin Kuftaru.<sup>18</sup> After his migration and before he began to lead the Khalidi-Naqshbandi order next to the tomb of Baghdadi at the foot of the Qasiyun Mountains and encountered Amin, ‘Isa first learned under Mahmud Hamzah (d.1887),<sup>19</sup> a Mufti of the Damascus district, and ‘Abd al-Qadir Jaza’iri. Considering that Mahmud and Jaza’iri passed away 10 years after ‘Isa’s migration, ‘Isa must have had extensive encounters with them during this brief period.

‘Isa succeeded in Damascus in bringing up several disciples who later became important scholars in Syria, including Amin. Among his disciples younger than Amin are Muhammad ‘Ata’ al-Qasim (d.1938), the Grand Mufti of the Hanafi school in the Syrian Kingdom under Faysal al-Husain, Abu al-Khayr al-Midani (d.1961), the chief of the ‘Ulama’ League of the Hanafi school in the 1940s, and Ibrahim Gharaini (d.1958), a jurist, teacher, and the Mufti from 1911 in the Qatanah district (outer Damascus).<sup>20</sup> They were not always Naqshbandis, but they were committed personally to ‘Isa. The most prominent disciples of ‘Isa were Amin Kuftaru and Muhammad Zamalkani (d.1927) as his successor.<sup>21</sup> They partially led the order, kept guard of the tomb of Baghdadi in ‘Isa’s old age, and in fact actually managed the order there. We can find two types of documents: One identifies Zamalkani as ‘Isa’s successor (Shaykh of the order) and the other names Amin as the successor.<sup>22</sup> But in either case, Amin had assumed the leading position of the Khalidi-Naqshbandi order in 1911 with official permission (ijazah).<sup>23</sup> Although it is not clear why Amin and Zamalkani became successors, they were both Kurds of the Shafi‘i school in common with ‘Isa, and this could be viewed as a strong tie among the three.

Although Ahmad Kuftaru did not learn directly under ‘Isa Kurdi, he succeeded in leading his Sufi order from the former’s successor Amin Kuftaru and then collaborated with other disciples of ‘Isa through his activities in the Syrian public sphere. After his succession and the passing of Amin Kuftaru in the 1940s, Ahmad Kuftaru entered the ‘Ulama’ Group (Jum‘iyyah ‘Ulam’ al-Sham). The group, established in 1938 by Muhammad Kamil Qassab (d.1954), was the circle of ‘ulama,’ mainly in Damascus.<sup>24</sup> It was also one of the predecessors of the ‘Ulama’ League (Rabitah al-‘Ulama’). The ‘Ulama’ League is known as an affiliates of the Muslim Brotherhood (Ikhwan al-Muslimin), a popular Islamic group organized by Mustafa al-Siba‘i (d.1964) in 1945–47 that played a role in supporting the league’s election campaign in Syria after its independence.<sup>25</sup> In addition, the Brotherhood could be viewed as an academic complement to the League. The original membership of the League was composed of some of ‘Isa’s disciples, such as Midani (director), Gharaini, and Ahmad Kuftaru (a vice chairman of the league assembly) and also disciples of Badr al-Din al-Hasani, such as Hasan Shati (d.1962, assistant officer of ‘Ulama’ Group).

As mentioned above, the Naqshbandi members in Damascus have remained under the influence of ‘Isa Kurdi through Khalidi-Naqshbandi since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the disciples within ‘Isa’s genealogy have spread their works, not only in the field of Sufism. They were composed of members with diverse characteristics, but finally the successors

emerged as leaders, like ‘Isa, who were Kurds of the Shafi‘i school as represented by Amin Kuftaru. Then Amin’s son, Ahmad Kuftaru, succeeded his prodigious predecessors as leader of the Sufi order, and ‘Isa’s disciples committed themselves to political activities under the name of ‘ulama’.

## 5. Conclusion

Ahmad Kuftaru is a prominent figure in ‘Isa’s theological genealogy who carried on his political, social, and religious power in modern Syria after the decline of the ‘Ulama’ League and the Muslim Brotherhood in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Nevertheless, he was committed to the Ba‘th regime as the Grand Mufti, in a collaborative relationship with President Hafiz al-Asad.<sup>26</sup> As discussed, the Sufi connection of Ahmad Kuftaru, which is to say his role as a Shaykh of the Naqshbandi-Khalidi order in Damascus following ‘Isa Kurdi, has not been widely examined mainly due to two reasons: his philosophical background and his reputation in modern Syria. However, since he was still a Shaykh of the order, we can see a linkage between Ahmad Kuftaru and ‘Isa Kurdi and, moreover, the importance of the Sufi genealogy, since ‘Isa remained a force in the 20<sup>th</sup> century religious network of Damascus.

The 19–20<sup>th</sup> century Islamic world is known for having brought about several Islamic revivals and their widespread dissemination. The one in Syria is regarded neither very prominent nor influential throughout the whole Islamic world, but some activities under the name of ‘ulama’ deserve attention. In fact, the Sufis within ‘Isa’s genealogy were at the center of these ‘ulama’ activities in Damascus, and they have established religious networks lasting from the 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>27</sup> The Sufi aspect and the genealogy of Ahmad Kuftaru should be viewed as a flexible hookup of Sufi and ‘ulama’.

## Notes

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\* This research and article were partly supported by the Sasakawa Scientific Research Grant from the Japan Science Society, and the Grant from the Matsushita International Foundation. This article is a research product of NIHU Program: Islamic Area Studies.

<sup>1</sup> E.g. Frederic de Jong, “The Naqshbandiyya in Egypt and Syria: Aspects of its History, and Observations Concerning its Present-Day Condition.” in *Naqshbandis: Cheminements et Situation Actuell d’un Ordre Mystique Musulman* (eds. M. Gaborieau, A. Popovic & T. Zarcone, Paris/Istanbul: Éditions ISIS, 1985); J.P. Luizard, “Le Moyen-Orient Arabe.” in *Les Voies d’Allah* (eds. A. Popovic & G. Veinstein, Paris: Fayard, 1996); Annabelle Böttcher, “L’Elite Feminine Kurde de la Kuftariyya: une Confrérie Naqshbandi Damascene.” in *Islam des Kurdes* (ed. Martin van Bruinessen, Paris: INALCO, 1998); Leif Stenberg, “Naqshbandiyya in Damascus: Strategies to Establish and Strengthen the Order in a Changing Society.” in

- Naqshbandis in Western and Central Asia* (ed. Elisabeth Özdalga, Istanbul: Swedish Research Institute, 1999); Paulo G.Pinto, "Le Soufisme en Syrie." in *La Syrie au Present* (Paris: Sindbad Actes Sud, 2007); Itzhak Weismann, *The Naqshbandiyya: Orthodoxy and Activism in a Worldwide Sufi Tradition* (New York: Routledge, 2007).
- <sup>2</sup> Ramadan 24, 1350 A.H. C.f. 'Imād 'Abd al-Ṭā'if Nadāf, *al-Shaykh Aḥmad Kuftārū yataḥaddath* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed, Dimashq: Dār al-Rashīd, 2005), p.84.
  - <sup>3</sup> de Jong, op.cit., p.600; Luizard op.cit., p.364; Eyal Zisser, "Syria, the Ba'th Regime and the Islamic Movement: Stepping on a New Path?" in *The Muslim World* 95 (2005), pp.43-65.
  - <sup>4</sup> C.f. Muḥammad Sharīf, *Mu'jam al-usar wa-'allām al-Dimashqiyyah* (Dimashq: Bayt al-Ḥikmah, 2003), p.1138.
  - <sup>5</sup> C.f. Nizār Abādah & Muḥammad Muṭī' al-Ḥāfīz, *Tārīkh 'ulamā' Dimashq fī al-qurn al-rābi' asharah al-hijuriyyah* (Dimashq: Dār al-Fikr, 1986), pp.284-291, 473-494; Muḥammad Ḥasan Ḥamṣī, *al-Du'āh wa-l-da'wah al-Islāmiyyah al-mu'āshirah: al-munṭalaqah min masājid Dimashq* (Dimashq: Dār al-Rashīd, 1991), pp.151-158, 803-808.
  - <sup>6</sup> Muḥammad Ḥabash, *al-Shaykh Aḥmad Kuftārū wa-manhaj-hu fī-l-tajdīd wa-l-iṣlāh* (Dimashq: Dār al-Rashīd, 1996), p.44.
  - <sup>7</sup> C.f. Abū al-Ḥasan Nadawī, *al-Manhaj al-sūfiyy fī fikr wa-da'wah al-Shaykh Aḥmad Kuftārū* (Dimashq: Bayt al-Ḥikmah, 1999), p.118f.; Nadāf, op.cit., p.85; Takao Kenichiro, "Sufism of Aḥmad Kuftārū, the Grand Mufti of Syria: A Challenge for 'the Rebuild of Islam Based on Non-Sectarianism.'" in *The World of Islam*. 72 (in Japanese; 2009), pp.97-122.
  - <sup>8</sup> Stenberg, op.cit., p.105.
  - <sup>9</sup> C.f. Hamid Algar, "A Brief History of the Naqshbandī Order," "Political Aspects of Naqshbandi History." in Gaborieau, Popovic & Zarccone, op.cit., Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, *The Naqshbandi Sufi Way: History and Guidebook of the Saints of the Golden Chain* (Chicago: KAZI Publications, 1995); 'Ubūd 'Abd Allāh 'Askarī, *Tārīkh al-taṣawwuf fī Sūriyyah: al-nash'ah wa-l-taṭūr: al-zaman, al-makān, al-insān* (Dimashq: Dār al-Namīr, 2006a); Itzhak Weismann, *Taste of Modernity: Sufism, Salafiyya, and Arabism in Late Ottoman Damascus* (Leiden: Brill, 2001); "Law and Sufism on the Eve of Reform: The View of Ibn 'Abidin." in *Ottoman Reform and Muslim Regeneration* (eds. Itzhak Weismann & Fruma Zachs, London / New York: I.B.Tauris, 2005), op.cit., 2007.
  - <sup>10</sup> 'Askarī, who interviewed with the Sufi Shaykhs in Syria, indicates the details of 7 Naqshbandi orders. According to him, 6 of them are of Khalidī-Naqshbandi orders. 'Askarī, op.cit., 2006a, *al-Turq al-ṣūfiyyah fī Sūriyyah: taṭawwurāt wa-maḥmūmāt: qirā'āt fī waqī' al-ḥāl* (Dimashq: Dār al-Namīr, 2006b), pp.1-88.
  - <sup>11</sup> Weismann, op.cit., 2007, p.88.
  - <sup>12</sup> Weismann, op.cit., 2005, p.74f. *Radd al-muhtār 'alā-l-durr al-mukhtār: ḥashiyah Ibn 'Ābidīn*, vol.1, p.26; *Sall al-ḥusām al-Hindī li-nuṣrah Sayyidīnā Khālīd al-Naqshbandī*.
  - <sup>13</sup> John O. Voll, *Islam: Continuity and Change in the Modern World* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1994), p.120; Weismann, op.cit., 2001, p.204f., 270f., op.cit., 2005, p.207; 'Askarī, op.cit., 2006a, p.115f.
  - <sup>14</sup> Weismann, op.cit., 2001, p.270.
  - <sup>15</sup> Khaled Abou El Fadl, *The Great Theft: Wrestling Islam from the Extremists* (New York: Harper Collins, 2007; 2005), p.75.
  - <sup>16</sup> This tendency was called "Neo-Sufism" and discussed. C.f. Fazlur Rahman, *Islam* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979); R.S. O'Fahey & Bernd Radtke, "Neo-Sufism Reconsidered." in *Der Islam*. 70(1) (1993), Voll, op.cit., Elizabeth Syriyeh, *Sufis and Anti-Sufis: the Defence, Rethinking and Rejection of Sufism in the Modern World* (London: Curzon Press, 1999).
  - <sup>17</sup> Kerim Yildiz, *The Kurds in Syria: the Forgotten People* (London / Michigan: Pluto Press, 2005), p.205f.
  - <sup>18</sup> Ḥabash, op.cit., 1996, p.37.
  - <sup>19</sup> C.f. Abādah & al-Ḥāfīz, op.cit., pp.51-58.

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<sup>20</sup> Abādah & al-Ḥāfīz, op.cit., pp.517-522, 687-692, 720-732; Muḥammad Ḥabash, *al-Shaykh Amīn Kuftārū fi dhikrā murūr khamsīn ‘amm ‘alā wafāt-hu* (Dimashq: Dār al-Ma‘rifah, 1989), pp.29-34.

<sup>21</sup> C.f. Abādah & al-Ḥāfīz, op.cit., p.425f.; Ḥamṣī, op.cit., p.204f.

<sup>22</sup> One defines Zamalkani as I‘sa’s next are below. Muḥammad Dahmān, *Riḥlah wafā’ ma‘a al-wārith al-Muḥammadī*. (n.p., 2008), p.419; Ḥamṣī, op.cit., Muḥammad Ḥabash, *al-Shaykh Amīn Kuftārū 1875-1938* (Dimashq: Dār Nadwah al-‘Ulamā’, 2008), p.101f. One defines Amin as ‘Isa’s next are below. Nadawī, op.cit., p.169; Nadāf, op.cit., p.65.

<sup>23</sup> Ḥabash, op.cit., 1989, p.37.

<sup>24</sup> Activities of the group are as below: Islamic studies such as Qur’an readings and 4 Sunni schools of shari‘ah, and mathematic, geography, French, and sports. C.f. Abādah & al-Ḥāfīz, op.cit., pp.657-667.

<sup>25</sup> Kota Suechika, *The Transformation of the State and Islam in Modern Syria* (in Japanese; *Gendai Siria no Kokka-Hen’you to Isurāmu*, Kyoto: Nakanishiya Shuppan, 2005), p.187.

<sup>26</sup> C.f. Muḥammad Anwar Wardah, *al-Ijtihād bayna al-tajdīd wa-l-tafrīt* (Dimashq: Dār al-Rashīd, 2004); Zuhayr al-Ayyūbī, *Aulāik ābā’i* (Dimashq: Dār al-Ma‘rifah, 2006).

<sup>27</sup> C.f. Aḥmad ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, *al-‘Arif bi-Allāh al-Shaykh Aḥmad al-Ḥārūn Aḥmad bn Muḥammad Ghanīm: sīrah-hu wa-karāmāt-hu* (Dimashq: Dār al-Īmān, 1992), p.38ff.; Muḥammad Ḥamīdān Ziyān, *al-‘Allāmah al-rabbānī al-Shaykh Rajab Diyb: nibrās da‘wah wa-manārah hidāyah* (Dimashq: Dār Ṭayyib al-Gharā’, 2007), p.24.

As a last note I wish to emphasize that this article does not aim to present that Naqshbandi as a Sufi order of the highest rank in contemporary Damascus, Syria, but rather that Naqshbandi is one of the major Sufi orders existing since the Ottoman era, to maintain today, under Ahmad Kuftaru political and social influence, by having cooperated with the Syrian government. In fact, there are numerous Sufi orders including Shadhilis, Qadiris and others, for which see ‘Askarī, op.cit., 2006b; Itzhak Weismann, “The Shādhiliyya-Dārqawiyya in the Arab East: XIX<sup>th</sup>/XX<sup>th</sup> Centuries.” in *Une Voie Soufie dans le Monde: la Shādhiliyya* (ed. Éric Geoffroy, Paris: Espace du Temps Présent / Maisonneuve & Larose, 2005), pp.255-269.