Ayşe Ezgi Dikici

PAINTING AN ICON OF THE IDEAL *GĀZI*: AN EXPLORATION OF THE CULTURAL MEANINGS OF THE LOVE AFFAIR EPISODE IN SŪZĪ CHELEBI'S *GAZAVĀTNĀME* OF MIHALOĞLU ALI BEY

MA Thesis in Medieval Studies

Central European University

Budapest

May 2007

PAINTING AN ICON OF THE IDEAL *GĀZI*:
AN EXPLORATION OF THE CULTURAL MEANINGS OF THE LOVE AFFAIR EPISODE IN SŪZĪ CHELEBI'S *GAZAVĀTNĀME* OF MIHALOĞLU ALI BEY

by

Ayşe Ezgi Dikici

(Turkey)

Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,

Central European University, Budapest, in partial fulfillment of the requirements

of the Master of Arts degree in Medieval Studies

Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU

_____

Chair, Examination Committee

_____

Thesis Supervisor

_____

Examiner

Budapest
May 2007

PAINTING AN ICON OF THE IDEAL *GĀZI*:
AN EXPLORATION OF THE CULTURAL MEANINGS OF THE LOVE AFFAIR EPISODE IN SŪZĪ CHELEBI'S *GAZAVĀTNĀME* OF MIHALOĞLU ALI BEY

by

Ayşe Ezgi Dikici

(Turkey)

Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,

Central European University, Budapest, in partial fulfillment of the requirements

of the Master of Arts degree in Medieval Studies

Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU

_____

External Examiner

Budapest
May 2007

PAINTING AN ICON OF THE IDEAL *GĀZI*:
AN EXPLORATION OF THE CULTURAL MEANINGS OF THE LOVE AFFAIR EPISODE IN SŪZĪ CHELEBI'S *GAZAVĀTNĀME* OF MIHALOĞLU ALI BEY

by

Ayşe Ezgi Dikici

(Turkey)

Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,

Central European University, Budapest, in partial fulfillment of the requirements

of the Master of Arts degree in Medieval Studies

Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU

_____

External Supervisor

Budapest
May 2007

I, the undersigned, **Ayşe Ezgi Dikici**, candidate for the MA degree in Medieval Studies declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

Budapest, 25 May 2007

_____

Signature

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to my supervisor Cristian Gaşpar for all his meticulous attention, patience, and support during the writing process. Although this thesis was not in his own field of interest, he was immensely helpful and always ready to devote his time. I owe my access to otherwise inaccessible material to his translations from Serbo-Croatian and Hungarian. I would also like to thank Pál Fodor for generously sharing his books with me and for his useful suggestions, and Judith Rasson for corrections. Finally, I thank my roommate Suzana Kasovska for her friendship and encouragement.

If it were of any help, I would dedicate this thesis to P., who died when I was in Croatia.

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

In all direct quotations from the main primary source, i.e., Sūzī Chelebi's *Gazavātnāme*, I have been faithful to the transliteration system used by A. S. Levend in his critical edition, which includes Turkish characters such as *ç*, *ş*, and *ğ*. While translating Sūzī's verses, I have usually kept the transliterated forms of proper names intact.

For other terms and names of Arabic, Persian, or Turkish origin, I have employed a transliteration system close to the one used by the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, which I modified by substituting, for instance, *ch* for *č* and *ġ* for *gh*.

On the other hand, in an admittedly arbitrary decision, I chose not to transliterate the names of the Ottoman sultans and the frontier lords. I also decided to write certain frequently appearing words in the main text in the following manner: *gāzi* (rather than *ġāzī* or *ghāzī*), *gazā*, *gazavātnāme*, *akıncı*, and *bey* (rather than *beğ* or *beg*).

INTRODUCTION

As he set about to write an epic poem dedicated to the heroic exploits of the fifteenth century frontier lord Mihaloğlu Ali Bey, of which apparently only an initial fragment would survive through the centuries, the Ottoman poet Sūzī Chelebi of Prizren seems to have hoped to establish the great warlord as an icon of the *gazā* ideal in the eyes of his audience.[1] As the namesake of ʻAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, who is widely honored in the Muslim world as the greatest warrior for the faith, Mihaloğlu Ali Bey was well qualified for such an endeavor. His respectable lineage, whose semi-legendary history had intermingled with that of the House of Osman, and his excellent career as a very active and successful commander of raiding expeditions mainly on the Balkan frontier testified to this. Yet, out of all his exploits that Sūzī Chelebi may have found worth recording in his glorification of Ali Bey as a second ʻAlī, a second Rustam, and a Mars on earth, what has come down to us in the surviving fragment of Sūzī's poem is a narrative of one of his early expeditions in Transylvania, his victory against the Hungarian commander Michael Szilágyi, and his love affair with the daughter of a Wallachian ruler.

What constitutes the focus of the present study is this love story and its function within the *gazā* narrative, which was composed probably in the early sixteenth century. More fictional than historical, the love affair episode inserted in the midst of the epic bears a specific character that distinguishes it from the *gazavātnāme* proper, where the concern to communicate a historical content—though a selective and idealized one—is much more evident. The love story, however, seems to serve the poem's agenda in a

[1] Sūzī Chelebi, "Ġazavāt-nāme-i Mihaloġlı ʻAlī Beğ" (The book of Mihaloğlu Ali Bey's holy wars), in *Ġazavāt-nāmeler ve Mihaloğlu Ali Bey'in Ġazavāt-nāmesi*, ed. Agâh Sırrı Levend, 228-358 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1956). Hereafter both the text of the *gazavātnāme* and Agâh Sırrı Levend's whole book will be abbreviated as *Gn*.

different way, for, as I will atempt to show in this study, this is the place where Sūzī adds to his portrayal of the ideal *gāzi* two significant and interrelated dimensions; namely, his hero's appeal for the Christians and love.

I will argue that, written for patrons from the most elite segment of the *gāzi*s, Sūzī Chelebi's epic-romantic *mesnevī* shares the frontier narratives' well-acknowledged inclusivist attitude towards the religious Other that was coupled by a desire to convert, but renders it in a very strong Sufi coloring, which gives his narrative its peculiar character. While a religious outlay that would legitimate frontier raiders as warriors for the faith is a common feature of *gazā* narratives, in Sūzī's conception the ideal *gāzi* seems to be cast almost in the image of a shaykh who is capable of filling even the Christians' hearts with love that would lead them to salvation. This study will, therefore, emphasize the centrality of love—understood in both mystical and this-worldly sense—to this particular literary image of the ideal *gāzi*.

Thus, the aim of this study is to show how and with what literary tools Sūzī constructed in the love story episode his own image of the ideal *gāzi*, which is just one among the many possible ways in which this could have been achieved. In doing so, I will consider the Sufi texture of the poem, the conventions of the Ottoman/Islamicate literary tradition, and the influence of the Turco-Muslim frontier epics and *gazā* lore in an effort to understand the poem in its multi-layered complexity and in the light of its intertextualities. I believe a better understanding of the function of the love story episode within the larger picture of the narrative can lead to a better understanding of the message(s) of the whole poem.

Despite its significance as the only extant literary work dedicated entirely to the glorification of one of the early Ottoman frontier lords, the content of Sūzī Chelebi's poem itself has remained largely ignored by scholars. Most of what is known about Sūzī

Chelebi and his work still depends on the studies of the Russian scholar Olesnicki published in Serbo-Croatian in the 1930s and 1940s.[2] In 1956, Agâh Sırrı Levend's critical edition of the poem—which is the only edition to this date—based on the four extant manuscripts was published as a part of his book on the *gazavātnāme*s written in the Ottoman period. Since then, the text has never been subjected to any detailed analysis, although it has occasionally attracted some scholarly attention, albeit on punctual questions of limited scope.

The discussion in the present study is organized in the two main chapters that follow this introductory chapter. The first of these discusses the place and function of love within the poem, considering the significance of both earthly and mystical types of love in the image of the ideal *gāzi*. The second one focuses on the representations of the Christian characters and of Christianity, pointing at the construction of monastic characters in the image of dervishes and Sūzī Chelebi's incorporation of the Christian Orthodox conception of icon into the poem's Sufi framework, which, as I will argue, gives a unique character to his narrative.

[2] See ch. I.c.

CHAPTER I

THE *GĀZI*, THE POET, AND THE EPIC: CONTEXTUALIZING THE LOVE STORY

The present chapter aims to introduce the identities of the protagonist Mihaloğlu Ali Bey and the author Sūzī Chelebi as well as the general features of the *gazāvātnāme* in order to provide a framework for the subsequent discussion of the love story episode. What follows is a brief overview of the historical, cultural, and literary context of the questions and issues investigated in this study.

I.a. Mihaloğlu Ali Bey: The Historical Person Behind the Hero

The historical person to whom Sūzī devoted his poem is not revealed until the 209th couplet in Levend's edition, where the poet begins to define his objective as relating the *gazā*s of Mihaloğlu Ali Bey, who was an already world-famous warrior according to the author.

Ali Bey was, indeed, one of the most renowned members of the noble Mihaloğlu family, who in the fifteenth century, along with the Evrenosoğlu, Turahanoğlu, and Malkoçoğlu families, constituted the topmost stratum of the early Ottoman landed nobility in the Balkans.[3] Known as 'frontier lords' (*uç beğleri*), these nobles were in charge of the defense of the marches and carried out incursions into the neighboring

[3] For an assessment of the role of these families in the early development of the Ottoman polity, see Heath W. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), 55-66. For the architectural patronage of these noble families in the Balkans, see H. Çetin Arslan, *Türk Akıncı Beyleri ve Balkanların İmarına Katkıları (1300-1451)* (Turkish raider lords and their contributions to the urban development in the Balkans) (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 2001), and for that of the Mihaloğlus in particular, ibid., 47-79. The studies of Vassilis Demetriades on the Evrenosoğlu family are especially important; see his "The Tomb of Ghazi Evrenos Bey at Yenitsa and Its Inscription," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 39, no. 2 (1976): 328-332; idem, "Some Thoughts on the Origins of the *Devşirme*," in *The Ottoman Emirate (1300-1389)*, ed. Elizabeth A. Zachariadou, 23-34 (Rethymnon: Crete University Press, 1993); idem, "*Vakif*s Along the Via Egnatia," in *The Via Egnatia under the Ottoman Rule (1380-1699)*, ed. Elizabeth A. Zachariadou, 85-95 (Rethymnon: Crete University Press, 1996).

foreign territories.[4] The rapid Ottoman expansion in the Balkans during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was largely a result of the activities of these and other frontier lords, who at the head of their *akıncı* (raider) troops raided and plundered foreign lands and fought in battles as auxiliary forces beside the central Ottoman army.[5] As he was glorifying Mihaloğlu Ali Bey in his epic, Sūzī Chelebi also paid homage to these dynasties of hereditary *akıncı* leaders by means of an imaginary group of icons that depict their members who were contemporaries of Mihaloğlu Ali Bey.[6]

The inclusion of these great noble families in the Ottoman ruling elite happened at different times and in various circumstances; as for the Mihaloğlus, this seems to have happened particularly early.[7] This family's history is traced back to a certain Köse Mihal (Köse Mihāl, 'Michael the Beardless'), a Byzantine local lord (*tekfur*) in Bithynia, who allegedly allied himself with the founder of the Ottoman dynasty, Osman, around the turn of the fourteenth century.[8] Since then, according to Sūzī Chelebi's

[4] See Elizabeth A. Zachariadou, "Udj," *EI*, vol. 10: 777.

[5] See A. Decei, "Aḳındjı," *EI*, vol. 1: 340. The word *aḳıncı* ('raider') comes from *aḳın* ('incursion' or 'raid'), which in turn derives from the Turkish verb *aḳ-mak* ('to flow'); thus, the term implies, as the fifteenth century Byzantine chronicler Doukas noted, the rapid and destructive movement of these plundering detachments which poured onto the enemy "like torrential rains" (Lowry, *Early Ottoman State*, 47). In everyday usage the word *aḳıncı* seems to have been more or less synonymous with *ġāzī*, a word of Arabic origin that refers to someone who took part in *ġazwa* ('raid against the infidels'). Originally, *ġazwa* also meant, like *aḳın*, a raid or incursion carried out for booty; however, *ġāzī* and *ġazwa* received a religious coloring in time—this is evident in Turkish usage in the distinction between these terms on the one hand and *aḳın-aḳıncı* on the other—and *ġāzī* even came to be used as a title of honor for Muslim military leaders; see I. Mélikoff, "Ghāzī," *EI*, vol. 2: 1043-45; T. M. Johnstone, "Ghazw," *EI*, vol. 2: 1055-56; and Lowry, *Early Ottoman State*, 45-46.

[6] For a translation of this part, see the Appendix. Also see the discussion in ch. III.b.

[7] For an overview of the history of the Mihaloğlu family and their genealogical tree, see M. Tayyip Gökbilgin, "Mihal-oğulları," *İA*, vol. 8: 285-292. A history of the family was first written by Mehmed Nüzhet Pasha, who was himself a descendent of the Mihaloğlus; see his *Aḥvāl-i Ġāzī Mihāl* (An account of Gāzi Mihal) (Istanbul: n.p., 1315 [1896/7]). Also see Yaşar Gökçek, "Köse Mihal Oğulları," (Graduation Thesis, Istanbul University, Faculty of Literature, 1950).

[8] Though this is beyond the scope of the present study, here I would like to mention briefly a debate which suggests the possibility that Sūzī's poem might have been a part of a conscious project that, being launched during the lifetime of Mihaloğlu Ali Bey, may have intended to emphasize the role of the Mihaloğlus in the foundation of the Ottoman state. The historicity of Ali Bey's legendary Byzantine ancestor Köse Mihal has been questioned by Colin Imber, who suggested that the character of Köse Mihal may have well been a late fifteenth century invention, inserted into the Ottoman historiographic canon. Imber traced the appearance of this character to the chronicle of Oruç (1467) and noted that the details of his beardlessness and his being the lord (*tekfur*) of the Bithynian town Harmankaya were added to the story in 'Āshıḳpashazāde's chronicle towards the end of the fifteenth century. According to Imber, Mihaloğlu Ali Bey's purchase of property in Harmankaya may have been related to Köse Mihal's

poem, which includes an account of Mihal's conversion to Islam and his alliance with Osman, the members of the House of Mihal had been "servants" of the House of Osman,[9] though this designation, which suggests a state of subordination from the very beginning, seems to have been informed by the early sixteenth century situation, when the poem was composed. The epic was, in fact, written at a time when the local aristocratic landed families were gradually losing their powers as a result of the centralizing policies of the Ottoman state. Although it seems that, as the co-founders of the Ottoman state, the Mihaloğlus had enjoyed a better position earlier in history, the initial autonomy that they and other lords enjoyed in the lands they conquered 'by their own sword' was increasingly coming under tighter central control.[10] Thus, the epic's idealized description of Mihaloğlu Ali Bey together with several other frontier lords was situated in such a historical context.

Mihaloğlu Ali Bey belongs a certain branch of the Mihaloğlu family that was established in Plevna. Often referred to in the poem as the "shah of the *gāzi*s" (*Şāh-ı ġāzī*), Mihaloğlu Ali Bey's military career is well documented in the early Ottoman chronicles and foreign sources.[11] A contemporary of Mehmed II 'the Conqueror' of Constantinople and of his successor Bayezid II, this *akıncı* commander took part in

fictional lordship of this town; see Colin Imber, "The Ottoman Dynastic Myth," *Turcica* 19 (1987): 7-27; idem, "The Legend of Osman Gazi," in *The Ottoman Emirate (1300-1389): A Symposium Held in Rethymnon, 11-13 January 1991*, ed. Elizabeth A. Zachariadou, 67-76 (Rethymnon: Crete University Press, 1993); idem, "Canon and Apocrypha in Early Ottoman History," in *Studies in Ottoman History in Honour of Professor V. L. Ménage*, ed. Colin Heywood and Colin Imber, 117-137 (Istanbul: Isis Press, 1994). For a critique of Imber's argument, see Orlin Sabev, "The Legend of Köse Mihal: Additional Notes," *Turcica* 34 (2002): 241-252. In this article, Sabev questions Imber's assertion that Köse Mihal, the legendary ancestor of the noble Mihaloğlu family, was "entirely fictitious," and points to some other documents that support Köse Mihal's historical reality. In fact, it would be interesting to compare Sūzī's version of the story in *Gn*, 250-260, couplets no. 291-423 with the other versions written in the second half of the fifteenth century. Sūzī does not mention the motifs of beardlessness and the lordship of Harmankaya, but tells about Mihal's conversion inspired by a dream where he saw the Prophet Muhammad. According to this version, the Byzantine lord joined Osman's forces only after his conversion.

[9] *O demden bu deme dek nesli anuñ* / *Olupdur çākeri ol h̲ānedānuñ*, *Gn*, 260, couplet no. 422.

[10] This trend of centralization had gained impetus especially during the reign of Mehmed II, whose "land reform" of 1478 brought about the confiscation of a great number of freehold (*mülk*) and *vaḳf* lands which had been previously in the control of such hereditary landlords; see Halil İnalcık, "Meḥemmed II," *EI*, vol. 6: 980.

[11] For a list of his major exploits, see *Gn*, 188-195.

many important expeditions in this period, particularly in the Balkans, in addition to the numerous raids he led into foreign territories. Ali Bey also held administrative posts in the border *sandjak*s (administrative units) of Smederevo and Vidin.[12] As for his charitable deeds, according to his *vaḳfiyye* dated to 1494/5, a copy of which was published by Mehmed Nüzhet, Ali Bey built a mosque, a *medrese* (a theological school), a dervish lodge, and a public kitchen in Plevna.[13]

Sūzī Chelebi's *gazavātnāme*, in its extant form, relates very few of the events of this extremely busy life. It begins to recount Mihaloğlu Ali Bey's exploits with a narrative of an incursion into Transylvania, which apparently belonged to an early phase in Ali Bey's life, since, according to the poem, it was on the occasion of this raid that he emerged as an able commander in his own right, as acknowledged by his superior and master in military affairs, the *akıncı* commander Hasanbeyoğlu Isa Bey. The poem then proceeds to tell about the affair with a certain *akıncı* called Ḳoca Pençekçi, whom Ali Bey violently attacked causing him to complain the sultan about this mistreatment. The story, which is also found in the chronicle of Ibn Kemāl,[14] concludes in a favorable way for the hero, as he manages to take Michael Szilágyi captive, and thanks to that, he is not only forgiven by the sultan Mehmed II but also given the *sandjak* of Vidin as a reward.

According to Mehmed Nüzhet, a nineteenth century descendant of the Mihaloğlus who wrote a history of this family, Ali Bey captured a daughter of King Matthias at the same when he captured Szilágyi. He then married her after having changed her name to Māhitāb; and in fact, it was this woman who gave birth to his son

[12] See Olga Zirojević, "Der Sandschakbey von Smederevo Ali-Bey Mihaloğlu," in *VII. Türk Tarih Kongresi, Ankara: 25-29 Eylül 1970, Kongreye sunulan bildiriler* (The Seventh Turkish Congress of History. Ankara: 25-29 September 1970, Papers presented at the congress), 567-577 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1973).
[13] Gökbilgin, "Mihal-oğulları," 292.
[14] See Ibn Kemal, *Tevârîh-i Âl-i Osman: VII. Defter* (The history of the Ottoman dynasty: the seventh book), ed. Şerafettin Turan (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1957), 168-172.

Hasan Bey. This family legend, however, cannot be confirmed from any other source,[15] though it seems that he really had two wives who were born to non-Muslim fathers.[16] Whether these Christian-born wives constituted the historical basis of the love story episode should be kept in mind as a possibility.

Although the poet never promised to provide a complete account of Mihaloğlu Ali Bey's deeds, his narration of the *akıncı* leader's early exploits which helped establish him as a successful military commander, gives the sense that the poem would continue to relate the hero's later deeds following their actual chronological order. Especially Sūzī's emphasis on Ali Bey's raid of Várad in a few places in the poem suggests that the poet had perhaps planned to relate this event as well in a subsequent episode of the *gazavātnāme*, which, however, did not survive to this day even if it was ever written. Still, the poem in its extant form seems to me as only a fragment of a much longer epic, which was commissioned after Mihaloğlu Ali Bey's death[17] by his family—or written by Sūzī in the hope of a reward from them—in order to publicize the exploits of Mihaloğlu Ali Bey after he died probably in 1507.[18]

I.b. Sūzī Chelebi of Prizren: His Biographical and Intellectual Profile

When and how a patronage relationship came to be established between Sūzī Chelebi and the Mihaloğlu family is not known. However, Sūzī seems to have taken advantage of the generosity of Mihaloğlu Mehmed Bey, who is known to have favored

[15] Gökbilgin, "Mihal-oğulları," 287.
[16] See Cristina Feneşan, "Mihaloğlu Mehmet Beg et la Principauté de Valachie (1508-1532)," *The Journal of Ottoman Studies* 15 (1995): 144, n. 47.
[17] *Gn*, 260, couplet no. 424 mentions Ali Bey's tomb (*türbe*) and implies that Mihaloğlu Ali Bey was already dead at the time when the epic was composed.
[18] See ibid., 194-195.

poets and scholars. Mehmed Bey was in good terms especially with the poet Nihālī, a native of Bursa who taught at the medrese of Ali Bey in Plevna.[19]

As for Sūzī Chelebi[20] (Sûzî Çelebi), what is known about him is based on the scarce and fragmented information derived from a few written sources such as the biographical compilations known as *tez̲kīre* or *tez̲kere*,[21] his tomb inscription, and the endowment deed of his pious foundation (*vaḳf*). Concerning the events of his life, hardly anything can be deduced from the *gazavātnāme* to which he owed his fame, except for the implication that he personally knew Ali Bey and stayed with him for some time.[22] Sūzī also came to acquire a legendary status in his native town Prizren in Kosovo, where to this day he continues to be venerated as a holy man.[23]

It was the Russian scholar A. Olesnicki who, after some pioneer research on this poet including a visit to Prizren, produced a seminal study on Sūzī's biography in the 1930s.[24] An important piece of information for constructing Sūzī's life story derives

[19] Gökbilgin, "Mihal-oğulları," 288. This poet wrote a couplet that is worth quoting in full here since it summarizes the paradoxical condition of the *akıncı*s under the grip of increasing central control. When he was appointed as a judge of of Galata—a place in Istanbul famous for debauchery—where his position did not allow him to drink wine, the poet wrote the following about Mehmed Bey, who was appointed to a governorship on the border but was ordered not to conduct any raids: "To give Mihaloğlu [a commander's position on] the frontier and to forbid him to operate it is like giving me [the judgeship of] Galata and telling me not to drink!" The English translation is that of Cemal Kafadar's in *Between Two Worlds*, 150, slightly altered.

[20] Sūzī is the pen-name that the poet chose to use in his writings, in accordance with a common practice in the Ottoman world. Its meaning is related to 'burning (with the love of God),' and therefore, has a Sufi connotation. The other component of his name, Chelebi (*Çelebi*) was a common title of honor that applied to educated and cultured men.

[21] Such compilations could also be prepared for other artists, such as calligraphers, not only for the poets. For an overview of those that were devoted to poets (*tez̲kere-i shu'arā*) in the Ottoman world, see J. Stewart-Robinson, "The Ottoman Biographies of Poets," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 24, No. 1-2 (1965): 57-74. These consist essentially of a series of biographical entries accompanied by samples from the verses of each poet (ibid., 57).

[22] Towards the end of the introduction to his poem, Sūzī Chelebi urges himself to "reveal whatever [he has] seen and whatever [he has] heard" about Ali Bey's deeds, suggesting that his narrative relies both on his memory as an eye-witness and on hearsay, *Gn*, 244, couplet no. 210.

[23] See Olga Zirojević, "Prizren – Primer Koegzistencije," *Helsinška Povelja* 48 (2002), available from http://www.helsinki.org.yu/authors_singletext.php?lang=sr&idteksta=208; Internet; accessed 24 May 2007; and Raif Vırmiça, *Suzi ve Vakıf Eserleri* (Sūzī and his pious foundation) (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 2002), 106.

[24] [Aleksije A. Olesnicki] А. Олесницки, "Сузи Челеби из Призрена Турски Песник-Историк XV-XVI Века: Прилог Биографији" (Sūzī Chelebi of Prizren, Turkish Poet-Historian of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries: A Contribution to His Biography), *Гласник Скопског Научног Друштва* 13 (1933): 69-82.

from his tombstone inscription in the poet's hometown Prizren. Read for the first time by Olesnicki, the inscription records the date of the poet's death as 931 after Hijra, i.e., 1524/25 CE, and reveals his real name as Mehmed son of Mahmud son of Abdullah.[25] As in Ottoman documents it was a common practice to record the non-Muslim name of one's father as Abdullah (meaning 'a servant of God') in order to avoid writing a non-Muslim name, it can be stated with certainty that Sūzī's grandfather was a non-Muslim—probably a Serb. Consequently, this would suggest that his father was a convert who adopted the name Mahmud. As Prizren was conquered by the Ottomans in 1455, it is probable that his father converted to Islam shortly after this date, before or after Sūzī's birth sometime in mid-century.[26]

Sūzī Chelebi was not one of the greatest Ottoman poets. Yet, out of the twenty-four extant Ottoman *tez̲kīre*s written between the sixteenth and the twentieth centuries, six cover the period when Sūzī Chelebi was alive[27] and all six of them include an entry dedicated to him. Although in the course of this research I did not have personal access to those compilations, what appears from the information given in the secondary literature is that his connections with the noble Mihaloğlu family, who were his patrons as he was writing the epic poem studied here, is a commonly recurring feature in these short biographies of the poet.[28]

The earliest of these *tez̲kīre*s, compiled by an author called Sehī, relates that Sūzī, who was born in Prizren, became a student of theology, but a while later cut his studies short for some undisclosed reason and wrote an epic poem of 15,000 couplets

[25] Ibid., 77-78. Vırmiça, *Suzi*, 27-28; *Gn*, 199.
[26] *Gn*, 199. A part of the Serbian kingdom from the mid-thirteenth century to the mid-fifteenth century, Prizren was conquered by the Ottomans in 1455 during a war against George Branković, and remained as the seat of a *sandjak* all throughout the Ottoman period. At the time Sūzī lived there, the population of Prizren was still dominated by Christians; see M. Kiel, "Prizren," *EI*, vol. 8: 337-338.
[27] These are the *tez̲kīre*s compiled by Sehī (1538), Laṭīfī (1546), 'Āshıḳ Chelebi (1569), Ḳınalızāde (1585), Beyānī (ca. 1595), and Riyāżī (1609), Stewart-Robinson, "The Ottoman Biographies of Poets," 57-58. The dates given in parentheses are the compilation dates.
[28] *Gn*, 197-198.

narrating the deeds of Mihaloğlu Ali Bey.[29] This note about the 15,000 couplets constitutes one of the puzzles concerning Sūzī, since the extant copies of his poem include only 1795 couplets about the earliest deeds of Ali Bey, which end rather abruptly without a proper conclusion. Therefore, it is not clear whether the poet indeed wrote a longer epic, of which only a fragment has survived, or whether he never finished his work for an unknown reason. Perhaps, as I have already suggested above, Sūzī had, in fact, planned an ambitious epic of this length, which would have covered the whole life of Ali Bey.[30] Levend, the modern editor of the *gazavātnāme*, speculates that the poem could have been left unfinished because of a disagreement or quarrel between Sūzī and his patron Mihaloğlu Mehmed Bey, the son of Ali Bey, which could have been caused by the impropriety of the love story episode.[31] Since, as it will be explained below, Sūzī Chelebi seems to have settled permanently in his hometown, Prizren, from 1513 onward, it was probably before or around this date that Sūzī left the Mihaloğlus and gave up writing the epic. It is impossible to know whether, as Levend suggests, this possible break was caused by the inappropriate content of the poem itself or not, although this is of utmost importance for assessing the extent to which it was in line with the wishes of the patron(s).

The *tezkīre* compiled by Laṭīfī, on the other hand, identifies Sūzī Chelebi as a dervish of the Naḳshibandī order, adding one more layer to the identity of the poet.[32] There seems to be, however, no other source to confirm his adherence to this particular

[29] Ibid., 197.
[30] Levend notes that the poet briefly lists Ali Bey's major exploits in couplets no. 231-238, which can perhaps be considered as a summary of what would follow. But he also questions this hypothesis as he refers to the couplets no. 434-436, where the poet expresses the impossibility of putting all the countless deeds of Ali Bey on paper; ibid., 206.
[31] Ibid., 207.
[32] Ibid., 197.

order; and indeed, certain verses in his epic poem suggest that he had an affiliation with the Mevlevī order rather than or in addition to the Naḳshibandī.[33]

Sūzī Chelebi's dervish identity is also attested by the *teẕkīre* of 'Āşıḳ Chelebi, though without naming any Sufi order in particular.[34] Moreover, this source relates that the poet had an elder brother, who also wrote poetry under the pseudonym Nehārī. Despite Levend's reservations as to the veracity of this information,[35] there are indications that Nehārī was indeed Sūzī's relative, if not brother. The fact that they were buried side by side in Prizren as well as Nehārī's signature as a witness on Sūzī's endowment deed supports the possibility of a familial relation between the two.[36] On the other hand, another entry in the same *teẕkīre* suggests that Nehārī was the brother of a poet called Sa'yī.[37] Sūzī's relationship with the poet Sa'yī, however, is not attested to by any other source. As Levend suspects, it is possible that the brotherhood of all three contemporary poets from Prizren was an invention of popular imagination perpetuated in the oral traditions to which the *teẕkīre*-compiler 'Āshıḳ Chelebi, himself a native of Prizren,[38] had direct access. Then, the fact that the author of one of the main written sources for Sūzī's life was from Sūzī's hometown should not necessarily give him more credibility, but caution one against his susceptibility to distorted oral information.[39]

The Islamic institution known as a *vaḳf* (*waḳf*), i.e., 'pious endowment,' enabled one to grant part of one's income permanently for a certain purpose, such as the construction and maintenance of a building complex that could include a mosque, a soup kitchen, a public bath, and so on. Like many others in the Ottoman world—and

[33] For instance, ibid., 314, couplet no. 1167.
[34] According to 'Āshıḳ Chelebi, Sūzī gave up his studies when his spiritual mentor passed away, ibid., 197-198.
[35] Levend points out that the name of Nehārī seems to have been a later addition that appears in some of the manuscripts of this *teẕkīre* and it probably stems from a "rumour" in Prizren; see ibid., 197 and 202 with the relevant notes.
[36] Vırmiça, *Suzi*, 31.
[37] See the footnote to *Gn*, 202.
[38] Stewart-Robinson, "The Ottoman Biographies of Poets," 58.
[39] Indeed, oral sources are among the principal sources for the compilation of *teẕkīre*s: see ibid., 66-67.

like his hero Ali Bey—Sūzī Chelebi had a *vaḳf* of his own, which was devoted to the maintenance of a building that functioned both as a mosque and a school and which is still standing in Prizren.[40] The rest of what is known about Sūzī comes from the inscription on the poet's tomb in the vicinity of that building and the *vaḳfiyye* ('endowment deed') belonging to this *vaḳf*.

Sūzī's *vaḳfiyye*, written in 1513, adds some further details to this picture by shedding light on the last years of his life. According to this document, the Ottoman Sultan Selim I granted him a farm in Graždanik, near Prizren, the income of which Sūzī donated to the mosque and the school he had built in Prizren.[41] It also appears from this document that by that time Sūzī, who must have already left the Mihaloğlus, was planning to spend the rest of his life in Prizren working as a teacher and an *imām* (prayer leader) in his mosque-school. He probably did as he planned, as he was buried there.

Based on the biographical details mentioned above, it is possible to identify three significant aspects of Sūzī Chelebi's cultural and intellectual identity which, as I will show in the following chapters, influenced his literary work in more than one way. First, born to a family of non-Muslim origin and brought up in a predominantly Christian town, Sūzī was probably exposed to the local culture of his homeland to a considerable extent. Indeed, it is even likely that Sūzī's native language was not Turkish. Sūzī, in fact, belonged to the first generation of the native Balkan poets who wrote in Ottoman Turkish in the second half of the fifteenth century. His *medrese* education must have been instrumental in ensuring his adaptation to the Ottoman culture and his acquisition of the knowledge required for literary pursuits in the Islamicate literary tradition, as the *medrese* was crucial for becoming versed in poetry. Finally, his

[40] Vırmiça, *Suzi*, 53-62.
[41] The facsimile, transcription, and a modern Turkish translation of the *vaḳfiyye* were published in Vırmiça, *Suzi*, 40-50.

Sufi identity was also an important feature of his intellectual profile, as the discussion in the subsequent chapters of the present study will show.

I.c. The *Gazavātnāme* of Mihaloğlu Ali Bey

As a look at the quite comprehensive list of extant *gazavātnāme*s provided by A. S. Levend will show, the term *gazavātnāme* may better be used to define various sorts of *gazā* narratives, perhaps sharing similar discursive features, rather than a particular literary genre with established characteristics.[42] The *gazavātnāme* that is studied here is—like the *gazavātnāme* part of Aḥmedī's *Iskendernāme*[43] and Enverī's *Düstūrnāme*[44]—one which was written in the form of a *mes̲nevī* (or *mathnawī*); arranged in couplets each of which rhymes in itself, this was a widely used form for narratives in Islamicate literatures.[45]

Sūzī's *gazavātnāme* is an important source, above all, for understanding how the early Ottoman frontier lords in the Balkans saw themselves and their relationship with the Ottoman political centre at a time when they were becoming increasingly subordinate to it. This phenomenon must have provided the poet and his patron(s) with a political motivation in promoting the cult of Ali Bey, a highly successful frontier lord. In fact, Sūzī Chelebi's poem is the only extant literary work that was both directly commissioned by one of the frontier lords and written for such a propagandistic aim.

Despite its significance, Sūzī's *gazavātnāme* has not received sufficient attention from scholars. The scholar who conducted the most extensive study so far on Sūzī

[42] See *Gn*, 15-164.
[43] The early fifteenth century poet Aḥmedī calls that part of his *Iskendernāme* (Book of Alexander) which is about the Ottomans a *gazavātnāme*; see page 6 in Aḥmedī, *Dâstân ve Tevârîh-i Mülûk-i Âl-i Osman* (The epic and history of the sultans of the Ottoman dynasty), in *Osmanlı Tarihleri I*, ed. N. Atsız, 6-25 (Istanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi, 1949).
[44] Enverī, "Düstūrnāme," ed. and trans. Irène Mélikoff-Sayar, in *Le destān d'Umur Pacha* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1954).
[45] See, J. T. P De Bruijn, "Mathnawī (2. In Persian)," *EI*, vol. 6: 832-835 and Amil Çelebioğlu, *Türk Edebiyatı'nda Mesnevi: XV. yy'a Kadar* (*Mes̲nevī* in Turkish literature: up to the fifteenth century) (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 1999), 21-25.

Chelebi and his *gazavātnāme* is Aleksije A. Olesnicki. However, writing in the 1930s and 40s in Serbo-Croatian, this Russian scholar represented a now outdated understanding of the *gāzi*s and the early Ottoman history, and came to some erroneous conclusions concerning the historical reality, as I will note in the following chapter.[46] The next scholar who was interested in the poem was Agâh Sırrı Levend, who, as early as 1956, published a transcription of the *gazavātnāme* into Latin characters together with the facsimile of one of the manuscripts in a critical edition that was based on the four extant copies.[47] This edition, which still remains as the only edition of the poem, was published in the same volume with a study on the Ottoman *gazavātnāme* literature and a detailed introduction on Sūzī Chelebi and Mihaloğlu Ali Bey. Recently, the Turkish minority in Prizren took up publishing books on the author and his work; however, these are of very low scholarly quality.[48] On the other hand, other studies that refer to Sūzī Chelebi's poem (such as that of C. Feneşan) touch upon the text in a tangential way and tend to approach it only as a testimony for the concrete events of the period.[49] However, I believe that the poem was meant to be first and foremost the literary glorification of a hero rather than a historical source and it includes a considerable amount of fictional elements.

[46] See [A. Olesnicki] А. Олесницки, "Сузи Челеби;" idem, "Duhovna Služba Bektašijskoga Reda u Akindžijskoj Vojsci: Prilog Proučavanju Kulta Đerzeleza i Njegove Popularnosti u Bosni" (The Bektāshī Order, the Spiritual Guide of the *Akıncı*s: Essay on the Origin of the Cult of Đerzelez and Its Popularity in Bosnia), *Viestnik Hrvatskoga Arheoloskoga Drustva* 22-23 (1940-1941): 193-206; and idem, *Mihajlo Szilágyi i Srbska Despotija: Akcija Szilágyijeva za Oslobođenje Smedereva od Turaka i njegov poraz od Ali-bega Mihaloglije kod Bazjaša 8. studenoga 1460.* (Mihajlo Szilágyi and the Serbian despotate: Szilágyi's action for the liberation of Smederevo from the Turks and his defeat by Ali-beg Mihaloglu near Baziaš on the 8th of November 1460) (Zagreb: Hrvatska Akademija Znanosti i Umjetnosti, 1943).

[47] These manuscripts are the following: one found in Levend's personal collection (he refers to this as L), in Millet Kütüphanesi (E), in Berlin (B), and in Zagreb (Z). Z consists of only a fragment of 216 couplets, whereas the other three manuscripts, L, E, and B, which begin and end with the same couplets, contain respectively 1646, 1642, and 1688 couplets; see *Gn*, 205, and for the descriptions of the manuscripts, see ibid., 221-226.

[48] See Vırmiça, *Suzi*; and Osman Baymak, ed., *Sûzî Çelebi: Araştırma-İnceleme* (Sūzī Chelebi: A Research) (Prizren: Balkan Aydınları ve Yazarları Yayınları, 1998). Levend's edition of the text was reprinted in both books.

[49] Feneşan, "Mihaloğlu Mehmet Beg," 137-155.

Sūzī Chelebi defined/formulated the aim of his *gazavātnāme* as to relate the glorious deeds of Ali Bey for posterity. At the same time, this epic poem attempts to fashion its protagonist Mihaloğlu Ali Bey as a character belonging to the almost timeless domain of fairy tales and as the contemporary counterpart of the illustrious *gāzi*s of the past, whose memory was handed down to Sūzī's day through popular lore. This last point is evident, above all, in the representation of Mihaloğlu Ali Bey as a match of his most renowned namesake, 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, the nephew and son-in-law of the Prophet and the fourth caliph. Yet, Sūzī also stated that Mihaloğlu Ali Bey was a follower of Seyyid Baṭṭāl Gāzi, the legendary Arab warrior who became one of the most important heroes of the Turkish epic tradition,[50] and whose tomb in Anatolia was once maintained with the donations of Mihaloğlu Ali Bey himself.[51]

Therefore, among the possible literary sources of the poem one can list the orally transmitted *gazā* lore, by which I refer to the oral and written forms of the "two interrelated, sometimes even indistinguishable, types of narrative [which] played a prominent role in formulating the historical consciousness of the people of the [Ottoman and pre-Ottoman Turco-Muslim] frontiers: warrior epics and hagiographies."[52] However, obviously written for a relatively cultivated audience who could appreciate poetic elegance in the 'high literary tradition' in Ottoman Turkish,[53] the *gazavātnāme* also had its acknowledged and unacknowledged sources in the Ottoman/Persianate/Islamicate literary tradition.

[50] *Gn*, 246, couplet no. 240.
[51] See Olesnicki, "Duhovna Služba," 193-206.
[52] Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 62.
[53] As it was produced within a cultural environment where oral poetry was distinguished from the written one by a whole set of poetic conventions including word choice, imagery, and metrical system, Sûzî's work clearly belonged to the latter, as indicated by its employment of the poetic forms of *mesnevî* and *gazel*, *'aruz* meters, conventional rhetorical elements, and a fairly good knowledge of Arabic and Persian vocabulary, all of which characterized the more cultivated literary tradition.

I.d. The Love Affair Episode in the *Gazavātnāme*

Despite his earlier note that emphasized the dearth of *gazāvātnāme*s as opposed to the plethora of love stories (*ḥüsniyyāt ü ʻışḳiyyāt*),[54] Sūzī Chelebi devoted almost one third of his extant work to a narrative of the love story between Mihaloğlu Ali Bey and the daughter of a Wallachian *ban*. The story, coming right after the conclusion of the episode about the capture of Michael Szilágyi, is placed perhaps according to the real chronological order of events. Although it probably has some historical basis, the love story abounds in fictional elements which situate it in the realm of fiction and rhetoric rather than history.

The poet justifies his choice to include this love story in the *gazā* narrative by arguing that it is necessary for a book to have a love story in it.[55] Then, as he lists his arguments in favor of the need for such a component, he compares a love story with the reed flute (*ney*) that prepared Mevlevī dervishes for an ecstatic dance, thus making the first explicit reference to the Mevleviyye since the beginning of the poem.[56] This is conveniently followed by a few couplets about mystical love (*ʻışḳ*), which, though being a common concern for all Sufis, is especially central to the Mevlevī tradition. The mystical tone of the narrative is, thus, set from the beginning; and the title of the narrative is revealed *en passant* as the "*Şevḳ-nāme*" ("the story or book of passionate longing"), an important fact first noted by Olesnicki.[57] Hence, the whole poem seems to be separated in two parts, the *Ġazavātnāme* and the *Şevḳnāme*, the epic and the romantic episodes; or, as I would rather say, a love story episode is inserted in the midst of an epic-heroic poem that was likely to resume after the conclusion of the *Şevḳnāme*.

[54] *Gn*, 244, couplet no. 214.
[55] Ibid., 314, couplet no. 1165.
[56] *Girür mi mevlevīler raḳṣa neysüz*, "Would the Mevlevīs begin to dance without *ney*?" ibid., 314, couplet no. 1167.
[57] As noted by Olesnicki in his *Mihajlo Szilágyi*, 12, Sūzī mentions the name of the love story in the transitional part between the epic and the romantic episodes of the poem in couplet no. 1182: "Tell [O Sūzī] a story about the passion of ʻAlī Beğ, / The fire of which would scorch even the papers and the pen!" (*Gn*, 315).

Following the author's claim of heaving heard it from a reliable witness,[58] the story actually begins in a manner reminiscent of fairy tales: [once upon a time,] there was a *ban* in the land of Wallachia, who ruled over many lands and cities, with innumerable soldiers and immense riches.[59] This *ban* had a daughter by the name of Meryem (i.e., the Muslim equivalent of Mary). Historical details such as the date, the location, the name of the *ban*, etc. seem to have been omitted purposefully so that the story would more resemble a fairy tale.

The story can be summarized as follows: The sequence of events begins on the first day of spring. Living confined in a castle, Meryem cannot go out and enjoy the spring without the permission of her father, the *ban*. Upon the insistence of her friend, Bānū, who is also a noble girl, the daughter of another *ban*, she visits her father to ask for permission. After some hesitation the *ban* gives his consent. Meryem, accompanied by several guards and a number of beautiful female attendants, meets her friend in an open-air place; and the two girls are entertained whole day by musicians in their service. At night, Meryem sees herself in a dream admiring a rose of extraordinary beauty in the middle of a garden. In the morning, she asks Banu whether she knows anyone who can interpret dreams. Bānū recommends a certain monk who lives in her father's monastery. Then, the two girls go there together and meet the monk. Inside the monastery there are pictures of brave warriors who are well-known in that region; this is basically a portrait gallery of the most important *gāzi* chiefs; not a single Christian hero is mentioned. Among them, Meryem suddenly sees the picture of Ali Bey and marvels at him. Then, the monk begins to tell the story of that picture.

[58] This person is introduced as Ali Bey's "*müsellem kātibi*," i.e., a kind of secretary, who wrote some of his *gazā*s in verse, ibid., 315, couplets no. 1184-1185. One wonders whether this mysterious secretary/poet is the author himself.
[59] Ibid., couplets no. 1186-1187.

According to this, when he was in Jerusalem, he met another monk who always carried a picture with him, which later turned out to be a picture of Ali Bey. This second monk was in fact a European prince, and he had once witnessed his father's reception of the (Hungarian) king's ambassador. Complaining about the Ottomans, the ambassador had told how much Christians in Hungary had suffered because of a hero called Ali Bey, whom he described and praised. After hearing that and seeing a picture of Ali Bey, the prince renounced all his wealth and became a monk; he was constantly wandering in the hope of finding Ali Bey. The two monks, who met in Jerusalem, decided to find him together and went to the Balkans. However, before they could find Ali, the former prince died on the way. Luckily, the other monk was able to see Ali (but it seems that Ali did not notice him) and paint a picture of him, which he apparently placed in his monastery later (what happened to the first picture carried by the prince is not explained).

As she listens to the story, Meryem realizes that the rose in her dream represents Ali. She falls in love with him, and the next day she begs the monk to find him. The monk visits Ali Bey in his military camp, shows him a picture of Meryem that he has painted, and tells him the whole story. This time, it is Ali Bey's turn to fall in love with Meryem. Then, he and his *gāzi*s arrive at the monastery, and taking control of everything, they convert everybody to Islam. Meryem becomes Ali Bey's wife, while it seems that Meryem's female attendants form couples with the other *gāzi*s. After some time, Ali Bey also marries Bānū.

It will be the task of the investigation pursued in the following chapters of this study to show that beyond its apparent simplicity, this plain tale of love and surrender hides several layers of meaning, which at times may reveal remarkable complexities of thought and convey important information about the poet and his audience.

CHAPTER II

THE *GĀZI*, THE CHRISTIAN WOMAN, AND LOVE: A FICTIONAL ENCOUNTER AND ITS MEANINGS

Although Mihaloğlu Ali Bey was not the only *gāzi* in the *gazā* traditions who stole the heart of a Christian woman, the *gazavātnāme* of his heroic exploits, it seems to me, is distinguished among other *gazā* narratives by the centrality of love to its portrayal of the ideal *gāzi*. According to Sūzī, the ideal *gāzi* appears to be not only the one who is ready to sacrifice his life for the sake of the faith or the brave warrior capable of acquiring booty and slaves, but also the one who, even beyond being the object of an infidel woman's rather earthly desire, could and would act as a channel of people's love towards God. While the peculiar way in which Ali Bey performs this last function for the benefit of various Christian characters will be discussed in some detail in the next chapter, here I shall dwell on the place and significance of this-worldly and mystical love within Sūzī Chelebi's poem.

In both the last chapter and this one, my interpretation is two-pronged, as it is aimed at discerning two main layers of meaning in Sūzī Chelebi's work; namely, a literal and mundane one on the one hand, and a mystical one on the other. These parallel layers, in my view, are equally important for understanding the messages of the poem. Although such an interpretation may seem simple at first sight, this basic scheme may become even more complex because of the numerous metaphors, clichés, conventions, motifs, and themes that come from the Islamicate poetic tradition, as the last chapter will show, and on account of all the possible sublayers that might be discerned within each of the two main layers.

To start with the external layer of meaning, the love story can, first of all, be read as a fantastic tale of love between a Muslim warrior and a Christian woman. As such, this is just one of the encounters between *gāzi*s and infidel women which were preserved in fictionalized forms in the collective memory of Turco-Muslim frontier warriors. As a sort of fairy tale produced in *gāzi* circles, these love stories that stirred the imagination were perhaps instrumental in encouraging young men to join the ranks of the *gazī*s or continue their *gazā* activities.[60] While it is possible that Sūzī Chelebi reworked an already existing oral narrative (or different versions of an oral narrative) of the love between Mihaloğlu Ali Bey and his Christian beloved, it is also equally possible that he fictionalized a real event in his own right and invented a new tale of love out of a real story. In either case, for some reason the poet must have found a love story useful and instrumental for the ideal *gāzi* image he tried to construct. In so doing, he may have found some inspiration in the fictional Christian women who loved and helped the legendary *gāzi*s in (other) oral narratives.

A *gāzi* in love, however, may not always have been an appropriate image for every portrayal of a great hero. In a dramatic scene in the *Düstūrnāme*, Aydınoğlu Umur Bey, a non-Ottoman fourteenth-century *gāzi*, rejects Despina, who pays him a visit at night in the hope that he will requite her love. Dazzled and embarrassed, Umur Bey stands fast in his morals in front of the beautiful daughter of John Kantakouzenos—the usurper of the Byzantine throne between 1341 and 1355—and does not step back from his conviction that it would not be right to marry the daughter of a man whom he regards as his brother.[61] The author of this text also emphasized the necessity that a *gāzi* should be able to rein in his desires, and presented this almost as a requirement of being

[60] Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 70.
[61] Before that Umur Bey also rejects Kantakouzenos, who wants to give him the hand of one of his three daughters; however, the idea seems so embarrassing that he does not even raise his head to look at them; see Anonymous, "Düstūrnāme," 106-108.

a *gāzi*.[62] It is also possible that one may find a simple, regular marriage more acceptable for the portrayal of an excellent *gāzi*. For instance, in the extant written form of the *Dānishmendnāme*, the divinely arranged marriage of the hero, Melik Dānishmend Gāzi, with the beautiful Christian, Gülnūsh Bānū, certainly not presented as a great love story, is very much overshadowed by the more passionate love of Artuhı and Efromiya, the two converted companions of the *gāzi*.[63] Thus, depending on the author who wrote down a certain narrative and the audience it was intended for, love could be employed in different ways in a narrative in order to emphasize different qualities of the hero who was being praised. In Sūzī's portrayal of Mihaloğlu Ali Bey, love certainly occupies a more central place compared to these examples, and abstinence does not seem to be among the values that the author ascribed to his hero.

Also, it is likely that the love story episode was inspired by a real life situation. Mihaloğlu Ali Bey had two wives who were probably born to non-Muslim fathers—a fact that has been documented from the extant sources. One of these two women—who may have been the historical persons behind the fictionalized Meryem and Bānū —was the mother of Mehmed Bey, who, as far as we know, was the main patron of Sūzī at the time when he composed his epic-romance.[64] Cristina Feneşan plausibly suggested that the loving couple that Sūzī wrote about may indeed have been the parents of Mehmed Bey,[65] who would thus be praised as an excellent couple. In this case, the poet's choice of Meryem (Mary) as the name of the heroine would be particularly meaningful; for although it may have derived from the Christian name of Ali Bey's real-life wife, the choice might have been affected by the fact that the Virgin Mary (known as Maryam in

[62] Ibid., 108.
[63] Melik Dānishmend does not marry her until the stubborn maiden consents to convert to Islam after the Prophet Muhammad appears to her in a dream; see Anonymous, "Dānishmendnāme," 190, 191, and 217-222.
[64] See above, ch. I.a.
[65] Feneşan, "Mihaloğlu Mehmet Beg," 144. See ch. III.

Islam) is a mother figure held in great esteem by the Muslims as well. The only problem is that, if this is the case, then the final verses of the love story episode would be quite puzzling, as I will suggest later in this chapter.

What is striking even at a cursory reading of the love story is the high level of fictionalization that was permitted by the half a century which separates the date of composition of the poem and Ali Bey's actual encounter with the Wallachian lady. In what follows, I will provide an overview of these fictional elements and attempt to show in what way they contribute to the construction of the ideal *gāzi* image. In doing so, I will refer to a parallel discussion of a comparable love story that has come down to us through the chronicles of ʻĀshıḳpashazāde and Neshrī.[66]

The story, known as "The Taking of Aydos Castle," takes place in the context of the early Ottoman conquests during the first half of the fourteenth century.[67] Briefly, it relates how an Ottoman band of warriors took possession of a Byzantine fortress with the help of the daughter of its lord (*tekfur*); this woman, inspired by a dream, let the *gāzi*s in, and eventually became the wife of one of them. Especially on three or four points, Sūzī's love story bears a noticeable resemblance to this tale. In both stories, there is a noble or high-class maiden who lives in isolation; then, one night, she has a dream that is in some way connected to her future beloved, and under the influence of this dream, she invites the *gāzi*(s) to conquer her homeland or helps them in this endeavour. As William Hickman noted in his article on the Aydos story, these elements—particularly, the motifs of dream and isolation—derive from a common stock of folktale motifs.[68] It is impossible to know whether this particular set of motifs, in

[66] ʻĀshıḳpashazāde, 113-114; Neshrī, 138-143. Neshrī's account is also reproduced in the sixteenth-century historian Saʻdeddin's "Crown of histories."
[67] This event is dated to 1328. Aydos was the turkicized name of the Byzantine Aëtos, which was situated close to Constantinople, on the Asian side; see William Hickman, "The Taking of Aydos Castle: Further Considerations on a Chapter from Aşıkpaşazade," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 99, no. 3 (1979): 399.
[68] Hickman, "Aydos Castle," 400-401.

fact, had already constituted an established pattern for love stories between *gāzi*s and Christian maidens by the turn of the sixteenth century or whether Sūzī Chelebi was aware of the Aydos story and used it as a model for his own story. In any case, Sūzī seems to have taken some inspiration from the oral literature—unless he, indeed, retold in his own way an already established legend about Ali Bey and his Wallachian beloved.

The Aydos story is one of the "maiden's castle" type of tales, which, as defined long ago by F. W. Hasluck, feature a heroine who is inaccessible, isolated, or remote.[69] At the beginning of Sūzī's story, Meryem is also confined in a fortress (*ḳal'a* or *ḥıṣār*), where she remains bored and dispirited[70] until, encouraged by her friend Bānū, she succeeds in getting her father's permission to enjoy the spring outdoors. This introductory part, which takes almost one hundred couplets, seems to serve simply to establish her as a not-so-easily accessible lady. While it is to Ali Bey's credit that he manages to meet her, the isolated maiden's implied chastity is perhaps instrumental in constructing her as an appropriate wife for the Muslim hero. Then, inspired by her one-day sojourn in the gardens, that night she dreams of a rose of extraordinary beauty and intoxicating fragrance, "the face of which is marked by the light of Muhammad" and "the scent of which is like the breath of Jesus,"[71] placed among other less remarkable flowers. The rose, which later turns out to symbolize her future beloved, Ali Bey, is, in fact, a very common symbol in Islamicate literary traditions that often stands for the beloved. Since this flower is believed to carry the Prophet Muhammad's sweet fragrance and constitutes "the supreme manifestation of Divine beauty,"[72] the rose motif

[69] Ibid., 400. For the "maiden's castle" stories, see F. W. Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans*, ed. Margaret M. Hasluck, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929), 741-750, though Hickman finds his treatment of this type of stories "uncharacteristically garbled."
[70] *Gn*, 316, couplet no. 1202.
[71] *Yüzi nūr-ı Muḥammedden nışāne* / *Koḫusı nefh-i 'Īsa'dan fesāne* (in other manuscripts: *nışāne* or *mürde cāne*), ibid., 323, couplet no. 1299.
[72] See Schimmel, *Deciphering*, 20 and 26.

bears a religious aura as well, in addition to the erotic one. Therefore, in terms of the religious overtones present in this episode, Meryem's dream corresponds to the Byzantine maiden's dream in 'Āshıḳpashazāde's version of the Aydos tale, where the Prophet himself appears to the girl, raises her out of a pit, and in a symbolic act of imbuing her with the true faith, washes her body and exchanges her clothes with others made of silk. Interestingly, in his own narrative, Sūzī Chelebi chose to mention Jesus as well as Muhammad when describing the rose, as quoted above, and thus perhaps alluded to Ali Bey's appeal to the adherents of both religions.

In an article he wrote about the Aydos tale, Paul Wittek pointed at the transformation of the Byzantine girl's religiously significant dream into a mere erotic one in the hands of the Ottoman historian Neshrī.[73] Wittek, in this first scholarly treatment of the legend, compared the two versions of this fourteenth-century story preserved in late fifteenth-century chronicles, remarking how divergent they were in spirit. It is perhaps worth repeating here the main points raised by Wittek, in line with his well-known '*gazā* thesis,' which suggests the zeal for holy war as the major driving force that ensured the successful expansion of the early Ottomans.[74] Accordingly, Wittek distinguished between the two versions of the Aydos Castle story by taking as his main criterion the extent to which the two narratives capture the early Ottoman *gāzi* spirit. Although what the '*gāzi* spirit' actually consisted of is in itself a contested issue, it is interesting to see how Sūzī Chelebi's work compares with these two divergent versions.

[73] Paul Wittek, "The Taking of Aydos Castle: A Ghazi Legend and its Transformation," in *Arabic and Islamic Studies in Honor of Hamilton A. R. Gibb*, ed. George Makdisi, 662-672 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965). This article provides English translations of both versions.
[74] See Paul Wittek, *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire* (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1938).

Wittek believed that ‘Āshıḳpashazāde’s version was more faithful to the earliest (i.e., mid-fourteenth-century) form of the story,[75] and regarded it as “a genuine document” in the sense that it conveys the life and spirit of the time in a fairly accurate manner. On the other hand, Neshrī, who used ‘Āshıḳpashazāde’s work as his main source for that period, was, in Wittek’s view, so distant from the world of the *gāzi*s and so far from grasping the true significance of the Aydos story that he thought he was within his rights to distort the original story as he saw fit.[76] Thus, in the case of the girl’s dream, the “lovely-faced friendly person” identified as the Prophet Muhammad in ‘Āshıḳpashazāde’s version becomes, in Neshrī’s account, “a youth of comely face,” who later turns out to be Ġāzī ‘Abdurraḥmān, the girl’s future husband. Therefore, all the details about washing and changing clothes in the dream assume a more overtly erotic character.[77] Wittek argued that Neshrī’s substitution of the young *gāzi* for the Prophet was due to his failure to understand that he whom the girl sees as the holy person leading the attacking *gāzi*s in ‘Āshıḳpashazāde’s account was, in fact, the Prophet, who was believed to attend the *gāza*s at the head of the Muslim warriors, and not—as Neshrī thought—the youthful *gāzi* ‘Abdurraḥmān.[78] In short, Wittek’s discussion of these two versions shows quite persuasively that the girl who was convinced by the miraculous apparition of Muhammad to betray the fortress to the Muslims turns, as a result of Neshrī’s alterations, into “a lovesick maid”—in Wittek’s words—that acts treacherously simply out of her love for the brave warrior, who, in the latter account, gets all the credit for the conquest.[79]

[75] As Wittek argues, the story probably belongs to the chronicle’s “ancient nucleus” that ‘Āshıḳpashazāde took from a now lost account by Yahshı Faḳıh, *imam* of the Ottoman ruler Orhan. For the stages of the composition of ‘Āshıḳpashazāde’s chronicle, see Wittek, “Aydos Castle,” 662-664.
[76] Ibid., 671-672.
[77] For this reason, she is too embarrassed to reveal the dream in the letter where she offers help to the *gāzi*s, ibid., 669-670.
[78] Ibid., 669.
[79] For these and other points, not mentioned here, see ibid., 669-671.

I believe that Wittek's analysis provides fairly good grounds for assessing Sūzī Chelebi's point of view. It is true that Sūzī did not emphasize the Prophet's spiritual presence to the degree that 'Āshıḳpashazāde did; however, his story is not a purely erotic tale either. Neshrī's modifications merely stripped the Aydos tale of the popular sort of mysticism that permeated it without putting anything comparable in its place. The Prophet's appearing in a dream and the dreamer's subsequent conversion to the faith are, after all, quite common in orally transmitted stories, and they are present even in the foundation legend of the Mihaloğlu family that is included in Sūzī's poem. Moreover, as Hickman pointed out, because of the narrative ambiguity in 'Āshıḳpashazāde's version, which causes the identity of the young *gāzi* to be somewhat confused with that of the Prophet, "our attention—and, more importantly, the maiden's—is divided between the Prophet of Islam and one of the attackers, the flesh and blood Ghazi Rahman."[80] Sūzī Chelebi, on the other hand, avoids such an ambiguity by placing Mihaloğlu Ali Bey at the spiritual and erotic focus of his narrative. In Sūzī's love story, the Prophet is almost totally left aside, while Ali Bey takes on the role of the person who guides people towards faith. I find it plausible, then, that the rose image, which in itself is quite ambiguous, probably stands for the spiritual gift bestowed on the heroine along with a future husband.

Sūzī's love story, in my view, differs in its Sufi texture from the folktale related by 'Āshıḳpashazāde as well as from the rather secularized version by Neshrī. Obviously, this is not a heroic-romantic tale of the sort related by Neshrī, since in the love story episode it is not Ali Bey's heroism but rather his spiritual charisma that earns him the hand of the Wallachian lady, new converts, and new land, whereas the epic part of the poem highlights his qualities as a brave warrior. Also, unlike 'Āshıḳpashazāde,

[80] Hickman, "Aydos Castle," 401. Wittek had noted that Neshrī also changed the *gāzi*'s rather "unorthodox" name of Raḥmān—which is, in fact, one of the names of God—to 'Abdurraḥmān; see Wittek, "Aydos Castle," 671.

Sūzī was not writing about a miraculous event that led to the conquest of a particular place, i.e., the divine aid that enabled the *gāzi*s to accomplish a particular objective. In Ali Bey's case, there is no divine intervention to aid the *gāzi* in distress; it is, instead, his personal power that is being emphasized over and over again. After all, according to Sūzī, Ali Bey's spiritual authority had already been acknowledged among the Christians long before the Christian lady's dream led her to fall in love with the *gāzi*.

Thus, in my opinion, Sūzī constructed a love narrative with heavy Sufi overtones, where the story of the love between a Muslim hero and a Christian woman is coupled with a parallel 'love' story, of the two monks who come to accept Ali Bey as their spiritual guide. Even the name that the poet gives to the love story episode, *Şevḳ-nāme* ('the story or book of passionate longing'), incorporates the Sufi term *şevḳ* (or *shawḳ*) meaning 'longing for the Beloved (i.e., God),'[81] which in this context alludes both to the female protagonist's longing for her beloved (Ali Bey) and to the two monks' yearning for Ali Bey, who comes very close to being God's manifestation or theophany (*tecellī* or *tadjallī*).[82]

As in many other matters concerning Sūzī and his work, it was Olesnicki who, for the first time, called the attention of the reader(s) to the mystical texture of the poem. By singling out a number of words and phrases in the epic part which describe the warriors of Ali Bey and express a spiritual connection between them and their leader, Olesnicki demonstrated in his *Mihajlo Szilágyi i Srbska Despotija* that Sūzī Chelebi depicted this *gāzi* community almost as a dervish order organized around their shaykh-like leader Ali Bey.[83] Some of the examples he gave are, indeed, notable, such as the

[81] See Michael Frishkopf, "Authorship in Sufi Poetry," *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics* 23 (2003): 91.
[82] The word is used in the line which recounts the moment when the old monk sees Ali Bey for the first time: "That moon [scil. Ali Bey] manifested himself (*tecellī ḳıldı*) from the peak of the Invisible World (*ġayb evcinden*)," *Gn*, 334, couplet no. 1462.
[83] Olesnicki, *Mihajlo Szilágyi*, 77-89.

young Ali Bey's addressing his old commander Hasanbeyoğlu 'Īsā Bey as his shaykh and *pīr* ('master' or 'spiritual guide'), as if the two men—who were superior and subordinate in military terms—were placed on a *silsila* (a chain of spiritual masters).[84] Still, all the emphasis on self-sacrifice and other-worldly concerns which Olesnicki noted as the values that supported the *gāzi* community could basically be explained as the religious coloring that legitimized the raiding and pillaging activity on the frontier—something that was in no way unique to Sūzī's narrative.[85] Also, in the light of the cultural proximity and alliance between dervish and *gāzi* groups at the frontier, which is reflected in the interrelated literary types of warrior epics and hagiographies and in the emergence of half-*gāzi* half-dervish personalities,[86] the dervish-like image of the *gāzi*s in the work of a dervish author that aims to exalt a *gāzi* leader is certainly not unexpected. One thing that would appear unwarranted and naïve to today's scholars is Olesnicki's firm conviction that Ali Bey was indeed even in real life the spiritual head of an ascetic and monastic community, a secret mystical organization.[87]

Still, in my view, Olesnicki's suggestion that the literary image of Ali Bey was cast in the mould of a shaykh has a core of truth that can explain to a certain extent the role love plays in this narrative. First of all, the poet created a very vivid image of a (potential) disciple (*murīd*) in the person of the European prince who, upon seeing a portrait of Ali Bey, renounced all his wealth, status, and family ties, became a monk,

[84] Olesnicki, *Mihajlo Szilágyi*, 89. *Dil ü cān kişverinde mīrimüzsin* / *Bu yolda şeyḫimüzsin pīrimüzsin*, "You are our [scil. my] master in the realm of heart and soul / You are our shaykh [and] our guide on this path," *Gn*, 270, couplet no. 556.

[85] In his effort to emphasize this religious overlay, which he took rather too much for granted, Olesnicki claimed that Sūzī never employed the words *akın* ('raid;' literally 'flow') and *akıncı* ('raider'), which, being of Turkish origin, are the rather 'secular' equivalents of *gazā* and *gāzi*, ibid. 79 and 82. This can be easily refuted by a look at the text, since, as far as I could ascertain, *akın* appears twice in 'Isā Bey's letter in *Gn*, 264, couplets no. 473-474, and *akıncı* appears ibid., 265, couplet no. 498. *Akın* and *gazā* as well as *akıncı* and *gāzi* were often used interchangeably in Ottoman sources; yet, as Colin Imber noted concerning a couplet from Aḥmedī's *Iskendernāme*, *akın* and *akıncı* seem to have been more frequent in daily usage; see Imber, "The Legend of Osman Gazi," 73-74. Also see the fourth chapter entitled "What Could the Terms *Gaza* and *Gazi* Have Meant to the Early Ottomans?" in Lowry, *Early Ottoman State*, 45-54.

[86] Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 62.

[87] This idea is also present in his article "Duhovna Služba."

and began to wander with the hope of finding Ali Bey, whom he apparently regarded as his (potential) spiritual master (shaykh or *murshid*). The behaviour of this monk, who allegedly designated himself as a *mürīd-i ʻışḳ* (ʻa pursuer of mystical love' or ʻa disciple of love'),[88] clearly conforms to the rule that a novice in a Sufi order should renounce his former identity and fully submit to the authority of his master.[89]

Since the resemblance of the monastic characters to dervishes will be further elucidated in the next chapter, here it is sufficient to point out the role of love in the relationship between Ali Bey and the monks. As a matter of fact, medieval Sufis often expressed their relationship with their masters through the language of love. The word *shawḳ*, which appears as part of the title of the love story episode, could express a disciple's love or longing for his shaykh in the Sufi jargon, which was believed to lead one to annihilation in God. In the same vein, the former prince's contemplation of the picture of his absent master, Ali Bey, can be seen as the equivalent of a disciple's practice of contemplation and visualization (*taṣawwur*) of his shaykh in prayer.[90]

Having said all this, it must be acknowledged, however, that Ali Bey does not fit completely into the image of a shaykh, for he neither has any active control over the lives of his ʻdisciples,' as a shaykh would, nor does he seem to wish to exercise such control.[91] In fact, Ali Bey has a noticeably passive role in the spiritual development of the Christian characters, who are almost naturally attracted by his charisma. Sūzī also does not draw the comparison any further by using gendered language about the monks' love and dependence on their potential shaykh.[92] Ali Bey's resemblance to a shaykh is, therefore, restricted to his appeal as someone with a divine touch.

[88] *Gn*, 333, couplet no. 1440; also see below, ch. III.a.
[89] Margaret Malamud, "Gender and Spiritual Self-Fashioning: The Master-Disciple Relationship in Classical Sufism," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 64, no. 1 (1996): 91.
[90] Ibid., 93 and 98-99.
[91] See ibid., 92.
[92] Gendered imagery would often be used in the medieval Sufi descriptions of the relationship between a spiritual master and his disciple and could take several different forms; see ibid., 89-101.

Still, Ali Bey clearly stands on the top of the hierarchy of spiritual authority that is discernable among the characters of the love story episode. This descends from Ali Bey, who is on the top, to the former prince, who renounced his status and wealth, then to the narrator monk, and finally, to Meryem. Bānū stands somewhat apart from this chain, as she does not seem to share the others' feelings for Ali Bey and merely follows them into conversion. Furthermore, if suggesting it is not going too far, one may even imagine these characters as standing on different points on the Sufi spiritual path from *shari'a* to *ḥaḳīḳa*. According to this, as she appears in the beginning of the story, Meryem, whose chastity and moral perfection have been implied by allusions to her namesake[93] and by the fact that she is dependent on her father's permission in order to go outdoors, stands on the beginning of this path.[94] The dream, which as a common motif in folktales often refers to an initiation ritual,[95] also has the function of initiation in her case. But, unlike the Aydos story where the dream represents a rite of passage merely from one religion to another—from a 'corrupted' one to the 'most perfect'—in this story, it seems to have an additional Sufi significance, since the dream leads her to enter the monastery of a monk who is identified as a man of *ṭarīḳa*.[96] Influenced by the monk's words, Meryem comes under the spell of a picture and identifies her beloved. After that, Bānū advises the heroine in love to accept the monk as her spiritual guide and be his disciple (*mürīd*).[97] As for the other monk, that is, the former prince, he is designated as an *'ārif*, i.e., one who has attained the stage of *ma'rifa* ('cognition [of God]');[98] and he appears to be somewhat spiritually superior to the narrator monk. It is noteworthy that, unlike the other characters, Ali Bey does not seem to traverse the

[93] See below, ch. III.
[94] One verse even suggests that she wears a veil on her face: *İrüp deyre niḳāb açtı yüzinden*, "When she arrived at the monastery, she removed the veil on her face," *Gn*, 325, couplet no. 1320.
[95] See Hickman, Hickman, "Aydos Castle," 402.
[96] See *Gn*, 346, couplet no. 1621.
[97] Ibid., 339, couplet no. 1533. For further discussion, see below, ch. III.a.
[98] See ibid., 329, couplet no. 1388; and below, ch. III.a.

spiritual path or experience any rite of passage; instead, he is presented as already accomplished and perfect.

Ali Bey, however, also falls in love with the beautiful Meryem. The victorious hero even bursts into tears as he listens to the monk's description of Meryem[99]—more precisely, just after he hears that Meryem begs him to come and conquer her country. For a Muslim male audience, this image of a beautiful Christian noble lady imploring a *gāzi* to save her from the "darkness of blasphemy" and to "cast his shadow" on her country must have been quite an appealing fantasy.[100] However, if this explicit invitation and Ali Bey's victorious entry into the monastery where his beloved awaits him reflects a sensitivity on the part of the poet to certain expectations of his audience, the image of a great *gāzi* smitten by a woman requires a different explanation. Sūzī's description of this phase of mutual love and passionate longing, which culminates in a description of the intimate moments of the loving couple in the monastery, seems to me to allude to the classical love stories of the Islamicate literary traditions rather than to the oral traditions of *gazī* culture. It is in this part of the story that Ali Bey temporarily strips off his glorious-*gāzi*-who-is-admired-by-non-Muslim-women character and turns into, say, a Khusraw who is in love with his Shīrīn.

However, after Ali Bey's arrival at the monastery, where he meets his beloved and converts all the Christians around, the narrative takes an interesting turn. Despite its pervasive mystical tone and fairy-tale-like nature, the love story episode ends in a rather sobering anticlimax: Ali Bey, getting bored with the heroine, marries[101] her friend as well. In fact, Sūzī Chelebi's narrative of the deeds of the exemplary *gāzi* leader, which has acquired a more ahistorical and mystical character from the beginning of the episode, turns overtly erotic after the story's culmination in the union of the lovers and

[99] Ibid., 348, couplet no. 1661.
[100] Ibid., couplets no. 1656-1660.
[101] There is no indication in the text that these are normal marriages with a legal basis.

the conversion of all the 'infidels.' After a lengthy description of the pleasures of the time when Ali Bey and Meryem were together, instead of a conclusion there comes a moment in the narrative where this picture of a happy loving couple, drawn so persistently from the beginning of the story, is shattered.

The last eight couplets of the episode (and of the poem as it has reached us) describe how Ali Bey's attention began to be drawn away from Meryem towards Bānū, while "his falcon-like heart was looking for new game every day."[102] Even more interesting is the following couplet where the frequently repeated allusion to the classical loving couple Khusraw and Shīrīn is given a final touch:

> Like Khusraw he concluded the affair with Meryem;
> He loved a Shīrīn-faced beauty of the world.[103]

Thus, the Wallachian lady Meryem, who until then was depicted as the counterpart of Shīrīn, the heroine of the classical story, suddenly turns into her namesake who was Khusraw's wife.[104] With the fall of Meryem from the position of the heroine to that of the unwanted wife, Ali Bey—the unchanging Khusraw of the story—finds a new Shīrīn for himself; and the poem abruptly ends here with the following couplet, which clearly has an erotic connotation:

> He attained the spring of uniting with her as well
> He picked the fruit of her sapling as well.[105]

It is perfectly legitimate to question whether these female characters indeed corresponded to Ali Bey's wives in real life, as Levend and Feneşan were tempted to think, or whether they are entirely fictitious figures, just like the monks seem to be. If they are the literary equivalents of real women, did the audience and the patrons

[102] *Dil-i şeh-bāzı her gün avı gözler*, *Gn*, 357, couplet no. 1791.
[103] *Ḳodu Husrevleyin Meryem hevāsın* / *Cihānuñ sevdi bir Şīrīn-liḳāsın*, ibid., 358, couplet no. 1793. Levend does not capitalize *Şīrīn*.
[104] See Çelebioğlu, *Mesnevi*, 232.
[105] *Bahār-ı vaṣlına irdi anuñ da* / *Nihāli mīvesin dirdi anuñ da*, *Gn*, 358, couplet no. 1795.

consider it within the limits of Sūzī's poetic licence to eroticize and treat them in the way I have shown above? Or, as Levend suspected, did they find this treatment rather unbecoming? It is impossible to know how the poem was received by its audience in the absence of any direct evidence, but an assessment of its literary strategies may reveal what Sūzī wanted to achieve.

It is truly worthy of notice that Sūzī Chelebi, at the (apparent) end of his narrative, felt the need to claim for his protagonist an additional woman at the expense of spoiling what would otherwise be the exemplary love story of an excellent loving couple. This extension to the love story, in my view, adds a strong this-worldly dimension to the total message of the episode, which has to be evaluated beside the Sufi pattern, since both of them seem to contribute to the image of the ideal *gāzi* in their own ways. Apparently, Sūzī's ideal *gāzi* is not someone to be attached permanently to a woman, however excellent she may be, but an ambitious *akıncı* whose life is marked by tremendous mobility and who constantly 'hunts' for new booty and new women. Moreover, it is not only Ali Bey, but the warriors under his command who benefit from his ability to acquire booty, slaves, and women; throughout the *gazavātnāme*, Sūzī Chelebi paid special attention to praising the beauty of the captured girls, whom he presented as the beauties in heaven that were bestowed on the *gāzi*s on earth.[106] In Sūzī's conception, it is in addition to these worldly requirements that the ideal *gāzi* is also supposed to be a channel of love between mankind and God.

In fact, there is a curious juxtaposition in this part of the poem of the mystical and sophisticated Christian characters with the Muslim warrior, who apparently behaves with quite down-to-earth motivations. Indeed, in contrast to the mystical depths in which they delve in their quest for Ali, the latter's vigourous response to their invitation, which results in his appropriation of their land and their women in the end, is strikingly

[106] See, for instance, ibid., 285, couplets no. 764-774.

mundane. This may support the post-Wittekian conviction of some scholars that, for its practitioners, *gazā* meant an endeavour motivated first and foremost by booty and slaves (including women) rather than by any religious zeal to convert the infidels to the true faith, which could have been a secondary concern and/or a means of legitimation.[107] In fact, as the next chapter will show, the Christians in this story are imagined to be quite helpful to the *gāzi*, as they almost convert themselves, not leaving much to do for him.

[107] See Lowry, *Early Ottoman State*, 45-54.

CHAPTER III

THE *GĀZI*, CHRISTIANS, AND CHRISTIANITY: REPRESENTATIONS OF THE RELIGIOUS OTHER AND THEIR FUNCTION

Inasmuch as it is a tale of earthly love modelled on other legendary love stories, the romance that accompanies the *gazavātnāme* proper is also the story of Christians falling into mystical intoxication at the very sight of the Muslim hero's pictorial image. As such, the episode fulfills an important function in the poetic glorification of Mihaloğlu Ali for it seeks to justify his worthiness through the Other's willing acceptance of him as a somewhat holy being. Therefore, as contrasted to the preceding narrative of Ali Bey's early ventures in warfare, in this part of the epic poem a number of Christian characters, often made to speak in the first person singular, are put on stage as the main actors leading the narrative. Leaving aside Ali Bey's pictorial presence and final intervention, this is a story acted mainly among 'good' Christian characters, who dream about the *gāzi*, yearn to see him, paint and contemplate his portraits, and even come to the verge of conversion almost by themselves.

The present chapter is concerned with the question of how this positive representation of Christian characters was meant to function in relation to the general aims of the whole poem. Placed within the narrative of a renowned *gāzi*'s holy wars against the infidels, the love affair episode breaks with the relatively antagonistic rhetoric of the *gazavātnāme* by ascribing positive value to Christian monks, the Christian place of worship, and even the Christian practice of icon veneration. The following analysis will, therefore, focus on the use of such emblematic items of Christianity as monks, the church, and the icon as literary tools that the poet brings together in his effort to construct a certain image of Mihaloğlu Ali Bey which, as will

become clear, is very much imbued with Sufism. I shall try to point out how the poet's own Sufi affiliations, his origin in the Balkans, and his proximity to *gāzi* circles played a role in this creative combination of certain conventional themes and motifs taken from the Ottoman (and Islamicate) literary tradition and *gazā* lore.

As in the previous chapter, I think a first approach to the representations of Christians in the love story episode can be from two perspectives. First, it is possible to read the story as an expression of early Ottoman latitudinarianism, inclusivism, and tolerant frontier culture, all concepts which have been well established in the scholarly literature.[108] Culturally belonging to the Ottoman Balkan frontier, and enjoying the patronage of one of the most prominent noble families of *gāzi* chieftains (i.e., the Mihaloğlus), the poet Sūzī Chelebi must have been well acquainted with the inclusivist attitude of the *gāzi*-dervish circles towards the Christian Other; especially if we take into account that he was a dervish as well. Therefore, one may safely assume that it was not a strange or scandalous act for this poet to profess such an attitude towards Christians in his work. After all, in a poem written to exalt a hero whose Christian descent is imprinted in his family name, the poet (who is himself of Christian descent) was rather unlikely to adopt a strictly exclusivist, zealously otherizing rhetoric against Christians. On the basis of certain verses which seem to be somewhat apologetic regarding Ali Bey's (or anyone's) non-Muslim origins,[109] one may even imagine that the poem was meant to convey the idea that cooperation with Christians is always possible, and perhaps even welcome, insofar as it may facilitate the expansion of the Muslim territories and, moreover, Christians' conversion to Islam, the desired happy end.

[108] For a discussion of latitudinarianism, inclusivism, and cooperation with Christians in the pre-Ottoman and early Ottoman context, see Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 66-77 *et passim*.
[109] See *Gn*, 353-354, couplets no. 1730-1736, where, on the occasion of the conversion of the Christian characters, the poet argues that a convert should not be disdained for his/her infidel past.

The more precise historical context within which Sūzī composed his poem has been explored to some extent by Cristina Feneşan, who used the love story episode as a source to support her argument that the blood relation between the Wallachian prince Neagoe Basarab (the uncle) and Ali Bey's son Mehmed Bey (the nephew) enabled the latter's frequent interventions in the affairs of Wallachia in the first half of the sixteenth century.[110] Feneşan suggested that Meryem, the female protagonist of the love story, could have been a sister of Neagoe Basarab and the mother of Mehmed Bey, whose Muslim name appears to be Selimşah in an Ottoman document.[111] Thus, the whole sense of cooperation and spiritual/cultural affinity with the Christians that is so prevalent in the episode analysed here make a certain sense in light of the close relations between the Wallachian principality and the neighboring Ottoman *sancak* of Nicopolis (Niğbolu) under Mehmed Bey's rule.[112] The problem is that one cannot be sure whether the date of Sūzī's composition of the poem—or at least of the love story episode—coincided with this period of intense relations from 1508 onwards. However, if the manner of Ali Bey's marriage was peaceful, as the poem suggests, then that period of close relations could have had a precedent that goes back at least three decades. All in all, it is plausible to think that these good Christian characters in Sūzī's poem are not accidentally Wallachian, or to put it the other way around, the Wallachian characters (including the "*ban* of Wallachia," father of the female protagonist)[113] are not accidentally good. This becomes even more probable if one also considers the fact that, according to the poem, 'the enemy' is by no means the Wallachians or the characters from a most loosely defined "Europe" (*Firengistān*), but Michael Szilágyi, and to a

[110] Feneşan, "Mihaloğlu Mehmet Beg," 137-155.
[111] Ibid., 144.
[112] For the relations between the two, see Feneşan's entire article; the poem itself, however, is not her primary interest.
[113] The historical person behind him is probably Neagoe, the *ban* of Strehaia, who was the father of Prince Neagoe Basarab; ibid., 144.

lesser extent "the king" (*ḳıral*) (apparently) of Hungary, i.e., Matthias Corvinus, who is represented in the poem by his unnamed ambassador to Europe.

In addition to contextualizing it in a broader or narrower historical setting, a second way of looking at the love story in Sūzī's poem is to interpret it in Sufi terms; i.e., not so much as the story of the conversion of some people believing in the 'other' religion to 'our' faith, but rather as the story of some fellow human beings who, having realized the transcendental Truth, seek union with God. Ali Bey, as represented throughout the entire poem, is effective from both the practical and spiritual points of view, since he is not only a great warlord leading his followers in successful raids, acquiring booty and glory, and expanding the realm of Islam, but he is also a blessed person, whose very appearance can lure people into a spiritual quest that goes beyond the world of appearances. Naturally, both elements of Ali Bey's image and both ways of approaching the poem have characteristics that must have been appealing to the *gāzi*-dervish circles, of whom Sūzī Chelebi was a relatively well-educated and, as far as his religious beliefs are concerned, perhaps a rather orthodox member.

Strictly speaking, this epic romantic poem that pursues an explicitly this-worldly objective by glorifying a historical personality may not really be labeled Sufi poetry, if this is to be defined as "poetry used in Sufi ritual contexts."[114] The poem was, however, produced within the Ottoman poetic tradition, which can hardly be considered clearly separate from Sufi poetry since it owes much of its complex system of tropes to Sufism.[115] Therefore, it is only natural that as Sūzī narrated the love between Ali Bey and the daughter of the Wallachian ruler, which had a historical basis, he could not but add a Sufi flavor to this earthly love affair—which, as I have already begun to show, proves to be somewhat more than simply a "flavor."

[114] Frishkopf, "Authorship in Sufi Poetry," 88.
[115] See, for instance, for the "mystical-religious voice," Walter G. Andrews, *Poetry's Voice, Society's Song: Ottoman Lyric Poetry* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1985), 62-88.

The this-worldly aspect of the story, which should not be underestimated, is represented, above all, by the two female characters. These are the standard beautiful and noble female figures that appear in traditional love stories written so many times by Ottoman, Persian, and Arab poets. What is interesting here is that, from among the stock of clichéd metaphors employed by Sūzī Chelebi while praising the two women's beauty, the ones that allude to Christianity seem to be especially numerous. Thus, for instance, the main female character bearing the name Meryem (i.e., Mary)—which could be the poet's choice rather than the real name of the historical person behind her—is described in a positive manner as "resembling [the Virgin] Mary" (*Meryem-erkān*),[116] and as "Jesus-breath'd" (*'Īsī-dem*), i.e., "whose breath gives life like that of Jesus."[117] The appearance of Mary and Jesus in such designations is by no means an original feature of Sūzī's poem; indeed, *'Īsī-dem* is quite a common epithet for the beloved in all Persianate poetry, including Ottoman poetry.[118] But in this case, the concentration of such epithets referring to Meryem functions as a constant reminder of her being a Christian,[119] thus defining her as 'the Other's woman' *par excellence*.[120] This method of 'otherization,' however, is not employed for Bānū, Meryem's close

[116] Or "who has the manners of [the Virgin] Mary," *Gn*, 315, couplet no. 1188.
[117] Ibid., 326, couplet no. 1335.
[118] For examples employing the "life-giving breath of Jesus" see Annemarie Schimmel, *A Two-Colored Brocade: The Imagery of Persian Poetry* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 79, 265, and 348 with note 129.
[119] Compare this with the function of similar allusions to Jesus in the lines concerning Hasanbeyoğlu 'Īsā Bey, who was a superior of Ali Bey when the latter was a young warrior. 'Īsā Bey's name means Jesus, and such allusions simply seem to emphasize this fact and perhaps to praise him by suggesting his resemblance to his namesake: see the couplets no. 481, 553, 554, and 270 respectively in *Gn*, 264, 269, 270, and 278.
[120] Also noteworthy is the use of *nār ü nūr* in several lines concerning Meryem; see ibid., 316, couplet no. 1194, and ibid., 351, couplet no. 1698, almost identical with the former couplet. This expression, which literally means 'fire and light,' is employed in early Ottoman texts as something that is specifically part of the Christian faith (but not of Muslim beliefs), though its exact meaning is unclear; see, for instance, Anonymous, "Dānishmendnāme," 46, 101, 102 and 141—the editor Irène Mélikoff considered "Nārinūr" a proper name—Anonymous, *Gazavât-ı Sultân Murâd b. Mehemmed Hân: İzladi ve Varna Savaşları (1443-1444) Üzerinde Anonim Gazavâtnâme* (The holy wars of Sultan Murad son of Mehemmed Khan: anonymous *gazavātnāme* on the battles of Zlatitsa and Varna [1443-1444]), ed. Halil İnalcık and Mevlûd Oğuz (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1989), 3 for this expression put in the Pope's mouth, and also *Gn*, 299, couplet no. 968 for Michael Szilágyi speaking of the help of *nār ü nūr*, and ibid., 301, couplet no. 993 for Mihaloğlu Ali Bey speaking of "putting off the candle of *nār ü nūr*."

friend and the secondary female character of the story, whose name simply means "princess," and who hardly appears to be anything more than a conventional 'beautiful and noble maiden.' Therefore, while Meryem's union with Ali Bey parallels and implies the submission of her country, Bānū seems to be there only to assist the unfolding of a classic love story—though, in the end, she also becomes part of this wholesale conquest by becoming Ali Bey's second woman.

On the other hand, unlike Meryem, who is markedly Christian and different, the two anonymous monks in the narrative are portrayed almost as Sufi mystics, standing somewhere in the middle of the grey area between the two religions. Thus, whereas Meryem is closer to the this-worldly side of the story, the monks belong to the spiritual layer, where confessional distinctions between people are reduced almost to insignificance.

III.a. The Monks: Dervishes in Disguise

The first "monk" character that appears in the story is, in fact, the narrator of more than one fourth of the love story episode and one of the main characters of the whole poem. He is introduced by Bānū, as she suggests that Meryem visit him in his monastery in order to ask for an interpretation of her dream.[121] Thus, the reader's first

[121] *Atam deyrinde var bir pīr-i rāhib*
Ki bulmış Ḳuds feyżinden mevāhib
Riyāżet-keş 'ibādet-pīşe 'ālim
Gice tā ṣubḥ ḳāyim ṣubḥ ṣāyim
Dolanup gün gibi gezmiş cihānı
Nedür bilmiş zemīn ü āsmānı
Müsellemdür bu pīre 'ilm-i ta'bīr
Nitekim Mānī-i nakkāşa taṣvīr
"In the monastery of my father, there is an old monk (*pīr-i rāhib*)
To whom divine blessing is bestowed.
He is ascetic, devoted to worship, [and] learned;
He stays awake the whole night till the morn, he fasts during the day.
He wandered around the world like the sun;
He came to know about the earth and the sky.
He is gifted with the art of [dream] interpretation,
Just as Mani the Painter is gifted with the art of painting."
Ibid., 324, couplets no. 1304-1307. Though, from a Christian point of view, it may seem scandalous to compare a monk to someone who is considered to be a heretic, Sūzī does not seem to be concerned about

encounter with this monk is occasioned by his mastery in the art of dream interpretation, which is considered to be an honorable practice in the eyes of Muslims.[122] Bānū refers to this anonymous monk as a *pīr-i rāhib*, combining two significant terms. *Rāhib* is the standard word for a (Christian) priest still used in modern Turkish, but it also means 'monk' in Ottoman. *Pīr*, on the other hand, may refer either to an old man—as in the expression *pīr-i dānā* ('the wise old man') that Meryem uses when she addresses her father the *ban* in a respectful manner[123]—or to a (usually Muslim) saintly figure, the founder or chief of a mystical order, a spiritual guide. The combination of the two, therefore, implies either the character's old age or his high rank and venerable status among monks (a *hēgoumenos*?) or both. The initial ambiguity in this expression as to whether he is a priest or a monk is later resolved as Bānū describes him as an ascetic (*riyāżet-keş*) who spends his time with prayer and fasting. Otherwise, the Ottoman Turkish terms *rāhib* and *ruhbān*[124] are rather vague and do not allow a clear semantic distinction between 'priest' and 'monk.'

In my opinion, this good and respectable monk in Sūzī Chelebi's narrative can be taken as a relative of the good monk/priest figures appearing in Turco-Muslim frontier epics. Some of these epics, based on oral traditions, were written down in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[125] It is likely that, being a man close to *gāzi* circles, Sūzī Chelebi had access to their oral and/or written forms, from which he could have

accuracy regarding the Christian beliefs and practices. Moreover, the choice is justified by the poetic language, since Mani is traditionally mentioned in Persianate poetry as the greatest painter; see Schimmel, *A Two-Colored Brocade*, 120.

[122] See Agâh Sırrı Levend, *Divan Edebiyatı: Kelimeler ve Remizler, Mazmunlar ve Mefhumlar* (Ottoman Literature: Words and Symbols, Metaphors and Concepts), 2nd ed. (Istanbul: İnkılâp Kitapevi, 1943), 236: The art of dream interpretation was called "'*ilm-i tābir-i rüyā*;" and the prophet Yūsuf (Joseph) was an especially renowned practitioner of it. Also see Annemarie Schimmel, *Deciphering the Signs of God: A Phenomenological Approach to Islam* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 123-124.

[123] *Gn*, 319, couplet no. 1240.

[124] *Ruhbān* is the plural of the Arabic word *rāhib* ('priest' or 'monk'); yet, it is often employed as singular in Ottoman Turkish.

[125] Irène Mélikoff, "Hamāsa: Turkish Literature," *EI*, vol. 3: 115.

borrowed the good monk/priest *topos*. Examples from two epics that are related to each other will illustrate this point.

One of the similar figures to be found in such works is a monk called Ḥarḳīl Zāhid (whose name may perhaps be rendered as Hercules the Ascetic), who helps the legendary eleventh-century hero Melik Dānishmend Gāzi in the epic known as the *Dānishmendnāme*. Melik meets this *ruhbān* (monk/priest) in a great temple, seated on a marble throne with "his splendid white beard shining like divine light on his chest," while ten other monks are standing before him in a respectful manner.[126] As it then turns out, the Prophet Muhammad, who appeared to this monk in a dream, told him that Melik would come. Immediately, Ḥarḳīl—supposedly together with his monks—converts to Islam, and continues for some time to offer help and shelter to Melik and his friends until he and the monks are "martyred" by Christian enemies who are after the *gāzi*s.[127]

An even greater role is played in a similar context by Shemmās Pīr, a high-ranking religious figure (a *pīr*) appearing in the epic of Seyyid Baṭṭāl Gāzi (the *Baṭṭālnāme*). This monastic character, again residing in a grand marble monastery/temple (*deyr*), is likewise informed of the coming of the hero in a dream. When the hero appears, the monk takes up spying for Seyyid Baṭṭāl, and his monastery serves as a shelter for the *gāzi*. An additional feature of this character, also of interest for Sūzī Chelebi's poem, is that he conceals a chamber arranged as a mosque in the basement of his monastery.[128] Thus, although he keeps up his Christian appearance, this monk is in fact presented as a practising Muslim. It is, perhaps, not too far-fetched to

[126] Anonymous, "Dānishmendnāme," 24.
[127] Ibid., 24-26 and 45-46. For another helpful monk who becomes Muslim after seeing the Prophet Muhammad in his dream, see ibid., 124-127.
[128] Vasfi Mahir Kocatürk, *Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi: Başlangıçtan Bugüne Kadar Türk Edebiyatının Tarihi, Tahlili ve Tenkidi* (The history of Turkish literature: the history, analysis, and critique of Turkish literature from its beginnings to the present day) 2nd ed. (Ankara: Edebiyat Yayınevi, 1970), 106-107.

think that his fictional situation is somewhat similar to that of the two monks in Sūzī Chelebi's poem, who, even after they come to be spiritually attached to Ali Bey by means of his painted image, retain their Christian identity (by keeping and painting icons, residing in a monastery, and going to Jerusalem, apparently for pilgrimage), although in essence they are depicted as already almost Muslim. In Sūzī's mystically oriented imagination, the essential criterion that separates the Other from Us seems to be not so much the formal outward practice of Islam, but rather one's inner spiritual attachment to an intermediary (in this case, Ali Bey) who would guide one towards God.

For this reason, both the main monastic character in the poem and the one whom he meets in Jerusalem are described with epithets and expressions that would normally be used for Muslims, and more specifically for Sufis. The word *pīr* ('old man, master'), which has a Sufi connotation ('a spiritual guide'), is used for the elder monk more and more frequently towards the end of the story, without the qualifier *rāhib* ('priest/monk'), and often on its own and as part of the direct auctorial discourse, that is, not only when a character addresses the monk or the monk refers to himself.[129] True, it may also be that Sūzī Chelebi used this term without its possible Sufi connotations simply to mean a respectable elder or a high-ranking Christian cleric.[130] Yet, several of the epithets the author used to qualify the elder monk belong quite clearly to the specific Sufi terminology. Such is, for instance, the case of *pīr-i ṭarīḳat* ('the chief of a dervish order [a *ṭarīḳa*]'),[131] and even more strikingly, of *pīr-i sālik* ('a leading follower of the Sufi path'), as well as *mürşid-i rāh* ('a spiritual guide on the mystical path')—the last

[129] Some examples are *Gn*, 349, couplet 1672 ("He [scil. Ali Bey] sent the *pīr*…"); and 353, couplet 1725 ("It was the *pīr*'s turn…").
[130] This meaning is especially frequent in the Indo-Muslim usage, as in *pīr-i kelīsa* ("the head of the church"), but apparently not so common in the Persian-Turkish jargon: see, C. E. Bosworth and K. A. Nizami, "Pīr," *EI*, vol. 8: 306-307.
[131] *Gn*, 346, couplet no. 1621. The monk tells Ali Bey that the other monk whom he had met in Jerusalem addressed him as *pīr-i ṭarīḳat*.

two placed in Meryem's mouth.[132] Even if one supposes that *pīr-i ṭarīḳat* in this context simply means 'the head of a Christian fraternity' rather than that of a Sufi order, the other two examples—because of *sālik* ('wayfarer' or 'one who follows the mystical path, the Sufi spiritual journey towards God') and *mürşid* ('spiritual guide')—strongly suggest Sufi connotations.

Moreover, other evidence supports my suggestion that the monastic characters of the narrative are cast in the mould of Sufis. A passage of particular significance for the construction of these two characters is the old monk's narration of his meeting with the other monk in Jerusalem. Here, as an introduction to the story of Ali Bey's picture, the old monk relates to Meryem how he came to know the other monk; he recalls that as he was wandering in Jerusalem, "watering it with [his] abundant tears,"[133] "there arrived a stranger from the realm of the Unseen."[134] Thus, he uses an Islamic/Sufi term, i.e., *ġayb* (the Unseen, the Divine Mystery), in his depiction of the other monk. *Ġayb* may refer to several things, but in this specific context it seems to mean the reality beyond the senses, which can be experienced by gnosis or cognition (*ma'rifa*).[135] The couplet may, therefore, imply that this stranger, who is the second monk, was constantly experiencing the unseen reality. On the other hand, his emergence from *ġayb* parallels the appearance of Ali Bey also from *ġayb*, which is narrated by the first monk in a later verse.[136] Thus, the association of these two characters with the concept of *ġayb* suggests that the use of this term may have been intended to evoke the *ricāl-i ġayb* (or *ridjal al-ġayb*, 'the men

[132] Both expressions ibid., 348, couplet no. 1652.
[133] Ibid., 329, couplet no. 1382. The monk's crying is clearly an expression of piety in Muslim as well as in Christian traditions. See, for instance, Giovanna Calasso, "La Dimension Religieuse Individuelle dans les Textes Musulmans Médiévaux, entre Hagiographie et Littérature de Voyages: les Larmes, les Émotions, l'Expérience," *Studia Islamica* 91 (2000): 39-58. For the metaphorical connection between tears and ablution, see Schimmel, *Deciphering*, 97. The monk's crying in Jerusalem, which is the common holy place for both religions, is probably instrumental in Sūzī Chelebi's effort to construct this character as a Christian who understands the pre-Islamic prophets and their teachings in an 'uncorrupted' way and is, therefore, very close to Islam in his heart. Alse see below for the appearance of the motif of 'tears' in the Qur'an.
[134] *Yetişdi ġayb ilinden bir müsāfir*, *Gn*, 329, couplet no. 1383.
[135] See D. B. Macdonald [and L. Gardet], "Al-Ghayb," *EI*, vol. 2: 1025-1026.
[136] *Gn*, 334, couplet no. 1462.

of the Unseen'), the mysterious saints who rule the world. By this passing reference, Sūzī Chelebi might be claiming saintly authority for both his characters, though without putting it too explicitly.

According to the narrator monk, this wise stranger, who was also an ascetic,[137] was no alien to him, since there was a spiritual connection between the two.[138] The monk expresses this as follows: "Although he was not familiar in appearance, / In truth [his identity] was evident." By saying this, the monk (or Sūzī) refers to the duality between appearance and reality, which is so prevalent especially in the love story episode of the poem, as I will show in my discussion of the 'icon' motif. By saying that "only the *'ārif* ('the true knower of God,' 'cognisant,' or 'gnostic') who knows the truth[139] is a [true] acquaintance" and "the rest are aliens,"[140] the monk establishes the status of the other monk and implicitly his own as *'ārif*s, i.e., those who have attained the stage of *ma'rifa* ('cognition [of God]') on the spiritual path.[141] The identification of the second monk as *'ārif* also testifies to his experience of *ġayb*, which was suggested earlier.[142] His fascination with the picture of Ali Bey is, therefore, due just as much to his being an *'ārif* who could recognize various signs of God's presence and see the inner reality behind the picture and behind the mere appearance as due to Ali Bey's own intrinsic saintly merit.

[137] See ibid., 329, couplets no. 1384-1385.
[138] Ibid., couplets no. 1387-1389.
[139] *Ḥaḳḳ* can be translated as both 'truth' or 'God.'
[140] *Biliş ḥaḳḳı bilen 'ārifdür ancaḳ / Ḳalanı yadimiş bildüm muḥaḳḳaḳ, Gn*, couplet no. 1388.
[141] Thus, the first monk is explicitly identified as an *'ālim* (ibid., 324, couplet no. 1305) and the second as an *'ārif*. The first word is related to *'ilm*, and the second to *ma'rifa*, which are the two terms employed in Sufi jargon for knowledge. They can often be used interchangeably, but "[w]hen discussing knowledge as a human attribute, many Sufis placed *ma'rifa* at a higher stage than *'ilm*, and in this context it would be fair to translate the first as gnosis and the second as knowledge," William C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-'Arabī's Metaphysics of Imagination* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 148. Perhaps the first monk, who is initially at a stage lower than that of the second monk, elevates to that level after he comes to recognise the meaning of the icon that the second monk keeps with himself. For the disputed relationship between *'ilm* and *ma'rifa*, see ibid., 149.
[142] "In reality, *ma'rifa* is realised only for those to whom there is revealed something of the invisible (*al-ġayb*), in such a way that God is proved simultaneously by manifest and by hidden signs," R. Arnaldez, "Ma'rifa," *EI*, vol. 6: 569.

Some of the activities of the two monks in Jerusalem can also be construed as reinforcing their identity as true Muslims in the guise of Christians, and moreover, as Sufis in the guise of monks. As the first monk narrates, in the Holy City the two investigated the manifestations of the *ṣıfātu'llah* ('the attributes of God') and conversed about the *Tevḥīd* ('the Unicity of God').[143] In my opinion, it is especially the mention of *Tevḥīd* (or *Tawḥīd*) that distinguishes these fictional characters from ordinary Christians, whose belief in the Trinity has been a regular target of Muslim criticism, which found it contradictory to the idea of a one and transcendant God.[144] The other topics of their conversations enumerated by the narrator monk, particularly the nature of the stars and the earth, simply serve to establish their vast knowledge, which is emphasized by the poet in other verses as well.[145] According to Sūzī, the two also told stories about "sultans" and—more significant for their almost-Muslim status—about "the holy men who stake[d] their lives" (*ser-bāz erenler*)—a term which, apparantly referring to dervish warriors, is repeated in some other instances in the *gazavātnāme*.[146]

Moreover, elsewhere in the poem, the second monk describes himself as a *mürīd-i 'ışḳ* ('a pursuer of mystical love'),[147] a self-description reported by the first monk, as are all his companion's other words. *Mürīd* is just another example of the *ṭarīḳa*-related vocabulary employed by Sūzī in connection with the two monks (such as

[143] *Gn*, 330, couplets no. 1393-1394.
[144] For this and other Muslim arguments against Christianity, see Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, "Some Neglected Aspects of Medieval Muslim Polemics against Christianity," *The Harvard Theological Review* 89, no. 1 (1996): 67-82.
[145] In Bānū's description of the first monk, *Gn*, 324, couplets no. 1305-1306; in the first monk's praise of the second monk, ibid., 329, couplet no. 1385 ("the second Hippocrates"); and also in Meryem's address to the first monk, ibid., 340, couplet no. 1548 ("O philosopher of science and wisdom").

Astrology, which went along with astronomy, was by no means abhorred by the medieval Muslims. In fact, the verse 6:97 of the Qur'an states that the stars can serve as guiding signs; see Schimmel, *Deciphering*, 15-16.
[146] *Gn*, 330, couplet no. 1397. The term is repeated, for example, in ibid., 343, couplet no. 1589, where it seems to refer to the dervish warriors fighting under Ali Bey's command.
[147] Ibid., 333, couplet no. 1440: *Bu ṣūret şevḳine ṣūret değişdüm / Mürīd-i 'ışḳ olup kisvet değişdüm*, "I changed my appearance for the sake of this picture (or because of the desire aroused by this picture) / I became a pursuer of love and changed my garments." Note that the word *ṣūret* is employed both for his own appearance and for the picture of Ali Bey.

pīr-i ṭarīḳat, *sālik*, and *mürşid*). It is a standard term for an aspirant or novice in a Sufi order, who, under the spiritual guidance of a shaykh, strives to get closer to God. Elsewhere, after Meryem falls in love with Ali Bey by means of his picture, Bānū advises her to become a *mürīd* of the monk in the monastery, whom she calls *pīr*.[148] However strange and inappropriate this suggestion may be from the Christian point of view (the presence of a female disciple in a male monastery is inconcievable in the Christian tradition), Bānū's advice is certainly formulated from within the Sufi tradition, where it is possible that shaykhs have female disciples.[149] As I intend to show later, the monk's position as a *pīr* who leads his disciple (Meryem) towards God[-like Ali] has a perfect counterpart in his role as a go-between who helps to bring together the two lovers.

To mention a final element that adds to the depiction of the monks as Sufi dervishes, the first monk, falling into a state of ecstasy, begins to dance twice in the poem; this, I believe, clearly alludes to the Sufi ecstatic dance, which is very much favoured by the Mevlevī order.[150]

From all that has been said above, it is safe to conclude that Sūzī's use of such Islamic/Sufi terminology is instrumental in establishing his monks' liminal position in between the two religions. The two monks as imagined by Sūzī are, in fact, fictionalised embodiments of a type of 'wise man' which belongs rather to the author's own intellectual and religious tradition, although they have the essential external trappings of Christianity in accordance with their imagined 'monastic' status and their roles in the narrative.

[148] Ibid., 339, couplet no. 1533.
[149] This is true especially in the Mevlevī order, where women could even become shaykhs until the seventeenth century. For Sufi women in general, see Abdülbâki Gölpınarlı, *100 Soruda Tasavvuf* (Sufism in one hundred questions) (Istanbul: Gerçek Yayınevi, 1969), 159-160.
[150] He dances when Meryem asks him to find Ali Bey, *Gn*, 343, couplet no. 1585 (*Ṣafādan raḳṣa girdi pīr-i āgāh*); and at the time of his conversion to Islam, ibid., 353, couplet no. 1725 (*İçüp ser-mest-i şeydā raḳṣa girdi*).

In addition to all this, it also seems to me—while acknowledging the influence of the precedents in Turco-Muslim epics discussed above—that the monastic Christian characters imagined by Sūzī, who are so remarkably prone to converting to Islam, could also be the literary echoes of the Qur'anic description of learned and devout Christians who are the closest to the Muslims:

(5:85) Strongest among men in enmity
To the Believers wilt thou
Find the Jews and Pagans;
And nearest among them in love
To the Believers wilt thou
Find those who say,
"We are Christians":
Because amongst these are
Men devoted to learning
And men who have renounced
The world, and they
Are not arrogant.[151]

(5:86) And when they listen
To the revelation received
By the Apostle, thou wilt
See their eyes overflowing
With tears, for they
Recognise the truth:
They pray: "Our Lord!
We believe; write us
Down among the witnesses.

(5:87) "What cause can we have
Not to believe in God
And the truth which has
Come to us, seeing that
We long for our Lord
To admit us to the company
Of the righteous?"[152]

Although Sūzī Chelebi never cites these verses, and there is no absolute evidence that he was directly inspired by them, there is a noticeable congruence between his fictional monastic characters and the Qur'anic notion of nominal Christians

[151] An alternative translation for "men devoted to learning and men who have renounced the world" (*qasīsīn wa-ruhbān*) is "priests and monks," Lazarus-Yafeh, "Muslim Polemics," 73.
[152] *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary*, ed. and tr. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, (Beirut: Dar Al Arabia, 1995), 268-269.

who are Muslims in their hearts.[153] After all, Sūzī's characters are not rank-and-file Christians, but precisely those who fall into the category of "*qasīsīn wa-ruhbān*," i.e., "priests and monks," or more subtly, "men devoted to learning and men who have renounced the world." Moreover, they are Christians whose eyes "overflow with tears" as they "recognise the truth," as mentioned in 5:86.[154] Indeed, the Qur'an is the only literary and intellectual 'source' of the poem that we can safely assume that the author read from cover to cover, as attested to by the citations concentrated especially in the introductory part of the *mes̲nevī*.

Having thus shown how Sūzī Chelebi created his Christian monastic characters in the image of Muslim dervishes and having identified two possible sources of inspiration (i.e., the monk/priest topos in the epics and the Qur'an), I now consider the following question: How Christian are the Christians in this narrative? Being inclined to Islam in their hearts, their superficial and rather external Christianness rests, in fact, on a few stereotypical elements that distinguish Christian from Muslim religious practice. According to the poem, a Christian monk is hardly anything more than someone who lives in a monastery, who honors Jerusalem as a holy place, who fasts, and who reverently contemplates (and sometimes paints) icons. Quite significantly, this Christian façade is undermined by several oddities that would seem scandalous or out of place to a hypothetical Christian audience, such as the suggested master-disciple relationship between a monk and a woman, the monks' extensive travelling and their inclination to ecstatic dancing. If all these do not stem from Sūzī Chelebi's personal ignorance about

[153] According to Abdullah Yusuf Ali's commentary, "[t]he meaning [in 5:85] is not that they merely call themselves Christians, but that they are such sincere Christians that they appreciate Muslim virtues, as did the Abyssinians to whom Muslim refugees went during the persecution in Mecca. They would say: "It is true we are Christians, but we understand your point of view, and we know you are good men." They are Muslims at heart, whatever their label may be," ibid., 268n.

[154] These two elements, however, are not coupled in Sūzī's poem: for recognising the truth, see *Gn*, 330, couplets no. 1388-1389, and for 'tears,' ibid., 329, couplet no. 1382. By themselves, they cannot be taken as direct allusions to this particular Qur'anic verse, but the fact that they are associated with two monks "devoted to learning" brings to mind the possibility that Sūzī could have been inspired by the Qur'an in constructing his characters.

Christians and Christianity—which, given his origins and homeland, does not seem to be a likely explanation—then they can be construed as the result of a deliberate ignorance of realistic details pertaining to Christian practices, an ignorance common to Ottoman writings, which would perhaps ward off any suspicion regarding the author's own beliefs. Yet the main reason for minimizing the difference between these Wallachian Christians and the Muslims is, in my opinion, different. This is, in fact, the poet's wish to balance somewhat the dichotomizing tone of the *gazavātnāme* (the Muslims versus the Others) by emphasizing the common inborn human inclination (since everybody is born Muslim according to Islam) that would eventually lead them towards the 'true faith' and to the side of the Muslims. Thus, not only the monks, who are almost dervishes, but also the two female characters and the Wallachian *ban* do not display any sign, any behaviour, or any belief that can be associated strictly with Christianity other than the ones mentioned above. The only thing that may hint at what Sūzī actually thinks the Christian beliefs consist of is the old *ban*'s mention of the story of Ya'ḳūb and Yūsuf (Jacob and Joseph).[155] Even then, however, Sūzī rather points to the common biblical themes shared by both the Muslims and the People of the Book (*Ahl al-Kitāb*), i.e., Christians and Jews in the Muslim jargon.

As a final note in this discussion of the monastic characters, I suggest that yet another layer of meaning can be identified in the love story. This is a result of the symbolic use of non-Muslim elements within the Islamicate poetic tradition. The poetic language also used by Sūzī Chelebi relates non-Muslim people and things to mystical love through a chain of metaphors that unfolds as follows: in Perso-Arab and Ottoman poetry, 'wine' stands for love in its mystical sense. Since Islam forbids drinking wine,

[155] When expressing his hesitation to permit his daughter to go outside, the *ban* reminds her of the story of Ya'ḳūb and Yūsuf and says that he is afraid of that, apparently referring to his fear that he would lose his daughter in the same way as Ya'ḳūb lost his son Yūsuf, *Gn*, 320, couplets no. 1252-1253. The Qur'anic story is in the Sūrah Yūsuf; for the biblical story, cf. Gen. 37. Here Sūzī likens Meryem to Yūsuf, although usually the one whom he compares to him is Ali Bey.

anyone and anything associated with a religion that does not impose any restriction in this matter assumes a positive mystical connotation in poetic metaphors inspired by Sufism. In Schimmel's words, which apply to Ottoman as well as Persian poetry,

> [t]he same can be said for the imagery—widespread—of Christian monasteries and delightful young monks with cross-shaped haircuts. Regardless of whether there really were drinking bouts in monasteries, this imagery had become frozen in Persian poetry in very early times and could be used unblushingly by even the most orthodox Muslim, who looked to the mystical meaning behind the images.[156]

Thus, for instance, the expression *pīr-i muġan*, "the elder of the Magi," employed when referring to the first monk,[157] can be explained within this framework, that is, as a non-Muslim element that had acquired a positive connotation as a clichéd poetic metaphor. Indeed, this is a clichéd expression used in poetry for 'tavern keeper' or a 'cup-bearer,' i.e., people who serve wine and who, therefore, may also appear as figures who arouse mystical love.[158] Sūzī first uses this expression as part of Bānū's speech to Meryem, where she urges the Wallachian lady, who is already in love, to become a *mürīd* of the *pīr-i muġan*, i.e., a "disciple" of the "old magus." The term appears a second time within the auctorial discourse, at the point when Ali Bey, after his meeting with the monk, sends him back to the monastery to tell Meryem that he will come to see her. In other words, Sūzī employs this expression at those points in the narrative when the monk acts as a go-between, making first Meryem and then Ali Bey fall in love by means of the pictures he paints. Thus, the expression *pīr-i muġan*, due to its established poetic connotations, emphasizes the idea that the monk acts as an intermediary between the two lovers, being the one who stimulates their love by

[156] Schimmel, *A Two-Colored Brocade*, 116.
[157] *Gn*, 339, couplet no. 1533, and ibid., 349, couplets no. 1674 and 1676.
[158] 'The Magi' (*muġan*) in this context are to be read as Zoroastrians or fire-worshippers. The *pīr-i muġan*, the old and wise magus/fire-worshipper/Zoroastrian, often appears in drinking contexts (as Zoroastrianism permits drinking wine), and stands for a person who "introduce[s] the seeker into the mysteries of spiritual intoxication. [He is] integral to that group of images with which poets try to indicate the contrast between law-bound exterior religion, or narrow legalism, and the religion of love, which transgresses the boundaries of external forms," Schimmel, *A Two-Colored Brocade*, 116.

offering them the wine of love. By doing so, he also ensures that they find each other, as a *pīr* would lead one to the Beloved (God). Clearly, as far as the poetic canon is concerned, it is appropriate that a Christian monk is presented as the intermediary between the lovers. Everything associated with Christianity would have suggested the association between Christianity and the permission to drink wine to an audience familiar with the conventions governing Ottoman poetry. Wine (and its consumption) on the other hand, were keywords for (falling in) love, both carnal and, more importantly, spiritual.

In the same way, other specifically non-Muslim terms—'monastery' and 'icon' in particular—are sometimes used in the poem with their symbolic meanings. Unlike *kelīsa* ('church'), which in Sūzī's usage seems to mean simply a 'Christian place of worship' in a concrete sense,[159] the other word employed for the same place, where the monk meets Meryem, *deyr* ('monastery'), is sometimes used in order to refer to the 'universe' or to 'this world'–a meaning that it often assumes in Sufi poetry.[160] Thus, Sūzī Chelebi's use of Christian imagery needs to be considered in terms of the meanings it bears within the mystical texture of the poem as well as in terms of its literal meaning, as the following discussion will emphasize.

III.b. The Icon: Meaning Beyond the Form

Just as the monks and the monastery are employed in such a way as to evoke more than one meaning, the motif of the icon is also meant to be understood within the

[159] For example in *Gn*, 326, couplet no. 1341.

[160] The following couplet, for example, illustrates the use of this word in its double meaning: "[She was] An honored icon (*tasvīr*) in the temple (*deyr*) of the world / [She was] Life-giving like Christ, her name was Meryem" (*Cihān deyrinde taṣvīr-i mükerrem* / *Mesīhā gibi cān-baḫş adı Meryem*), ibid., 315, couplet no. 1189. Here the poet communicates simultaneously Meryem's picturesque beauty in this temporary world, her Christian identity (with the concentration of specifically Christian terms such as 'icon,' 'monastery,' 'Christ,' and 'Mary'), and her similarity to Ali Bey, who also appears as "an icon in the *deyr*").

framework of multiple references. Indeed, it is possible to detect the conventions of the poetic tradition at work in the poet's use of the icon as a literary tool. As it appears in Sūzī's poem, the icon is, first of all, a portrait that has the practical function of conveying somebody's physical appearance. As such, the portrait of Meryem that the monk paints and shows to Ali Bey performs precisely the same function as Ali Bey's icon in the monastery, which was painted by the same monk: They both serve the purpose of inciting love towards the person depicted. As I will show below, Sūzī Chelebi borrowed this motif, of the painted image as an erotic go-between, from the classical tales of love in the Islamicate literature, namely "Khusraw and Shīrīn" ("Ḫusrev ile Şīrīn") and "Wāmiḳ and 'Adhrā" ("Vāmıḳ ile 'Aẕrā"), where the protagonists also fall in love with each other by means of pictures. The debt towards "Khusraw and Shīrīn" is explicitly acknowledged in the following couplet:

> That picturesque beauty [scil. Meryem] marvelled at this picture
> Just as Shīrīn marvelled at the image of Parvīz[161]

The parallel between Meryem's love story and that of Shīrīn is marked even further by the poet; in fact, he compares the old monk to Shāvūr, the servant of Khusraw who, in the classical tale, first makes his master fall in love with Shīrīn by praising her to him and then paints a picture of Khusraw and takes it to Shīrīn in order to persuade her to accept his master's marriage proposal. In addition to being a painter, Shāvūr's similarity to the monk is also evident in the fact that when he meets Shīrīn he is dressed like a monk/priest.[162] It is, therefore, not surprising to read that, according to Sūzī, when the old monk found Ali Bey to tell him about Meryem,

> The monk kissed the ground and uttered prayers
> Just as Shāvūr of that time did the same to Khusraw.[163]

[161] *Bu naḳşa ḳaldı ḥayran ol nigārīn* / *Nitekim sūret-i Pervīze Şīrīn*, ibid., 335, couplet no. 1475. Parvīz is the other name of Khusraw.
[162] See Çelebioğlu, *Mesnevi*, 230.
[163] Or "As if he were Shāvūr of the time for Khusraw:" *Yer öpdi vü du'ālar ḳıldı ruhbān* / *Nitekim Ḫusreve Şāvūr-ı devrān*, *Gn*, 344, couplet no. 1591.

Sūzī also presents the story of Ali Bey and Meryem as a parallel to "Wāmiḳ and ʻAdhrā." Thus, for instance, Meryem instructed the monk to speak to Ali Bey on her behalf, when he met him, as follows:

> She fell in love when she saw your likeness.
> Alas! She, who is like ʻAdhrā, has turned into Wāmik.[164]

It is interesting to note that gender roles are changed in Sūzī's comparison: whereas it is the male protagonist (Wāmik) who sees a picture of the female (ʻAdhrā) in the classical tale, in this story it is the heroine (who is otherwise a counterpart of ʻAdhrā) who falls in love with the hero by looking at his portrait, and therefore, "turns into Wāmik."

Unlike in the two classical love stories mentioned above, Sūzī Chelebi chose to place his scene of falling in love in a Christian setting by turning the portrait into an icon. As he did that, the poet apparently thought that a Christian place of worship, ambiguously called both a monastery and a church in the poem, would be the appropriate place to house objects with figural representations. It seems to me that relocating this important borrowing from the tradition of classical tales into a Christian context and, thus investing it with all the connotations attached to this context, was an original idea of Sūzī, as I have been unable to find any other literary parallel to it. Indeed, as I will show below, the transformation of what was merely a picture in the classical stories into an icon kept in a Christian place of worship was a very appropriate choice that fits well into the Sufi framework of the poem. Also, by turning the picture of the beloved (in this case, Ali Bey) into a sacred object—i.e., an 'idol,' as Muslims would identify an icon—Sūzī Chelebi seems to have intended to evoke the double meaning of the word *büt*, which can refer both to an idol and to the beautiful beloved.

[164] *Ġörüp nāgeh miṣālüñ ʻāşıḳ oldı / Zihī ʻAẕrā-ṣıfat kim Vāmıḳ oldı*, ibid., 341, couplet no. 1555.

While in several verses Sūzī plays with the two meanings of this word,[165] which were exploited quite often in Ottoman poetry (as well as in Islamicate literatures in general),[166] the main way in which he employs this ambivalence is by weaving it into the most important part of the plot: Meryem sees her beloved for the first time by means of an image that is to be 'worshipped.' In other words, the manner of Meryem's first encounter with Ali Bey suggests that the great hero is a holy man worthy of veneration just as much as he is a handsome hero with whom the heroine could fall in love.

Ali Bey, however, is not the only person that Sūzī found worthy of veneration. Arguably the most memorable moment in the narrative depicts Meryem, the Wallachian lady, who, upon her entrance in the monastery/church, finds herself surrounded by the icons of the great personae of the fifteenth-century Muslim nobility settled in the Ottoman Balkans. Here, apart from 'Isā Bey, who also appears in the *gazavātnāme* part of the poem as the respectable old *akıncı* leader under whom Ali Bey fought in his early years, Sūzī cites the name of one *gāzi* from each of the other three noble families who were influential in the Balkans along with the Mihaloğlus: Bali Bey of the Malkoçoğlus, Ahmed Bey of the Evrenosoğlus, and Ömer Bey of the Turahanoğlus.[167] In the context of this poetic act of reverence to the other *akıncı* families, Mihaloğlu Ali Bey emerges as the first among equals. He is shown as the greatest among the great *gāzi*s, and this greatness seems to be somewhat connected with (and enhanced by) his being chosen as the object of a (non-Muslim) woman's love. At the same time, a sense of solidarity among the members of the early Ottoman nobility is evident in Sūzī's choice to include them in this part, as the poem was written at a time when this group was gradually losing their initial power in the face of the centralizing policies of the Ottoman central

[165] For example, in ibid., 324, couplet no. 1308, Bānū says to Meryem, *Büt-i sīmīnisin bu köhne deyrüñ*, which can be translated as "You are the silver idol/beauty of this decrepit monastery/world."
[166] Schimmel, *Deciphering*, 33.
[167] See the Appendix for a translation of this part of the poem.

administration.[168] Thus, the veneration of these renowned *gāzi* chiefs in a church which was then still in foreign territory is a remarkable literary image that deserves some further consideration.

Sūzī justifies the appearance of these Muslim heroes in such an unexpected place by claiming that "whenever a hero appeared in this country, he would be depicted in that church;"[169] here, "this country" seems to refer to an ill-defined territory that I would interpret as the Balkan frontier zone rather than Wallachia proper.[170] This literary construct, i.e., the representation of celebrated Muslim warriors in a Wallachian church, probably does not correspond to any historical reality. Nevertheless, as Olesnicki pointed out, the images of rulers and nobles that would often be found on the frescoes that covered the walls of Serbian churches may have inspired Sūzī Chelebi. After all, the poet himself was quite likely of Serbian origin and was presumably exposed to Orthodox culture in his hometown, Prizren. Olesnicki considers the use of the icons in this context in Sūzī's poem as an original piece of fiction born out of the imagination of a poet who, unlike most Muslims, cherished a deep understanding of the meaning of icons in Eastern Christianity.[171] While I incline to agree with this statement, I find it somewhat problematic that the Olesnicki takes this motif as proof for his claim that Sūzī was not (in religious as well as an ethnic sense) "an authentic Turk" who—according to him—was supposed to be highly intolerant towards the overtly anti-Islamic custom of icon veneration.[172] In my view, his use of the icon motif and even his understanding of the meaning of icons in Orthodox Christianity do not make Sūzī Chelebi an iconodule

[168] See Chapter I.a.
[169] *Bu kişverde belürse bir dilāver / Olurdı ol kelīsāda muṣavver*, *Gn*, 326, couplet no. 1341.
[170] The geographic designations in the poem are, in general, quite ambiguous. Yet, one may get a sense that Sūzī distinguishes the Balkan frontier region (as of the late fifteenth century) from the rest of the Ottoman realm in the expression *Ṭuna ıḳlīmi* ("the Danubian land"), which is described as the region where Mihaloğlu Ali Bey was active and influential; see *Gn*, 332, couplet no. 1421, and 334, couplet no. 1449.
[171] Olesnicki, *Mihajlo Szilágyi*, 4.
[172] Ibid., 4-5.

who falls short of Olesnicki's rather blunt normative definition of a true Muslim. What Olesnicki did not take into account is that the pervasive mystical pattern of Ottoman poetry, which permits writing poems that appear to contradict Islamic principles, saves this poem, along with many others, from the accusation of religious unorthodoxy.

In a certain sense, the presence of the icons of *akıncı* leaders in a monastery/church may be taken as just another way of saying that these brave men have already been immortalized, as their heroism is honored and commemorated even by people who stand on the other side of both the political and the religious frontier. Indeed, the association between being depicted and being famous and memorable is also evoked in the introductory part of the poem where, in the absence of any Christian connotations, another fictitious portrait of Ali Bey is mentioned perhaps with the intention to indicate a salient motif of the poem that would later be elaborated:

> It is related that in the realm of Badakhshān
> They depicted him in the form of a lion.[173]
>
> With pearls and rubies they decorated it;
> As a guard they employed a heart-stealing beauty.
>
> That jasmine-fragrant cypress would say to those who asked,
> "This is a picture of Mihaloğlu Ali Bey."
>
> There is so much benefit in his eulogy
> That it would make this poem desirable for recitation.[174]

On the other hand, it is also possible to interpret the icons of the *gāzi*s in a Sufi sense. Indeed, in Sufi poetry, the term *deyr* (monastery) appears to be connected to the notion of time; more precisely, according to one interpretation, it means the "Eternal Divine

[173] His depiction in a lion's image may be an allusion to his resemblence to 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, see below.

[174] *Rivāyetdür Bedaḫşān mülketinde*
Ki naḳşitmişler arslan sūretinde
Dür ü la'lile zeyn itmişler anı
Ḳomışlar pāsbān bir dil-sitānı
Ṣorana dirmiş ol serv-i semen-bū
Miḫāloğlı 'Alī Beğ naḳşıdır bu
Bu midḥatden şu deñlu fāyide var
K'olur merġūb dillerde bu eş'ār
Gn, 245, couplets no. 224-227.

Presence" and "stands for an effacement of the elements of time and place."[175] One may follow this line of interpretation and relate the motif of the pictorial representation of the heroes to an implied connection between the great *gāzi*s and the Divine Presence. Thus, the symbolic character of words and images has to be taken into consideration in any discussion of how to understand this poem, and this is also true for the icon motif itself.

As suggested above by the comparisons between this poem and classical love stories, what I have been calling an icon is, in one sense, merely a picture that functions as a stimulus for love. What makes it an icon is its placement in the Christian context. Indeed, the words employed in the poem in order to refer to the paintings that depict Ali Bey, the other gāzis, and Meryem, namely *taṣvīr*, *ṣūret*, and *naḳş*, denote any kind of image, not necessarily an icon. In only one couplet does Sūzī Chelebi explicitly state that Meryem recognized Ali Bey's picture as an icon, for which he uses the expression *kelīsā naḳşı*, i.e., "church picture":

> As she saw the picture of 'Alī Beğ
> She marvelled at it like [or 'as if it were'] a church picture.[176]

True, in this couplet the picture of Ali Bey is somewhat distinguished from "church pictures," but the way Meryem responds to it is likened by the poet to a Christian's usual response to an icon. What appeals to Meryem (and also to the second monk) in Ali Bey's image seems to be not so much the physical beauty of the hero but rather the undescribable charismatic quality in him that instills awe and respect in the viewers of his portraits. This characteristic of Ali Bey, which resembles the *hayba* of a shaykh,[177] distinguishes his image from among the images of the other great *gāzi*s.

[175] This is taken from al-Nabulsi's interpretation of Shushtari's poetry, Omaima Abou-Bakr, "The Symbolic Function of Metaphor in Medieval Sufi Poetry: The Case of Shushtari," *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics* 12 (1992): 50.
[176] *'Alī Beğ naḳşını çūn gördi ol cān / Kelīsā naḳşı gibi ḳaldı ḥayrān*, *Gn*, 328, couplet no. 1365.
[177] *Hayba* is described as "a combination of awe, fear, and respect" that a disciple would feel in his master's presence; see Malamud, "Master-Disciple Relationship," 93.

When expressing her fascination with Ali Bey's portrait, Meryem tells the monk that "among [all] the paintings this seems to be the most life-like"—or "this resembles life the most."[178] As I understand it, in this sentence Meryem does not merely refer to the portrait's technical quality as a true-to-life representation that precisely reproduces visible reality, since the word she uses for 'life,' *cān*, seems to denote an internal essence rather than its external manifestation. Then, the success of this portrait painted by the monk lies in the ease with which it conveys the spiritual authority of the holy *gāzi* to the spectator.

It is indeed remarkable that Sūzī diverges from mainstream Islam, which equates icon veneration with idol worshipping, as he does not suggest in any way that the Christians he imagines in his poem treat their icons as idols. Quite the contrary, he understands the icon precisely as a "channel" that "transmits divine grace" or the divine beauty that is manifested in Ali Bey's image; and his view of the icon is, in fact, perfectly in line with Orthodox Christian theology—but perhaps not always with the Orthodox practice, since he does not attribute any miraculous power to the painted object itself.[179] It is true that Sūzī's Christian characters, as I have already shown, stand in a liminal position between the two religions, and therefore it is not so surprising that, as people on the right path who are close to Islam, they do not 'worship' the icons. But Sūzī also does not make any distinction between those Christians who do worship icons as idols and those who do not. Nor does he seem to believe that painting icons or keeping them is an error in itself; as long as the icons perform their function by properly transmitting something of the divine to their viewers, they are legitimate tools of devotion that would help one to get closer to God.

[178] This is how I translate the verse *Ki bu ṣūretler içre cāna beñzer*, *Gn*, 328, couplet no. 1367.
[179] Margaret E. Kenna, "Icons in Theory and Practice: An Orthodox Christian Example," *History of Religions* 24, no. 4 (1985): 345-346; for the "theological background to icons," see ibid., 348-350.

Even if Sūzī's Serbian Orthodox background, as Olesnicki believed, was decisive in his understanding and use of the conceptual basis of icons, what seems to me at least equally crucial is the role of the Neoplatonic influence common to the Orthodox and Sufi traditions, which facilitated the Sufi poet's (and his readers') access to the idea behind the icon. The key term is *ṣūret* (or *ṣūra*) (image), which Sūzī often employed interchangeably with *taṣvīr* and *naḳş* in order to refer to the pictures. *Ṣūret*, however, has a broader connotation compared to the other two words, as it means any image, form, or shape, and therefore, is a term that applies to external forms in general. Sūzī's poem and especially the love story episode is replete with allusions to the duality between *ṣūra* and *ma'nī* (or *ṣūret* and *ma'nā*), 'form' and 'meaning,' i.e., the outward appearance and the inner essence. This was a perennial topic in Sufi writings, above all in the works of Mevlana Jalal al-Din Rumi—which Sūzī seems to have been at least aware of—and was an issue of great concern for the Islamic theory of portraiture.[180]

In many verses throughout the poem Sūzī plays with these concepts, and he puts a few pairs of words analogous to *ṣūra* and *ma'nī* in the mouth of the second monk as he tells his companion in Jerusalem that the portrait in his hand is not just any picture but—just as an icon—it has an essential link with what it depicts, i.e., with its prototype.[181] The former prince describes the picture of Ali Bey as a talisman that provides access to (divine or spiritual) treasures and as a moon that reflects the rays of a sun.[182] In fact, the portrait of Ali Bey of which he speaks here was brought by the (Hungarian) king's ambassador to a European court, and therefore, was not meant to be

[180] Soucek, "Theory and Practice of Portraiture," 102. For the form-and-meaning duality and how it relates to the theory of painting, also see Yves Porter, "From the 'Theory of the Two *Qalam*s' to the 'Seven Principles of Painting': Theory, Terminology, and Practice in Persian Classical Painting," *Muqarnas* 17 (2000): 109-118.
[181] *Gn*, 330, couplets no. 1399-1400, a translation of which is given in the Appendix. For the relationship between the icon and what it depicts, see Kenna, "Icons," 349.
[182] *Gn*, 330, couplet no. 1401.

an icon as such. But this "gilded" picture (*müẕehheb ṣūret*)[183] turns into an icon in the monk's hands, as it becomes the only means by which he can imagine the owner of this image, whom he regards as a guide for his own spiritual development.[184]

Sūzī Chelebi's use of the icon motif also evokes two other issues related to icons in a Christian context. One of them is the problem of establishing the accuracy of the correspondence between the prototype and the icon, which is resolved through a rather poetic artifice by means of Meryem, who immediately recognizes that Ali Bey corresponds to the rose in her dream and therefore reassures herself (and the reader) of the sanctity of the hero and the veracity of the icon.[185] The second issue is the necessity of depicting a certain holy man in a particular way which would distinguish him from others. Accordingly, in this poem, Ali Bey is consistently said to be depicted in the leonine form, which, though explained as a symbol of courage,[186] is at the same time an allusion to 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, who is often praised as the "lion of God."[187]

Thus, it appears quite likely that Sūzī borrowed the concept of icon from Orthodox Christianity and incorporated it into the Sufi framework of his poem by relating it to the dichotomy between meaning and form. It is interesting to note that as he emphasizes the power of Ali Bey's portraits over their viewers, Sūzī Chelebi diverges from the opinion of Mevlana, his intellectual forebear, who in two anecdotes reported by his disciple/biographer, Aflaki, pointed out the inherent limitations of paintings and even the impossibility of producing an accurate likeness.[188] Sūzī's use of

[183] Ibid., 330, couplet no. 1398.
[184] See Chapter II for a disciple's imagining his spiritual master.
[185] The way that Meryem's dream and the icon testify to the veracity of each other can be compared to the cases of icons verified by dreams and visions and vice versa in the Byzantine tradition; see Henry Maguire, *The Icons of their Bodies: Saints and their Images in Byzantium* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 12-15.
[186] "They called him 'Lion' because he was brave / They depicted him in this fashion" (*Şecī olduġiçün arslan dimişler / Anı bu vechile naḳşeylemişler*), *Gn*, 335, couplet no. 1467.
[187] 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib is known as Ḥaydara (or Ḥaydar), meaning 'Lion'; Schimmel, *Deciphering*, 23. The allusion to 'Alī is made explicit in *Gn*, 335, couplet no. 1469.
[188] Soucek, "Theory and Practice of Portraiture," 102-103.

the icon motif—as he almost justifies the use of icons for a legitimate end, i.e., gaining new converts to Islam—is, therefore, noteworthy as the expression of one of the existing attitudes towards the rival religion in the early sixteenth-century Balkan environment, where competition between the two religions was as intense as it had been in thirteenth-century Anatolia, where Mevlana lived.

III.c. Sūzī Chelebi: A Sufi Close to Christianity?

When considering the peculiarity of the poet's use of the icon motif, it is necessary to note that Sūzī Chelebi was in no way unique among Sufis as far as religious borrowing (if, indeed, it may be called so) of the kind discussed in this chapter is concerned. In this respect he is comparable to the seventeenth-century Sufi shaykh Niyāzī-i Mıṣrī, who, in an effort to identify himself with Jesus Christ in his self-narrative, did not refrain from having recourse to the Christian narratives of the crucifixion of Christ, whereas mainstream Islam would not accept that Jesus was crucified.[189] Just as might have been the case with Sūzī Chelebi, the traces of Christianity in the writings of Niyāzī-i Mıṣrī are likely to have stemmed, at least partially, from the shaykh's personal contacts with Christians.[190] Niyāzī-i Mıṣrī, by choosing to employ "Christianizing" elements, took advantage of the theme of suffering that is so central to the Christian traditions while building a narrative of his own sufferings.[191] Likewise, Sūzī Chelebi's presentation of the Christian custom of icon veneration in such a positive light seems to be essentially a matter of personal choice, which, in all likelihood, was inspired by his local cultural/religious environment.

[189] Derin Terzioğlu, "Man in the Image of God in the Image of the Times: Sufi Self-Narratives and the Diary of Niyāzī-i Mıṣrī (1618-94)," *Studia Islamica* 94 (2002): 159.
[190] Ibid. He seems to have been, for instance, a friend of Callinicus, the future patriarch of Constantinople, ibid., 159 with note 74.
[191] Ibid., 160.

Nevertheless, it also needs to be stressed that Sūzī's 'borrowing' is not as straightforward as that of Mışrī, since it is masked by the veil of poetic themes and Sufi metaphors.

An even closer parallel can be found in the poetry of the thirteenth-century Hispano-Arab Sufi poet Abu al-Hasan al-Shushtari.[192] As Omaima Abou-Bakr's study of his literary work has shown, Shushtari employed terms that allude to Christianity, such as monk, monastery, and Jesus to such an extent that his usage would be seen as "unusual and unorthodox even in Sufi poetry."[193] The explanation that Abou-Bakr took from al-Nabulsi[194] for this is that Shushtari, who was undoutedly a Muslim by faith, "belonged to the Jesus' Muhammadan 'station' of faith."[195] As the one and true faith is manifested through various prophets, each of whom represents a certain aspect of it, and finally with Muhammad the revelation is complete, a Sufi could choose to approach the Divine through the path of any of the prophets. Al-Nabulsi goes further to say that the terms such as "monastery," "monk," and "priest," which are now understood in their strictly non-Muslim sense, originally stood for "certain divine secrets and gnostic stations."

> For example, the term *rāhib* (from the verb *rahaba*, to fear)–understood now as a strictly Christian monk–in reality indicates one who is in awe of Truth; a *qissīs* (priest) is actually one who strives to be certain of knowing the Absolute (from the verb *qassa*, to persist); *kanīsa* [i.e., the Ottoman Turkish *kelīsā* in Sūzī's poem], or church, from the verb *kanasa*, to sweep clean, points to a state of purity, being cleansed from all aspects of individual will.[196]

Thus, Shushtari used these words as symbols intended to evoke their original meaning.[197] Though I find it questionable that Sūzī Chelebi was aware of all these original meanings as explained by al-Nabulsi, as I suggested before in this chapter, he

[192] Abou-Bakr, "Metaphor," 40-57.
[193] Ibid., 49.
[194] The article that Abou-Bakr refers to is 'Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulsi, "Radd al-Muftariī 'an al-Ṭa'n fi al-Shushtari," *al-Mashriq* 54 (1960): 629-39.
[195] Abou-Bakr, "Metaphor," 49.
[196] Ibid.
[197] Ibid., 49-50.

probably relied on the elusive poetic language that often cloaked a deeper meaning beneath the apparently non-Islamic surface. It is also hard to assert that Sūzī was consciously close to a Christian-colored form of the Muslim faith, as Shushtari seems to have been.

In light of the discussion in this chapter, I believe that what Sūzī Chelebi attempts to do in his poem is to construct an idealized image of the *gāzi* leader Mihaloğlu Ali Bey as a Muslim hero who appeals to Christians, seen here as potential Muslims of the future. However, this image is carefully painted as a rather orthodox one since the great holy warrior is not an active proselytizer who deliberately uses Christian elements to attract Christians to his side. In other words, he is not someone like the warrior-dervish Ṣarı Ṣalṭuk whose heartfelt reading of the Bible in Hagia Sophia caused the Christian congregation to break into tears,[198] or like the saint, Abdāl Mūsā, who prepared a banquet with wine and pork for his Christian guests.[199] Mihaloğlu Ali Bey as depicted in this epic romance does not need to perform such paradoxical feats, since his saintly charisma and tremendous reputation as a brave warrior are more than enough to lead the Christians in unconquered lands to venerate him as their spiritual guide.

The Islamic/Sufi terminology that pervades the representation of the Christians in the poem seems to be employed in order to construct liminal characters who, as they gravitate towards Ali Bey and the 'true faith' almost following an inborn inclination in their human nature, finally come to remove the Christian veil in order to close the gap between their apparent identity and their inner self. The moment of their conversion to Islam, which is simultaneously the time when Meryem meets her beloved, is also the moment when the duality between outward appearance and inner essence as well as the duality between the Creator (the Beloved) and the created (the lover) disappear in a

[198] Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 71.
[199] See Anonymous, "Velāyetnāme-i Sulṭān Abdāl Mūsā" (The hagiography of Sulṭān Abdāl Mūsā), in *Abdal Mûsâ Velâyetnâmesi*, ed. Abdurrahman Güzel (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1999), 141.

mystical union. But until then, the outward Christian identity that they maintain defines them as the adherents of a rival religion situated in opposition to the Muslim side, who, however, as Sūzī chooses to emphasize, yearn in their hearts to join the side of the *gāzi*s. Therefore, I believe that by inserting a love story episode with such liminal characters into the *gazā* narrative, Sūzī underlined the essential non-Otherness of the Christian 'enemies' by pointing to their natural tendency towards the 'true faith'—of which even they themselves could be unaware—and even to their unconscious desire to be conquered and converted to Islam. Thus, whereas the preceding *gazā* narrative stresses the dichotomy between the Muslim and the Christian sides, the love story reveals that this dichotomy is merely an appearance and is bound to be reconciled. Hence the story ends in conquest, conversion, meeting with the beloved, union with God, and in other words, the ultimate effacement of all dualities.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion so far, Sūzī Chelebi's epic-romantic poem can be described as a particular elite variant of frontier narratives with a strong Sufi coloring. Written within the Ottoman/Islamicate 'high' literary tradition, to which it owes much in terms of metaphors, themes, and literary models, the text combines commonplace Sufi ideas with a relentless emphasis on the *gāzi* leader's this-worldly merits, notably his ability to acquire booty and slaves and to gain the hearts of beautiful Christian women. Although it shares with other *gazā* narratives an inclusivist attitude towards the religious Other and an emphasis on the rewards of the *gazī*s in this world, the poem seems to have a very peculiar *sui generis* formulation concerning inclusivism, which is evident in its use of the Christian Orthodox conception of icon and its construction of the monastic characters as dervish-like liminal personalities, whose love and yearning for Ali Bey parallels the Wallachian lady's quest for her beloved.

At this point, it is possible to make the following observations concerning the nature of Sūzī Chelebi's narrative and its messages. First of all, empathy towards Christian beliefs or practices, which is widely present in frontier narratives, can also be detected in this poem, as Ali Bey's ability to become a part of the cultural world of the Christians is emphasized in a positive manner. On the other hand, the Christians' reception of Ali Bey, as imagined by our poet, is taken to an extreme, since, in the poem, they are shown giving him an exceptionally honorable position by painting his icon and venerating him almost as if he were a Christian saint. Nevertheless, it is also suggested that Ali Bey's personal agency does not play any part in this, as he comes to be venerated by the Christians independently of his own will. For instance, when the old monk manages to find him in his camp surrounded by his men and paints a picture of

him, Ali Bey does not seem to be aware of what he is doing. This seems to be a strategy of Sūzī Chelebi in order to avoid any accusation of unorthodoxy that might be directed at the *gāzi*. In this sense, Ali Bey as a fictional figure differs from a number of other saintly figures, such as Sarı Saltuk or Abdal Musa, who actively seek recognition by Christians through a display of empathy towards Christian ways.

It also seems to me that in this episode of the poem it was not Sūzī's primary objective to present Ali Bey as a role model to be emulated by *gāzi*s; in fact, he seems to have implied that the very personal sort of charisma that he had could not really be emulated, but only venerated as an 'icon' of the ideal *gāzi*. In this sense, there is a difference between the epic and the romantic parts of the poem, since the epic part, enumerating several values attributed to Ali Bey (self-sacrifice, generosity, and courage in particular), seems to prescribe a certain way of conduct for all *gāzi*s.

In this study, I aimed to make a preliminary exploration of the messages of the poem by trying to place it within its cultural and literary context. It is important to recognize that the Ottoman frontier culture is not a monolithic entity and Sūzī Çelebi's poem certainly does not represent its entire diversity. It cannot be considered as the singular voice of the *gāzi* circles at the frontier, but that of an elite segment among them. I hope that this study, where I attempted to highlight what gave to Sūzī Chelebi's narrative its peculiarity, would be a step further towards seeing the Ottoman frontier culture in the Balkans, which has been so central to the scholarly explanations of the rise and success of the early Ottoman state, in a more nuanced, contextualized way.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abbreviations:

EI: *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*. New edition. Ed. B. Lewis, Ch. Pellat, and J. Schacht. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991.

İA: *İslâm Ansiklopedisi: İslâm Âlemi Tarih, Coğrafya, Etnografya ve Biyografya Lugati*. Ankara: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 1997.

Primary Sources

Aḥmedī. *Dâstân ve Tevârîh-i Mülûk-i Âl-i Osman* (The epic and history of the sultans of the Ottoman dynasty). In *Osmanlı Tarihleri I*, ed. N. Atsız, 6-25. Istanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi, 1949.

Ali, Abdullah Yusuf, ed. and trans. *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary*. Beirut: Dar Al Arabia, 1995.

Anonymous. "Dānishmendnāme." In Irène Mélikoff, *La Geste de Melik Dānişmend: Étude Critique du Dānişmendnāme*, vol. 2. Paris: L'Institut Français d'Archéologie d'Istanbul, 1960.

Anonymous. *Gazavât-ı Sultân Murâd b. Mehemmed Hân: İzladi ve Varna Savaşları (1443-1444) Üzerinde Anonim Gazavâtnâme* (The holy wars of Sultan Murad son of Mehemmed Khan: anonymous *gazavātnāme* on the battles of Zlatitsa and Varna [1443-1444]). Ed. Halil İnalcık and Mevlûd Oğuz. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1989.

Anonymous. "Velāyetnāme-i Sulṭān Abdāl Mūsā" (The hagiography of Sulṭān Abdāl Mūsā). In *Abdal Mûsâ Velâyetnâmesi*, ed. Abdurrahman Güzel, 140-153. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1999.

Âşıkpaşaoğlu Ahmed Âşıkî. *Tevârîh-i Âl-i Osman* (The history of the Ottoman dynasty). Ed. Çiftçioğlu N. Atsız. Istanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi, 1947.

Enverī. "Düstūrnāme." Ed. and trans. Irène Mélikoff-Sayar. In *Le destān d'Umur Pacha*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1954.

Ibn Kemal. *Tevârîh-i Âl-i Osman: VII. Defter* (The history of the Ottoman dynasty: the seventh book). Ed. Şerafettin Turan. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1957.

Mehmed Neşrî. *Kitâb-ı Cihan-nümâ: Neşrî Tarihi* (The chronicle of Neshrī). Vol. 1. Ed. F. R. Unat and M. A. Köymen. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1987.

Sūzī Chelebi. "Ġazavāt-nāme-i Mihaloġlı 'Alī Beğ" (The book of Mihaloğlu Ali Bey's holy wars). In *Ġazavāt-nāmeler ve Mihaloğlu Ali Bey'in Ġazavāt-nāmesi*, ed. Agâh Sırrı Levend, 228-358. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1956.

Secondary Sources

Abou-Bakr, Omaima. "The Symbolic Function of Metaphor in Medieval Sufi Poetry: The Case of Shushtari," Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics, no. 12 (1992): 40-57.

Andrews, Walter G. *Poetry's Voice, Society's Song: Ottoman Lyric Poetry*. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1985.

Arnaldez, R. "Ma'rifa." *EI*, vol. 6: 568-571.

Arslan, H. Çetin. *Türk Akıncı Beyleri ve Balkanların İmarına Katkıları (1300-1451)* (Turkish raider lords and their contributions to the urban development in the Balkans). Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 2001.

Baymak, Osman, ed. *Sûzî Çelebi: Araştırma-İnceleme* (Sūzī Chelebi: A Research). Prizren: Balkan Aydınları ve Yazarları Yayınları, 1998.

Bosworth, C. E., and Nizami, K. A. "Pīr." *EI*, vol. 8: 306-307.

Calasso, Giovanna. "La Dimension Religieuse Individuelle dans les Textes Musulmans Médiévaux, entre Hagiographie et Littérature de Voyages: les Larmes, les Émotions, l'Expérience." *Studia Islamica* 91 (2000): 39-58.

Çelebioğlu, Amil. *Türk Edebiyatı'nda Mesnevi: XV. yy'a Kadar* (*Meşnevī* in Turkish literature: up to the fifteenth century). Istanbul: Kitabevi, 1999.

Chittick, William C. *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-'Arabī's Metaphysics of Imagination*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989.

Darling, Linda. "Contested Territory: Ottoman Holy War in Comparative Context." *Studia Islamica* 91 (2000): 133-163.

De Bruijn, J. T. P. "Mathnawī (2. In Persian)." *EI*, vol. 6: 832-835.

Decei, A. "Aḳındjı." *EI*, vol. 1: 340.

Demetriades, Vasilis. "The Tomb of Ghazi Evrenos Bey at Yenitsa and Its Inscription." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 39, no. 2 (1976): 328-332.

_____. "*Vakif*s Along the Via Egnatia." In *The Via Egnatia under the Ottoman Rule (1380-1699)*, ed. Elizabeth A. Zachariadou. Rethymnon: Crete University Press, 1996.

Feneşan, Cristina. “Mihaloğlu Mehmet Beg et la Principauté de Valachie (1508-1532).” *The Journal of Ottoman Studies* 15 (1995): 137-155.

Flemming, B. “Mathnawī (3. In Turkish).” *EI*, vol. 6: 835-837.

Fodor, Pál and Szakály, Ferenc. “A Kenyérmezei Csata (1479. október 13.)” (The Battle of Kenyérmező). In *Fegyvert s vitézt… A magyar hadtörténet nagy csatái*, ed. Róbert Hermann, 61-80. Budapest, 2003.

Frishkopf, Michael. “Authorship in Sufi Poetry.” *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics* 23 (2003): 78-108.

Gökbilgin, M. Tayyip. “Mihal-oğulları.” *İA*, vol. 8: 285-292.

Gölpınarlı, Abdülbâki. *100 Soruda Tasavvuf* (Sufism in one hundred questions). Istanbul: Gerçek Yayınevi, 1969.

Hickman, William. “The Taking of Aydos Castle: Further Considerations on a Chapter from Aşıkpaşazade.” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 99, no. 3 (1979): 399-407.

Imber, Colin. “The Ottoman Dynastic Myth.” *Turcica* 19 (1987): 7-27.

_____. “The Legend of Osman Gazi.” In *The Ottoman Emirate (1300-1389): A Symposium Held in Rethymnon, 11-13 January 1991*, ed. Elizabeth A. Zachariadou, 67-76. Rethymnon: Crete University Press, 1993.

_____. “Canon and Apocrypha in Early Ottoman History.” In *Studies in Ottoman History in Honour of Professor V. L. Ménage*, ed. Colin Heywood and Colin Imber, 117-137. Istanbul: Isis Press, 1994.

İnalcık, Halil. “Meḥemmed II.” *EI*, vol. 6: 978-81.

Johnstone, T. M. “Ghazw.” *EI*, vol. 2: 1055-56.

Kafadar, Cemal. *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995.

Kenna, Margaret E. “Icons in Theory and Practice: An Orthodox Christian Example.” *History of Religions* 24, no. 4 (1985): 345-368.

Kiel, M. “Prizren.” *EI*, vol. 8: 337-341.

Kocatürk, Vasfi Mahir. *Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi: Başlangıçtan Bugüne Kadar Türk Edebiyatının Tarihi, Tahlili ve Tenkidi* (The History of Turkish Literature: The History, Analysis, and Critique of Turkish Literature from its Beginnings to the Present Day). Ankara: Edebiyat Yayınevi, 1970. 2nd ed.

Lazarus-Yafeh, Hava. “Some Neglected Aspects of Medieval Muslim Polemics against Christianity.” *The Harvard Theological Review* 89, no. 1 (1996): 61-84.

Levend, Agâh Sırrı. *Divan Edebiyatı: Kelimeler ve Remizler, Mazmunlar ve Mefhumlar* (Ottoman Literature: Words and Symbols, Metaphors and Concepts). Istanbul: İnkılâp Kitapevi, 1943. 2nd ed.

_____. *Ġazavāt-nāmeler ve Mihaloğlu Ali Bey'in Ġazavāt-nāmesi* (Books of holy wars and the book of Mihaloğlu Ali Bey's holy wars). Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1956.

Lowry, Heath W. *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003.

Macdonald, D. B. [and Gardet, L.] "Al-Ghayb." *EI*, vol. 2: 1025-1026.

Maguire, Henry. *The Icons of their Bodies: Saints and their Images in Byzantium*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.

Malamud, Margaret. "Gender and Spiritual Self-Fashioning: The Master-Disciple Relationship in Classical Sufism." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 64, no. 1 (1996): 89-117.

Mélikoff, Irène. "Ghāzī," *EI*, vol. 2: 1043-45.

_____. "Ḥamāsa (iii. Turkish Literature)." *EI*, vol. 3: 114-115.

[Olesnicki, Aleksije A.] Олесницки, А. "Сузи Челеби из Призрена Турски Песник-Историк XV-XVI Века: Прилог Биографији" (Sūzī Chelebi of Prizren, Turkish Poet-Historian of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries: A Contribution to His Biography). *Гласник Скопског Научног Друштва* 13 (1933): 69-82.

_____. "Duhovna Služba Bektašijskoga Reda u Akindžijskoj Vojsci: Prilog Proučavanju Kulta Đerzeleza i Njegove Popularnosti u Bosni" (The Bektāshī Order, the Spiritual Guide of the *Akıncı*s: Essay on the Origin of the Cult of Đerzelez and Its Popularity in Bosnia). *Viestnik Hrvatskoga Arheoloskoga Drustva* 22/23 (1940/1941): 193-206.

_____. *Mihajlo Szilágyi i Srbska Despotija: Akcija Szilágyijeva za Oslobođenje Smedereva od Turaka i njegov poraz od Ali-bega Mihaloglije kod Bazjaša 8. studenoga 1460*. Zagreb: Hrvatska Znanosti Umjetnosti, 1943.

Porter, Yves. "From the "Theory of the Two *Qalam*s" to the "Seven Principles of Painting": Theory, Terminology, and Practice in Persian Classical Painting." *Muqarnas* 17 (2000): 109-118.

Sabev, Orlin. "The Legend of Köse Mihal: Additional Notes." *Turcica* 34 (2002): 241-252.

Schimmel, Annemarie. *A Two-Colored Brocade: The Imagery of Persian Poetry*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992.

_____. *Deciphering the Signs of God: A Phenomenological Approach to Islam*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994.

Soucek, Priscilla. "The Theory and Practice of Portraiture in the Persian Tradition." *Muqarnas* 17 (2000): 97-108.

Stewart-Robinson, J. "The Ottoman Biographies of Poets." *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 24, no. 1/2 (1965): 57-74.

Vırmiça, Raif. *Suzi ve Vakıf Eserleri* (Sūzī and his pious foundation). Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 2002.

Wensinck, A. J. [and Fahd, T.] "Ṣūra." EI, vol. 9: 889-892.

Wittek, Paul. *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire*. London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1938.

_____. "The Taking of Aydos Castle: A Ghazi Legend and its Transformation." In *Arabic and Islamic Studies in Honor of Hamilton A. R. Gibb*, ed. George Makdisi, 662-672. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965.

Zachariadou, Elizabeth A. "Udj." *EI*, vol. 10: 777.

Zirojević, Olga. "Der Sandschakbey von Smederevo Ali-Bey Mihaloğlu." In *VII. Türk Tarih Kongresi, Ankara: 25-29 Eylül 1970, Kongreye sunulan bildiriler* (The Seventh Turkish Congress of History, Ankara: 25-29 September 1970, Papers presented at the congress), 567-577. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1973.

_____. "Prizren – Primer Koegzistencije." *Helsinška Povelja* 48 (2002). Available from http://www.helsinki.org.yu/authors_singletext.php?lang=sr&idteksta=208; Internet; accessed 24 May 2007.

APPENDIX

Translation of a Selected Part from the *Gazavātnāme*

Meryem enters the monastery/church with the intention of asking the monk to interpret her dream:[200]

There were many images in this temple[201]
Its four sides were painted all over like the sky

Whenever a hero appeared in this country[202]
He would be depicted in that church

Such as ʻİsā Beğ son of Ḥasan Beğ[203]
The virtuous[204] leader of *gazā*

The chief warlord under Sultan Murād[205]
The committed Rustam of that Kay Kubad

He lived into the reign of Sultan Muḥammed,[206]
Gathered soldiers and waged *gazā* many times

Alas, that *gāzi*, that diligent man
Was martyred in this endeavour, such was his end.

Malḳoçoğlı[207] was written[208] as the man of battlefield
In swordsmanship he was a reminder of the Shah of Men[209]

He would not guard himself against the sword
He would attack the lion with his fist

[200] The part translated here is from *Gn*, 326-330; and it is discussed in III.a and III.b.
[201] "Temple": the word that is used in this verse is "*deyr*," which, in fact, means 'monastery.' It is not clear whether this Christian place of worship is a monastery or a church; see III.a.
[202] In my interpretation, "this country" ("*bu kişver*") seems to refer to the Ottoman frontier zone in the Balkans rather than Wallachia proper; see III.b.
[203] Hasan Beyoğlu Isā Bey, who appears as one of the main characters earlier in the *gazavātnāme*, seems to have been Mihaloğlu Ali Bey's commander-in-chief during the expedition in Transylvania in 1458, Olesnicki, *Mihajlo Szilágyi*, 13.
[204] "Virtuous": "*ḫoş-ḫışāl*," literally "[the one] that has good moral qualities."
[205] Ottoman sultan Murad II, father of Mehmed II.
[206] "Sultan Muḥammed" refers to the Ottoman sultan Mehmed II (r. 1451-1481). Mehmed is the turkicized form of Muhammad and both are written in the same way.
[207] Malkoçoğlu Bali Bey (d. 1514) was the commander of the *sandjak* (*sandjakbeyi*) of Smederevo and later of Silistra, Olesnicki, *Mihajlo Szilágyi*, 13.
[208] I am not quite sure what is meant by "written." The intended meaning may be 'depicted;' but it may perhaps also mean that he was 'renowned' as such.
[209] "The Shah of Men" ("*Şāh-ı merdān*") is an epithet of ʻAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad and the fourth caliph, who is considered to be the best representative of the ideal *gāzi*.

This lord as well had led many raids
Had given up the world and life for the sake of the one Beloved

The sound of his sword had overwhelmed Egypt and Damascus
Just as the shah of the stars overwhelms day and night

With ʻAlī Beğ, he had swept along
Walked beside him on this path for a long time

[…]

Since ʻAlī, no one like him[210] has ever
Stepped unto the battlefield

Evrenosoğlu[211] was written as above all others
Ahmed Beğ, who had the qualities of Ḥasan and the mystical touch of ʻAlī

Committed to warfare like his forefathers
In massacre and ruse, a perfect match of Rustam

When he took the fortress of Iskenderiye
All said that he finally found the way to Hayber

It was he who conquered Aḳçaḥıṣār
As the skies conquered the gold-painted sun

In front of that fortress, that commander
Inflicted a humiliating defeat on the Frankish soldiers

Also written there, there was a great lord
ʻÖmer Beğ son of the Great Ṭurḫan Beğ[212]

As majestic as ʻAlī, as skilled as ʻOsmān
As awe-inspiring as ʻÖmer, as remarkable as Ṣıddīḳ

The place of honor was his in the assembly of the Shah
Such a high rank was his that even made the sky envious

ʻAlī Beğ trusted that brave man[213]
Who was close to that commander

It was he who took the whole land of Ṭırḥala
It was he who revived its cities and fortresses

[210] This seems to mean "no one like Malkoçoğlu."
[211] Evrenosoğlu Ahmed Bey (d. 1499) was the *sandjakbeyi* of Smederevo and the conqueror of Skadar (Iskenderija or İskenderiyye) and Kroja (Akçahisar), Olesnicki, *Mihajlo Szilágyi*, 13.
[212] Turahanoğlu Ömer Bey was the conqueror of Trikkala in Thessaly, and he disappeared without trace during an expedition in Egypt in 1488, Olesnicki, *Mihajlo Szilágyi*, 13.
[213] The meaning of this line is very unclear; therefore, I chose to render it like this.

May God make the heaven his last stop
Since he lit the candle of religion in that land

While Meryem was gazing at those images
Hear what image this temple displayed to her

As she saw the picture of ʻAlī Beğ
She marvelled at it like a church picture[214]

She said "Whose picture is this, o old man?
I wish to know to what kind of a man this painting belongs

"For among [all] the paintings this seems to be the most life-like
Among flowers this seems to be the blossoming rose

[The priest/monk] said, "This is the picture of Alī Beğ, o moon,
That both the slave and the shah wrote on the page of life

"They call him Mihaloğlu Alī Beğ
The world will remember him as long as it lasts

"A thousand wounds on the leopard are because of his arrow
A hundred fetters on the necks of captives because of his rope

"Fish in the sea tremble for fear of his dagger
Stars in the sky are frightened by his spear

"He collects soldiers, distributes flags to the chieftains
He goes now to Russia, then to Hungary

"In the end, he always defeats whomever he confronts
Above all his defeated enemies, there stands Mihāyıl (=Michael Szilágyi)

"Like the sun, he strikes every morning
This Tartar[215] has given the world to plunder

"His name is on everyone's lips
They have forgotten about Djem and Kay Kubad[216]

"More glorious than Kay Khusraw in his descent
Better known than Ḥātem[217] in munificence and generosity

"His forefather, having seen Muṣṭafā in a dream[218]

[214] "*Kelīsā naḳşı*": The only explicit expression for icon. See III.b.
[215] By referring to Ali Bey as a "Tartar," the monk emphasizes his being a destructive force.
[216] Djem (Cem) and Kay Kubad were ancient Persian kings.
[217] Ḥātem was a personality in Arab history who was proverbial for his generosity.
[218] "His forefather" refers to Köse Mihal, the earliest known ancestor of the Mihaloğlu family; and Mustafa is one of the names of the Prophet Muhammad.

He chose him, the Guide, as his ideal

"By his own will before 'Osman
He accepted the faith wholeheartedly

"Seven glorious generations followed him
Through their service, they increased the glory of the House of 'Osman

"Hear from me the story of this picture
Let me reveal to you its secret

"On a blessed day, in the morning
I was in the holy Jerusalem;

"As I was wandering in that sacred precinct, which delights one's heart,
Watering it with my abundant tears

"There arrived a stranger from the realm of the Unseen
Who came to dwell in the sacred precinct

"The star of bliss sparkling on his forehead
The pearl of nobility gleaming on his crown

"He was as wise as Bahman, a second Hippocrates;
Reputed for his ascetic discipline, wise in his words.

"As the sea of yearn was stirred
[My] heart was excited with the desire to meet him

"Although he was not familiar in appearance,
In truth [his identity] was evident.

"Only the cognizant who knows the truth[219] is a [true] acquaintance,
The rest are aliens; I have come to know that for sure.

"Do not consider him an acquaintance the one who is unaware of the truth,
Even if he happens to be, for instance, your father or mother.

"Such good fortune is sufficient for a wretched man abroad
To have a pure-hearted friend as his companion.[220]

"That's why the iris in the meadow is silent
Since she has no one to converse, no one to share her suffering.

We opened a gate into the cellar of knowledge;
We scattered many a ruby upon the world.

[219] "*Ḥaḳḳ*" ("truth") may also refer to God.
[220] "Companion": the word is "hem-derd," literally 'who shares one's suffering.'

Once we would recognize the divine attributes of God,
Then we would examine the manifestations on that subject.

Once we would express the mysteries of the Unicity of God,
Then the bird of thought would drop its feathers.

Once we would converse on astronomy,
Then on the nature of the skies.

We would find[221] the earth once as round, then as flat;
We would find the sky once as of brick, then as a flat surface.

Once we would relate the stories of kings,[222]
Then recount the holy men who staked their lives.[223]

He had a gilded image in his hand.
Like the sky, it would display the mirror of the sun.[224]

"He said to me, "O master of fraternity,[225]
"What is the true meaning of this image?

"Do you know what is named by this name,
"What is the meaning of this word, what is the import of this writing?

"The spell of what [hidden] treasures is this figure?[226]
"Which sun does this glittering moon reflect?

After this, the second monk begins to relate the story of Ali Bey's picture.

[221] "Find": literally "read."
[222] "Kings": "*selāṭīn*," literally 'sultans.'
[223] See ch. III.a.
[224] As I understand it, here, Ali Bey is like the sun, and the image is like the sky that contains the sun.
[225] "Master of fraternity": the expression is "*pīr-i ṭarīḳat*;" see III.a.
[226] "Figure": "peyker" means form, figure, face, countenance, portrait.