groups of ordinary people were difficult to come by. When I finally resolved
to visit and inquire about the sources Smith described, I realized en route
that I had no concrete plan. My more challenging research attempts had
relied on a combination of tenacity and what people in my native New York
might call chutzpah—not always a formula for success in Turkey. When I
got there, Ethem Bey—the son of the late shaykh Necmeddin Özbekkangay
(d. 1971)—saw me standing outside and invited me in. He told stories about
Sultantepe’s role in the Turkish War of Independence, with which I was fa-
miliar, but was caught off guard by my interest in the tekke, the records of
the people it hosted, and its role in nineteenth-century pilgrimage networks.
This was my introduction to the fraught position of Sultantepe in Turkish
history and of the forgotten history of Istanbul’s connections to the haj. It
was almost as if the lodge had existed to fulfill a destiny of helping found the
Turkish nation rather than its institutional mandate to provide lodging and
support to Central Asian pilgrims.

As Ethem Bey gave me a tour of the space—including the room where
the registers were still kept—I had my second introduction to the tekke.
Archivists and librarians had always mediated my access to documents and
manuscripts, and the sources for my research were far removed from the peo-
ple and places I studied. I was suddenly cognizant of being in the space that
served as one of the first sites of sustained encounter between Central Asians
and Ottomans and that had shaped the trajectories of generations of people in
motion. This insight made me look at the courtyard in a different way and to
imagine what it would be like to sit there in the shade of the magnolia after a
long day of looking for work and the relief it would provide—not only to new
arrivals who had been traveling for weeks aboard crowded trains and ships but
also to the tekke guests, who retired each night to crowded rooms and tents. I
began to visualize how the space shaped and rooted people in Istanbul in ways
that government documents alone could not account for.

That afternoon, Ethem Bey allowed me to examine two of the registers.
The pages listed the names, ages, places of origin, dates of arrival and de-
parture, and other details of guests’ journeys (fig. 6). To obtain access to the
sources in their entirety, however, I had to mobilize various personal and pro-
fessional connections. It seemed that I was something of a liminal actor—the
foreign Muslim who had to negotiate her insider-outsider status and who