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A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF SARI SALTİK AS A HERO IN
SALTIKNÂME

MA Thesis in Late Antique, Medieval and Early Modern Studies

Central European University

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by

Ceren Çıkın Sungur

(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 Late Antique, Medieval and Early Modern Studies.

Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU.

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I, the undersigned, **Ceren Çıkın Sungur**, candidate for the MA degree in Late Antique, Medieval and Early Modern 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.

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to develop a fresh approach to *Saltıknâme*, the hagiographic and heroic narrative on the life and deeds of a thirteenth century warrior-saint Sarı Saltık, by directly focusing on the portrayal of the protagonist in the text, and analyzing the main characteristics which made him a hero. Searching for the reasons behind this portrayal and examining the possible connections with sixteenth century Ottoman politics is another goal of this thesis since the first completed edition of the text is dated from 1591/2. Thus, I aim to reveal the sixteenth century layer of *Saltıknâme* which is accepted in the scholarship as originally a fifteenth century text, although it is a highly edited text including many anachronic elements and anecdotes, and its original version is lost.

I argue that the manifestations of heroism which Sarı Saltık displayed in this text show that his portrayal, as well as the sixteenth century copy of *Saltıknâme* were reconstructions built in accordance to the Ottoman Sunnitization process conducted by the Ottoman state and ulama to serve the political needs of the Ottoman state in the sixteenth century. I also argue that *Saltıknâme* reflects the ongoing rivalries between the Ottomans, the Safavids, and the Habsburgs, and mirrors the apocalyptic atmosphere of the period with its anecdotes on shared prophecies across the Mediterranean, and millennial fears, and in response, includes soothing and encouraging messages to its audience against those concerns. Besides, in *Saltıknâme* Alid legacy is contested by the Hanafi-Sunni Ottoman ideology claiming that they are the “true” heirs of his heritage contrary to the Safavids.

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Introduction

Saltıknâme is a hagiographical heroic prose recounting the life and deeds of a popular saint who lived in 13th century Anatolia and the Balkans. Although Saltık is also known as a *gâzi*,¹ the few historical sources about his life do not confirm this, however they do confirm his sainthood. According to its author Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî² the narrative is a compilation of oral traditions written down on paper with the order and patronage of Prince Cem (1459-1495), the son of Mehmed II (r. 1451-1481). In the scholarship, based on the information given in the last page of the text, it is accepted that the compilation was started in 1473 and completed in 1480. Yet, the earliest complete manuscript copy used in secondary literature, including this thesis, bears the date 1591/2.³

Sarı Saltık's memory was honored by the interest of Bayezid II (r. 1481-1512) and Süleyman the Lawgiver (r. 1520-66), indicating his popularity in the 15th and 16th centuries. Already becoming a reputed Sufi when he was still alive, a cult had emerged from the memories of his life and deeds interwoven with local beliefs, legends of Christian saints, and mythical beings like al-Khidr, after his death (probably between 1293-7). Today in Anatolia and especially in certain places of the Balkans, where not only the Alevi-Bektashi⁴ tradition

¹ "One who undertakes a *ghazwa* [holy raid] particularly the leader of one; hence an honorary title for one who distinguishes himself in war against the unbelievers." "Ghazi," in *Encyclopedia of Islam, First Edition (1913-1936)*, ed. M. Th. Houtsma, T.W. Arnold, R. Basset, R. Hartmann. http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2214-871X_ei1_SIM_2466

² Şükrü Haluk Akalın, "Ebülhayr Rumi," *İslam Ansiklopedisi 10*, (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1994): 360-362.

³ Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi (TMSK), MS Hazine 1612. This earliest copy is 618 folios long in three volumes, yet a few pages are missing at the beginning. It was published in facsimile: Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî'nin Sözlü Rivayetlerden Topladığı Sarı Saltuk Menâkıbı (Saltuk - Name: The Legend of Sarı Saltuk Collected from Oral Tradition by Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî)*, (Part 1: folios 2a - 50b) to (Part 7: folios 551a - 619b), ed. Şinasi Tekin, Gönül Tekin and Fahir İz (Boston: The Department of Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations, Harvard University, 1974).

⁴ "The Bektâşiyye a Sufi order established in 15th century Anatolia by Balım Sultan (d. 1519) and named after Hacı Bektaş Veli (d. 1270), lay at the crossroads of several Muslim antinomian trends. Often depicted by Sunni clerics as heretical, the Bektâşiyye flourished among the Turkish nomadic tribes of Central Anatolia that originated in Azerbaijan and Iran." Thierry Zarcone, "Bektâşiyye," *Encyclopedia of Islam 3*, Leiden: Brill, 2014, 21-30, 21.

is widespread, but also amongst the Christians, he is still remembered and respected as a prominent character. A hero who protected both Muslims and Christians from various dangers like dragons, and a sacred performer of miracles, like providing spring waters with a strike with his staff to a rock. Thus, Sarı Saltık has long been a gripping research subject for scholars from various disciplines. However, those studies primarily aim to reveal the historical facts about Sarı Saltık and use *Saltıknâme* only for finding crumbs of truth about him. The anachronical elements in the text from the 15th and 16th centuries are mostly viewed as increasing *Saltıknâme*'s importance as a historical source. The studies on his legendary personality are far fewer. Although it is clear that there is a yawning gap between the historical information about Saltık's life and deeds and his portrait in *Saltıknâme*, there is no study dedicated solely to focusing on the whole portrayal of him and his personality in the narrative, analyzing it in the context of the period that the text was copied.

Thus, the main purpose of this thesis is a direct focus on the portrayal of Saltık in his hagiography to understand the reasons behind this portraiture to reach a fresh analysis and approach to *Saltıknâme*. Since the narrative is a heroic hagiography and Sarı Saltık is a heroic figure, a warrior-saint, I approach the text with a lens of heroization. By heroization I mean a process which begins with the emergence of a heroic cult around a person which is generally mixed with local elements, the memories of the earlier heroes, and literary motifs from several traditions. Thus, I concentrate on the manifestations of Saltık's heroism, determining the distinctive features and main characteristics which led to Saltık becoming a hero. Therefore, I do not ignore the anachronical elements in *Saltıknâme* and, on the contrary, question and use them to develop my arguments.

I argue that Saltık's heroism in *Saltıknâme* is an intentional recreation, reconstructed to serve the political needs of the Ottoman state and reflect the views of the Ottoman ulama and, to some extent, the political writers of the 16th century. I also show that *Saltıknâme*

mirrors the apocalyptic atmosphere of the 15th and 16th centuries, involving various prophecies, beliefs, fears and anxieties, and the soothing and encouraging messages given to its audience by divine figures being in the first place a saintly hero, Sarı Saltık.

In the first chapter I show how the portrayal of Sarı Saltık takes place in the middle of a transformational period between ‘the heroic age of Anatolia’ as Gottfried Hagen states, and ‘the age of confessionalization’ as Tijana Krstić names it, analyzing the phases of his heroization. Then, I take a concise look at the historical and legendary personalities of Saltık. In the second chapter, I present and analyze the main four manifestations of Saltık’s heroism and the apocalyptic elements in *Saltıknâme* in the context of their connections with the 15th and late 16th century Ottoman politics. Finally, in the third chapter, I present my eventual arguments on *Saltıknâme* as a literary, hagiographical, and ideological narrative. Thus, I hope to reveal mostly the 16th century layer of *Saltıknâme*, and ideological context of the text in its historical framework.

***Saltıknâme*, A General Overview**

Saltıknâme belongs to the same literary cycle of *Battalnâme*⁵ and *Danişmendnâme*,⁶ all named after their protagonists. *Battalnâme* is about the deeds of an Arab hero named Battal Gâzi who became famous in the wars between the Umayyad Dynasty and Byzantine in the 8th century.⁷ *Danişmendnâme* narrates the heroic deeds of another warrior, Danişmend Gâzi, who fought against Byzantine in 11th century Anatolia.⁸ These are accepted as 13th century texts, while *Saltıknâme* is regarded as a 15th century narrative. According to these

⁵ *Battalnâme*, Facsimile ed. Şinasi Tekin and Gönül Alpay Tekin with introduction, English translation, Turkish transcription, and commentary by Yorgos Dedes, 3 vols. (Harvard University, 1996).

⁶ *Danişmendnâme*, ed. Necati Demir, 4 volumes. (The Department of Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations Harvard University, Cambridge, 2002).

⁷ Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, “Battalname,” *İslam Ansiklopedisi* 5, (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, (1992): 206-208.

⁸ Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, “Danişmendname,” *İslam Ansiklopedisi* 8, (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, (1993): 478-480.

texts the protagonists are related to each other by blood. However, of course, there is no genealogical connection between them.⁹

The examples of this cycle are typically categorized as epic romances, while Hagen argues that “the saints of ‘popular’ hagiographies in the period between 13th and 16th centuries are in fact heroic figures, and that these hagiographies are part of the historical heroic literature.”¹⁰ Dedes identifies them as “Anatolian Turkish religious-heroic prose narratives”¹¹ which I prefer to apply, too.

There is no information about the author Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî except his own small notes at the end of the text. It can be surmised however, that he must have been connected to Edirne and its circles of warriors and Sufi communities, from which he orally gathered information about Sarı Saltık. In the third volume of the text, and in the last *menkıbe*, the author explains how he was charged to write *Saltıknâme* by Sultan Cem. Accordingly, Mehmed II (r. 1451-1481), before going on a campaign against Uzun Hasan of Aqqoyunlus, commissioned Sultan Cem to stay in Edirne and govern the city.

At that time, a white wolf appeared and hurt people [of Edirne?]. Many other wolfs joined him. The white wolf was the leader of those beasts. They killed people and cattle. Sultan Cem haunted him. He gathered soldiers and they killed the beast. Then Sultan Cem traveled and arrived in Tuna Baba. He visited [the shrine of] Baba and he asked about the features of Baba and listened the answers from his [shrine’s] disciples. He indicated [commissioned] to me the poor man; I was known by the name Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî. He ordered me to collect the stories of this saint wherever I find the true *menâkıb*, ask to dervishes [about him], and learn. Thus, by the command of Cem Sultan, I walked through the country wherever I heard his *menâkıb* I wrote them down, [then] put them in an order, made a book and completed it in seven years. I came into the Sultan’s presence and handed it over to him. Sultan Cem always made it read [aloud] and listened it. He did not listen to the stories of Hamza, instead, he always listened this story.¹²

⁹ For a comparative analysis of these narratives in terms of literary examination see: Meriç Kurtuluş, “Gazavatname Türünün Romans-Epikten Biyografiye Dönüşümü” [The Transformation of Gazavatname Genre from Epic-Romance to Biography] (Ph.D. diss., Bilkent Üniversitesi, Türk Edebiyatı Bölümü, 2015).

¹⁰ Gottfried Hagen, “Heroes and Saints in Early Ottoman Literature,” *Oriente Moderno, Nuova Serie LXXXIX*, 2 (Special issue *Studies on Islamic Legends*, ed. Giovanni Canova 2009); 349-361, 353.

¹¹ Dedes, *Battalname*, 2.

¹² Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 621.

This explanation seems somewhat legendary, just as with the stories of Sarı Saltık. Can it be a literary fabrication with the motif of a wolf, haunting and saving people from a beast just like Sarı Saltık, to heroize Sultan Cem? Or can this white (“ak” in Turkish) wolf be symbolizing Ak (white) Koyunlu Uzun Hasan who Sultan Cem’s father fought against? Perhaps, it was just an attempt to attribute a kind of mystical and mythical purpose to the author’s effort. Based on this passage, it has been deduced by scholars that Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî travelled in Anatolia and the Balkans and finished writing his work in 1480. I think that his claim is a question needs to be reconsidered by making further studies and focusing much on the components in the text.

Saltıknâme’s Editions

The earliest three-volume manuscript of *Saltıknâme* was copied around 1591/2.¹³ There are other editions of it. The Turkish National Library edition’s date is unknown. The one in Halil Nuri Bey Library was written in 1578 has only two volumes. The Istanbul University Library edition’s date is 1733 and has only 95 pages. None of the editions except the last one found by Necati Demir in 1863 is complete.¹⁴ Demir says that he found this only complete edition in a village called Sarısalkım, in Gaziantep Turkey.¹⁵ *Saltıknâme* has two transliterated versions. The first one was transliterated by Akalın and published between

¹³ Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi (TMSK), MS Hazine 1612. This earliest copy is 618 folios long in three volumes, yet a few pages are missing at the beginning. It was published in facsimile: Ebü’l-Hayr-iRûmî, *Ebü’l-Hayr-iRûmî’nin Sözlü Rivayetlerden Topladığı Sarı Saltuk Menâkıbı* (*Saltuk - Name: The Legend of Sarı Saltuk Collected from Oral Tradition by Ebu’l - Hayr Rumi*), (Part 1: folios 2a - 50b) to (Part 7: folios 551a - 619b), eds. Şinasi Tekin, Gönül Tekin and Fahir İz (Boston: The Department of Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations, Harvard University, 1974).

¹⁴ Şükrü Haluk Akalın, “Ebülhayr Rumi,” in *İslam Ansiklopedisi* 10 (1994: 360-362). <http://www.islamansiklopedisi.info/dia/pdf/c10/c100351.pdf>

¹⁵ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî. *Saltıknâme, Saltık Gazi Destanı*. trans. Necati Demir, V.1 – V.4 (İstanbul: UKİD Kültür Yayınları, Alioğlu Yayınevi, 2013).

1987-1990¹⁶, and the second transliteration was done by Demir. Demir's transliteration is also based on the Topkapı Edition, with an additional first five pages from Demir's own edition of 1863. In this study Demir's transliteration was primarily used, however I also referred to Akalın's transliteration where necessary.

Contents

The first pages of *Saltıknâme* cover the origins of Sarı Saltık, his family and lineage, his relationships with Prophet Mohammed, Ali ibn Abu Talip, and Battal Gâzi, and his motives to be a holy warrior. The Topkapı Palace edition starts with the dream of Battal Gâzi and continues to relate Battal's martyrdom as predicted by Prophet Muhammed. Then the author says: "His stories that survived are written in the book about him."¹⁷ There are fourteen stories in the first volume, nine stories in the second one, and nineteen stories in the last volume of the text.

It can be said that the copyist(s) of *Saltıknâme* showed some effort to organize the text more or less in a chronological order, however, the timeline follows primarily the lifetime of Saltık not the historical facts. The first volume of the narrative seems to include memories, anecdotes, and the oral tradition of the 13th-14th centuries while the second volume reflects much more from the 15th-16th centuries. As for the third volume, Saltık is not the protagonist in the *menkıbes* (hagiographic tale) as they discuss events of the fifteenth century which occurred after his martyrdom. Instead, the incidents after the death of Saltık discuss the infidels who take advantage of his inexistence, and how Saltık goes on helping the Muslims as a late saint and thus a member of the "invisible army." In the eighteenth *menkıbe*, there again is only a brief reference to the last days of Saltık, while the whole

¹⁶ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî. *Saltıknâme I, II, III*. ed. trans. Şükrü Halûk Akalın (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları: 1987-90).

¹⁷ "Baki hikayeti kitabında malumdur." Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 39.

menkıbe is about some Tartar Khan whose name is unknown. In the nineteenth and last *menkıbe* of the third volume, Saltık appears in the dreams of Sultan Murad I, and Sultan Mehmed II, again as a late soul, and the narrative closes with the conquest of Constantinople.

The Hanafi-Sunni emphasis and thus the relevant literary interventions to the text begin as early as the second *menkıbe* of the first volume and shows itself in the form of a fatwa issued by Saltık declaring that Hanafî madhab as the most righteous one. Thus, the main terms of Hanafi-Sunni terminology such as *Râfızî*, *mülhid*, *ilhad*, *Hâricî* etc., spread all over the text from then on. Likewise, beginning from the second *menkıbe* to the end of the text, the words Sunni and Muslim are substituted for each other, as if they hold exactly the same meaning.

The *menkıbes* in the narrative can roughly be grouped into two categories, the ones which have some historical essence -Ocak argues that these kind of stories are related to the real life of Sarı Saltık¹⁸- and the ones which are totally legendary. However, historical, and legendary elements are intertwined and sometimes cannot be separated from each other. The historical group mention some facts such as the Bâbâ Revolt, the conflicts between the Mongols and Abbasid Caliphate, the Turks' crossing to Rumelia, and conquests in Anatolia, wars with the Byzantine *tekfurs*, and several events occurring in Seljukids era; real places like India, Abyssinia, Arabia, Egypt, Crimea, Poland, Turkestan, and historical figures such as Genghis Khan, Nasreddin Hodja, Mevlana, Bayezid I, Emir Timur are also referred to. There are also striking anecdotes involving Osman I and Gâzi Umur of Aydın, Turkic begs of 13th century Anatolia, and Sarı Saltık advices them on governing justly and on *gazâ*. The legendary group of *menkıbes* involve legendary places like Mount Kaf, the land of the genies, and Shahmaran, mythical creatures like the bird of Kaknüs, Rad the witch, Menüçher the

¹⁸ Ocak, *Sarı Saltık*, 9.

genie, and Al-Khidr, and many other extraordinary and supernatural beasts like witches, giants, dragons, which Saltık fights against.

Literature Review

The literature on Sarı Saltık and *Saltıknâme* can be categorized roughly into two main areas: studies aiming to discover the facts about Sarı Saltık's historical personality and studies mainly focusing on analyzing *Saltıknâme* with or without the same aim. This first group can also be classified based on whether or not used *Saltıknâme* as a source -since until 1936, the year which Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı (1900-1982) introduced and used *Saltıknâme*, no study could give any reference to this text. The second group can simply be seen as texts which mainly focus on analyzing *Saltıknâme* for historical, folkloric or literary purposes, regardless of whether they also aim to understand the historical Saltık or not. I identify it as such since these studies are stunningly quite scarce. Thus, I try to organize and review this part of the thesis in a chronological and categorical order at the same time. I intend to show the scholarly progress in the field, shifts in dissection practices and research trends due to several studies published in different years. I will be selective as much as I can, emphasizing the gaps in the field and state my arguments when necessary. I also try to show the gaps in the field.

From the 13th century onwards, stories about Saltık's life and deeds were circulating both in oral and written literature in Anatolia, and the Balkans. Many shrines attributed to him in the Balkans have still been visiting for religious reasons both by the Christians and the Muslims alike had raised the first modern questions about him. This first group of studies primarily concentrate on the facts about Sarı Saltık. They also deal with the lodges and maqams of him, his relation to Bektashism, the role he played in the Islamization of the

Balkans, and show an interest in information about his leadership of a migration from Anatolia to Dobrudja in around the 1260s. His religious identity as to whether he was a devoted Sunni fighting for Islam or a non-Sunni, Shi'ite or heterodox dervish or even a Christian disguised as a Muslim is another aspect that various scholars pay attention to.

The first time that *Saltıknâme* was mentioned in a scholarly work, as far as we know, was in 1891¹⁹ by the first Russian Turkologist to focus on the Ottoman history²⁰ named Vasiliy Dmitrievich Smirnov (1846-1922).²¹ We learn from Köprülü that this work bears the title *Menâkıb-ı Gazavât-ı Sultan Sarı Saltık Gâzi*. Since all known copies of the text are referred to as *Saltıknâme*, this information brings one's mind the question of whether this is another copy or compilation that has not been reached or discovered by anyone other than Smirnov yet or not.²² Of all the scholars work on Sarı Saltık and *Saltıknâme*, only two of them paid attention to this detail and touched upon it in their studies. Fahir İz says that he was unable to access this copy which was possibly somewhere in the Soviet Union of the time, thus it is understood that he accepts the existence of it.²³ Kemal Yüce, too, accepts its

¹⁹ Fuat Köprülü, "Anadolu Selçukluları tarihinin yerli kaynakları," *Belleten* 27 (1943): 431. The English version of this work is: Fuat Köprülü, *The Seljuks of Anatolia: Their History and Culture According to Local Muslim Sources*, trans. Gary Leiser (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1992). This work is *Oçerk istorii tureçkoy literature in Korsh, Veseobshchaja* (St. Petersburg 1891).

²⁰ İsmail Türkoğlu, "Vasily Dmitrievich Smirnov," *DİA*. <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/smirnov-vasily-dmitrievic> In this article there is no reference to this copy of *Saltıknâme* was first mentioned by Smirnov.

²¹ Liaisan Şahin, "Russian Turkology: From Past to Present," *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi* 8, 15 (2010): 591-644, 606, footnote 86: "Vasily Dmitrievich Smirnov (1846-1922), the student of V. V. Grigoriev and I. N. Berezin. Graduated from St. Petersburg University in 1870. In 1873 received his master's degree, submitting the dissertation Kuchubei Gumurdzhinskii and Other Ottoman Writers of the Seventeenth Century on Causes of Turkey's Decline (published in 1873 in St. Petersburg). In 1875, made his first journey to Turkey. In 1887 received his doctorate degree submitting the dissertation Crimean Khanate under the Ottoman Domination until the Beginning of the Eighteenth Century (St. Petersburg, 1887). The author of many important works on Turkish literature and history such as Crimean Khanate under the Ottoman Domination During the Eighteenth Century (Odessa, 1889), Exemplary Works of Ottoman Literature and Essays on the History of Turkish Literature (St. Petersburg, 1891), Catalogue of Turkish Manuscripts in the Library of the Educational Branch of Eastern Languages of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and others."

²² There is a study in German by Carl Brockelmann bearing the title "Menâkıb-i Gazavât-i Sultan Sarı Saltık Gâzi", however, although most of the scholars include it in their bibliographies none of them has mentioned it in detail or given an analysis of it. I also could not reach any information about it except its name. The bibliographical reference is: Carl Brockelmann, "Das Altosmanische Volksbuch: Menâkıb-i Gazavât-i Sultan Sarı Saltık Gâzi", *MA*, II/2 (1950).

²³ Fahir İz, "Saltuk-nâme", *TTK Bildiriler* 11-15 Ekim 1976, VIII V. 2 (1981): 971-977, 971. "Şimdi Sovyetler Birliği'nde bulunması muhtemel olan bu yazmayı tesbit etmek yazık ki mümkün olmadı."

presence and notes that it has not been introduced to the scholarship yet, and it is not known where the copy is.²⁴ Smirnov's view on *Saltuknâme* has never been examined except by Köprülü. In a footnote he cites Smirnov's notions that:

Another Ottoman epic poem, one which was not as well known among the people, was called *Menkabe-i Gazavat-i Sultan Sari Saltuk Gâzi*. This *manaqib* work belongs to that important period of Turkish history when the Turks were settling in Europe. This work has exactly the same characteristics as the *Battalname* with respect to literary style and the description of places, events, qualities of heroes, and their legends. Motifs found in this work are also found among the *manaqibs* concerning Christian saints: for example, the legend of St. George's defeat of the 'maiden-eating dragon.' The fact that such elements are found in the Ottoman epic legends could be explained as the result of borrowings from the local Greeks.²⁵

As for the Ottoman lands, Sarı Saltık was first mentioned in 1898 by Şemseddin Sami in his *Kâmusü'l-A'lâm*.²⁶ But the primal study on Sarı Saltık's legendary and historical personality was done by Köprülü in 1918 in his *Early Mystics in Turkish Literature*.²⁷ In this work, aiming to show the religious and literary landscape of Anatolia before Yunus Emre, Köprülü gave a reasonable prominence to Sarı Saltık by piecing together the information on all the known sources until that day about him: the *menâkıb* that Evliyâ Çelebi compiled in the Balkans and recorded in 17th century in his *Seyahatnâme*²⁸, the legendary tales that connect Saltık with Hacı Bektaş and Ahmed Yesevi in *Vilayetnâme-i Hacı Bektâş-ı Veli*²⁹ -written down probably between 1481-1501, nearly the same years that *Saltuknâme* was written, and the information given by historians Yazıcızâde, and Kemalpaşazâde about the migration where Saltık took lead of various Turkoman tribes from Anatolia to Dobrudja. Köprülü's primary focus was the relationship of Saltık to Bektashism, and he compared the first two

²⁴ Kemal Yüce, *Saltuknâme'de Tarihi, Dini ve Efsanevi Unsurlar* (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1987).

²⁵ Köprülü, *The Seljuks of Anatolia*, 110, footnote 85.

²⁶ Ocak, *Sarı Saltık*, 12.

²⁷ This work was first published in Ottoman Turkish in 1918: *Türk Edebiyatında İlk Mutasavvıflar* (İstanbul: Matbaa-yi Amire, 1918).

²⁸ Köprülü, *The Seljuks of Anatolia*, 82, footnote 85.

²⁹ Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, "Hacı Bektaş Vilâyetnâmesi." <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/haci-bektas-vilayetnamesi>

sources with the latter ones. He said that Bektashi tradition, even though it “is always completely contrary to the historical facts”³⁰, indicates a connection between Sarı Saltık and Hacı Bektaş, which historical sources do not support. He concluded that the legend of Sarı Saltık in the first two sources, just like the other legends about Yunus Emre, Sayyid Mahmud Hairani and Mawlana, is one of the evidences of a Bektashi practice of “taking over traditions that already existed among the people and inserting Hacı Bektaş into them” to make them familiar for the eyes of the local people, so that they could more easily convert to Islam.³¹

Another influential scholar in the field was F. W. Hasluck (1878-1920) whose articles from 1918-19³² centered mainly around the Bektashi belief and traditions which were translated into Turkish, published in 1928³³ with a foreword by Köprülü. Hasluck’s main question about Saltık was why the local Christians of the Balkans respected his cult just as the Muslim population did. He left his mark on the field with the conclusions that the legendary stories of St. Nicholas, St. George and St. Elias in the Balkans, partly because of the intentional propagandist efforts of Bektashi dervishes to motivate *gâzis* for further conquests in the region, had intertwined with each other. Similarly, Bektashi propaganda is the answer as to why Sarı Saltık became known as a Bektashi dervish beginning from 15th century. Thanks to his wife, nine years after his premature death, his studies were gathered and published.³⁴ The section devoted to Sarı Saltık in the second volume is a slightly more detailed version of this article, and Hasluck’s conclusions where he continued to argue that Bektashis adopted Saltık as one of them and portrayed him as one of their *vilayetnâmes*.

³⁰ Köprülü, *Early Mystics*, 54, footnote 68.

³¹ Köprülü, *Early Mystics*, 35-37. It is interesting that Köprülü did not give any reference to Hasluck’s studies which suggesting nearly the same conclusions and done between 1911-1919.

³² F. W. Hasluck, *Annual of the British School at Athens* XXIII, Athens 1918-19.

³³ On Köprülü’s initiation, ten of these articles translated by Râgıb Hulûsi and published in Ottoman Turkish in İstanbul. Its newest version is:

³⁴ W. F. Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans*, v. 1 – 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929).

On the other hand, it seems that for Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, “adoption” was not quite the heart of the matter. In his 1936 work³⁵, mainly on the life and poetry of Yunus Emre, he was certain that Hacı Bektaş, as the successor (caliph) of Baba İshak, had gathered the *Bâtınîs* -known as *Abdalân*, *Tâife-i Cevâlika*, *Işık*- together and “spread Babaism under the name of Bektashism.”³⁶ He was also convinced that Sarı Saltık was a *Bâtınî alp-eren*,³⁷ and that there was a historical and religious connection between him and Hacı Bektaş: “In sum, Sarı Saltık is a historical personality who was contemporaneous with Hacı Bektaş, and Saltık was one of his successors.”³⁸ Gölpınarlı showed interest in Sarı Saltık and *Saltıknâme* for one reasons: the connection between Hacı Bektaş, Yunus Emre, Sarı Saltık, Tapduk Emre, and Barak Baba since the last three were mentioned in Yunus’s poetry.³⁹ He concluded that Hacı Bektaş had sent Yunus to Tapduk Emre, and Tapduk’s sheikh was Barak Baba who was one of the successors of Sarı Saltık. Secondly, while his book was undergoing the publishing process, he was informed by the Ottoman historian İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı (1888-1977) that in the Topkapı Palace Library a copy of *Saltıknâme* could be found. Thus, Gölpınarlı examined it, and placed his analysis⁴⁰ -the first in the scholarship- as an addition to his book with the title “Saltuk’s Relationship with Tapduk According to *Saltıknâme*”, and

³⁵ Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, *Yunus Emre, Hayatı* (İstanbul: Bozkurt Basımevi, 1936).

³⁶ Gölpınarlı, *Yunus Emre*, 6. It is not clear whether Gölpınarlı argued that Hacı Bektaş himself founded Bektashism to gather all *Bâbâîs/Bâtınîs* together or he meant that it was a natural process developed spontaneously. He argued that: “... in early times, the [Bâtınî/Bâbâî] groups known as Abdalân, Cevâlika etc. cannot be distinguished from each other in terms of appearance, manners, and doctrines. In the course of time, despite nearly identical in the sense of religious doctrines and conventions they became dissimilar with regard to appearance and manners, and finally all of these groups disappeared and Bektashism remained until recently. I regard Baba İlyas, Baba İshak, and his peculiar caliph Hacı Bektaş as the absolute representatives of Cevâlika in their times.” “..gerek zahiri ahval gerek akide itibariyle aynı olan ve Abdalan, Cevalika adlarıyla anılan bu zümreleri ilk zamanlarda ayırma imkanı yoktur. Zaman geçince bunlar, akide ve hatta erkan itibariyle yine birbirlerinden adeta farksız oldukları halde zahiri eşkal ve ahval dolayısıyla ayrılmaya başlamışlar nihayet hepsi ortadan kalkarak Bektaşilik son zamanlara kadar kalmıştır. Gerek Baba İlyas’ı gerek Baba İshak’ı ve onun halife-i hassı HBV’yi zamanlarında bütün bu Batini zümrelerin tek tabirle Cevalikanın mümessili olarak görmekteyiz.” *Yunus Emre*, 10.

³⁷ See Gölpınarlı’s analysis on Sarı Saltık’s historical and religious personality: *Yunus Emre*, 29-49.

³⁸ “Hülâsa Sarı Saltık, Hacı Bektaş ile muasır tarihi bir şahsiyettir ve onun halifelerindendir.” Gölpınarlı, *Yunus Emre*, 35.

³⁹ “Yunus’a Tapduğ u Saltuğ u Barak’tandır nasib, Çün gönülden cûş kıldı ben nice pinhân olam.” Gölpınarlı, *Yunus Emre*, 54.

⁴⁰ This analysis takes place between the pages 253-270, but it does not exist in the last version of Gölpınarlı’s work: *Yunus Emre, Hayatı ve Eserleri* (İstanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2006).

this work has inspired all the following studies. Accordingly, he estimated the birth of the hagiographical stories about Sarı Saltık to be around the 12-13th centuries and dated the compilation and writing of the text as between 1473-1480 based on the information provided by the text's original author. However, Gölpınarlı pointed out that there were references to Bayezid II (r. 1481-1512) and Selim I (r. 1512-1520) in the text and thus the Topkapı manuscript is a copy of the original manuscript, edited by the author himself or other copyists.⁴¹ He also identified the similarities and established a sequential continuity between *Hamzanâme*, *Ebumüslimnâme*, *Battalnâme* and *Danişmendnâme* in terms of their contents, themes, and literary style. He described *Saltıknâme* as an addendum to *Battalnâme* and *Danişmendnâme*. The Sunni-Hanafi tone of the text and the many anachronical references to *Râfızîs*⁴² and Saltık's wars with did not however, catch Gölpınarlı's eyes. According to him it is because of the hearsayers' hypocrisy or simply that the author was a devoted Sunni. On the other hand, he also noticed the Shi'ite practices attributed to Saltık such as wearing the red-green headgear, and in Muharram wearing black clothes, fasting, cooking ashoura, and grieving. He noticed the close relationship between Saltık and rulers like Osman Gâzi and Gâzi Umur, the oft-repeated positive emphasis on Turkishness and mentions of Saltık's love of a young boy named Yusuf for the first and the last time. Bar Gölpınarlı No one has ever regarded this relationship as a love story or given any reference to it until today.

Köprülü's examination of *Saltıknâme* appeared in his study on the Muslim sources of Anatolian Seljuks, dated 1943.⁴³ He took up where Gölpınarlı left off the analysis, and his arguments regarding its author, as well as the compiling and writing process began to

⁴¹ But he never mentioned a date as 1000/1590-1. It is Köprülü who identified the date of the copied version as such. Köprülü, *The Seljuks of Anatolia*, 44.

⁴² The word "Râfızî" derives from the root "rafz" meaning to leave, abandon, and it means a person or a group who has left the group or gave up an idea. After the period of rashidun caliphate (632-661) this word used as a term to depict the Shiite groups rejected the caliphate of the first three caliphs. Mustafa Öz, "Râfızîler," *İslam Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2007), 34.

⁴³ Fuad Köprülü. *The Seljuks of Anatolia: Their History and Culture According to Local Muslim Sources*. trans. Gary Leiser, Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1992, 43-52. The original work is "Anadolu Selçukluları Tarihinin Yerli Kaynakları", *Belleten*, 25-27, 1943.

dominate the scholarship. Nearly all the arguments, deductions, and outlines regarding *Saltıknâme* and the historical Sarı Saltık still circulating today in the field where it seems, first proposed by Köprülü. He dated the text to the 15th century, like Gölpınarlı, and categorized it as “the third work in the cycle of popular epic stories about the heroic *ghazis* of Anatolia”⁴⁴ which *Danışmendnâme* and *Battalnâme* belong to. He argued that these popular epic stories like *Saltıknâme* can be used as historical sources as well as literary, religious sources for the history of Medieval Anatolia, but only when used with utmost care. On the other hand, although “Ideologically, it is impossible to distinguish him from Battal or Danishmend Ghazi”⁴⁵ *Saltıknâme* with its “genuine historical elements are much richer than those in the *Battalnâme* and *Danışmendnâme*.”⁴⁶ Indeed, it is clear that the narrative belongs to the literary cycle of these texts, however, neither ideologically nor legendarily Sarı Saltık in *Saltıknâme* is not a simple rewriting of Battal Gâzi or Danışmend Gâzi. What makes it possible to ideologically distinguish Sarı Saltık from them is firstly his sainthood (*velâyet*), and secondly the additions of the 16th century copyists to the text in accordance with the Ottoman claims and politics of the era, something which I show in the sub-chapters of this thesis.

Regarding the author Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, Köprülü concluded that the author may not have travelled for seven years, or to as many regions as he claimed, to compile the stories about the hero. He was not an artist in literary terms, and clearly confused some information as the work lacks a clear chronological ordering.⁴⁷ But Köprülü was firmly certain about Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî's use of some written sources -especially *Danışmendnâme*, *Battalnâme*

⁴⁴ Köprülü, *The Seljuks of Anatolia*, 43, and 45.

⁴⁵ Köprülü, *The Seljuks of Anatolia*, 45.

⁴⁶ He says: “A great many historical events, such as the thirteenth-century struggles of the Anatolian Seljuks and beyliks with the Mongols, Byzantines, and other Westerners; the insurrection of the Baba'is; the relations of the Golden Horde with the West and Byzantium and its actions in the Balkans; the struggles of Umur with the Christians of the West in the fourteenth century and finally the establishment of the Ottoman state are reflected in this work.” Köprülü, *The Seljuks of Anatolia*, 48.

⁴⁷ Köprülü, *The Seljuks of Anatolia*, 44.

and Bektashi *vilayetnâmes* - to create and construct *Saltıknâme* as the last example of the cycle, mixed with legends that were still alive amongst the *gâzis* of Rumelia, though he apparently was “lacking in literary taste and artistic ability.”⁴⁸ Köprülü claimed that the narrative resembles that of the first anonymous Ottoman chronicles as well as Ahmedî’s *İskendernâme*, Enveri’s *Düsturnâme*, and Aşıkpaşazâde’s history. Thus, it reflects the popular imagination and the traditions of *gâzis* lived in the *ucs*. However, neither he, nor most other scholars who have studied *Saltıknâme*, considered the possibility that these works can also be amongst the contributing written sources of *Saltıknâme*. In this vein, no comparative study comparing the information or style between these sources has been conducted.⁴⁹ The limitations of this thesis do not allow me to display such an effort, however, I suggest that the aforementioned texts can also be reviewed and compared to *Saltıknâme* if one aims to explore all the possible written sources of it.⁵⁰

There was a significant scholarly debate which occurred in 1952-53 between Ökiç and Yörükan around the historical and religious identity of Sarı Saltık, based on a fatwa supposedly given by shaykh al-Islam Ebussuûd Efendi (d. 1574) in 1538 on the question of Süleyman the Lawgiver, who while traveling to Wallachia (Boğdan) for a military campaign, visited Saltık’s shrine in Babadağ, and became curious about the stories he heard about him. Ebussuûd’s answer is still a matter of debate in the scholarship: “He was a monk who became a skeleton because of his abstemiousness.”⁵¹ Ökiç finds this answer “unfair” and argues that Ebussuûd’s opposition and hostility against Sufism comes as a result of Sufis’ improper practices violating Sunni Islam. Ökiç believes that Sarı Saltık was a devoted Hanafi-Sunni, just as *Saltıknâme* says, “an honorable hero and missionary of Islam”⁵², although he admits

⁴⁸ Köprülü, *The Seljuks of Anatolia*, 44.

⁴⁹ Köprülü, *The Seljuks of Anatolia*, 48-49.

⁵⁰ Such as the anecdotes on Gazi Umur in *Saltıknâme* can be studied comparatively with *Düsturnâme*.

⁵¹ Ökiç, “Sarı Saltık’a Ait Bir Fetva”, 56. “Riyazet ile kadid olmuş bir keşiştir.”

⁵² Ökiç, “Sarı Saltık’a Ait Bir Fetva”, 48-49.

that there is no historical evidence to prove it. He takes Saltık's figthings against "all the heterodox communities" in *Saltıknâme* as a fact, and the views arguing that the religious stories about him were mixed with the stories of Christian saints as a "slander."⁵³ Moreover, Ökiç claimed that Saltık had in mind a "project" aiming to convert all the Slavs to Islam but could not complete it in his lifetime and "entrusted it to the next generations."⁵⁴ Yörükan is quite a critic on the authenticity of this fatwa and the problem of Sarı Saltık's historical personality as a missionary of Islam. According to him, the fatwa is fake, and it is only the interpretation of some historians that the reason why various sheiks and dervishes like Saltık settled in Crimea and the Balkans was spreading Islam in these regions.⁵⁵ A number of hagiographical narratives including *Saltıknâme* "appeal to the people [who] lived in the age of legends" who did not have the abilities to establish cause and effect relations. Without understanding the circumstances of this era "it is not possible to accept that the *erens* [dervishes] of Khorasan were gâzi-fighters, a legend was a conquest project [of Sarı Saltık], the *babas* as missionaries of Islam, and a tale as a political will."⁵⁶ Indeed, Ökiç, without attempting any historical or literally analysis of *Saltıknâme*, seems to regard the image of Sarı Saltık as portrayed in *Saltıknâme* as the reflection of truth with only some simple changes. On the other hand, Yörükan ignores some historical sources on these matters. Nevertheless, despite Ocak thinks that Ökiç enriches his position with his second article⁵⁷ on this discussion, most of Yörükan's suspicions seem more reasonable in the face of Ökiç's assumptions.

⁵³ Ökiç, "Sarı Saltuk'a Ait Bir Fetva", 57.

⁵⁴ Ökiç, "Sarı Saltuk'a Ait Bir Fetva", 53.

⁵⁵ Yusuf Ziya Yörükan, "Bir Fetva Münasebetiyle, Fetva Müessesesi, *Ebussuûd Efendi ve Sarı Saltuk*," *AÜİFD*, 1/2 (1952): 137-150.

⁵⁶ Yörükan, "Bir Fetva Münasebetiyle," 155.

⁵⁷ M. Tayyib Ökiç, "Bir Tenkidin Tenkidi," *AÜİFD*, II/2-3 (1953): 219-290.

Adnan Erzi benefits from the *Saltıknâme* as a source, first for the Battle of Varna (1444)⁵⁸, and secondly and for the history of Aqqoyunlu and Karakoyunlu beyliks.⁵⁹ The most noteworthy finding he distinguishes is the similarity between Sarı Saltık's respectful words towards Osman Gâzi in *Saltıknâme*, which apparently justify his bloodline's reign as the dynasty who deserves to rule, and the sentences of the same kind for Kayı lineage in *The Book of Dede Korkut*.⁶⁰ Erzi does not claim an obvious intertextuality between these sources, however, he gives a hint for the future studies. These words of Sarı Saltık to Osman Gâzi, namely the advice on just and righteous rule, were interpreted as "a reflection of the early concept of state of the Ottomans", namely an adoption of a wider concept called 'circle of justice' by İnalcık.⁶¹ It seems to be a romantic assumption excluding the political circumstances of 15th century -as most historians accept as the date the original *Saltıknâme* was compiled and written down- and also of the late 16th century, the first known manuscript of the narrative was written down. I argue that these sayings in the form of advice which were extracted from Sarı Saltık's mouth by the author serve as an attempt to legitimate the Ottoman state.

In 1974 the first facsimile edition of the Topkapı manuscript was published.⁶² It is hard to say that it sufficiently enhanced and revived the studies on *Saltıknâme*, nevertheless various scholars contributed to the scholarship with important and influential works, though few in number. From this date onwards, the increasing interest of literary historians to the text can easily be observed, something which would not repeat until the first quarter of the

⁵⁸ Adnan Erzi, "Türkiye Kütüphanelerinden Notlar ve Vesikalar II," *Belleten* 56 (1950): 595-647.

⁵⁹ Adnan Erzi, "Akkoyunlu ve Karakoyunlu Tarihi Hakkında Araştırmalar," *Belleten* 70 (1954): 179-221.

⁶⁰ Erzi, "Akkoyunlu ve Karakoyunlu," 202.

⁶¹ Halil İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire The Classical Age 1300-1600* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1973), 70.

⁶² Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltuk - Name: The Legend of Sarı Saltuk Collected from Oral Tradition by Ebu'l - Hayr Rumi*, (Part 1: folios 2a - 50b) to (Part 7: folios 551a - 619b), tıpkıbasım-tenkitli değerlendirme-üslup incelemesi-dizin = text in facsimile with a critical and stylistic analysis and index by Fahir İz (ed. Şinasi Tekin, Gönül Alpay Tekin), The Department of Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations, (New York: Harvard University, 1974).

2000s. Müjgan Cunbur, announces in her article that she has found and identified a second manuscript of *Saltıknâme* in the National Library, giving detailed examinations of both the Topkapı and National Library editions. Comparing these texts, she concludes that they have the same contents except a few differences of words, and some missing sentences. Cunbur also argues that the organization of *Saltıknâme* itself as a three volumed narrative is also highly edited in terms of its stylistic structure.⁶³

Two years after the facsimile edition, İz presented a paper on *Saltıknâme*.⁶⁴ İz found its language simple and its style literary glide and based entirely on the colloquial language of the 15th century. İz argues that *Saltıknâme* resembles *The Book of Dede Korkut*, and the early Ottoman chronicles such as Aşıkpaşazade's *Tevârih*.⁶⁵ As for its contents, he says historical records are so knitted up with legends, epopes, and religious hearsays that even the names of historical personalities, and geographical regions cannot easily and definitively be validated. Just like Köprülü, İz argues that the narrative must also have some written sources. He thinks that the author "Ebu'l-Hayr-ı Rûmî added various written pieces to his book which had already been arranged"⁶⁶ long before he wrote *Saltıknâme*.

In 1987, the year which the first volume of the first transliteration of *Saltıknâme* by Şükrü Haluk Akalın was published,⁶⁷ Kemal Yüce published the most comprehensive analysis of *Saltıknâme*, examining the text both in historical and folkloric terms.⁶⁸ This work still maintains its unique characteristics in many aspects. Yüce not only focused on the historical and legendary personality of Sarı Saltık but also identified the adaptations and inspirations from Islamic texts and tradition in the narrative. Yüce rightfully states that the

⁶³ Müjgan Cunbur, "Saltuk-Name'nin Tıpkı Basımı ve İkinci Yazma Nüshası Üzerine," *Türk Folkloru Araştırma Yıllığı Belleten* (1975): 55-65.

⁶⁴ Fahir İz, "Saltuk-nâme", *TTK Bildiriler*, 11-15 Ekim 1976, VIII (1981): 971-977, 972.

⁶⁵ İz, "Saltuk-nâme," 976.

⁶⁶ İz, "Saltuk-nâme," 972.

⁶⁷ Ebu'l-Hayr-ı Rûmî, *Saltıknâme I-III*, trans. Şükrü Haluk Akalın (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1987-90).

⁶⁸ Yüce, *Saltıknâme'de Tarihi*, 1987.

image and memories of Sarı Saltık transformed dramatically in time and distinguishes the Sunni tone of the narrative. However, his only explanation to this phenomenon is that “Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî was quite aware of the religious politics that the Ottoman dynasty followed, thus he added a Sunni character to his work.”⁶⁹ He does not analyze this Sunni character of the text or the remaining anachronical ingredients of *Saltıknâme* in the context of the historical or political circumstances the manuscript was copied. It is another gap I aim to fill.

Akalın wrote several articles on the narrative, all of which have nearly the same contents. Akalın seems to have no doubt about the story that the author narrates on how he began to compile the *menâkıb*, and his commitment to recording these anecdotes. He does not ignore the possibility that the author may have used several written sources to create his work, but he argues that these must have been the alleged other records claimed to be written while Saltık was still alive. Contrary to Köprülü and İz, Akalın argues that “Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî must have been a prominent man of culture and art” because “he was entrusted with the task of compiling and writing down *Saltıknâme* by Sultan Cem.”⁷⁰ But he also describes *Saltıknâme* as a simple prose based on colloquial language, and written in an unsophisticated style. It seems somewhat incoherent. However, he explains this by arguing that the author’s intended audience was the common people. However, this contradicts the explanation the author gave in the text that Akalın accepts as true. The author wrote that Sultan Cem himself was consistently reading or listening to *Saltıknâme* much more than he read or listened to any other narrative. Whilst this does not show that the text was not read or listened to also by common people, it does present the idea that it may well have been read in the Ottoman elite circles. Besides, there are strong doubts in the field on the popularity of *Saltıknâme* since it is a three-volume narrative with the scarce number of its copies. The claim that the

⁶⁹ Yüce, *Saltıknâme’de Tarihi*, 11.

⁷⁰ Şükrü Haluk Akalın, “Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî’nin Saltuk-Nâme’si,” *Türk Dili Araştırmaları Yıllığı Belleten* 40 (1995): 37-59.

audience of *Saltıknâme* was common people is nothing but an assumption which one can find very few hints in the text to prove as such.

Between the 1970s and 1990s, plenty of studies center on the relations between the lodges and shrines of Sarı Saltık in the Balkans, his acts converting the local people to Islam, and the establishment of Bektashi order. The leading researches of this kind were conducted by Machiel Kiel⁷¹ and Thierry Zarcone.⁷² The most relevant conclusion they share is that Sarı Saltık's activities as a missionary of Islam later paved the way for the foundation of the Bektashi order in the Balkans, which was originally a Balkan institution.

In the 1990s, historians developed a renewed interest in religious-heroic narratives written in vernacular Turkish between the 13th and 15th centuries. The primary reason for this restored enthusiasm was a regenerated debate in Ottoman historiography: the *gazâ* thesis first formulated by Paul Wittek.⁷³ How *gazâ* ideology functioned in and for the foundation of the early Ottoman state was the main question to be solved in this debate. The scarcity of early sources lead historians to consult to these narratives to reach a clearer understanding of what *gazâ* meant to the early Ottomans, and for the people lived especially in the frontiers (*uc*). Most of the leading critics of this thesis concluded that the nature of the early Ottoman

⁷¹ Machiel Kiel, "The Türbe of Sarı Saltık at Babadag-Dobrudja, Brief historical and architectonical notes," *Güneydoğu Avrupa Araştırmaları Dergisi* 6-7 (1977-8): 205-225; "Güney Romanya'da Sarı Saltık'ın Çalışmaları ve Doğu Bulgaristan'da erken Bektaşilik Merkezi üzerine tarihsel önem taşıyan notlar," *Hacı Bektaş Bildiriler* (1977): 13-29; "Sarı Saltık ve Erken Bektaşilik Üzerine Notlar," trans. Fikret Elpe. *Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Dergisi* 2 9 (1980): 25-36.

⁷² Thierry Zarcone, "Alévis et Bektashis de la Thrace Orientale," *Tarih Boyunca Karadeniz Kongresi Bildirileri 1-3 Haziran 1988*, (1990): 629-638. (I thank you for the translation of this article to Özge Baydaş.)

⁷³ "Gaza thesis" was formulated by Paul Wittek in 1930s mainly based on Ahmedî's *Dâsûtân* in his *İskendername*, and an inscription dating back to 1337 found in Bursa. His book *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire* was firstly published in 1938. According to this thesis, the early Ottomans had adopted *gaza* as a state ideology, and accordingly named themselves as *gazi* from the very beginning of the foundation of the Ottoman state. And that *gaza* was their primary motivation and they saw themselves as devoted Muslims fighting for the true religion, Islam. See: Ahmedî, *History of the Kings of the Ottoman Lineage and Their Holy Raids against the Infidels*. Sources of Oriental Languages and Literatures Series, trans. Kemal Sılay (Massachusetts: Harvard University, 2004). Paul Wittek, *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Royal Asiatic Society, 1938.) For a critical analysis of the *gaza* thesis see: H. W. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2003.) Heath Lowry, "Some Thoughts on the Meaning of Gaza and Akin in Early Ottoman Usage," In *The Ottoman Empire, Myths, Realities and 'Black Holes', Contributions in Honour of Colin Imber*, eds. Eugenia Kermeli & Oktay Özel, İstanbul: The Isis Press, 2006, 47 – 50.

state and politics were much more “inclusivist” and “syncretic” rather than exclusivist, meaning they had “tolerance” towards ‘others.’ One of the primary evidence for that is the Ottomans’ employing local Christians to administrative and military ranks.

Kafadar’s prominent study *Between Two Worlds* provides an answer to these discussions, asking many new questions and taking a fresh approach.⁷⁴ Kafadar states that the warrior epics and hagiographies are closely interconnected with each other, and they played an important role in forming the historical consciousness of the frontier societies.⁷⁵ The idea that this body of late Medieval narratives reflect “the ideals and motives of *uc* society” is shared by many other researchers studying these primary sources before and after Kafadar. During my readings and studies this idea was often placed at the center of my attentions, and it raised a series of several smaller questions connected to one main question: Do these late Medieval narratives *reflect* “the ideals and the motives” of *uc* societies or did they *dictate*, *promote* or even *propagandise* them to these people? Indeed, while these records include some religious and cultural concepts, notions, and beliefs of common people, to what extent they can *reflect* or *represent* “the ideals and motives” of them is a greater question which should be discussed in a wider context. Thus, it seems to me a claim which needs to be reconsidered due to the inadequacy of our knowledge on this literature in terms of their original versions, information about their authors, copyists or patrons and secondary studies centered on these primary sources. Certain scholars of the field, including Kafadar⁷⁶, strongly stress the necessity of studying this body of literature with a comparative approach to reveal the facts about them, and I think in the future studies on this matter should be

⁷⁴ Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds, The Construction of the Ottoman State* (University of California Press: London, 1996).

⁷⁵ Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 72.

⁷⁶ “There are also more straightforward tasks, such as delineating the paths and mechanisms of transmission or analyzing and comparing different aspects of these narratives in terms of motifs, strategies, concepts, cosmology, geographic consciousness, degrees of “realism,” casts of mythical beings (e.g., the witchlike *cazu*), or topographies of legendary sites.” Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 73.

reassessed too. As for *Saltıknâme*, along with all these inadequacies are being valid, I argue that the manifestation of Sarı Saltık's heroism reflects, represents and promotes mostly the ideals, motives and wishes of the Ottoman state in the late 16th, and it is not possible to know if these ideals and motives were also voluntarily shared by its people or not. On the other hand, at one point Kafadar accepts and indicates -what I call- a *promotion* in the form of a common motif appeared in most of the examples of this literature: Byzantine women offering help and/or love to *gâzis*. Kafadar says: “[it] seems to have been a fantasy of the *gâzis*, and such narratives may well have served to attract adventuresome young men into the armies or to keep them there.”⁷⁷ Therefore it evokes several relevant questions such as the abovementioned ones.

Kafadar also underlines that these original stories reflect “a struggle between two religio-civilizational orientations” and since the *uc* societies, along with the duty of Islamic war against the infidels took over this tradition, the Turkish versions of them mirrors a struggler ethos too. However, to Kafadar, these are also the narratives of “inclusion.”⁷⁸ The protagonists, including Sarı Saltık, are somewhat cross-cultural mediators showing a certain extent of empathy, sympathy and tolerance to the others, the infidels, although the aim of this behavior was to gain more converts to Islam. Kafadar argues that *Saltıknâme* especially has rich materials in terms of empathy. To Kafadar, the atmosphere that made it possible may have been a “‘metadoxy,’ a state of being beyond doxies, a combination of being doxy-naive and not being doxy-minded.”⁷⁹ He says Sarı Saltık “like the Europeans in the New World” infiltrated among the local Christians, gaining knowledge about their ways so as to reach his main purpose: “gain[ing] converts, to expand the hold of Islam over ever-more

⁷⁷ Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 79.

⁷⁸ On “inclusion” as a method of conquest and spreading Islam see: Ömer Lütfi Barkan, “Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Bir İskan ve Kolonizasyon Metodu Olarak Vakıflar ve Temlikler,” *Vakıflar Dergisi* 2 (1942): 279–386. Halil İnalcık, “Ottoman Methods of Conquest,” *Studia Islamica*, 2 (1954): 103–129.

⁷⁹ Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 85.

hearts and lands.”⁸⁰ Indeed, there are several scenes in *Saltıknâme* to prove this idea. However, I argue that the sense of superiority over the non-Muslims is thicker and intense, so that it is one of the main manifestations of Sarı Saltık’s heroism. Kafadar also does not exclude the ideological rivalry, and the aim to reach the superiority over the others.

Mélikoff, a prominent *menâkıbnâme* researcher who is one of the developers of Köprülü’s paradigm, introduces her ideas on *Saltıknâme*.⁸¹ Mélikoff argues that Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî’s primary aim was to please Sultan Cem, so he searched for the stories that would please him. That is the reason why *Saltıknâme* has many stories irrelevant to Saltık’s life and deeds, and the narrative has very little reliable information about him.⁸² The authentic Saltık was a “colonizator dervish” just as Barkan formulated in 1942⁸³, and some “heterodox” references to cooking *aşura*, fasting in Muharrum-ul-haram, being friends with Qalandari dervishes reflect his historical past.⁸⁴ She says the reason we do not have the original narrative may be the conflict between Sultan Cem and Bayezid II after their father Mehmed II’s death in 1481. Mélikoff also underlines the many anachronism in the narrative, particularly Saltık’s Sunni character as created due to Shah İsmail’s spreading Shi’ism in Anatolia, and Selim I’s respond occurred in some years before the emergence of the first copy of *Saltıknâme*. The significant hostility against the *Râfizîs* in the text, the clear advocacy to Hanafism, and the details that make Saltık a fiery partisan of Sunni-Islam are the work of 16th century copyists. Mélikoff’s emphasis on the impact of Ottoman-Safavid conflicts is important as, unlike previous researchers, she makes it clear what the anachronisms in the text are mainly about and why. Although Mélikoff mentions the interferences of the 16th

⁸⁰ Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 80.

⁸¹ Irène Mélikoff, “Sarı Saltuk Kimdi? -Saltıknâme'nin Yazma Nüshaları Üzerine Bazı Dikkatler [Who was Sarı Saltuk? Some Remarks on the Copies of *Saltıknâme*],” in *Destandan Masala Türkoloji Yolculuklarım*, trans. Turan Alptekin (İstanbul: 2008), 77-84. Its original version is: “Qui était Sarı Saltuk? Quelques remarques sur les manuscrits du *Saltıknâme*,” in *Studies in Ottoman History in Honour of Professor V. L. Ménage*, ed. C. Heywood – C. Imber (Istanbul: 1994), 231-238.

⁸² Mélikoff, “Sarı Saltuk Kimdi?”, 77.

⁸³ Barkan, “Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda,” 1942.

⁸⁴ Mélikoff, “Sarı Saltuk Kimdi?”, 79.

century copyists, just as with other researchers, she limits her approach to the age of Selim I, and does not consider the socio-political conflicts occurring around the exact date the manuscript written down in 1591/2. It is well known that the Ottoman-Safavid conflicts continued for several years and remained in the agenda in the age of Murad III too. Thus, the anachronist effects in *Saltıknâme* in terms of propagandizing Sunnism is not limited to the first decades of 16th century but also present in its later years.

Mélikoff's views and approach was developed and expanded by Ocak who, after several studies on the history and historical uses of the Ottoman hagiographies,⁸⁵ publishes the first study dedicated to Sarı Saltık's historical and legendary character partly based on the text.⁸⁶ However, the text has very little reliable information on Saltık's historical personality.⁸⁷ Ocak argues that Saltık was from the Haydâri branch of Qalandariyya.⁸⁸

In 2000, a new and pivotal primary source, including firsthand information about Sarı Saltık, was introduced to the field by Machiel Kiel.⁸⁹ It was *Tuffâh'ul Arwah* by a al-Sarraj dated 1315, and it replaced İbn Battuta's *Rihle* as the earliest source on Sarı Saltık. The material it provided seems to confirm Ocak's argument on Saltık's religious affiliation since al-Sarraj defines Sarı Saltık as a "müvelleh" (mad or lunatic dervish) and paints a non-Sunni picture of him. This new source started a short and limited debate. An article by three authors published in 2013, based on *Tuffâh'ul Arwah*, challenge Ocak's argument, and claims that

⁸⁵ A. Yaşar Ocak, "Sarı Saltık ve *Saltıknâme*," *Türk Kültürü*, 197 (1979): 266-275; *Türk Halk İnançlarında ve Edebiyatında Evliyâ Menkıbeleri*, (Ankara: Başbakanlık Basımevi, 1984); *İslâm-Türk İnançlarında Hızır Yahut Hızır-İlyas Kültü*, (Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü, 1985).

⁸⁶ A. Yaşar Ocak, *Sarı Saltık, Popüler İslâm'ın Balkanlar'daki Destanı Öncüsü (XIII. Yüzyıl)*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2002).

⁸⁷ Ocak, *Sarı Saltık*, 8.

⁸⁸ Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Marjinal Sufilik: Kalenderiler, XIV-XVII. Yüzyıllar* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1999).

⁸⁹ Machiel Kiel, "Sarı Saltık: Pionier des Islams auf dem Balkan, im 13. Jahrhundert, mit Materialien von Berndt Radtke," in *Aleviler/Alewiten. Identität und Geschichte, Deutsches Orient Institut Hamburg, Mitteilungen*, Band 59, ed. Erhard Franz - Ismail Ergin (2000), 253-286. H. T. Norris also used this source, and cited wide passages from it, and examined this early news about Sarı Saltık. *Popular Sufism in Eastern Europe, Sufi brotherhoods and the dialogue with Christianity and 'Heterodoxy'* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

“müvelleh” is a denigrative word.⁹⁰ In their arguments, Sarı Saltuk was not a “müvelleh” and/or Qalandari but he was a member of *Rıfâî* order, however they do not claim that Saltuk was a devoted Sunni, instead, they give examples from *Tuffâh’ul Arwah* about his unorthodox behaviors. In response to this, Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, in the third edition of his book,⁹¹ in 47th footnote criticizes them for ignoring the fact that Saltık was a Haydâri which is an important wing of Qalandariyya. He reserves a subchapter to this matter with the name “Is Sarı Saltuk a müvelleh or a Kalenderi?” showing that the term “müvelleh” is a subjective word that implies sympathy and favor to the person it is used, not a libelous adjective.⁹² *Tuffâh’ul Arwah* is a very rich source about the life and the miraculous deeds of Sarı Saltık, and some *menâkıb* in it are very similar to the ones in *Saltıknâme*. However, Ocak does not allow much place for these *menâkıb* in his book or compare them to the ones in *Saltıknâme*. I will examine one of the *menkıbes* in *Tuffâh’ul Arwah* while dealing with the historical and legendary personality of Sarı Saltık in Chapter I.

Ocak confirms that the severe polemics against the Iranians and the *Râfizîs* marked the text.⁹³ He indicates that the copyist(s) re-echoed the reactions towards the Ottoman-Safavids conflicts, and Shiite propaganda in the 16th century. Accordingly, they portrayed Sarı Saltık as a devout Sunni mujahid, glorifying the Hanafî sect (of Islam) fighting against the *Râfizîs*.⁹⁴ Additionally, Ocak, in a conference paper dated 2014,⁹⁵ states that there are more questions yet to be solved: Was Sarı Saltık really a missionary of Islam? Under what

⁹⁰ M. Saffet Sarıkaya, M. Necmettin Bardakci, and Nejdett Gurkan, “İbnü’s-Serrâc’a Göre Sarı Saltuk, *Tasavvuf, İlmî ve Akademik Araştırma Dergisi*, 32 [2013/2]: 75-110. These scholars also translated the source into Turkish, edited, and published it. See Muhammed b. Ali b. es Serrac, *Tüffâhu’l-Ervâh ve Miftâhu’l-İrbâh, Ruhların Meyvesi ve Kazancın Anahtarı*, (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2015).

⁹¹ Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Sarı Saltuk: Popüler İslam’ın Balkanlardaki Destanı Öncüsü, 13. yüzyıl*. Third edition. (İstanbul: Kitap yayınevi, 2016).

⁹² Ocak, *Sarı Saltık*, 2016.

⁹³ Ocak, *Sarı Saltık*, 7.

⁹⁴ Ocak, *Sarı Saltık*, 8.

⁹⁵ Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, “Sarı Saltık’a Dair Halledilmemiş Problemler, Eski ve Yeni Sorular, Yeni Bir Kaynak.” [Unsettled Matters about Sarı Saltık, The Old and the New Questions, A New Source], *Uluslararası Sarı Saltık Gazi Sempozyumu 06-10 Kasım 2013, Köstence-Romanya Trakya Üniversitesi Yayınları*, (2014): 42-48.

conditions did Sarı Saltık become a legendary personality? It is quite hard to give accurate answers to these due to the lack of primary sources and the mists of legends covering the realities about Sarı Saltık's life, nevertheless, I try to find some hints in the sources and make some earthly suggestions.

Despite all these appropriate conclusions, and his rightful analysis about the reasons behind Sarı Saltık's Hanafi-Sunni image in *Saltıknâme*, Ocak does not detail these elements or examine much of the socio-political circumstances of the times in which the first copy was created, possibly as this was not the primary goal of his work. Yet, in my opinion, this is the greatest and the most important gap in the literature of *Saltıknâme* still waiting to be filled. In this thesis, I try to fill some of it by mostly benefiting the substantial arguments and conclusions by Tijana Krstić.

*Contested Conversions to Islam*⁹⁶ by Tijana Krstić, represents a brand-new approach to the field, and is the most significant work of the scholarship. In this work, Krstić's focus is the phenomenon of conversion mostly in Ottoman Rumelia from the early years of the state through to the 17th century. Krstić brilliantly shows that the political rivalry between the Habsburgs, the Ottomans and the Safavids in the early modern era was accompanied by a longtime religio-cultural competition, and it strengthened the "millenarian tendencies and expectations of spiritual renewal"⁹⁷ shared by the believers of monotheistic religions around Mediterranean since the late Middle ages. The apocalyptic views, messianic/millenarian expectations and anxieties grew stronger after the fall of Constantinople and Otranto campaign in 1480 and came to a climax in the 16th century due to the claims and acts of these three states on establishing a universal monarchy. Krstić's main argument is that all these developments caused "a process of confessional polarization"⁹⁸ which occurred similarly

⁹⁶ Tijana Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam: Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Stanford University Press, 2011).

⁹⁷ Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, 11.

⁹⁸ Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, 12.

and simultaneously in the lands of the Habsburgs, Ottomans and Safavids, and lead to “forging of religious ‘orthodoxies.’”⁹⁹ Therefore Krstić names this era as “an age of confessionalization.”¹⁰⁰ The main feature that differentiates Krstić’s approach from the previous scholars is this formulization, the remark on the rivalry with its many aspects, and the reading of the conversion within the Mediterranean-wide context, and its reflection on the Ottoman lands as Sunnitization enforced by the state.

Including *Saltıknâme*, she uses narrative sources like the *menâkıbnâmes* -which she categorizes as “Rumeli narratives”¹⁰¹- as well as non-narrative documents such as *tahrirs*, and other governmental records, and compares the information about conversion provided by these two different sources. Krstić’s other revisionist touch upon the issue is her analysis that the 15th-16th century Ottoman hagiographies as conversion narratives had a special place and function in this rivalry, the formulation of Ottoman imperial identity and developing the state-sanctioned Sunni-Islam: “teaching Islam to both ‘new’ and ‘old’ Muslims was central to the universalizing aspect of Islamization.”¹⁰² In this context, just like Kafadar, Krstić describes *Saltıknâme* as a source of prime importance, however, in terms of competition, not empathy.¹⁰³ Krstić sees a competitive attitude and a sense of superiority where the former researchers mostly see tolerance -described as syncretism¹⁰⁴- in these narratives. Unlike

⁹⁹ Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, 14.

¹⁰⁰ Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, 23.

¹⁰¹ Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, 45.

¹⁰² Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, 28.

¹⁰³ Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, 73.

¹⁰⁴ Syncretism, and using of the word “syncretic” has been debating for a while with the using of the terms heterodox -implying the non-Sunni beliefs and practices- and orthodox Islam -the mainstream interpretation of Islam. It is the reason why Krstić displays her ideas about the concept of syncretism. W. F. Hasluck’s prominent work *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans*, v. 1 – 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929) had started the fire. Hasluck did not use the term “syncretic” but he adopted an approach developed by Durkheim’s notions which emerged Darwinian evolutionary models about religions. According to this approach, the beliefs, and practices of monotheistic religions like Christianity and Islam has many traces from old-pagan cultures, and residues. He used the term “heterodox” for seemingly non-Sunni Islamic beliefs and practices. Köprülü adopted Durkheim’s notions, too, while forming his ideas about the non-Sunni Sufi orders, and cults of Anatolia emerged between 12th – 15th centuries, used a similar viewpoint. Köprülü argued that the non-Sunni elements in these Sufi practices and beliefs are originally coming from pre-Islamic Turkic cultural residues dated back the times that the Turks lived in Central Asia. His paradigm has been debated recently. On the other hand, Krstić does not oppose to use the term syncretism in all conditions, and adds: “this book will not entirely reject

previous researchers, Krstić determines a sense of superiority towards the rival other in these narratives. Contrary to Kafadar's view that there must have been a kind of "metadoxy" in the *ucs*, meaning a state of being "non-doxy-minded," which provided tolerance to an extent that people from different religious views and beliefs lived together.¹⁰⁵ Instead, Krstić shows that inter-religious contact as well as cultural and religious interchange along the frontiers of the Lands of Rum could exist at the same time with a harsh and long lasting religio-political and cultural competition. For example, while Kafadar interprets the many scenes in *Saltıknâme* in which Saltık, disguised as a monk, reads aloud verses from the Bible and thus makes Christians burst into tears, as a display of empathy,¹⁰⁶ Krstić objects to this view, stating that it is an interpretation done by "taking the story out of its specific context,"¹⁰⁷ and a closer look reveals the competitive discourse in the narrative.

Krstić's conclusions show that the Ottoman hagiographies should be reconsidered with a fresh view. Her arguments have crucial importance with respect to this thesis, and I will follow Krstić's revisionist approach since my readings, findings and conclusions indicate the same direction of thought. My main argument is that the portrayal of Sarı Saltık in *Saltıknâme* is an updated version of his legendary and historical character due to the political needs of the late 16th century Ottoman state. Through analyzing the principal manifestations of his heroism in the text, I show that in the multidimensional rivalry Krstić formulizes, Sarı Saltık in *Saltıknâme* symbolizes the superiority of Islam against Christianity,

the concept of syncretism but acknowledge that it remains productively problematic and seek to rethink it along the lines suggested by recent anthropological and historical scholarship." *Contested Conversions*, 18. About these debates see: "Introduction" in *Islam and Christianity in Medieval Anatolia*, eds. A.C.S. Peacock, Bruno De Nicola and Sara Nur Yıldız (New York: Routledge, 2016). "Foreword" by Devin DeWeese in Mehmed Fuad Köprülü, *Early Mystics in Turkish Literature*, translated, edited and with an introduction by Gary Leiser and Robert Dankoff (New York: Routledge, 2006), viii -xxvii. Ayfer Karakaya-Stump, "The *Vefa 'iyye*, The Bektashiyye And Genealogies Of "Heterodox" Islam In Anatolia: Rethinking the Koprulu Paradigm," *Turcica*, 44, (2012-2013): 279-300 doi: 10.2143/TURC.44.0.2988853

¹⁰⁵ Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, 17.

¹⁰⁶ Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 71-72.

¹⁰⁷ Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, 69.

and he is also a sworn enemy of *Râfizîs* as a champion of Sunnism. Thus, I argue that *Saltıknâme* is rich in terms of rivalry not empathy and tolerance.

Krstić also shows that some of the actors of this rivalry were the literate converts who mainly argued that “Islam is a perfected version of Christianity and that ‘true’ Christians were actually Muslims.”¹⁰⁸ Since *Saltıknâme* includes such arguments, Krstić suggests that the converts must have contributed to this narrative by producing and/or circulating its stories “to prove their loyalty to the new membership group.”¹⁰⁹ Following this suggestion, I make some speculations about the identity of the author Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî and the copyists of *Saltıknâme*. I also detail and exemplify that kind of statements in the text, however, I argue that these statements -and the more that I show in the second chapter- must have also been used to relieve the audience’s millenarian fears, and anxieties which, as mentioned by Krstić, arose from the multifaceted nature of this rivalry. Taking into consideration the date that the manuscript written down in 1591/2, the Islamic millennium, I argue and show that *Saltıknâme* is also rich in terms of these fears, and anxieties, too.

Another impressive work on *Saltıknâme* belongs to Rıza Yıldırım.¹¹⁰ It is an inspiring study showing the ways and possibilities of using *menâkıbnâmes* as historical sources. In this work, Yıldırım focuses on a single hagiographical anecdote (*menkıbe*) about the origins of “Rum *erenleri*”¹¹¹ which appears in both *Saltıknâme* and *Velayetname of Hacı Bektaş Veli*,¹¹² written nearly twenty years after the first text. Comparing the two versions in terms

¹⁰⁸ Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, 24.

¹⁰⁹ Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, 57.

¹¹⁰ Rıza Yıldırım, “Rum’da Öksöğüyü Tutan Kimdi? Saltıknâme ve Hacıbektaş Veli Velayetnamesi’nde Yer Alan Bir Menkıbeye Göre Rum Erenleri,” *I Uluslararası Hacı Bektaş Veli Sempozyumu, Çorum, Cilt II* (2010): 596 – 630.

¹¹¹ The saints in Anatolia who came from several places in the East, mainly from Khorasan in Iran.

¹¹² A hagiographic narrative includes the saintly exploits of Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli (d. 1271 [?]) written around late 15th century. Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli, is a Turcoman Sufi sheikh of 13th century Anatolia, and accepted as the original founder of the Bektaşî Order in that period. Some of Sarı Saltık’s *menkıbes* were compiled from the Bektaşî Order. Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, “Hacı Bektaş Vîlâyetnâmesi,” *İslam Ansiklopedisi* 14, (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, (1996): 471-472. For the primary source see: *Vîlâyetnâme, Manâkıb-ı Hümkâr Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli*, ed. Abdülkâki Gölpınarlı (İstanbul: İnkılâp Kitabevi, 1958).

of structure and contents, Yıldırım aims to understand which Sufi milieu this *menkıbe* arose from. He concludes that the milieu which Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî compiled this *menkıbe* from must be the Bektashi dervishes lived around Dobrudja. More importantly, Yıldırım argues that neither this *menkıbe* of Sarı Saltık nor the entire *Saltıknâme* can be considered as a source for 13th century Sufism in Anatolia, and the author used Sarı Saltık only as a tool to narrate the original story which appears in *Velayetnâme*. However, he argues that *Saltıknâme* should be considered as a primary source for the concept of Sufism and the Sufi cycles of the 15th century Anatolia.¹¹³ Differently from previous researchers, Yıldırım makes some suggestions about the author of *Saltıknâme*. He argues that Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî was not from any Bektashi circle, and he must be a companion (*musâhib*) of Sultan Cem, and a storyteller (*meddah*) in the Ottoman palace.¹¹⁴

Helga Anetshofer is one of the few and impressive scholars worked on *Saltıknâme*. Anetshofer, as far as I know, wrote the second thesis¹¹⁵ on the narrative after Akalın's doctoral dissertation. In this work, she provides a detailed summary of the text. Comparing the Topkapı manuscript to the Bor manuscript, Anetshofer looks through the old Anatolian Turkish elements and the innovative ones in the language of *Saltıknâme*. Anetshofer also categorizes the various sorts of miracles performed by Sarı Saltuk according to their Islamic, Christian, Shamanic or East Asian origins.¹¹⁶ Then, in another work, Anetshofer looks at *Saltıknâme* in terms of gender alongside other examples of Ottoman legends and epics, and determines common motifs in the narrative such as abduction of brides and warrior-

¹¹³ Yıldırım, "Rum'da Öksöğüü", 612.

¹¹⁴ Yıldırım, "Rum'da Öksöğüü", 612.

¹¹⁵ Helga Anetshofer. "Das Saltıh-name: philologische und islamkundliche Aspekte einer Heiligenlegende des 15. Jahrhunderts. [Saltıh-name: philological and hagiographical aspects of a 15th century saint's vita]." Unpublished Master Thesis, University of Vienna, 1995.

¹¹⁶ I am grateful to Helga Anetshofer for answering my e-mail I sent her to ask what her thesis is about since it is in German, a language I cannot read or understand. Thus, I wrote these sentences based on the information Anetshofer provided.

women.¹¹⁷ She describes *Saltıknâme* as an exemplary text which “most heavily conveys Ottoman Sunni state propaganda... which fosters the seclusion of women when Saltık advises Tapdık (Emre) not to allow women to participate in his mystical recitals (*dhikr*).”¹¹⁸

Anetshofer also works on Sarı Saltık’s legendary image that Evliyâ Çelebi recorded in his *Seyahatnâme* from 17th century based on the hearings during his visits to Dobrudja.¹¹⁹ She argues that Evliyâ’s main goal in narrating the legends about this warrior-saint was to challenge the ideas and rumors that Saltık was in fact not a Muslim or a Turk saint, but a priest. Thus, Evliyâ made efforts to make up a Turkic and a Sunni past for Sarı Saltık by claiming his real name is Muhammed Buhari or Saltık-Bay, and so built a Turco-Islamic past around him.¹²⁰ Comparing the *menâkıb* in *Saltıknâme* and *Seyahatnâme* Anetshofer concludes that they strongly resemble each other, and the reason why must be Evliyâ’s compiling his stories from the Bektashis,¹²¹ showing Saltık’s ongoing popularity even into the 17th century. However, based on the number of copies, Anetshofer argues that Kiel’s claim of *Saltıknâme*’s wide popularity in Medieval Anatolia and the Balkans is an exaggeration: “It did not become a very popular book, probably due to its enormous length, its less entertaining style compared to *Battalnâme*, and the portrayal of Sarı Saltık as a strict Sunni Muslim.”¹²² It can be judged from many studies about Sarı Saltık that he himself was and still is popular with his saintly and legendary stories in the aforementioned areas. But claiming *Saltıknâme*’s popularity, considering it is a three-volume text, is another thing needing to be proved. Besides, if we accept its author’s explanation as true, the text was

¹¹⁷ Helga Anetshofer, “Representations [of women, gender and sexuality]: Legends and Epics: The Ottoman Empire,” in *Encyclopedia of Women & Islamic Cultures v. 5 Practices, Interpretations and Representations*, ed. Suad Joseph, (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 443-445.

¹¹⁸ Anetshofer, “Representations [of women],” 444.

¹¹⁹ Helga Anetshofer, “Legends of Sarı Saltık in The *Seyahatnâme* and The Bektashi Oral Tradition,” in *Evliyâ Çelebi: studies and essays commemorating the 400th anniversary of his birth*, ed. N. Tezcan, S. Tezcan, R. Dankoff (Ankara: Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism Publications, 2012), 292-300.

¹²⁰ Anetshofer, “Legends of Sarı Saltık,” 293.

¹²¹ Anetshofer, “Legends of Sarı Saltık,” 296.

¹²² Anetshofer, “Legends of Sarı Saltık,” 291, 438th footnote.

primarily written to be read by Sultan Cem, and consequently in the Ottoman elite circles in the palace.

After Anetshofer, Zeynep Aydoğan wrote a thesis using *Saltıknâme* as a primary source.¹²³ In this work, Aydoğan determines four layers in the text in accordance with the suggestions made by Kafadar: 1) An *ahistorical* layer represents centuries-old frontier traditions; 2) a *historical* layer which indicates the rule of Seljuks that is interwoven with Sarı Saltık's biography; 3) the author of *Saltıknâme*'s textual interventions; and a fourth layer, where additions are made to the narrative by later copyists. Based on these layers, Aydoğan rightfully considers *Saltıknâme* as a historical narrative within the cultural environment that shaped it. While pointing out to numerous "historical" events covered by the text, such as the conquests of Bursa, Gallipoli, İznik, and Edirne by the Ottomans, or the conflicts between Umur Beg, the emir of Aydınli Beylicate, and the Venetians, Aydoğan also lays an emphasis on how *Saltıknâme* is "not simply the accumulation of centuries-old oral traditions that reflected the worldview of frontiersmen, but also an authored, or at least heavily edited text also voiced the concerns of a certain segment of the Ottoman court."¹²⁴ I will add this conclusion that the political needs of the Ottomans in the 16th century can be identified through the analysis of the heroism of Sarı Saltık. I argue that anachronistical additions such as promoting Sunni-Islam, claiming the superiority of Islam against all the enemies of it, justifying the rule of Ottoman house and an intense anti-*Râfizî* tone in the narrative constitute a fifth layer which correspond to the political needs and claims of the late 16th century Ottoman state. Thus, as a contribution to the field, I try to reveal and show this fifth layer, which echoes the attitudes and claims of 16th century Ottoman politics. Due to this fact, I also argue that this fifth layer can be seen as a *historical* one, not despite its

¹²³ Zeynep Aydoğan, "An Analysis of Saltıknâme" (Master Thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2007).

¹²⁴ Aydoğan, "An Analysis of Saltıknâme," ii.

anachronic character but because of this very characteristic, and *Saltıknâme* can be reconsidered as a historical source for the 16th century since it reflects the aforementioned circumstances of the time.

Aydoğan went on studying the late Medieval Anatolian narratives, and wrote a Ph.D. dissertation on the cultural geography of these texts.¹²⁵ Aydoğan focuses on each example of the relevant literary cycle's geographical areas, especially the *ucs* (frontiers), and also the perceptions and representations of the infidels. She reveals the traces of several traumatic historical events in Medieval Anatolia like the Mongols and the Memluks in *Saltıknâme*, and determines a transformation of identity, the Rumî identity in the image of Sarı Saltık. Aydoğan's successful analysis and findings will also light my way in this study, especially in the second chapter.

The last prominent scholar of the field is Karamustafa who first dealt with the historical personality and religious affiliation of Sarı Saltık in 1993 in order to understand his relationship to Barak Baba.¹²⁶ He maintains his interest in the topic and publishes a translated anecdote in *Saltıknâme* with a brief introduction.¹²⁷ Karamustafa's 2015 dated work is dedicated to *Saltıknâme*,¹²⁸ and he defines the narrative "as much a wonder-tale as it is a heroic epic and a hagiography"¹²⁹ which despite all this, is "woven around a historical core."¹³⁰ He reaches this conclusion interpreting the narrative by including many more fantastical elements than its other peers. His analysis is quite remarkable as he is certain that

¹²⁵ I would like to thank to Zeynep Aydoğan for answering my e-mail and being so generous to send me her Ph.D. dissertation which I had eagerly and excitedly been waited for a long while to read it. Zeynep Aydoğan, "Representations of Cultural Geography in the Late Medieval Anatolian Frontier Narratives" (Ph.D. dissertation, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, 2018). The pages between 84-116 are dedicated to *Saltıknâme*.

¹²⁶ Ahmet T. Karamustafa, "Early Sufism in Eastern Anatolia" in *Classical Persian Sufism from its Origins to Rumi (700-1300)*, vol. 1 of *The Heritage of Sufism*, ed. Leonard Lewisohn (London: Oneworld Publications, 1999), 175-199. This work was first published in 1993.

¹²⁷ Ahmet T., "Sarı Saltık becomes a Friend of God." In *Tales of God's friends: Islamic hagiography in translation*, ed. John Renard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 136 – 144.

¹²⁸ A. Karamustafa, "Islamization Through the Lens of *Saltıknâme*" *Islam and Christianity in Medieval Anatolia*, ed. A.C.S. Peacock, Bruno De Nicola and Sara Nur Yıldız (Ashgate, 2015), 349–364.

¹²⁹ Karamustafa, "Islamization Through," 352.

¹³⁰ Karamustafa, "Islamization Through," 352.

the author of *Saltıknâme* used many written sources of the 15th century, and “clearly worked with existing epic and hagiographical materials, including most notably the *Battalnâme* and the *Danişmendnâme* as well as a series of 15th century hagiographical narratives.”¹³¹ The abundance of fantastical elements such as the beasts, legendary places, and mythical creatures in the text arouse the interest of the many scholars, however, only Karamustafa makes such a clear argument for the reason behind their inclusion. Besides, while previous researchers regard *Saltıknâme* merely as a rewritten version of *Battalnâme*, Karamustafa thinks it only is one of the many written sources of the narrative. Indeed, one who closely reads *Saltıknâme* can easily recognize the plenitude of wondrous components from the beginning to the end of the text. I also agree that *Saltıknâme* seems to have various written sources composed between the 14th-16th centuries that were popular in Anatolia. However, without a dedicated study on the intertextuality of the text and comparing it to various narratives it is not possible to indicate which exact compositions have been drawn upon.

Karamustafa also rightfully stresses the connotations reflecting the rivalry between the Ottomans and the Safavids, and says: “it is highly probable (at times certain) that Sarı Saltuk’s Sunni Hanafi credentials and his zeal against the heretical Shia were either added or, more likely, significantly played up by the copyist.”¹³² He considers determining this layer from the 16th century necessary since it takes us one step closer to exploring “the social and cultural milieu within which the stories of Sarı Saltuk collected.”¹³³ In this thesis, I try to determine and show this 16th century layer, and argue that it can be reconsidered as a reflection of the historical facts occurring in the same century, and thus *Saltıknâme*, and also other similar narratives can be reviewed with this approach.

¹³¹ Karamustafa, “Islamization Through,” 363.

¹³² Karamustafa, “Islamization Through,” 363.

¹³³ Karamustafa, “Islamization Through,” 363.

Karamustafa's analysis about the representation of Christians and Christianity in the text is also remarkable and conforms with Krstić's approach and conclusions. He recognizes that Saltık's hostility is mainly directed towards the prominent rulers such as the governors, commanders, lords, kings, archbishops and emperors, and thus "Sarı Saltuk's ceaseless heroic labor"¹³⁴ primarily serves to the establishment of the political hegemony of Islam. As a late 16th Ottoman claim, I argue that founding a universal hegemony of not just Islam but also Muslim Turks is one of the aims of Sarı Saltık in *Saltıknâme*, and it is one of the main features which makes him a hero. On the other hand, it is true that the narrative neither includes true and detailed information on Christian beliefs, rituals etc. nor seems to have any interest in these matters.

Furthermore, Karamustafa is suspicious as to whether the work was presented to Sultan Cem or not.¹³⁵ I agree with the justification of this doubt as the fifth layer, which reflects Ottoman political ideals and claims of the 16th century, is noticeably clear. Accordingly, it fuels the suspicion that the patron of the copy from 1591/2 may well have been someone other than Sultan Cem. However, since there is no other document related to the patronage of *Saltıknâme* I am only able to make some speculations about it, grounding some hints in the narrative.¹³⁶

As one can see thus far, studies of *Saltıknâme* which began with Gölpınarlı, despite the contributions of many prominent scholars, are yet to be sufficiently or extensively developed. One of the reasons for this perhaps, are the methodological challenges which need to be solved and the intellectual barriers which Karamustafa defines as "the traditional

¹³⁴ Karamustafa, "Islamization Through," 359.

¹³⁵ Rıza Yıldırım displays a kind of suspicion about its patronage and whether Prince Cem was the patron or not, however, he only mentions it in a footnote as a one sentence and does not generate any ideas. See 12th footnote: Yıldırım, "Rum'da Öksöğü," 612.

¹³⁶ Karamustafa, "Islamization Through," 363.

prejudice of scholars against popular culture in general and popular literature in particular.”¹³⁷

Of all the studies around *Saltıknâme* I regard the conclusions of Krstić and Karamustafa as the most outstanding and I try to draw my analyses according to her innovative approach. I think that the greatest gap in the secondary literature of *Saltıknâme* which needs to be filled is examining this text in view of the fact that the Topkapı manuscript, the earliest complete copy which all studies based on, was copied around 1591/2. Apart from the information believed to be given by the author Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî in the last pages of the narrative, we know nothing about the author, the patronage or how and why *Saltıknâme* was written. However, it is well known that the copy itself originated in 1591/2 and scholars have determined over and over that the narrative was highly edited as it includes many anachronical elements. These anachronistic additions are considered as obstacles preventing or even stopping scholars making historical studies about the text. Whereas, I argue the contrary, and suggest that these additions offer us the opportunity to discover the possible relationships and reflections of the 16th century.

Sarı Saltık was already heroized while he was still alive, and re-heroized when his life and deeds were compiled and written down first by Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî in the 15th century, then apparently once more by many unknown copyists through the 16th century. There are many questions unanswered and problems unsolved about *Saltıknâme*. Although it is not possible to overcome all of these in such a brief work, I will try to develop an approach with the intention of respond at least a few of them.

¹³⁷ Karamustafa, “Islamization Through,” 350.

CHAPTER I: THE HEROIC AGE OF ANATOLIA AND SARI SALTİK AS A HISTORICAL AND LEGENDARY HERO

I.1. The Heroic Age of Anatolia

Historical studies specifically focusing on the concept of hero and heroism are few and far between, even though most studies on saints, sultans, warriors, *abdals*, Sufis and their deeds—as reflected or narrated in *menâkıbnâmes*, *gazâvatnâmes*, and other types of historical sources—can be considered as “indirect” studies on heroes and heroism. When historians construe the protagonist of a narrative in its historical context, they also analyze the hero and the concept of heroism in the text. The aim of this present study is not to make another indirect study but to directly concentrate on the perception of heroism and the features which make the protagonist a hero in the audience’s eyes, in order to understand the reasons behind the creation of a late medieval Anatolian heroic narrative. As I show in this subchapter, prominent scholars of this field recognize the heroic component in vernacular Turkish literature composed between the 13th and the 16th centuries. Hagen names this period as “the heroic age of Anatolia” and I argue that the age of confessionalization followed this age, as described by Krstić, and the portrayal of Sarı Saltık as a hero in *Saltıknâme* is a product of this transformative period.

In literary terms, a hero is a “chief character in a plot, on whom our interest centers,”¹³⁸ “the main character in a narrative or dramatic work,”¹³⁹ namely a protagonist. Some literary dictionaries warn us that the word “carries no connotations of virtuousness or

¹³⁸ M. H. Abrams, ed., *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2009), 265.

¹³⁹ Chris Baldick, ed., *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 12.

honor”¹⁴⁰ and that due to the characteristics such as courage and virtuousness generally associated with a hero or heroine “the term protagonist is often preferable, to avoid confusion with the usual sense of heroism as admirable courage or nobility, since in many works, the leading character may not be morally or otherwise superior.”¹⁴¹ The word "hero" comes from Greek, originally meaning “protector” or “defender.”¹⁴² It seems that “hero” as a concept and definition is itself a construct. The main characteristics of a hero are essentially the readers’ expectations, since in the course of history this word has gained new meanings, mostly depicting heroes as superior. As I will show in the following subchapter, Sarı Saltık, both with regards to his image in oral literature and for his portrayal in *Saltıknâme*, is received and mentioned as a hero in scholarship. In this vein, Sarı Saltık in *Saltıknâme* is not just the protagonist of the narrative, he is also a hero with the virtues and values he carries and symbolizes.

Sarı Saltık, as a historical figure, was a chief of several Turkic tribes who lead the migration from Anatolia to Dobrudja in a time of crisis under the Anatolian Seljukids. As noted, the period between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, is generally referred to as the transition period in Anatolia. It implies a transition from nomadic to sedentary life, from oral to written literature, as well as from old beliefs to a relatively new religion, Islam. It is the very period when Sarı Saltık lived, and he was believed to be godly man who could perform miracles to spread Islam in the lands of the infidels. The *menkıbes* about him were conceived and began to circulate in Anatolia and the Balkans. Through this process he lived and was represented as a hero, and when he died these *menkıbes* were heard by Sultan Cem, who commissioned Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî to write them down. Certainly, Sarı Saltık was not

¹⁴⁰ J. A. Cuddon, ed., *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 329.

¹⁴¹ Baldick, ed., *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 12.

¹⁴² Elaine Kinsella, Timothy D. Ritchie and Eric Igou, "Attributes and Applications of Heroes: A Brief History of Lay and Academic Perspectives," in *Handbook of Heroism and Heroic Leadership*, ed. Scott T. Allison, George R. Goethals, and Roderick M. Kramer (New York: Routledge, 2017), 20.

the only hero of this period, numerous narratives written in Turkish at this time are rife with heroes and heroic tales. These texts are furnished with an idealized *topos* of warriors, saints, Sufis, scholars, and sultans.

Köprülü, named the early phase of this period as “the era of *alps*” and treats the concept of heroism as a historical fact, performed in particular by the hero saints of this era. It was mainly because “the geo-political conditions of Anatolia” that lead Turks resisted and fought against the Crusaders’ campaigns along with their warlike background and cultural values. Besides, fighting against the infidels was the commandment of God, and accordingly religious feelings, intertwined with the desire to display heroic deeds, were the main motives which prompted the Turks of early Medieval Anatolia. Köprülü also describes Sarı Saltık as “not an ordinary dervish, but a hero”¹⁴³ and one of the “erens (saints, Sufis spiritual leaders)”¹⁴⁴ of the time, a hero saint. According to Köprülü, the era of *alps* continued through the early years of the Ottoman state despite the failure of political unification of the Anatolian Turks, the common disorders, and the chaos rooted in these conditions.¹⁴⁵ Yorgos Dedes, too, recognizes a heroic component prominent in the literature of the age, and identifies the cycle comprised of the *Saltıknâme*, the *Battalnâme* and the *Danişmendnâme* as the “Anatolian Turkish religious-heroic prose narratives.”¹⁴⁶

On the other hand, according to Hagen, it was this very state of chaos that inspired heroism and thus the heroic literature of the age. Hagen expands this era of heroism from the eleventh century—after the *Oğuz* Turks’ immigration into Anatolia—to the sixteenth century when Ottoman rule was consolidated. Hagen identifies this period as “the heroic age of Anatolia” based on Hegel’s formulation of a heroic age in which “the heroic epics flourish

¹⁴³ Köprülü, *Early Mystics*, 266.

¹⁴⁴ Köprülü, *Early Mystics*, 213.

¹⁴⁵ Köprülü, *Early Mystics*, 213.

¹⁴⁶ *Battalnâme*, Facsimile edited by Şinasi Tekin and Gönül Alpay Tekin with introduction, English translation, Turkish transcription, and commentary by Yorgos Dedes, 3 vols. (Harvard University, 1996), 1-2.

in specific socio-political conditions, and that they are inflected by space and time”¹⁴⁷ and the vernacular Turkish literature of the age, including *Ebumüslimnâme*, *Battalnâme*, *Saltıknâme*, and so on, as semi-historical legendary epics, heroic literature. In this sense, the warrior narratives of that period, such as *Saltıknâme*, are heroic narratives in terms of their specific and comprehensive contents.¹⁴⁸ As Hagen continues, “the saints of ‘popular’ hagiographies in the period under consideration are in fact heroic figures, and these hagiographies are part of the historical heroic literature.”¹⁴⁹

Hagen does not however, suggest that this heroic literature was inspired by the conflicts with the infidel, nor does he read them as conversion narratives.¹⁵⁰ Considering the visible absence of central authority, the concept of heroism, and the ways in which all these are represented in the narratives, Hagen argues that the chaos emerging from the disjointed political landscape of Anatolia is the reason behind the birth of this type of literature.¹⁵¹ In a later work, Hagen uses the term “heroic hagiography” for this genre despite the differences between them both in origin and their audience. His main argument is that the heroic hagiography of 15th century Anatolia was written as a response to the chaotic political state of contemporary Anatolia, the experience of concurrent violence, and conflict.¹⁵²

Likewise, Ahmet Karamustafa determines a heroic component in 13th and 14th century Anatolian Turkish literature. He does not use the word 'hero' or the concept of heroism, however, he uses the term ‘cult of saints’ and argues that in the very era this cult,

¹⁴⁷ Gottfried Hagen, “Heroes and Saints in Early Ottoman Literature,” *Oriente Moderno, Nuova Serie* 89, no. 2 (Special issue *Studies on Islamic Legends*, ed. Giovanni Canova, 2009): 349.

¹⁴⁸ Hagen, “Heroes and Saints,” 349-50. Elsewhere Hagen adds “however, the heroic tradition did not disappear completely. Under a growing layer of hegemonic elite culture, a popular collective memory of heroic figures remained in place.” “Heroes and Saints,” 358-59.

¹⁴⁹ Hagen, “Heroes and Saints,” 353.

¹⁵⁰ Gottfried Hagen, “Chaos, Order, Power, Salvation: Heroic Hagiography’s Response to the Ottoman Fifteenth Century,” *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 1, no. 1-2 (2014): 92.

¹⁵¹ Hagen, “Heroes and Saints,” 358.

¹⁵² Hagen, “Chaos, Order, Power”, 105.

in fact a heroic one, was intentionally created and risen by the literary elite.¹⁵³ Like Hagen, Karamustafa also points out the circumstances of the age:

The cult of saints was formulated and built by the elite in dialogue with the masses, in response to changing circumstances in a new world where the Islamic universalism of the earlier caliphates had long given way to the radically different dispensation of the many sultanates that made up Islamdom. A great many of the best minds of the period in question were attracted to Sufism and actively participated in the construction of the new cult.¹⁵⁴

John Renard's study on the Islamic images of heroes and heroism in literary traditions does not specifically focus on late medieval Anatolia or the heroic hagiography of the age. Renard examines works such as the *Battalnâme*, and *Danişmendnâme*—but not the *Saltıknâme*—and although his arguments and formulations apply to Islamicate literature in general, they also fit heroic hagiography. First, Renard points out the relationship between Islamization,¹⁵⁵ indigenization,¹⁵⁶ and heroization. As Islam developed into a dominant factor, Muslim heroes, such as Prophet Muhammed and his son-in-law Ali or an Islamized hero like Alexander the Great, began “to take on the features of a local character.”¹⁵⁷ This process comprised three phases: 1) certain literary genres became popular; 2) certain heroes were adopted, and other ones dismissed; 3) heroic themes became influential in societies. Regarding Anatolia, a distinct Islamization process took place in late medieval times. As Hagen states, political boundaries were inconsistent, while identities were mostly constituted

¹⁵³ Ahmet T. Karamustafa. “Antinomian Dervish as Model Saint,” in *Modes de transmission de la culture religieuse en Islam*, ed. Hassan Elboudrari (Cairo: Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale, 1993), 241–60.

¹⁵⁴ Karamustafa, “Antinomian Dervish”, 259.

¹⁵⁵ Renard explains the term Islamization as such: “In the general sense, Islamization is the process by which the religious tradition of Islam becomes a major factor within a culture or ethnic group or region. Some understanding of that process can help clarify to what extent one can speak of Islamdom as a unity. Renard, *Islam and the Heroic Image*, 14.

¹⁵⁶ Renard implies “Indigenization is the process by which a culture, ethnic group, or region puts its own stamp on Islam, and it accounts at least in part for the diversity within Islamdom.” Renard, *Islam and the Heroic Image*, 14.

¹⁵⁷ John Renard, *Islam, and the Heroic Image: Themes in Literature and Visual Arts* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1993), 9, 16.

around religious tendencies. Hence, according to Hagen, the warrior-saint plays a critical role in the literature produced in such religious landscape.¹⁵⁸

Karamustafa underlines the fluctuating conditions of the new era and evaluates the rise of the cult of saints as a response to these circumstances including the cult of Sarı Saltık. Most importantly, Karamustafa argues that this new type of saintly hero, the antinomian dervish, was a model “for a rapidly spreading mode of reverence that thrived on his moving example.”¹⁵⁹

Reasons and Functions of Heroism in the Late Medieval Anatolia

The Islamic saints of the period between 13th and 15th centuries were not accepted as heroes only because they were sheikhs of various Sufi orders. They were real historical figures who lived and functioned in several communities. They performed many roles in society, especially in the most chaotic times of Anatolia. Thus, many of them, like Sarı Saltık, were heroized while they were still alive. Resul Ay emphasizes the active roles that Sufi sheiks played in Anatolia at this time, especially through the lodges that they established, serving as guides on religious issues, public works, and accommodation.¹⁶⁰

What kind of role model were these saints and what role did they play? The answer to what needs and necessities gave birth to these heroic figures is double-sided: on the one hand they played a vital role in real life and as idealized saintly heroic beings met various needs of the people and, on the other hand, in some cases like that of the *Saltıknâme*, also met the needs of Ottoman politics.

¹⁵⁸ Hagen, “Heroes and Saints,” 352.

¹⁵⁹ Karamustafa, “Antinomian Dervish,” 260.

¹⁶⁰ Resul Ay, “Sufi Shaykhs and Society in Thirteenth and Fifteenth Century Anatolia: Spiritual Influence and Rivalry,” *Journal of Islamic Studies* 24, no. 1 (2013): 7.

Psychological Functions: Soothing Anxiety and Promoting Bravery

When it comes to the images of saintly heroes in heroic hagiography, scholars agree that they were portrayed and functioned as role models promoting ideal beliefs, attitudes, codes and behavior. Renard stresses that any heroic figure's primary function is being an ideal role model:

From a formal point of view, the hero or heroine is the protagonist: any character who plays a starring or strong supporting role in either major literary works or the visual arts, or both. The heroic figure must in addition function as a model, an ideal of exemplary behavior as worked out in the context of adversity.¹⁶¹

Karamustafa also emphasizes that the antinomian dervishes became role-models or model-saints thanks to the efforts of the authors of the relevant narratives. Writing about sainthood, he indirectly describes the concept of heroism and the main characteristics of being a hero in late medieval Anatolian heroic hagiography.¹⁶²

Renard, just like Hagen and Karamustafa, underlines the close relation between heroes and experiencing hard and chaotic times. He uses the term “psychological” and determines the psychological functions of heroic tales as such: to inspire and encourage people to resist and fight in time of crisis.¹⁶³ Most importantly, “Listening to a hero's tale can soothe and quite anxiety.”¹⁶⁴ By transferring to listeners or readers “a sense of connectedness to historical antecedents” this heroic hagiography also function as a tool to exhort them to be brave against all the dangers and enemies.¹⁶⁵ Besides, Hagen too argues that heroic hagiographies proposed remedies for the pains of life: “They, help the believer to cope with the experience.”¹⁶⁶ He thus reads this heroic hagiography as echoing the widespread insecurity, violence, and misery felt by the lay people of the period. These

¹⁶¹ Renard, *Islam, and the Heroic Image*, 9.

¹⁶² Karamustafa, “Antinomian Dervish,” 260.

¹⁶³ Renard, *Islam and the Heroic Image*, 11.

¹⁶⁴ Renard, *Islam, and the Heroic Image*, 13.

¹⁶⁵ Renard, *Islam and the Heroic Image*, 11.

¹⁶⁶ Hagen, “Chaos, Order, Power,” 97.

people, witnessing all these calamities were also the audience of heroic tales. Accordingly, these narratives “constitute attempts to cope with these experiences by sublimating them into a religious world view.”¹⁶⁷ Indeed, *Saltıknâme* has an explicit messages for its listeners, which aims to comfort them by creating and strengthening a solid faith in the victory of Hanafi-Sunni Turks against all their enemies like *Râfızîs*, and Christians.

The other social function of heroic narratives is another psychological benefit: entertainment. As Renard notes, “heroic stories bring people together. One result of this interaction is the strengthening of national pride, a major social function is the capacity to inculcate a sense of honor and shame.”¹⁶⁸ Thus, entertainment itself was not a mere aim, it was also creating a collective past and group identity.

Social Function: Creating a Collective Memory and Building Group Identity

Renard argues that heroic tales connect the past to the present, thus creating a common past and a sense of group identity in time.¹⁶⁹ Similarly, Hagen suggests that “hagiographies are expressions of collective memory”¹⁷⁰ and thus they “must have provided the basic coordinates of identity.”¹⁷¹ Hagiographies, which were regularly recited among the dervishes, assumed an almost liturgical function in a performance that took the listener back to the mythical founder, and helped to reassert the religious group identity among his followers.¹⁷²

As a composition derived from oral tradition, most probably conceived in Bektashi circles, one can argue that the *Saltıknâme* too, functioned as a tool to create or strengthen

¹⁶⁷ Hagen, “Chaos, Order, Power,” 108.

¹⁶⁸ Renard, *Islam and the Heroic Image*, 12.

¹⁶⁹ Renard, *Islam and the Heroic Image*, 11.

¹⁷⁰ Hagen, “Heroes and Saints”, 353.

¹⁷¹ Hagen, “Heroes and Saints”, 352.

¹⁷² Hagen, “Heroes and Saints”, 355.

group identity. Although it is impossible to determine the exact contemporary audience of this narrative, based on the messages it aims to convey, I argue that the figure of Sarı Saltık as portrayed in *Saltıknâme* was meant to serve the development of Ottoman-Sunni identity officially supported by the Ottoman state.

Political Function: Constructing an Islamic Ideology

According to Renard, out of all the functions of heroic tales in Islamicate societies, the two fundamental ones are the renewal of devotion and religious education.¹⁷³ In this sense, the *Saltıknâme* is full of religious moral anecdotes, tales and even humorous stories that aim to educate its listeners and readers on ideal Islamic worship, attitudes, and a way of life. Renard, citing several other scholars, argues that the first phase of Islamization occurs by the medium of Islamic tales, interwoven with non-Islamic ones, mostly originating from ancient literary traditions.¹⁷⁴ Thus, Islamization is followed by indigenization. Sarı Saltık, from this point of view, can be seen as an indigenized hero since his portrayal in the narrative began to “take on the features of local characters” such as St. George and Battal Gâzi.¹⁷⁵ However, Saltık has a clearly distinct feature: he is a sworn enemy of the non-Hanafi-Sunnis, not only in the Ottoman lands, but all over the world. Saltık journeys through the world to find and kill the *Râfizîs*, thus establishing not just an Islamic but a Hanafi-Sunni-Islamic order. As Hagen suggests, the hagiographies of the era “clearly advocate a specific ideology”¹⁷⁶ and this ideology in *Saltıknâme* coincides with the late fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Ottoman politics, as is detailed in Chapter 2.

¹⁷³ Renard, *Islam and the Heroic Image*, 11.

¹⁷⁴ Renard, *Islam and the Heroic Image*, 15-16.

¹⁷⁵ Renard, *Islam and the Heroic Image*, 16.

¹⁷⁶ Hagen, “Heroes and Saints”, 357.

From the Heroic Age of Anatolia to the Age of Confessionalization

The heroic age of Anatolia, as Hagen states, continued until the early sixteenth century, and came to an end when the Ottoman state completed its consolidation.¹⁷⁷ However, “the heroic tradition did not disappear completely. Under a growing layer of hegemonic elite culture, a popular collective memory of heroic figures remained in place.”¹⁷⁸

As noted in the literature review, Krstić shows that the political rivalry between the Habsburgs, the Ottomans and the Safavids in the early modern era was accompanied by a longtime religio-cultural competition, and it strengthened the “millenarian tendencies and expectations of spiritual renewal.”¹⁷⁹ The rivalry, competition and millenarian anxieties came to a climax in the sixteenth century when the 1591 manuscript of *Saltıknâme* was copied. In the following chapter, I examine the 16th century layer of the narrative by analyzing the messages, beliefs and ideals reflect these certain features of the age of confessionalization.

I.2. Sarı Saltık as a Historical and Legendary Hero

Sarı Saltık, as a heroic-saintly figure, was widely known in Anatolia, and the Balkans from the thirteenth century onwards. Although there is evidence that Sarı Saltık was a Sufi sheikh and a real historical figure in the thirteenth century, there is still scarce information about his real-life character, although his religious tendency and affiliation are much clearer. Ocak, based on the depictions and information in varied sources about Sarı Saltık and his famous follower called Barak Baba, describes Sarı Saltık as a Qalandari sheikh.¹⁸⁰ Both

¹⁷⁷ Hagen, “Heroes and Saints”, 350, 358.

¹⁷⁸ Hagen, “Heroes and Saints”, 358, 359.

¹⁷⁹ Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, 11.

¹⁸⁰ Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Marjinal Sufilik: Kalenderiler, XIV-XVII. Yüzyıllar* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1999).

Ocak and İnalçık agree that Saltık was a follower of *Baba İshak*, the non-Sunni dervish-leader of the 1240 popular revolt in Anatolia.¹⁸¹ However, except the *Velâyetnâme-i Hacı Bektaş*, no other source confirms this supposition, and indeed, Kemal Yüce argues that it cannot be concluded based on the information given in *Saltıknâme*.¹⁸²

As we learn from the earliest—and probably the most historically accurate—source about Saltık's life, the *Tüffâhu'l Arwah* written around 1315/6,¹⁸³ he was accepted as an Islamic saint (*velî*), a miracle worker, a saintly hero while he was still alive. After his death (ar. 1293 [?]), a heroic cult was formed around him, interwoven with certain local elements from Christian/Byzantine and Islamic/Turkic cult of saints, such as St. George, the beliefs about al-Khidr, and the stories of Battal Gâzi, and thus he was re-heroized. When and how Sarı Saltık was remembered also as a war hero who fought and conquered places for the glory of Islam is unknown. But it is estimated that the legendary stories about his heroism displayed against the unbelievers, and the troublesome dragons began to circulate for some time before the fifteenth century. It is the time when, as noted in the literature review, the Bektashis adopted Sarı Saltık as one of their own, incorporating his figure into their tradition, and his commemoration as a Bektashi warrior-saint began. Since it is beyond the scope of the present study to explore the historical personality of Sarı Saltık, pieces of information will suffice here to show how his heroization process developed across centuries, and how his image was used to legitimate another story.

Saltıknâme, a heroic hagiography about his life and deeds, was, mostly, compiled from the oral tradition, most probably in the Sufi circles in the Balkans and Anatolia. In both these regions, there are many shrines attributed to him which are still visited for religious

¹⁸¹ Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Sarı Saltuk: Popüler İslam'ın Balkanlardaki Destani Öncüsü, 13. Yüzyıl* [Sarı Saltuk: The legendary pioneer of popular Islam in the Balkans], third edition (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2016); İnalçık, *The Ottoman Empire the Classical Age*, 228.

¹⁸² Yüce, *Saltıknâme'de Tarihi, Dini*, 112-115.

¹⁸³ al-Sarraj, *Tüffâhu'l-Ervâh*, 2015.

reasons today. His religious-heroic cult is respected not only by Alevi-Bektashi and Sunni Muslims but also by Christians. He is commemorated as a hero who protected people from danger, and a saint who performed miracles such as causing spring waters to break forth with a strike of his staff to a rock. While Sarı Saltık was a popular heroic figure and still is, the same cannot be suggested for *Saltıknâme*. The popularity of *Saltıknâme* in late medieval Anatolia is unclear. As Helga Anetshofer states, considering the number of its copies as well as “its enormous length, [and] its less entertaining style compared to *Battalnâme*” it is an exaggeration to think that it was widely circulated.¹⁸⁴ Moreover, the text contains hardly any reliable information on the historical person of Sarı Saltık,¹⁸⁵ and *Tuffâhu'l Arwah* is the only existing source including historical anecdotes on his life and deeds. On the other hand, although İbn Sarraj claimed that he met Sarı Saltık and they sent letters to each other, there are no signs of any letters in this work, and the anecdotes he records are *menkıbes* portraying Saltık as an Islamic miracle worker aiming to convince the audience of his sainthood.

More primary sources about Saltık as a historical person would doubtlessly contribute to identifying the differences between the real Saltık and the picture painted of him in *Saltıknâme* as a hero. In the following chapter, information about him found in various available sources will be gathered to summarize his legendary and historical profile, trace the phases of his heroization, and show that he was heroized again and again over the centuries.

By heroization I mean a process which begins with the formation of a heroic cult around a person generally mixed with local elements, various heroes, and literary motifs from several traditions. In a later phase of this process, a hero or heroine is generally detracted from his/her historicity, transformed into a constructed figure, as was the case of

¹⁸⁴ Anetshofer, “Legends of Sarı Saltık,” 292.

¹⁸⁵ For a detailed analysis see: Ocak, *Sarı Saltık*, 8.

Sarı Saltık. This process can be repeated time and again and due to the political, social, and economical changes and different circumstances in a certain environment or period, the hero or heroine is re-heroized gaining new features each time. The initiators, builders or continuators of this process can be lay people, power holding elites, patrons of literary or architectural materials or all of them at the same time. Even if they do not use the word heroization, Hagen's formulation of the heroic age of Anatolia, and Karamustafa's emphasis on the rising of the cult of saints in the same period imply and involve the same process.

Sarı Saltık's heroization can be reconstructed as follows:

- 1) 13th and 14th centuries: the emergence and circulation of religious-heroic stories of Saltık as an Islamic saint during his lifetime.
- 2) 14th and 15th centuries: the adoption of his figure by the Balkan Christians, and his stories being mixed and interwoven with the local saints such as St. George and St. Nicholas.
- 3) 15th century: the adoption of his figure by the Bektashis, and his stories being mixed and interwoven with several other Bektashi saints.
- 4) 16th century: Re-heroization of Sarı Saltık as a Hanafi-Sunni-Muslim holy warrior saint by Ebu'l-Hayr-I Rûmî, and subsequent copyists of *Saltıknâme*, perhaps commissioned by various sultans or any other patrons.
- 5) 17th century: Evliyâ Çelebi's efforts to rebuild Sarı Saltık's image as a Sunni and Turkish Muslim whose real name was Muhammed Buhari.

The emergence of Sarı Saltık's Religious-Heroic Cult

The *Tuffâh al-Arwah* by Ibn al-Sarraj, completed in 1315/6, is the earliest known source which mentions Sarı Saltık. It can be considered as evidence for the first phase of Sarı Saltık's heroization. H. T. Norris devotes considerable attention to the information given by al-Sarraj.¹⁸⁶ According to the *Tuffâh al-Arwah*, Saltık was a sheikh, an Islamic saint whose miracles were witnessed by many from different places, and also a warrior who fought

¹⁸⁶ H. T. Norris, *Popular Sufism of Eastern Europe, Sufi Brotherhoods, and the Dialogue with Christianity and 'Heterodoxy'* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 57-66.

against the Christians with his followers. Al-Sarraġ also calls him “Saltık the Turk” and claims that he died in 1296/7:

Sheikh Saltuq resided in a small town called Sakj, as it is pronounced in the Qipchaq (Qifchaqiyya) language. The neophytes asked him to create a source of water for his town. He struck a rock with his hand and a spring of water gushed forth then and there. It flowed and never ceased to flow. The tomb (türbe) of Sheikh Saltuq is located at a distance of three hours journey from Sabhi? (Sakj/Sakçe) He died in 697 AH/ 1296/7 AD. May God be pleased with him'.¹⁸⁷

Norris identifies Sakj as the town of Isaccea which the Turks called İsakça, its old and Slavic name can also be found in one of the most common *menkıbes* about Sarı Saltık: wherein he caused spring water to burst forth from a rock.¹⁸⁸ In scholarship regarding Sarı Saltık there is not much doubt that he was a *gâzi* and a conqueror of several cities in the Balkans. In this context, it is worth examining the *Tuffâh al-Arwah*'s claim that he waged wars against the infidels with his disciples. Before the *Tuffâh al-Arwah* was discovered there were no historical sources depicting him as a holy warrior [gâzi-dervish] except for the *Saltıknâme*, yet, following Köprülü's description of Saltık as “a great *ghazi* dervish and *alp-eren* [hero-dervish] who seized fortresses with wooden swords and extracted tribute from the unbelievers,”¹⁸⁹ many scholars accepted that he was a warrior as his hagiography claimed. At odds with this commonly held view, Karamustafa is still not convinced on this matter and states that “there is no solid evidence that he was a warrior or not.”¹⁹⁰

In *Saltıknâme*, the place called *Baba* (*Babadağı* in Dobrudja) was conquered by Sarı Saltık and the town still contains shrines dedicated to him, as well as a lodge which owns ships and cattle. He is also said to have conquered *Babaeskilisi* which is situated between Adrianople and Istanbul. The dome near the town is now a shrine to Sarı Saltık. The infidel

¹⁸⁷ Norris, *Popular Sufism*, 60, 61.

¹⁸⁸ Norris, *Popular Sufism*, 62.

¹⁸⁹ Köprülü, *The Seljuks of Anatolia*, 46.

¹⁹⁰ Karamustafa, “Islamization through,” 352.

Christians reconquered the town after Sarı Saltık's death. Thereafter Sultan Orhan conquered it, and indeed, *Babakıyas* which is situated on the way to Bursa is also famous.¹⁹¹ In this source, Saltık waged wars against many more infidels from various towns and countries around the world and conquered many places—some legendary and some real. In *Tuffâh al-Arwah* there is a long *menkıbe*—which the *Saltıknâme* also includes nearly verbatim—describing Saltık and his disciples as raiders.¹⁹² Interestingly, neither Saltık nor his followers are depicted as participating in battle. Instead, in an unknown place which is obviously not a battlefield, in front of his disciples' eyes, Saltık stands up, undresses, and begins to move about as if he were fighting:

He stripped his clothes from his body and, then and there, stark naked, he began to move to and for as he stood upright. His movements were disturbing, and he acted as though he was someone who was struggling with an adversary. All this occurred while, blood oozed with the sweat from his body. The novices (*al-fuqarâ*) wiped his body, time after time, during a period that lasted for three hours, about a quarter of the daylight hours. Then he sat down, and he was quiet.¹⁹³

When Saltık is asked what those bizarre and incomprehensible behaviors mean, he claims that he was in the battlefield, saw that the Muslims needed help, and so he began to fight and saved them from death. Only three men were wounded, and it was because they had not believed that Saltık was an Islamic saint:

He replied, 'that company of men went forth to fight the foe. A host of the infidels, who numbered some thirty thousand went forth to fight them. When I saw how feeble they were in the face of those others, I joined their company. I did so through the power of the Almighty. I fought against their enemy and I rescued them from death. I went before them on their way. Only very few of them perished. They totaled three. They had followed a path that was different from the one which I had told them to follow'.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹¹ "Kâfirler baba diyü yad iderlerdi. On iki yirde makamları vardır. Baba didikleri Babatağı'nı Sarı Saltık feth itmişdür ve kasabanun hala makamları ve tekkesi vardır. Tekkenün koyunı, sığırı çok bir makamdur. Edirne ile İstanbul arasında olan Babaeskisilisi nam kasabayı ol feth itmişdür ve kasabanun kenarında olan kubbe Sarı Saltık makamıdır. Kafirler Sarı Saltık vefatından sonra yine ol kasabayı aldılar. Ba'de Sultan Orhan feth eyledi ve dahı Bursa'ya deniz ile giderken Babakıyas meşhurdur." Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 37.

¹⁹² Norris, *Popular Sufism*, 58.

¹⁹³ Norris, *Popular Sufism*, 58.

¹⁹⁴ Norris, *Popular Sufism*, 58.

After a while, the three rescued men, whom Saltık had previously identified, show up, “threw themselves down at his feet” and beg for mercy for their disbelief saying “For long we have been in ignorance of your divine status. Let us abide at your bidding, O saint of God’.”¹⁹⁵

Can this *menkıbe* be accepted as evidence to the claim that Sarı Saltık was a warrior? Upon careful reading it reveals that its primary aim was to convince the audience of the sainthood of Saltık, rather than of his warlike acts. The rest of the *menkıbes* in the *Tuffâh al-Arwah* in which Saltık is discussed are about his divine powers, and al-Sarraj consistently urges his audience that Muslims must believe in saints and their sainthood nearly as pillars of Islam. In this context, the abovementioned *menkıbe* of his “military miracle” seems to be another effort to promote the religious-heroic cult of Sarı Saltık.

Another dimension that *Tuffâh al-Arwah* contributed to the debates is the religious affiliation of Sarı Saltık. Before this source was discovered, fourteenth-century traveler Ibn Battuta’s record his cemented inconvenient reputation:

We came to the town known by the name of Baba Saltuq. Baba in their language has exactly the same meaning as among the Berbers [father] but they pronounce the b more emphatically. They relate that this Saltuq was an ecstatic devotee, although things are told of him which are reproved by the Divine Law.¹⁹⁶

Al-Sarraj also defines him as a *müvelleh* (mad dervish) and paints a non-Sunni picture of him. Ocak adds that *müvelleh* is a subjective word that implies sympathy and favor to the person it refers to, and also refers to non-Sunni dervishes.¹⁹⁷ Ocak also deduces that he was from the Haydâri branch of Qalandariyya.¹⁹⁸ In the *Tuffâh al-Arwah* reports about Saltık are

¹⁹⁵ Norris, *Popular Sufism*, 58.

¹⁹⁶ Ibn Battuta, *The Travels of Ibn Battuta, A.D. 1325–1354*, vol. 2, ed. H. A. R. Gibb (London: Routledge, 2017), 499-500. “Baba Saltuk ‘mükâşif’ biriymiş. Lakin hakkında söylenenler dinin temel prensipleriyle bağdaşmamaktadır.” In Ibn Battuta, *İbn Battuta Seyahatnamesi*, ed. Sait Aykut (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2004), 498.

¹⁹⁷ Ocak, *Sarı Saltuk*, 2016.

¹⁹⁸ Ocak, *Marjinal Sufilik*, 64-66.

related by Sayyid Bahram Shah who was, according to al-Sarraj, a Haydâri, which also underpins Ocak's suggestion.

The Balkan Christians' Adoption of Sarı Saltık

In the *Tuffâh al-Arwah*, Ibn al-Sarraj complains that the Christians appreciate the value of Sarı Saltık's sainthood more than the Muslims do.¹⁹⁹ Considering that it is a book from 1315/6, Saltık's commemoration as a hero by the Christians must have begun around the beginning of the fourteenth century. Why and how is not known for certain. His Christian cult is the center of attention in studies about his historical and religious personality, and one of the reasons why historians accept Saltık as a heroic figure. According to *Saltıknâme* the "infidels" also remembered him as *baba* (father), an epithet for the leaders of the dervish groups, especially the *Bektâşîs* in medieval and late medieval Anatolia.²⁰⁰

On the other hand, in the context of the *Tuffâh al-Arwah* where they are mentioned as Christians, it seems that these respectful Christians must have remained loyal to their religion and not converted to Islam with Saltık's help or coercion. It was, however, at this time that the stories about Saltık were increasingly mixed and interwoven with those of the Christian saints such as St. George and St. Nicholas. This phenomenon is generally explained with the tolerance theory and shared sacred spaces, as Anetshofer summarizes:

As a result of the Ottoman conquests in the Balkans from the 14th century onwards, Orthodox Christians and Sunni Muslims lived closely together, and intermarriage and conversion occurred on a regular basis. The people accepted this situation with more or less tolerance. As part of the same process, Christians and Muslims began to share some of the old religious sites, and this also brought about the identification of some Christian saints with Muslim saints.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁹ al-Sarraj, *Tuffâhu'l-Ervâh*, 322.

²⁰⁰ F. Taeschner, "Baba," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_0973 Taeschner also points out that "As part of a place name, *Baba* indicates that the place had dervish associations. Thus, for example, *Baba Dağı* in the Dobrudja, where the tomb of the famous saint Sarı Saltık Baba is."

²⁰¹ Anetshofer, "Legends of Sarı Saltık", 293.

While the commonly held idea in Turkish historiography is that Sarı Saltık played a prominent role in the Islamization of the Balkans, from the earliest studies onwards, it is also accepted that the Bektahsis adopted Sarı Saltık's cult and transformed his figure into a Bektashi saint to favor their propaganda. These two purported religious trajectories seem somewhat conflicting so in the following section I will explore how the Bektashis must have played a more important part in Saltık's story.

Sarı Saltık's Becoming a Bektashi Saint

The exact years or period when the Bektashis began to embrace Sarı Saltık is not clear. It can be traced back to the middle of fourteenth century,²⁰² but judging from the first written evidence, Sarı Saltık seems to have become a part of Bektashi tradition in Bektashi *menâkıbnâmes* and *velâyetnâmes* from the fifteenth century onwards. As noted in the literature review, although these sources claim a connection between Sarı Saltık, Hacı Bektaş and Bektashism, scholars—except Gölpınarlı— agree that Sarı Saltık was not a Bektashi but instead that his person was adopted and transformed to serve their own religious and political propaganda.²⁰³ This was obviously because Sarı Saltık was a heroic figure in the eyes of local people, and the Bektashis most probably used his heroic image as a tool to convert local Christians to Islam more easily.

Various Bektashi hagiographies from the 15th century mention Sarı Saltık and they answer the question as to why he is still recognized as a great saint of the Alevi-Bektashi

²⁰² İnalçık, *The Classical Age*, 233-4.

²⁰³ According to Gölpınarlı there was a connection between Saltık and Hacı Bektaş: "Sarı Saltık is a historical personality who was contemporaneous with Hacı Bektaş, and Saltık was one of his successors." Gölpınarlı, *Yunus Emre*, 35.

tradition today.²⁰⁴ The *Velâyetnâme-i Hacı Bektaş*, written in the last decades of the 15th century, is the most important one amongst them. According to *Velâyetnâme*, Sarı Saltık was a shepherd until he met and became a disciple of Hacı Bektaş, Saltık then traveled from Sinop to Georgia with Ulu Abdal and Kichi Abdal, inviting the people to Islam, and founding his *tekke* in Dobruja.²⁰⁵

In *Saltıknâme*, the meeting between Hacı Bektaş and Sarı Saltık takes place only after Sarı Saltık had many epic adventures and fought numerous *gazâs*, converting infidels in Rumeli, on Mt. Qaf, in India, Turkestan, and other places. Hacı Bektaş sends Sarı Saltık to Fakih Ahmed, however, it is Mahmud Hayran who sends Saltık out for raids or *gazâ* into foreign (non-Muslim) territories.

In the 15th century, the cult of Sarı Saltık is further developed. Other sources outside the hagiographies indicate that Sarı Saltık was still popular, especially in the Balkans. 15th century historian Yazıcızâde Ali, in his work *Tevârih-i Âl-i Selçuk*, written during the reign of Murad II (r. 1421-44, 1446-51), and completed around 1436/7, deviates from previous sources: here Sarı Saltık is said to have led a migration wave of Turkic tribes from Anatolia to Dobruja during the reign of the Seljukid Sultan, Izzaddîn Kaikavus II (r. 1246-1262).²⁰⁶ Although on the history of Seljukids Yazıcızâde Ali uses passages from İbni Bibi's (d. 1285) Persian history translated to Turkish, about Sarı Saltık he must have heard *menkıbes* in the very places that this event occurred.²⁰⁷ There are several other sources that include information on this migration such as Georgios Pachymeres (d. ca. 1310) and Nikephoros Gregoras (d. 1360), however, as Ocak finds, none of them record a leader named Sarı Saltık.

²⁰⁴ For various versions of legendary stories about Sarı Saltık see Köprülü, *Early Mystics*, 32-37, and Anetshofer, "Legends of Sarı Saltık," 292.

²⁰⁵ Köprülü, *Early Mystics*, 54. For Turkish see: *Vilâyet-nâme, Manâkıb-ı Hünekâr Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli*, trans. Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı (Istanbul: İnkilap Yayınevi, 2017), 44-47.

²⁰⁶ Today, a region between Romania and Bulgaria. Halil İnalçık, "Dobruđja," in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Second Edition, ed. P. Bearman, and others, accessed May 26, 2020, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_2137; Ocak, *Zındıklar ve Mülhidler*, 191.

²⁰⁷ Ocak, *Sarı Saltık*, 2.

On the other hand, this migration story is generally accepted as a historical fact on account of the existence of Turkic groups in Dobrudja. İnalçık argues that the choice to migrate had to do with Sarı Saltık's being a *Bâbâî* sheikh who, after the *Bâbâî* Revolt in 1240 in Anatolia, had no choice but to emigrate.²⁰⁸

At the same time, Paul Wittek, analyzing this migration story, concludes that the mention on Sarı Saltık in Yazıcızâde Ali's history is nothing "but a for-runner" primarily serving to narrate the Barak Baba's story.²⁰⁹ According to this episode, Barak was the son of the Seljukid Sultan who was born a Muslim but raised as a Christian monk in the service of the patriarch in Hagia Sophia. When Sarı Saltık heard this, he asked the patriarch to send Barak to him. Since the patriarch knew that Saltık was a holy man, he sent Barak who, thanks to Saltık's efforts, became a Muslim again and a dervish in his service.²¹⁰ Wittek finds Yazıcızâde Ali's account chronologically and logically consistent, although the author, using his literary skills, organizes several stories in a coherent order to legitimate Seljukid Sultan Izzedin and his people's exile to *dâr'ül-harb*, and assures his Muslim audience that Izzeddîn ultimately "dies in exile but on a Muslim soil and one of his sons returns to the throne of Rum, another son ends a Muslims saint."²¹¹

Some forty years later, as claimed in the *Saltıknâme*, Sultan Cem (d. 1495), son of Mehmed II, was sent to Edirne by his father who went on a campaign against Uzun Hasan of Aqqoyunlu. Sultan Cem travelled from Edirne to Babadağı in the Dobrudja,²¹² and visited the shrine of Sarı Saltık, and he was so impressed by the *menkıbes* about him, as narrated by the dervishes, that he commissioned Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî to compile and write them up. If

²⁰⁸ Halil İnalçık, *The Ottoman Empire The Classical Age*, 228.

²⁰⁹ Paul Wittek, "Yazıcıoğlu 'Alî on the Christian Turks of the Dobruja." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 14, no. 3 (1952), 655.

²¹⁰ Wittek, "Yazıcıoğlu 'Alî," 650.

²¹¹ Wittek, "Yazıcıoğlu 'Alî," 667.

²¹² Şükrü Haluk Akalın, "Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî," in *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, accessed May 26 2020, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/ebulhayr-rumi>. Ocak thinks that Babadağı is Babaeski, now in Kırklareli, Turkey. Ocak, *Sarı Saltık*, 7.

Sultan Cem really heard the legendary stories about him which may well have happened, it shows that Saltık was still remembered by many people.

A few years later, Kemalpaşazâde (İbn Kemal, d. 1534), a historian and shaykh al-Islam in the service of Sultan Cem's brother Bayezid II (r. 1481-1512), in his *Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman* mentions Sarı Saltık as a great and respected Muslim saint.²¹³ According to Evliyâ Çelebi, Bayezid II, just like his brother Cem, could not remain indifferent to Sarı Saltık's respectful reputation while he was on a campaign and heard his stories. So Bayezid II visited his shrine in Babadağı in 1484, and as a result of a dream which was astonishingly the same dream that led "to Battal Gâzi's lost tomb to be discovered in Seljukids time," had this shrine repaired.²¹⁴ The sultan also built a mosque there, as well as a *zawiya*, a *madrassa*, and a bath for the people.²¹⁵ Lewis and Ocak state that there are two documents of 1667 and 1699 about the *wakf* which Bayezid II endowed there, and they are listed in the catalogue of the Topkapı Palace.²¹⁶

Kiel and Yüce both suggest that Bayezid II had political motivations behind this architectural generosity: the sultan sought support during his conflict with his brother Cem, which began after their father's death. Both this conflict, and his fugitive brother, were still alive at this time. Sultan Cem had the support of the sheikhs in Karaman, therefore Bayezid II had to enlist the support of other sheikhs for himself and his cause.²¹⁷ Ocak argues that Sarı Saltık's shrine in Babadağı enjoyed a privileged position.²¹⁸ Most importantly, Babadağı and its neighboring towns, just like most parts in the Ottoman Balkans, were predominantly controlled by non-Sunni *sûfîs*, dervishes, and *gâzis*—and lay people respected

²¹³ Ocak, *Zındıklar ve Mülhidler*, 191.

²¹⁴ Kiel, "Güneydoğu Avrupa'da," 29.

²¹⁵ *An Ottoman Traveller: Selections from the Book of Travels by Evliya Celebi*, trans. Robert Dankoff and Sooyong Kim (New York: Eland Publishing, 2011), 281.

²¹⁶ Ocak, *Sarı Saltık*, 112; B. Lewis, "Babadaghi," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, accessed May 26, 2020, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_0976.

²¹⁷ Yüce, *Saltıknâme'de Tarihi, Dini*, 19-20.

²¹⁸ Ocak, *Sarı Saltık*, 112.

and followed them. In 1416, those groups joined a political revolt against the Ottoman state led by Şeyh Bedreddin (d. 1420).²¹⁹ Bayezid II must have used his generosity to show a kind of moderation and dignity towards a heroic figure as Sarı Saltık.

One year before Bayezid II's visit to Babadağı, the hagiography of a Qalandari sheikh named Otman Baba (d. 1478) was written by his disciple Küçük Abdal. This narrative also included memories about Sarı Saltık, and Otman Baba, who spent most of his life amongst the Turkic non-Sunni groups in the Balkans, claiming that he was Sarı Saltık. It is interpreted through a belief similar to reincarnation (*tenâsüh*), prevalent among non-Sunni groups at the time. This again demonstrates that Saltık's cult and image as a hero was so alive and tempting that even Otman Baba's disciple, the author of his hagiography, included this claim in his work.²²⁰

However, it seems that Bayezid II's effort did not appease the Qalandari opponents of the Balkans, and during a campaign in Albania the sultan suffered an attempt on his life by a Qalandari dervish. The followers of Otman Baba were held responsible for this attempt. The sultan survived the attack and decreed all members of this order were to be exiled from Edirne. The judge of Edirne enforced this order and some of the Qalandari were expelled from the city, while some were executed by hanging.²²¹ Bayezid II was not satisfied with this, and in 1501 the sultan appointed Balım Sultan (d. 1519), the sheikh of the lodge belonging to Kızıl Deli in Dimetoka, as the head of Bektashi order at Hacı Bektaş.²²² Thus, the formalization of Bektashi order, and another phase of Sarı Saltık's heroization began.

²¹⁹ D. Kastritsis, "The Şeyh Bedreddin Uprising in the Context of the Ottoman Civil War of 1402-13," in *Political Initiatives 'From the Bottom Up' in the Ottoman Empire: Halcyon Days in Crete VII; A Symposium Held in Rethymo 9-11 January*, ed. A. Anastasopoulos (Crete: Crete University Press, 2009), 233-250.

²²⁰ Haşim Şahin, "Otman Baba," in *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, accessed May 26, 2020, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/otman-baba>

²²¹ Kiel, "Güneydoğu Avrupa'da," 31.

²²² Thierry Zarcone, "Bektasiyye," 23.

Re-Heroization of Sarı Saltık as the Champion of Sunni-Islam

The first year of the sixteenth century marked the transformation of Bektashi order and the heroic image of Sarı Saltık. It was only the beginning and, as Yüce says, “in the Ottoman times [the image of] Sarı Saltık underwent many changes under the influence of religious and political propaganda.”²²³ It seems that Sarı Saltık’s religious identity was becoming increasingly important. At the end of this century, Sarı Saltık became a Hanafi-Sunni-Muslim holy warrior saint through the work of Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî and the following copyists of *Saltıknâme*, which may have been commissioned by several sultans or other patrons.

Süleyman the Lawgiver (r. 1520-66) was another sultan who visited Sarı Saltık’s shrine in Babadağ, while traveling to Wallachia (Boğdan) for a military campaign in 1538. His curiosity piqued; the sultan asked his shaykh al-Islam Ebussuûd Efendi (d. 1574) who Sarı Saltık was. Ebussuûd Efendi, unlike his predecessor Kemalpaşazâde, proffered a *fatwa* saying that Saltık “was a monk who became a skeleton because of his abstemiousness.”²²⁴ What could Süleyman have heard about Sarı Saltık that prompted him to pose this question to the shaykh al-Islam? And on what grounds did Ebussuûd Efendi give this answer? The sources are silent but Anetshofer convincingly argues that Sarı Saltık’s identification with Christian saints, and perhaps also some of his activities that were considered heterodox, must have caused discomfort among the Ottoman authorities and ulema in the 16th century.²²⁵

At this time the Safavid threat from Iran was growing and began to pose a greater challenge to the Ottoman state in Süleyman’s reign. Thus the pressure on non-Sunni groups from the state increased because they mostly supported the Safavids.²²⁶ In archival records

²²³ Yüce, *Saltıknâme’de Tarihi, Dini*, 78.

²²⁴ Ökiç, “Sarı Saltık’a Ait Bir Fetva”, 56. “Riyazet ile kadid olmuş bir keşiştir.”

²²⁵ Anetshofer, “Legends of Sarı Saltık,” 293.

²²⁶ Erünsal, “XV-XVI. Asır Osmanlı Zendeke ve İlhad,” 127.

from this period, they were called *Kızılbaş*, *Râfizi*, *Işık*, and so on.²²⁷ The Ottoman state took measures to prevent these non-Sunni groups from joining or supporting the Safavids. One of these measures was assimilating these non-Sunni groups into the Bektashi order, which was seen as less dangerous.²²⁸ The Ottoman state, with the purpose of integrating the *Râfizi* groups in its territory into its governmental system, supported the Bektashis.²²⁹

In this way, originally a Qalandari sheikh, Sarı Saltık became known as a Bektashi sheikh in popular culture. I argue that it is not a coincidence that this recreated layer of Sarı Saltık's heroization as a champion of Sunni Islam, and defender of Hanafism in the *Saltıknâme* occurs, instead it reflects the Ottoman politics of this era. But how successful were these attempts? Another phase of the heroization process, Evliyâ Çelebi's efforts to rebuild Sarı Saltık's image as a Sunni and Turkish Muslim whose real name was Muhammed Buhari—a name that is not recorded in any other sources—was another effort to repair his image.²³⁰

Evliyâ Çelebi's Sarı Saltık: Turkic Origins with Sunni Background

Evliyâ Çelebi dedicated many pages to stories about Sarı Saltık. He compiled them from the dervishes in Bektashi lodges when travelling through the Balkans. Ocak rightly states that the the portrayal of Sarı Saltık in *Seyahatnâme* is an image intermingled with the

²²⁷ "Turkmen who owed religious and political allegiance to the Safavid ruler Shah Ismail (r. 1501-24) were called Kızılbaş." The terms Rafizi, Işık, etc. were used to depict them in the late sixteenth century. Thierry Zarcone, "Bektasiyye," 22. The word "rafizi" derives from the root "rafz" meaning to leave, abandon, and it means a person or a group who has left the group or gave up an idea. After the period of rashidun caliphate (632-661) this word used as a term to depict the Shiite groups rejected the caliphate of the first three caliphs. Mustafa Öz, "Râfiziler," *İslam Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2007), 34, 396-397.

²²⁸ Bektâşiyye was considered less heretical than the other antinomian movements of the period and was thus given the mission of weaning the Kızılbaş from beliefs considered heretical to the extreme and to unify and institutionalise the Anatolian antinomian movements under the umbrella of a single brotherhood. Thierry Zarcone, "Bektasiyye," 23.

²²⁹ Rıza Yıldırım, "Bektaşî Kime Derler? Bektaşî Kavramının Kapsamı ve Sınırları Üzerine Tarihsel Bir Analiz Denemesi" [Who is called "Bektashi"? A historical analysis of the content and boundaries of the term], *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Veli Araştırma Dergisi* 55 (2010): 23-58.

²³⁰ Yüce, *Saltıknâme'de Tarihi, Dini*, 31.

legends of local Christian saints in the Balkans and took its place in Bektashi tradition.²³¹ In these stories Sarı Saltık is again an Islamic saint who converted Christians to Islam through his bravery in facing enemies and monsters and by performing miraculous deeds. According to Anetshofer, Evliyâ must have been aware of Ebussuûd's *fatwa* even though he never mentioned it in his *Seyahatnâme*.²³² Evliyâ chose the name Muhammed Buhârî for Sarı Saltık to indicate that he was a Sunni Muslim of Turkic origin. He explains the name Sarı Saltık by taking over the identity of a Christian priest (Esvet Nikola) to infiltrate the Christians and convert them to Islam.²³³ Elsewhere in his work, Evliyâ claims that Sarı Saltık “was called Esved Nikola in the lands of the infidels.”²³⁴ Evliyâ's usage of the name Sarı Saltık as equivalent to St. George is rather interesting.²³⁵

The most interesting addition to the cult of Sarı Saltık is his association with *boza*-sellers. It seems that *boza* (a kind of beverage) was treated as an alcoholic drink, and Evliyâ argues against this belief: “The boza-sellers say: ‘Our *pîr* is Sarı Saltık, he is the patron of the boza-sellers’ — God forbid! He was a great saint, a noble descendant of the Prophet.”²³⁶ Whether he tried to make a sensible explanation for the rumors or beliefs about Sarı Saltık or aimed to record them with an intellectual intent as a folkloric account, pretending to reject them, remains unclear.

It is understood that in the seventeenth century, stories about Sarı Saltık were still circulating and they include the old rumors that he was in fact a Christian, a non-Turkish hero, and/or was a non-Sunni who did not observe *sharia*. Importantly, this also proves the ultimate failure of attempts by the *Saltıknâme*'s author and copyists to recreate his image as

²³¹ Ocak, *Sarı Saltık*, 4.

²³² Anetshofer, “Legends of Sarı Saltık,” 293.

²³³ Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatnâme*, ed. Mümin Çevik (Istanbul: Üçdal Neşriyat, 2011), 489.

²³⁴ Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatnâme*, 492.

²³⁵ Dankoff, *An Ottoman Traveller*, 201.

²³⁶ Anetshofer, “Legends of Sarı Saltık,” 293.

a Sunni: the text was either not as popular as it is claimed to be, or the narrative was simply not convincing for the people.

The Current Phase

Beginning with the introduction of the *Saltıknâme* to the scholarship in 1936, many scholars have used the word “hero” when referring to Sarı Saltık. For example, Gölpınarlı dismisses Hasluck’s argument that Balkan Christians respected Sarı Saltık as a saint and claims that “it is unnecessary to say that Sarı Saltık has no tangible relation to Christianity. On the contrary, he was a Turkish Muslim hero [who] fought against them.”²³⁷ Köprülü stresses Sarı Saltık’s image as a hero for the Western Turks saying he “was not an ordinary dervish, but a hero who conquered countries with a wooden sword and spread the faith.”²³⁸ He also stresses the Christians’ view using the same language: “Sarı Saltuk was venerated as a great hero and saint who spread Islam in Anatolia and, above all, in Rumelia. A special cult grew up around this personality among both Muslims and Balkan Christians.”²³⁹ Okiç is convinced of Saltık’s aim to spread Islam in Southeastern Europe and depicts him as “a hero of honor, a great missionary of Islam.”²⁴⁰ On the other hand, Norris defines him as a “shaman-like character” and “the most popular of all the heroes of the Bektashiyya.”²⁴¹

Except for Okiç, using the word “hero” for Sarı Saltık in scholarship maintains the relevance of his cult and memories representing him through the eyes and minds of Muslims and Christians. In recent years, Turkish academia perceptibly shifted towards a trend of aggrandizing Sarı Saltık as a missionary of Islam, as is suggested by Okiç, despite the lack

²³⁷ “SS’in Hristiyanlıkla müsbet alakası olmadığını söylemeğe bile lüzum yoktur. O bilakis Hristiyanlarla harb etmiş kahraman bir Müslüman Türk velisidir.”Gölpınarlı, *Yunus Emre*, 35.

²³⁸ Köprülü, *Early Mystics*, 266.

²³⁹ Köprülü, *The Seljuks of Anatolia*, 43.

²⁴⁰ Okiç, “Sarı Saltuk’a Ait Bir Fetva,” 48, 49.

²⁴¹ Norris, *Popular Sufism*, 54.

of sources to prove it. In these works, using the word hero for Sarı Saltık does not mark his image as conceived by his contemporaries and people who commemorated him but is guided by the scholars' agenda about him.²⁴² Ocak, in a later work, describes this situation as a "sociological phenomenon peculiar to Turkey" and criticizes these works that are "focusing only the literal expressions of the sources,"²⁴³ reminding his readers that the 1591 manuscript of *Saltuknâme* is not the original copy and reflects the views of the copyists and Sunni public opinion. In his words:

The theological approach dominant in the conservative opinion in Turkey does not rely on the methodology of historiography. Instead, by entirely ignoring the methodology, this approach views the 13th century nomadic Turkic tribes newly converted to Islam as Sunnis just like the Sunnis in today's Turkey. Thus, this approach views Sarı Saltık in that manner.²⁴⁴

To continue the historical overview of Sarı Saltık's memorialization across the ages, this type of scholarship can certainly be considered a new and modern phase of Sarı Saltık's heroization as a Turkish Sunni-Muslim heroic saint and warrior, a potential subject of future research.

²⁴² Ş. H. Akalın's approach is not theological but interesting: despite his repeated claim that there is not enough source to consider him an Islamic holy warrior fighting for religious reasons, he always depicts him as one. For a late example see: "Saltuknâme'ye Göre Sarı Saltuk", *Balkanlara Gidişinin 750. Yılında Uluslararası Sarı Saltuk Gazi Sempozyumu 6-10 Kasım 2013, Köstence-Romanya*, (2014): 351-363. For other examples see Mehmet Demirci, "Balkan Müslümanlığında Gazi-Dervişlerin Roller ve Sarı Saltık Örneği," *Balkanlarda İslam Medeniyeti Milletlerarası Sempozyum Tebliğleri, Sofya 21-23 Nisan 2000*, ed., Ali Çaksu, 75-85. Mehmet Z. İbrahimgil, "Balkanlarda Sarı Saltuk Türbeleri", *Balkanlarda Kültürel Etkileşim ve Türk Mimarisi Uluslararası Sempozyum Bildirileri, 17-19 Mayıs 2000* (2001): 375, 390. Rabia Uçkun, "Saltuknâme'de Sarı Saltuk Gazi'ye Atfedilen Kerametler," *Türk Dünyası Bilgeler Zirvesi: Gönül Sultanları Buluşması. 26-28 Mayıs 2013* (2014): 131-144.

²⁴³ Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, "Sarı Saltık'a Dair Halledilmemiş Problemler, Eski ve Yeni Sorular, Yeni Bir Kaynak" [Unsettled matters about Sarı Saltık, the old and the new questions, a new source], *Uluslararası Sarı Saltık Gazi Sempozyumu 06-10 Kasım 2013* (Edirne: Köstence-Romanya Trakya Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2014), 41-48, 42.

²⁴⁴ Ocak, "Sarı Saltık'a Dair Halledilmemiş", 44. My translation.

CHAPTER II: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF SARI SALTİK AS A HERO IN *SALTİKNÂME*

As previously mentioned, the late medieval narratives of Anatolia and specifically the hagiographical texts, are traditionally viewed as narratives of inclusivity, and religious tolerance. But Krstić's revisionist approach argues that these texts should be reconsidered in the light and context of the age of confessionalization which the Ottoman state and lands also went through along with the Habsburgs, and Safavids, offers more to analyze and understand especially *Saltıknâme*. Thanks to the increasing works on Ottoman Sunnitization, Alevi-Qizilbash studies, and on millennialism, apocalyptic worries, and the beliefs on the Last Days of the world covered the Mediterranean regions in the 15th and 16th centuries, various elements in *Saltıknâme* can be clarified. I argue that *Saltıknâme* should also be re-read and reconsidered pursuant to the reign of Murad III in whose reign the first completed copy, dated 1591, was produced. Besides, as it is well known that this date represents the Islamic millennium which induced fears and anxieties.

As *Saltıknâme* is categorized as a religious heroic narrative, I will focus on the portrayal of Sarı Saltık's heroism and the primary features and characteristics which make him a heroic figure. In doing so I am able to analyze, understand and make suggestions about *Saltıknâme*. A close reading of *Saltıknâme* with a renewed approach, I try to show that this narrative includes numerous elements related to the age of confessionalization, the Ottoman Sunnitization process, millennialism and apocalyptic anxieties, and the competitive discourse born by political and cultural rivalry between the abovementioned states during the 16th century.

All the characteristics which make Sarı Saltık a hero in *Saltıknâme*, despite could not be limited to, are relevant to his anti-*Râfîzî* and pro-Sunni attitude can be observed

throughout the text. Thus, during this chapter I try to explain the reasons behind this attitude. Recreated as a hero above all the previous heroes, as a sayyid, the primary manifestation of Sarı Saltık's heroism is his devotion to Hanafi-Sunni Islam as a warrior and saint. Saltık accuses the *Râfizîs*, both the Safavids and the Qizilbash groups -despite never using the latter term- of the very same transgressions that Ottoman ulema and political writers during the 15th and 16th centuries would write about in their fatwas or *risâles*. The second manifestation of Saltık's heroism is his symbolization of Islam's and Turkish-Hanafi-Sunni Muslims' superiority over the rival religious, and political identities, primarily over the Christians and Christianity. This is the very point at which apocalyptical anxieties, and millennialist fears are revealed in the form of encouraging and soothing claims and prophecies that the eternal victorious arose from the fear of losing decisive wars. Thirdly, Sarı Saltık, is shown to be not only an ideal role model for the lay people, with his true way of life, behaviors, beliefs, and deeds, but can be considered as a great adviser for the sultans in particular. While Saltık recommends a way of life in accordance with the Hanafi-Sunni sharia to the lay people, he does not forget to counsel the ruling elite to be just and generous, to take stands against bribery and corruption, and to choose the right viziers. Saltık also religiously and politically approves and legitimizes Osman Gâzi and the dynasty and the state he founded. Thus, he rises from the narrative as a performer, and executer of the ideal world order as structured by the Ottoman state and its alignment with the ulama class. Sarı Saltık's efforts aim to spread this ideal order all through the world.

Messianic Revolts

The messianic revolts began in the 15th century²⁴⁵ and continued during the 16th century, posing a great challenge to the Ottoman state. The reasons that caused these rebellions are traditionally explained solely through socio-economic factors and religious tendencies of the period. However, Kastritsis suggests that the conflicts arose from transformation of the Ottoman state from an *akıncı* (raider) beglik to a regional power, and “holy men with esoteric ideas”²⁴⁶ such as Sheikh Bedreddin had greater impact than is generally accepted. The Revolt of Sheikh Bedreddin (d. 1426) in 1416 is viewed as the first sign that the Sufis could challenge the power and legitimacy of the state and ruin the public order.²⁴⁷ One of the responses to that threat was referring Sultan Mehmed I (r. 1413-21), the victorious prince of the Ottoman Interregnum, as Mahdi “perhaps in response to similar claims made by his brother and adversary Musa”²⁴⁸ in *Halilnâme*²⁴⁹, a literary weapon would be used for the future sultans, too, to cope with the charismatic authority of the rebellious leaders.

²⁴⁵ Beginning from Gölpınarlı and Köprülü, the Bâbâî Revolt in 1240 is considered as the first example and inspirational core of the 15th-16th centuries revolts with its messianic nature and claims. Ocak maintains this argument and sees this core related to heterodox Islam and thus the Central Asian past later effected by Shiite traditions. However, Küçüküseyin indicates the lack of contemporary sources, and argues that the messianic beliefs of Turkmen may have derived from the apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius “written at the end of the 7th century under the impression of the Arab-Muslim conquests” judging from the long term coexistence Seljukids with the Christians in the southern part of Anatolia. Şevket Küçüküseyin, “Messianic Expectations Among Anatolian Turkmens, Heritage from Central Asia or local syndrome?”, *Central Periphery? Art, Culture and History of the Medieval Jazira (Northern Mesopotamia, 8th–15th centuries) Papers of the Conference held at the University of Bamberg, 31 October–2 November 2012*, eds. Lorenz Korn and Martina Müller-Wiener (Reichert Verlag 2017): 233.

²⁴⁶ Dimitris Kastritsis, “Conquest and Legitimacy in the Early Ottoman Empire,” in *Byzantines, Latins, and Turks in the Eastern Mediterranean World after 1150*, eds. Jonathan Harris, Catherine Holmes, and Eugenia Russell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012): 235.

²⁴⁷ Derin Terzioğlu, “Sufis in the Age of State-Building and Confessionalization”, in *The Ottoman World*, ed. Christine Woodhead (London: Routledge, 2012): 86–99, 90. D. Kastritsis, “The Şeyh Bedreddin Uprising in the Context of the Ottoman Civil War of 1402-13”, in *Political Initiatives ‘From the Bottom Up’ in the Ottoman Empire: Halcyon Days in Crete VII. A symposium held in Rethymos 9-11 January*, ed. A. Anastasopoulos, (Crete: Crete University Press, 2009): 233-250.

²⁴⁸ Kastritsis, “Conquest,” 235.

²⁴⁹ Abdülvâsi Çelebi, *Halilnâme*, ed. Ayhan Gültaş, (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları: 1996).

Shah Ismail and Safavid Challenge

The year 1501 has a special place within the history of messianic revolts, and the Ottoman state. Bayezid II, who barely survived an assassination attempt by a Qalandari dervish in 1492, appointed Hızır Balı (Balım Sultan) (d. 1519), the sheikh of the tekke of Seyyid Ali Sultan at Dimetoka, as the leader of the Bektashi order. It was an attempt to control the non-Sunni groups in Anatolia and the Balkans by uniting them under a single roof.²⁵⁰ In 1501, Shah Ismail took Tabriz, made it the capital city, and adopted the Twelver/Imami Shiism as the state religion.²⁵¹ Now his primary rivals were the Sunni Ottomans, the Uzbeks in Transoxiana, and the Mamluks. When Shah Ismail took the throne in 1494, he had also inherited a wide network of pro-Safavid and powerful Turcoman tribes. Haydar, the father of Shah Ismail, had aimed to conquer the Ottoman lands and establish his own empire. He reinforced his army with the Turcoman tribes, and the red headgear (*tâj-i Haydar*) was adopted in his reign²⁵² so that the followers of Safavid order were named as Qizilbash (redhead).²⁵³ Now, numerous more joined his army and became his followers after the conquest of Tabriz. Thus, he became a religious and political leader.

Shah Ismail's Turcoman followers saw him as "a semi-divine" figure, just as he himself did.²⁵⁴ Mitchell stresses that these nomadic Turks preferred to believe the Safavid millenarian preachers and made their ways to Iran to "join the young Ismail in his quest to

²⁵⁰ Bektâşîyye was considered less heretical than the other antinomian movements of the period and was thus given the mission of weaning the Qizilbash from beliefs considered heretical in the extreme and to unify and institutionalize the Anatolian antinomian movements under the umbrella of a single brotherhood. Thierry Zarcone, "Bektâşîyye," 23.

²⁵¹ Ebru Boyar, "The Ottoman Expansion," in *The Cambridge History of Turkey, Volume 2, The Ottoman Empire as a World Power, 1453–1603*, eds. Suraiya N. Faroqhi and Kate Fleet, (USA: Cambridge University Press, 2013): 99.

²⁵² Boyar, "The Ottoman Expansion," 98.

²⁵³ Minorsky suggests that the name "Qizilbash, "Red Heads", "Originally, this nickname must have been used by the opponents of the Safavids, but in due course was adopted by their adherents as a title of honour." V. Minorsky and Shāh Ismā'īl I, "The Poetry of Shāh Ismā'īl I," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 10, 4 (1942): 1027a.

²⁵⁴ Adel Allouche, *The Origins and Development of the Ottoman-Safavid Conflict (906-962/1500-1555)*, (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1983), 30.

usher in the Apocalypse.”²⁵⁵ Besides, Shah Ismail was appointing Turkic tribal beys in his court. However, it was not just about the Turcomans’ anti-Ottoman attitude which led to the Safavid challenge, their religious tendencies and beliefs clearly played an important part in all the events occurring during the Ottoman-Safavid conflicts. According to Allouche’s quote from Ibn Ruzbihan (d. 1521) Turkoman followers of Shah Ismail’s father Haydar “considered him as their god and neglecting the duties of *namaz* and public prayers, looked upon the Sheikh as their *qibla* and the being to whom prostration (*secde*) was due.”²⁵⁶ Allouche refers to it as an “extremist heterodoxy” namely *ghuluw*. As for Shah Ismail, his subjects considered him as the Mahdi. The leading researchers of the field, examining Ismail’s poetry, the *Dîvân*, agree on his self-understanding as the Perfect Guide, Seal of the Prophets, the guiding Imam, even the incarnation of God himself.²⁵⁷

A Venetian account reveals the support and popularity of Shah Ismail amongst the Turcomans. Accordingly, the Ottoman general Yahya Pasha was commissioned to march against the Shah, but he informed his sultan Bayezid II that “the people follow Ismail as if he were a god” and thus the sultan should face him in person.²⁵⁸ As a religious and political leader, Ismail “worked to bridge the gap between millenarian mysticism and centralized, bureaucratized imperial polity.”²⁵⁹ In an age of rivalry, even European Christendom saw Ismail as a savior, “a Christian-like holy man”²⁶⁰ who would save them from the Ottomans.²⁶¹

²⁵⁵ Colin P. Mitchell, *The Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran, Power, Religion and Rhetoric* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2009), 22.

²⁵⁶ Allouche, *The Origins*, 51.

²⁵⁷ Markus Dressler, “Inventing Orthodoxy: Competing Claims for Authority and Legitimacy in the Ottoman-Safavid Conflict,” in *Legitimizing the order: The Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power*, eds. Hakan T. Karateke and Maurus Reinkowski (Leiden: Brill, 2005): 157. Cornell H. Fleischer, “A Mediterranean Apocalypse: Prophecies of Empire in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 61 (2018): 52. Minorsky, “The Poetry,” 1027a.

²⁵⁸ Palmira Brummett, “The Myth of Shah Ismail Safavi: Political Rhetoric and ‘Divine’ Kingship,” *Medieval Christian Perceptions of Islam: A Book of Essays*, ed. John Victor Tolan, (New York: Rotledge, 1996): 338.

²⁵⁹ Mitchell, *The Practice*, 19.

²⁶⁰ Brummett, “The Myth,” 332.

²⁶¹ Fleischer, “A Mediterranean Apocalypse,” 38.

Qizilbash Turkomans' Support to the Safavids

The Safavids, founded originally as a Sufi order in Ardabil by Sheikh Safi al-Din Ishaq (d. 1334), were very popular amongst the Qizilbash Turkoman tribes in Anatolia and the northern Syria, who had their religious origins in the *Rum Abdalları* and *Vefâiyye* orders.²⁶² In its early years, the Safavid reputation managed to reach even to the Ottoman sultans, and they started to send “çerağ akçesi” (money) to Ardabil. Murad II even allowed Sheikh Junayd, the father of Haydar, to settle in Anatolia. However, after becoming suspicious of Junayd potentially holding political aims against the Ottomans, he expelled him. Aqqoyunlu leader Uzun Hasan had him as a guest in his court in 1456.²⁶³ Sheikh Junayd married the sister of Uzun Hasan, and Mehmed II upon receiving the news, put an end to the tradition of sending money to Safavid order.²⁶⁴

Those Turkomans who had various problems and had been in conflicted with the Ottoman state since the reign of Mehmed II, started to migrate in masses to the Safavid lands in İran which became a legitimate alternative state for them. The influential Safavid propaganda, and financial problems of the state also played an important role. They joined the ruling elite and the army of the Safavids and so Shah İsmail, with the support of the Turkoman tribes such as Ustacalu, Şamlu, Tekelü, Karamanlu, Dulqadirli, seized Azerbaijan in 1500, Diyarbekir in 1507, Bagdad in 1508, and thus ended up Aqqoyunlu state.²⁶⁵ Those Turkomans who stayed in their villages, collected and sent donations to the Safavids, and

²⁶² See Ayfer Karakaya Stump, “Subjects of the Sultan, Disciples of the Shah: Formation and Transformation of the Kizilbash/Alevi Communities in Ottoman Anatolia,” Harvard University, 2008, especially this chapter: “The Forgotten Forefathers: The Wafaiyya Order and its Kizilbash Offshoots in Anatolia,” 38-82.

²⁶³ Boyar, “The Ottoman Expansion,” 97.

²⁶⁴ Boyar, “The Ottoman Expansion,” 98.

²⁶⁵ Ş. Tekindağ, “Yeni Kaynak ve Vesikaların Işığında Yavuz Sultan Selim'in İran Seferi”. *Turkish Journal of History* 17 (2011): 49.

some of them, as caliphs, continued to incite riots and supported Safavid propaganda within Ottoman lands.

One of the marked revolts against the Ottomans which broke out amongst the Turcoman tribes in the Taurus mountains in 1511 was led by Shah Kulu Baba Tekeli who was the son of a pro-Safavid caliph and served under Sheikh Haydar. Shah Kulu claimed to be the Mahdi, and thousands of *sipâhîs*, along with the local Turkomans, joined his revolt. He was referred as “Şeytan Kulu” (Slave of Devil) in the contemporary Ottoman records and archival documents.²⁶⁶

Shah Kulu revolt erupted at a time when Selim I and the Janissaries who supported him were trying to force Bayezid II to renounce the throne in favor of Selim. Another possible heir to the Ottoman throne, Selim I’s brother Sultan Ahmed, making use of the mess the Shah Kulu rebellion caused, was arranging his own rebellion by recruiting an army in Anatolia. There were supporters of Shah Kulu descent from the Ottoman dynasty. Selim I’s other brother, the Sancak Beyi of Karaman, Prince Şehinşah and Sultan Ahmed’s son Prince Murad joined the rebellion.²⁶⁷ Moreover, Prince Murad became a Qizilbash by wearing the red headgear in a ceremony.²⁶⁸ Some months later, Selim I (r. 1512-20) took the throne, which led to another rebellion in 1512 as instigated by Nur Ali (*halîfe-i Rumlu*) who was a caliph of Shah Ismail and was sent to Anatolia by him. Prince Murad and Nur Ali had the *hutbe* (sermon) read on behalf of Ismail in Tokat. Finally, Nur Ali was killed in the same year, and Prince Murad took refuge in Shah İsmail.²⁶⁹ These two years were quite determinative for both the Ottomans and the Safavids in terms of redesigning their way of conducting politics, restructuring the states, and the propaganda machine, as well as

²⁶⁶ A. Refik, *Onaltıncı Asırda Rafizilik ve Bektaşılık*, ed. Mehmet Yaman (İstanbul: Ufuk Matbaası, 1994), 25.

²⁶⁷ Çağatay Uluçay, “Yavuz Sultan Selim Nasıl Padişah Oldu?” *İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Dergisi* 9 1954, 53-90.

²⁶⁸ Rıza Yıldırım, “An Ottoman Prince Wearing Qizilbash Tâj: The Enigmatic Career of Sultan Murad and the Qizilbash Affairs in the Ottoman Domestic Politics, 1510-1513”, *Turcica* 43 (2011): 91-119.

²⁶⁹ Tekindağ, “Yeni Kaynak ve Belgeler,” 51. Boyar, “The Ottoman Expansion,” 105.

reinforcing their religious claims and titles by empowering the ulama class. Ottoman state policy against the Safavids, and its supporter Qizilbash groups, became much more severe and as a result, the Ottoman-Safavid conflict would transform the religious landscape.²⁷⁰

The Ottoman and Safavid armies met to fight in Çaldıran in 1514. Shah Ismail was defeated, and Selim I took Tabriz. However he did not stay long in the capital, which mostly populated by Qizilbash groups, creating a sense of insecurity.²⁷¹ In this process, Selim I gained the loyalty of some local Kurdish, Turcoman and Arab leaders with the help of İdris-i Bidlisi who was a former member of Safavid order, who became an envoy of Selim I, and would eventually become an anti-Safavid political writer supporting Sunnism.²⁷²

However, the Safavid state continued to pose a great threat, and ideologically challenged the Ottoman state by existing as an alternative Turkic state for the Turcoman tribes. After two years, during which Selim I conquered the Mamluk sultanate in Egypt and Syria in 1517, Bozoklu Sheikh Celal, claiming to be the Mahdi, rebelled around Tokat in 1519. In 1520, a more major revolt, intended to prevent another campaign of attack by Ottoman forces against Safavid lands occurred in the same area, led by Shah Veli and supported by Shah Ismail.²⁷³ When Süleyman I (r. 1520-66) took the throne the Ottoman treasury was nearly empty, and he had to implement new taxes which caused new revolts. Bozok Turcomans rebelled against the state in the heat of Battle of Mohacs in 1526 under a leader named Shah Kalender, claiming to be descent from Hacı Bektaş and also the Mahdi himself, and thus supported by *abdals*, dervishes, and disciples. They seriously damaged the Ottoman army. Süleyman had to retreat from his western campaign.²⁷⁴ Süleyman was

²⁷⁰ Terzioğlu, "Sufis in the Age of State-Building," 94.

²⁷¹ Nabil Al-Tikriti, "İbn-i Kemal's Confessionalism and the Construction of an Ottoman Islam", *Living in the Ottoman Realm, Empire and Identity, 13th to 20th Centuries*, eds. Christine Isom-Verhaaren and Kent F. Schull (USA: Indiana University Press, 2016): 109.

²⁷² Ebru Sönmez, "An Acem Statesman in the Ottoman Court: İdris-İ Bidlîsî and the Making of the Ottoman Policy on Iran," MA thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2006. Tekindağ, "Yeni Kaynak ve Belgeler," 75.

²⁷³ Boyar, "The Ottoman Expansion," 115.

²⁷⁴ Refik, *Onaltıncı Asırda*, 29-31.

concerned about Ismail's followers in Ottoman lands, even after Ismail's death in 1525. During the reign of the new shah Tahmasb (r. 1525-76), the Ottoman-Safavid conflict did not come to an end, instead it was heightened across several campaigns until the Treaty of Amasya in 1555.²⁷⁵ But Süleyman could not prevent his son, with his family and supporters, from fleeing to the Tahmasp's land and taking refuge in the struggle for the throne in 1559.²⁷⁶ Pro-Safavid Turcoman tribes, according to the records, continued to collect money to send to Iran until Murad III's reign, when a long war was waged against the Safavids between 1578-90.²⁷⁷

Why did these nomadic tribes prefer to support and join the Safavids? The story begins in the reign of Mehmed II (r. 1451–1481). The sultan's land reform dispossessed many Turcomans in Anatolia and the Balkans, including *gâzis*, and dervishes.²⁷⁸ On top of this, as a result of the many military campaigns, struggles for the throne among the Ottoman princes, and natural disasters, more taxes were imposed by the state.²⁷⁹ Shah Ismail's state was seen as a more attractive alternative to be part of it. The people who had already joined him in Iran sent their relatives good news that the Shah was dispensing justice and lands (*dirliks*) to his subjects, further increasing its appeal.²⁸⁰ According to a witness of the era named Zuan Moresini, as Brumett quotes, "when money comes in, he quickly distributes it such that he seems a god on earth."²⁸¹

²⁷⁵ Metin Kunt, "Ottomans and Safavids: states, statecraft, and societies," in *A Companion to the History of the Middle East*, ed. Youssef M. Choueiri, (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2005): 197.

²⁷⁶ Boyar, "The Ottoman Expansion," 127.

²⁷⁷ Boyar, "The Ottoman Expansion," 132.

²⁷⁸ Dressler, "Inventing Orthodoxy," 153.

²⁷⁹ Dressler, "Inventing Orthodoxy," 153, 154.

²⁸⁰ Boyar, "The Ottoman Expansion", 100.

²⁸¹ Brummett, "The Myth of Shah Ismail," 338.

Safavid Propaganda

Another aspect of the matter concerned the Safavids' capability to influence and directs these unhappy Qizilbash Turcomans through their use of propaganda.²⁸² The Safavid caliphs were everywhere in the Ottoman lands: preaching, leading religious rituals, reading aloud the poetry of Shah Ismail, collecting money from their supporters, and even spying, these caliphs convinced the Turcomans to join them.²⁸³ It seems that certain narratives and popular story tellers such as the *Ebûmüslimnâme*, Khatai's *Dîvân*, the *Muhtarnâme*, the *Şahnâme*, and the *Cüneydnâme* played important roles for their cause.²⁸⁴ This information raises the question as to whether *Saltıknâme* 1591 copy could have been intended for much the same purpose. In addition to the messianic, anti-Ottoman revolts, the Safavid sphere of influence was growing in Ottoman lands. Qizilbash Turcomans had connections to the Safavid state, preferred to join its armies, making the Ottoman's rival foe stronger day by day. *Saltıknâme*, with its emphasis on anti-*Râfîzî* beliefs, and rituals, might well have been a useful tool in a campaign of anti-Ottoman propaganda. As I will show in the second subchapter, the text also praises some Alid beliefs, and Shiite practices which Qizilbash Turcomans adopted. Dressler argues that the religious difference, namely the confessional discrepancies were not that important at the beginning, but only became so "when a legalistic interpretation of Sunnism was established as orthodoxy"²⁸⁵ in the reign of Süleyman I (1520–66) Qizilbash beliefs and practices which were not directly challenged to the Ottoman state. These practices, and the struggles with the Safavids were still alive during the reign of Murad III. Accordingly, *Saltıknâme*'s target audience could be those people.

²⁸² Allouche, *The Origins*, 65.

²⁸³ Ayşe Baltacıoğlu-Brammer, "Those Heretics Gathering Secretly ...": Qizilbash Rituals and Practices in the Ottoman Empire according to Early Modern Sources," *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 6, No. 1, Ceremonies, Festivals, and Rituals in the Ottoman World (Spring 2019): 46-50.

²⁸⁴ Mitchell, *The Practice of Politics*, 31.

²⁸⁵ Dressler, "Inventing Orthodoxy," 155.

Ottoman Response

The Ottoman reaction is well summarized in Tezcan's statement that the: "Ottomans responded to the Safavid ideological challenge by an emphasis on the Sunni Islamic component of their political identity."²⁸⁶ There was an urgent need to characterize and portray the Safavids and Qizilbash as infidels, and heretics (*Rafîzi*) to legitimize the wars against them and to discourage their supporters in the Ottoman lands. Thus, the Ottoman ulama and political writers issued fatwas and composed *risâles* to meet the needs of the state. Finally, the attempts to establish "a network of imperial state-sponsored learning institutions"²⁸⁷ all through its lands beginning from the conquest of Constantinople showed results in the 16th century. Madrasa-trained intellectuals and members of ulema grew into a more powerful and subservient class.²⁸⁸ The empowered ulama aligned with the state, transforming Sunni Islam into Sunnitization as a state policy, creating and enforcing an anti-Râfîzî, Sunni-Hanafi body of law declaring Qizilbash people as heretics who deserved to be executed.

Dressler and several archival records show that before the Safavids gained strength "the Ottomans were quite tolerant"²⁸⁹ of Qizilbash beliefs and practices which did not directly challenge the Ottoman state. Ökten also shows that Qizilbash groups in the Ottoman lands only "began to be called *Râfîzîs*"²⁹⁰ after Safavid efforts to coopt them to their cause. Dressler stresses that "the conflicts between Ottomans and Kızılbaş, as well as between Ottomans and Safavids, had a direct impact on the development of legalistic Sunnism as Ottoman state doctrine."²⁹¹

²⁸⁶ Baki Tezcan, "The Ottoman Mevâlî as 'Lords of The Law'," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 20:3 (2009): 387.

²⁸⁷ Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 585.

²⁸⁸ Derin Terzioğlu, "How to Conceptualize Ottoman Sunnitization: A Historiographical Discussion," *Turcica* 44 (2012–13): 309.

²⁸⁹ Dressler, "Inventing Orthodoxy," 155.

²⁹⁰ Ertuğrul Ökten, "Ottoman Society and State in the Light of the Fatwas of Ibn Kemal," Master Thesis, Bilkent University, 1996, 21.

²⁹¹ Dressler, "Inventing Orthodoxy," 151.

Ottoman Ulama, Their Fatwas, and Risâles

In 1501, Bayezid II, tried to prevent Qizilbash groups from migrating to Iran by forbidding it, however, this law failed. Then, the sultan decided upon a different approach of forced migration, exiling them to the Balkans. The Ottoman historian Oruç (d. after 1502) justified the sultan's decision saying "this enforced migration was imposed before. It is the custom of the sultans."²⁹² Beginning from Bayezid's son Selim I's reign, the sultans turned to ulama for support, and the ulama, in response, produced fatwas and *risâles* to satisfy their needs.

In 1514, before the Battle of Çaldıran, Müftü Hamza Sarı Görez (d. 1522) issued a fatwa for Selim I's campaign against Shah Ismail.²⁹³ Apparently this fatwa became the key reference point for future statements, including the same accusations against the Safavids and Qizilbashes that can also be seen in *Saltıknâme*. Müftü Hamza Sarı Görez incriminated them, accusing them of "betting the sharia of our prophet, saying that what God has forbidden is licit. The said group are infidels and heretics. It is an obligation and a religious duty to kill them and to scatter their congregations."²⁹⁴ According to Sarı Görez, They were cursing Abu Bakr, Umar, and Aisa, and worshipping Shah Ismail as if he was an idol (*mâbud*).²⁹⁵ They set the Muslim masjids on fire, and their original purpose is to eliminate Islam. As Boyar stresses, the Müftü's fatwa also gave permission to the sultan to kill his own subjects: "if there is someone in this vilayet who is known as one of them and/or captured when going to Kızılbaş territory let him be killed. This entire group consists of people who are both infidels and heretics and people of sedition. Their killing is legitimate on both

²⁹² Boyar, "The Ottoman Expansion," 102.

²⁹³ Tekindağ, "Yeni Kaynak ve Vesikalar," 53, 54.

²⁹⁴ Colin Imber, "Ideals and legitimation in early Ottoman history," in *Süleyman the Magnificent and his age: The Ottoman Empire in the early modern world*, ed. Metin Kunt and Christine Woodhead (New York: Longman, 1995): 147.

²⁹⁵ Al-Tikriti, "*Kalam* in the Service of State," 147.

counts.”²⁹⁶ According to Müftü, the sultan must kill the Qizilbash leaders, seize their possessions, wives and children to distribute them among the *gâzis* fought for Islam. Their repentance or remorse must not be accepted.²⁹⁷ The most important and relevant point for this thesis in this fatwa is that Müftü’s decision that these Qizilbash groups must not be shown any mercy, and his statement that “The religious position of them is much worse and lower than the infidels.”²⁹⁸ In *Saltıknâme*, it is exactly the same attitude Sarı Saltık displays against the *Râfizîs*. As I will show in the second subchapter, Saltık never asks or orders a *Râfizî* to repent or offers him/her the opportunity to convert to Sunnism even though they are Muslims from a “wrong” madhab, whereas the Christian infidels are always asked and offered these options.

Another legitimizer of Selim I’s wars against the Safavids is İdrisi Bidlisi (d. 1520) who was a former member of the Safavid order. As Sönmez shows in her work, Bidlisi produced various texts during the reigns of Selim I and Süleyman I depicting these sultans as ideal rulers, worthy of conducting the mission of a caliph, and legitimizing Ottoman domination.²⁹⁹ Bidlisi also questioned the claim that Shah Ismail was a sayyid and glorified the Ottoman lineage. Sönmez especially emphasizes Bidlisi’s work *Kânûn-i Şehinşâhî* as “the primary work of political philosophy written in the reigns of Sultan Selim and his son, Sultan Süleyman.”³⁰⁰ In this work Bidlisi argued that the followers of Safavid order:

had quit praying, declared canonically forbidden acts (*haram*) to be canonically permissible (*halal*), drinking alcohol, illicit sexual relationships to be legal and despised the Koran, Islam and shari’a, cursed the sheikhs and killed the ulema, destroyed the mosques and burnt the sheikhs’ tombs and grave.³⁰¹

²⁹⁶ Boyar, “The Ottoman Expansion,” 107.

²⁹⁷ “Sultan-ı İslam e’ezze’l-lahu ensâreha içün vardur ki bunların ricallerin katl idüb mallarını ve nisalarını ve evladlarını guzât-ı İslam arasında kısmet ide ve bunların ba’de’l-ahz tevbelerine ve nedâmetlerine iltifat ve itibar olunmayub katl oluna.” Tekindağ, “Yeni Kaynak ve Vesikalar,” 55.

²⁹⁸ “Bunların hali kâfirler halinden eşedd ve ekbahdur.” Tekindağ, “Yeni Kaynak ve Belgeler,” 55.

²⁹⁹ Sönmez, “An Acem Statesman,” 129.

³⁰⁰ Sönmez, “An Acem Statesman,” 113.

³⁰¹ Sönmez, “An Acem Statesman,” 127.

In his *Selimşahnâme*, Bidlisi used the terms *mülhid* (atheist), *kâfir* (infidel), *mürted* (apostate), *ehl-i fesâd* (the hellraisers), *Hâricî*, *Râfîzî*, and Qizilbash, and just like Müftü Hamza Sarı Görez, Bidlisi too claimed that Shah Ismail instituted his own rules of sharia, and his followers worshipped him like he was God. Sönmez rightfully indicates that the leading members of Ottoman ulama in 16th century “made almost the same arguments as Bidlisi.”³⁰² Most interestingly, just like Müftü Hamza Sarı Görez, Bidlisi recommended waging wars against the Safavids “rather than fighting against infidel Franks and Tatars who had trespassed the borders of the Ottoman state.”³⁰³

One of the most important scholars formulating Ottoman Sunnism, shaykh al-Islam and historian Kemalpaşazâde (d. 1534) in his “Treatise on Classifying the Rafida (Deserters) as Apostates”³⁰⁴ written between 1507-13, sorted most of the main accusations against the Qizilbash groups which can be traced in Ottoman archival records, fatwas and other kinds of sources through the 16th century. Those are cursing and insulting the Orthodox caliphs Abū Bakr, Umar, and Uthmān, Shah Ismail’s proclaiming what is haram according to Quran as halal, using the term *zındık*, and the conclusion that they must be sentenced with capital punishment.³⁰⁵

³⁰² Sönmez, “An Acem Statesman,” 127.

³⁰³ Sönmez, “An Acem Statesman,” 130.

³⁰⁴ İkfâr-ı Şia, Halet Efendi 815, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, 82a 83b. See: Ökten, “Ottoman Society,” 24.

³⁰⁵ “Accounts have abounded and reports have proliferated in the lands of Muslims and regions of Believers that a Shii sect has triumphed over numerous territories among the lands of Sunnis until their invalid ways emerged, so that insulting İmām Abū Bakr, İmām Umar, and İmām Uthmān (may God’s approval be upon them all together) manifested itself. They were renouncing the caliphate of the righteous caliphs and the rightly guided imams. They disdained the sharia and its people. They insulted the legal experts, with some of them claiming that conduct in line with the legal experts’ way is not without hardship, while conduct in line with the path of their head and leader, whose name is Shah Ismail, is full of ease, and its result beneficial. They also claim that whatever the Shah permits is permissible, and whatever the Shāh outlaws is illicit. As the Shāh permitted wine, it became permissible. Altogether, indeed all sorts of their aforementioned apostasy have spread among us so that what enrages is uncountable and innumerable. We have no doubt about their apostasy and renunciation, that their abode is an abode of war, and that the marriage of their boys and girls is invalid, such that each one of their children is to be considered a bastard without remedy. If one of them should fall dead, he should be considered [canonically] slaughtered. Whoever wears their distinctive red turban without any compulsion generally possesses the taint of apostasy, and if that one is openly among the leadership of apostasy and heterodoxy, then their judgment is to be one of the apostates’ rulings. Should they take over their cities, they become an abode of war, so that their possessions, women, and children become licit for Muslims. As for their men, it becomes a duty to kill them, unless they accept Islam. A conquest renders them as righteous as the rest of the righteous Muslims, as opposed to one’s appearance as a *zindīq* [secret nonbeliever], in which

In studying this *risâle*, along with Kemalpaşazâde's fatwas against Qizilbash and Qalandari, Ökten concludes that Kemalpaşazâde wrote the *risâle* solely for political reasons, aiming to legitimize the Battle of Çaldıran. According to Ökten, Kemalpaşazâde did not target all Qizilbash follower, only those who followed Shah Ismail. The sheikh-al Islam was relatively tolerant to the Qalandari, approving the glorification of Ali ibn Abi Talib, and cursing Yazid who consented to the killing of Husayn, the grandchild of Muhammad.³⁰⁶ In this sense, Kemalpaşazâde's approach and judgements are perfectly suited with Sarı Saltık's. The hero in *Saltıknâme* enforces the law and decrees just like an officer.

Kemalpaşazâde devotion to Hanafi school makes him a figure of particular importance. The shaykh al-Islam clearly expressed that he preferred to follow Hanafi madhab in his judgements. In his *risâle*, *Tercîhü'l-Mezhebi'l-Hanefî alâ Gayrihî*, Kemalpaşazâde argued that Abu Hanifa, the founder of the madhab, is the superior scholar over the others -Maliki, Hanbali, and Shafii- and thus the Hanafi madhab is the superior one.³⁰⁷ Moreover, at the end of this text, Kemalpaşazâde addressing the Ottoman sultan, asserts that sharia legislation in the Ottoman lands should be done directly in accordance with the Hanafi school, just as all the previous Turkic states did and if the Sultan would not accept this, it would not be wise and or just.³⁰⁸ In 1537, a sultanic decree was issued ordering qadis to follow the Hanafi school.³⁰⁹

case it is absolutely obligatory to kill him. Should someone abandon the abode of Islam and choose their invalid religion, such that their abode might fill up with them, then the judge must judge him for death, divide his possessions between the inheritors, and marry his wife to some other husband. One must also know that jihad against them is a prime obligation of each one of the people of Islam who are able to fight them. We shall now detail the sharia points according to which these aforementioned judgments are considered valid." Al-Tikriti, "İbn-i Kemal's Confessionalism," 102, 103. For the original version see: Tekindağ, "Yeni Kaynak ve Belgeler," 53, 54.

³⁰⁶ Ökten, "Ottoman Society," 25-31.

³⁰⁷ Ökten, "Ottoman Society," 62, 63. Also see: Ahmet İnanır, "İbn Kemal'in Fetvaları Işığında Osmanlı'da İslam Hukuku," Ph.D. dissertation, İstanbul University, 2008, 56-61.

³⁰⁸ İnanır, "İbn Kemal'in Fetvaları," 60.

³⁰⁹ İnanır, "İbn Kemal'in Fetvaları," 55.

Before the Battle of Çaldıran, Selim I's acts had been justified by Bidlisi and Kemalpaşazâde, and after the war, it was Lütfi Pasha (d. 1563), Süleyman I's grand vizier and a historian, who proclaimed Selim I as "müceddid of the 10th century, the renewer of religion divinely enabled to set right the world of Islam."³¹⁰ However, Selim I went further and had his image built as "the messianic ruler who would fill the world with justice."³¹¹ In *Niğbolu Kanunnamesi*, written in 1517, Selim was credited as "muayyad min Allah, succored by God, and *sahib-kıran*, master of the conjunction or world conqueror, and the shadow of God."³¹² In fact, Lütfi Pasha was contributing to the debate on whether the Ottoman sultans could be Islamic caliphs or not as they were not descendants of the Quraysh tribe.³¹³ The adoption of these religiously and politically assertive titles proved to be the foundations of the state Sunnism to come in later years. Just as Bidlisi and Kemalpaşazâde, Lütfi Pasha also argued that "the Râfizîs pronounce tekfîr on all caliphs before Ali."³¹⁴ Krstić also underlines that his depiction of *ehl-i sünnet ve cemâat*, and approach to Qizilbashs are in accordance with the ulema's fatwas of the time.³¹⁵ The perfect harmony amongst the Ottoman ulama was growing.

Shaykh al-Islam Ebussuûd Efendi³¹⁶ (d. 1574) was another remarkable contributor to Ottoman Sunnism. As a student of Kemalpaşazâde, his juristic decisions during Süleyman I's campaign against the Safavids between 1548-1555, depict these wars as holy. Contrary

³¹⁰ Cornell H. Fleischer, "The Lawgiver as Messiah: The Making of the Imperial Image in the Reign of Suleyman", in *Soliman le Magnifique*, ed. Gilles Veinstein (Paris: Le Documentation Française, 1992): 162.

³¹¹ Fleischer, "Law Giver as Messiah," 164.

³¹² Fleischer, "Law Giver as Messiah," 162.

³¹³ Imber, "Suleyman as Caliph," 180.

³¹⁴ Tijana Krstić, "State and Religion, "Sunnitization" and "Confessionalism" in Suleyman's Time," in *The Battle for Central Europe: The Siege of Szigetvar and the Death of Suleyman the Magnificent and Miklos Zrinyi (1566)*, ed. Pal Fodor, (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 75.

³¹⁵ Krstić, "State and Religion," 76.

³¹⁶ Imber, "Ideals and legitimation," 147. Marinos Sariyannis, "Ebussuud", in *Encyclopedia of Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. M. Sgarbi (Switzerland: Springer International Publishing 2015): 1-3. Eugenia Kermeli, "Ebussuûd Efendi", in *Christian-Muslim Relations, A Bibliographical History, Volume 7. Central and Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa, and South America (1500-1600)*, ed. David Thomas and John Chesworth (Leiden: Brill, 2015): 715-723. Ertuğrul Düzdağ, *Kanuni Devri Şeyhülislamı Ebussuûd Efendi Fetvaları*, (İstanbul: Kapı Yayınları, 2012). Colin Imber, *Ebu 's-su 'ud, The Islamic Legal Tradition* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).

to Lütü Pasha, Ebussuûd did not hesitate to use the title caliph for both Süleyman I, and his son Selim II (r. 1566-74), identifying them as guardians of Islam and sharia. Ebussuûd's courage was given to him by Süleyman I, and his rivalry with Charles V and Shah Tahmasp.³¹⁷

As for Ebussuûd's fatwas on Qizilbash, the perfect harmony was not disconcerted. Killing Qizilbash followers was a religious duty (*gazâ-i ekber*) because they were scorning Quran, sharia and Islam, killing ulama of Islam, worshipping and groveling (*secde*) to Shah Ismail as if he was an idol (*mâbud*), cursing Abu Bakr, Umar, and Aisa, and those who died fighting the Qizilbash became martyrs.³¹⁸ Ebussuûd also stated that "Slaughtering them is more necessary than killing other infidels,"³¹⁹ justifying this decision by giving examples from the first years of the Islamic caliphate:

When Madinah Munawwarah was full of heretics, and before the conquest of Damascus, during the caliphate of Abu Bakr, the companions of prophet Muhammad decided to make *gazâ* against the apostate followers of Müseyleme-i Kezzâb, [a man claimed to be a prophet]. The same happened during the caliphate of Ali ibn Abu Talip against the Harijis. These people do great evil, and it is important to struggle against them in order to wipe their evil off the face of the earth.³²⁰

In another fatwa, Ebussuûd was asked: While Qizilbash recited the kalima shahadah, and thus they were Muslims, they also saw themselves as Shiite. What would happen to them in the afterlife? Ebussuûd answered that the Prophet clearly stated "There are seventy three factions who were ahl-i Sunnah, the ones who will burn in hell."³²¹ By the mid-16th century

³¹⁷ Colin Imber, "Suleyman as Caliph of the Muslims: Ebussuud's Formulation of Ottoman Dynastic Ideology", in *Soliman le Magnifique*, ed. Gilles Veinstein (Paris: Le Documentation Française, 1992): 179.

³¹⁸ Düzdağ, *Kanuni Devri Şeyhülislamı*, 135.

³¹⁹ "Bu taifenin kâtîli sâir kefare kâtîlinden ehemdir." Düzdağ, *Kanuni Devri Şeyhülislamı*, 138.

³²⁰ Düzdağ, *Kanuni Devri Şeyhülislamı*, 139.

³²¹ Düzdağ, *Kanuni Devri Şeyhülislamı*, 136.

reciting kalima shahadah was not enough to be on the “right” way of Islam, and confession building was at its height.³²²

This is the period between 1550-1650 that the political needs and concerns of the Ottoman state, on the way to develop a universal monarchy led to empower “the interpretive role of the jurists in the transformation of Islamic sources into positive law, a more Orthodox understanding of Islam.”³²³ The members of the Ottoman ulama mentioned so far, as Tezcan shows, constituted “a privileged social group, a nobility of sorts, the members of which could pass on their social status to their sons.”³²⁴ The portrayal of Sarı Saltık in *Saltıknâme* is a perfect example of a performer of this law, and thus the Ottoman-Sunnitization policies.

Ottoman Sunnitization

Recent scholarship agrees that an explicit Ottoman-Sunni identity matured in the second half of Süleyman I’s reign after the hopeful expectations of creating a universal monarchy and establishing *nizâm-ı âlem* (world order) were lost.³²⁵ Süleyman I continued to be portrayed as “the defender of a normative Sunni Islam”³²⁶ in several histories of his time, and as Krstić states “the confession building was a predominantly top-down process presided over by the sultan and his advisers.”³²⁷ This reveals itself with various sultanic decrees, and in the legislative process.

³²² Tijana Krstić, “From *Shahāda* to ‘*aqīda*: Conversion to Islam, Catechisation And Sunnitisation in Sixteenth century Ottoman Rumeli”, ed. A.C.S. Peacock, in *Islamisation: Comparative Perspectives from History* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017): 297.

³²³ Baki Tezcan, “The Ottoman Mevali As ‘Lords Of The Law’,” *Journal of Islamic Studies* 20:3 (2009): 384.

³²⁴ Tezcan, “The Ottoman Meval,” 384.

³²⁵ Terzioğlu, “How to Conceptualize,” 304.

³²⁶ Fleischer, “The Lawgiver,” 161.

³²⁷ Tijana Krstić, “Illuminated by the Light of Islam and the Glory of the Ottoman Sultanate: Self-Narratives of Conversion to Islam in the Age of Confessionalization,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 2009, 51(1): 40.

The 16th century, also saw “a distinctive Ottoman Hanafism.”³²⁸ The Ottoman sultans were Hanafi, and there was already a Hanafi supremacy in Anatolia and the Balkans, but a special kind of Ottoman-Hanafism emerged as a result of cooperation between the Ottoman state and Hanafi jurists. They built a corpus of law and imposed it on the judges (*qadis*). After Selim I’s conquests in the Middle East, only the Hanafi *qadis* were paid by the state. In 1537, the Ottoman state forbade *qadis* deciding favorably to any madhab apart from the Hanafi, so that staying in the limits of this school and this arrangement became standardized in the 16th century.³²⁹

The Ottoman dynasty played a prominent role in arranging the principles in Hanafi law. In 1556, Süleyman I introduced certain Hanafi textbooks for madrasa students to study and Ebussuûd Efendi consulted the sultan to gain approval on his judgements, and to learn which way the sultan preferred.³³⁰

Friday Prayers, Preachers, and Khutbah

As Krstić states, all acts of worship (*ibâdet*) were matters of the state.³³¹ Süleyman I paid special attention to Friday prayers, and wanted to ensure that all his male subjects listened to the khutbah (*hutbe*) that was read in the name of the existing sultan every week. In 1537/8, justified by Ebussuûd, the sultan ordered his governors throughout his lands to build Friday mosques in every village, and ensure that male subjects regularly attended the prayers.³³² As Imber rightfully indicates, “Friday prayer clearly did have a great practical

³²⁸ Rudolph Peters, “What does it mean to be an official madhhab? Hanafism and the Ottoman empire”, ed. Bearman, R. Peters, & F. E. Vogel, in *The Islamic school of law: evolution, devolution, and progress* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press 2005): 147-158.

³²⁹ Peters, “What does it mean,” 151, 152. Guy Burak, “The Second Formation of Islamic Law: The Post-Mongol Context of the Ottoman Adoption of a School of Law,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 2013 55 (3): 585. Imber, Ebu's-Suud, 25.

³³⁰ Burak, “The Second Formation,” 586.

³³¹ Krstić, “State and Religion,” 77.

³³² Imber, “Ideals and legitimation,” 151. Terzioğlu, “How to Conceptualize,” 313, 314.

importance, since it was through this prayer that Islamic monarchs broadcast their claims to sovereignty.”³³³ Namely, the tradition of khutbah became a much more important tool for Ottoman propaganda, especially against the Safavids.

As a devoted Sunni hero-saint Sarı Saltık always advised people against leaving Friday prayers, encouraging them to listen to khutbah and sometimes reading the khutbah himself. Throughout *Saltıknâme* we see Saltık, also in the role of a preacher, giving religious and moral advice to the people using his extensive knowledge (*ilm*) which provides him with the privilege of issuing fatwas too. In fact, Saltık’s wide range of roles is like a collage consisting of the most respected social and official positions one can achieve in the 16th century. Terzioğlu states that all these efforts aimed to educate the subjects on Sunni Islam, and the role of a preacher was very important within this education: It is indicative of the growing prestige of preachers in this period that they were increasingly found worthy of inclusion in the biographical dictionaries of the ulema.”³³⁴

Likewise, there was an explosion of religious texts written in Turkish for public education on Sunni Islam. The increase in the production of catechetical literature (*ilm-i hâl*), and aqaid books can be observed.³³⁵ Krstić identifies that “prioritizing of fıkıh”³³⁶ was the characteristic feature of these religious primers. On the eastern borders of the Ottoman lands, Safavids managed a similar process, where Shah Ismail refers to his followers as “ahl-i Haqq, men of truth, God’s men”³³⁷ and the others as unbelievers, and infidels.³³⁸

Moreover, the Safavid state commissioned officers called *tabarra’iyân* (zealots) to force people to curse the first three caliphs in public areas and spy on people who refused to

³³³ Colin Imber, *Ebu’s-su’ud, The Islamic Legal Tradition* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 67.

³³⁴ Terzioğlu, “How to Conceptualize,” 315-6.

³³⁵ Derin Terzioğlu, “Where İlmihal Meets Catechism: Islamic Manuals of Religious Instruction in the Ottoman Empire in the Age of Confessionalization,” *Past and Present*, 220 (2013): 79-114. Krstić, “From *Shahāda*,” 297.

³³⁶ Krstić, “State and Religion,” 68.

³³⁷ Minorsky, “The Poetry,” 1027a.

³³⁸ Dressler, “Inventing Orthodoxy,” 157.

do so. It is interesting that a poet named Abdi Beg Shirazi was using the word “idol” (*mâbud*) praising the acts of *tabarra'iyân*: “With the coming of the *tabarrâ'iyân*, the idols of Sunnism were shattered in the exact same way (that happened) with the blow of İbrahim, son of Azar.”³³⁹ Thus, just as Sunni ulama was accusing Qizilbash and Safavids of worshipping Shah Ismail as if he was a god, Shirazi implied that the first caliphs were like idols for the Sunnis.

This was the cursing ritual (*lânet*) mentioned in ulama’s fatwas and *risâles* which was a distinguishing feature of Shiism.³⁴⁰ As we learn from Hasan Beg Rumlu (d. 1578), a Safavid cavalryman and historian, Shah Ismail began to use khutbah and cursing ritual as a tool of propaganda consolidating the support of his subjects right after he took the throne.³⁴¹

The cursing ritual must have had such strong symbolic implications and been such an influential propaganda device that it became one of the main topics in the relationships between the Ottomans and the Safavids. Shah Tahmasp I, before the Amasya Peace Treaty (1555), threatened Süleyman I on ordering his Safavid *tabarrâ'iyân* to curse the Ottoman dynasty and sending them to the Ottoman lands to ruin the state’s legitimacy.³⁴² During the peace negotiations, the sultan requested to put an end to this ritual. This request was repeated by Murad III in 1590, before the Long Iranian Campaign was finished.³⁴³

Another ritual which helped strengthen support for the Safavids whilst being regarded by the Ottomans as a crime was mixed gathering of women and men for religious services.³⁴⁴ In fatwas, *risâles*, and archival records of the 16th century, mixed gatherings were recorded as an act against sharia, a sign of being *Râfizî*, and generally associated with sexual

³³⁹ Mitchell, *The Practice of Politics*, 24.

³⁴⁰ Baltacioğlu-Brammer, “Those Heretics,” 53.

³⁴¹ Baltacioğlu-Brammer, “Those Heretics,” 54.

³⁴² Baltacioğlu-Brammer, “Those Heretics,” 54.

³⁴³ Boyar, “The Ottoman Expansion,” 138.

³⁴⁴ Baltacioğlu-Brammer, “Those Heretics,” 42.

corruption, illicitness, and even incest. As shall be shown in the following pages, Sarı Saltık was also against this ritual.

Qizilbash Prosecution in the Reign of Murad III

The Safavid challenge, and persecutions against Qizilbash, Qalandaris and other non-Sunni groups and practices continued before, during and after the Long Iranian Campaign between 1578-90 in the reign of Murad III, during which *Saltıknâme*'s first completed edition dated 1591 was copied. There were still Safavid caliphs in the Ottoman lands propagandizing their cause, numerous supporters, and followers of the Safavids, and also other non-Sunni groups who did not obey the state's impositions on religious beliefs and practices.

In 1574 a man name Shahvirdi, whose father had been executed previously for being a caliph of Shah Ismail, was reported by the qadi of Ruha (Urfa) for "collecting offerings (*nezir*) and sacrifices (*kurban*) from the villages of Ruha and Siverek and taking them to Persia."³⁴⁵ Murad III ordered the governor of Çorum and the qadi of Orta-pâre to find the thirty four volumes of *Râfizî* books that he heard Sahvirdi possessed from one of his spies named Kara Yakup, and send them to the court in 1576.³⁴⁶ The same year the sultan also ordered his officers to punish members of the Hurûfî order.³⁴⁷

Beginning from 1577, an increase can be seen in records on non-Sunni denunciations, investigations, and punishments. Imber defines those cases as "pre-war persecutions."³⁴⁸ In 1577, qadi of Kerkük informed the court about a group of Qizilbash lived in Dakük who had

³⁴⁵ Colin H. Imber, "The Persecution of the Ottoman Shiites according to the Mühimme Defterleri, 1565–1585," *Der Islam: Journal of the History and Culture of the Middle East*, 56 (1979): 245-273, 250.

³⁴⁶ Refik, *Onaltıncı Asırda*, 99.

³⁴⁷ Refik, *Onaltıncı Asırda*, 101, 102.

³⁴⁸ Imber, "The Persecution," 257.

held mixed gatherings since Shah Ismail was coronated. It was apparently heresy.³⁴⁹ Around the same year, two men who took refuge in a Halvatî order, fearful of being slaughtered during Qizilbash persecutions, were reported by a Halvatî sheikh named Mevlâna Müslihüddin for straying from the right path and insulting Sunnis in the masjid.³⁵⁰ Again in 1577, *sancak beyi* of Bozok was ordered “to examine and report on certain corrupters who practice the Kızılbaş rite, rebel against and curse the Chosen Companions, receive offerings and travel to Persia.”³⁵¹ A certain Yitilmiş Abdal was sentenced to death for being Qizilbash in Elbistan.³⁵² The Qizilbash caliph Kör Tatar and his followers were ordered to be investigated for “gathering for their false rites with women outside the permitted degrees”³⁵³ near Tarsus. A sultanic edict dated 1577 indicates that a certain Baba Seyyidî in western Anatolia was burnt at the stake for being “famous and noted for his apostatize” and their followers were investigated.³⁵⁴ In 1578, a group of people was sentenced to death for pledging loyalty to a Safavid caliph, and sending him offerings in Malatya.³⁵⁵ The same year, a man claiming to be Shah Ismail having two hundred horsemen were reported. Imber argues that this incident of a false Shah Ismail shows that the Qizilbash movement in Anatolia had been weakened, however, they also “were able to accept an imposter apparently without question.”³⁵⁶

The year 1579 was also full of cases of Qizilbash persecution. A former sanjak beg of Dhamar was reported by the qadis of Sala, Madan and Amma for cursing the *çâyâr*.³⁵⁷ The qadi of Kurşunlu reported some men for cursing the first three caliphs and arranging

³⁴⁹ Imber, “The Persecution,” 248.

³⁵⁰ Refik, *Onaltıncı Asırda*, 97.

³⁵¹ Imber, “The Persecution,” 257.

³⁵² Refik, *Onaltıncı Asırda*, 103.

³⁵³ Imber, “The Persecution,” 250.

³⁵⁴ “ilhâd ile meşhur ve ma’rûf olan” Cahit Telci. “Bir Osmanlı Zındığının Suç Dosyasında Neler var? Yeşil Külahlı Mustafa (Oğlan Dede) Örneği [What’s in the Crime file of an Ottoman Heretic? A Case of Yeşil Külahlı Mustafa (Oğlan Dede)], *Sufi Araştırmaları* 14 (2016): 4.

³⁵⁵ Refik, *Onaltıncı Asırda*, 104.

³⁵⁶ Imber, “The Persecution,” 254.

³⁵⁷ Imber, “The Persecution,” 249.

mixed gatherings of women and men.³⁵⁸ From Alaşehir, Kestel, and Aydın there were reports of another cursing ritual.³⁵⁹ In a relatively long imperial order, Murad III commanded the bey of Kangırı to investigate its population to determine whether they were *Râfizîs* arranging mixed gatherings. The sultan also asked: "...the local government to investigate the nature of these clandestine gatherings, as well as their connections with Yukarı Cânib (i.e., Safavid Iran.)"³⁶⁰

In the 16th century, this request had been repeated for numerous times by the sultans. The villages highly populated by Qizilbash follower were of particular interest to the court. They were accused of *rafz*, *ilhad*, and heresy. Telci examines a text written in 1578, the year that Long Iranian Campaign began, bearing the title of *Risâle-i Zendekiyye*. It contains all the above-mentioned accusations against Qizilbash but its emphasis on fornication and sexual corruption is heavier.³⁶¹

Telci criticizes the modern scholarship for focusing only on the cases from the eastern and southern parts of Anatolia where the Ottoman-Safavid conflicts occurred, and approaching this matter only in the context of Ottoman-Safavid rivalry.³⁶² Instead, Telci argues that the Ottoman state politics, law, and prosecutions against the heretics in the late 16th century also included the western part of Anatolia, and investigations and punishments of individuals were not just due to the Safavid rivalry, but also a matter of faith more broadly, in the eyes of the state. In his article dedicated to analyzing the case of a certain *zındık* named Oğlan Dede who lived in Balıkesir, he shows that the prosecution of heretics continued even years after the Ottoman-Safavid conflicts ended. Telci also gives other examples from

³⁵⁸ Imber, "The Persecution," 259.

³⁵⁹ Imber, "The Persecution," 263.

³⁶⁰ Baltacıoğlu-Brammer, "Those Heretics," 39, 40. Refik, *Onaltıncı Asırda*, 110, 111.

³⁶¹ Telci, "Bir Osmanlı Zındığının," 5.

³⁶² Telci, "Bir Osmanlı Zındığının," 6.

Aydın, Manisa and Kütahya based on the diwan and *mühimme* registers, most of them issued under the reign of Murad III.³⁶³

Guided by those Ottoman archival documents, Telci reaches the conclusion that being a heretic was worthy of formal punishment by the Ottoman state in the late 16th century. According to this depiction, a *Râfizî*, Qizilbash, *zındık* or *mülhid* was the person who “was not from the Sunni madhab”³⁶⁴, drinking wine, leaving five prayers (*namaz*) and fasting, holding religious ceremonies and mixed gatherings of men and women, committing adultery, and setting a bad example for the neighborhood. Additionally, they also believed and waited for the Mahdi to come, using unmentionable words for the companions of prophet Muhammad, accepting the things forbidden by religion as halal, not naming their children after Ebubekir, Ömer, Osman, and some of them saying “Our God is Ali.”³⁶⁵ In this period, being a *Râfizî* was such a crime that a person could be investigated and/or punished simply for appearing to be one, even if this was not actually the case.

As for 1580s, cursing the *çâryâr* was still enough for anyone to be stigmatized as a Qizilbash, heretic, and sentenced to death.³⁶⁶ There are records showing that common people of Sunni madhab were also reporting Qizilbash to the authorities for the same reasons and the extent of violence was growing.³⁶⁷

Another record from 1583, when the war with the Safavids was at its height, covers a wide area in Amasya and a range of accusations against Qizilbash populations. Apart from being *mülhid*, cursing *çâryâr*, leaving prayers and fasting, supporting Safavid caliphs, they were also regularly accused of illicit sexual actions.³⁶⁸ The allegations of sexual immorality

³⁶³ See especially the footnotes of the pages: Telci, “Bir Osmanlı Zındığının,” 3-9.

³⁶⁴ “*sünniyü’l-mezheb olmayub...*” Telci, “Bir Osmanlı Zındığının,” 3.

³⁶⁵ Telci, “Bir Osmanlı Zındığının,” 7.

³⁶⁶ Imber, “The Persecution,” 261.

³⁶⁷ For example: “Certain intriguers, it seemed, broke into innocent Muslims’ houses leaving a kızılbaş crown (*tac*) there as evidence that the householders were heretics. They imprisoned the victims without reference to a kadı and appropriated their money and property.” Imber, “The Persecution,” 249.

³⁶⁸ Refik, *Onaltıncı Asırda*, 112, 113.

in the mixed gatherings continued to be directed against the Qizilbash groups in any part of the Ottoman lands.

The Long Iranian Campaign 1578-90

The increase in allegations of moral impropriety against Qizilbash is likely related to the established Sunni character of the Ottoman state, and as is seen in the records, to the continued strength of Safavid influence and the density of Qizilbash population in the Ottoman lands. Naturally, the impact of the war with the Safavids in 1578 only increased this tension,³⁶⁹ and accordingly the ongoing need for the Ottoman's to demonize them cannot be ignored.

Twelve years after the Treaty of Amasya (1555), the question as to why Murad III preferred to wage a long and expensive war against Iran while the Safavid state was in a time of crisis is still a matter of debate in the scholarship. Among the potential justifications one may consider that Murad was taking advantage of the crisis emerging from the sudden death by poison of Shah Tahmasp in 1574, to take revenge, and seize the treasure of Süleyman's son Prince Bayazid when he took along to the Safavid court.³⁷⁰

Matthee examined and explained the matter based on Ottoman and Safavid materials, and two contemporary accounts that had not previously been examined: a narrative written by an Italian chamberlain in the service of Lala Mustafa Pasha, and Minadoi's *The War between the Turks and the Persian* published in 1587.³⁷¹ Accordingly, the Safavids, after Çaldıran in 1514, were not that willing to fight against the Ottomans. Shah Tahmasp (r. 1514-76) regularly sent his envoys, trying to maintain peace with the Ottomans, resisting pressure

³⁶⁹ See: Rudi Matthee, "The Ottoman Safavid War of 1578-90, Motives and Causes," *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 20, Nos. 1&2 (2014): 1-20.

³⁷⁰ Matthee, "The Ottoman Safavid War," 10-12.

³⁷¹ Matthee, "The Ottoman Safavid War," 5.

from Prince Bayazid to march against the Ottoman state, and finally handed the Prince to his father. It was the Ottomans started war. He shows that it was a combination of political needs, and religious ideology, desire to use the opportunity of the turmoil in İran, and personal ambition of Murad III in a period when European frontier was secured.³⁷²

The ideology was the matured emphasis on the Sunni character of the Ottoman state. The calculation was about the factions in the court and advices given to Murad III.³⁷³ The private interest of the sultan partly comes from the various witnesses of the times, mostly travelers who agree that Murad III desired to conquer the Safavid lands, and Georgia, and of his relationship with his sheikh Şücâ.

Dreams of Murad III

Murad III's reign was marked by many criticisms, and his relationship with Sheikh Şücâ was one of them. He was criticized for his secluded lifestyle, doting on entertainment with his dwarfs in the palace, an inability to choose efficient viziers for government, and a failure to solve financial problems.³⁷⁴ His reign saw the first significant devaluation of the currency of the time, and the first military rebellion. Thus, his era was regarded as a period of long decline which began in the very first years of his reign.³⁷⁵ Although recent

³⁷² Matthee, "The Ottoman Safavid War," 19.

³⁷³ Günhan Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites at the Courts of Sultan Ahmed I (r. 1603-17) and His Immediate Predecessors," Ph.D. dissertation, The Ohio State University, 2010.

³⁷⁴ Christine Woodhead, "Poet, Patron and Padişah, The Ottoman Sultan Murad III (1574-95)", *Ambition and Anxiety: Courts and Courtly Discourse, c.700-1600*, eds. Giles E.M. Gasper and John Mckinnell (Toronto: Durham University Publications, 2014): 231.

³⁷⁵ Börekçi summarizes how the "declinist" historians see the period between the 1570s and 1610s, and the revisionist approaches. Especially see the introduction part: Börekçi, "Factions and Favorites." Also see: Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

scholarship tends to identify the period as one of crisis and transformation, rather than decline, the independent historians of the late 16th century portrayed him as a weak sultan.³⁷⁶

Historian Gelibolulu Mustafa Âli (d. 1600) was one of the critics who wrote about Sheikh Şücâ's radical impact on the sultan.³⁷⁷ Sheikh Şücâ was a Halvatî sheikh, and a gardener in Manisa, and was invited to Istanbul after interpreting a dream that Murad III saw before his enthronement happened to be reality. In time, he became a *hünkâr şeyhi* and a close friend of the sultan. Murad III wrote letters about his dreams and visions and sent them to Şücâ until his death in 1587/8. Those letters were turned into a book in 1591/2. Özgen Felek's magnificent study, and analysis shows that with these letters mainly aimed at Sufi circles, Murad III wanted to build his own image as he wished since he did not trust his cortege of writers to shape his image as he wished it to be.³⁷⁸ According to Felek, Murad III:

"...turned his dreams into narrative tools through which he also conveyed an image that he wanted people to have about himself at a time when true dreams were seen by his contemporaries as one of the forty-six parts of prophethood."³⁷⁹

Murad III's choice of image which he built for himself is rather interesting. The sultan was a *velîyullâh* (friend of God, saint), *kutbü'l-aktâb* (pole of poles, the first ranking saint in the hierarchy), and then turned into al-Khidr, prophet Muhammad and Ali ibn Abu Talip, respectively. In this sense, Felek argues that the narrative had the form of a hagiography and can be re-titled as *Menâkıbnâme-i Sultan Murad Han* ("The Exemplary Virtues of Sultan

³⁷⁶ Özgen Felek, "(Re)creating Image and Identity Dreams and Visions as a Means of Murad III's Self-Fashioning", *Dreams and Visions in Islamic Societies*, eds. Özgen Felek and Alexander D. Knysh (New York: State University of New York Press, 2012): 253.

³⁷⁷ Cornell H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire, The Historian Mustafa Âli (1541-1600)*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986), 296.

³⁷⁸ Felek transcribed those letters and published the book with a marvelous analysis. *Kitâbü'l-Menâmât, Sultan III. Murad'ın Rûya Mektupları*, ed. Özgen Felek, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2012). To see the examples from the letters and Felek's extended analysis see: Özgen Felek, "(Re)creating Image and Identity, Dreams and Visions as a Means of Murad III's Self-Fashioning", *Dreams and Visions in Islamic Societies*, eds. Özgen Felek and Alexander D. Knysh (New York: State University of New York Press, 2012): 249-272.

³⁷⁹ Felek, "(Re)creating Image and Identity," 250.

Murad Han”).³⁸⁰ What is more striking is the sultan also deemed himself as “the inheritor of the knowledge of prophet”, a belief specific to Shia tradition.³⁸¹

After this Murad III turned into Ali ibn Abu Talip, receiving the essences of the *velâyet* (sainthood) and *kerâmet* (miracle working) originally possessed by Ali. Felek interprets this an attempt by Murad III to portray himself as a divinely approved Islamic sovereign able and confirmed to rule both the Sunnis and the Shi’as.³⁸² Moreover, as the twelfth sultan of the Ottoman dynasty, he pictured himself as the twelfth Imam, namely Mahdi according to Shiite beliefs. In a following dream, the sultan was divinely promised “the disposal of all the sovereignty of the province of the Persian Lands.”³⁸³ Felek argues that these dreams could have been amongst the reasons why Murad III was so willing to wage war against the Safavids while there was so much opposition, many financial problems, and several other handicaps. Accordingly, Felek says, “*Kitâbü’l-menâmât* functions not only to create an image of Sultan Murad, but also to legitimize his political and military decisions.”³⁸⁴

Matthee shares an interesting anecdote written by an Austrian humanist scholar Löwenklau (1533-93), living in Istanbul between 1585-1587. According to the scholar’s testimony Murad III’s two dreams, as interpreted by his sheikh Şücâ, influenced his decision to wage war.³⁸⁵ In relation to this, the self-image of Murad III was closely related to the coming of the Last Days, the Islamic millennium, apocalyptic anxieties and expectations as the restorer and protector of Islam.

³⁸⁰ Felek, “(Re)creating Image and Identity,” 256.

³⁸¹ “Shia tradition holds that before his death, the Prophet passed a sacred and secret knowledge (*ilm*), inaccessible to ordinary human beings, as well as his political and religious authority onto Ali, although the Sunnis deny this. It is through this knowledge that the Shia imams claimed to have been the ‘the infallible interpreters of God’s will,’ a claim that established them as the true authorities over the Muslim world. Our narrator, however, asserts that this authority and sacred knowledge was passed onto Murad by the Prophet himself in his dream.” Felek, “(Re)creating Image and Identity,” 264.

³⁸² Felek, “(Re)creating Image and Identity,” 264.

³⁸³ Felek, “(Re)creating Image and Identity,” 265.

³⁸⁴ Felek, “(Re)creating Image and Identity,” 265.

³⁸⁵ Matthee, “The Ottoman Safavid War,” 12.

The Islamic Millennium

Kitâbü'l-menâmât was collected as a book in A.H. 1001, 1591/2, nearly one year after the Islamic millennium, and the same year that *Saltıknâme*'s first completed edition was copied. Perhaps Sultan Murad III was celebrating, in his own distinctive way, living through the apocalypse, and also his victory over the Safavids when it became definite and sealed with a treaty in 1590.

At the beginning of the century, the ideological necessity to declare the Safavids as heretics, and response to the messianic, millenarist expectations and claims of the age had caused an urgency to portray the Ottoman sultans as true believers, and guardians of Islam who received divine consent and favor. Bayezid II, Selim I, and Süleyman I were portrayed and glorified as messianic figures, and sometimes even the Mahdi.

However, starting from the 1550s, with the failure to establish a universal monarchy including the lands of the west and the east, Habsburgs, and the Safavids, Süleyman I was pictured more as the protector and restorer of Sunni Islam.³⁸⁶ Thus, the image Murad III designed for himself seems to be a shift, a return to the beginning of the 16th century. This was caused by revival of apocalyptic fears as well as internal and external threats.

Judging from historical records, and secondary studies, when Murad III took the throne, there was a positive atmosphere, and hopeful outlook in the region. However, the seclusion of the sultan to the court, his seeming devotion only to entertainment, rumors and accusations of corruption and bribery, and complaints about incompetent viziers caused discontent. Increasing financial difficulties, and devaluation led to the first military revolt in Ottoman history, the Beylerbeyi Incident in 1589, designed by the ruling viziers to target the

³⁸⁶ Dressler, "Inventing Orthodoxy," 160. Fleischer, "A Mediterranean Apocalypse," 58.

sultan's *musâhib* Mehmed Pasha,³⁸⁷ resulting in his death³⁸⁸ with the following plague in Istanbul contributing to the reactivation of millenarian fears, and expectations. Thus, "Istanbul was reminded that the Muslim millennium, the Hijri year 1000, was only two years away, and apocalyptic expectation ran high."³⁸⁹ Fleischer says, even Âli himself, despite had no believe in this apocalyptic scenario, had his share from the atmosphere. Âli also recorded the fear felt by Murad III. Astrologers had prophesized great upheavals and revolts, and the sultan, already aware of dissatisfaction concerning his rule, was also rumored to be anxious that his son Mehmed received far more sympathy than he himself did.³⁹⁰

Politically, what Tezcan identified as "the Second Empire," began in 1580, the year in which Murad III choose to rule the state directly, without a grand vizier, after the death of Semiz Ahmed Pasha. This was a period in "which the limits of the political power of the emperor and his court were questioned, challenged"³⁹¹ and Murad III responded to this by creating a kind of absolutism. Fleischer underlines that "the Islamic millennium was only sixteen years away when Murad ascended the Ottoman throne must not be forgotten."³⁹² Likewise, I think and argue that the date 1591 must also be not forgotten when analyzing *Saltıknâme* which includes and reflects fears, and expectations in the millenarian sense.

II.1) A Hero Above All

In its first sentences *Saltıknâme* represents a concise and compact picture of the hero: a sayyid and a *sharif* whose lineage goes back to the Prophet and Ali ibn Abi Talib; a *gâzi* descend from the most respected warriors before him; a saint who had both *velâyet*

³⁸⁷ Börekeçi, "Factions and Favorites," 172.

³⁸⁸ Özel re-examines the issue based on newly found sources: Oktay Özel, "The Reign of Violence, The Celalis c. 1550-1700," in *The Ottoman World*, ed. Christine Woodhead (London: Routledge, 2012): 184-205. Özel shows that "By the 1590s, not only sipahis in Anatolia but also kapıkulus everywhere were participating in unlawful activities and violent reactions." Özel, "The Reign of Violence," 186.

³⁸⁹ Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual* 134.

³⁹⁰ Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, 295.

³⁹¹ Tezcan, *The Second Empire*, 194.

³⁹² Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, 244.

(sainthood) and *kerâmet* (miraculous deeds) and also al-Khidr³⁹³ as his primary comrade; an educated man who can speak twelve languages, and is a master of Islamic disciplines, a hero who cannot be compared with any of his earlier forerunners.

Sarı Saltık's Names and Epithets

His real “blessed and honorable name”³⁹⁴ is al-Khidr³⁹⁵ however, throughout the narrative Saltık is mostly referred as *server*, a Persian word meaning chief, leader, *sharif* (sayyid), and Saltık/Saltuh. According to the text, the word Saltık means mighty man but it is most probably not true.³⁹⁶ Anetshofer indicates that both in Evliyâ’s *Seyahatnâme* and *Saltıknâme*, the word Saltık is considered as a non-Turkic name, and given extra explanations to normalize this word as his name. Furthermore, Anetshofer detects Evliyâ’s efforts to portray him as a man with Turkic (thus Muslim) origin “without reference to any written or oral source, solely in order to defend Sarı Saltık from the allegations of being a Christian monk”³⁹⁷ by making up the name “Muhammed Buhârî” and an imaginary past for him.³⁹⁸ On the other hand, in *Tuffâh’ul-Arwah*, Saltık is referred as “Saltık et-Türki”, an epithet indicating his ethnicity or where he came from. In *Saltıknâme*, Sarı Saltık is mentioned several times as “Türk Saltuh”, Saltık the Turkic. However, it is not clear whether this is about his ethnicity or simply to denote that he was a subject of the Turks, namely the Hanafi-

³⁹³ Khidr is remembered together with a prophet named İlyas in Islamic tradition, and these two figures constituted a cult called Khidr-Elias. See Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *İslam-Türk İnançlarında Hızır, yahut Hızır-İlyas Kültü* [Khidr in Islamic-Turkic beliefs, or the cult of Khidr-Elias] (Istanbul: Kabalcı Yayınları, 2012). On previous pages, Elias also becomes a comrade of Sarı Saltık, and the hero meets generally two of them at the same time.

³⁹⁴ “İsm-i şerifleri Hızır’dur,” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 37.

³⁹⁵ It is in fact not a name but an epithet: “Al-Khadir is properly an epithet (the green man); this was in time forgotten and this explains the secondary form *Ḳhīdr* (about the green), which in many places has displaced the primary form.” A. J. Wensinck, “al-*Ḳhādir*”, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, First Edition (1913-1936), ed. M. T. Houtsma, T. W. Arnold, R. Basset, R. Hartmann, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2214-871X_ei1_COM_0131

³⁹⁶ Karamustafa, “Islamization”, 354.

³⁹⁷ Anetshofer, “Legends of Sarı Saltık,” 296.

³⁹⁸ Anetshofer, “Legends of Sarı Saltık,” 293-4.

Sunni Ottomans. Considering this emphasis on his Turkic background can be seen mostly in the anecdotes related to Christian rivals, it can be concluded that it is about being an Ottoman. That is to say, if an anecdote is about a political, religious or cultural rivalry between a Christian member of clergy, a state or a king, the emphasis always includes being a “Türk”. The same is valid in the anecdotes related to the *Râfizîs*. When they are at the center of the anecdote, the word Sunni is the most repeated term against the rivals.

A Sayyid and a Sharif

Saltık is a “sayyid” through the Prophet’s grandson Husayn, and a “sharif” [şerif] through another grandson Hasan. Moreover, Sarı Saltık is also “descended from Seyyid Battal Gâzi,”³⁹⁹ the main protagonist of *Battalname*, a very respectful and popular hero in medieval and late medieval Anatolia which was heralded in his dream about the birth of Sarı Saltık by the Prophet Muhammad. Saltık is referred to mostly with these titles sayyid, and sharif, all throughout the text as if those were his real names.

In the earliest historical source about Saltık’s life, *Tuffâhu’l-Arwah* there is no record about his sayyidhood. However, Saltık undoubtedly may have been remembered as a sayyid and sharif in oral tradition, something which was later recorded in the original *Saltıknâme*. On the other hand, sainthood may have inserted into his identity with the 1591 edition of the text, as being a sayyid had already risen in importance in the late 16th century while Ottoman-Sunnism was at its height.

Terzioğlu emphasizes a “growing veneration of the Prophet and his descendants, the sayyids, across the Sunni-Shii divide” in the late Medieval times and argues that it was softening the confessional boundaries.⁴⁰⁰ During the 16th century, being a sayyid “was highly

³⁹⁹ “Seyyid Battal Gazi evladundan [...]” (He is descended from Seyyid Battal Gazi) Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 37.

⁴⁰⁰ Terzioğlu, “How to Conceptualize,” 307.

valued throughout the Islamic world.”⁴⁰¹ Looking at fatwas of Kemalpaşazâde, Ökten concludes the same, and says that the sayyids were higher in the social ranking as nontaxable people who were not from *re'âyâ* and privileged in sharia courts.⁴⁰²

Shah Ismail's claim to be a sayyid who is “proud of his descent from Ali and Fatima”⁴⁰³ can be another or the second reason behind Saltık's inserted sainthood. As I will show in the next subchapter, Shah İsmail's claims about his noble lineage are especially targeted and unjustified in various anecdotes of *Saltıknâme*. As Sönmez states:

The Safavid shah tried to consolidate his political legitimacy in the eyes of Shi's and Sunni Muslims in Iran by claiming descent from Ali as in the following poetical expressions: “(*anamdur Fatima atam Ali dūr*) Fatima is my mother [the daughter of the Prophet], my ancestor is Ali.”⁴⁰⁴

İsmail's prophetic lineage was as great a danger as his army, his supporters in Anatolia and propaganda to the Ottomans. İdrisi Bidlisi, Kemalpaşazâde, and Ebussuûd who were amongst the builders of Ottoman-Sunnism dealt with Ismail's claim. Sönmez deduces that Bidlisi anxiously tried to disaffirm İsmail's genealogy because of its possible influence all over the Muslim world, particularly while he was struggling to lay out a hypothetical grounding for the Ottoman sultans so that they could claim to establish a caliphate/sultanate. Bidlisi's response was that Shah Ismail was only a product of political marriages, and had no other legitimate cause to be adopted by the Muslim world.⁴⁰⁵ Kemalpaşazâde wrote that İsmail's claimed lineage was a lie. Even it was the truth, he tried to convince his audience, it did not mean that every sayyid was in the right way to God.⁴⁰⁶ Likewise Ebussuûd refuted Ismail's lineage, and in a fatwah he issued upon a question about whether a sayyid could be killed or not alleged that:

⁴⁰¹ Sönmez, “An Acem Statesman,” 120.

⁴⁰² Ökten, “Ottoman Society,” 64.

⁴⁰³ Minorsky, “The Poetry,” 1026a.

⁴⁰⁴ Sönmez, “An Acem Statesman,” 120.

⁴⁰⁵ Sönmez, “An Acem Statesman,” 120.

⁴⁰⁶ Baltacıoğlu-Brammer, “Those Heretics,” 56.

Shah İsmâ'il, forced the *sâdât-i 'izâm* [who were descendants from Imams] to give him a place in the chain of lineage depended on the Imams, and killed those who refused to do so. Yet some *sâdât* did what he wanted, in order to escape death; but they deliberately tied İsmâ'il's genealogy with the one [Imam], who had no children, so that one can understand the truth.⁴⁰⁷

Thus, Saltık's portrayal as both sayyid and sharif at the very beginning of the text can also be reconsidered in this context.

Continuity and Superiority

Dreams occupy a quiet place in *Saltıknâme*. They function as prophecies heralding Muslim victories or warnings about the obstacles they will face, a resource of communication, and also legitimization. The first dream narration in the text can be seen as a template. Accordingly, Sarı Saltık is heralded to Seyyid Battal Gâzi in a dream before his birth by the Prophet:

Hearsayer says: Seyyid Battal Gâzi saw Prophet Muhammad in his dream. The prophet said: 'My son! A person will be born to world from your lineage. His name will be Hızır. Namely, his name will be Sarı Saltık. He will attack to the lands of Rum and devastate many churches. These lands will be swarmed by Islam thanks to him. My *ummah* will be powerful by dint of him, and he will convert many infidels to Islam by his brute force (by the force of his wrist). And you will be with me in a very short time. You'll be a martyr and drink the sherbet of martyrdom.' Then the prophet disappears.⁴⁰⁸

The appearance of the Prophet in a dream in *Saltıknâme* is always about prophecy and legitimization. Katz states that this was also valid for the medieval Muslim world, and especially for Sufi circles and traditions. Moreover, there is a hadith about it:

⁴⁰⁷ Sönmez, "An Acem Statesman," 121.

⁴⁰⁸ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 37.

“The vision of the prophet Muhammad was understood by Sufis to be *prima facie* true or veridical, a view supported by an oft-cited hadith, ‘Whoever has seen me has seen me truly and Satan cannot take my form.’”⁴⁰⁹

In this dream, the names attributed to Saltık, and the synonymousness usage of al-Khidr and Sarı Saltık are approved directly by the prophet.⁴¹⁰ It seems important for the copyist(s) to underline that aspect of his personality. In this way, Saltık’s being a sayyid, and his heroism is both heralded and approved by the higher Islamic figure, the Prophet. When Battal Gâzi wakes up, he writes down his dream and his testament on a piece of paper straight away. Then he sends them with a man to his comrades in Malatya, saying: “Preserve this testament properly until the time comes, and give it to Seyyid Hızır.”⁴¹¹ Therefore, the divine dream transforms into a historical document, a certificate of approval. Battal Gâzi sent these documents to his friends in Malatya so that when Sarı Saltık arrived they would know that it was him and his identity would be guaranteed. Indeed, it worked, and Battal Gâzi’s friends helped Saltık in his heroic deeds. As the story proceeds, the messenger delivered the dream letter and testament from Seyyid Battal Gâzi and left for Malatya. Battal went to Mesih Kalesi (The Castle of the Messiah). He fought for several days, and then died just as the prophet foretold it in his dream. In his last battle the prophet himself showed up and also fought. Then the next paragraph opens with an interesting sentence: “Since Seyyid [Battal Gâzi] had gone, there came Eyne Gâzi and Melik Danişmend.”⁴¹² Together they slaughtered the infidels and weakened them. They made *gazâs*, and made people convert to Islam. This

⁴⁰⁹ Jonathan G. Katz, “Dreams and Their Interpretation in Sufi Thought and Practice,” in *Dreams and Visions in Islamic Societies*, eds. Özgen Felek and Alexander D. Knysh, (New York: Suny Press, 2012): 181-199, 190.

⁴¹⁰ Fleischer includes a remarkable example in his article. In a 16th century text titled *Cihâdnâme*, the author claimed that he was informed in his dream by Seyyid Gâzi on the hidden saints (*ricâl ül-gâib*) and all the other saints were on the battlefield in Mohacs when Süleyman I was fighting against the infidels to support him. Fleischer, “The Lawgiver,” 169.

⁴¹¹ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 37.

⁴¹² “Çünkü Seyyid gitdi, sonuna Eyne Gazi ve dahi Melik Danişmend geldiler, kafirleri kırıp zebun itdiler.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 39.

sentence is a statement of an idea of continuity between the champions of Islam. The “arrival” of Eyne Gâzi and Melik Danişmend is related to the departure of Battal Gâzi from the scene. When a champion dies, another one replaces him, just as the saints replace each other after one’s death.

This short paragraph is also related to Sarı Saltık’s family history. According to *Saltıknâme*, Sarı Saltık’s father Seyyid Hasan ibn-i Hüseyin ibn-i Muhammad ibn-i Ali, “was descended from Seyyid (Battal) Gâzi, and from the lineage of Ali’s (bin Abi Talib) sons” together with Eyne Gâzi and Melik Danişmend were comrades fighting against the “infidels” together. After Saltık also lost his mother Rebi when he was fourteen, and suffered from poverty, he asked his tutor Seravil for help. Seravil had him meet with the sultan (whose identity is not clear) who put him on a salary. While the sultan and Şerif Saltık were hunting together somewhere in Anatolia, the sultan witnessed his many skills, turned to *Seravil* near him and said: “He will surpass his father.”⁴¹³

When Saltık returned to Sinop accompanying the Muslim ruler of the city an envoy, Emir Ali, arrived from Tırbanos, the ruler of Amasya. His message was threatening. Christians had gathered an army that would attack the Muslims and they would certainly be defeated. Hearing it, Sarı Saltık stood up furiously, wounded the envoy’s face, cut off his ears, and handed them over to him:

God gave the opportunity to the Muslims. Did not they know that our ancestor Seyyid Battal defeated them again and again? They are still afraid even of his name, they frighten their sons with him. I will play such a trick and damage them further that they will forget about Battal and remember my name.⁴¹⁴

Here, one can see the primary motivation of Sarı Saltık as a hero: to outbrave the threats from Christian enemies towards Muslims by replacing an earlier hero, Battal Gâzi. At this

⁴¹³ “Bu atası Hasan’dan artuk olııardur.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 41.

⁴¹⁴ “Allahu ta’ala fırsatı Müslümanlara virmüştür. Bilmezler mi kim bizüm neslümüzden Seyyid Battal anlara ne işler itmişdür. Henüz dahı anun adından korkarlar, oğlancukların anunla korkudurlar. Anlara bir iş idem kim anı unıdup beni analar.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 41.

point, the idea of continuity shows itself once more. However, the author makes it clear that he is a hero above all. This idea of continuity is originally related to the Islamic belief of sainthood. Accordingly, when a saint dies another one replaces him. The world continues to survive thanks to those saints.⁴¹⁵ However, here in this passage the focus is on Saltık's warlike enthusiasm and abilities. Thus, it is a projection of the idea of continuity between the saints to a heroic-warlike group. On the other hand, in the course of narrative, Saltık will also become a saint, and this belief will display itself once more about Saltık's sainthood. During the following anecdotes, Sarı Saltık explicitly strives to surpass the memory or deeds of other heroes, such as Alexander the Great or Rustem of the *Shahname* of Ferdowsi. To be a hero, his self-confidence, and the decisions he makes to overcome the dangers of living as a warrior are equally as important as his ascribed status as a *sayyid* and being a descendant of Battal Gâzi. It is true that he was described as a natural-born hero in *Saltıknâme*, but his heroism, as well as his sainthood, is developed by virtue of his further decisions and deeds. Additionally, this speech also includes the main message of the whole narrative: Muslims will always be victorious. Now, it is their turn.

The Greatest Hero of the Time

Upon Sarı Saltık's display of vengeful behavior towards the envoy, some *begs* (local lords) sitting around Emir Ali denounce him for doing such an indiscreet act at such a young age. At that time, Saltık is only fourteen years old, and feeling heavily offended by their words he goes home, lays down upon his bed, and sleeps. In his dream he sees Battal Gâzi and hear these decisive words from his mouth: "My precious! Stand up and move out. No one can compare to you."⁴¹⁶ Thus, his uniqueness is evidenced and ensured by Battal Gâzi

⁴¹⁵ Süleyman Uludağ, "Velî", in *İslam Ansiklopedisi* 43 (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2013): 25-28. <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/veli--tasavvuf>

⁴¹⁶ "Sana kimse mukabil olmaya." Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 41.

once more. Then, Battal gives directions to a cave in a mountain for him to find. There, Sarı Saltık finds Battal's horse Aşkar, war clothes and arms, and certain weapons which used to belong to the great heroes of history. Finally, he is ready to go for a *gazâ*. Kafadar sees and reads the continuity through the horse Aşkar:

The consciousness of the legacy of earlier *gâzis* and the urge to situate later *gâzis* within the framework of that legacy find a more poetic formulation in the image of Aşkar, the horse of Hamza, the uncle of the Prophet and the protagonist of a cycle of extremely popular narratives called *Hamzanâme*. This holy horse, who enjoys a miraculously long life, serves, after Hamza, both Seyyid Battal Gâzi and Sarı Saltuk.⁴¹⁷

Saltık, after killing thirty clergymen, goes back to the cave where he left his horse *Aşkar*, and finds a different horse instead. There is a letter stuck to the forehead of the horse and reading it he learns that this new and “celestial horse” is *Zulcenâh*, the horse of Imam Ali ibn Talib. The letter says: “Prophet Muhammad, Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman bin Affan, Ali ibn Abi Talib, Hasan ibn Ali and Husayn ibn Ali and Abbas rode this horse. The weapons on him belong to Ali. Take him and make *gazâ*. Renounce *Aşkar*.”⁴¹⁸ The question of the significance of *Zulcenâh* taking *Aşkar*'s place is unanswered in the text. In my opinion, it is a sign of development in his heroism, and heroic character as the protagonist of the narrative. As while *Aşkar* is the horse of Seyyid Battal Gâzi, *Zulcenâh* as the horse of Imam Ali, a member of *ahl al-Bayt*, must have a higher place.⁴¹⁹ Saltık received the horse of Imam Ali upon performing his initial heroic acts, and *Zulcenâh* is also a telling sign of greater adventures that he will face, a harbinger of things to come, mostly *gazâs*. On the other hand, praising Imam Ali ibn Talib and his sons Hasan and Husayn is another repeated element through the text, as well as promoting Sunnism, and Hanafism.

⁴¹⁷ Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 73.

⁴¹⁸ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltuknâme*, 43.

⁴¹⁹ *Ahl al-Bayt* refers to the family of the prophet Muhammad. See I Goldziher, C. van Arendonk, and A.S. Tritton, “Ahl al-Bayt,” in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Second Edition, edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_0378

When Tırbanos learns that it was the young Saltık who killed the thirty clergymen, he sends an envoy to Emir Osman, the Muslim ruler of Sinop after the death of his father, Emir Ali, and demands Saltık to be handed over, otherwise there will be a war. Although the nobles of the city agree to handing Saltık over to Tırbanos, Emir Osman opposes them and says that a descendant of the Prophet cannot be handed over to the enemy. Right after this, as a sign of respect, Saltık begins to wear two insignia of his bloodline: a red cloth showing his lineage from Husayn (on his father's side), and a green one for also being a descendant of Hasan (on his mother's side), stressing his genealogy is extended to Ali's family too. When Saltık learns about Tırbanos's threat, he sets off alone to kill him. Standing up to danger, threat, or going on a war by himself constitutes one of his main characteristics which is emphasized in the narrative several times. When Saltık kills Tırbanos, his son, Şemmas, marches against Sinop with thirty thousand men to avenge his father.

The man who criticized Saltık before for not taking his father's revenge in the first place, this time criticizes him for causing this war. This time Saltık does not feel offended, instead accusing them of failing in not having already waged war with these Christians: "You are living with these infidels around. Why were you not making *gazâs* anyway?"⁴²⁰ Along with this opposition, and obsessive desire for *gazâ*, he manages to become a legitimate *gâzi* who can now gather warriors under his command. They have a *sanjak*, and Saltık is bestowed legitimate rule over them for his legitimate cause.⁴²¹

Saltık and his troops defeat Şemmas's army. "Muslims plundered the properties of the infidels. They prayed to God for Şerif, and the city was ameliorated. They sent the news

⁴²⁰ "Bu kafirler arasında niçün olursız kim gaza itmeyesiz?" Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıkname*, 45.

⁴²¹ "Şerif has just reached puberty at this year. He ordered his comrades, and they moved out equipped with forty thousand arms and armors. They planted a *sanjak* made up of white cheesecloth above their heads." "Şerif henüz ol yıl baliğ olmuşdı. Yoldaşlarına emr itdi, kırk bin saz ve seleb geyüp taşra çıkdılar. Başları üzere bir ağ dülbendden sancak dıkdiler." Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıkname*, 45.

of the conquest with presents to the Sultan.”⁴²² The development of Saltık from a young boy, enthusiastic to make *gazâs* against Christians into a legitimate *gâzi* is finalized with the scene in which he is accepted as a warrior in the council of the caliph Sultan Gıyâsaddîn Kaykhusraw. They discuss military tactics and strategies together for the next war. The sultan heeds Saltık’s advice and decides accordingly.

This anecdote telling the *huruc* [sortie] story of Sarı Saltık unveils the very reason behind his existence in the world: Saltık is the latest, bravest, and greatest hero of his time, and above all the others who existed before him. Amongst many titles bestowed upon Saltık in the text, there are three of particular note that express his reason for being. These are “pehlivân-ı zamân”⁴²³ that is “the hero of the time”; “server-i sâlâr”⁴²⁴ that means “the chief of the chiefs”, and “Saltık-ı cihân-dâr”⁴²⁵ namely “Saltık the owner of the world”. This fact becomes clearer towards the middle of the narrative. After unceasing wars with the Christian infidels, Saltık settles in Adrianople and devotes himself to prayers and taqwa. Four months later, “an outcry came apart from the sky” saying: “We have sent you to the world to make *gazâ*, no to remain settled in Adrianople.”⁴²⁶ Considering that Saltık uses his sainthood for and in his wars against the infidels, I can argue that in *Saltıknâme* Saltık is more of a warrior-hero, a *gâzi*, more than he is a saint. However, Saltık’s sainthood is one of the aspects of his heroism. Those two primary features are interlocked with each other all through the text.

⁴²² “Müslümanlar anda olan kâfirleri kırdılar, malların ganimet itdiler. Şerif’e dualar itdiler, şehri tonatdılar. Sultan’a feth haberin gönderdiler, piş-keşler virdiler.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 46.

⁴²³ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 159.

⁴²⁴ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 271.

⁴²⁵ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 320.

⁴²⁶ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 271.

Saltık's Sainthood

Saltık is born a warrior-hero, and he reaches the level of sainthood later in his life. It is said: "When he turned forty, he stepped into sainthood, and became a friend of God."⁴²⁷ In the second anecdote of the narrative, we see that it was al-Khidr who turns Saltık into a saint by spilling his saliva into his mouth:

al-Khidr said: 'Do not be afraid anymore. Open your mouth.' Şerif opened his mouth. He gave his saliva to his mouth. Şerif became stronger and reached sainthood so that the veils in his eyes and heart has gone, then all glazes became explicit to him.⁴²⁸

As a saint, he displays various kinds of miraculous deeds, however these are consistently challenged by the infidels of any kind and Saltık is accused of being a magician or a witch [*cazu*]. Saltık's general response is that: "I am not a magician. It is the *walayah*. It is the miracle of our prophet."⁴²⁹ The most explicit evidence of his sainthood is God responding to all his prayers, and requests. Moreover, he performs many miracles including throwing earth to the sea so it becomes land, so he can ride his horse⁴³⁰ and thrusting his staff in a rock so that healing water flows from it.⁴³¹ In time, he begins to perform greater miracles such as revolving a ship around without touching it,⁴³² failing to burn in a boiling cauldron,⁴³³ spitting his saliva into pungent spring water so that it becomes sweet and drinkable⁴³⁴ and

⁴²⁷ "Kırk yaşına girdikde vilayete kadem basup ehlullahdan olmışdur ve [...]." Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 37. The number forty is almost sacred in popular beliefs, literature, and Sufism. It is a numeral motif of goodness, and sanctity. It is an age-related symbol for spiritual maturity, and the age that Muhammad received his first divine inspiration and became prophet. Ahmet Özgür Güvenç, "Kırk Sayısının Halk Edebiyatı Ürünlerinde Kullanımı Üzerine Bir İnceleme" [A study of the use of the number forty in products of folk literature], *A.Ü. Türkiyat Araştırmaları Enstitüsü Dergisi* 41 (2009): 85-97.

⁴²⁸ "Korkma şimdengirü, aç ağzını didi. Şerif dahı ağzın açdı. Ağzına barın virdi. Şerif bir ol kadar kuvvet tutup velayet belürüp gözinden gönlinden hicab gitdi, cemi gizlüler aşikâre oldı." Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 56.

⁴²⁹ "Ben sahir degülem. Bu velayetdür. Bizüm peygambarımızun mucizesidür." Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 267.

⁴³⁰ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 70.

⁴³¹ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 261.

⁴³² Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 266.

⁴³³ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 268.

⁴³⁴ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 269.

turning his spear into a seven headed dragon by saying a prayer.⁴³⁵ His miraculous deeds are witnessed by prominent religious figures such as Fakih Ahmed and Hacı Bektaş.⁴³⁶ After he proves himself as a saint in the presence of these prominent saints, his miracles gain greater qualification. He does not need to throw earth into water to create land anymore. Instead, he can walk on the sea without sinking.⁴³⁷ He can bend the iron arrowheads by only holding his palms of his hands towards them⁴³⁸ and can bend the iron door locks with his bare hands.⁴³⁹

Hagen argues that in this period “a more scripture-oriented idea of sainthood”⁴⁴⁰ depending on Islamic mysticism emerged, and the miracles displayed by the saints became much more important since they were accepted the signs of evidence of proximity to God. As “Especially the concept of competition between saints seems to have disappeared entirely in the sixteenth century.”⁴⁴¹ Saltık is well suited to this argument. In conjunction with his sainthood, there is always a strong emphasis on his modesty in the narrative. He says to his followers: “Since you come closer to me, so I come closer to God with a higher level of proximity”⁴⁴² and that he is only one of the many watchers of Islam of his age. In another anecdote, the djinnis warns him suddenly in the middle of an adventure and say: “The almighty God lead you the true path. If you had felt a little arrogance, we would destroy you.”⁴⁴³ Şerif, hearing this, values these words as worthy advice for himself. Most importantly, the title of “sultân-ı evliyâ”⁴⁴⁴ [the sultan of all saints] is used for him with a

⁴³⁵ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 270.

⁴³⁶ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 276.

⁴³⁷ “Deniz içinde yörیدی, deniz topuğına gelmezdi.” Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 294.

⁴³⁸ “Server, lainün sünüsine mübarek avucın karşı tutdı. Ol sününün demireni egildi, Server’e zarar gelmedi.”

Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 320.

⁴³⁹ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 322.

⁴⁴⁰ Hagen, 2009, p. 358.

⁴⁴¹ Hagen, 2009, p. 358.

⁴⁴² “Zira sizzler bana yitişdünüz, ben Allah ta’alaya kurbiyyet derecesiyle yitişdüm.” Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 266.

⁴⁴³ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 370.

⁴⁴⁴ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 148.

special prayer “rahmetullahi aleyh” which is used for the saints rank after ahl-i bayt in Islamic culture.⁴⁴⁵ Thus, Saltık is also the “server” [chief] of the saints of his time.

Saltık uses his saintly skills to wage wars. He is always with the *gâzis*, especially the ones in the battlefield. He helps *gâzis* whenever they need help. For example, when Gâzi Davud is tied by 130 infidels’ ropes he hears a shout saying, “God help you.” He becomes motivated and says: “This shout is coming from Seyyid Saru Saltıh. March on *gâzis*! He is with us. Do not be afraid of outnumbered soldiers of the infidels.”⁴⁴⁶ Then, Sarı Saltık suddenly shows up in the battlefield with his wooden sword originally belonging to the Prophet, and fights with the *gâzis*. Even when he is praying in a mosque, he can sense the dangers threatening them, and appears on the battlefield to lend a hand. After he fights in many battles, and displays many miracles, his reputation spreads in far lands. Even “lords of the infidels became lovers to him.”⁴⁴⁷ Yet, he sometimes secludes himself in prayer for days. However, there is always someone or something reminding him that he should be with the *gâzis*, not in a room alone by himself. In an anecdote, while Sarı Saltık is ready to devote himself to live the secluded life of a dervish *Seyyid Mahmud Hayran* advises him to go and make *gazâs* since it is his faith.⁴⁴⁸

The Heroes Saltık Gets Superior

Sarı Saltık, in many anecdotes of the narrative, obviously tries to overreach the earlier heroes such as Battal Gâzi, İskender and Rustem, striving to display greater heroism than theirs. During the journeys he takes, Sarı Saltık runs across to ancient ruins remaining from

⁴⁴⁵ Erdiñç Ahatlı, “Rahimehullah”, Veli”, in *İslam Ansiklopedisi* 34 (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2007): 413. <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/rahimehullah>

⁴⁴⁶ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 130-131.

⁴⁴⁷ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 196.

⁴⁴⁸ “Var, yörü gazada ol, sana fetih andandır.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 276.

these heroes and telling their stories. He reads these inscriptions, and it is in these encounters where his desire to be a hero above all manifests itself.

While he is on his way to Mount Kaf he sees a marble pillar. The heroic deeds of Rustem are written on it. He reads it, prays for his soul, and moves on. A few days later, he runs across a mound with a dome. In its door there is an inscription written for İskender. It says “I am İskender of Rum. I came here and stayed. I entered darkness and asked for water of life, but I could not find it. It was vouchsafed to Khidr but not to me and I died.”⁴⁴⁹ Then Saltık sees İskender’s sarcophagus, prays for his soul, too, and moves on. After some time, he sees another mound with a dome. In its door, the inscription is about Solomon. He also sees his tomb, prays, and moves on. All these prove that Sarı Saltık went to the places the earlier heroes went before, and by moving on, he physically goes beyond them.

In another adventure, he wants to discover the headwaters of the Nile River. The Sultan warns him that “Thus far, no human could have discovered it but İskender.”⁴⁵⁰ And that the journey is dangerous because of the insurmountable mountains, and strong winds. Such words serve only to further motivate Sarı Saltık who prays for himself and begins the journey. On the way he meets a ruler named *Safvan*, and asks him about İskender’s deeds:

Oh king! Could İskender pass beyond this mountain?

Safvan said: He passed it beyond with the ships. (...)

Oh king! I can also pass over this mountain and take a ship.

Safvan said: This place is called Tahum in Habeş, it means the end. No human can climb over this mountain since the wind throws and destroys him.

Oh king! If İskender could do it why cannot I do it?

Safvan said: İskender managed to do it with the profundity of God, and thanks to his wisdom. They knew every solution of any kind of problem. You are not like that that is why you are not able to do it.

I seek refuge in God and am going to this mountain by myself. Let us see what happens.⁴⁵¹

⁴⁴⁹ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 103.

⁴⁵⁰ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 158.

⁴⁵¹ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 163.

Then, despite his servants' begging him to not to go, he starts off his journey to the Nile River. Finally, of course, he manages to find the headwaters of the river sweet as sugar and finds another great mountain. At the foot of the mountain, he sees a statue which has an inscription of its chest saying:

"I am Ehremen Shah, one of the sons of Adam. I saw this headwater. (...) But I could not summit to the top of the Mountain Şems. I felt regretful about it. I could not learn what is there, in the mountain top."⁴⁵²

After reading this, Sarı Saltık starts to climb over this mountain, and the author makes it clear that he is the first hero who has the courage to do so. He enumerates the earlier heroes that Sarı Saltık surpasses by displaying this courage:

Everyone (hero) came here and enjoyed the scenery. But no one could learn what is there in the mountain top, then gone. These are Ehremen Shah, Kahraman, Neriman, Rüstem, and Karhan, Adi, Fercan, Sa Süvar, Tahmeras, Gazanfer Han, Cemşid Shah, Hamza ibni Kenan and many others who were also heroes. They came but could not climb over this mountain.⁴⁵³

In another anecdote, while he stays in a place called 'Mountain Mürtefi' (Cebelü'l-Mürtefi), an infidel landlord comes and asks him to create a spring. İskender had tried to bring water to the place but since he suddenly died, no one could accomplish the job. Hearing this, Sarı Saltık sets about the work, stamps his staff on the ground, and water springs from it.⁴⁵⁴

The author implies a heavenly and historical continuity between the heroes of Islam, and places Sarı Saltık as the last link of this chain. It is almost like a relay race and Sarı Saltık is now carrying the flag of Islam. This notion which spread all over the narrative reveals itself in a paragraph in the first volume. It is interesting that the audience of the narrative reads or hears this from a vizier of an infidel landlord who is preparing to wage war against

⁴⁵² "Ben kim Ehremen Şaham, Adem oğlanlarından. Geldüm bu aynları gördüm. (...) Yokarı Kulle-i Şems'e çıkamadum, hasretim kaldı. Anda ne var, bilmedüm." Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 165.

⁴⁵³ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 165.

⁴⁵⁴ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 350.

the Muslims. Vizier Hamun warns his landlord that the “Turks are aided by the angels from the sky. Their god helps them.”⁴⁵⁵ And he starts to draw up all the heroes of Islam as of prophet Muhammad till that day in a chronological order: “Twelve thousand angels with their piebald horses and green wings had landed on the earth for (fighting with) Prophet Muhammad.”⁴⁵⁶ Sarı Saltık is the last one:

The Kaisers (of Byzantine) wanted to vanquish Islam. Husayn Gâzi and his father were fighting in Malatya. Husayn Gâzi procreated a son, and his name was Battal. The Kaisers recruited armies for seven times. They recruited soldiers from Çin, Maçin, Hitay, Haver. Battal defeated all of them alone and killed the Kaisers. They tried to burn Battal, he did not get hurt. They tried to poison him he did not die. (...) No one could overcome them thus far. It is better to stay calm and quiet since this Şerif is Battal’s descendant. He is a descendant of Husayn Gâzi. He is a descendant of the prophet. Beware and avoid themselves so that you do not get into a muddle.⁴⁵⁷

What is obvious about Sarı Saltık’s image as a hero in *Saltıknâme* is that it was designated to be the latest and the greatest hero of the period. He is an intentional construction by the author to be a hero above all heroes before him widely known by audiences. Therefore, he also is an amalgamation of several heroes, but at the same time, a hero beyond all.

II.2) A Champion of Sunni-Hanafi Islam

The dominant characteristic of Saltık as a hero is his devotion to Hanafi-Sunni Islam. However, his devotion is not limited to Islamic piety or the true way of faith. Saltık’s loyalty primarily to Ottoman Sunnism as firmly established in the 16th century wherein the ulama class are positioned in the leading role along with the sultans. Performing ritual prayers, Friday sermons, listening to khutbah and glorifying the companions of the prophet are

⁴⁵⁵ “Türklere gök yüzinden yardıma melekler gelür, Tangrıları anlara yardım ider.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 176.

⁴⁵⁶ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 177.

⁴⁵⁷ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 177.

compulsory and at the center of this religious way of life. Saltık is not only a Sunni but also a Hanafi, and a zealous supporter of Hanafi madhab so that when in Egypt he issued a fatwa on it as if he were a member of the ulama.

The Hanafi-Sunni tone of *Saltıknâme* mostly reveals itself with Saltık's anti-*Râfizî*, and pro-Ottoman-Sunni-Hanafi attitude, an attitude not all too dissimilar from the position the Ottoman state and ulama adopted not only against the Safavids, but also towards Anatolian Qizilbash groups, and Qalandaris sometimes mentioned as *Işıks* just in the late 16th century Ottoman archival records. Moreover, there is a strong claim in *Saltıknâme* that the Hanafi-Sunni Ottomans are the “true” heirs of Alid legacy, while the Qizilbash Safavids are represented as perverters and pretenders, directly rejected by Imam Ali ibn Abi Talip and his sons. On the other hand, Saltık is supported by them, and also by Abu Hanifa, the prophet Muhammad, and al-Khidr. In this sense, Alid legacy is contested by the Ottoman Sunnism against the *Râfizîs*. Thus, in this subchapter, I mainly focus on Saltık's struggles, and messages against the *Râfizîs*, and *Işıks* to analyze how the narrative's Hanafi-Sunni tone manifests traces of the 16th century political and religious climate.

Râfizî, the Qizilbash under Safavid Influence

The word Qizilbash is not used in *Saltıknâme*, not even once. Instead, the religiously exclusionist terms *Râfizî*, *zındık*, *mülhid*, *hâricî*, *münâfık* (hypocrite), *mürted* (apostate), infidel and heretic are repeatedly used to describe the Safavids, Qizilbash and/or Qalandari (*Işık*) groups just as in the Ottoman documents of the 15th and 16th century.⁴⁵⁸ Among those words, *Râfizî*, generally with the term *ilhad/mülhid*, is the most repeated one related to the

⁴⁵⁸ Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, “Türk Heterodoksi Tarihinde Zındık, Harici, Rafizi, Mülhid ve Ehl-i Bid’at Terimlerine Dair Bazı Düşünceler,” *Tarih Enstitüsü Dergisi* 12, (1982): 507-520. Ocak, *Zındıklar ve Mülhidler*, 191. İsmail E. Erünsal, “XV-XVI. Asır Osmanlı Zendeka ve İlhad Tarihine Bir Katkı,” *Osmanlı Araştırmaları The Journal of Ottoman Studies XXIV* (2004): 127- 157. Ahmet Refik, *Onaltıncı Asırda Rafizilik ve Bektaşilik*, ed. Mehmet Yaman (İstanbul: Ufuk Matbaası, 1994).

Safavids and Qizilbash groups. This is a cognizable choice. At first glance, the reason may seem as the absence of the Qizilbash amongst the targeted groups in the narrative. However, religiously, and politically they were targeted by the Ottoman state and ulama from the time of the Battle of Çaldıran in 1514, and thus in *Saltıknâme*. The term *Râfizî* was applied for Qizilbash after they were perceived to have fallen under Safavid influence.⁴⁵⁹ As Dressler determines:

“The accusations against Safavids and Anatolian Kızılbaş were very much alike and in fact often difficult to distinguish from each other. The drastic measures against the Anatolian Kızılbaş were justified by the same arguments as the anti-Safavid war.”⁴⁶⁰

In this context, using of the term “Hâricî” should also be considered. Originally denoting the rebels who objected to Ali ibn Abi Talib’s caliphate in old Islamic sources, the word *harici* (*huruc* = revolt) was used directly for the non-Sunni rioters who objected to the head of the state, namely the sultan since the time of the Seljukids through to 16th century Ottoman times. Ocak determines that the word *harici* was never used for Sunni rebels but only for the non-Sunni, semi-nomadic Turkoman tribes including those who participated in the Shah Kalender Revolt in 1527, and it was not as common as *Râfizî* or *zındık*. *Huruc* and *harici* were used in *Saltıknâme* with same purpose. It seems to me that the copyist(s) preferred to remain faithful to the authentic character of the text, and masterfully blended the anachronic elements into the narrative. Yet, the copyist(s) insinuatingly targeted the Anatolian Qizilbash groups, and explicitly the Qalandaris despite displaying more tolerance towards them. Indeed, the only sworn enemy of Sarı Saltık in the text is the *Râfizîs*. While Saltık can be complaisant, forgiving, and even helpful to Christians and idolaters from time to time, he never thinks twice before slaughtering a faithful *Râfizî*. Saltık’s religious and

⁴⁵⁹ Ökten, “Ottoman Society,” 21.

⁴⁶⁰ Dressler, “Inventing Orthodoxy”, 164.

political messages, judgements, and punishments against those non-Sunnis are in a perfect harmony with the Ottoman state and ulama positions beginning from the mid to the late 16th century.

Another side one can look to investigate is Al-Sarraj's book *Tuffâhu'l-Arwah* in which the *Râfizîs* of the 14th century were also targeted. However, suggesting that Al-Sarraj's book was one of the written or inspirational sources of *Saltuknâme* requires another study and labor.

Interchangeable Usages of "Sunni" and "Muslim"

Beginning from the second *menkıbe* of *Saltuknâme* to the end of the volume three, the words Sunni and Muslim are substituted for each other as if Sunni and Muslim corresponded to the same meaning. Examples include: "A brave man named Bürtüs from the Sunnis"⁴⁶¹, "Şerif from the Sunnis"⁴⁶², "Franks, Rûmîs, and Sunnis"⁴⁶³, "Sunnis defeated"⁴⁶⁴, "the infidels [Christians] defeated the Sunnis"⁴⁶⁵, "Sunnis arrived in Haynab and stayed there"⁴⁶⁶, "The Sunnis perfected their munitions, rode their horses and became ready for the war against the infidels"⁴⁶⁷, "The Sunnis fought a heavy war"⁴⁶⁸, "[the infidels] defeated the Sunnis"⁴⁶⁹, "This year because of the black death numerous Sunnis were dead in the land of Kefe"⁴⁷⁰, "Afterwards, Rayko saw that the Sunnis were conquering the castle"⁴⁷¹, "The Sunnis begged Sarı Saltık for not killing Argun Khan,"⁴⁷² etc. In the war between the Tartars

⁴⁶¹ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltuknâme*, 46.

⁴⁶² Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltuknâme*, 48.

⁴⁶³ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltuknâme*, 47.

⁴⁶⁴ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltuknâme*, 47.

⁴⁶⁵ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltuknâme*, 60.

⁴⁶⁶ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltuknâme*, 71.

⁴⁶⁷ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltuknâme*, 134.

⁴⁶⁸ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltuknâme*, 254.

⁴⁶⁹ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltuknâme*, 309.

⁴⁷⁰ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltuknâme*, 313.

⁴⁷¹ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltuknâme*, 391.

⁴⁷² Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltuknâme*, 393.

and the Russians, the Tartars are mentioned as the Sunnis.⁴⁷³ Muslim *gâzis* fighting against the Genghis Khan (the Mongols) are mentioned as Sunnis, too.⁴⁷⁴ Even the djinni who is a comrade of Sarı Saltık is a Sunni djinni, and he is not the only Sunni invisible creature in the text.⁴⁷⁵ Many paragraphs like this, begins with Sunnis or Muslims and ends with the other term:

Seyyid [Saltık] went outside with ten thousand Sunnis in front of the door. They stood by the door. The infidels held the mirror towards the sun. Praise to God, the light reflected on the infidels. So, they turned back, and marched for the southwest. The light reflected on the castle. The people in the castle could not open their eyes [because of the light]. They turned their faces towards the east. The infidels marched through the west door of the castle and fought. Many Muslims were death, martyred.⁴⁷⁶

Al-Tikriti notices the same interchangeable usage in one of Uzun Firdevsi's (d. after 1512) works from 1501, just before the Safavid state became a danger for the Ottomans. Firdevsi used the term Sunni "when praising the Ottoman victory over a European alliance in 1501, to contrast them against the heathen Franks, praising several historical figures identified with Shiism, and making no mention whatsoever of any Shi'i group."⁴⁷⁷ Al-Tikriti says that apparently the word Sunni meant something different from its traditional reception, and this usage may have related to the efforts under Bayezid II's reign to develop a divine legitimation of the Ottoman state. Yıldırım also briefly touches upon this interchangeable usage in *Saltıknâme* along with several other *menâkıb* and shares Al-Tikriti's view saying that "there was no clear-cut separation between Shiite and Sunni ideas in Anatolia before the official reorganization of Shiism in the 16th century under the Safavids."⁴⁷⁸ Indeed, it is well

⁴⁷³ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 599.

⁴⁷⁴ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 255.

⁴⁷⁵ "Menüçehr from the Sunni djinnis." Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 55. There are many other djinnis, some of them are the rulers of their tribes, like the one in the Mount Kaf. Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 517.

⁴⁷⁶ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 472.

⁴⁷⁷ Al-Tikriti, "Ibn-i Kemal's Confessionalism," 96.

⁴⁷⁸ Rıza Yıldırım. "Sunni Orthodox vs Shiite Heterodox? A Reappraisal of Islamic Piety," in *Islam and Christianity in Medieval Anatolia*, ed. Andrew Peacock, Bruno De Nicola, Sara Nur Yıldız (New York: Routledge, 2016): 287-307, 300.

known from recent studies that the reception and actualization of Sunnism in the 13th and 16th centuries was different. Besides, *Saltıknâme* has Alid and/or Shiite elements. Ali ibn Abi Talib is praised as the mystical and moral leader of all *gâzis*. His codes of behavior in *gazâs* is explained briefly:

“In his wars, Ali did not kill the ones asked for mercy. He did not chase the escapers fled from the battle. He did not escape from his enemies. He did not kill his foes without striking for three times. He is the head of *gâzis* so the *gâzis* follow his path.”⁴⁷⁹

Moreover, Sarı Saltık does the fasting of the Twelvers,⁴⁸⁰ puts black cloths on, and mourns for the slayed sons of Imam Ali in Karbala for fulfilling the religious duties.⁴⁸¹ It seems that none of those practices are viewed as acts against the Ottoman Sunnism of the era. Neither the documents of 15th and 16th centuries claimed that.

However, it is also well known that the edition of *Saltıknâme*'s which all researchers use was produced in 1591, when Ottoman Sunnism was established, and the Ottoman ulama was at the height of its power. Thus, despite the fact that its original copy -which we do not have- may well have contained the same interchangeable usage, the term Sunni in its 1591 edition should be reconsidered especially since it has an extra Hanafi sensitivity which was legalized in the mid-16th century under Süleyman I, and since Sarı Saltık reflects the very same notions, and directs the same accusations of the Ottoman ulama against non-Sunni groups.

⁴⁷⁹ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 128.

⁴⁸⁰ “Server anda aşura eyledi.” Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 311.

⁴⁸¹ “On birinci gün ıyd itdi, on ikinci gün karalar geyüp üç gün mâtem-i Hüseyin iderdi ve cemi zamanda âdeti buydu.” Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 311.

The Role of the Ulama in Saltıknâme and Hanafi Hegemony

Saltık always gets together with ulama wherever he goes to slaughter the *Râfizîs*. They meet, talk, and approve each other, and then Saltık acts. Saltık does not seem to counsel the ulama, instead he has his acts ratified before or after the execution. Even Saltık himself gives fatwas as if he were a member of the ulama, and sometimes just like a qadi, he makes his judgements and announces them to the public.

In an early stage of Saltık's adventures, in the second *menkıbe* of the first volume, the narrative clearly takes sides with the Hanafi school's supremacy towards the other Sunni madhabs. Sarı Saltık, after going on pilgrimage with a man named Hacı Selim and becoming a hadji, travels to Egypt. There, he declares to his friend that he wants to come together with the local ulama and people to make a *ders-i amm*,⁴⁸² a religious education given publicly. Hacı Selim, perhaps since Saltık is not a mudarris, warns him: "Be calm. Do not be insane!"⁴⁸³ But Saltık announces his desire to the city by muezzins. The sultan of Egypt hears this announcement and gathers the ulama. They publicly meet, and debate on the madhabs. Saltık must have been so much informed and wiser than the local ulama that he "made them feel obliged to hold their tongues"⁴⁸⁴ and finally expresses his decision in the form of a fatwa imposing Hanafi school's supremacy. Hanafism, Shafiism, Hanbeliism, and Malikiism are presented the four rightful sects of Islam, however, Saltık chooses Abu Hanifa as the most rightful interpreter of Islamic law, and Hanafism as the most legitimate sect. It was because:

The imams agreed on that [Imam] Maliki and [Imam] Hanbel were subjected to Imam Shafii, and Imam Shafii was subjected to Abu Hanifa. Thus, the head preacher, [and] the head qadi must be Hanafi, and superior over the all [preachers and qadis from the other madhabs].⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁸² Mehmet İpşirli, "Dersîâm", in *İslam Ansiklopedisi* 9 (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1994): 185-6. <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/dersiam>

⁴⁸³ "Epsem ol, delûlik itme." Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 64.

⁴⁸⁴ "Şerif cümlesin mülzem itdi." Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 64.

⁴⁸⁵ "Bu mezâhib-i erbaa kim sünnet ve cemaat mezhebidür, akvâsı Hanifiyye mezhebidür. Hem mukaddem muazzamdur. İttifâk-ı eimme böyledür kim Malik ve Hanbel ikisi Şafii'ye tâbi oldılar. İmam Şafii dahı Ebu Hanife'ye tâbi olmışdur. Pes, sultân-ı hatib, kadı Hanifi ola, cemisine nafız ola. (...) Arablardan Şafiiler gelüp nisbet itdiler. Kabetullah'da Şerif'ün fetvasın gönderdiler, tercih-i Ebu Hanife itdügün didiler." Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 64.

Sarı Saltık's views are well aligned with shaykh al-Islam Kemalpaşazâde's (d. 1534) expressions on the supremacy of Hanafi school both in his fatwas and in his *risâle* titled *Tercihü'l-Mezhebi'l-Hanefî ala Gayrihi*, [The (Reasons of) Preference of Hanafi Madhab Over All the Others].⁴⁸⁶ Kemalpaşazâde argues that Abu Hanifa is superior to Imam Shafii, and he is also superior as an interpreter of Islamic law (*müctehid*) over all the others, and thus the Hanafi school must be followed in jurisdiction and administration in the Ottoman lands. As Peter shows, there was already a Hanafi monopoly in Anatolia and the Balkans where "the qadis and muftis were explicitly forbidden to follow other madhabs"⁴⁸⁷, and after the conquests of Egypt and Syria in 1516-7, the Ottomans maintained "this system of madhab plurality but placed it under Hanafi supremacy."⁴⁸⁸ However, this supremacy began to transform into a hegemony with a sultanic decree issued in 1537 by Süleyman I forbidding qadis to follow the Shafii school. Moreover, the Ottoman sultans and Hanafi ulama defined the exact doctrine that the qadis must apply in each case.⁴⁸⁹ Thus, the Hanafi school became the superior one in the Middle Eastern parts of the Ottoman country by the mid-16th century. It seems to me that the location of this *menkıbe*, Egypt, is not a coincidence, and this anecdote must have been added to the narrative at least after the 1537 decree, around the time at which Imber indicates the Hanafi school "became predominant" in the Middle East too.⁴⁹⁰ Saltık's merciless wars against the *Râfizîs* began only after this fatwa, and continued until the ninth *menkıbe* of the second volume of *Saltıknâme* without interruption. Saltık, even after his death, supports and tries to maintain wars against the *Rafizis*, and thus this struggle continues until the end of the narrative.

⁴⁸⁶ Ökten, "Ottoman Society," 62, 63. İnandır, "İbn Kemal'in Fetvaları," 56-61.

⁴⁸⁷ Peters, "What does it mean," 158.

⁴⁸⁸ Peters, "What does it mean," 154.

⁴⁸⁹ Peters, "What does it mean," 148-152.

⁴⁹⁰ Imber, *Ebu's-su'ud*, 25.

The empowered position of the 16th century Ottoman ulama can also be observed in *Saltıknâme* through the superior depictions of them over the other “secular” ones. According to one of those anecdotes, one day in the past, a Frank [Christian] army attacked the Muslim Alexandria, Egypt. The sultan of Egypt requested his army, consisting of slave soldiers, to fight against the enemy. But the soldiers, in an arrogant way, challenged the ulama and said: “Those members of the ulama claimed that they are religious scholars, and the watchers of Islam. Now order them to join us, and fight with us against the enemy.”⁴⁹¹

The sultan accepted and ordered ulama to join the campaign. The leader of the ulama, the shaykh al-Islam, gathered twelve thousand scholars together. In the time of conflict, they marched ahead of the soldiers, the amirs, and the sultan and reached the front line. They took a hill and prayed to God for a victory. Upon their prayers, clouds and lightnings emerged in the sky, and the angels and divine spirits came down to earth, and slaughtered the enemy army of forty thousand men. In the face of such a result:

The slave soldiers, the amirs, and the sultan were filled with admiration. They realized that angels come from the sky to the earth by the order of God to help ulama, the faithful people, the helpless and the poor. At that time, the amirs kissed the hands of the ulama, and apologized them for their sins and misconducts. They understood that the ummah of Muhammad was the superior over the others, and the most honorable and beneficent ones of this ummah were the members of the ulama.⁴⁹²

Thus, the ulama class is compared with the “secular” rulers and the slave soldiers in terms of proximity to God, and effectiveness on winning wars against the enemy. The ulama are then also portrayed as the most esteemed people of all Muslims, a position compatible to the status of Ottoman ulama in the late 16th century. At the very last page of *Saltıknâme*, the author and/or the copyist(s) remind the reader that “the ulama, along with the faithful ones, sayyids, and martyrs will intercede for the Muslims”⁴⁹³ in the last judgement, locating the

⁴⁹¹ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 485.

⁴⁹² Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 485.

⁴⁹³ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 615.

ulama in a higher position. Likewise, throughout the text, the ulama is revered especially in the paragraphs relevant to the non-Sunni groups, beliefs, and acts. The ulama's judgements against the non-Sunni groups are repeatedly reminded to the audience and used to legitimize the deathly acts against them.

The Demonization of the Râfizîs

Râfizîs are the only sworn enemies of Saltık who, bar one single occasion, never receive mercy from him. They are represented as a greater danger than any of the other enemies of Islam. Furthermore, *Râfizîs* are literally demonized in *Saltıknâme* by depicting the Devil as their religious and political leader. According to the text, the Devil is responsible for perverting and misleading the Muslims to become *Râfizîs* with the bewitching words he sometimes speaks when disguised as al-Khidr, the Messiah, an old man, or an angel. Thus, the *Râfizî* beliefs, their way of faith and life are created by the Devil himself. However, this Devil is also described always as a one-eyed creature. Whichever form he takes, he becomes a one-eyed being. It is a clear connotation with Dajjal “who appears at the end of the world as the apocalyptic opponent of Jesus”⁴⁹⁴ and is believed to be come from the eastern part of the Muslim world. In this sense, this Devil-Dajjal creature is the representation of apocalyptic anxieties and expectations of the age, and the root cause of the conflicts, tensions, and various social and economic problems of the era. The actors of those conflicts are depicted almost as victims, instead of being agents. In response to the dangers and threats, directly or deriving from this Devil-Dajjal creature and his lured and misled followers, appeasing and heartening messages, sometimes in the form of prophecies, are frequently given by not just Saltık but also by the Prophet Muhammad, Imam Ali, and al-Khidr. Quran,

⁴⁹⁴ David B. Cook, “Dajjāl”, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, three*, eds. Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Everett Rowson. http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_25826

especially the first two verses of Rum Surah are interpreted as evidence for eternal victory of Sunni Muslims in the lands of Rum.

Fatwa for Gaza Against the Râfizîs

The eternal military and political victory and legitimization are also heralded by dreams in which the protagonists are mostly Muhammad, Ali, and al-Khidr. After Saltık gives his fatwa in Egypt, in the third *menkıbe* of the first volume, he wants to travel to Medina. He overcomes the obstacles on the road and arrives in the city with the help of a horse previously ridden by Ali ibn Abu Talip and a gift from Hamza of his Sunni djinni Menüçehr. He visits the tomb of the Prophet Muhammad, then finds the ruler of the city and asks him and his people's lineage. The ruler of Medina answers that they are descent from Imam Husayn ibn Ali, and the city had been endowed to them by the Prophet. Saltık continues:

- Which madhab do you follow?

The ruler of the city said:

- I follow ahl-i Sunnah vaal camaa.

- So, tell me, where are the *Râfizîs* in Medina, they are our enemies. We need to find them. The ruler of Medina said:

- Server, the half of the population here are *Râfizîs*.

Server ordered to kill them. He gave a fatwa saying that it is *gazâ*. When *Râfizîs* heard the fatwa, they got afraid. They came to Şerif, and asked:

- Why did you judge that these four sects are the rightful ones but ours is not? You especially prefer Abu Hanifa over Imam Shafii.

Şerif said:

- I made my judgement according to their subjections. Most probably the Prophet agrees with me.

- How can we know that for sure?

- It is appropriate to the sayings [hadith, I think] about the companions of prophet Muhammad. ⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹⁵ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 67. "Tebaiyyetleri üzere hükm itdüm. Belki Resul katında dahı eyle ola."

Then, a “damned *Râfizî*” amongst the crowd claims loudly that he cannot be the real Sarı Saltık. Saltık imprisons the *Râfizî*. In the night, Saltık dreams that Prophet Muhammad invites him to his tomb: “Oh my child! Come to my tomb and salute me tomorrow. I will answer you, so that you will overcome the *Râfizîs*.”⁴⁹⁶ The next morning, Saltık gathers all the *Râfizîs* in the city by the tomb and calls them out: “- Oh people! If your way [madhab] reveals a superstition, will you be penitent and turn to the right madhab?”⁴⁹⁷ People swore that they would. Then, Saltık stood still with dignity and decency in front of the tomb, saluted the Prophet, and they held a conversation in Arabic:

- Your madhab is followed by the majority.
- Our madhab is the one Abu Hanifa follows, and Shafiis, Malikis and Hanbalis follow just as my companions Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali ibn Abi Talib.
- As for *Râfizîs*, *Hâricîs*, and the followers of Mutelize, what are their conditions [in Islam]?
- Kill those who are hypocrites.⁴⁹⁸

Thus, Saltık’s judgement on the right madhab and slaughtering the *Râfizîs* is justified by the Prophet, just as the Ottoman ulama in their fatwas and *risâles*. As I showed in the introductory part of Chapter II, from Müftü Hamza Sarı Görez (d. 1522) to Ebussuûd Efendi (d. 1574), all members of the Ottoman ulama gave permission to kill the *Râfizîs*, stressing that “The religious position of them is much worse and lower than the infidels.”⁴⁹⁹ Ebussuûd had also answered a question about the religious position of the Qizilbash with the Prophet’s words: “There are seventy three factions who were ahl-i Sunnah, the ones who will not burn in hell”⁵⁰⁰ and Qizilbash was not one of them.

⁴⁹⁶ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 68.

⁴⁹⁷ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 68.

⁴⁹⁸ “- *Mezhebüküm min el-mezâhibi’l-kesîra*.

-*Mezhebûna mezhebü’n-nu’mâni sümme Şafîi ve Maliki ve Hanbeli ke mislihim ke misli Ebu Bekr ve Ömer ve Osman ve Ali inde eshabi*.

-*Mâ ahvâlû’r-Revafiz ve’l-Havâric ve’l-Müteziile*.

-*Uktulu ve... min el-münâfikîn fi’l-dîn*.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 68.

⁴⁹⁹ “Bunların hali kâfirler halinden eşedd ve ekbahdur.” Tekindağ, “Yeni Kaynak ve Belgeler,” 55.

⁵⁰⁰ Düzdağ, *Kanuni Devri Şeyhülislamı*, 136.

Upon Saltık threatening the *Râfizîs* with massacre, four thousand of them repent and become Sunnis. It is the one and only occasion in which they have the chance to convert to Hanafi-Sunnism in the whole text. Saltık puts to the sword three hundred people “from the Berâni tribe”⁵⁰¹ who deny this miracle and reject becoming Hanafi-Sunni.

Then, Saltık travels to Mecca, and Kaaba. The people of the city welcome him and show their respect. He arrives at Masjid al-Haram, and sees that:

Hanafi is on the maqam-ı Abraham, Shafii is on the Golden Gutter, Maliki is on the west side, Hanbali is on the south. Şerif said: Oh preacher [*hatib*] of Mecca! You follow the Hanafi madhab. Observe the religion. Qadı, sultan [and you] must observe the religion.⁵⁰²

Saltık seems to proselytize the 1537 decree of Süleyman I to the audience. The stress on *hatib* and qadi are especially important. Beginning from the mid-16th century, the office of preacher gained much importance for the political reasons. As Ökten says:

Hatib is the preacher in the Friday prayer. The office of hatib was important for two reasons. First the prayer which followed the Friday sermon was an occasion of expressing allegiance to the ruler; mentioning the Sultan in the prayer meant accepting his authority. Therefore, the sermon had acquired a symbolic importance leading to an increase in the importance of the preachers. Second, the Friday sermon could also be an occasion of propagating the state's ideology to the public. Consequently, the appointment of the preachers received a special attention.⁵⁰³

Terzioğlu adds those the effort to “instill in the lay public a proper knowledge of Sunni Islam” and underlines the expanding prominence of *hatibs* in that era.⁵⁰⁴

⁵⁰¹ This “Berani” tribe evokes the word “Barani”, a second name for Karakoyunlu tribes who joined the Safavid state, and army as one of the leading Turkoman tribes. See: *Kızılbaşlığın Tarihi, Tarih-i Kızılbaşîyye*, trans. Şerafettin Deniz, and Hasan Asadi (İstanbul: Bilge Kültür Sanat, 2015).

⁵⁰² “Ya hatib-i Mekke! Sen Hanefi mezhebsindür. Din bile riayet eyle. Kadı ve sultan bu üçü böyle itmek gerek.” Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 69.

⁵⁰³ Ökten, “Ottoman Society,” 68.

⁵⁰⁴ Terzioğlu, “How to Conceptualize,” 315-6.

“Ali is God”

One of the accusations against the *Râfizîs* directed from İdrisi Bidlisi was their worshipping Imam Ali, and Shah Ismail as a God. Sönmez and Ökten interpret this accusation as the *tajalla (tecellâ)* belief of the Safavids, namely “the manifestation of God as a human being.”⁵⁰⁵ In *Saltıknâme*, both claims are mentioned and explained as tricks by the Devil and therefore, unjustifiable.

In one of the most fantastical *menkıbe* of *Saltıknâme*, the sixth of the first volume, full of fairies, witches, giants, a phoenix and a dragon, the Devil shows up as the perverter of the *Râfizîs*. While Saltık is enjoying himself in Mount Qaf, he falls asleep and when he wakes up, sees a weak, one eyed, one eared, beardless old man. Upon Saltık’s asking, the old man admits that he is the Devil himself. Saltık asks why he reveals himself so openly and quickly, and the Devil answers that he is afraid of him. Saltık invites him to prostrate to Adam, and be a favorite angel again, and of course, the Devil gives an unfavorable reply. The Devil says that even if he would repent, his “children” namely *Râfizîs*, would not. And the Devil unexpectedly goes on confessing his crimes:

- Oh Şerif! I lured people in such a way that they were religiously deceived and go on slaughtering each other.

Şerif said:

- What did you do, you damned?

- I made people to believe that Ali ibn Abi Talib is the God. *Râfizîs* obeyed me, got together in Mazenderan and tyrannized people there.

Şerif became sad. The Devil said:

- Oh Şerif! Do not be sad yet. I am going to do them greater evil [*fesad*]. Only those Muslims who abide to the sharia can save themselves from me and from the hell.

Şerif said:

-Oh damned! Why did not you lie to me?

The Devil said:

- I am afraid to be maledicted by the Prophet, his companions, and Jesus.⁵⁰⁶

⁵⁰⁵ Sönmez, “An Acem Statesman,” 128. Ökten, “Ottoman Society,” 23.

⁵⁰⁶ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 104.

Saltık becomes so deeply demoralized for hearing the Devil's words that al-Khidr shows up, and tries to soothe him:

Regardless their numbers, and strength, they will be fated to be destroyed in the end. They cannot be prosperous. (...) Do not be afraid of ahl-i bidat. Their enemy is God. (...) The religion will survive without any deterioration and remain over till doomsday. As heralded in Quran, whoever desire to deteriorate this religion he/she will be deteriorated at the end. Al-Khidr consoled Şerif and gone.⁵⁰⁷

Along with the apocalyptic connotations, especially with the emergence of al-Khidr in a difficult time, the existence and image of the Devil in the text, brings to mind the naming of “Shah Kulu”, the leading rebel in 1511 whose father served as a caliph under Sheikh Haydar, as the “Slave of Devil”. Identifying the *Râfizîs* and Qizilbash groups with the Devil and his evil doings must be related to apocalyptic worries in an age of confessionalization as well as the effort of excluding them out of Islam.

It is interesting that Sheikh Mahmud Hüdâyî (d. 1628), in a report to the sultan (exact date is unknown, Hijri 11th century, sometime between 1591-1688) about various villages called Docalar in the Balkans used the same words as al-Khidr. Hüdâyî saying that their numbers were high, and that they did not follow sharia or Sunna. They were *Râfizîs*, *zındıks*, and *mülhids*, and sources of evil [*fesâd*]. “There are devils amongst them who they call sheiks. They are always busy with deterioration and perversion.”⁵⁰⁸

In the next *menkıbe*, while Sarı Saltık is staying in Deşt, a message arrived: Sultan Izzaddîn was kidnapped by the *Râfizîs* from Mazenderan, a province in Iran, and “the province is in an evil situation for two years.”⁵⁰⁹ Saltık gives a soothing and encouraging answer to the Muslims:

Do not angst. Al-Khidr informed me that they will not reach their goals. The supremacy [*galebe*] belongs to the Muslims. Hellraisers [*müfsid*] will not achieve their purposes, however, there must be a hidden cause [*hikmet*] by God

⁵⁰⁷ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltuknâme*, 105.

⁵⁰⁸ Refik, *Onaltıncı Asırda*, 17, 18.

⁵⁰⁹ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltuknâme*, 122.

in those current events. On the other hand, Izaddin oppressed the Muslims, and shut his eyes [to his own doings]. Accordingly, he got his just deserts by God.⁵¹⁰

After a while, another message arrived: Sultan Izaddin managed to escape from the *Râfizîs* who conquered Iran [Acem mülkü], and they entered the lands of Rum chasing the Sultan. Saltık gives another soothing and encouraging answer to the Muslims:

Just so you the Muslims know, all the hellraisers and tyrants [*cebbârî*] came from Iran and Babylon, however, the prophets came from Arab lands. Until the Last Days, those hellraisers go on coming from Iran. They are not an auspicious folk. The Prophet Muhammad especially maledicted to the East [şark]. The people of Rum are tough, and loyal people. ‘[The verses of] *Elif, lâm, mim*, the *Rums* have been defeated’ came down about them. They are victorious in good and evil. You should understand that they now get in trouble since they arrived at Rum.⁵¹¹

Apparently, Iran and Babylon, and the maledicted east represent here the lands that the Dajjal will emerge or has already emerged from in the form *Râfizîs*. However, good news from divine sources are given to the audience in these passages. The first two verses of Surah of Rum are used as an evidence for this purpose. The third verse of it, despite not existing in the text, implies its divine promise: “They [the people of Rum] will be victorious in a couple of years after their defeat.”⁵¹²

At this point, two short stories are included, added to strengthen the relationship between the Devil and the *Râfizîs*, and implying that Shah Ismail and his supporters are going in the way of the worst enemy of Islam. According to the first story, a Jewish man from Sabzevar, a city in Iran famous as a center of Shiite propaganda,⁵¹³ goes to Mazanderan, and falls in love with a woman coming from Mervan lineage [*Mervan nesli*]. They get married, and have a son, named İshak-ı Mazandarani. When İshak is fourteen years old, the Devil

⁵¹⁰ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltuknâme*, 123.

⁵¹¹ “Elif, lâm, mim gulibetü’r-rûm.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltuknâme*, 136.

⁵¹² “Onlar yenilgilerinden sonra birkaç yıl içinde galip geleceklerdir.” (my translation).

⁵¹³ Enver Konukçu, “Beyhak”, in *İslam Ansiklopedisi* 6 (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1992): 57, 58. <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/beyhak>

shows up, talks to Īshak, and re-names him as Dadgar. Īshak asks his identity, and the Devil says: “I am al-Khidr. I came to help you so you can conquer the world.”⁵¹⁴ Then, Dadgar puts a headgear of color green and red, and begins his claims:

“- I am sayyid, and descent from Imam Husayn. [showing his headgear] Here is my sign. The Devil educated him, thought him how to do magic and sent him to Estervay.”⁵¹⁵

Then, the Devil shows himself in the dreams of Mirza Hasan, the ruler of Estervay and says:

“A sayyid descent from Imam Husayn is coming to you. Respect him because he will conquer and rule the world. Be his vizier.”⁵¹⁶

When Dadgar arrives in Estervay, Mirza Hasan and his men worship him. Upon Dadgar’s question as to why they display such an obeisance, they say they saw al-Khidr in their dreams heralding him and promising the world domination. Dadgar confirms that he was sent by al-Khidr. Hasan and his men demand him to roust: “Now you have to prompt a revolt [*huruc*]. We have no riches.”⁵¹⁷ Suddenly, the Devil appears disguised as al-Khidr, riding a grizzly colored horse, but one eye blind. They kiss his hand supposing he is al-Khidr.

Mirza Hasan mutters to himself on this blind eye but he did not ask anything to the Devil. Because they were ignorant. They did not know science of *havas* [ilm-i havas] and wisdom, so they believed [that he was al-Khidr]. Anyway, *Râfızî* beliefs became flesh and blood of those Acem [Iran] tribes.⁵¹⁸

Then, the Devil orders them to kill the people of Sabzavar, claiming they are *Hâricîs*, advises them on removing *çâryâr* from the khutbah, and doing things contrary to Sunni sharia:

- Now stand up, go to Sabzavar, and kill the *Hâricîs* with your swords. Remove the names of those three persons, *çâryâr*, Ali ibn Abi Talib, Imam Hasan, Imam Husayn and Fatima. Do not wash your feet when performing ablution, and curse

⁵¹⁴ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltuknâme*, 137.

⁵¹⁵ “Pes Dadgar başına yeşil sarındı, kızıl alamet itdi.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltuknâme*, 137.

⁵¹⁶ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltuknâme*, 137.

⁵¹⁷ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltuknâme*, 137.

⁵¹⁸ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltuknâme*, 137.

the companions of the Prophet, and slander that they harmed the children of Ali ibn Abi Talib.⁵¹⁹

Moreover, the Devil dictates to them various adverse allegations which “Now the *Râfizîs* in Iran grounded their claims on.”⁵²⁰

- Oh Dadgar! You should know that you are a saint. You should explain it to the people who came for you, you should reveal this truth to them. The archangel Gabriel will come to you since you have the sainthood, and you will be a prophet.⁵²¹

The Devil makes Dadgar memorize some spells to cast whenever his followers demand possessions from him. Thus, Dadgar casts these spells, the ground cracks, the riches pullulate from the subsoil, so his supporters rise to wealth, and maligned about the companions of the Prophet. In this way, Dadgar conquers many cities, and causes seditions.

Dadgar here is intricately connected with Shah Ismail’s emergence as a charismatic religious and political leader in 1501, and his claims on his noble lineage, from which he based his other and greater claims to challenge the Ottomans. When Shah Ismail took the Safavid throne in 1494 after the death of his brother Sultan Ali, he was only seven years old. When he took Tabriz, adopted Shiism as the state religion and became a political and religious leader, he was fourteen years old just like Ishak-ı Mazandarani. His mother was the daughter of Uzun Hasan, the famous ruler of Aqqoyunlu state centered on Diyarbakır, a city ruled by Mervani house between 983-1085. However, the stress on Mervani here may also occur in reference to Muaviye b. Ebu Süfyan⁵²² (d. 680) the founder of Umayyad caliphate and the father of Yazid, since he is mentioned in another anecdote as “Mervan”, blamed for deteriorating Al-Imran Surah and renaming it after his name as “el-Mervan.”⁵²³ As for his

⁵¹⁹ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltûknâme*, 137.

⁵²⁰ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltûknâme*, 137.

⁵²¹ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltûknâme*, 137.

⁵²² İrfan Aycan, “Muaviye b. Ebu Süfyan,” in *İslam Ansiklopedisi* 30 (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2005): 335-6.

⁵²³ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltûknâme*, 153.

father, portraying him as a Jewish man indicates the myth of Dajjal, believed to be Jewish. The second name “Dadgar” adopted by Īshak-ı Mazandarani is one of the King Khusraw’s [Anushirvan] epithets in the Persian epic *Shahnameh* meaning dispenser of justice. Thus, it may indicate Shah Ismail’s promise to his subjects to be a just ruler. But most probably, the name Dadgar is related to Shah Ismail’s efforts to recreate his image using *Şahnâme* and its heroes, and a specific claim that he was descent also from Mazdean Kings including King Khusraw.⁵²⁴

The “headgear of color green and red” is apparently the *qızıl taj* (*tâc-ı Haydar*) introduced by Ismail’s father to the Safavids. However, the added color green symbolizes Shah Ismail’s claim to be a sayyid, as a descent from Imam Husayn which the Ottoman ulama rigorously denied and produced anti-theses about. “The riches” demanded from Dadgar are achieved by revolt, resembling the messianic pro-Safavid rebellions which ravaged Anatolia and the Balkans through the 15th and 16th centuries, and also the promises and possessions given by Shah Ismail to the Turkoman Qizilbash tribes for joining his armies.

As can be seen, the Dajjal-Devil’s advice represents the non-Sunni and anti-sharia practices that the Safavids were blamed for believing and practicing. The Devil also teaches Dadgar magical spells. It is the reason why whatever seems to be “good” done by Dadgar, Shah Ismail, originally derives from magic which is strictly forbidden in Islam as a great sin. Sarı Saltık is always accused of being a magician by his enemies who do not want to accept him as a saint, and convert to Islam, and Saltık is always revealed to be as a “real” saint, not a magician. But Dadgar is a magician trained by the Devil. Besides which, Saltık is a real sayyid who is worthy of wrapping his head in clothes colored red and green, symbolizing his lineage from Imam Hasan and Imam Husayn.

⁵²⁴ Mitchell, *The Practice of Politics*, XXIX.

Poet Muhsin Tuli as Mahdi

The following anecdote is again recalling how *Râfizî* leaders have been deceived and thus created by the Devil, and the poetry of Shah Ismail is more directly implied. One of the *Râfizî* leaders is İlyas, who later takes the name Çenmur. While Sultan Izaddin is fighting with the *Râfizîs* in Iran, a man from Geylan, named İlyas, appears with the claim that “I am like Ali ibn Abi Talib [*nisbet-dâr-ı Ali*].”⁵²⁵ İlyas takes sides with *Râfizîs*, and gathers them together in Geylan, and they attack the Tartarian cities. After this anecdote, the narrative immediately redirects to the story of Poet Muhsin Tuli, another man deceived by the Devil, who becomes a leader of *Râfizîs*.

One day Muhsin Tuli, the ruler of Mashhad⁵²⁶, a city in Iran, awakes from sleep, sees a man with green wings, and asks his identity. The man says he is Gabriel, he came to make him a prophet, and Dadgar and Çenmur [İlyas] should obey him to make *Râfizî* religion victorious. The Devil disguised as Gabriel says that Muhsin should believe that “Ali ibn Abi Talib is God”⁵²⁷, Muhsin himself is both the Mahdi and a prophet, and that he should not suspect or question it.

Falling into this trap, Muhsin gives a speech to his people who “already became *Râfizîs* before him”⁵²⁸ and proclaims that he is the Mahdi and a prophet. Seemingly, to influence the crowd, he reads poems in Arabic. They march towards the lands of Iraq and take a city. Muhsin writes many poems for his followers and claims that those poems consist the third fascicle of Quran, and some Osman gave them to him. In fact, “it was the perversion of the Devil.”⁵²⁹ Muhsin, upon rejecting his prophethood by Dadgar and Çenmur, renounces

⁵²⁵ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 138.

⁵²⁶ It is written “Meşa’at” in the text.

⁵²⁷ “Tahkik bil kim Ali Tangrı’dur ve sen hem Mehdisin hem peygambarsın. Şekk ve güman itme.” Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 138.

⁵²⁸ “pes ol halk, ansuzda evvelden Rafiziler idi.” Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 138.

⁵²⁹ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 138.

his claim since “he was a wise man”⁵³⁰ but maintains his claim to be the Mahdi and says: “I am Mahdi, the keeper of the age.”⁵³¹

Dadgar, claiming that al-Khidr informed him that Saltık would be a follower of him, writes a letter and offers Saltık to kill Sunnis. They meet in the battlefield. Dadgar casts a spell to create a snake in Saltık’s neck to kill him but Saltık, saying the prayer al-Khidr taught him, survives. “Sunnis rode their horses against *Râfizîs*”⁵³² and killed them. But Dadgar manages to escape, and Saltık with Sultan Izaddin’s army, chasing after him continues to kill more *Râfizîs* in various cities.

Saltık also kills Çenmur in a decisive war. The Muslims slaughter the captives, “those *mülhids*, and *zındıks*”, and plunder their possessions including their wives. It was such a great victory that Sultan Izaddin offers Saltık to take the throne, but he refuses saying: “You should stay in the throne, we will fight in front of your armies as your subjects so that the world attains its order.”⁵³³

Accompanied by the army, Saltık goes to Azerbaijan, they kill more *Râfizîs* “by inspecting each and every house”⁵³⁴ in the country, then visiting the sultan of Azerbaijan. The sultan receives a letter from Muhsin Tuli including his claims. Furthermore, Muhsin alleges that he has found the additive fascicle of Quran in which it is proclaimed that Ali ibn Abu Talip is superior over all other companions of the Prophet.

In response, Saltık stresses that Muhsin is a poet, and that he wrote this fascicle. He offers to boil it in a cauldron to see whether it remains safe or not. Upon the damaging of the fascicle, it is well understood that Saltık was right, and it was all Muhsin’s own doing, his poetry. Saltık also objects to Muhsin’s claim to be a sayyid:

⁵³⁰ “Melik Muhsin âkil idi.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 139.

⁵³¹ “Ben Mehdi-i sahib-i zamanam.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 139.

⁵³² Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 140.

⁵³³ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 143.

⁵³⁴ “Rafizileri hâne ve be-hâne teftiş idüp kırdılar.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 143.

If one descent from a noble lineage, he/she does not oppose [the laws] and cause harm. If one commits those crimes, either he/she was born of illicit [haram] behaviors or fornication, and that his/her practical seditions count as practical. Thus, we response them according to sharia.⁵³⁵

However, Muhsin does not renounce his claims, and writes a letter repudiating all of what Saltık has said. As a result, Saltık invites the ulama to work on a fatwa together sentencing Mushin to death: “One who swears to the companions of the Prophet, he must be killed.”⁵³⁶ After this fatwa, Saltık cooperates with the Arabs, and Muhsin is slaughtered.

Then, Saltık moves to Damascus, and joins the local people in Friday prayer in a mosque. At the end of the sermon, the preacher mentions the names of *çâryâr*, and Muaviye, Mervan and Yazid but curses Ali ibn Abi Talib and his children. Hearing it, Saltık stands up and warns the preacher that it is not right. Asfur, the ruler of the city, orders his men to kill Saltık, and it causes a war. For three days, Saltık and his men kill Asfur and the *Hâricîs* in the city.

In this anecdote, the claims of Shah Ismail as a sayyid, and Mahdi are once more invalidated. As mentioned in the introduction of Chapter II, Shah Ismail’s poetry was very influential on the Safavids and on the Qizilbash Turkoman tribes in the Ottoman lands, and his claim to be the *mehdî-i zaman* is in his poetry:

Among the Kızılbaş, Shah İsmâ'il was known as the Mahdi, and he refers to this claim in his divan: ‘The time of the *mehdî-i zaman* has begun, the light of the eternal life has come.’ Further verses in a similarly apocalyptic tone illustrate Ismail’s millenarian assessment of the time.⁵³⁷

Thus, it is understood that the copyist(s) of *Saltıknâme* were aware of all the claims of Shah Ismail as well as their anti-thesis produced by the Ottoman ulama. Apparently, the copyist(s) exerted themselves to prove Shah Ismail’s claims and promises to be wrong. If they were all

⁵³⁵ “Eger ol, asil neseb ola, muhalefet ve şekavet andan gelmeye. Eger gele, ya haram lokma ya zinadan olmuş ise anun ameli müfsidlikleri ameli olur. Şer’an ne lazım gelürse anı iderüz.” Rumi, *Saltıknâme*, 143.

⁵³⁶ “Ashâb-ı Resul’e mübahen sebt ide, vâcibü’l-katldür.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 144.

⁵³⁷ Dressler, “Inventing Orthodoxy,” 158.

wrong, it is revealed that they will not be victorious but instead, the Sunni-Ottomans will be. In addition, Saltık's objections to the preacher who mentions the names of *çâryâr*, but curses Ali ibn Abi Talib and his children, to my opinion, can not only be explained by the contemporary conception of Ottoman Sunnism, and its inclusivist nature. Saltık's objection is pronounced after the relationship between the Devil-Dajjal and the *Râfizîs* is established, and thus it is understood that their veneration towards Imam Ali and his children is a pretense. Thus, Saltık's objection is a literary tool, a contrastive element aiming to convey this message: The Ottoman-Sunnis are the real respecters of Imam Ali and his children, not the *Râfizîs*, although they strongly claimed to be, and propagandized it.

Dreaming Abu Hanifa, Ruining His Tomb

While Saltık is in Babaeski he sees Abu Hanifa in his dream. He tells Saltık that thirty hypocrite *Râfizîs* from Sabzavar ruined his tomb, and now they are plundering the surrounding areas. He wants help from Saltık saying "Come and destroy these damned people. Do not believe their loyalty if they obey you. Beware of their sheikh who disguised as a Sufi has only one eye. Do not give him a chance and kill him."⁵³⁸ This one-eyed sheikh is no one but the Devil-Dajjal, leading the *Râfizîs* against Abu Hanifa. Finally, Saltık goes to Baghdad and kills them.

First, Saltık travels to Baghdad, and ulama of the city welcome him. Saltık tells them his dream and asks them what should be done about *Râfizîs*. They respond that just as the Ottoman ulama, the only way is to kill them. In this meeting, a member of the ulama Abdullah Fazli, encourages a Sunni man named Abdurrahman to narrate an event about how the *Râfizîs* were cursed and sentenced to death by the companions of the Prophet and

⁵³⁸ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 373.

Muhammad himself. Abdurrahman however, has a neighbour named Hacı Şiran, famous for being a *Râfizî* but rich, who silenced people by bribing them not to report him to the authorities. When Şiran hears that Abdurrahman was to go on a pilgrimage to Mecca, he gives him ten thousand filorin to deliver to another *Râfizî* man in Mecca in order to dispatch the amount amongst other *Râfizîs*. Abdurrahman, afraid of being in trouble because of the power of Hacı Şiran, accepts his offer, and fulfils Şiran's wishes during his pilgrimage. But in the night Abdurrahman sees the companions of the Prophet and Muhammad in his dream, and is heavily reprimanded by them for his crime, helping a *Râfizî* and being a mediator in providing money for their acts. In his dream, Muhammad orders Ali ibn Ali Talib to kill Hacı Şiran, and he cuts the man's head with his famous sword *Zülfikâr*. Then the Prophet forms sentences which are consistently repeated through the narrative in relation to *Râfizîs*, and in fact the fundamental message of the whole *Saltıknâme*. He says:

“Those damned ones deserve this end for they are hypocrites. Go and let people know that those *Râfizîs* will end up badly. They are the enemies of God. They will never be successful.”⁵³⁹

When Abdurrahman wakes up, he finds that there is blood in his cloths, and Şiran's head is by his side. He buries the head in a hole in Mecca. Then he goes back to Baghdad and learns that Şiran was found dead in his house without his head. Abdurrahman is enlightened and explains what happened. The people send a man to Mecca to find the head of Şiran where Abdurrahman buried to see whether he was right or not. Upon revealing that Abdurrahman is telling the truth, those people who are *Râfizîs* immediately repent and convert to Sunni Islam.

⁵³⁹ “Uş bu melunların hali böyle gerekdür kim münafıklardur. Var, haber vir, bu Rafizilerün sonı helaklikdür. Tanrı taalanun bunlar düşmanlarıdır. Ber-hurdar olmazlar.” Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 373, 374.

Another man claims that he sees the Prophet in his dream, and he orders him to be present that day in the meeting to deliver a message to Saltık. It is an order to kill all *Râfizîs*. Upon Saltık's request, the dreamer offers to confirm his message to Abu Hanifa. They go to his tomb, and Saltık asks Abu Hanifa's spirit if the man tells the truth. But two different voices respond to Saltık, Abu Hanifa and Imam Shafii. Saltık contrives that it is a trap, and finds the man pretending to be Imam Shafii, the one-eyed sheikh of thirty *Râfizîs*, the Devil-Dajjal. They are all killed, and Saltık has the tomb of Abu Hanifa repaired⁵⁴⁰ just as Süleyman I did in real life in 1535 after conquering Baghdad from the Safavids, accusing them of ruining his tomb on purpose.⁵⁴¹ Burak states that the reconstruction of Abu Hanifa's tomb was especially important as "it represented the connection between the Ottoman dynasty (and, more concretely, the sultan), the Hanafi school of law, and its eponym."⁵⁴²

Ruining the Tomb of Imam İsmail

The same *menkıbe* includes the first reference to the name of İsmail. Saltık and his men go to Lahican city in the province of Gilan, (a city which came under the domination of the Safavids in the first years of 16th century)⁵⁴³ and it is mentioned as a place full of *Râfizîs* in the text. Then "they exhumed İsmail, the Imam of *Râfizîs*, from his grave, ruined his tomb, and set fire"⁵⁴⁴ to it. They go on and kill the *Râfizîs* in Shirvan. These references to the tombs and shrines of the prominent religious figures have various meanings. Many of those shrines and their located areas were the places in which the Ottoman-Safavid conflicts occurred. Patronage of their reconstruction was another aspect of this rivalry and their destruction was

⁵⁴⁰ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 376.

⁵⁴¹ Burak, "The Second Formation," 581.

⁵⁴² Burak, "The Second Formation," 581.

⁵⁴³ Rıza Kurtuluş, "Lahican," in *İslam Ansiklopedisi* 27 (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2003): 51, 52. <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/lahican>

⁵⁴⁴ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 377.

used as a form of propaganda by the Ottoman ulama from Kemalpaşazâde to İdrisi Bidlisi, who wrote that the Safavids destroyed the mosques and burnt the sheikhs' tombs and grave. Such anecdotes are particularly representative of a revengeful act against their claimed destructive deeds.

The “Real” Shrine of İmam Ali bin Abi Talib

Another striking visit paid by Saltık is to Imam Ali's “real” grave. This anecdote begins with Saltık's visiting the tomb of “Imam Ali” in Mashhad. At first sight, this character seems to Ali ibn Abi Talib, however, in Mashhad, there is another Imam Ali, Ali al-Ridha (d. 818), the eight Imam in Twelver Shiism who Kemalpaşazâde claimed that Shah Ismail attacked to destroy with other descendants of the Prophet Muhammad.⁵⁴⁵

Saltık, then travels to Karbala and visits Imam Husayn's tomb. Sleeping in this tomb, Saltık sees Ali ibn Abi Talib in his dream, and is invited by him to his masjid in Kaffa in Crimea. But Saltık first goes to Najaf, a city in Iraq, believed to be sacred by Shiites, and Masjid al-Imam Ali takes place. He meets with nobles and sayyids of Najaf and asks them if it is true that Imam Ali was buried there, inquires as to whether his shrine is real or not. They answer with a religious account.: Imam Ali had bequeathed that his corpse should have been delivered by an Arab man who would show up with his camel after his death. His will was fulfilled by his sons, and they understood that the Arab man was in fact Imam Ali himself, as a miracle, and that he was disappeared. Thus, it is revealed that Masjid al-Imam Ali in Najaf is only a symbolic shrine.⁵⁴⁶ But Saltık, of course, already knows this, and the sayyids only confirmed what Saltık knew. Saltık laughs, ridicules a belief implied to be held by *Râfizîs*, and reminds them of verses from the Quran: “They claimed that Imam Ali was

⁵⁴⁵ Brammer says, “In fact, the shrine had been damaged in the ongoing battles between the Safavids and the Shaybanid Uzbeks of Central Asia.” Baltacıoğlu-Brammer, “Those Heretics,” 56.

⁵⁴⁶ “Devesini bu yirde çökürüp gayib oldu. Burada bu kabri ayan itdiler.” Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıkname*, 427

not death. [Whereas] Every living thing will die one day. Every soul will taste the death eventually.”⁵⁴⁷

Bringing out the truth once more, Saltık journeys to Kaffa with the sayyids of Najaf, and finds the well which Imam Ali had informed him of in his dream. Saltık drops a long rope down into the hole and under the guidance of an angel with green wings named Derdail, reaches the real grave of Imam Ali. Derdail underlines that Saltık should “Go see your ancestors. No one had this chance before.”⁵⁴⁸ Saltık interacts with Imam Ali and, who shares with him details that convince the audience of the reality of the story. He also finds out that the graves of Imam Hasan and Husayn are also there.

Meanwhile, it is revealed that there were *Râfizîs* secretly watching Saltık going down into the well. They want and try to do the same, however, a great flame emerges out of the well to prevent them, and they all burn to death. Not even Imam Ali and his children that the *Râfizîs* so glorify accept or approve of these beliefs or practices. The *Râfizîs* are rejected even by them, thus they are in the wrong path to God.⁵⁴⁹

Why did the copyist(s) of *Saltıknâme* make an effort to assert that the Masjîd al-Imam Ali in Najaf is not his authentic grave? I think it is now not possible to determine the exact reason. Najaf was mostly in Ottoman dominion until 1920.⁵⁵⁰ However, it was an intermittent dominance, in which the city passed into the hands of the Safavids for some years. Most importantly, according to Uluçam, the shrine and the architectural complex around it was mainly built after 1588, beginning in Shah Abbas’s reign, 1587-1629.⁵⁵¹ Thus, this intervention may have been caused by an addition done in the reign of Murad III.

⁵⁴⁷ “Ali ölmedi didiler. *Küllü men aleyhâ fânin ve küllü nefsin zaikatü ’l-mevt.*” Rumi, *Saltıknâme*, 427.

⁵⁴⁸ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 428.

⁵⁴⁹ “Nagâh kuyu içinden bir od yalını çıkup anları kamu bir uğurdan kapkara tutup yakdı.” 428.

⁵⁵⁰ Mustafa Öz, “Necf”, in *İslam Ansiklopedisi* 32 (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2006): 486-7.

⁵⁵¹ Abdüsselam Uluçam, “Meşhed-i Ali”, in *İslam Ansiklopedisi* 29 (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2004): 365-6.

Nureddin against the Râfizîs in Medina

In the fifteenth *menkıbe* of the third volume, Saltık is poisoned by a man named Ukbe, and dies,⁵⁵² however, the conflicts and wars against the *Râfizîs* continue because it is God's will, and it is repeatedly approved by the primary religious figures like the Prophet Muhammad, Imam Ali, and his children, Abu Hanifa, and the other imams of Sunni madhabs. Saltık, as a saint, in the form of a sacred spirit, maintains his struggle against those hypocrites just as the abovementioned figures did in his adventures while he was still alive.

Hearing that Saltık was dead, the rulers of Frengistan get together to find a way to overcome "the Turks" once and for all and exile them out of the lands of Rum. A priest with one-eye offers to exhume Muhammad's corpse from his grave in Medina, and bring him to Frengistan in order to "benefit from his heavenly light to transform their lands into a prosperous and developed country."⁵⁵³ Thus, they travel to Medina. However, the Sunni warrior Nureddin in Damascus is informed by the Prophet in his dream about the plans conspired against the Muslims Turks. As soon as Nureddin reaches Medina, he orders the local *Râfizîs* to leave the city and when they band together to go, he and the Sunni people of the city slaughter them all. After the massacre, Nureddin gives a speech justifying it:

"Oh, people of Medina! I did not do that for its my own personal decision or idea, the Prophet ordered me to do it. You should know that slaughtering the *Râfizîs* is a religious necessity for the Sunnis. If they repent, perhaps they will be saved."⁵⁵⁴

Thus, it can be observed that Saltık's views and acts in harmony with the Ottoman ulama are maintained even after his death, and by the help and support of his sacred soul.

⁵⁵² Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 576.

⁵⁵³ "Nur-u Muhammed bizüm ilümüzde berk ura, ilümüz şen ve mamur ola." Rumi, *Saltıknâme*, 586.

⁵⁵⁴ "Medine kavmı, ben bu işi kendü ray ve fikrümle itmedüm illa Resullullah buyurdı, eyledüm. Sizlerün malumı olsun kim bu kavmun katli Sünnilere vacibdür. Meğer ki istiğfar ideler ki halas olalar." Rumi, *Saltıknâme*, 588.

Representations of Qalandaris as Işıks

Saltıknâme's approach to Qalandaris, the antinomian dervishes of the age, is like Kemalpaşazâde's relatively moderate views on them. As Ökten shows, when Kemalpaşazâde was asked "whether calling an *Işık* heretic and giving him money is a proper action. İbn Kemal again gave a conditional answer: giving money is a proper action, but calling an *Işık* heretic is not proper if there is not a reason for it."⁵⁵⁵ Some anecdotes clearly were created or added to absolve Qalandaris from the blame centered upon their non-Sunni and anti-sharia practices. There is a certain effort to portray them as innocuous Sufis who do not pose any danger towards Islam. However, in accordance with the accusations which can be seen in the late 16th century Ottoman documents, especially relating to the ones directed to dervishes living in the zawiyas of Sarı Saltık in the Balkans, *Saltıknâme* also includes criticism against Qalandaris, namely "Işıks".

Cemalü'd-Din-i Sâvi (d. 1232-3), the founder of Qalandari order, appears with the name Cemâleddîn Kalender in the text. He is portrayed as a sayyid, and the reasons behind his appearance and clothing as being incompatible with sharia are explained and justified in the text. Qalandaris' cutting all their facial hair is at the center of the story as an antinomian conduct. This custom is explained and legitimized with Cemâleddîn-i Kalender's well-behaved nature and his avoiding of fornication. According to the anecdote, Sayyid Cemâleddîn cuts all his facial hair because of a woman who falls in love with him, runs up him wherever he goes, and declares that "I want to rub my face to your hair, beard and eyelashes."⁵⁵⁶ Cemâleddîn shaves off all the hair on his head and throws all of it to the woman, who then renounces her desire for him. As for his anti-sharia clothing, this arose as a result of his official duty as a spy. Cemâleddîn goes to the court of Sultan Alâeddîn who

⁵⁵⁵ Ökten, "Ottoman Society," 26.

⁵⁵⁶ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 366.

has been waging religious wars against the Frenks and voices his desire to be assigned as a spy for the state in Frengistan. It is accepted, and Cemâleddîn functions as a spy in the lands of infidels for a while. Returning from his duty, same woman chases after him for love again, and Cemâleddîn cut all his facial hair once again, but this time permanently, and continues to dress as an infidel⁵⁵⁷ Frenk to avoid this woman. So Cemâleddîn's disciples do as the same. However, neither the sultan, nor the Sunni local people of the city look favorably on them since they do not seem like proper Muslims. Moreover, Sultan Alâeddîn loathes his disciples and uses them nearly as slave labor in some services. Eventually, Sultan Alâeddîn learns the truth about Cemâleddîn and his disciple providentially through a foreign Frenk (European) man coming to Antalya. This man initially thinks that Cemâleddîn's disciples are also Frenks but he learns the truth when he talks them. Then he goes to the sultan who explains to him that they are true Muslims. The Frenk man converts to Islam, names after Ahi Firengi, and becomes a saint in time. By way of these explanations, those Qalandaris who look and practice behaviors contrary to Islam are absolved in the text, and therefore also in the eyes of the audience.⁵⁵⁸

Furthermore, Cemâleddîn performs the Friday prayer. In the mosque, Cemâleddîn sees Sarı Saltık, and wants to meet him but Saltık does not shake his hands, claiming that he does not live suitably to sharia. He criticizes him for removing his facial hair and his disciples not performing *namaz*. Cemâleddîn-i Kalender tells the above story, but nevertheless promises to change and live perfectly pursuant to Sharia. Some Qalandari disciples repent and starts to perform *namaz*. Thus, Sarı Saltık, who was historically a Qalandari sheikh himself, is portrayed as a Sunni-Muslim criticizing Qalandaris for not being Sunni enough.

⁵⁵⁷ "...kafirlerin kisvetin geyardi." Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 366.

⁵⁵⁸ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 368.

There are many explanations in various hagiographies about Cemâleddîn and his disciples' practice of removing their facial hair. Interestingly, the explanation in *Saltıknâme* is the same as with İbn Battuta's in his *Rihla*. In fact, the version mentioned above seems to be a summary of the long version adopted in accordance with the role envisaged for Sarı Saltık in the narrative. In İbn Battuta's version, the man who jumped on Cemâleddîn for not having hair on his head is a local judge named İbnü'l-Amid. At the end of the story, he became a follower of Cemâleddîn. Whereas, in *Saltıknâme*, Cemâleddîn's story ends up with him becoming a Sunni thanks to Sarı Saltık's advice. As for the similarity between the two versions, the author may have seen and used a written source which included İbn Battuta's version, if Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî did not go to Dimyat and heard it by his own ears. Or maybe oral tradition may have this version.⁵⁵⁹

In the fifth *menkıbe* of the third volume, Saltık warns *Işıks* not to burn their faces with fire:

One burns one's face with fire one is damned. The Sunnis must not do that. Even the infidels must not do that. It means rebelling to God and hypocrisy. It has no place in any religion. Nowadays, the *Işık* folks do that and they name it as the mark of love. [However] It is religiously illicit. They torture their selves. It is the mark of the Devil's followers. It is a great sin. When the doomsday to come, their souls will sue them.⁵⁶⁰

Namaz has a special place relevant to the anecdotes about *Işıks*. Cemâleddîn Kalender's performing the Friday prayer is apparently added for that matter. Saltık is written to be a saint who "dismisses, beats the ones amongst the *Işıks* who do not perform five times prayer."⁵⁶¹ The stress on *namaz* and other anti-sharia acts attributed to some of the *Işıks* - but not all of them - can also be observed in some of the late 16th century Ottoman documents. In a sultanic decree from 1559, Süleyman I order the qadi of Varna to question the "ahlul

⁵⁵⁹ Ocak, *Marjinal Sufilik*, 24-34.

⁵⁶⁰ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 488.

⁵⁶¹ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 490.

bidah *Işık* folk” (*bid’at ehli Işık taifesi*) residing in the Zawiyah of Sarı Saltık in Kaliagra, who was reported to talk against the sharia.⁵⁶² In the same year Following this decree the sultan, upon learning that the rumors were true, ordered the qadi to forbid all the *Işık* folk since they were not from ahl-i Sunnah ve’l camaa.⁵⁶³ In a 1567 dated decree, this time the *Işıks* in Zawiyah of Sarı Baba in Denizli were ordered to be questioned since they were ahlul bidah and thus did not perform prayers (*namaz*).⁵⁶⁴ Thus, the portrayal of the founder of Qalandariya as a man performing Friday prayer, and complaints about non-Sunni acts of several *Işıks* may have been added in the late 16th century.

Adapting Sarı Saltık to the Ottoman-Sunni Identity

The religious necessity of *namaz* is emphasized all through *Saltıknâme*. However *namaz* as performing the Friday prayer has a heavier emphasis than *namaz* as the five times prayer, in accordance with the Ottoman state’s and ulama’s judgements. Saltık is portrayed as a devoted practitioner of this ritual and always advises people about it in his preachings. This portrayal and emphasis on *namaz* represents only one aspect of the Sunnitization of Sarı Saltık’s personality in accordance with Ottoman-Sunnism. There are more activities of daily living that Saltık performs as an obedient Ottoman-Sunni. One remarkable example is refusing to drink wine even when Saltık disguises himself as a Christian monk, priest or messiah and has to prove his false identity to deceive his enemies. When Saltık disguises himself as a monk, infiltrating a group of Christian clergy, he shows courage in refusing to drink the wine that the Pope, the most dangerous Christian enemy, offers him, saying he is ill.⁵⁶⁵ In another example, Saltık, disguised as a monk, joins hundreds of priests and refuses

⁵⁶² Refik, *Onaltıncı Asırda*, 44.

⁵⁶³ Refik, *Onaltıncı Asırda*, 49, 50.

⁵⁶⁴ Refik, *Onaltıncı Asırda*, 63.

⁵⁶⁵ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 53, 54.

to eat pork meat and drink wine saying he is fasting.⁵⁶⁶ A few pages later, this time Saltık says that he is from *ahl-i riyâzât* to justify not drinking wine and eating pork.⁵⁶⁷ At this point, Saltık's words evokes Ebussuûd's fatwa issued upon Süleyman I's request, judging that Saltık "was a monk who became a skeleton because of his abstemiousness."⁵⁶⁸

That [infidel] beg [ruler] asked:

- Why don't you drink wine?

- We are monks, we are from *ahl-i riyâzât* [abstemiousness]. Whenever we fast, we do not eat pork, blood, or drink wine. We also do not eat food of animal origin. You must know that how [Christian] scholars praise *riyâzât*.⁵⁶⁹

Such a point seems like an explanation of why Christians in the Balkans believed Sarı Saltık was a Christian, a monk, and a legitimization of Ebussuûd's fatwa. Another judgement of Ebussuûd that Saltık obeys is about drinking boza, a fermented beverage made of millet. This scene depicting Saltık's tasting boza comes out of nowhere and does not have any relation to the *menkıbe* in which the following paragraph was placed, and is thus seemingly added to the *menkıbe* only for stressing that it is better not to drink boza:

Server settled in Sivas. There was a bozahouse where he lived. The louding cries of the boza drinkers in that bozahouse reached the ears of Saltık. It was night. They [Saltık and his friends] entered the bozahouse without introducing their identities and ate *kebab*. Server drank boza for once, it was sweet not sour. And Saltık said: 'Whoever drinks it, he/she will feel regretful.' He never drank boza again.⁵⁷⁰

The careful distinction made in the paragraph between the sweet and sour kinds of boza is important as while the first one is nonalcoholic, the latter, also called "Tatar boza", is accepted as an intoxicating beverage. Both kinds had their own bozahouses in the Ottoman

⁵⁶⁶ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 73.

⁵⁶⁷ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 76.

⁵⁶⁸ Ökiç, "Sarı Saltık'a Ait Bir Fetva", 56. "Riyazet ile kadid olmuş bir keşiştir."

⁵⁶⁹ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 76.

⁵⁷⁰ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 457.

lands during the 15th and 16th centuries.⁵⁷¹ As Işın says, boza houses were “much like taverns, frequented by sailors, muleteers, porters and other working-class people. They were not places where gentlemen liked to be seen.”⁵⁷² As far as I searched, Kemalpaşazâde has no judgement on boza or bozahouses, however, several fatwas about this disputable topic were issued by Ebussuûd (d. 1574) indicating that it was quiet a polemic in the late 16th century.⁵⁷³ In one of them, Ebussuûd judged that gathering as groups in bozahouses and drinking sour boza is infidelity [*küfür*].⁵⁷⁴ In another example Ebussuûd regarded even sweet boza as illicit:

“Question: What should be done to the people go to the sweet bozahouses and say, “we go to the bozahouses to eat kebab and we drink boza, it is halal”?

Answer: *Aleyhim mâ aleyhim*. [Everything that makes people drunk is haram].”⁵⁷⁵

Thus, even sweet boza was considered as haram by shaykh al-Islam despite requires only repenting (*tövbe*), relatively a light sentence. On the other hand, we learn from Ibn Battuta that boza was halal in Hanafî madhab in the middle of the 14th century. Battuta tasted and did not like it, just like Saltık.⁵⁷⁶ Saltık and boza were together mentioned also in a 17th century text, Evliyâ Çelebi’s *Seyahatnâme*, when the author recorded a belief that Saltık was the patron saint of the boza-sellers: “The boza-sellers say: ‘Our *pîr* is Sarı Saltık, he is the patron of the boza-sellers’ — God forbid! He was a great saint, a noble descendant of the Prophet.”⁵⁷⁷ Obviously a relation between Saltık and boza still existed towards the middle of the 17th century, several decades after the 1591/2 manuscript of the text was copied.

⁵⁷¹ Priscilla Mary Işın, “Boza, Innocuous, and Less So”, in *Cured, Fermented and Smoked Foods, Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery 2010 (Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery)*, ed. Helen Saberi, (Britain: Prospect Books, 2012): 154-164.

⁵⁷² Işın, “Boza, Innocuous,” 158.

⁵⁷³ Düzdağ, *Ebussuûd Efendi*, 45, 187-189.

⁵⁷⁴ Düzdağ, *Ebussuûd Efendi*, 187.

⁵⁷⁵ Düzdağ, *Ebussuûd Efendi*, 188.

⁵⁷⁶ “These Turks ... have also a fermented drink which they make from the grain of the dugi (hulled millet) ... I tasted it and finding a bitter taste in it left it alone. These people are Hanafis and nabidh (fermented liquor) is permissible according to their doctrine. They call this nabidh which is made from dugi by the name of buza.” Işın, “Boza, Innocuous,” 155.

⁵⁷⁷ Anetshofer, “Legends of Sarı Saltık,” 294.

Seyahatnâme's including many *menâkıb* which also exist in *Saltıknâme* was examined in detail and explained by Anetshofer with shared oral sources, the Bektashi traditions. Anetshofer also argues that Evliyâ was responding to Ebussuûd's fatwa even though no clear reference was made to it.⁵⁷⁸ I think the same goal was also pursued by the copyist(s) of *Saltıknâme*. Considering the shared sources, the original *Saltıknâme* must have the same or a close version of the belief which Evliyâ compiled in the Balkans. However, the copyist(s) must have changed it in accordance with Ebussuûd's views against boza. The copyist(s) could have left alone the original version or excluded it. Instead, they chose to hold this anecdote but adapted it to be in keeping with the Ottoman-Sunnism of the late 16th century.

In *Saltıknâme*, there is a similar attempt to correct Saltık's "real" identity and shed light upon the "real" reasons behind the Balkan Christians' sympathy and respect towards him. This inference in the narrative apparently aims to persuade the text's audience that those Christians mistakenly regard Saltık as a Christian saint and/or al-Khidr. According to the first explanation, after Saltık's death, the Christian infidels conquered Kaffa and ruined all the masjids including Saltık's and turned them into churches. They also re-named Saltık's masjid as "Ezersatmelere" or "Ezentımarıyye"⁵⁷⁹ that is remembered with the names of Saltık and al-Khidr.⁵⁸⁰ The second effort of correction is about a maqam belongs to al-Khidr somewhere in "Frengistan", generally meaning Europe or the Balkans. One day, disguised as al-Khidr, Saltık goes to a church with a population of seventy monks and introduces himself as "Zentamariye, that is to say al-Khidr."⁵⁸¹ They respect him, and inform Queen Kaydahan about this venerable guest. Queen Kaydahan asks him "Are you the real al-Khidr?"⁵⁸² and since his real name is "Hızır" he does not have to tell a lie and gives a positive

⁵⁷⁸ Anetshofer, "Legends of Sarı Saltık," 296.

⁵⁷⁹ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 123.

⁵⁸⁰ "Firenk dilince Ezersatmelere diyü ana ad kodılar. Yani Saltık'un hem Hızır ve İlyas'un âdemisi Hızır'un bu kilisasıdır diyü yâd olundu." Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 122.

⁵⁸¹ "Adım Zentamariyedür, yani Hızırdur." Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 571.

⁵⁸² "Siz sahih Hızır mısınız?" Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 571.

answer. They bring Saltık back to the church “called Ezantamariyye, namely the maqam of al-Khidr.”⁵⁸³ Nestur the monk, Saltık’s enemy, wholeheartedly believes that he is al-Khidr, and when he falls ill, asks Ezantamariyye to cure him as:

“All people in that land came to Server [to recover]. Saltık rehabilitated them by the touch of his hands. All the infidels believed him, and overwhelmed him with gold materials, gave him gifts.”⁵⁸⁴

Finally, Saltık kills Nestur, and puts him in his own clothes, and he wears Nestur’s, and magically turns his face into the face of Nestur by touching his face with his hands.⁵⁸⁵ Saltık tells everybody that al-Khidr is dead. The infidels bury Nestur in a marble coffin inside the church and “built for him a red shrine.”⁵⁸⁶ So why did Saltık not reveal the truth about this coffin and al-Khidr, letting the Christians believe that al-Khidr was on their side? Because Saltık sees some man in his dream, his identity is unknown but obviously a religiously high-ranked man, saying: “Oh Server! Be patient, do not blow the gaff about Nestur since more possessions will gather here [in time] and all will be vouchsafed to the *gâzis* [in the future].”⁵⁸⁷

Thus, the hidden truth has now been clarified, the rumors about Saltık are unjustified, and his shrines and maqams in the Balkans that Christians paid visits to are revealed as false constructions.

II.3) A Symbol of Superiority

Saltık’s struggle against the Christian clergy, rulers and their alliances aiming to oust the Muslim Turks from the lands of Rum is another dominant characteristic that makes him

⁵⁸³ “ana Ezantamariyye dirlerdi yani Hızır makam demek olurdu.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 572.

⁵⁸⁴ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 572.

⁵⁸⁵ “Nestur’un tonların kendü geydi, kendü tonların hep Nestur’a geyirdi.” Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 572.

⁵⁸⁶ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 573.

⁵⁸⁷ “Ya Server! Sabr eyle Nestur sırrını fâş eyleme ki bunda çoklık mal cem ola sonra gazilere nasib ola.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 573.

a hero. This struggle not only includes the military conflicts but also an apparent challenge to prove the religio-political superiority of the Turks, and it aims to build a superior identity and self-image of the side that Saltık serves. In this sense, Saltık represents the rightfulness of the Turks holding the lands of Rum, who will maintain them with the support and protection of divine forces until the Last days. Thus, contrary to the ideas that *Saltıknâme* displays tolerance and empathy towards the Christians, I argue that the narrative is rich in terms of rivalry in many aspects in accordance with the Ottomans' multifaceted conflicts with the Habsburgs, one of its two main rivals along with the Safavids, during the 16th century.

The anecdotes on the Christians are also furnished with the apocalyptic and millenarian atmosphere which reigned over the 16th century. This climate can be seen in the narrative in the form of prophecies, beliefs, and anxieties primarily as the expectations of the Messiah to come, and decisively defeating the Turks, appearance and functions of al-Khidr, the prophecy on Blonde People, justness of geomancy, the concept of Red Apple, and the Mahdi.

I also show that there are repeating messages to relieve and encourage *Saltıknâme*'s audience against the millenarian expectations and fears of the 16th century. Those messages particularly underline "the Last Days" of the world, and the eternal victory and existence of the Turks in the lands of Rum. The messages are completed when Saltık hands over his duties, functions and thus the legitimate rule mainly to the Ottoman dynasty, the point is further stressed in Saltık becoming a member of the invisible army that will continue to support and help the Turks until the Last Days.

All of those elements in the narrative, and Saltık's dealing with them, show that the portrayal of Sarı Saltık as a hero in *Saltıknâme* is a product of the transformative period

between the heroic age of Anatolia, as Hagen states, and the age of confessionalization which Krstić formulizes.

Humor, and Humiliation: Fooling the Clergy

Saltık's primary targets are the members of the Christian clergy and the ruling class like the Pope, the kings, *tekfurs*, priests and monks. Likewise, they directly target Saltık because he is a renowned warrior of Islam whose reputation of power and courage spread all over the world as the *pehlivân-ı zaman* and represents the greatest obstacle against their ultimate and decisive victory. In this competitive rivalry, the main aim of the Christians is to throw the Turks out of the lands of Rum and wipe them off the face of the earth, whereas Saltık's main purpose is killing or converting them to Islam or at least, obligating them to pay *haraç* (tax) to the Muslims, proving his own and thus Islam's superiority over Christianity and the Christians.

Saltık's strategy to infiltrate these groups is to disguise himself as a priest, monk, or Messiah, reciting verses from the Bible to convince and influence them of his false identity and using his vast knowledge to accomplish his goals. While the only tool of Saltık's enemies is their armies, Saltık uses his intelligence and sainthood as well as his physical power and knowledge. Renard observes that in Islamic heroic narratives disguise and/or mistaken identity are a widespread theme. But "one must distinguish between disguise employed for strategic or tactical purposes and those kinds of masking, denial or failure to identify"⁵⁸⁸ someone. This theme in *Saltıknâme* most probably derives from *Battalnâme*, its main written source, and Saltık uses disguise as a strategy to have access to the clergy, just as Battal Gâzi does. On the other hand, according to the Ottoman apocalyptic prophecies of the 16th century,

⁵⁸⁸ Renard, *Islam, and the Heroic Image*, 145.

as Fleischer examines, the clergy is the main enemy of the Mahdi “who will refuse to believe in him and order his death.”⁵⁸⁹ As many scholars of the field suggest, *Battalnâme*’s influence on *Saltıknâme* cannot be ignored. Thus, they must share many common themes and targeting the clergy may well be one of them. However, taking into consideration that the eschatological tradition and texts were in circulation since the 13th century in the Mediterranean lands, the apocalyptic elements in *Saltıknâme* and in its cycle’s early examples may have existed in their original oral and written sources, and thus in the original texts. Nevertheless, in the 1591 edition of *Saltıknâme* those apocalyptic elements were apparently updated according to 16th century’s circumstances and needs.

Some of Saltık’s struggles against the Christians serve to humiliate them in a humorous way, and in most anecdotes -including the ones without humor- the Christians are represented as naive people who are insufficient in terms of religious and intellectual knowledge and can therefore be entrapped with ease. However, these enemies often witness, accept, and admit Saltık’s successful victories, physical and divinely powers, and the invincibility of the Turks.

In *Saltıknâme*, Saltık’s first heroic act is defeating the Christian clergy by fooling them. Accordingly, Saltık decides to take revenge in honor of his father who was killed a few years before. He goes to the church where the instigator of his father’s murder, the ruler of Amasya, Tırbanos goes every day to pray. He pretends to be a local Christian, and since “[he] memorized the four holy scriptures, knew twelve different languages, and received education from the masters,”⁵⁹⁰ it is always easy for him to disguise himself and act like someone else, someone non-Muslim. He mingles with the crowd in the church where forty members of clergy are present. The emphasis on Saltık’s intellectual knowledge explains

⁵⁸⁹ Fleischer, “A Mediterranean Apocalypse,” 46.

⁵⁹⁰ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 42.

how he manages to deceive them because solely possessing the ability to act would be insufficient. Thus, Saltık's *ilm* is a critical tool in pretending to be a Christian. Then, when the time comes, he kills thirty of them and wounds the others. But before that comes a humorous short anecdote. In the church, the head priest sits on the "minbar"⁵⁹¹ and gives a speech:

-Do you know, why are these Muhammedîs (Muslims) in the ascendant? What is the reason of it?

They said that they did not know.

-Because they follow the words of their prophet. And they love each other.

One of the priests said: Do they enter paradise when they die?

-No, they do not. They see paradise, stand in the front of it, wait and return.

Suddenly a ten-year-old boy appeared, climbed up to where the head priest set, and swore to him saying:

'Oh foul! Do not lie! Today, on earth the Turks are kicking you out of your houses, your properties, and lands. Cannot you reason that they can also kick you out from the paradise? I cannot believe they can stay still.'

Head priest said: -You are denying the Bible and Messiah!

Boy said: 'You believe and what did you achieve upon that? But look at them! They are beating your heads.'

The priests stand up to beat the hell out of the boy. The boy saved himself and sheltered to Şerif. Şerif stands up and threw such a punch on the head priest's throat that he kicked the bucket.⁵⁹²

The acts of tricking the Christian clergy are mostly narrated in a humorous tone of that kind. They are not merely tricked, they are fooled, and humiliated. The Christian clergy and the lords are portrayed as fools repeating the same mistakes time and time again. Namely, humor is used to build a sense of superiority, and thus a superior religious and political identity towards these "ridiculous" rivals. Thus, I argue that as Krstić argues, *Saltıknâme* does not include empathy, tolerance or an inclusivist attitude towards the Christians as many scholars suggest. For example, according to Kafadar, Saltık's reciting verses from the Bible in the Church of Hagia Sophia "with such emotion that the Orthodox congregation dissolves into

⁵⁹¹ In *Saltıknâme* there are many wrong information like this detail of "minbar" about the Christians, the churches, the religious services, etc...

⁵⁹² Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 42.

tears” is a “display of empathy.”⁵⁹³ Likewise, Anetshofer also thinks that Saltık’s ability to “bring [the clergy’s] tears to their eyes” can be seen a kind of empathy.⁵⁹⁴ However, looking more closely at the beginning and end of this *menkıbe* – and also several others where this motif is repeated- one can see that the only goal of Saltık’s existence in that church and reciting from the Bible is always the same: kill or convert the clergymen by fooling and tricking them.

In the beginning of the relevant *menkıbe*, Saltık tricks the Pope and the *tekfür* of Rum as if he is a wise Christian priest. The Pope, as the highest figure of Christianity on earth, and Messiah/Jesus on heavens, is consistently mentioned in the text and Saltık has many adventures with him. Saltık says: “The Messiah came to my dream and said that ‘Beat my ummah with a foot of a donkey. Beat it to their napes so that they can go to paradise.’”⁵⁹⁵ Hearing this, local Christians come together to have their’s beaten. Saltık reads verses from the Bible, and everyone cries in tears. Then, Saltık says he will rise to the sky to meet Jesus. He prays as Menüçehr djinni taught him to rise to the sky, and says: Seeing his rising up, no unbeliever remains in the crowd. After he lands, he asks everyone for a gold coin, so that he can transmit them to Jesus:

“That foolish and unperceptive nation, women, and men, came together. Şerif beat all of them with the foot of the donkey. He so strongly beat them that their noses bleed, and they lost their shit.”⁵⁹⁶

Then they take Saltık to the Church of Hagia Sophia and announce that the Messiah is in the city. Şerif reads verses from Bible, the crowd descends into tears once more. In this night, when all priests in the church gets drunk off wine, and sleep, Saltık takes feces from

⁵⁹³ Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 80.

⁵⁹⁴ Anetshofer, “Legends of Sarı Saltık”, 293.

⁵⁹⁵ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 57.

⁵⁹⁶ “Ol akılsız ve idraksız kavm ne kadar adam varsa er ve avrat geldiler. Şerif bunların enselerine ol eşek ayağıyla urdı kim burunlarından kan atılırdu, çoğunun akli giderdi.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 58.

the toilet and smears it to the priests' hair and beards. In the morning, the priests wake up, notice the feces on them, and cry out loudly. When they go to the landlord to inform him, they see that he also has feces in his face. Then they go to Şerif's room, and see that he has feces on his beard, too. They want an explanation. Saltık says:

“You denied my sainthood. Jesus Christ landed from the sky in midnight and beat me for I am with you in this city which the Devil fell from heaven. He beat me so hard that my feces leaped out, it rubbed off my kaftan. It is my story; I do not know anything about yours.”⁵⁹⁷

And they believe him. Even the *tekfur* asks: “Show me who denied your sainthood so that I will kill them all.”⁵⁹⁸ Saltık points out sixty-three innocent priests and the landlord kill them by sword. Thus, Saltık triumphs and gets back on the road. He goes to the Castle of Ebrusak and the Castle of Anguruyye and collects money from the locals with the same scheme as above. Moreover, they give him forty servants for fighting with the Turks. One day Saltık recognizes a man in the crowd named Mansur whom he already knew. Mansur is a Muslim spy living in Christian lands and sending messages to the Muslims about them. Saltık publicly orders his men to grab Mansur and makes him confess his real identity. Then he puts him in jail. Since Saltık recognizes Mansur and reveals his identity on sight, people start to believe that he is not only a servant of the Messiah, but he is the Messiah himself. At midnight, Saltık goes to jail where Mansur is kept, writing a note to his comrades informing them that the priests and the landlord are preparing for an attack into Muslim lands. He secretly releases Mansur to send the message to their comrades. In the morning, as if he knows nothing about Mansur's escape from jail, he kills many infidels for not being awake and letting Mansur flee. In the end when the Christians attack the already warned Muslims

⁵⁹⁷ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 58.

⁵⁹⁸ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 58.

they are defeated once more. In the battlefield, Saltık lets out a cry which he is famous for and still the Christians do not understand that he is in fact not the Messiah but Saltık himself. Finally, Saltık declares his real identity and the Christians flee from the battlefield.

As can be seen, the clergy is well fooled, tricked and humiliated by Saltık thanks to his extensive knowledge of the Bible and Christianity. Saltık's being in the Hagia Sophia and reciting verses from the Bible are not related to a kind of empathy, tolerance or even respect. He reads or rehearses verses from the Bible so sentimentally that his audience bursts into tears. Then, they are either killed or forcibly converted to Islam. The priests and the *tekfurs* are portrayed as people who cannot reason, even when the truth is obviously out there. Moreover, the Christians' expectations about the Messiah to come, and belief that Jesus rose to the sky -and not died as an ordinary human being- are apparently ridiculed. Saltık even benefits from those beliefs through collecting gold coins. Besides, the wine normally used in the mass rituals is pictured as an entertaining beverage for clergy consumed in the churches out of rituals. Several times in the narrative priests get drunk from drinking to excess and at the end, beaten or killed by Saltık.

Saltık often disguises himself as the Messiah as much as he disguises himself as an ordinary priest or a monk. In another striking example of teasing the Christian belief of the Messiah, Saltık introduces himself as a priest named Messiah in the Strait of Kilaspol, and requests to take a ship. Upon the suspicion of the infidel mariners, Saltık sprinkles the sand he takes out of his pocket to the sea and miraculously turns the water into land. Seeing it, the mariners admiringly ask his real identity, and Saltık answers:

“It is not surprising that the Turks slaughter you since you even are unaware of yourselves. I am the one who lives in the fourth layer of the sky, your prophet, the Messiah. Here I am, living amongst you and you even do not understand that.”⁵⁹⁹

⁵⁹⁹ “Ben ol kimseyem kim dördinci kat gökde, kim sizün peygambarunuz Mesih'dür, uş geldi içünize girdi, dahı bilmezsiniz.” Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 278.

The mariners answer: “Oh the ruler of the time! The Messiah came down to earth from the sky! He showed a miracle and turned the sea into land!”⁶⁰⁰ Then Saltık is taken to the ruler of Kilaspol, Samerriye, to meet him. Samerriye complains about “the Turks” and asks him for help and support: “Those Turks have been hurting your ummah for a long while, they kill us. Mercy upon them [your ummah]. Overcome them and wipe them off the face of the earth.”⁶⁰¹ At the end of the story, Saltık burns all the churches in the city along with their priests and kills the rest of the infidel inhabitants.⁶⁰²

Throughout *Saltıknâme*, in the short or long anecdotes where Saltık is fighting against the *Râfizîs*, the emphasis is generally on Hanafi-Sunnism of Saltık and his people. But when Saltık fights against the Christian clergy, *tekfurs* and kings, the emphasis is always on “the Turks” and Saltık’s Turk identity, not as an ethnic reference of course but as a religious, cultural, and political identity. In this sense, as we will see in the following pages of this thesis, Saltık’s own identity represents the religio-political identity of Turk-Muslims, and their superiority.

Clergy Converting to Islam

As Krstić determines, conversion of the clergy is a common theme in 15th century Ottoman narratives, especially the popular ones.⁶⁰³ In *Saltıknâme*, the Christian clergy is directly targeted by Saltık, and every story ends up proving the superiority of Islam again and again. Across the narrative many priests voluntarily convert to Islam without demanding any discussion or answers to their questions. This group either witness a miracle Saltık has

⁶⁰⁰ “Ya melik ü’z-zamân! Mesih gökyüzünden yire indi, bir mucize itdi, gösterdi, denizi kara yir itdi.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 278.

⁶⁰¹ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 278.

⁶⁰² Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 279.

⁶⁰³ Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, 68.

worked or see a divine dream calling them to the true path of God. These members of the Christian clergy function as the attestors of Saltık's sainthood and the superiority of Islam. As former enemies learned and educated men spent their years serving the Christianity, their coming over to the side of Islam and the Ottomans has special meaning and significance.

After Saltık and his *gâzis* seize the Fortress of Adrianople, a group of priests inside it are already waiting for Saltık, admitting that they all saw the Prophet Muhammad in their dreams a night before and converted to Islam.⁶⁰⁴ A few pages later, the priest Nastor, at the sight of seeing Saltık, becomes Muslim. He advises the other priests to do the same but they do not, and Saltık turns all of them into stone.⁶⁰⁵ Another "great priest" [*ulu papaz*], upon seeing Saltık in a bastion, warns the infidel warriors that "His head reaches to the clouds. Do not fight with him. He can ruin this fortress with only a kick of his one foot."⁶⁰⁶ But the infidels get angry and kill the great priest after he recites the kalima shahadah aloud."⁶⁰⁷ Saltık takes his revenge by killing all the others.

Priests, monks, and occasionally ordinary Christians convert to Islam upon witnessing Saltık's miraculous deeds such as killing a monster⁶⁰⁸ or performing five times prayer on his prayer rug on the Danube River without sinking.⁶⁰⁹ In *Saltıknâme*, there are also several cases that portray some prominent members of the clergy secretly following Islam.

⁶⁰⁴ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 263.

⁶⁰⁵ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 270.

⁶⁰⁶ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 379.

⁶⁰⁷ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 379.

⁶⁰⁸ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 514.

⁶⁰⁹ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 568.

Secretly Following Islam

In the first *menkıbe*, the Pope, along with the *tekfurs* in Anatolia, is the sworn enemy of Saltık, who is directly targeted by them. In the reign and “the caliphate of Sultan Gıyasaddîn Keyhüsrev from Âl-i Selçuk”⁶¹⁰ the Pope sends a letter to the Sultan ordering them to pay tax, get out of the lands of Rum and give up their lands until the Euphrates River to the Christian Frenks. In addition, the Pope requests that the Sultan “Send me Şerif, I will make him my page.”⁶¹¹ Here, the Pope is depicted as a political leader reigning all over Europe, insulting the Turks and representing the goals of Christian rivals of the Ottomans. In the following pages the scene is changed, and we learn that the Pope is in fact a Muslim secretly following Islam [*uğurlayın din tutmak*]. This happens again in the reign of Sultan İzzaddîn (most probably Kaykhaüs II, r. 1246-57)⁶¹² and even though it is not clear whether he is the same Pope or not, judging from the reigns of two sultans, it can be assumed that the latter Pope is different from the first.

Disguised as a priest, Saltık goes to Palestine to face the Pope who lives in a church located in the citadel of Arumay. The clergy welcomes him and gives him a room in the church where Saltık kills fourteen priests in his first night. Next morning, the Pope is informed, and he inspected the priests in the church. The Pope recognizes Saltık as soon as he sees him but says nothing and does not accuse him of anything. Then, the Pope calls for Saltık, discloses that he knows his identity and takes him to his private chamber. He uncovers a trapdoor underneath his throne and going down a ladder, they reach the Pope’s most private room where his vizier is waiting for them. The Pope and his vizier admit that they secretly believe Islam, just as all their forerunner colleagues since the caliphate of Umar (d. 644). They perform *namaz* and recite verses from Quran together. Saltık asks:

⁶¹⁰ This is probably Kaykhusraw II, reign 1237-47. “Ol zaman Al-i Selçuk’dan hilafetde Sultan Gıyasüddin Keyhüsrev idi.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltuknâme*, 46.

⁶¹¹ “Ol Şerif’i bana gönder iç oğlanı edeyim.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltuknâme*, 47.

⁶¹² Yüce, *Saltuknâme’de*, 112-3.

“Since you are a Muslim from the beginning why did you recruit infidel armies and attack us? What is your reason?

The Pope said:

-[If I would do that] The infidels will assault me.”⁶¹³

Fleischer says that converting the Pope to Islam was one of the apocalyptic expectations in the reign of Süleyman I.⁶¹⁴ However according to this anecdote, the Pope was already a Muslim. Furthermore, all the popes before him since the times of Caliph Umar were Muslims. Thus, it must be an addition to the text done after Süleyman I’s reign at a time “when it became clear that neither side could decisively defeat the other or its respective internal “others”⁶¹⁵ namely after the 1550s. Because the expectation of converting the Pope gave its place to the claim that ‘The Pope is a hidden Muslim like all the others before him.’ A few years later, fighting against the infidel Christians, another Pope [Felyon] ⁶¹⁶ confronts Saltık ordering his soldiers to catch him. Saltık asks:

“- Oh Felyon! Don’t you secretly follow Islam just like the felyon before you?

Felyon said:

- Yes, I also secretly follow Islam just like the previous felyons. [But] You created this trouble. You denied al-Khidr and killed his accepted ally Nestor.”⁶¹⁷

Thus, this information that the popes secretly followed Islam was affirmed once more towards the end of the narrative. In the same pages, we see that previously a devoted Christian and an enemy of Saltık and Islam, the Ruler of Üngürüs Kaydahan also became a hidden Muslim. She is solicited and asked for her army by the Christian kings, but she

⁶¹³ “Çün sen kadimden Müslüman olasın, ya niçün girü leşker çeküp bunca kafir leşkerin divşürüp bizüm üstümüze geldün, sebep nedir? Pap eyitdi: -Kafirler bana gülüvv iderler.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 91.

⁶¹⁴ Fleischer, “A Mediterranean Apocalypse,” 62, 63.

⁶¹⁵ Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, 14.

⁶¹⁶ In *Saltıknâme* various popes are mentioned with only the words of “Pope” and “Felyon”. Obviously there are more than one person but their names do not exist in the text. In the following pages, another Pope will be mentioned as a hidden Muslim, and apparently they are different popes.

⁶¹⁷ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 572.

refuses. Then Kaydahan is asked “Are you afraid? That is to say, did you become a Turk?”⁶¹⁸

Kaydahan sets forth the excuse that she agreed on ceasefire with Saltık but the real reason was her “secretly following Islam.”⁶¹⁹

“Bahs”: Overcoming the Christians by Knowledge

Krstić notes that “every episode of carnage or mass conversion of the priests in the account is preceded by a form of contest or debate that demonstrates Saltık's superiority over his archfoes.”⁶²⁰ Indeed, Saltık does not defeat the Christians only through his physical power, cunning mind, and expertise on martial arts but also with his vast knowledge (*ilm*) and his skillfulness in debates. As the representative of the Turks and Islam, Saltık proves his intellectual superiority again and again over the Christians. Thus, he does not only vanquish the Christian clergy and ruler but also Christianity as a religious and political identity.

In the relevant anecdotes, two words are especially noteworthy since both are originally the terms of logic: *bahs* and *istidlâl*. “Bahs” (debate, discussion) means analyzing the relationship between a thesis and anti-thesis during a debate or research with the purpose of discovering the truth.⁶²¹ “İstidlâl” (deduce, reasoning) was mostly used for showing the evidence to prove an argument in a debate.⁶²² In an anecdote, Saltık arrives at a church with a population of forty thousand priests in Sevad Island, somewhere on the Anatolian coasts. He introduces himself as a priest coming from Jerusalem and going to Constantinople. The elderly leader of the church offers him to debate on religious matters, and Saltık, owing to

⁶¹⁸ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 582.

⁶¹⁹ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 582.

⁶²⁰ Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, 68.

⁶²¹ Mustafa Çağrı, “Bahis,” in *İslam Ansiklopedisi* 4 (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1991): 487-8.

⁶²² Abdulkuddüs Bingöl, “İstidlâl,” in *İslam Ansiklopedisi* 23 (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2001): 323.

his deep knowledge, “over smarted all of them”⁶²³ once more. After defeating even the oldest, and therefore the most well-informed priest amongst them, Saltık kill them all and sets the church on fire. Then, he sails for Marulvan Island and in a big church he again conducts religious and intellectual discussions with the priests. He surpasses and disgraces them all once more.⁶²⁴ However this time, one of them recognizes Saltık’s real identity, and orders the priests to kill him. But the priests object to this and claim that Saltık is the Messiah even he does not claim to be: “He is the Messiah came down to earth from the sky, he can never be Saltık.”⁶²⁵ Saltık secretly kills the wise priest and throws his body to the sea. Then he goes back to the city, completely burns it, and kills all the other priests.⁶²⁶

Travelling for four days, Saltık reaches another infidel city claiming that the Messiah sent him to arrive at Constantinople since “the ummah of the Messiah became powerless because of the Turks.”⁶²⁷ Thus the infidels welcome Saltık, take him to the citadel, and give a feast in his honor. But in the night, Saltık burns all the houses, and inhabitants of the city, and ruins the citadel.⁶²⁸ Then, Saltık meets a priest called Şemun who is an expert on history in a city named Bodan. “They discussed [*bahs kıldılar*]. Şemun was routed and saw reason and converted to Islam. He did not inform the infidels about his conversion. No one knew that he secretly followed Islam.”⁶²⁹

Removing the “Truth” from the Bible

Saltık’s extensive knowledge involves the greatest truth which the Christian clergy purposely cover: the divine information about Muhammad that he was the last prophet. As

⁶²³ “...cümlesin mat kıldı.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 422.

⁶²⁴ “Ruhbanlar bir niçe gün bahs kıldı. Cümlesin yenüp rüsvay kıldı.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 423.

⁶²⁵ “Bu gökden gelmiş Mesih kendüdür, haşa bu Saltık ola. Bu başından ayağa değin nür-ı Mesih kendüdür, didiler.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 423.

⁶²⁶ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 423.

⁶²⁷ “Mesih ümmeti bu Türkler elinde zebun olmuş.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 424.

⁶²⁸ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 424.

⁶²⁹ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 426.

Krstić shows, it is an “interconfessional polemical encounter” and its first written example in Ottoman history has the same claim. Accordingly, the bishop of Thessaloniki Gregory Palamas (d. 1359) was told by a Muslim that “Christians intentionally removed the evidence of Muhammad's coming from the Gospels.”⁶³⁰ In *Saltıknâme*, this “truth” reveals itself in long debates (*bahs*) with the clergy. Namely, the concept of *bahs* also covers those polemics. In the first volume of the text, this matter becomes a current issue. Saltık, disguised as a priest, asks the clergy:

- Oh monks! I have a question for you, answer me correctly.
- Ask it.
- In the Bible, the almighty God said that a supreme prophet named Arakin will emerge after the Messiah. He will be the superior [prophet] over all his forerunners. There will be no other prophet after him. He has the light [of God]. I ask you, why don't you read this part [and inform your community] in the Bible when you arrive that point? Why do you deny him?⁶³¹

One of them answers:

- He is Muhammad, and he was sent as a prophet to the Turks, not us.
- Şerif said:
- Did God order in the Bible that you should not read his name? And why do you think that Muhammad was sent for the Turks?
- No, it is not God, it is our religious leaders who bequeathed us to do that.
- I do not accept anything did not exist in the Bible, I follow the Bible's words.
- If we do that we will have to obey the Turks, and convert to their religion.⁶³²

Then Saltık reveals his identity, invites them to Islam, and kills the hundreds who do not convert. In a following anecdote, a priest serving a Christian leader named Cibran, upon holding a short conversation with Saltık admits that he has previously seen the depictions of Muhammad in the Torah, Bible and Psalm and so he too converts to Islam. This priest died

⁶³⁰ Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, 8.

⁶³¹ “İncil’de Hak ta’ala demiş kim Mesih’den sonra bir Arakin adlı bir ulu peygamber gele, ol cemi’sinün ulusu ola. Artık andan sonra nebi gelmeye ol sahib-i nur ola. Sizlerden soraram, haber virünüz kim İncil’den niçün ol yire gelicek okumazsınız inkar edersiz?” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 77.

⁶³² “Ol Muhammed’dür kim Türklere peygamber gelmişdür, bize degüldür.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 77.

fighting with Cibran who did not assent to being converted.⁶³³ As can be seen, this “truth” is a matter of politics for the clergy, not a religious one. Thus, the Christian clergy is portrayed as a group sacrificing this divine truth for the sake of politics, as to covert one becomes a “Turk” and must obey the Turks.

One of the many examples of Saltık’s discussing with the clergy on religious matters is a long and detailed conversation between him and a priest named Safbal on why Christianity is an invalid religion. Saltık asks: “- Oh priest! Why do you do that? You put yourselves at great risk through [believing] a void religion and a nullified book.”⁶³⁴ The priest asks Saltık to explain why the Bible is nullified. Saltık simply says that the Torah, Psalm and Bible were all falsified by certain men. Then the priest says that Yazid ibn Muaviye also falsified the Quran by removing some truth about Ali ibn Abi Talib. Saltık accepts it, however he argues that Ebul Müslîm-i Mervî (Ebu Müslîm-i Horasanî) worked things right, finding out the “authentic Quran”⁶³⁵ consisted of thirty fascicles which Ali ibn Abi Talib read and approved. But the discussion is not finished. Another priest in the meeting asks Saltık how he is so sure that Islam will never be distorted. Saltık replies that “The Almighty God promised his prophet that Islam will exist and be permanent until the apocalypse.”⁶³⁶ As long as the Muslims continue to make *gazâs* and fulfill the religious services, God would be keep his promise. Despite this unsatisfying answer, Safbal the priest is convinced and converts to Islam.

⁶³³ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 221.

⁶³⁴ “Bâtıl dinle ve mensuh kitab ıla kendünüzü tehlikeye salarsız.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 467.

⁶³⁵ “sahih mushaf” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 468.

⁶³⁶ “Hak taala ahd itdi Resuluna kim kıyamete dek kaim ve daim ola.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 468.

Apocalyptic Figures, Fears, and Prophecies

Saltıknâme's 1591 edition is a rewritten text which entirely reflects the apocalyptic fears circulating in the 16th century Mediterranean lands. It also includes responses to those fears in the form of relieving and heartening messages given by the leading personalities of Islam. Along with the Devil-Dajjal, primary apocalyptic figures, and the signs of the Last Days, al-Khidr, Messiah, Dabba, Blonde People (*Ben-i asfer*), Gog and Magog, and Mahdi were mentioned in *Saltıknâme* for several times. Fleischer summarizes the shared fears felt by the Jews, Christians, and Muslims in this period as such:

the appearance from the east of the Antichrist (*Dajjāl*), the messiah of the Jews who will have combat with the prophet Khidr-Elijah; the descent of Jesus, who slays the Antichrist, takes a wife, and as a Muslim enjoys, together with the *Mahdī* who appears from the west, a forty-year millennial reign; the arrival of the Beast from the Land, bearing the Seal of Solomon and announcing the End; the emergence of Gog and Magog; and the eschatological function of the Turks and Tatars as the Scourge of God.⁶³⁷

In *Saltıknâme*, al-Khidr is already on earth helping the Muslims, the Devil-Dajjal has emerged as the perverter of the *Râfizîs*, the Christian expectation of the Messiah to come and save them from the Turks is ridiculed, the Turks behave and are regarded as if they are the Scourge of God, Saltık threatens Gog and Magog not to climb over the Gates of Alexander and Mahdi has not come yet.

The Messiah and the Devil

Compared to the anecdotes about the *Râfizîs*, the Devil is mentioned less in the anecdotes relevant to the Christian rivals, and he is not the initial hatemonger between the Christians and the Muslims. In all these examples, the Devil disguises himself as the Messiah and encourages the Christian clergy to attack to the Muslims. In one of them, the Patriarch

⁶³⁷ Fleischer, "A Mediterranean Apocalypse," 46.

of Constantinople's son explains why Jesus does not come down from the sky just to communicate with the clergy and necessarily support the Byzantine Christians. The Patriarch claims that:

- Jesus came down for me and said that that Turk [Saltık] will die in your hands. Why do I have to fear him? Now go!
- His son said:
- Father, Jesus does not secretly come down from the sky, He will apparently do that when the time comes. The one who secretly came to you is the Devil. The Devil misguided you, he is the enemy of the Turk. [But] Jesus is a friend of him. Why should Jesus be an enemy of him? Jesus is an Arab, not a Rûmî [Anatolian]. So, why should Jesus disregard his kind and help you? ⁶³⁸

In another example, the Devil, disguised as the Messiah deceives the priest Nestur and orders him to attack Saltık and the Turks⁶³⁹, however this attempt fails. In the whole text, Jesus, the Bible, and the Messiah are often mentioned and none of these are rejected or negatively portrayed. But every mention directly serves to glorify Islam and the Muslims. Although Jesus, the Bible, and the Messiah are embraced by the Christians, contrary to their beliefs, these all support Islam in one way or another.

al-Khidr: Divinely and Militarily Support

Amongst all the apocalyptic figures in the text, al-Khidr is most frequently named as the primary companion of Saltık with "his brother İlyas."⁶⁴⁰ First of all, Saltık's "blessed and honorable name"⁶⁴¹ is Khidr. He is bestowed sainthood, always protected and accompanied by al-Khidr, and taught by him on various aspects. al-Khidr is a prominent character, respected by the whole Muslim world and can be seen in numerous narratives from the late Medieval period. On the other hand, in eschatological texts and prophecies of the 15th and 16th centuries, al-Khidr's appearance was regarded as one of the signs of the Last Days to

⁶³⁸ "İsa Arabdandır, Rumî degüldür kim cinstün koyup size yardım ide." Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 466.

⁶³⁹ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 569.

⁶⁴⁰ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 169.

⁶⁴¹ "İsm-i şerîfleri Hızır'dur," Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 37.

come.⁶⁴² Moreover, al-Khidr, as a high Islamic character, added to the narratives about Süleyman I and Murad III. The Ottoman writer Levhî wrote around 1529 in his *Cihâdnâme-i Sultan Süleyman* that “the sultan was taught by Hızır.”⁶⁴³ Another text suggested that “Suleyman is accompanied by the hidden saints, is a witness to or part of prodigies, is the pupil of the prophet-saint Hızır (al-Khidr), and communes directly with God.”⁶⁴⁴ As for Murad III, in his dream letters written as a form of self-fashioning, he depicted himself as al-Khidr, a higher position than being the *kutbu’l aktâb*.⁶⁴⁵

As a text bearing many traces from the reign of Süleyman I, copied during Murad III’s time, and taking into consideration his functions in the narrative, al-Khidr’s playing an important role in *Saltıknâme* can be linked directly to the apocalyptic atmosphere of its period. One of the most important roles al-Khidr plays in *Saltıknâme* is teaching Saltık on how to use a musket (*tüfeng*) to kill the future Last Roman Empire who would otherwise recruit an army of Blonde People and defeat the Muslims.

Blonde People (Ben-i Asfar) and the Last Emperor

The prophecy of Blonde People is first mentioned in *Saltıknâme* in the form of a letter written by the Pope to the *tekmur* of Rum. The *tekmur*, taking advantage of Saltık’s absence - who was bewitched by a Jewish magician and lost his mind- wants to make an alliance to attack the Turks. But the Pope warns him:

We cannot be victorious against the Turks. I saw the Messiah in my dream, he said to me that ‘Make peace with the Turks until the time when a man rises amongst you, a blonde man with green eyes and ugly appearance, has bad breath and leprosy. He will appear beyond Rus [lands]. He is descended from Salsal. You can see the star of Mars in the sky, it is red-hot. It sometimes rises in the east and sometimes in the west. It wanders [in the sky]. Nowadays, this star helps the Turks, and swings its sword around you. When the time comes, it will

⁶⁴² Fleischer, “A Mediterranean Apocalypse,” 63, 64. Fleischer, “The Lawgiver,” 165.

⁶⁴³ Fleischer, “The Lawgiver,” 168.

⁶⁴⁴ Fleischer, “A Mediterranean Apocalypse,” 67.

⁶⁴⁵ Felek, “(Re)creating,” 261.

help him [the blonde man]. He will overcome the Turks and kill them. If you attack before he rises, each and every Turk becomes a Saltık on their own.⁶⁴⁶

The *tekfur* bursts into tears as if he was a child, and cries out that “The Turks will kill us all until then.”⁶⁴⁷ As Fleischer shows, the prophecy of Blonde (or Yellow) People, *Ben-i Asfar*, was widely known and believed in the 16th century Ottoman Istanbul. Guillaume Postel, a French diplomat who came to Istanbul in 1535 with the first ambassador Jean de la Forest, witnessed even an Ottoman vizier explaining this prophecy with reference to a book, *Miftah al-jafr al-jami* (The Key) by al-Bistâmî (d. 1454), a popular and respected text read also in the Ottoman court. Accordingly, when the Last Days come *Ben-i Asfar* would help to the Last Roman (or World) Emperor “reconquest of the Christian lands from the Muslims, who would destroy the Ottoman dominion.”⁶⁴⁸ Postel recorded that this prophecy was taken seriously by the Turks and understood to refer to the Franks, namely the Gauls:

The Turks accord special authority, nearly as much as they give to their Koran, to a book of prophecies in which it is explicitly written that the prince and people of yellow color shall destroy the Turks as well as the other Ismaelites or Muhammedics, who are vulgarly called Muhammadans. From this evidence one can well believe that the Turks go to the greatest possible lengths to conceal the said prophecy from foreigners.⁶⁴⁹

However, contrary to this prophecy’s Christian versions, al-Bistâmî interpreted the Last Emperor’s identity as being a member of the Ottoman dynasty who would take the throne in the tenth century of Islam. However, in *Saltıknâme*, it is the Christian version of the prophecy that Saltık prevents from coming true.

Somewhere around Danube, Saltık comes together with Tatar Khan and his *gâzis* in a feast. Khan shares the information his spies provided with Saltık. It is about Queen

⁶⁴⁶ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 69.

⁶⁴⁷ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 69.

⁶⁴⁸ Fleischer, “A Mediterranean Apocalypse,” 23.

⁶⁴⁹ Fleischer, “A Mediterranean,” 24.

Kaydahan and her plans to organize with the Christian kings. They have decided to awaken the last descendant of Salsal ibni Dal, the only man who can lead an army of Ben-i Asfer (blonde people) warriors against the Turks, be victorious, take the lead and seize land from the Turks till the Euphrates River. A priest tells the prophecy: “He lives in a dome built in [the lands of] *Alaman*. When the time comes, he will presage it, step out of the dome, and rise. He is the one who will kill all the Turks.”⁶⁵⁰ Hearing this, Saltık starts out and reaches a city named Sameriyye, populated by the Jews, and finds the dome. Since the dome has no door or window, Saltık carves a whole to enter through. He sees a plaque made by the builder of the dome, a man descends from Seylaf, saying that he invented a cannon and a musket which can be found inside the dome. And he follows:

I sensed through my knowledge that at the end of the world, a good and righteous people will come, they will use them as weapons, destroy the enemies of Islam, and produce [these weapons]. More than ten thousand of them will fire these weapons at the same time. They will easily do its science. I invented them but could not use them properly. The length of the musket is four hand spans and seven fingers. It had one thousand bullets and placed in a bag made of iron.⁶⁵¹

Reading this, Saltık tries to use the musket but he cannot. Suddenly al-Khidr shows up and demonstrates how to use it. Then al-Khidr makes his prophecy: “My son Saltık! This iron weapon will spread all over the Muslim world in the future. The infidels will be perished thanks to this invention. It will strengthen Islam.”⁶⁵² Educated on usage of the musket, Saltık finds the place where Kaydahan, and the man got out of the dome named Dan and kills him with the musket. Thus, Dan the Last Emperor is killed as soon as he is born, and another hope of the Christian rivals is lost.

⁶⁵⁰ “Alaman’da bir kubbe yapmışlardır, anın içinde oturur, vakti geldiği vakti anlara malum olur dahı ol kubbeden çıkar huruc eyler. Bu Türkleri hep ol kırsardur.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 354.

⁶⁵¹ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 355.

⁶⁵² Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 355.

Ágoston notes that firearms were being used by the Ottomans starting from the 1380s, nearly a century after Saltık's possible death, and they used them against Byzantines, Venetians, and Hungarians. However, one of the most "stunning example of the efficacy of Ottoman firepower was the Battle of Chaldiran"⁶⁵³ in 1514. In this battle, unlike the Ottomans, the Safavids did not have any firearms, and they were defeated. The military superiority of the Ottomans was intricately linked with those firearms. Thus, insertion of a firearm in this anecdote linked with al-Khidr and his prophecy against the 16th century Christian rivals of the Ottomans can be read as another claim of being superior both as a military power and as a religio-political identity supported by divine powers.

al-Khidr's military aid was not limited to teaching to use weapons. He also fights in the wars with Saltık, Osman I, and Umur Gâzi.⁶⁵⁴ Moreover, al-Khidr heralds Osman the fate God designed for him and for his dynasty: "Go on oh gâzi! The Almighty God endowed [to establish] a state to you and your lineage. This land(s) [of Rum] will be yours."⁶⁵⁵

The thirteenth *menkıbe* of the third volume of *Saltıknâme* is entirely inspired by the prophecy of Ben-i Asfar beginning with its title: The Story about the Battle of Asfaryan (the people from the lands of Asfar) and The Great Gaza that Şerif Made.⁶⁵⁶ In this *menkıbe*, Kaydahan is mentioned as "Kaydahan-ı Asfari", Kaydahan from the lands of Asfar, and the ruler of its people. Seemingly, the word "Asfar" here is used for various Christian rivals in Europe, and Kaydahan represents the ruler reigning over all of them since the Devil disguised as a priest comes to her and says:

⁶⁵³ Gábor Ágoston, "Fıranğı, Zarbzân, and Rum Dasturi: The Ottomans And The Diffusion Of Firearms in Asia," in *Şerefe, Studies in Honour of Prof. Géza Dávid*, eds. Pal Fodor, Nandor E. Kovacs, Benedek Peri (Budapest: Research Centre for the Humanities, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 2019): 90.

⁶⁵⁴ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 556.

⁶⁵⁵ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 557.

⁶⁵⁶ Kısas-ı Ceng-i Asfaryân Bâ Şerif Gazâ-yı Ekber Şod, 546.

“There is no other ruler as powerful as you. Why do you sit back and watch those Turks, and do not make effort for your religion? (...) Go and kill those Turks, attack to Şerif since divine support reached us.”⁶⁵⁷

Upon hearing the, Kaydahan charges her brother Yanko to recruit a great army. Yanko goes to Budin, and recruits Magyar, Czech, Polish, and Russian soldiers. “Forty eight thousands of infidel warriors having entrenched armors were recruited only from Üngürüs where its people are Asfarî.”⁶⁵⁸ Saltık, on receiving the news of this from the ruler of Walachia, declares mobilization and establishes an army.⁶⁵⁹ The war that breaks out is the greatest of all in the narrative. The Muslims fight against an army of around three hundred thousand for a long while. Many of them are martyred or wounded. It is such a fierce and compelling war that growing impatient “Kaydahan wore a long golden crown on her head and girds on a silvery belt”⁶⁶⁰ decrying that her army would not withdraw unless they win. The Tartar Khan is captured but the Muslims achieve victory. Kaydahan leaves the battlefield with her army. Sinking into despair, Yanko runs for the hills in “The Citadel of the Messiah’s Crown. Whoever infidel ruler wears this crown, all the infidels regard him as their head ruler and glorify him.”⁶⁶¹ Saltık makes towards Buda in Hungary, “the capital of Asfar,”⁶⁶² plundering “the great cities of Üngürüs such as Rumas, Yakol and Raton”⁶⁶³ in order to catch Yanko. Finally, Saltık conquers Buda, and all the Christian rulers agree to paying taxes to the Muslims. “The Devil immediately absconds and gets lost. He did not disguise again. He

⁶⁵⁷ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 546.

⁶⁵⁸ “Yalunuz Üngürüs, kim Asfaridür, andan kırk sekiz bin polad-puş kâfir çerisi dirildiler.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 546.

⁶⁵⁹ “Server nefîr-i âmm çağırdup Müslümanlar cem oldılar.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 547.

⁶⁶⁰ “...başına bir uzun altunlu tac giyüp, biline bir sim kemer kuşanup” 547.

⁶⁶¹ “Adına Kala-i Tâc-ı Mesih dirlerdi. Her kangı kâfir begi anı geyse cemi kafirler anı kendülere baş idünüp ulularlardı.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 549.

⁶⁶² “kim tahtgâh-ı Asfar oldur.” 550.

⁶⁶³ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 549.

had no staying power for spoiling. He remained beguiled and destitute till the end of the time.”⁶⁶⁴

Defense of İlm-i Reml

Recent studies on Ottoman interest in the occult sciences reveal that *ilm-i reml* (geomancy) was used by 16th century sultans including Bayezid II, Selim I and Süleyman I and maintained its prestigious position in the reign of Murad III.⁶⁶⁵ An anecdote in *Saltıknâme* can be seen as another reflection of the 16th century’s apocalyptic atmosphere to the text, and also a proof of the rivalry between the prophecies. It concerns a Christian prophet challenging the Islamic/Ottoman geomancers and accusing them of telling lies. While Saltık is chasing after the priest Bihrus who has been fleeing to the land of Milan Frenk (somewhere in Europe I think), an interesting scene occurs: A man called Manol the priest, sitting on a throne placed on a great tree in front of a church, has been making prophecies to the people around him.⁶⁶⁶ As Saltık nears, Manol recognizes him despite Saltık disguising himself, and asks:

- Oh, the Turk magician! So, you the Muslims have those geomancers, they palaver but can foresee nothing true. Now, look at me and see how I can foretell the future.

Flaming up Server said:

- You damned! They make geomancy by adducing evidence; they tell fortunes by casting lots based on prosperous books. They make geomancy to notify the people on good and bad news. Their words based on science. They aim to foretell about righteousness and depravement. They do not make [absolute] prophecies. They do not claim that they are telling the [absolute] truth. The science of physic, the science of oneiromancy and geomancy are done through adducing evidence. Whoever claims to tell the [absolute] truth, he/she becomes an infidel.⁶⁶⁷

⁶⁶⁴ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 550.

⁶⁶⁵ Ahmet Tunç Şen, “Practicing Astral Magic in Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Istanbul A Treatise on Talismans Attributed to Ibn Kemal (d. 1534),” *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* (Spring 2017): 67.

⁶⁶⁶ “...ol halka gayibane sözler söyler kehanetle.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 497.

⁶⁶⁷ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 497-8.

The discussion goes on, and Manol continues to insult Islamic geomancy. Saltık says that “It is the science of the prophets, what you do is evil”⁶⁶⁸ and kills Manol at the end. Here, apart from Manol’s accusation the Islamic geomancy is the telling of lies, Saltık’s sorting oneiromancy and geomancy out with the medical science is also noteworthy. The Venetian diplomat Ramberti recorded in 1534 that “the Turks were much given to belief in astrology, magic, and the interpretation of dreams.”⁶⁶⁹ Thus, it is also a defense of oneiromancy, and gives hints about the function of dreams in *Saltıknâme* as a legitimizing tool.

Red Apple and the Mahdi

“Red Apple” (Kızıl Elma) is another apocalyptic element mentioned in *Saltıknâme*. It is “a metaphor from popular Turkish prophecies that signifies the last Ottoman earthly conquest to be followed by the Day of Judgment.”⁶⁷⁰ It was generally understood as the conquest of Rome in the 16th century, and its conqueror would be the ruler of Rum.⁶⁷¹ In *Saltıknâme*, just like the prophecy of Blonde People, the concept of Red Apple is associated with the lands of *Alaman* and “Üngürüs”, another name used for Red Apple in various narratives.⁶⁷² After being exposed to an attack by a Christian league, Saltık and his *gâzis* chase after some Christian rulers to the lands of *Alaman* and Üngürüs. As soon as he steps into the city Saltık sees a great church and a golden ball atop its dome. “It was a picture of an apple made of red golden.”⁶⁷³ Saltık asks: “What is it? They said: It is called Red Apple.”⁶⁷⁴ Then, they all enter into the church and plunder its treasures. Saltık sees a wand hanging from inside the ceiling of the dome, an armor, and a crown. When he tries to get the

⁶⁶⁸ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 498.

⁶⁶⁹ Fleischer, “A Mediterranean,” 21.

⁶⁷⁰ Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, 112.

⁶⁷¹ Fleischer, “A Mediterranean Apocalypse,” 46.

⁶⁷² Orhan Şaik Gökyay, “Kızılalma”, in *İslam Ansiklopedisi* 25 (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2002): 559-61.

⁶⁷³ “...kızıl altundan bir alma resminde idi.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 135.

⁶⁷⁴ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 135.

wand, a voice comes out of nowhere saying “Do not touch them!”⁶⁷⁵ Suddenly, Saltık notices a marble plaque with the following words embossed upon it:

“I am Baht-ı Nasr. I set Jerusalem on fire and brought its treasures to here. Those oil lamps are from the Holy Jerusalem. This wand belongs to Moses, the armor belongs to David, and the crown belongs to Jesus.”⁶⁷⁶

Thereafter, Saltık orders everyone to get out of the church, and locks its door. However, he wants to bring down the picture of the golden apple. He orders the soldiers to climb over the dome to take it. But:

“Immediately, al-Khidr shows up and greets him:

- Oh Şerif! You have no permission to bring it down. Twelve caliphs will come from the Muhammad’s ummah, and the tenth caliph will bring it down.”⁶⁷⁷

After briefly summarizing the previous caliphs, al-Khidr says that “The twelfth caliph will be the Mahdi, al-Khidr said, and he was lost.”⁶⁷⁸ The narrative ends at this point and no further information is provided. If we regard the caliph as the Ottoman sultan, the tenth of them was Süleyman I, and twelfth was Murad III. However, since there is no other hint or obvious allusion in the text, it can only be assumed that the reference to the tenth caliph may have been a trace of the prophecy about Süleyman I’s conquering of Rome, and the prediction regarding the twelfth caliph may be a traditional but weak attribution to the current sultan of the time in which the 1591 edition of *Saltıknâme* was copied.

Another mention of the Red Apple takes places towards the end of the text. After Saltık’s death, Sultan Murad I (1362-89) sees the Prophet Muhammad in his dream ordering to conquest Adrianople. Muhammad says “Moving from there [Adrianople] your lineage

⁶⁷⁵ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 135.

⁶⁷⁶ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 135.

⁶⁷⁷ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 135.

⁶⁷⁸ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 135.

will conquer Red Apple. Then, all the world will obey you.”⁶⁷⁹ This brief reference is typical of 16th century apocalyptic expectations and the prophecy that world domination would be established through the conquest of Red Apple, and that this should be heralded by the Prophet in a dream.

The last obvious reference to the Mahdi is linked with Adrianople, just as in the previous prophecy about the Red Apple. Saltık visits Adrianople with his friends and arrives at a mountain made of rock. His companions inform Saltık that the throne of Prophet Solomon was set there in ancient times, and his treasures were “buried underground sealed with magic. No one knows where they are.”⁶⁸⁰ Saltık’s answer is in the form of a prophecy: “Finding it will be easy for the deserver. Whoever will be vouchsafed to discover it, [it means that] he is the Mahdi, the Lord of the Time.”⁶⁸¹

Turks: Existent and Victorious until the Last Days

The apocalyptic atmosphere covering the anecdotes about Christian rivals in *Saltıknâme* is always followed and thus completed by soothing and encouraging messages on the goodness of the Turks. In this sense, Saltık symbolizes the religio-political superior identity of the Turks who has divine support, physical power and godly promises on eternal existence and victory.

Saltık also symbolizes the fate of the Turks as their protector, who was prophesied even in the books of the infidels, although they always accuse him of being a magician or a witch to deny his sainthood and legitimacy. Whenever he is absent in the lands of Rum because he is ill, fighting or settling in remote lands, the Christian clergy allied with the

⁶⁷⁹ “...andan yürüyüp kızıl almayı dahı siz neslünüz feth eyleye. Âlem size müsahhar ola, didi.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 476.

⁶⁸⁰ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 458.

⁶⁸¹ “Ehle âsâundur. Anun bulması nasib kime oldıysa ya Mehdi sâhib-i zamanundur.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 458.

Christian rulers start a war against the Turks. Upon receiving news of this Saltık mostly returns to Rum, always inciting an invisible army consisting of ghostly divine creatures to assist the Turks.

The Invisible Army

This invisible army was described by the geomancer Haydar “whose annual prognostications were apparently kept in the Privy Chamber.”⁶⁸² Haydar was portraying the Süleyman I as *sâhib-qıran* (world conqueror), *sâhib-zaman* (master of the age) and *qutb al-aqtab* (pole of poles) of the Last Age. He also assured the sultan that he was supported by all the divine creatures:

Furthermore, all holy creatures—angels, prophets, saints, jinn, and the Hidden Saints— are constantly at your side and praying for you. The proof of this is that in times of trouble your prayers are immediately answered; and the invisible army has been with you in most of your battles.⁶⁸³

This invisible army is also well known by some Christians and they warn their coreligionists about it. For example, Saltık settles in and around Abyssinia for two years making *gazâs*, and thus does not appear in the lands of Rum. Taking advantage of his absence, the *tekfur* of Istanbul calls for war against the Turks in the Christian world: “Let’s recruit armies, kill the Turks in the lands of Rum, and re-convert people to Christianity.”⁶⁸⁴ Such a call represents a summary of the Christians’ ultimate aim. In another instance it is repeated by the ruler of Morea Island, named Diranikir, who explains his desire to: “exile the Turks from the lands of Rum, and re-convert the people to Christianity.”⁶⁸⁵ A ruler living around Morea named Cinas whose sister was abducted and married by Saltık also undertakes to organize an attack

⁶⁸² Fleischer, “A Mediterranean Apocalypse,” 69.

⁶⁸³ Fleischer, “A Mediterranean Apocalypse,” 70.

⁶⁸⁴ “Gelün leşker direlüm, bu Rum’da olan Türkleri kıralum, âlemi girü Hıristiyan idelüm.” Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 176.

⁶⁸⁵ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 514.

while Saltık is said to be dead. Cinas' final aim is "killing the Turks, exiling the rest of them from the lands of Rum."⁶⁸⁶

In the resumption of the anecdote, the *tekfur*'s vizier and a priest Hamun warn him about the noble and warlike lineage of Saltık, and the divine support that the Turks received: "You should know that the angels come down from the sky to help the Turks. Their God helps them."⁶⁸⁷ Thus, both a member of the clergy and ruling class confirms one of *Saltıknâme*'s most important messages, that the Turks are favored by God. The vizier-priest mentions an array of warrior-heroes from Ebu Müslim to Saltık, and describes them as the protectors of the Rum:

The djinnis used to come from Mount Kaf to help them [Muhammad and his armies]. No one has ever defeated them [the Muslims]. It is better to stay silent. Because Şerif is descended from the Prophet, he is the son of Hüseyin Gâzi. Since they are descended from the Prophet you should avoid them so that you can prevent yourselves to get into trouble.⁶⁸⁸

The *tekfur* of Istanbul hesitates. In the night, he has a strange dream in which "a bird bigger than a camel settled on his palace, the palace wracked, flames spewed out from the bird's mouth. The *tekfur* was scared half to death."⁶⁸⁹ The *tekfur*'s amirs interpret his dream with his mentioning of Saltık's name a day before. The *tekfur*'s response is: "If it is true, then Saltık is a saint, not a magician."⁶⁹⁰ Prominent Christians admitting the sainthood and/or rightfulness of Saltık is a repeated motif in the text, strengthening the claims of Saltık and thus the Turks. As for Saltık's reaction to the news, it is one of the main messages for

⁶⁸⁶ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 542.

⁶⁸⁷ "Bilmiş ol kim bu Türklere gök yüzinden yardıma melekler gelür. Tangrıları anlara yardım ider." Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 176

⁶⁸⁸ "Bunlara Kaf dağından cinniler gelüp gelüp yardım iderlerdi. Hiç kimse bunlara galib olmamışdır. Epsem olmak yigrekdür. Zira bu Şerif dahı anun nesli, Hüseyin Gazi'nün oğlıdur. Muhammed neslidür ki sakınun, ta kim girü bir belaya giriftar olmaya." Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 176.

⁶⁸⁹ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 177.

⁶⁹⁰ "Bu eğer böyle ise ol kişi veli imiş, sahir degül imiş." Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 177.

Saltıknâme's audience. When he learns of the *tekfur*'s attempt through a letter sent to him, he says aloud:

“There are such men in the army of Islam that when they ride their horses to attack, they can make you forget thousands of Şerif. They settle in some place, and sustainably worship to God. I serve [to Islam by fighting] on behalf of them. Islam is not exclusive to me.”⁶⁹¹

In his responsive letter, Saltık underlines the foreverness of Islam's superiority: “Oh *tekfur*! There are numerous watchers of Islam. The weakest of them can make you forget about me. They will exist until the Last Days.”⁶⁹² Receiving and reading this letter, a priest advises the *tekfur* to give up his plan and says that the Turks will exist and rule until the time when the Messiah comes down to earth from the sky. Thereupon the *tekfur* gives up his plan, deciding to make peace with the Turks and pay taxes to them.

Soon afterwards, the *tekfur* takes another chance, this time allying with the Pope, and Saltık, after repulsing it, gives the same message with his letters sent to his enemies:

Even if I would not come back to the lands of Rum for ten years, its dwelling Muslims will not afraid of you. Because I ordered four djinni padishahs that: Whenever those infidels attack to the Muslims, come to the help of them. They made a deal with me. They will help the Muslims to tie your hands to kill you until the Doomsday.⁶⁹³

A great number of the invisible army are the Sunni djinnis. In an anecdote, we see one of them helping Ayas Gâzi, upon learning he was in danger from al-Khidr, while he is about to die. This is the brother of Menüçehr, the companion djinni of Saltık, and he approves the

⁶⁹¹ “Bu İslam leşkerinde adamlar vardır kim eger ata binüp cenge yörüye, sad-hezar Şerif'i size unutturalar. Anlar bir yirde oturup ibadet iderler, kalkmazlar. Ben anların yirine hizmet iderem. Bu İslam heman bana münhasır degüldür.” Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 178.

⁶⁹² Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 179.

⁶⁹³ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 205.

message Saltık gives in the text numerous times: “We have an agreement with Seyyid. We show ourselves as human to the eyes of the infidels.”⁶⁹⁴

When Saltık is on his way to Adrianople, he sees a gathering of infidels, and the people welcome him. But they entrap him, secretly adding alcohol into his sherbet to make Saltık drunk. Saltık is then taken to the infidel ruler Sirdal, and he warns his men that: “Do not ever spill his blood to the earth. If you do, every drop will become another Saltık to cause us trouble.”⁶⁹⁵

In another example, one of Saltık’s sworn enemies, Rad the witch, sends a letter to the *tekfur* of Istanbul offering him an alliance against Saltık and the Muslims. Reading it, the *tekfur* hopelessly repeats the lesson he was given in the past:

I saw Saltık and learnt who he was. The Turks will not decline as long as he is alive, maybe even after he dies, until the Doomsday. Because their saints will not be depleted ever. It is their prophet’s promise. They have a *qutb*, a saint, and he has 364 saints to serve him. They all protect the Turks. Each of them has more than a thousand servant saints. They choose one of them, give him the sword of religion to seemingly serve on earth, and the chosen one, assuming the form of a *gâzi*, becomes Saltık *beg*. When he [the *gâzi*] disappears [not dead] they send [to earth] another one. It is a tradition. The Doomsday will not come as long as those saints exist. That is to say, neither a witch can overcome them nor all the infidels of the world.⁶⁹⁶

Thus, the main duty and function of Saltık as a hero is revealed. He is the champion warrior saint of all time who was commissioned by a council of saints always watching and protecting the Muslims on earth. They are the members of the invisible army. Besides, Saltık was presaged in the prophetic books of the Christians.

⁶⁹⁴ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 594.

⁶⁹⁵ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 289.

⁶⁹⁶ “Kutb dirler imiş. Bir veli olurmuş, ana üç yüz altmış dört veli hizmet idermiş, bu Türkleri saklarlar imiş. Birine anların binden artuk evliya hizmet idermiş. İçlerinden birin bu zahire hizmetkâr koyup, din kılıcın anın eline virüp zahirde gazi suretinde uş bu Saltık begi olur imiş. Eger ol giderse birin dahı gönderürler imiş. Adet buymuş. Ta bu evliya gitmeyince kıyamet kopmaz imiş. Pes bunlara ne cazu kâr kılur ve ne dünyanın kâfirleri.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 351.

Saltık as a Prophetised Champion

After several fights against Kastilya (Castile), Ciniviz (Genoese), Milan (Milano?), and Frenk (any person or land of Europe) Saltık reaches an island named Firdevs -somewhere in Europe [*Frengistan*]- ruled by the Pope. In its church, reciting the Bible to his Christian audience, Saltık invites the infidels to convert. Amongst the audience, a priest comes up “with a book in his hand and placed it in front of Seyyid. Şerif opened the book and saw that each previous and the future *gâzis* were described in this book including his own.”⁶⁹⁷

The priest shows a description of a future *gâzi* in the book and says that: “Server, this *gâzi* is going to convert *Frengistan* to Islam. But he has not appeared yet. Indeed, one day he will rise.”⁶⁹⁸ The same kind of book is also found in another anecdote which takes place in Albania. Saltık goes to a great church as always, and an old priest, upon seeing him, says:

came to Şerif, cased out his face and said [to the other priests]
– Deliver me the bla bla book!
They delivered him the book. He opened it [and saw] there was the exact description of Şerif. The priest said:
- Oh Christians! You no longer have a chance. This country will be ruled by the Turks until the Doomsday. Since that man [Saltık] has come to the earth we are already done [defeated].⁶⁹⁹

Then, the priest hangs himself, symbolizing and indicating that it is the exact fate of the Turks, established by God himself.

One of the pieces of evidence showing the superiority of the Turk-Muslims is their military triumphs, as God grants victories only to the righteous and legitimate. In a striking example a Christian ruler named Bağış is challenged by his son upon receiving the news that Saltık and his *gâzis* have waged many wars around their lands and defeated all their enemies. The son says: “If the religion they believe was not true, the Turks would not always be

⁶⁹⁷ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 447.

⁶⁹⁸ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 447.

⁶⁹⁹ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 459.

victorious against the infidels.”⁷⁰⁰ His father gets violently angry at his son, and claims that if Saltık did not help the Turks, he could easily defeat all of them. His son disrespectfully objects to his father and humiliates him saying “Those are ramblings. Who do you think are you to respond to the Turks on your own? You are chattering.”⁷⁰¹ Bağış gets even more angry and tries to kill his own son. However, the son kills his father and takes refuge with Saltık. Initially Saltık sentences him to death, but after a dream, he resurrects him. The son converts to Islam and is given the name al-Khidr.

Saltık is often accused of being a magician or a witch since he works dazzling miracles and achieves miraculous military victories. Most Christians ignore all this because accepting Saltık’s sainthood means accepting the superiority of the Turks and thus being obliged to cede to their rule. For instance, the *Alaman* ruler Figor receives the news of Saltık helping to the ruler of Bosnia:

He superciliously laughed out loud too much that his amir and vizier hang their heads. Then he turned his face and said:

- Oh begs! Is Saltık a thousand-headed dragon? If he is not, how can he fight with that [extensive] army?

The head vizier raised his head and said:

- You are right but numerous infidels could do nothing to him. He defeated many armies like this one. He waged many wars. He has no qualms about the people of the world. He is a saint. It is better to think about the consequences.⁷⁰²

Figor gets angry at these words but does not change his mind. This time, his spies try to discourage him from attacking Saltık and the Muslims. The title they use for addressing the *Alaman* ruler is noteworthy:

Oh, the lord of time! This Turk is a grim person. Your ancestors did not challenge him, and displayed friendship fearing him. You did not do the right thing by treating hostile to him. The Turks do not fear from the people of the world. Why do they afraid from you? They fought with many armies higher in number than yours. (...) The day of war for the Turks is a feast day.⁷⁰³

⁷⁰⁰ “Eğer bunların dini hak olmasa, her-gâh kâfirlere Türkler yegin olmazlardı.” Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 489.

⁷⁰¹ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 489.

⁷⁰² Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 520.

⁷⁰³ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 521.

Another infidel ruler named Şişban is a friend of Saltık, and Saltık attacks them with an army of *gâzis*, Şişban advises his people to convert since no one can overcome the Turks:

Those Turks are ferocious people. The creator of the universe created them of his own rage to cause trouble to the people of Jesus. Let us unite with them. Those are foreign for us; we do not know their habits or attitudes. They are foreign enemies [but] they have been treating us as friends for a long while. So, it is not reasonable to stay enemies with them, what do you say?⁷⁰⁴

In this passage, the prophesied duty of the Turks as the scourge of God can be recognized. The depictions of Saltık as “a grim person” and the Turks as “ferocious people” follow each other, and represent the Christians’ only chance, namely obeying the Turk-Muslims. Furthermore, it is the fate of the Christians that would maintain itself even after Saltık’s death.

Continuity, and the Continuous Message

The continuity amongst the heroes, saints and hero-saints comes in view once more towards the end of the narrative. Saltık’s place in the hierarchy of saints becomes clearer. It is interesting that most of the relevant passages are related to the Christian threat and alliances and ends up with the continuous message that the Turks and thus Islam will rule until the Last Days. Along with the abovementioned functions, Saltık’s sainthood also represents this message itself. As he always underlines “Islam has many watchers defending it. And there will be watchers of Islam till the doomsday.”⁷⁰⁵

Towards the end of *Saltıknâme*, Sarı Saltık is informed in a dream about his successor. He is told that a brilliant *gâzi* will take his place after his death:

Oh Server! After you, this hero will conquest those places through his valiant deeds, and the lands [of Rum] will be crowded with the Muslims until the Last

⁷⁰⁴ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 582.

⁷⁰⁵ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 179.

Days. This hero is Ece Beg Sultan Gâzi they call him.’ Then, while Saltık was praying looking at him, Ece Beg fled to the sky with his green wings, did *semâs* in air. The divine light was radiated from his wings, and the whole lands of Rum overwhelmed with this divine light.⁷⁰⁶

However, Ece Gâzi is not the only one who will take Saltık’s place, he represents only some of the functions and duties which Saltık undertakes. In another anecdote, it is said that:

“All the people of the world knew that Server was martyred and gone and [the duty of] being the hero [pehlivanlık] was given to İlyas-ı Rûmî. It is narrated that since İlyas Rûmî took Server’s place they [*gâzis*] observed him.”⁷⁰⁷

The first thing that İlyas Rûmî does is send letters to Osman Gâzi and Gâzi Umur asking them to come back to the lands of Rum and support the Muslims there. They come and “They kept their eyes on every part [of the Rum].”⁷⁰⁸ But İlyas Rûmî lived a short life and was martyred in a war.⁷⁰⁹ Another candidate is Gâzi Umur, who after conquering Salonica and Skopje, visits the cities of Baba, Yılan Baba and Eski Baba. When he enters the shrine of Saltık in Eski Baba, he sees Saltık sitting, surprisingly he kisses Saltık’s hands and asks:

“- Oh, my sultan! Are you alive?

Şerif said:

-Oh Umur! Do such a deed on earth, so that you revive after your death. I have just changed my shape. I am not dead; I am with you.”⁷¹⁰

Thus, it is understood that as a saint Saltık becomes a member of the invisible army that will continue to help and support the Turks until the Last Days. Kemal Ata, one of the dervishes of Saltık, confirms it and explains Saltık’s divine nature:

⁷⁰⁶ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 397.

⁷⁰⁷ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 580.

⁷⁰⁸ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 580.

⁷⁰⁹ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 583.

⁷¹⁰ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 606.

Seyyid presents always and everywhere with the *gâzis*. It is ordered [by God] that even when they die, they change forms [maintain to present] in the visible and invisible worlds. Their true form become apparent, and they make *gazâ*. (...) Bayezid [Bestâmî d. 848] is the watcher of Iranian lands, Ahmedî is the watcher of Arab lands, some named him Veysan. The watcher of the lands of Rum is Hacı Bektaş. But Seyyid is the sayyid of the saints, their source of pride. Any duty is easy for him. He does *tayy-i mekân*, and thus he can go anywhere while he is still sitting. No one sees him standing up.⁷¹¹

Before his death, Saltık declares that Osman Gâzi would fulfill the gap left after his death.

Accordingly, Saltık advises his *gâzis* not to leave the lands of Rum so that they reach happiness. And says:

You should know that I am giving my place to Osman. You should lay the prayer rug in front of him. Nearby, I will migrate from the mortal world to the eternal world. My son Osman! Provide the migration of all your people from the coast beyond [to here, Rumili] so that Islam will increase, and the people in Iran [Acem] will aspire and desire to make *gazâs*. This land will become your property.⁷¹²

Osman Gâzi accepts his will, and Saltık's *gâzis* pledge loyalty to Osman. The djinnis also remain faithful to the agreement with Saltık and continue "to appear in the shape of giants and tie the infidels' hands" to deliver them to the Muslims.⁷¹³ Thus, Saltık subordinates the invisible army to Osman Gâzi and his dynasty, the legitimate ruler and protector of the Turk-Muslims in the lands of Rum.

II.4) An Adviser and Legitimiser for the Sultans

Another distinct characteristic of Saltık's portrayal in *Saltıknâme* is his role as an adviser for the sultans. Preaching on following the sharia, performing five times prayer,

⁷¹¹ "Bayezid, Acem vilayetinin gözcisidir ve Arab ilinin seyyid Ahmedî'dür. Bazılar Veysan dir ve bu Rum'un Hacı Bektaş'dur ve amma Seyyid hazreti evliyanun seyyididir, mefharıdır. Ana her iş âsândır. Her yire oturdığı yirden tayy-i mekân ider, varur, gelür. Kimse görmez yirinden kalkduğın." Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 130.

⁷¹² Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 555.

⁷¹³ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 594.

listening to khutbah, etc. to the lay people is one of the habits of Saltık. As for the sultans, Saltık mostly functions as a guide who puts them to the true path of God, government and *gazâ*, and a legitimizer who justifies the sovereignty of the Ottoman dynasty. However, Saltık has a conflictual and controversial relationship with the Seljukid sultans whom he openly criticizes for not watching over the lands of Rum properly. Nevertheless, he leads them to just rule.

Those sultans are the Seljukid rulers Gıyasaddîn Kaykhusraw II (r. 1237-47); Izzaddîn Kaikavus II (r. 1246-1262) whom the 15th century historian Yazıcızâde Ali recorded in his *Tevârih-i Al-i Selçuk* that Saltık lead a migration of Turkic tribes from Anatolia to Dobruja following him, and Sultan Alâeddîn. Yüce rightly states that this Alâeddîn must be Kaykubad III (r. 1298-1302).⁷¹⁴ Regarding the last two sultans, Vizier Affan is an important character who symbolizes corrupted officials, especially viziers. Yüce thinks that Vizier Affan is Saadettin Köpek (d. 1239), the vizier of Gıyasaddîn Kaykhusraw II.⁷¹⁵ Alongside Gâzi Umur Bey (r. 1334-48), the son of Mehmed Bey, the founder of the Aydinid dynasty in western Anatolia, Osman I (r. 1302-24), Murad I (r. 1362-89), Bayezid I (1389-1403), Amir Timur (r. 1370-1405), and Mehmed II (r. 1451-81) are the other rulers recorded in the text. These rulers are put in the three volumes of the narrative in a more or less chronological order, and the most mentioned ones are respectively Osman I, Alâeddîn Kaykubad III, Gâzi Umur Bey and Izzaddîn Kaikavus II.

The Vizier Affan

The critical attitude against the Seljukid sultans is analyzed by Ocak as the impaired memories of the historical events and facts about struggles for the throne which started with

⁷¹⁴ Yüce, *Saltıknâme'de*, 68.

⁷¹⁵ Yüce, *Saltıknâme'de*, 112-3.

the death of Kaykhusrav II, leading to the Bâbâ Revolt. Indeed, a comparison of those *menkıbes* and historical records reveals that there are some memories of the 13th century in the text. However, Ocak explains the transformation of Saltık in those *menkıbes* -from originally as a Bâbâ sheikh, most probably joined this revolt, to an anti-Bâbâ, and in this sense anti-*Râfizî* saint fighting against the rebels on behalf of those Seljukid sultans- merely as a deformation in the course of time in collective memory and thus in oral tradition.⁷¹⁶ However, *Saltıknâme* is a highly edited text, and Ocak also accepts that it owes its anti-*Râfizî* attitude to the Ottoman-Safavid conflicts of the 16th century. I argue that the 16th century layer of the narrative is not limited to those conflicts, and the abovementioned deformation cannot be seen solely as a transformation in collective memory occurring naturally and autochthonously. Instead, I argue that the deformed memories belonging to the 13th century were adapted and updated in accordance with the circumstances of the 15th and 16th centuries, and somewhat turned into allegorical anecdotes bringing *Saltıknâme* more in to line with the genre of advice literature (*nasihatnâme*). In this literary recreation, I believe that the Seljukid period was reconstructed as an era of tyranny and poverty, and Saltık is given the role of an adviser who openly criticizes the sultans, redressing their faults and correcting their mistakes, teaching them how to rule justly and a mediator re-establishing the interrupted communication between the rulers and their subjects. With regards to the Ottomans, Saltık's primary role is legitimizing their noble lineage, the dynasty, and its rule, and repeatedly advising mainly Osman Gâzi on how to avoid being like the Seljukids and making their same mistakes.

The period of Anatolian Seljukids is especially marked in the narrative as years of corruption, poverty, and unrest until the moment when Alâeddîn finally becomes a just ruler, thanks to Saltık's efforts. Although the sultans are not totally absolved, greedy viziers, qadis

⁷¹⁶ Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Bâbâîler İsyanı* (İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2011), 9.

and amirs are pointed to as those responsible for the problems in the lands of Rum. In the reign of Gıyasaddîn Kaykhusraw II, the *tekfur* of Istanbul's son, Alyanos, recruits a navy consisting of three hundred ships and this Christian alliance attacks Haynab (Sinop in the northern Anatolia). No army arrives to protect Haynab, despite a promise from the sultan, and the Muslim inhabitants of the city stuck within the castle secretly send a letter to Saltık asking for help. After Saltık kills Alyanos, and saves the city, he cries out against the sultan saying: "Why don't they watch over those lands while they are the padishahs? Is this what being a padishah about?"⁷¹⁷ Although it is revealed that the sultan sent an army as promised, it was waylaid by a confrontation from the infidels, the criticism remains valid and is increasingly used in all the following stories referencing the Seljukid sultans. When Saltık is receives a messenger from the Seljukid state informing him of the death of Gıyasaddîn and Izzaddîn's taking the throne, he reacts in anger once more saying: "Look how those Muslims become destitute! If you [the state] totally give up this place, then let us rule it."⁷¹⁸ Then, Saltık takes over the role of the sultan, and "a white flag" as a sign of his sovereignty -which will be used by Osman Gâzi in the future- and fights against the infidel army.

The Seljukid viziers are fingered as the real actors behind the corruption, poverty, social unrest, and unjust rule in the lands of Rum. They prevent the sultans from gaining true information about their lands and people, misleading them at every turn. The character of Vizier Affan symbolizes all such failings in his personality in the narrative. As Yüce determines, Affan's portrayal in the text is reflective of Saadeddin Köpek, vizier of Gıyasaddîn. Köpek lived and died in his reign, however, in the text he serves Izzaddîn and Alâeddîn. Köpek is depicted as a misleading vizier for Gıyasaddîn, motivated by his greed to gain more power, slandering prominent and experienced state officials to the sultan,

⁷¹⁷ "Padişah olalar, bu diyarı niçün gözetmeyeler? Padişahlık böyle mi olur?" Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 70.

⁷¹⁸ "Bak Müslümanlar bu hale giriftar ola. Bakasız turasız bu yirden vaz geçdünüzse kon bari biz tasarruf idelüm." Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 71.

resulting in most of them being sentenced to death, and intimidated the rest for years. Finally, Köpek mounts a challenge as pretender to the throne, claiming that he was the illegitimate son of Kaykhusraw I (r. 1205-11), and was killed by the efforts of a spy commissioned by Gıyasaddîn.⁷¹⁹ In *Saltıknâme*, Affan is the obstacle between a potential close and intimate relationship between Saltık and Sultan Izzaddîn and the sultan's biggest mistake is relying upon him:

“[Affan] was a bribe-taker. He did not like Şerif. Since Gıyasüddin was dead, and Izzaddîn became padishah, that hypocrite gained much power. He held the power, carried authority and the sultan believed in him.”⁷²⁰

Affan convinces Izzaddîn of Saltık's disrespect against him and slanders him, accusing Saltık of seeking an opportunity to seize the Seljukid throne. Trusting his vizier since “he was an unawares ruler”⁷²¹, Izzaddîn abolishes Saltık's feud (*tımar*) and dismisses him from the lands he reigns over.⁷²² Furthermore, as a result of his anger against Saltık, Izzaddîn abandons his people in Sinop. However, after a while, when great danger is posed by a Christian league, Izzaddîn needs Saltık's help and goes to Kaffa with Tartar Khan to meet him. The sultan apologizes to him saying that “I caused all of these. Those troubles were emerged since I deserved your curse.”⁷²³ Saltık accepts his apology but indicates it was Affan who was the true instigator of these poor decisions.

After Izzaddîn's death, Alâeddîn succeeds the throne, makes Konya the capital of the Seljukids, and sends eight thousand men to welcome Saltık when he comes to celebrate him. Vizier Affan, as a hypocrite, also welcomes Saltık and bestows upon him a young boy as a

⁷¹⁹ Muharrem Kesik, “Saadeddin Köpek,” in *İslam Ansiklopedisi* 35 (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2008): 392-3.

⁷²⁰ “...rüşvethor kimse idi. Şerif'i sevmezdi. Çünkim Gıyasüddin fevt olup İzzüddin padişah oldu, ol münafık kuvvet tutdı. Cemi tasarruf elinde idi ve hem Sultan ana itikad itmişdi.” Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 73.

⁷²¹ “İzzeddin gafıl melik idi.” Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 86.

⁷²² “Saltık'ı tımarıdan azl idüp buyurmuş ki ‘Çıksun vilayetümden gitsün, turmasun.’ Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 73.

⁷²³ “Ben bana itdüm, bu nekbetler bana hep senün bedduandır.” Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 139.

valet. This boy, in reality a spy of Affan, poisons Saltık, who barely escapes from death.⁷²⁴ As Yüce states, certain acts of Alâeddîn in the text indicate that he is Kaykubad III (r. 1298-1302) known for confiscating the properties of the rich by force and torture.⁷²⁵ But again it is Affan who misleads the sultan:

“When Sultan Alâeddîn took the throne, he took his vizier Affan’s advice and seized the properties of the Muslims by force and he also laid taxes on his lands and caused the poor shed into tears, and he was cursed by them.”⁷²⁶

Hearing the sad news Saltık immediately arrives at Konya, and storms into the sultan’s assembly with anger: “Why do you oppress those Muslims by seizing illegally their properties and reduce the poor to tears? Don’t you fear from the God?”⁷²⁷ Provoked by Affan, Alâeddîn dismisses Saltık from his lands just as Izzaddîn did before. Not surprisingly, this act is followed by a new Christian alliance emerging as a result of Saltık’s absence in the lands of Rum. After a while, Saltık goes to Konya disguised as a merchant, and is brought to the palace to have his properties confiscated. In the presence of the sultan and Affan, Saltık gives his message: “Do not oppress people so that the merchants of the lands abound, it means wealth. The poor reach prosperity.”⁷²⁸ At the end of the story, Alâeddîn and Saltık engage in one-to-one combat, and fearing death, the sultan promises to be a just ruler. Alâeddîn undergoes such a great transformation that ever after he “sincerely repented, and the Almighty God granted him sainthood”⁷²⁹ and engages in *gazâs*. But Vizier Affan does not like his transformation and conspires to kill the sultan. Finally, Affan is killed by a man

⁷²⁴ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 273.

⁷²⁵ Faruk Sümer, “Kaykubad III”, in *İslam Ansiklopedisi* 25 (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2002): 360-61.

⁷²⁶ “Sultan Alaeddin padişah olacak, veziri Affan sözine uyup Müslümanların mal ve metainı darbı çeküp alurdu ve mülke avarız salup fukaranun gözi yaşın akıdurdu, halkun bedduasın alurdu.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 277.

⁷²⁷ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 277.

⁷²⁸ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 285.

⁷²⁹ “Sultan Alaeddin çün sıdk-ıla istiğfara geldi, Hak taala ana velayet ruzi kıldı.” Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 286.

sent by Saltık, his cut head is cut off and sent to Adrianople and it “was hung in the east door”⁷³⁰ of its castle.⁷³¹

Kul Viziers of Alâeddîn

The theme which consists of Sultan Alâeddîn, viziers and corruption comes up once more in the fifth *menkıbe* of the third volume of *Saltıknâme*. The criticism is directed mainly at inefficient viziers, appointed by an inattentive sultan who relinquishes state affairs totally to them and does not care about his people’s safety, happiness, or wealth. However, again it is the viziers who are truly responsible for the degeneration and unjust rule. In this *menkıbe*, entirely dedicated to such subjects, “two favorite pages”⁷³² of Alâeddîn are appointed as chamberlains over the sultan’s subjects. They influence the sultan by casting spells over him, and convince Alâeddîn not to choose his viziers amongst the Turks and instead assign them as viziers:

“Why do you bother yourself by choosing your viziers amongst the foreigners from the Turk[ic] lineage and thus become miserable because of them? Assign us, your *kuls*, as your right and left viziers.”⁷³³

The word “kul” in this passage does not merely mean “subject” of the sultan as the following paragraphs will show. “Kul” is a term used for the sultan's household troops, and civil and military administrators from non-Turkish origins, and it is an intentional emphasis. Followingly, although the wise men react indicating the viziers’ inefficacy for this important administrative duty saying “They aren’t trained properly, they are ignorant boys incapable

⁷³⁰ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 312.

⁷³¹ Saadeddîn Kôpek’s dead body was placed in an iron cage and hung in a bastion of Kubâdâbâd Palace in 1238 in Konya.

⁷³² “iki has makbul oğlanı” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 479.

⁷³³ “Ne hacet padişahum yabandan Türk neslinden vezir idinüp anlar ucından perişan-hatır olasız. Biz kullaruna vezaret ata ve ihsan eyle, sağ ve sol vezirün olalum.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 479.

for the vizierate”⁷³⁴ the sultan accepts their offer. In time, Alâeddîn even leaves the traditional meetings [*divan*] with his subjects that are designed to inform him of their complaints: “He says: ‘Complainers should go to the viziers’ and does not accept their petitions. He does not even go outside [of his palace] and completely renounced the meetings.”⁷³⁵ The social unrest and disapprobation caused by the oppressive and inequitable rule of the greedy viziers end up with fears, uprisings, and migrations of the subjects to neighboring lands. The subjects of the sultan are unable to reach and inform him of the actual situation in the lands of Rum since the viziers restrict communication between them. They desperately write letters to Saltık asking for his help. But the warning letters Saltık’s sends to the sultan also fail to reach him, mired in the same communication problems. Meanwhile, the viziers make plans allying with the infidel Christian rivals to eliminate the sultan and take the throne for themselves. Accordingly, they arrange a fake hunting party somewhere along the coast of Italy and set sail with the sultan. Alâeddîn is kidnapped by the infidels and brought to Rhodes Island. An old sheikh accompanying him explains the reasons for the bad condition he finds himself in:

It happens to you since you are unwary, tyrant and halfhearted. You charged those ignorant boys as viziers. It is the very reason that [all the previous] the shahs failed to keep possession of their sovereignty. It also happened to you. The curses of the Muslims against you became an arrow, and it locked on the target [the sultan] and the sighs and tears of the oppressed ones found their way.⁷³⁶

The old sheikh continues to underline the youthfulness, lack of experience and inability of the viziers and accuses the sultan of abandoning his heavenly and earthly duties as a ruler,

⁷³⁴ “Bu oğlanlar tarikden gelmediler, cahillerdür, vezaret emrinde kasırlardur, didiler.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 479.

⁷³⁵ “Şikâyetçi, vezirler kapısına varsun, diyüp kağıtların almaz oldu ve kendü dahî taşraya çıkmayıp Divanın terk üzerine farz itdi.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 479.

⁷³⁶ “Gafil, zalim ve kahil olduğundan oldu ve cahil oğlanı vezir idindün, zevâl-i saltanat şahlara andan olagelmişdür. Sana da oldu. Müslümanların bedduası oku nişana irüp mazlumun ahı ve gözyaşı yoluna geldi.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 481.

for example inspecting the state officials and caring about the problems of his country and people.⁷³⁷ When the sultan is saved and goes to Adrianople, Saltık sets off to meet him, leaving the war against the infidels in the city of Baba. Alâeddîn respectfully welcomes him but Saltık obviously and wrathfully reprimands the sultan with the same criticism as the old sheikh:

Oh, you tyrant! Why did you abandon your sovereignty and assigned those ignorant boys as your viziers and devastate the people of the world? How could you leave the country to the viziers and did not examine the circumstances of the world? You listlessly lived in your own world. You deserved all the fatalities and disasters happened to you.⁷³⁸

Thereupon, after being rebuked by Saltık, Alâeddîn swears to no more to choose his viziers from amongst his *kuls*, and instead decides to charge the members of ulama and wise people for this important duty.⁷³⁹ This transformation of Alâeddîn is followed by an anecdote professing the superiority of ulama over non-ulama state officials (*ümerâ*) which I mentioned in the second subchapter, and continues with short tales about some bribe-taker qadis. The point is strengthened by a hadith indicating the lower status of bribe-takers than the infidels. Accordingly, the tyrants and bribe-takers “will so heavily be tortured in hell that even the infidels will not face this end.”⁷⁴⁰

Finally, Alâeddîn returns to Konya and chooses a member of the ulama as his grand vizier named Sheikh Hasan. Alâeddîn secures the justice in the country and examines the circumstances and conditions of his lands. The sultan also becomes more engaged in the administration and once more attends the official public meetings in person “visibly twice a

⁷³⁷ “Dahı sen gafil ve farig olup teftiş ve tefahhusdan berü olasın.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 481.

⁷³⁸ “Bre zâlim! Niçün saltanatdan gafil olup birkaç cahil oğlanları vezir idinüp alem halkını yire urasın? Memleketi vezire ısmarlayup kendün ahvâl-i âlemi yoklamayasın? Farig kendü alemünde oturasın. Sana bu kadar nekbet ve felaket çok degüldür.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 483.

⁷³⁹ “Sultan tevbe itdi kim kul aslından kimseyi vezir eylemeye. Ulema ve ukaladan ide baş veziri” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 483.

⁷⁴⁰ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 485.

week in Mondays and Thursdays, accompanied by four qadis, sees the poor subjects and asks about their circumstances in accordance with the sharia of the Prophet.”⁷⁴¹

Yılmaz argues that hagiographies written by Bâbâi authors like Elvan Çelebi and Eflâki depicted Alâeddîn as an ideal ruler who was close to the God’s friends and that his depiction set a “role model for the newly incorporating Ottoman rulership”⁷⁴² for centuries. As the hagiography of a Bâbâi related saint, I think *Saltıknâme* distinguishes itself from those examples. The depiction of Alâeddîn in this text can hardly be seen as an ideal ruler as it is only after facing the prospect of dying at Saltık’s hand that he decides to be a decent sultan. There are two versions of Alâeddîn’s transformation into a just ruler with the help of Saltık: the first one occurs only after a one-on-one combat with Saltık and is told in the fourth *menkıbe* of the second volume and the second one happens after a reproachful speech by Saltık in the fifth *menkıbe* of the third volume. The second example is a much longer and more detailed *menkıbe* than the first, however it includes many different elements from the first. Focusing on the differences can provide an insight through the narrative indicating its converging character to the genre of advice literature.

Justice, Tyranny, Viziers and Advice Literature

The emphasis on justice (*adl*) and tyranny (*zulm*) as its opposition is derived from the concept of the circle of justice (*dâire-i adâlet*). The strong connection established between justice and the prosperity of the people along and giving good or bad examples from the reigns of previous sultans to advise current sultans is a major of Ottoman advice literature - including histories- starting from its earliest example, *Muradnâme* by Bedr-i Dilşad written

⁷⁴¹ “...haftada iki gün dü-şenbih ve peşenbih günlerinde divana âşikâre çıkup, oturup dört kadı yanına alup şer-i Resül üzere fukara-yı raiyyetün halin görür, sorardı.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 485.

⁷⁴² Huseyin Yılmaz, *Caliphate Redefined, The Mystical Turn in Ottoman Political Thought*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2018), 113.

around the 1420s.⁷⁴³ This was mainly because justice held a practical benefit, namely the loyalty of the soldiers since it depended on money, and money was provided by the taxpayer subjects.⁷⁴⁴ The need to have the legitimacy to rule was also important:

Neither religion nor genealogy were sufficient to legitimise the Ottoman claim on sovereignty. Firstly, the Abbasid Caliph of Baghdad, who could authorise the Ottoman claim to sovereignty, was long ago executed by the Mongols. Secondly, the Ottomans were no descendants of Prophet Muhammad or of the imperial dynasty of Djenghiz Khan, which also could have legitimised their claims to sovereignty. Lacking an imperial lineage and the authorisation of a caliph, the Ottoman historical tradition of the early chroniclers, compensated it through the active promotion of pivotal ideas, such as ‘justice’ and *gazâ*.⁷⁴⁵

This need to legitimate Ottoman rule remained on the agenda in the 15th and 16th centuries. As Ocak states, even though those anecdotes which include certain traces of the 13th century Anatolia, especially the second example, are apparently updated in accordance with the circumstances of the 15th and 16th centuries. Alâeddîn becoming a just ruler, even a saint at the auspices of God, indicates a renovation of earlier memories of him. As İnalcık says, portraying the sultans as saints was not merely a literary motif or *topos*.⁷⁴⁶ Glorifying the sultans as saints was common in the 15th century texts from Abdülvâsi Çelebi’s *Halilnâme* which portrayed Çelebi Mehmed, the winner sultan of the Interregnum Era, as *müceddîd* and even the Mahdi.⁷⁴⁷ Likewise, Murad I, Bayezid II, Süleyman I and Murad III were presented as saints by various historians. This attitude, as recent studies show, was an intentional presentation of the sultans in an age of confessionalization. It must also be related to the following anecdotes in which the sultan legitimately bestows lands to Osman I.

⁷⁴³ Hilmi Kaçar, “A Mirror for the Sultan, State Ideology in the Early Ottoman Chronicles, 1300-1453”, University of Gent, 2015.

⁷⁴⁴ Pál Fodor, “15-17. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Hükümdar Aynalarında Devlet ve Toplum, Kriz ve Reform,” trans. Erdal Çoban, *Tarih İncelemeleri Dergisi XIV* (1999): 283.

⁷⁴⁵ Kaçar, “A Mirror for the Sultan,” 296.

⁷⁴⁶ Halil İnalcık, “Aşıkpaşazade Tarihi Nasıl Okunmalı?”, in *Söğüt’ten İstanbul’a*, eds. Mehmet Öz, Oktay Özel (Ankara, İmge, 2000): 119-149, 138.

⁷⁴⁷ Feridun M. Emecen, “Osmanlı Tarihçiliğinin Başlangıcı: İlk Manzum Tarihler,” in *Türk Tarihçiliğinin Asırlık Çınarı Halil İnalcık’a Armağan*, eds. Mehmet Öz, Serhat Küçük (Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü Yayınları, 2017), 110.

The Anti-Kul Attitude of Saltıknâme

At the core of the anecdote, there is the contrast depicted between the *kuls* and the ulama, linked to the ability to be a just vizier. In this sense, the text takes a strong anti-*kul* and pro-ulama position. Thus, it is understood that it is an addition of a time when the *kul* system became firmly settled and powerful to such an extent that it caused opposition and rivalry. As it is well known, the *kul* system was strengthened in the reign of Mehmed II who invalidated the influence and power of the families and networks of the frontier lords (*uc begs*), and especially the members of the ulama, in order to create a centralistic and absolutist state. In the early days of the Ottoman state the viziers were the members of ulama. However, after the conquest of Constantinople, Mehmed II dismissed the Çandarlı Halil from an Anatolian Muslim family from the administration and raised *kul* men to the highest positions.⁷⁴⁸ As Atçıl shows, these were mostly the sons of former Byzantine and Serbian aristocrat families, who were appointed by Mehmed as viziers.⁷⁴⁹ But at some point, just like Alâeddîn, Mehmed II appointed a vizier from the ulama class, Karamanî Mehmed Paşa.⁷⁵⁰ Mehmed II also annexed various Turkoman settlements, and foundation properties (*evqaf*) creating “a general mistrust of the Ottomans, especially amongst the dervishes and *gâzis* of the Anatolian and Rumelian periphery, who had been most directly affected by it.”⁷⁵¹ Moreover, the sultan excluded himself from *Divân-ı Hümâyûn* meetings where any subject of the empire could appeal to present their complaints and seek justice, giving his place to the grand vizier that he furnished with authority in his stead. I argue that all these similarities indicate that the anecdotes above include some traces from the reign of Mehmed II but these

⁷⁴⁸ İnalçık, “Aşıkpaşazade,” 128.

⁷⁴⁹ Zahit Atçıl, “State and Government in The Mid-Sixteenth Century Ottoman Empire: The Grand Vizierates of Rüstem Pasha (1544-1561),” Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Chicago, 2015, 205.

⁷⁵⁰ Atçıl, “State and Government,” 211.

⁷⁵¹ Dressler, “Inventing Orthodoxy,” 153.

traces are not solely limited to his reign, Mehmed II's policy of choosing viziers from the *kuls* became law in the reign of his successor Bayezid II.⁷⁵² Likewise, the very same criticism of bribery, seclusion, and corruption also fall with the new sultan's rule.⁷⁵³

The migrations of subjects to neighboring lands because of the oppressive and inequitable rule of the greedy viziers mentioned in the anecdote also seems to be related to the migrations of Turkoman tribes to the Safavid lands in this period. The loss of population was so great that Bayezid II had to prohibit the movement but failed. Then, the sultan exiled many Qizilbash groups to Mora, Chios, Lepanto, and Albania.⁷⁵⁴ The migrations continued throughout the 16th century.

The inefficacy of the vizier was a concern for many when Süleyman I assigned İbrahim Pasha (d. 1536), his favourite, as his grand vizier after Piri Mehmed Pasha in 1523. İbrahim was the chief of the privy chamber and first he was appointed to the Governor of Rumeli, then vizierate, and lastly the grand vizierate. İbrahim had no experience in government, wasn't educated in *enderun*, the palace school, and thus he was seen as a foreigner (*ecnebi*) who did not deserve to hold this position.⁷⁵⁵ The ruling elite openly and loudly reacted to the sultan's decision emphasizing İbrahim's inexperience.⁷⁵⁶ Moreover, İbrahim was accused of causing the wars with the Safavids and their consequences.⁷⁵⁷

İbrahim's appointment lead to future viziers gaining far more power. Thus, the viziers increasingly continued to pose problems during the reign of Murad III. Börekçi says that "the grand vizier who, as the deputy of the sultan, assumed the role of the empire's *de facto* ruler during this period, leading the centralized bureaucracy overseen by his council

⁷⁵² Tekindağ, "Yeni Kaynak ve Belgeler," 74.

⁷⁵³ Boyar, "The Ottoman Expansion", 100.

⁷⁵⁴ Boyar, "The Ottoman Expansion", 100-102.

⁷⁵⁵ Atçıl, "State and Government," 219.

⁷⁵⁶ Kaya Şahin, *Empire and Power in the Reign of Süleyman, Narrating the Sixteenth-Century Ottoman World*, (Cambridge University Press, 2013), 46.

⁷⁵⁷ Findlay, "Prophecy and Politics," 25.

(*dîvân*).”⁷⁵⁸ Likewise, the *kuls* were closer to the viziers. In the middle of the 16th century, the viziers ruled over the Empire.

In fact, the exact formulization which consists of viziers, corruption, bribery, failures of *kul* system, a secluded sultan being unaware of the country’s circumstances in the anecdotes on Seljuks sultans perfectly fits with the criticism directed to Selim II (r. 1566-1574) and Murad III by various contemporary historians. Selim II left administrative issues totally to his grand vizier Sokullu Mehmed Pasha in 1565 and did not join the decision-making process.⁷⁵⁹ When Murad III took the throne, Sokullu Mehmed Pasha still held office and had a powerful position in government. In response, the sultan formed “an inner circle of mainly non-*kul* advisors,”⁷⁶⁰ *musâhibs* (royal companions), including Şemsi Ahmed Pasha (d. 1580) and Doğancı Mehmed Pasha (d. 1589). Börekçi names this period as “the first era of favorites (ca. 1580 – ca. 1650)” aiming to seize Sokullu’s power.⁷⁶¹ Likewise, Tezcan choses 1580 as the starting date of the second empire in which the sultan began to retake control of the government.⁷⁶² However, it was only after Sokullu’s mysterious assassination in 1579 that Murad III could directly rule the country, accompanied by viziers he changed ten times during his reign. The concept of “*ecnebi*” (foreigner) had become a current issue during the reign of Murad III related to the *kuls* and the Beylerbeyi Incident. During the third quarter of the 16th century, although the *devşirme* system continued, salaried *kuls* recruited from local Muslim peasants were increased in numbers, and thus they became *kapıkulu* soldiers. Istanbul-based troops felt discomfort about this and viewed them as outsiders (*ecnebi*). The financial crisis, and debasement were the last straw in this unrest which led to the Beylerbeyi Incident.⁷⁶³ The sales of official duties and *tımars* along with the

⁷⁵⁸ Börekçi, “Factions and Favorites,” 14.

⁷⁵⁹ Börekçi, “Factions and Favorites,” 159.

⁷⁶⁰ Woodhead, “Poet, Patron and Padişah,” 234.

⁷⁶¹ Börekçi, “Factions and Favorites,” 174.

⁷⁶² Tezcan, *Second Empire*, 195.

⁷⁶³ Özel, “The Reign of Violence,” 184-7.

bribery were also the matters during the 1590s, and the *kuls* “Increasingly vulnerable to fluctuations in fiscal and military administration, they began to react more violently to deteriorating conditions.”⁷⁶⁴

Various authors known as the observers of the Ottoman decline -with reference to an article by Lewis⁷⁶⁵- recorded complaints about corrupt viziers.⁷⁶⁶ For example, Gelibolulu Mustafa Âli, a historian of the period, claimed that Şemsi Ahmed Pasha was a bribe-taker who encouraged Murad III to accept graft money, leading to poverty and the exodus of his subjects.⁷⁶⁷

Although all the criticism aligns with the reign of Murad III, the period in which *Saltıknâme*'s 1591 edition was copied, it is not possible to claim that there is a precise relationship with and/or to his rule and reign alone. Likewise, there may be some references to the life of Sultan Cem. In the struggles for the throne beginning after the death of Mehmed II, the *kul* men and janissaries supported Bayezid, while opponents of the late sultan's politics stood up for his rival brother Sultan Cem.⁷⁶⁸ References to Italy, Rhodes Island, and the captivity of the sultan is reminiscent of the life of Sultan Cem who spent several years in those places as “the object of unceasing intrigues and negotiations among the Christian rulers”⁷⁶⁹ however, there are no more attributions to him in the text. On the other hand, based on various criticism from various reigns that I mentioned above, I argue that those anecdotes bear traces of the 13th century Seljukid memories which were updated to include some of the major events from Mehmed II to Murad III, and edited into political advice

⁷⁶⁴ Özel, “The Reign of Violence,” 184.

⁷⁶⁵ Bernard Lewis, “Ottoman Observers of Ottoman Decline,” *Islamic Studies* Vol. 1, 1 (1962): 71-87.

⁷⁶⁶ Many of them also complained about the degeneration of *timar* system since the foreigners (*ecnebiler*) and janissaries got involved in it. “The advice writers attribute the uselessness of the *timar*-holding cavalry to the admission of outsiders (*ecnebiler*).” Linda T. Darling, “Nasihatnâmeler, İcmal Defterleri, and the Timar-Holding Ottoman Elite in the Late Sixteenth Century,” *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 43 43(2014): 194.

⁷⁶⁷ Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, 296.

⁷⁶⁸ Abdülkadir Özcan, “Kul,” in *İslam Ansiklopedisi* 26 (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2002): 348-50.

⁷⁶⁹ V. L. Menage, “The Mission of an Ottoman Secret Agent in France in 1486,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 97, 2 (April 1965): 112.

stories. In this sense, *Saltıknâme* has the characteristic of advice literature, linked with an anti-*kul* attitude.

Saltıknâme has a clear voice in favor of the old *gâzis* who were freeborn Muslims from Muslim families that were marginalized by Mehmed II while the “new” *gâzis* were converts from non-Turkic origins who were “employed by the sultan to undercut the influence of the native Muslim aristocracy.”⁷⁷⁰ As Krstić identifies, and Aydoğan analyzes in various layers of her thesis, the narrative reflects the tension between the two groups, which was heightened by the disagreement on the conquest of Constantinople. The old *gâzis* “saw Edirne as their moral center”⁷⁷¹ and the new ones wanted to have a new center. However, *Saltıknâme*’s anti-*kul* attitude is not limited to this clash.

I think this attitude reflects a more common prejudice against the *kuls* that was voiced aloud in the 16th century and distinctly observable in Ottoman political-ethical advice literature (*nasihatnâmes*), indicating another political rivalry. Thus, it reveals another aspect of the text’s 16th century layer, its similarity to *nasihatnâme*, and a promising clue for an analysis as the text sides once again with the ulama. In a recent study, Çıpa prominently sets forth the connections between the notion of decline and the birth of a distinct Ottoman *nasihatnâme* literature, and a tendency to accuse the *kuls* he describes as anti-*kul* sentiment.

As a result, a distinct Ottoman *nasihatnâme* literature was born in the 16th century informed by “the emergence of a historical consciousness of ‘decline’ in Ottoman learned circles.”⁷⁷² Mostly freeborn, though not exclusively, Muslim writers displayed an anti-*kul* sentiment in their works and this sentiment functioned as a “political argument in favor of meritocratic recruitment, appointment, or promotion in Ottoman imperial hierarchy.”⁷⁷³ Most importantly, those writers saw the Christian born *kuls* of the sultans as those primarily

⁷⁷⁰ Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, 62.

⁷⁷¹ Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, 61.

⁷⁷² Çıpa, “Changing Perceptions,” 11.

⁷⁷³ Çıpa, “Changing Perceptions,” 17.

responsible for all the corruption, and the deterioration of the universal order, *nizâm-ı âlem*, where their main motivation was a political rivalry among the ruling elite:

“They thus voiced their most potent criticisms against *kuls* and against Ottoman monarchs who employed pro-*kul* recruitment strategies, thereby significantly restricting opportunities for freeborn Muslims to be promoted to bureaucratic and administrative high offices.”⁷⁷⁴

There was a drastic change in the genre of *nasihatnâmes* starting from the late 16th century. The notion of justice, as Kaçar observes, became “the crucial rhetoric tool for maintaining the *nizâm-ı âlem*”⁷⁷⁵ and “the morality-based kingly virtues being ignored”⁷⁷⁶ giving their place to the necessary virtues that a vizier must have. The most exemplary text of this transformation is the first chapter of *Âsafnâme* by Lütî Paşa (d. 1563), who served as the grand vizier of Süleyman I between 1539 – 1541, which is solely dedicated to the morals (*âdâb*) and necessities of a grand vizier. Sariyannis notes the “special emphasis he gives on the grand vizier instead of the sultan”⁷⁷⁷ while Fodor argues that the text is a mirror for viziers, and thus it can also be seen as a mirror for princes.⁷⁷⁸ Thus, rethinking the abovementioned anecdotes, one can see that the moral emphasis is on the viziers and their sufficiency, not on the sultans. There are only two tasks that a sultan must do: choose the “right”, namely ulama viziers, and being visible, not secluded, in the eyes of his subjects by joining the *divan* meetings. It is the viziers who must have all the basic moral virtues; however, it is the sultans who are advised on making the right choices. At that point, the importance of taking sides with the ulama is also stressed by the copyist(s) of *Saltıknâme*:

⁷⁷⁴ Çıpa, “Changing Perceptions,” 14.

⁷⁷⁵ Kaçar, “*A Mirror for the Sultan*,” 298.

⁷⁷⁶ Marinos Sariyannis, “The Princely Virtues as Presented in Ottoman Political and Moral Literature,” *Turcica* 43 (2011): 136.

⁷⁷⁷ Sariyannis, “The Princely Virtues,” 129.

⁷⁷⁸ Fodor, “15-17. Yüzyıl Osmanlı,” 286.

“While *nasihatnâme* authors are unanimous in their emphasis on justice and equity (*adâlet*) as a precondition for the (re)establishment of the proper societal order (*nizâm-ı âlem*), they differ in their suggestions as to how this can be achieved.”⁷⁷⁹

Referring to the ulama as the right source for choosing the viziers can be taken as an advisory to return to the origins and the early times of the Ottoman state, and thus a remnant of the old *gâzis*’ voice in the text. On the other hand, taking into consideration the overall effect of ulama in *Saltıknâme*, such as the fatwas from the 15th and 16th centuries, the emphasis on their superiority over the non-ulama administrative elements of the Ottoman state (*ümerâ*), and also its increased importance by the mid-sixteenth century continued through the late years that *Saltıknâme* was copied may mean that the text was copied and/or patronized by a member of this class. I think, dealing with Alâeddîn’s transformation into a just ruler for the second time with a longer and more detailed *menkıbe*, dedicated to the bitter repercussions caused by the non-ulama viziers, and this *menkıbe*’s placing in the third volume which seems to be the most edited one of the whole narrative corroborates this possibility.

Two Falcons from Yunan

The first appearance of Gâzi Umur and Osman Gâzi in *Saltıknâme* happens through another of Saltık’s divine dreams. Saltık dreams that two falcons fly from the lands of Yunan [Karaman] to the lands of Rum and kill the birds in its mountains. Many pigeons gather around them. One of the falcons shakes one of his wings and many other falcons are born from it whom Saltık strokes, happy to see them unafraid by his presence. Saltık interprets his dream to his comrades in the morning saying:

⁷⁷⁹ Çıpa, “Changing Perceptions,” 10, 11.

Oh *gâzis*! Two *gâzis* will appear from the lands of Yunan. They are descendants of padishahs. They will conquer the Rum; this land will swarm with Mohammedanism. One of them will die but the other's offspring will be the rulers. They will be great padishahs and grand khans.⁷⁸⁰

Then, one day, 14-year-old Gâzi Umur who is a very perspicacious boy wearing red headgear [*börk*] who “had seen him in a dream”⁷⁸¹ sails to Kaffa to meet Saltık. Umur kisses Saltık's hands, he is girded on a belt by Saltık, and sails back to Aydın. Saltık says “He is one of the falcons I dreamt. Hope the best.”⁷⁸² Apparently the other falcon is Osman Gâzi, and the baby falcons are his offspring.

Although Gâzi Umur is less mentioned than Osman Gâzi through the narrative, he clearly has a different relationship with Saltık. Umur can talk to him from miles away, and even when Saltık is dead. He is the one hears Saltık's words “I am not dead, I am with you.”⁷⁸³ Moreover, Umur becomes a saint when Saltık spills his saliva into his mouth.⁷⁸⁴ As for Osman Gâzi, he neither becomes a saint nor can connect to Saltık in any divine way. The origins, birth and eternality of the Ottoman state are the main points in all the anecdotes about the Ottomans.

Alâeddîn's Seeking for an Heir

The story, told in two different anecdotes in two different volumes, begins with Sultan Alâeddîn seeking an heir as he does not have a son. The other common points are Mongol Bacu Han marching with his army to Rum, Alâeddîn gathering his begs to counsel

⁷⁸⁰ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 314.

⁷⁸¹ “Akıl zîrek olup başına kızıl toğru börk giyerdi, düşinde ol kisveti ana gösterdilerdi.” Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 314.

⁷⁸² Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 314.

⁷⁸³ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 606.

⁷⁸⁴ “Ağzı yarın Umur'un ağzına virdi.” Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 544.

them for choosing the right heir to bestow the lands to, Ertuğrul taking this land, and Osman's lineage lies down to *Ben-i İshak* (the sons of the prophet Isaac).

In the first anecdote, the fifth *menkıbe* of the second volume, Alâeddîn allows his begs to be the ruler of any land they seize from the infidels and declares that he is leaving his own throne to Karaman Beg. He gives his daughters to Karaman Beg, Candaroğlu Ali Beg and another beg worthy of having the lands of Harcinevan, who will be chosen by the other begs.⁷⁸⁵ However, the begs do not choose anyone and Ertuğrul seemingly appoints himself to this position. Without any other information, the narrative starts to tell the story of Ertuğrul and his lineage:

At that time, the Oghuzs, the sons of Süleyman Shah had come to the lands of Rum from Khorasan fleeing from the Cingis [Mongols]. They were three brothers. They were called the sons of Ben-i İshak. They came from the lineage of Esau, the son of the prophet Isaac (peace be upon him). Their ancestor had drowned in the Euphrates. This is the lineage of Bayezid Khan and Korkud Ata.⁷⁸⁶

Those three brothers are Paysunkur Telin (it must be Teg(k)in), Gündüz and Ertuğrul, the youngest one. Ertuğrul sends his son Saruhan (it must be Saru Yatu in Aşıkpaşazâde's *Tevârih*) to Sultan Alâeddîn "with several prominent Turkic men" (*bir niçe Türk ulularıyla*) and demands to have Sürmeli-Çukur (as İnalçık determines the Valley of Aras) both as a winter quarter and a summer pasture: "And since the Sultan knew their lineage, he bestowed them those lands. And said: 'Go and make *gazâs* in Harcinevan. You are allowed to do that in those lands, make raids.'⁷⁸⁷

⁷⁸⁵ "...her birünüz bir yiri kâfirden alduğunuz kim elünüzde sancakdur, epsem oturun, gaza idün. Karaman benüm yirüme otursun. Bir kızım ana vireyim, güveyigümdür ve bir kızum Ali Beg'e virdüm ki Candaroğlu'dur ve bir kızum dahı var anı bir yigide virürem, fal uğurum olsun, ana Harcinevan mülkin ısmarladum kim gaza ide." Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 314, 315.

⁷⁸⁶ "Hem dahı nisbetde İshak peygambar (aleyhisselam) oğlu Aış neslinden idi. Nesl-i Bayezid Han ve Korkut Ata idi." Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 315. The word "nisbet" is used to describe the concept of "neseb" (lineage) consecutively and twice. In its third usage finally, it becomes the exact word "neseb".

⁷⁸⁷ "Sultan dahı bunların sahib-i nisbet idüklerin bilüp anlara ol bir yircügezleri viridi. Dahı eyitdi: 'Varun Harcinevan'a gazalar idün. Dahı size o yana desturdur, akınlar eylen.'" Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 315.

At the same time, Ertuğrul, upon hearing about the sainthood of Saltık, sends his son Osman to meet him in Sinop, and “Osman threw himself at the feet of Server. He was a young boy, he rubbed his face on Server’s feet.”⁷⁸⁸ In response, Saltık kisses his eyes as a sign of love and consent and:

He gave advices to him:

- Oh son! The Almighty God bestowed upon you and your descendants [the right to establish] a government and honor. Do not dare to abandon making *gazâs*. Rule with justice and righteousness. Avoid from the curses of the poor. Do not hurt the subjects. Beware of estraying and debauchery. Do not innovate [*bidat*] and follow the sharia. Bestow your favors upon your subjects and treat well to the helpless people. Do not oppress and agonize anyone. Do not be unwary. This is my will to you, always inspect all qadis and governors to secure the justice so that you can maintain your sovereignty and your subjects will be loyal to you. Slaughter the bribe-takers. Do not accredit the infidels, do not make them sovereign. Needing them and making peace with them, and thus making illicit things do not have a place in Islam.⁷⁸⁹

Witnessing this lengthy advice giving, a man asks curiously:

- Server. He is [only] a valiant *gâzi*, a beg of a tribe, not a padishah. So why did you advise him?

Server said:

- Oh people! This valiant man is descended from padishah, and [also] from the sons of Isaac, the one called Esau. Three prophets blessed this lineage: first, the prophet Abraham, secondly the prophet Isaac and third of all, the prophet of the Doomsday Muhammad Mustafa. All the padishahs of the world were descended from this lineage. The Almighty God bestowed sovereignty to this valiant man [Osman], and thus his offspring will be great padishahs.

Since the people heard those words from Şerif, they said:

- This person is a saint, [so] he tells the truth, he is correct.

And they showed favor to Osman.⁷⁹⁰

Then, the valiant *gâzis* amongst the crowd start to gather around Osman, just like the pigeons Saltık saw in his dream and they make numerous raids and *gazâs* together. Thus, we see that only after Saltık publicly declares his support for Osman, glorifying his noble lineage, and

⁷⁸⁸ “Gelüp Osman Server’ün ayağına düştü. Henüz dahı genç oğlan idi, Server’ün ayağına yüz sürdü.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 315.

⁷⁸⁹ “İslam dininde anlara ihtiyaç gösterüp müsalaha dahl itdürmek yokdur ve nâ-meşru iş işlemeğe.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 315, 316.

⁷⁹⁰ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 315, 316.

prophesizing a bright future for his offspring, that the *gâzis* of Rum take sides with him. It is told in the anecdote that Osman began to grow stronger immediately after Saltık's declaration.

The second version of this story, the twelfth *menkıbe* of the third volume differs from the first one with the *begs* unanimous verdict that it must be Ertuğrul who will have the lands of Harcinevan. It is because his son Alp Osman is a *gâzi* who is always busy with holy wars and approved and favored by Saltık. In addition, their lineage is noble as they are the descendants of the son of the prophet Isaac, and also Korkud Ata, the legendary narrator of *The Book of Dede Korkut*. They are true believer Oghuz-Turks.⁷⁹¹ Alâeddîn is convinced and invites them to his place with a letter.

Those two anecdotes include both the relationship between Sultan Alâeddîn, and thus the Seljukids and the Ottomans, and the claims of the Ottomans' noble lineage which proves that they are capable of ruling and that their sovereignty is legitimate. Those "just" origins are mentioned in the early Ottoman histories though with several differences. Although it is not possible to determine exactly which part derives from which tradition in those anecdotes, a concise look through them proves Saltık's role as a hero and thus information about *Saltıknâme*.

First of all, it seems that two different traditions in Ottoman historiography -which may have both originated in oral traditions- were combined in these anecdotes to ensure the legitimacy of the Ottomans' rule: Alâeddîn repeats that the *begs* can legitimately rule any land they take from the infidels⁷⁹² but also bestows lands to Ertuğrul. Thus, it is also legitimate to rule a land as a beg if one takes it by his own efforts. According to several early Ottoman histories, Alâeddîn grants lands to Ertuğrul, not around Harcinevan, but instead

⁷⁹¹ "...nesebde dahı hem asıl idügin. İshak peygambar ouğlu Ays aslındandır ve Korkud Ata anun oğlanlarıdır. Salb itikadlı Oğuzlardır, Türk-i sadık bunlardır." Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 544.

⁷⁹² "Kâfirlerden ne alırsa ol anun mülki ola." Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 544.

Söğüt on the Byzantine frontier.⁷⁹³ However, one of them, Aşıkpaşazâde's *Tevârih*, completed around 1480 -the date in which *Saltıknâme* is also thought to have been completed- narrates a different story in which Osman strongly argues that he deserves to be the ruler of his land as he conquered it by his sword.⁷⁹⁴ As Imber states, stories on Alâeddîn's granting lands to Ertuğrul took their final shapes around 1480s with Neşrî's 'History of the Ottomans'.⁷⁹⁵ Ertuğrul's asking for Sürmeli-Çukur, and Osman's love story -which *Saltıknâme* mentions but only in one sentence- are also in Neşrî's work, however, while Neşrî argued that the prophetic ancestor of the Ottomans was Japhet not Esau, *Saltıknâme* insists on the Esau thesis.

The Political Geneology of the Ottomans: Japhet, Oghuzs and Esau Myth

Osman's argument in *Tevârih* is followed by his claim to be a descendant from Gök Alp, through Oghuz Khan, the legendary leader of the Oghuzs.⁷⁹⁶ This is the Oghuz tradition formulized by Yazıcızâde Ali in his *Târih-i Âl-i Selçuk*, completed in 1436 based on the *Oghuznâme* in Rashid-al-Din's (d. 1318) *Câmi'ut-Tevârih*. Yazıcızâde Ali created a genealogy linking the Ottomans to Oghuz Khan and the Kayı tribe in order to prove that the Ottomans were appropriate and capable of being padishahs since the legitimacy of their rule was in danger after they were defeated by Timur in 1402. He also gave reference to Korkut Ata but without establishing a genealogical connection. The Oghuz tradition and Kayı lineage were adopted by the Ottoman dynasty, became popular and took place in many other histories through the centuries started from the 15th century.⁷⁹⁷ However despite acceptance

⁷⁹³ Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire 1300-1650, The Structure of Power* (Great Britain: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 122.

⁷⁹⁴ Halil İnalçık, "Osmanlı Beyliğinin Kurucusu Osman Beg," *Belleten* LXXI 261 (2007): 479-536.

⁷⁹⁵ Imber, *The Ottoman Empire*, 122.

⁷⁹⁶ İnalçık, "Osmanlı Beyliğinin Kurucusu," 503.

⁷⁹⁷ İnalçık, "Osmanlı Beyliğinin Kurucusu," 484.

of *Saltıknâme* as a 15th century text, there is no mention of the Kayı tribe, although it does include the Oghuz tradition.

Linking the Kayı tribe's genealogy to Japhet through Oghuz Khan is another tradition in the 15th century histories. It originated in Islamic historiography and also in *Câmi'ut-Tevârih*. Like Neşrî, Yazıcızâde, Şükrullah, Oruç Beg, Aşıkpaşazâde and also *Anonymous Chronic* give reference only to Japhet, not Esau.⁷⁹⁸ However, *Saltıknâme* does not include the Japhet tradition.

The Esau origin myth, as Ogasawara states, represents an “unusual deviation from the established Muslim historiography still remains to be studied seriously.”⁷⁹⁹ In Islamic historiography, Ays (Esau or İşu) is the son of the Prophet Isaac and the ancestor of Rum. Rum is the son of Esau, so the Greeks, as the local inhabitants of Rum, were called *Ben-i Asfar* (*Banü'l-Asfar*).⁸⁰⁰ However, as I mentioned before, in the 15th-16th centuries, *Ben-i Asfar* was understood to refer to the rival Christians outside of the Ottoman lands, and were subject to a prophecy, a millennial expectation that they would attack and defeat the Ottoman Turks. Likewise, the tradition about *Ben-i İshak* must have been recreated in accordance with the circumstances of the 15th and 16th century.

Ogasawara argues that *Saltıknâme* is the first source which directly mentions Esau as the ancestor of the Ottomans, and thus it is an invention from the Ottoman period with the aim of claiming a divine right for the descendants of Esau.⁸⁰¹ The second source is an Ottoman history known as *Oxford Anonymous*⁸⁰² completed around 1484, and presented to

⁷⁹⁸ Ali Anooshahr, “İdris-i Bitlisi'nin *Heşt Bihişt*'inde Osmanlı'ya Dair Efsanenin Yaratılması ve Tarih Yazımı,” *The Journal of Ottoman Studies*, L (2017): 23. Ogasawara, “The quest for the Biblical ancestors,” 39. Fleming, “Political Genealogies,” 135.

⁷⁹⁹ Ogasawara, “The quest for the Biblical ancestors,” 38.

⁸⁰⁰ Barbara Fleming, “Political Genealogies in the Sixteenth Century,” *The Journal of Ottoman Studies VII-VIII* (1988): 134.

⁸⁰¹ Ogasawara, “The quest for the Biblical ancestors,” 42.

⁸⁰² *An Early Ottoman History, The Oxford Anonymous Chronicle* (Bodleian Library, Ms Marsh 313), trans. Dimitri J. Kastritsis (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2017).

Bayezid II (r. 1481-1512). Its more detailed story includes the claim of a divine right to rule just as in *Saltıknâme* and is summarized by Ogasawara as such:

Though Isaac loved Esau and wanted to bless him, Jacob disguised himself as Esau and thereby treacherously acquired Isaac's blessing. Noticing Jacob's trickery, Esau flew into a rage and Isaac prayed for him as well: [Isaac said to Esau] 'I also pray for you. May your descendants and lineage be prosperous, exalted and honored!' Taking Esau's hand, Isaac said 'Thanks to the perfectness of God, may all emperors (*Padişahlar*), lords (*beyler*) and heroes (*pehlivanlar*) come from his descendants!' In the end, Esau was reconciled with Jacob and migrated to Turkistan.⁸⁰³

The Ottoman dynasty is therefore linked with Esau who is identified with Kayı Khan and thus the Oghuz lineage. Another work presented to Bayezid II, and completed in the 1480s is Oruç Beg's *Tevârîh* which argues that the sons of Isaac, before the Doomsday, would conquer Constantinople, for the second time after Mehmed II:

"Just before the pretender of Messiah (*Deccâl*) appears, [Constantinople] will be conquered. On the day of Judgement, Messiah (*mehdî*) will appear among the sons of Ebu İshâk (*Ebu İshâk oğlanları*), he will gain that city saying Allah is great."⁸⁰⁴

It was a prophecy based on a hadith composed by (a?) Muslim:

Abu Huraira reported Allah's Apostle (peace be upon him) saying: You have heard about a city the one side of which is in the land and the other is in the sea. They said: Allah's Messenger, yes. Thereupon he said: The Last Hour will not come unless seventy thousand persons from the people of Isaac (*banū Ishāq*) would attack it. When they would land there, they will neither fight with weapons nor would shower arrows but would only say: 'There is no god but Allah and Allah is the Greatest,' that one side of it would fall.⁸⁰⁵

⁸⁰³ Ogasawara, "The quest for the Biblical ancestors," 33.

⁸⁰⁴ Ogasawara, "The quest for the Biblical ancestors," 39.

⁸⁰⁵ Ogasawara, "The quest for the Biblical ancestors," 39.

But how could this hadith establish the Ottoman lineage? What inspired the historians? According to Imber, in the early 16th century, this hadith inspired the Ottoman historians to create a renewed genealogy through Esau rather than Japheth.⁸⁰⁶

However, those historians mostly linked Esau with the Oghuzs and Kayı tribe and thus the Oghuz tradition remained within, rather than excluded from, the histories. Ogasawara thinks that the inspiration may have been linked to “the influence of the Ishakiyye order, founded by Ebu İshâk Kazarûnî, whose members had participated in the holy wars of the Ottoman Empire during this period”⁸⁰⁷ and Saltık’s possible relation to that order. Flemming, also does not exclude the possibility of Ishakiyye’s influence, arguing that it was an invention of some historians who knew much about the two different hadith traditions about the fall of Constantinople, and their inspiration was the eschatological belief: “In the end of days, before the advent of the Dajjal, the sons of Ishaq (or of Abu Ishak) would take the city with the call ‘God is most great’. But were the Turks descendants of Isaac?”⁸⁰⁸ In Islamic historiography, they were not. Besides, Japhet was not a highly glorified figure and did not have any relation to kingship or the Last Days like Esau. Thus, apparently, a renewed genealogy needed to be invented. Currently it is not possible to determine its exact inventor however, as the abovementioned sources and information indicate, the invention and adoption of the Esau origin myth arose in the early years of Bayezid II’s reign and around 1480s.

The Oxford Anonymous seems to be the first history linking the Esau lineage with the Ottomans, though it is not known whether its author was the initial inventor, or it used an oral or written source. As for *Saltıknâme*, it is the first non-chronic source to include the

⁸⁰⁶ “This, however, is in keeping with the increasingly cosmopolitan character of the Ottoman elite in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, who would no longer comprehend the significance of the Turkish descent from Oghuz Khan, but for whom a link with the Arabs might indicate a connection with the Prophet.” Imber, *The Ottoman Empire*,” 123.

⁸⁰⁷ Ogasawara, “The quest for the Biblical ancestors,” 42.

⁸⁰⁸ Fleming, “Political Genealogies,” 135.

Esau connection with the Ottomans. Its original composition date is estimated as 1480. But most importantly, in the first example mentioning the Esau myth, there is a direct reference to Bayezid Khan: “This is the lineage of Bayezid Khan and Korkud Ata.”⁸⁰⁹ I do not think that it can be Bayezid I (r. 1389-1402), the defeated sultan before Timur. Based on the mentioned reasoning, I argue that it must be Bayezid II (r. 1481-1512). Thus, the Esau origin myth may affirm *Saltıknâme*’s completion date. On the other hand, in the scholarship, *Saltıknâme* is accepted as a text mostly compiled from oral traditions, principally the Bektashi circles in the Balkans, though its author did not specifically indicate this area. Could the 15th century Bektashi or any other non-Sunni dervish groups invent this origin myth? What could be their inspiration or motive? Taking into consideration the fact that Bayezid II assigned Balım Sultan as the head of Bektashi order in 1502 to control various non-Sunni groups since they mostly consisted of opponents against the Ottomans, it does not seem possible. Thus, if the record in *Saltıknâme* is from the 15th century, then this narrative and the *Oxford Anonymous* may have shared an oral tradition circulated somewhere outside of Bektashi groups in the Balkans. Or the *Oxford Anonymous* may well have been one of the written sources that *Saltıknâme*’s original author used.

Flemming’s suggestion that the initial inspiration in inventing the Esau origin myth in the Ottoman tradition may have been related to the Ishakiyye order seems not valid. Firstly, the historical sources about Saltık’s life do not involve any relation to that order and show that Saltık was a Haydâri-Qalandari sheikh. Secondly, this myth principally serves to legitimize the Ottoman dynasty and thus it should be read in this context. Lastly, the apocalyptic atmosphere of the 15th and 16th centuries should be considered much more central in the context of this myth. Flemming and Ogasawara only look over the

⁸⁰⁹ “Hem dahı nisbetde İshak peygambar (aleyhisselam) oğlu Ays neslinden idi. Nesl-i Bayezid Han ve Korkut Ata idi.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 315.

eschatological elements without making any form of detailed analysis. Instead, I argue that even the Esau myth is a record from the 15th century, it is much more related to the 16th century layer of *Saltıknâme* and the apocalyptic fears, expectations and need to legitimacy of the Ottoman dynasty.

In this sense, Oruç's claim that the Mahdi "will appear among the sons of Ebu İshâk (*Ebu İshâk oğlanları*)" ⁸¹⁰ is noteworthy. Beginning from Mehmed I (r. 1413-21) to Süleyman I (r. 1520-66) the sultans were portrayed or alluded to as the Mahdi.⁸¹¹ Such a practice continued until the 1550s, after which "the millenarian hopes vested in Süleyman and his ancestors had failed."⁸¹² The author or the copyist(s) of *Saltıknâme* may consciously have borrowed this information from Oruç's *Tevârih* and used it favorably for the needs of the Ottoman dynasty.⁸¹³ Another possibility is a shared oral tradition between these sources. Oruç, like Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, is from Adrianople and wrote his work in this city. The *Ben-i İshak* tradition could be one of several oral stories circulated in that city in the late 15th century. However, Oruç followed the Japhet tradition, not Esau, so how could Esau, the son of the prophet Isaac enters the story? I agree with Ogasawara and Anooshahr that it must be associated with Esau's strong and divine relation with the kingship of the Islamic tradition. Indeed, Isaac's prayer for Esau that "may all emperors (*Padişahlar*), lords (*beyler*) and heroes (*pehlivanlar*) come from his descendants" is akin to the phrase Saltık uses: "All the padishahs of the world were descended from this [Esau's] lineage" and that Osman's "offspring will be great padishahs."⁸¹⁴

⁸¹⁰ Ogasawara, "The quest for the Biblical ancestors," 39.

⁸¹¹ Fleischer, "A Mediterranean Apocalypse," 46.

⁸¹² Dressler, "Inventing Orthodoxy," 162.

⁸¹³ *Saltıknâme*'s narration of the origins of the Ottoman, though not the same, has very similar elements to Oruç's such as Sürmeli-Çukur, Sungur Tekin (Paysunkar Tigin in *Saltıknâme*), Süleyman Şah's drawing in the Euphrates, etc. Besides, there are some common phrases such as "they are the true-believer Oghuzs." In *Saltıknâme* it is said "Salb itikadlu Oğuzlardur." 544, in Oruç's history it is "Oguz tâyifesi kim vardı, i'tikadlu tâyife idi." Oruç Beg, *Oruç Beğ Tarihi (Giriş, Metin, Kronoloji, Dizin, Tıpkıbasım)*, ed. Necdet Öztürk, (İstanbul: Çamlıca Basım Yayın, 2008), 2.

⁸¹⁴ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 315, 316.

There is another work from the early sixteenth century including the Esau origin myth which used to strengthen the Ottoman dynasty's claim to be sovereigns. It is İdrisi Bidlisi's *Heşt Bihişt* which -as Bidlisi claimed- was ordered and patronized by Bayezid II and completed around 1506. A recent work by Anooshahr studiously analyzes the Esau origin myth in *Heşt Bihişt*, and concludes that Bidlisi made a great effort to harmonize two different traditions: the first is the lineage linked the sultans to Central Asia, and "The second was a myth of the formation of the Ottoman polity which he tried to present as a Roman Empire, inheritor of the legacy of Alexander the Great and Byzantine emperors."⁸¹⁵

It is the same effort made in *Saltıknâme* where the early ancestors of the Ottomans were both Oghuzs and *Ben-i İshak* through Esau. Neither tradition was excluded. Although he used Neşrî's history, Bidlisi did not support Japhet thesis.⁸¹⁶ Instead, Bidlisi consciously invented a myth, although this myth was not in and of itself produced from thin air. Instead, Bidlisi benefited from the early historical traditions and legends about the Ottomans' origins, hadiths, Quran, Biblical sources, and Islamic historiography to construct his renewed genealogy. In one of his passages he explains it as such:

This fountain of creation of this royal garden derives from the lifeblood of the trees that bear the caliphate in its essence. And the freshness of the flower gardens of this noble community, this well-behaved family derives from the divine rivers, and from the waters of a heavenly pool belonged to Abraham and his son Isaac which took out prophets in itself. The source that the Euphrates was born and the divine waters that caliphate stream arose from are Esau, the son of Isaac. He is the master of all the kings and all the heroes.⁸¹⁷

Bidlisi clearly built this prophetic genealogy to tell the world that the Ottoman sultans had the right, as well as the necessary heritage to rule as legitimate Islamic caliphs. This claim and genealogy carry an explicit message in themselves: that the Ottoman sovereignty and

⁸¹⁵ Anooshahr, "İdris-i Bitlisi'nin," 1.

⁸¹⁶ Fleming, "Political Genealogies," 136.

⁸¹⁷ Anooshahr, "İdris-i Bitlisi'nin," 9.

victory will survive until the apocalypse.⁸¹⁸ The Esau myth in *Saltıknâme* serves exactly the same purpose. In fact, the prophetic emphasis on the Ottomans' eternal existence and victory is the primary message of *Saltıknâme* repeated, throughout the text on various occasions, something I believe to be an intentional creation built, in order to soothe and encourage the narrative's audiences. In this respect, I argue that a relationship may exist between *Heşt Bihişt* and *Saltıknâme* in terms of intertextuality. *Heşt Bihişt* may be one of the written sources used by the copyist(s) of *Saltıknâme*. On the other hand, as Yılmaz determines, Bidlisi "refashioned the vernacular imageries created in hagiographic chronicles and frontier epics."⁸¹⁹ Thus, Bidlisi may have used an earlier version of *Saltıknâme* that is unknown to us for now.

After Bidlisi, the historians Kemalpaşazâde (d. 1534), and Ruhi Çelebi (d. 1522), too, adopted the Esau myth in their works, ordered and patronized by Bayezid II, however, it was Gelibolulu Mustafa Âli who maintained the conscious myth making process by connecting several traditions to each other and disconnecting the Ottoman dynasty from the Ottoman subjects in his *Künhü'l Ahbâr* (*The Essence of History*) written between 1591-98:

As descendants of Esau and thus of Isaac, the Ottoman rulers could now exploit not only the Oghuz myths, but also the Islamic tradition to their own advantage. Their ruling house was descended from Esau; the Turks were Japhetids like the Mongols, and the inhabitants of their empire, the people of Rum, were of mixed origin.⁸²⁰

Thus, at the time when *Saltıknâme*'s 1591 edition was completed, and thus was read aloud and heard, the Esau myth was still circulating. Most importantly, all those efforts served a process which Yılmaz described as "the mystification of the caliphate" and thus the imperial

⁸¹⁸ Anooshahr, "İdris-i Bitlisi'nin," 11, 12.

⁸¹⁹ Yılmaz, *Caliphate Redefined*, 236.

⁸²⁰ Fleming, "Political Genealogies," 137.

ideology which the scholars, and political writers close to the Ottoman dynasty contributed to with discursive texts in an age of confessionalization.⁸²¹

Osman Becomes the Legitimate Beg

Saltıknâme deviates from the historical tradition with two more inventions. One is Alâeddîn's bestowing lands to Ertuğrul "since the Sultan knew their [noble] lineage"⁸²² and recognized it. The other one is the claim that Orhan, the son of Osman, was a sharif through his mother, the daughter of Sheikh Edebali, something which, to the best of my knowledge, no other 15th or 16th century source indicates. Saltık's role as a saintly hero in this context is to voice this claim and turn it into an unarguable fact, therein increasing the legitimacy of the Ottoman dynasty in the eyes of the audiences. I will show the frequency of repeated advices, their contents, and purposes they served.

Saltık granting Osman "a state tent made of red satin" and "a silver throne,"⁸²³ captured from the *tekfur* of Harcinevan in a battle, is another deviation from tradition as it was originally Sultan Alâeddîn who performed such actions. When the envoy of Harcinevan arrives at Sinop to present Saltık the annual tax, he says "Go and present it to Osman. He is our beg. He is the one who should make peace with you."⁸²⁴ Saltık's decision can be explained as an act to show support to and legitimizes Osman in the eyes of the *gâzis*: "Server did this in order to ensure that while he was still alive *gâzis* respected Osman, recognize him as their head and obey him."⁸²⁵ Osman stays with Saltık for forty days with his young son

⁸²¹ Yılmaz, *Caliphate Redefined*, 4.

⁸²² "Sultan dahı bunların sahib-i nisbet idüklerin bilüp anlara ol bir yircügezleri viridi. Dahı eyitdi: 'Varun Harcinevan'a gazalar idün. Dahı size o yana desturdur, akınlar eylen.'" Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 315.

⁸²³ "kızıl atlastan otağ" ve "bir gümüş kürsi bağışladı." Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 362.

⁸²⁴ "Var Osman'a ilet, begümüz oldur. Sizünle ol sulh eylesün." Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 362.

⁸²⁵ "Server bunu anun-çün eyledi kim Osman'a benüm sağlığında rağbet idüp kendülere baş idüp gaziler uysunlar diyü." Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 362.

Orhan. In this respect, what is striking is the claim that Orhan was a sharif, namely a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad through his grandson Hasan:

Osman had a son aged fourteen. He was born of Seyyid Bali's daughter, he was a sharif. He was shoeing Saltık his sandals and respected him. Seyyid blessed him saying 'May your offspring be cherished. May the great khans shoe their sandals.' He was called Orhan.⁸²⁶

It may be an effort to take the claim of the prophetic origins of the Ottomans a step further.

After that Saltık turns to Osman and voices his advice once more:

- 'Oh Osman! The Almighty God bestowed you and your lineage and offspring the leadership. This is my will to your lineage that in your sovereignty rule justly and rightly. Be generous and do good. Be subject to God, treat well the people, do not tyrannize people, always oversee qadis and beware of their doings, and threaten them. Do not indulge the astray and hellraiser ones.' He gave Osman many more advices, prayed for him, and gave him permission to his place.⁸²⁷

Then, Saltık sets off to Rumeli and settles in his own zawiya, dedicating himself to religious services. Thus, we understand that Saltık delegates his military tasks and responsibilities to a newly emerged and recognized *gâzi* leader, Osman. In the following *menkıbes*, Saltık often runs across Osman on several occasions, who kisses Saltık's hands, and is blessed in response. In an occasion like this, Saltık heralds Osman the eternal victory once more and prays for him:

"Henceforth the time is yours. May Almighty God grants you and your lineage benediction, power and conquests. May your offspring do not extinct, and happiness and fortune be closer to you."⁸²⁸

Saltık addresses Osman by saying "oh the light of my eyes, corner of my liver, my son Osman"⁸²⁹ and his advice centers on ruling justly, not oppressing people, treating

⁸²⁶ "Osman'un bir oğlancuğı on dört yaşında vardı. Seyyid Bali kızından idi, Şerif idi. Seyyid'ün başmağın tutardı, izzet iderdi. Seyyid ana dua eyledi: Evaldun aziz olsun. Anların başmakların ulu hanlar dutsunlar, didi. Anun adına Orhan dirlerdi." Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 362.

⁸²⁷ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 363.

⁸²⁸ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 535.

⁸²⁹ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 551.

subjects well, avoiding to sustain people's maledictions, never abandoning making *gazâs*, cautioning against being deceived by property and goods, loving and respecting the ulama and wise men, showing no mercy towards the *Râfizîs* and *Hâricîs* and hypocrites, burning them to death and always overseeing the Hanafî madhab. Osman also receives al-Khidr's blessings, heralding him the eternal victory, and sovereignty that God granted.⁸³⁰

In another occasion, when Saltık visits his father's shrine in Sinop, Osman Gâzi comes up with seven hundred *gâzis*, and stays with him for four months. Saltık gift to Osman his own white turban and a belt and gives him a stick and a Quran.⁸³¹ Then, Alâeddîn girds him with his own sword, and marries Osman and his daughter. Finally, Hacı Bektas also bestows upon him his own crown⁸³² [*tac*], and Osman adopts Saltık's white flag as his own sanjak:

The house of Osman strengthened, and the caliphate and sovereignty abided to them. Government, happiness, prosperity, and prestige was here to stay to this legitimate lineage. May it [the Ottomans' sovereignty] be immortal, steady and everlasting until the Last Days, amen.⁸³³

One Madhab to Rule Them All

After Alâeddîn's death, and before Osman rises, the begs of Rum who received lands from the sultan break the alliance, violating the previously held unity. Becoming leaderless, the *gâzis* of Rum recognize Saltık as their *beg*, strike coins, and read khutbah on behalf of Saltık for four years. But Saltık does not like the situation as he is a saint who does not compete with the sultans or has any claim to be a political leader:

- This disintegration does not bode well.

⁸³⁰ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 557.

⁸³¹ "kendi imamesin başına geyürdi, kuşak kuşatdı ve bir ak destârı vardı, anı Osman'a virdi ve bir asa ve bir hamâyîl hatm-i mushaf bağışladı." Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 563.

⁸³² Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 563.

⁸³³ "Âl-i Osman kuvvet dutup, hilafet ve saltanat bunlara kaldı. Devlet ve saadet ve ikbal ve izzet bu nesli sahihe yüz dutdı. Ta kıyamete müstedâm ve müstahkem ve pâyende ola, amin." Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 364.

That night, in his dream, he was told that: The House of Osman will fix the disintegration and make an alliance. One man from this House will appear and make [only] one madhab dominant in the world. He will honor and strengthen Islam. The world will attain order and be regenerated.⁸³⁴

That is to say, the violation of the unity and the order of Rum will be fixed by a sultan from the Ottoman dynasty, and when he emerges, one madhab, of course the Hanafi madhab, will dominate the world. This prophetic emphasis on the dominance of the Hanafi madhab and an Ottoman sultan providing it, seems like an implication about the Mahdi, the rightly guided ruler of the Last Days. In *Saltıknâme*, there is no clear reference to any particular Ottoman sultan on being the Mahdi in the whole narrative, however, this is the second mention saying that an Ottoman sultan will be the Mahdi one day. It is another divine dream that Saltık sees, and it functions as a tool to inform the audience on the Ottoman dynasty's mission given directly by God, and thus its legitimacy. In this vein, Saltık advises Osman to "Make more *gazâ* and jihad, and do not make peace with the infidels unless they give up their properties to you."⁸³⁵ Osman follows his advice and becomes such a successful *gâzi* that Karaman Beg, fearing his growing influence and power, attacks Osman. Saltık sets off to help Osman and reprehends Karaman:

"- Oh, you wicked believer, shameless! Why did you attack this *gâzi*? He could overcome you on his own, but he did not want to spill [your] blood. Come here! I issued a fatwa saying whoever prevents *gazâ* it is religiously necessary to kill him."⁸³⁶

This time Saltık advises Karaman saying "Don't be jealous. Your becoming jealous is your prison, not a sign of felicity."⁸³⁷ Following Saltık's advice, Karaman kisses the eyes of Osman, they make peace, and write peace pacts (*ahidnâme*) for each other. In this

⁸³⁴ "Âl-i Osman gele bu teferruku giderüp ittifakı bir ideler. Ol nesilden bir kişi gele, mezheb dahı âlemde bir ide, bu dine şeref ve kuvvet vire. Âlem nizam bulup düzele, didiler." Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 566.

⁸³⁵ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 566.

⁸³⁶ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 566.

⁸³⁷ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 566.

anecdote about the conflicts between the Ottomans and another Muslim beglik the Karamanids, Osman Gâzi apparently represents Murad I (1362-89). Seemingly, some memories from the reign of Murad II (r.1421-51) were also added to it the story. The notion of “whoever prevents *gazâ* it is religiously necessary to kill him” is a sentence said by Murad I to the Karamanid’s envoy in Neşrî’s history. Accordingly, Karaman Beg sends his envoy to the sultan to deliver his message in a less than a peaceful manner: “If you make peace, I will make peace, if you fight, I will fight.”⁸³⁸ In response, Murad I says that “to make *gazâ* against the one who prevents a *gazâ*, is a greater *gazâ*.”⁸³⁹ The version in *Saltıknâme* is also similar with the fatwas given against another Muslim state, the Safavids. Most probably, this anecdote is another attempt to reconstruct the historical memory by updating it with the current events of the time, and thus advise the current sultans. Just as the Karamanids did in the 14th and 15th centuries, the Safavids posed an ideological, political, and military challenge to the Ottomans, and thus often prevented or stopped them from marching against the West and their Christian rivals.

An advice that Saltık repeatedly gives Osman in the anecdotes relevant to the Karamanids lead me to search more. Saltık underlines that Osman does not have to be peaceful against the infidels as Islam does not require him to be. On the contrary, Islam allows him to fight with those infidels. However, the Karamanids were Muslims not infidels. I think, a fatwa from the 15th century may reveal its reason. The Karamanids made alliances with the Byzantine state, Hungarians, and the Papacy against the Ottomans while they were waging wars in the Balkans. As a result, Murad II applied both to the Ottoman ulama and

⁸³⁸ “Eğer barışırsan barışurın, eğer uruşursan, uruşurın. Derdüne derd, merküne merk virürüm.” Mehmed Neşri, *Kitâb-ı Cihan-Nümâ, Neşri Tarihi, Cilt I*, eds. Faik Reşit Unat and Mehmed A. Köymen (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1994), 219.

⁸³⁹ “Bire hey müdbir ve müfsid ve zalim, benüm kasdum ve işüm gice ve gündüz gazaya duruşmekdür. Benüm gazama mani olub Müslümanları ben gazada iken incidürsün. Ahd ü aman bilür âdem değilsin. Seni kam itmeyince ben huzur ile gaza idemezsin. Nice barışmak ki *mâni-i gazâyâ gazâ, gazây-ı ekberdür*. Hazır ol vaktuna işte vardum, didi.” Neşri, *Kitâb-ı Cihan-Nümâ*, 219.

the jurists in Egypt asking for fatwas answering whether it was appropriate to sharia to fight with a Muslim beglik or not in those circumstances. The jurists agreed that Murad II had the right to fight against the Karamanids.⁸⁴⁰ Başkan argues that the only mention of Murad II's asking for fatwas in the Ottoman documents takes places in a *gazâvatnâme*, written in verse by a poet named Zaifi (d. 1557), completed during the reign of Murad II.⁸⁴¹ But Zaifi did not explain the fatwas' contents. However, apparently the records of those fatwas were preserved in the Topkapı Palace Library and have since been discovered by Uzunçarşılı.⁸⁴² Amongst all, one fatwa given by shaykh al-Islam Askalani (d. 1449) is noteworthy since his reasoning resembles the advice by Saltık. Askalani's fatwa is entirely furnished with verses and hadiths indicating that making friends with the infidels and/or Christians turns Muslims into infidels, and thus they should be treated as infidels and should, therefore, be killed.⁸⁴³ The judgement on killing Muslims allied with infidels is also resembles the fatwa Saltık gives. Taking into consideration that *Saltıknâme* is particularly reflective of the fatwas and views of the 16th century Sunni ulama and political writers, the views of these groups – and maybe particularly Askalani's fatwa- on the Karamanids may well have been mirrored in those anecdotes. Either way, it can be safely argued that *Saltıknâme* approaches the matter of Karamanids from the viewpoint of the Ottoman state and thus serves its needs and fulfills its requirements.

Key to the Conquest of Constantinople

The last and the least mentioned Ottoman sultan in *Saltıknâme* is Mehmed II. Although a noticeably short one, the relevant anecdote is about the conquest of

⁸⁴⁰ Ramazan Boyacıoğlu, "Karamanoğlu İbrahim Bey Aleyhine Osmanlıların Aldığı Fetvalar," *Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 4 (2000): 61-76.

⁸⁴¹ Yahya Başkan, "Karamanoğlu Osmanlı Münasebetlerine Ait İki Hukuki Vesika," in *I. Türk Hukuk Tarihi Kongresi Bildirileri* (İstanbul: On İki Levha Yayıncılık, 2014): 137-149, 138. Mehmed Sarı, "Gelibolulu Zaifi Gazâvât-ı Sultan Murad Han," Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, İstanbul Üniversitesi, 1994.

⁸⁴² İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, "Karamanoğulları Devri Vesikalarından İbrahim Bey'in Karaman İmaret Vakfiyesi," *TTK Belleten* 1/1 (1937): 56-164.

⁸⁴³ See the whole text of Askalani's fatwa: Boyacıoğlu, "Karamanoğlu İbrahim Bey," 66.

Constantinople with the help and support of Saltık and reflects and partly explains the abovementioned tensions between the old and new *gâzis*. As a member of the old *gâzis*, Saltık is expected to raise his voice against the conquest, however, he plays the role of an actor and supporter of this great attempt by presenting the sultan with a magical key:

The sultan was in Adrianople and preparing weapons for the conquest of Constantinople. However, at that time, the begs did not want to conquer Istanbul. Because [they fear that] of this city's prosperity will devastate the country, any padishah enters in that city will stop making *gazâs*, and its weather is heavy and bad. Podagra and many other diseases derives from there. The begs did not support the conquest since they think that if the padishah fancy the city and make it his capital, the *gâzis* who are the masters of war [*ehl-i harb*] will not be respected anymore since the city has a coast, and the campaigns will be done through the sea. That night, Sultan Mehmed saw Sultan Saltık in his dream. He was holding a key and gave it to the sultan and said: 'Take this key, go to Istanbul. It is the key of the Gate of Perkinük. Open the gate but never leave the key there. Otherwise you will be lost, do not do it. Bring the key to Adrianople, if you leave it in Istanbul you will never open any other gate.'⁸⁴⁴

Despite the divine support he receives, Mehmed II fears making a move towards conquest. The sultan thinks that taking the city requires too much blood to be shed and in particular for too Muslim warriors to be killed. In addition he fears that if he is not victorious in the end, and fails to conquer the city, that his soldiers may attempt to murder him.⁸⁴⁵ It appears that Mehmed II gives up on marching to Constantinople, or at least hesitates in taking further steps. Meanwhile, Mehmed II's viziers ask for his order to punish a man, and the sultan sentences the man to death. But it is revealed that the viziers mislead Mehmed II as in fact, the man was a victim of slander against him. In light of this, the sultan commutes the sentence and orders his viziers to save the man, but they cannot come to the man's rescue, and he dies. Mehmed II becomes terribly upset, and blazes against his viziers. At night, when the sultan is climbing a ladder to the tower of his new palace to enjoy the scenery, a young boy attempts

⁸⁴⁴ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 615.

⁸⁴⁵ "Sultan Mehmed uyanur, düşümdür bu dahı eydürdi, anda çok kan dökilür. Pes alıma kim ana kasd idebilür." Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 615.

to assassinate him, however he survives. Mehmed II faints and in his dream Saltık admonishes him:

Now, did you understand what unnecessarily shedding blood means? You are making mistakes. Why don't you thoroughly inspect [your viziers]? You are the [main] responsible of this state. You take the advices of your viziers and avoid of shedding blood for justifiable reasons. I had informed you in your dream. Do the saints lie?⁸⁴⁶

Then, the sultan sentences the slanderer to death, and “for the sake of Şerif’s soul” conquers Constantinople and does not leave the key there just as Saltık advised him. According to the narrative, it is a “remz” (a term for indirect expression) indicating that “this capital city will be like Adrianople.”⁸⁴⁷ That is to say, there is no need to fear or worry about the changes that this great triumph will bring about.

The voice representing the views of old *gâzis* can be heard all through *Saltıknâme* in various forms and approaches. One of them can be summarized as an adverse attitude against Constantinople which often takes the shape of hostility.⁸⁴⁸ Thus, Saltık encouraging Mehmed II to conquer it seems like another attempt to mend the adverse memories of the past, and to replace Saltık in those corrected and thus reconstructed memories in order to advise the audience.

⁸⁴⁶ “He mi nâ-hâk yire kan dökme ola, hata idersin niçün usılıyla teftiş itmezsin. Bu mülki senden sorarlar, sen vezirün sözine uyarsın dahı hak yire gazada dökilen kandan kaçarsın. Sana düşünde hod haber virdüm, erenler yanlış mı söyler?” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 615.

⁸⁴⁷ “Bu remzden anlanan girü taht-gâh bu şehir-i Edirne ola gibi.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 615.

⁸⁴⁸ Zeynep Aydoğan successfully analyzes this 15th century layer of the narrative, and the voice of the old gazis. “An Analysis of *Saltıknâme*,” Master Thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2007.

CHAPTER III: SOME ARGUMENTS ON SALTİKNÂME AND THE HEROISM OF SARI SALTİK

The primary manifestations of heroism displayed by Sarı Saltık in *Saltıknâme* as well as the expectations, fears and prophecies about the Last Days spread all over the narrative, and the soothing and encouraging messages given as responses to those apocalyptic elements indicate that some parts of the knowledge on this narrative are presuppositions which are not supported by any other historical source. Although many scholars in the field put forth their doubts on this knowledge, those conventional assumptions are maintained to be used in the studies as there is a lack of opposing sources and detailed analysis. Those presuppositions that I offer to reconsider are mainly about the genre, audience, and the patronage of *Saltıknâme*, and these matters are intricately connected with the fact that the text was written to be read aloud.

The main presumptive knowledge derives from a paragraph supposedly written by Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî towards the very end of the narrative. In it, it is said that:

He [Prince Cem] ordered me to tot the stories of this saint wherever I find the true *menâkıb*, ask to dervishes [about him], and learn. Thus, by the command of Cem Sultan, I walked through the country wherever I heard his *menâkıb* I wrote them down, [then] put them in an order, made a book and completed it in seven years. I came into the Sultan's presence and handed it over to him. Sultan Cem always made it read [aloud] and listened it. He did not listen to the stories of Hamza, instead, he always listened this story.⁸⁴⁹

The last two sentences of the paragraph pose questions on the patronage, and the whole copying process of the text. The first issue arises in the use of the past tense when discussing

⁸⁴⁹ “Pes Cem Sultan emriyle memleketde yörüdüm, kangı yirde kim bunun menakıbın işitdüm, yazdum, birbirine tertib üzere uydurup bir kitab idüp, yidi yılda tamam eyledüm. Sultan katına getürüp teslim itdüm. Dayım bu kitabı Sultan Cem okıdup dinlerdi, Hamza kıssasın dinlemezdi, dayım bu kıssayı dinlerdi.” Ebu'l-Hayr-iRûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 614.

Cem listening to the text. If it is a sentence written by the original author, why did he use the past tense [*dinlerdi*]? If it does not belong to the original author, and was written by a copyist, why was this expression added to the end of the explanation supposedly given by the original author? While it is obvious that this sentence is an addition made at a later time by a copyist, how can we trust the previous explanation about the production process of *Saltıknâme*, namely Sultan Cem ordering the author to compile and write the narrative?

Another point is the oral sources of *Saltıknâme*. In the scholarship, it is assumed that the original stories were compiled from the *gâzi* and dervish circles, while in the paragraph the dervishes are addressed as the only source of the text. Why shouldn't the author mention about the *gâzis* if he compiled stories also from them? Taking into consideration that there is not any historical source supporting that Saltık was a *gâzi*, can we say that it is an invention by the copyist(s) of the text?

The author's travelling in Anatolia and the Balkans to compile the stories, and using only a few written sources, along with *Saltıknâme* reflecting the ideals, imagination, and motives of the frontier societies are the other presuppositions which need to be reconsidered, since it is obvious that the text is highly edited, containing additions from between the 14th and 16th centuries. However, the most neglected layer of *Saltıknâme* seems to be its 16th century. Although Mélikoff, Ocak and Karamustafa indicate its very existence, they only point out the Ottoman-Safavid conflicts of the century, limiting their views to the reign of Selim I and never mentioning or referencing the reign of Süleyman I. In addition, the reign of Murad III – in which the Ottoman-Safavid conflicts continued for several years - or the date of copying coinciding with the Islamic millennium have never been applied or considered in any analysis on *Saltıknâme* although it is clearly known as text from 1591/2.

In this thesis, by focusing on the main characteristics of Saltık's heroism and his portrayal in *Saltıknâme*, I aim to fill those gaps, I tried to analyze and show the 16th century

layer of the text, namely the influences of the political and religio-cultural rivalry between the Ottomans, the Safavids and the Habsburgs, and the reflections of the apocalyptic fears, prophecies and the atmosphere towards the Islamic millennium on the narrative. Now, I try to extend my analysis further to make some more suggestions on the genre, patronage, audience, and the possible written sources of *Saltıknâme* by taking a closer look to the reign and habits of Murad III.

Reading Aloud

Saltıknâme includes various expressions proving that it was written to be read aloud before an audience, probably from different social groups. The most distinct of them is the sentence which can be found at the very beginning of the second volume: “Hear the second volume of *Saltıknâme*.”⁸⁵⁰ There are several more expressions meaning “let’s go back to the story” or “now listen what I tell”⁸⁵¹, etc. Moreover, in the anecdotes on justice and tyranny, the voice of the author can be heard louder giving several advices to the audience. This feature of the text, especially as a heroic narrative, is closely related to the reasons of its copying and functions.

Scholars of the field underline the relationship between the heroic hagiography and the reciting of it, reading aloud in public spheres, and the functions of their performance. Hagen chooses the term “reciters of stories” to describe the performers of these texts, and says that “hardly anything is known about their background and training.”⁸⁵² The lack of information about *Saltıknâme*’s author may indicate its identity, as Yıldırım argues, as a companion (*musâhib*) of Sultan Cem, and a storyteller (*meddah*) in the Ottoman palace.⁸⁵³

⁸⁵⁰ “...cild-i sâni-yi Saltıh-nâme işit.” 247.

⁸⁵¹ “geldük bu yanadan”, “biz girü hikâyete gelem”, “girü hikâyete dönelim”, etc.

⁸⁵² Hagen, “Heroes and Saints,” 355.

⁸⁵³ Yıldırım, “Rum’da Öksöğü”, 612.

As for the function, Krstić points out the prominent ones as “the communication and articulation of social identity.”⁸⁵⁴ Hagen views these texts as the products of collective memory narrated around a heroic figure, and makes a wider explanation about constructing an identity by performance.⁸⁵⁵

Likewise, Öztürkmen groups the audience of these texts as tribal, religious and political communities.⁸⁵⁶ In this sense, I argue that *Saltıknâme* is more functional as a tool to create a political, rather than religious identity, however it does still maintain a heavy emphasis not just on religion but on Hanafi-Sunni madhab. To this point, I agree with Karamustafa’s conclusion that in *Saltıknâme*, religion is depicted only as a “communal political allegiance”⁸⁵⁷ as it gives the message that converting to Islam is nothing but a matter of performing a couple of practices. In *Saltıknâme*, converting to Islam and thus becoming a Muslim also means becoming a “Turk” and the Turks are the Hanafi-Sunni Ottomans who are the sworn enemies of the *Râfizîs* and rivals of the Frenks. More precisely, *Saltıknâme* aims to create, address, and intensify a religio-political identity which perfectly reflects the religio-political ideology constructed and preserved by the Ottoman state and ulama beginning from the mid-16th century, using Saltık and his heroism to promote this ideology. This distinct ideological partiality of the narrative, along with some more elements in *Saltıknâme* which differentiate it from its contemporary counterparts, provides a different perspective to its genre and thus its editing process.

⁸⁵⁴ Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, 38.

⁸⁵⁵ Hagen, “Heroes and Saints,” 355.

⁸⁵⁶ Öztürkmen, “Orality and Performance,” 329.

⁸⁵⁷ Karamustafa, “Islamization Through,” 360.

Genre

As mentioned in the first chapter, many scholars agree on *Saltıknâme*'s including heroic components and they view the narrative as a heroic epic-romance and/or hagiography. Indeed, in terms of including the opposite ideas and approach from the traditional early Ottoman historiography, the experience of the 15th century was “a time of transition, disorientation and loss, violence and insecurity, suffering and disrupted order,”⁸⁵⁸ reflecting a chaotic environment, a visible absence of central authority, social anxiety and responses, the narrative displays various common features of the 15th century hagiographies. Saltık's performance as a hero fits well with Krstić's analysis that these texts entertain, religiously instruct and historically inform their audience.⁸⁵⁹ Furthermore, as a specific literary trope of this genre, Saltık mixes his divine and worldly powers to support the Ottoman state:

A characteristic feature of the *vilayetnâme* genre is the merger of a conquering warrior's and a saint's attributes in one charismatic person. These combined spiritual and material powers are juxtaposed to the purely secular powers of the Ottoman sultans. For instance, Seyyid Ali Sultan and Sarı Saltuk are both descendants of the Prophet (*seyyids*) and possessors of sanctity (*vilaya*).⁸⁶⁰

On the other hand, *Saltıknâme* has some important dissimilarities from this genre, indicating the phases of literary intervention that the text went through. First, “a radical world renunciation”⁸⁶¹ is not presented as an alternative way of life, a response to a chaotic environment. On the contrary to Hagen's opinion that “World neglect is a message that is conveyed by the saint's life story”⁸⁶² Saltık is portrayed as a warrior who always fights for the victory and glory of Islam and the Turk-Muslims. On the few occasions which Saltık retreats he is warned by divine forces not to go on living in seclusion.

⁸⁵⁸ Hagen, “Chaos, Order, Power,” 93.

⁸⁵⁹ Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, 38.

⁸⁶⁰ Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, 46.

⁸⁶¹ Hagen, “Chaos, Order, Power,” 91.

⁸⁶² Hagen, “Chaos and Order,” 107.

Another distinct dissimilarity of *Saltıknâme* is the lack of rivalry between the saints in seeking worldly power. Competition on possessing influence, prestige and legitimacy is very common in the 15th century hagiographies.⁸⁶³ As Yılmaz determines, Bâbâî hagiographies have a competitive character, both against the established authority and against each other, “loaded with political statements either made by the authors or attributed to founding saints of their orders.”⁸⁶⁴ Though the protagonists are saints and friends of God, they “are not free from these vices, either, as they share those features criticized in common people: jealousy, boastfulness, worldly concerns.”⁸⁶⁵ In *Saltıknâme*, there are several occasions where Saltık achieves success and is glorified by the people or the sultans, but where he himself expresses notions of modesty. For example, in one of his victorious adventures, the djinnis warn him all of a sudden and say: “The almighty God lead you the true path. If you had felt a little arrogance, we would destroy you.”⁸⁶⁶ Şerif, hearing this, values these words as worthy advice for himself. Saltık never challenges another saint, sultan or ulama. Hagen says, Hacı Bektaş is described as a saint competes against other dervishes, and the members of the ulama.⁸⁶⁷ Whereas Saltık is a friend of the ulama, as well as of God, and actualizes their fatwas, and sometimes issues his own. Those differences lead Hagen to think that *Saltıknâme* “is actually more the continuation of the *Battalnâme* than a proper hagiography.”⁸⁶⁸ Indeed, *Battalnâme* is accepted as the primary written source of *Saltıknâme*, however, I argue that the latter’s dissimilarities from the other hagiographies are closely connected with the copyist(s)’s efforts to transform the narrative into a proper text in accordance with the official ideology of the Ottoman state in the 16th century.

⁸⁶³ Ay, “Sufi Shaykhs,” 112.

⁸⁶⁴ Yılmaz, *Caliphate Redefined*, 112.

⁸⁶⁵ Hagen, “Chaos and Order,” 102.

⁸⁶⁶ Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 370.

⁸⁶⁷ Hagen, “Heroes and Saints,” 354.

⁸⁶⁸ Hagen, “Heroes and Saints,” 353.

Audience

The audiences of not just *Saltıknâme*, but also all the other texts written to be read aloud, are thought to include a wide range of social groups. Although it is not possible to determine the exact audience of every text, various suggestions can be made due to their contents. Hagen, like many other scholars, thinks that this wide social spectrum mainly consisted of illiterate masses who were exposed to the chaotic environment that the heroic hagiographies reflect.⁸⁶⁹ The second group are generally thought to be soldiers in the Ottoman armies. Krstić, in her analysis on the audience of *Saltıknâme*, suggests that Christian and new converts from Christianity to Islam were amongst the audience who were “caught in the middle between their new and their old communities, inevitably seeking to prove their loyalty to the new and distance themselves from the old coreligionists.”⁸⁷⁰ Judging from *Saltıknâme*’s contents and its anti-*Râfızî* attitude, I would like to add to Krstić’s argument that the Ottoman soldiers who had Qizilbash and/or Shiite affiliations or tendencies, particularly *sipâhîs* recruited from the Turkoman tribes in the 16th century, and *akıncıs* who had mostly Qizilbash tendencies, may also have been some of the text’s intended audience.

As Tekindağ shows, even before the Battle of Çaldıran in 1514, there were Janissaries who displayed an unwillingness to fight, protesting the sultan’s decision to go on a campaign by leaving threatening letters in his tent and hanging their worn boots on their muskets. In particular, most of the *akıncıs* (raiders) were supporters of the Qizilbash groups. They posed such a distressful problem that Selim I was obliged to give a counter-threatening speech to his soldiers.⁸⁷¹ But this was only one piece of a greater confusion.

⁸⁶⁹ Hagen, “Chaos, Order, Power,” 109.

⁸⁷⁰ Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, 56.

⁸⁷¹ Tekindağ, “Yeni Kaynak ve Belgeler,” 63-65.

As Özel shows in his remarkable study, discipline in the Ottoman army was in decline during the 16th century. The *sipâhî* class of provincial cavalry were particularly notorious: they came from the unruly Turkoman groups coming from Qizilbash affiliated areas such as Taurus and Dulkadirli provinces. They were often disobedient to the centralizing policies of the Ottoman state and held a longstanding messianic ideology and had mostly joined the throne struggles of rival princes and the Qizilbash revolts. Between 1559-62, these Turkoman groups “were recruited *en masse* as soldiers in the warring camps and offered either *sipâhî* fiefs or *kapıkulu* rank. As the mainstay of the rival princely armies, they became further politicized.”⁸⁷² However, from 1578 onwards, the period in which long-term campaigns against Iran began, they were mostly replaced by timar holders of *devşirme-kul* origin, and they were trying to survive and fight under bad conditions.⁸⁷³ This period ended with the 1590 armistice between the Ottomans and the Safavids while *Saltıknâme* must still have been being copied. It was a time when of financial crisis and population increase, where both the soldiers from various classes and peasants in rural areas became uncontrollable, engaging in illegal actions, and violence, and thus leading to the popular revolts, named as *Celâlî* movements which occurred especially in Anatolia.⁸⁷⁴ Furthermore, under the ominous atmosphere of the oncoming Islamic millennium, the astrologers whom Murad III firmly believed, prophesized more upheaval in the near future.⁸⁷⁵ Thus, considering these facts, I argue that as such a voluminous narrative, if *Saltıknâme* was read aloud before an audience involving soldiers, those who had non-Sunni, and/or Qizilbash tendencies were particularly targeted.

Râfizîs and the Christian rivals (Frenks) are the two main enemies in *Saltıknâme* whom the Turk-Muslims consistently fight against. Concerning the Frenks, one message is

⁸⁷² Özel, “The Reign of Violence,” 187.

⁸⁷³ Özel, “The Reign of Violence,” 185.

⁸⁷⁴ Özel, “The Reign of Violence,” 184.

⁸⁷⁵ Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, 295.

consistently repeated: “The Turk-Muslims will exist and be victorious until the Last Days.” It is a far-reaching expression that does not allow one to reach a specific conclusion about the audience. However, the messages, and anti-propaganda about the *Râfizîs*, along with the historical facts about the 16th century Ottoman troops can provide us a different standpoint. Thus, I argue that the studious and lengthy explanations embedded in the *menkıbes* on how and why the *Râfizîs* went astray, were tricked by the Devil-Dajjal, and not approved also by the prophet Muhammad and Imam Ali bin Abu Talip whom they supposedly dignified, aimed to convince those soldiers of the political and religious rightfulness of the Ottoman state and ulama. Likewise, those explanations may have also been religiously and politically instructive for the Sunni and/or non-Qizilbash soldiers as well and functioned as didactical anecdotes for the same reasons.

Patronage

Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî's paragraph on how and why he created *Saltıknâme* includes the claim that the author completed the work when Prince Cem was still in Anatolia, and that he presented it directly to Cem. Allegedly the Prince was so fond of Saltık's stories that he always listened *Saltıknâme*. It can therefore be suggested that *Saltıknâme* was read and listened to in an Ottoman palace, probably also by elite circles, however, no scholar of the field seems convinced of this fact, most probably because the work is mainly a hagiography written in colloquial 15th century Turkish. Additionally, even if the original text was patronized by Prince Cem, and despite some scholars argue that he may not, no suggestion has done about the possible patron of neither the original nor 1591 edition of *Saltıknâme*. Thus, the question of patronage of *Saltıknâme*'s 1591 edition is another gap waiting to be

filled. To my mind, in looking closely at the reign of Murad III, it is possible to establish some connections and develop some arguments about the text's patronage.

Murad III was a sultan highly criticized for his secluded lifestyle, his absolutist attitude towards the administration of the empire and his devotion to entertainment. His preferences for entertainment included many books of various genres, and the sultan spent plenty of time in his court reading or listening to books. Unlike previous sultans, Murad III was painted several times with a book in his hand. As a sultan very much concerned with his self-image, it tells a lot about his passion and the impression he wanted to give. In one of them, Murad III "in his right hand holds a carnation rather than a rose, in his left hand is a book rather than a handkerchief"⁸⁷⁶ and in another one he was depicted in his own library reading his own books, "Murad III is enthroned between two bookshelves, filled with books of varying sizes that are arranged on their side in various piles."⁸⁷⁷ His reign, especially his last years, witnessed a rise in the production of manuscripts, however this rise was only partly related to Murad III's status as a bibliophile sultan.

As is understood from Fetvacı's splendid study, the Ottoman elite was also interested in books and the increasing growth in manuscript production did not arise solely from Murad III's fondness for books. It was primarily related to the growing importance of the sultan's cortege and the rivalry between the factions in the court. Recent studies, some of which I included in this thesis, agree that this matter of factions left its mark on the reign of Murad III, because the level of proximity to the sultan determined the level of political and economic power that an Ottoman elite could have from any circle in the court. Thus, Fetvacı argues, the members of those factions got involved in the production process of the manuscripts. They patronized books with the aim of using them to give certain messages, empower his

⁸⁷⁶ Woodhead, "Murad III and The Historians," 92.

⁸⁷⁷ Fetvacı, "Viziers to Eunuchs," 25.

zones of influence and have an impact on the sultan's *musâhibs*, who had tremendous political power.⁸⁷⁸

The Ottoman elite, the viziers, high-ranking officials, and the members of the dynasty not only patronized books but also read them. Fetvacı reveals that the doors of the Topkapı Palace Library were open to them - even to Mustafa Âli who was not included in any court circle - and the books in the imperial treasury in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish were consistently circulated among the courtiers. Woodhead says that Murad III's interest in building his self-image was also related to those factions. Accordingly, due to the intense criticism, Murad III was obsessed with the portrayal of himself, the Ottoman house, and the sultanate in the texts, even if they were not designed to be popular. The fact that the contents of the manuscripts would eventually have been accessible and thus open to the factions in the palace, and the sultan's need to maintain and improve his self-esteem and image were the main reasons behind his concern.⁸⁷⁹

In this mass production, the histories, from Ottoman history to the history of the world, were extensively covered. This was followed by poetry, examples of mystical literature, and books of prophecy.⁸⁸⁰ As for Murad III's personal areas of interests, he was keen mostly on the stories of holy men, history, and odd and rare stories. Mustafa Âli complained that during his reign "men of science and art had come to be duly prized, and the forerunners of those that produced wonder-inspiring works were fully honored in the Ottoman Empire."⁸⁸¹ An anecdote Fetvacı quotes from Ata'i's account testifies that Murad III was passionate about unheard and odd stories. Accordingly, "Sultan Murad, being favorably inclined towards history and accounts of rare and strange events"⁸⁸² charged a

⁸⁷⁸ Fetvacı, "Viziers to Eunuchs," 22, 23.

⁸⁷⁹ Woodhead, "Murad III and The Historians," 96, 97.

⁸⁸⁰ Fetvacı, "Viziers to Eunuchs," 57.

⁸⁸¹ Fetvacı, "Viziers to Eunuchs," 58-59.

⁸⁸² Fetvacı, "Viziers to Eunuchs," 27.

literate man named Cenânî to compose a book consisted of odd stories. Cenânî wrote the book and took it to the illuminator who was friends with Derviş Eglence, the storyteller of the sultan. Derviş Eglence secretly read and memorized Cenânî's stories and performed them in Murad III's presence. Thus, when Cenânî presented his book to the sultan, Murad III thought that the thief was Cenânî. Displeased by the situation, Murad III ordered his chief white eunuch Gazanfer Agha to send Cenânî away with a small sum. *Saltıknâme* was copied in such an environment towards the end of the 16th century when the court factions were already established and in which the production of books had increased and become an area of competition. *Saltıknâme* most probably began to be rewritten and completed under the reign of such a sultan who enthusiastically desired to hear unheard stories. I think this may be an answer to the question of why *Saltıknâme* has more fantastical elements than any other examples of its cycle, and also any other hagiography of the period.

As mentioned in the literature review, scholars of the field have made note of the increased prevalence and substantial number of fantastical elements in *Saltıknâme* compared to its peers. It is a phenomenon about *Saltıknâme* which was identified several times but has never analyzed in detail. Karamustafa, defining the narrative “as much a wonder-tale as it is a heroic epic and a hagiography”⁸⁸³ despite it was “woven around a historical core”⁸⁸⁴ is the only scholar to argue that it may related to many written sources of *Saltıknâme*. Indeed, I also agree that *Saltıknâme*'s wondrous components indicate that the text has many more written sources than estimated by scholars until today, and the books in the Topkapı Palace Library may well have been used for this purpose. At the same time, this may also be related to the literary taste of Murad III. The narrative's language of 15th century colloquial Turkish, prevent the scholarship from considering on this possibility. However, as Fetvacı shows,

⁸⁸³ Karamustafa, “Islamization Through,” 352.

⁸⁸⁴ Karamustafa, “Islamization Through,” 352.

there happened to a “shift in language from Persian to Ottoman Turkish after the middle of the 1580s reflect the preferences of this new group of patrons, whose tastes intersected with that of the new sultans.”⁸⁸⁵ Thus, *Saltıknâme* may have been patronized by one of those new patrons from a certain faction, and its copy may have commissioned around or after the 1580s. Despite its literary style and language being far from artistic or elegant in technique, its targeted audience may have included Murad III, and the Ottoman elite in the court. For now, without any further evidence, it is not possible to determine the identity of the patron of *Saltıknâme* and the faction they belonged to. Nevertheless, some more arguments can be developed based on the fact that political power changed hands in the court in the 1580s, causing the emergence of the new patrons, and a certain anecdote that I have analyzed before about the anti-*kul* attitude of the text.

As Tezcan shows, Murad III’s response to the empowered viziers and the ulama in the late 16th century was his absolutist attitude and policies. The sultan ruled the Ottoman lands without a grand vizier after Sokullu’s death and formed “an inner circle of mainly non-*kul* advisors,”⁸⁸⁶ *musâhibs* (royal companions) as well as, “outsiders” (*ecnebîs*) who were commoners seized military, political and economic power by getting involved in ruling elite and military forces.⁸⁸⁷

Tezcan also argues that this *ecnebî* phenomenon cannot be explained only with the growing need for infantry troops, and instead says that they were the new “social forces”⁸⁸⁸ that ran the empire. All of which is to say that the Janissaries and the Muslim-originated members of the ruling class gained much power at the end of the 16th century. In this sense, the clear anti-*kul* attitude in *Saltıknâme* makes more sense and gives hints about the character or possible faction of the patron of the 1591/2’s edition. In the relevant anecdote, two of the

⁸⁸⁵ Fetvacı, “Viziers to Eunuchs,” 27.

⁸⁸⁶ Woodhead, “Poet, Patron and Padişah,” 234.

⁸⁸⁷ Tezcan, *The Second*, 193.

⁸⁸⁸ Tezcan, *The Second*, 193.

sultan's pages convince him not to choose his "viziers amongst the foreigners from the Turk[ic] lineage."⁸⁸⁹ In this sentence, the Turkish word "yaban" was used instead of its Arabic equivalent "ecnebî." As a result, Sultan Alâeddîn choose them as his viziers, and they ruin the country. Then, rebuked by Saltık, Alâeddîn rescinds his appointment of *kul* viziers and charges the members of ulama and wise people for this duty.⁸⁹⁰ This anecdote is immediately followed by a quasi-religious story empowering the message that the ulama is superior over all other members of the ruling class, except the sultan, and that warriors must obey and respect them: an obvious pro-ulama voice can easily be heard from the beginning of the narrative to its end. Taking into consideration the text's heavy emphasis on the rightfulness of Hanafi-Sunni madhab and the legitimacy of the Ottoman dynasty, and rule, it seems highly likely to me that *Saltıknâme* was patronized and/or copied by a member or a supporter of the ulama who was also an outsider (*ecnebî*), a commoner who gained power and influence during the late 16th century.

Written Sources

The secondary literature on *Saltıknâme* suggest *Danişmendnâme*, *Battalnâme* and Bektashi *vilayetnâmes* as the possible written sources of the narrative. *Hamzanâmes*, Ahmedî's *İskendernâme*, Enveri's *Düsturnâme*, Aşıkpaşazâde's *Tevârih*, Quran translations in Turkish are also estimated to be the intertextual partners of *Saltıknâme*. I agree with Ocak's recent suggestion that Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî must have used al-Sarraj's *Tuffâhu'l-Arwah* as a source.⁸⁹¹ I argue that various texts legitimizing the wars against the Safavids

⁸⁸⁹ "Ne hacet padişahum yabandan Türk neslinden vezir idinüp anlar ucından perişan-hatır olasız. Biz kullaruna vezaret ata ve ihsan eyle, sağ ve sol vezirün olalum." Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 479.

⁸⁹⁰ "Sultan tevbe itdi kim kul aslından kimseyi vezir eylemeye. Ulema ve ukaladan ide baş veziri" Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 483.

⁸⁹¹ Ocak, "Sarı Saltık'a Dair," 47.

and Qizilbash groups, and including religious and political judgements on a Hanafî-Sunni way of life in accordance to the Ottoman state ideology such as the fatwas, *risâles*, and histories of the shaykh al-Islams, and political writers of the 16th century, especially Müftü Hamza Sarı Görez (d. 1522), Kemalpaşazâde (d. 1534), Ebussuûd Efendi (d. 1574), İdrisi Bidlisi (d. 1520), Lütî Pasha (d. 1563) should be added to this list as the auxiliary written sources of *Saltıknâme*. Additionally, I add to this list some more narratives and anecdotes based on the contents, and various hints in *Saltıknâme*.

Evliyâ Çelebi claimed that he saw two different *saltıknâmes*, *Menâkıb-ı Sarı Saltık* by Yazıcızâde Mehmed (d. 1451) and a *saltıknâme* by governor of Özi, Kenan Paşa (d. 1659), and also mentioned a text related to *Saltıknâme* named *Fütuhat-ı Toktamış Han*. None of which have currently been found.⁸⁹² In the early pages of *Saltıknâme*, there is the claim that “There are many volumes of *gazânames* and *cenknâmes* about Saltık.”⁸⁹³ Indeed, all through the text there are lots of references to historical sources and documents about Saltık’s life and deeds written by *gâzîs*, dervishes⁸⁹⁴ or unknown people who witnessed the happenings by their own eyes when Saltık was still alive. Sometimes, Saltık herself is his own hearsayer: “The next day Şerif came to the masjîd. He told all the adventures he went through. They wrote them down, and they remained until today.”⁸⁹⁵ In another anecdote, a book is mentioned: “They came to Kaffa, and settled in. Muslims came to the masjîd to meet them. Mir Osman prayed for Şerif and spelled out all the events they experienced. They wrote [them down], and composed a book.”⁸⁹⁶ There are also some expressions which strengthen the claim that there was at least one book on Saltık that was being when he was

⁸⁹² Ocak, *Sarı Saltık*, 5.

⁸⁹³ “[...] nice cild gazanamesi ile çok cengleri vardır.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 37.

⁸⁹⁴ Very rarely, a name is mentioned such as: “the hearsayer of this story is Baba Perende” (*bu hikayette ravi olan Baba Perende*) Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 236.

⁸⁹⁵ “İrtesi Şerif mescide geldi. Geçen sergüzeşti bir bir diyü virdi. Yazdılar, bu zamana hikâyet kaldı.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 122.

⁸⁹⁶ “Kefe’ye geldiler, karar itdiler. Müslümanlar mescide gelüp görüşdiler. Mir Osman, Şerif’e dualar itdi, bir bir hikayetleri söyledi, yazdılar, kitab eylediler.” Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 257.

still alive and that the writing process went on until his death: “That winter, Şerif settled in Baba[dağ]. The Tatar Khan came and met with Şerif Gâzi and asked and learnt about the event. They wrote them down in a book of stories.”⁸⁹⁷ As can be seen, this evokes a history more than a hagiography.

There are also some elements which could be derived from the 13th-16th century texts. For example, the fourteenth *menkıbe* of the first volume bears the name of the fantastical bird “kaknüs”⁸⁹⁸ which is originally from Persian mythology and mentioned also in *Mantıku't-Tayr* written in the 13th by Feridüddin Attar, a very popular text during this period. Another reference to the Persian literature is Kahramân-ı Katil⁸⁹⁹ from *Kahramannâme* from the literary cycle of *Şahnâme*.⁹⁰⁰

Sometimes, Saltık gives references to the books that were written to narrate his ancestors' heroic deeds: “Haven't you heard from the books that my ancestor Sayyid Cafer Battal Gâzi went everywhere on his own, alone.”⁹⁰¹ There is one direct mention to a book named *Mikât-ı Mirac* which I could not find a match in the secondary sources despite it was specified in the relevant anecdote as a text in Arabic.⁹⁰² Another reference to Arabic literature is Sinbad.⁹⁰³

Additionally, there are numerous references to historical anecdotes, historians, and history books in *Saltıknâme* so that it can safely be argued that the text has a claim to educate its audience on history. The expression of “tevârih ehli” (the experts on history) can be

⁸⁹⁷ “Ol kış Şerif, baba'da karar itdi dahı Tatar hanı gelüp, Şerif Gazi birle buluşup ol kaziyyeyi sorup bildi. Yazdılar, hikâyet kitabına geçürdiler.” Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 401.

⁸⁹⁸ “Kaziye-i Kaknüs Varduğın Beyân İderler.” Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 232.

⁸⁹⁹ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 237.

⁹⁰⁰ or Kahraman-name, a Persian epic in prose. Th. Menzel, “Kahramân-Nāma,” in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, First Edition (1913-1936), ed. M. Th. Houtsma, T.W. Arnold, R. Basset, R. Hartmann. http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2214-871X_ei1_SIM_3804

⁹⁰¹ The expression “heard from the books” indicates also the oral culture, and listening to the books, instead of reading them: “Kitablarda işitmedün mi kim benüm ceddüm Seyyid Cafer Battal Gazi her yirde تنها giderdi.” Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 148.

⁹⁰² “I saw it written in a book written in Arabic called Mikât-ı Mirac” (Mikât-ı Mirac adlu bir Arabi kitabda yazılı gördüm ki...) Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 462.

⁹⁰³ of the Arabian Nights.

observed several times through the narrative. Saltık finds a wise, old, and/or educated man, sometimes directly referred to as a historian, nearly everywhere he goes to learn history. Saltık's questions to them function as tools to inform the audience on historical events. In Egypt, Saltık finds "a wise man" and he tells the history of Egypt from Adam.⁹⁰⁴ In the city of Tarum, Saltık asks a teacher (*muallim*) about the rulers of the lands of Arab.⁹⁰⁵ In another occasion, Saltık sees an old man, and asks him "Are you informed of science of history?"⁹⁰⁶ In a dream, Saltık finds a priest to learn history and the priest answers him narrating "from the history books."⁹⁰⁷ Saltık asks another priest about the constructions in Constantinople:

"-If you are informed of history, tell us about the constructions in Constantinople.

That priest said:

-Oh sultan! In our books it is written that..."⁹⁰⁸

The short or long answers given to Saltık's questions by these educated men, well-versed in history, may have created an impression on its audience that *Saltıknâme* is also a history. As for my impression, it seems to me another sign that the *menkıbes* in the text were orally performed by storytellers in various environments. Krstić's emphasis on a storyteller's ability to tell history marries well with this feature of the text: "In Ottoman society an oral performer could be at the same time an entertainer, a religious instructor, and a 'historian'."⁹⁰⁹

Based on Fetvacı's research on *metrûkâts*, I think that the copyist(s) of 1591/2 edition may have used personal libraries of the Ottoman elite living in or outside of the palace. They may well have used the books in the Topkapı Palace Library to enrich and revive the

⁹⁰⁴ "bir kâmil kişi" Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 151.

⁹⁰⁵ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 256.

⁹⁰⁶ "Tevârih ilminden haberin var mıdır?" 409.

⁹⁰⁷ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 281.

⁹⁰⁸ "-Sen bu tevârihden haberdar isen bize Konstantiniyye binasından haber virgil. Ol rahip eyitdi: - Sultanum, bizüm kitablarımızda..." Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 509.

⁹⁰⁹ Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, 38.

narrative with fantastical and supernatural elements, themes, and motifs, and also with historical anecdotes. Future studies focusing on the intertextuality between those texts can promise to reveal more.

Why Sarı Saltık?

As is understood from the sources, Saltık's religious affiliation, whether he was a devoted Muslim/Sunni person/saint or not, had been approached with suspicion by Muslims and Muslim authorities from the 14th century until at least 17th century. al-Sarraj, in his work of 1315/6, the first known historical source about Saltık's life, recorded that Saltık was more often commemorated by the Christians than the Muslims.⁹¹⁰ İbn Battuta's record in his *Rihle* reflects a similar impression: "They relate that this Saltuq was an ecstatic devotee, although things are told of him which are reproved by the Divine Law."⁹¹¹ However, it seems that the Ottoman authorities did not doubt Saltık's religious sincerity until Ebussuûd's fatwa in 1538.

The first "positive" impression given about Saltık's religious sincerity is a record from 1471 about a zawiya, written before 1473, the date in which *Saltıknâme* began to be compiled. This zawiya was in Mimar Sinan-ı Atik district in Istanbul, and the historian Aşıkpaşazâde (d. ar. 1502) was its sheikh. The zawayah was renamed as "Baba Saltuk Zaviyesi"⁹¹² for an unknown reason in 1471. Aşıkpaşazâde was descended from Baba İlyas, the *Vefâi* sheikh and leader of Bâbâi Revolt in 1240, and according to İnalcık, he tried to feature his own lineage as the primary contributors to the foundation of the Ottoman state in his *Tevârih*. Saltık is also thought to be a *Vefâi* and thus *Bâbâi* who joined this revolt, and

⁹¹⁰ al-Sarraj, *Tüffâhu'l-Ervâh*, 322.

⁹¹¹ İbn Battuta, *The Travels*, 499-500.

⁹¹² Halil İnalcık, "Aşıkpaşazade Tarihi Nasıl Okunmalı?", in *Söğüt'ten İstanbul'a*, eds. Mehmet Öz, Oktay Özel (Ankara, İmge, 2000): 124.

upon failing left Anatolia.⁹¹³ Aşıkpaşazâde was affiliated to the Sunnitized branch of *Vefâiyye*, namely *Zeyniyye*. Thus, Aşıkpaşazâde as a Sunni sheikh of the late 15th century, and an employee in the service of the sultans renamed the zawiya after Saltık's name.

Saltık's shrine in Babadağ was visited by Prince Cem, Bayezid II, and Süleyman I. But while shaykh al-Islam Kemalpaşazâde recorded him as a prominent Islamic saint, his successor Ebussuûd Efendi described Saltık as "a monk who became a skeleton because of his abstemiousness."⁹¹⁴ Murad III, as a sultan never left Istanbul and did not even see Babadağ. However, like his ancestors, he also paid attention to Saltık's shrine in this town. In 1583, upon hearing the disturbing news of its decline, Murad III ordered the qadi of Babadağ "to forbid the zawiya and alcove recently built."⁹¹⁵ According to this sultanic decree, "some people" built new constructions additionally to the Zawiya of Sarı Saltuk Baba, and the crowd consisted of Sufis in those buildings was increasingly growing. Apparently, feeling uncomfortable, Murad III ordered the qadi to prevent this growth, inspect the Sufis and most probably to demolish all constructions "outside of the ones built from necessity in the lands which my ancestor Sultan Bayezid Khan bestowed."⁹¹⁶

During the reign of Murad III, two travelers visited Babadağ before 1578. They were Stephan Gerlach and Reinhold Lubenau and both recorded that his stories was similar to St. Nicholas, and his cult and shrine were commemorated by the Christians. There are also decrees from the mid-16th century about the *Işıks* in several zawiya in the Balkans named after Saltık accusing them of not following Sunni madhab, and thus ordered to be inspected and punished. As for *Saltıknâme*'s 1591/2's edition, Saltık was doubtlessly a devoted Hanafi-Sunni fighting for the Turk-Muslims with the support of divine forces. As I showed in the

⁹¹³ Halil İnalçık, *The Ottoman Empire the Classical Age*, 228.

⁹¹⁴ Ökiç, "Sarı Saltuk'a Ait Bir Fetva," 56. "Riyâzet ile kadid olmuş bir keşiştir."

⁹¹⁵ "...sonradan eklenen zaviye ve halvethanenin yasaklanması." Refik, *Onaltıncı Asırda*, 52.

⁹¹⁶ "Sarı Saltuk Baba zaviyesine ceddin Sultan Bayezid Han'ın vakıf eylediği yerlerin üzerine ihtiyaç oldukça bina olunandan başka..." Refik, *Onaltıncı Asırda*, 52.

subchapter titled “Symbol of Superiority”, the attempt to correct Saltık’s “real” identity as a Turk devoted to Hanafi-Sunni madhab, and reveal the “real” reasons behind the Christians’ commemoration of him is obvious. Thus, I agree with Anetshofer’s argument that the “unorthodox” stories and image of Saltık “must have caused discomfort among the Ottoman authorities and ulema in the 16th century”⁹¹⁷ and I argue that Saltık’s image was reconstructed in accordance with the ideology and the needs of the late 16th Ottoman state and ulama.

On the other hand, Evliyâ Çelebi in the 17th century, was still pursuing the same task that the copyist(s) of *Saltıknâme*’s 1591/2 edition fulfilled, and trying to prove the “real” identity of Saltık with the same features those copyist(s) attributed to him: Turk, Sunni, Sufi, saint, and *gâzi*. Anetshofer rightly thinks that Evliyâ was responding to Ebussuûd’s fatwa in 1538, despite not giving any reference to it.⁹¹⁸ I argue that it is also valid for *Saltıknâme*. However, the text is highly affected, edited and adapted to Ebussuûd’s fatwas, and especially his views on the *Râfizîs*, and the way of life a Hanafi-Sunni must pursue. Thus, I think that Saltık’s portrayal in *Saltıknâme* is not a picture painted *despite* Ebussuûd’s fatwa but *because of* this fatwa. It was not a response, instead, it was a solution found not just for this fatwa, but all the other obtrusive rumors and stories about Saltık. Choosing Saltık’s image and cult to be reconstructed in the late 16th century must have been related to his intense popularity amongst different social groups who most probably had common characteristics such as religious tendencies, affiliations, and the proximity to the sultan and the state in various levels. I think those groups can be considered as the largest intended audience of the text. Thus, Saltık’s popularity with his recreated portrayal served the late 16th century Ottoman state. I think that Ay’s analysis made for the “alive” sheikhs of the period that they “at their

⁹¹⁷ Anetshofer, “Legends of Sarı Saltık,” 293.

⁹¹⁸ Anetshofer, “Legends of Sarı Saltık,” 296.

disposal the power of effective propaganda, which made them very influential in legitimizing or challenging state authority.”⁹¹⁹ is also valid for the then deceased popular Sûfî Saltık.

A Special Relation with the Lands of Rum

The secondary literature on Sarı Saltık focusing on his historical personality rightly views him as a figure mostly related to the Balkans because his most popular and visited shrines are located there and the accounts about him indicate Babadağ as his home. Likewise, in *Saltıknâme* Babadağ and its neighborhood, and also Kaffa in Crimea are mentioned as his two main bases he settles in (*karar itmek*) for short periods. On the other hand, Saltık has an incredibly special relationship with the lands of Rum.

Saltık is the symbol of Turkish sovereignty in the lands of Rum. He provides the support of divine forces to the Turks and also mediates between the earthly and heavenly powers of *Saltıknâme*'s universe. Saltık is the protector of Rum mostly against the Christians who primarily aim to throw the Turks out of the Rum and wipe them off the face of the earth. His existence in Rum is such an important matter that if he is absent, the Christian clergy, allied with the rulers, immediately start wars in order to achieve their aims. However he also encourages its people by declaring that even if he “would not come back to the lands of Rum for ten years, its dwelling Muslims will not afraid of”⁹²⁰ the Christian rivals as the invisible army will support the Turks' domination in Rum until the Last Days.

The heralded successors of Saltık are also directly charged with the protection of the lands of Rum. Saltık is informed that Ece Beg Sultan Gâzi will take his place and “the whole lands of Rum [will be] overwhelmed with this divine light.”⁹²¹ Another successor, İlyas-ı

⁹¹⁹ Ay, “Sufi Shaykhs,” 12.

⁹²⁰ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 205.

⁹²¹ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 397.

Rûmî is given the *pehlivanlık* (heroism) after Saltık's death, and the first thing he does is summon Osman Gâzi and Gâzi Umur to Rum to support the Muslims there: "They kept their eyes on every part [of the Rum]."⁹²² Likewise, when Saltık is declaring that Osman Gâzi would be his military successor he also advises his *gâzis* on not leaving the lands of Rum so that they reach happiness.⁹²³ Most importantly, on one occasion, when his tutor Seravil finds him in Egypt, complaining his long stay in there and asks him whether he will never go back to the Rum or not, Saltık says:

"The wise men say, [if] the world is a ring, [then] its bezel is Rum. This bezel is worn by gâzi(s). Rum is the seal [on the ring] of Süleyman [the prophet]. No one can ever desert this seal."⁹²⁴

This emphasis on the lands of Rum seems to me a part of the reconstruction of Saltık's portrayal in *Saltıknâme* which may have been added based on *Battalnâme*. But its reason is more important than its written source, and I think, it is related to one of the intended audiences of the text, namely the soldiers recruited from the Turkoman tribes in the 16th century. They were coming from the lands of Rum, they could identify themselves more easily with a saintly hero who was the protector of Rum, and as soldiers, they were charged to protect the lands of Rum.

⁹²² Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 580.

⁹²³ Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 555.

⁹²⁴ "Âkiller dünyayı bir yüzükdür, kaşı Rum'dur dirler. Pes ol dahı gazi parmağındadır. Rum, hâtem-i Süleyman'dur. Kimse bu devlet hâtemin terk eylemez." Ebu'l-Hayr-i Rûmî, *Saltıknâme*, 456.

Conclusion

What are the primary features and characteristics of Sarı Saltık that make him the protagonist and a heroic figure in *Saltıknâme*? What can those manifestations of heroism in this text tell us? Why is there a huge gap between the historical information about Saltık and his portrayal in *Saltıknâme*? For which purposes could *Saltıknâme* have been copied in the late 16th century? Those were the main research questions which guided my exploration of narrative. Since *Saltıknâme* is a heroic hagiography, I chose to focus on its protagonist's heroism to reach the answers. I mainly concluded that both the portrayal of Sarı Saltık in *Saltıknâme* and *Saltıknâme* as a whole are the product of the transitional period from the heroic age of Anatolia, as Hagen states to the age of confessionalization, as formulized by Krstić.

The layers of *Saltıknâme* from the 13th to 15th centuries were already determined, however, despite it is well known that it has also a 16th century layer, it is thought that it was only related to the Ottoman-Safavids conflicts, and nevertheless, no study has done about it. It is notable that *Saltıknâme* is accepted always as a 15th century text even though the earliest completed edition that is used in secondary literature originating in 1591/2. Despite this fact, no study has read the text in the context of the 16th century. Moreover, although its copying date coincides with the Islamic millennium, a fearful period for all the inhabitants through the Mediterranean, reflected itself on numerous texts from various genres, no study has related several components in the text to this crucial characteristic of *Saltıknâme*.

At the beginning of my research, I only intended to understand the heroic features of Saltık, analyze the concepts of heroism in this narrative and develop new arguments about *Saltıknâme*. However, during my work, all the answers I wanted to give pointed to the

circumstances of the 16th century, and the religio-political rivalry which Krstić showed in brilliant detail in her work. Therefore, it became clear that discovering the heroism in *Saltıknâme* also meant revealing the 16th century layer of the text, since the main characteristics that make Saltık a hero in this narrative were aligned with the ideology and the Sunnitization process formulated and conducted by the Ottoman state, allied with the ulama class, which gained extreme power during the period. Furthermore, I saw that *Saltıknâme* is full of apocalyptic elements, anxieties, and prophecies along with the soothing, and heartening responses to those fears in the form of messages to its audience.

Amongst all the features of Saltık's portrayal as a hero in *Saltıknâme*, being a devoted Hanafi-Sunni Muslim informs most of his actions. This feature primarily reveals itself in the religio-political position that Saltık takes against the *Râfizîs*, the non-Sunni Muslims of the text. The narrative presents the *Râfizîs* as people who are deceived and thus were led astray by the Devil-Dajjal, an apocalyptic figure who rose from the East to demonize them in many ways. The anecdotes about the *Râfizîs* bear the traces of various fatwas, and religio-political ideas composed by the Ottoman ulama and the political writers of the 16th century. It implies an intertextuality between the texts they wrote and *Saltıknâme*, and helps to develop arguments about the patronage, audience, and genre of the text.

The heavy emphasis on the Ottoman Sunnitization of the 16th century is not limited to the portrayal of the *Râfizîs*. The perpetual insistence on Hanafi madhab, and mentions of Abu Hanifa, the fatwa directly given by Saltık judging Hanafism as the superior over all the other madhabs, and also on the religious necessities such as *namaz*, and listening to the Friday sermon and preaching potently support this argument. These facts also show that the *Râfizîs* in *Saltıknâme* are not merely the Safavids, they are also the Turkoman Qizilbash groups who share some similar beliefs with the Safavids. The extended religious, historical, and political explanations about why the Râfizîd tendency is wrong in many aspects means

that one of the aims of *Saltıknâme* is showing the “right” way to be a Muslim, namely a Hanafi-Sunni Muslim, as well as generating consent for the wars and persecutions against the members of Râfîzîd affiliation. This conclusion, taking into consideration the fact that there were numerous recruited soldiers from the unruly Turkoman tribes in several ranks of the Ottoman army, shows that they are one of the targeted audiences of *Saltıknâme* with the aim to teach them the “right” Islam. In this sense, Saltık was reconstructed as a heroic role model building a group identity chosen by the copyist(s), chosen as he was a popular and respected figure amongst people of the period believed to be a *gâzi*-saint. Saltık represents the last circle of a long heroic cycle, widely known by audiences, and was designated as the latest and the greatest hero of the period. He is a sayyid and an Islamic saint, the “pehlivân-ı zaman”, the hero of the time, and a hero beyond all. The ultimate role model not just for the recruited soldiers from the Rum but also for its all inhabitant Muslims that the Ottoman Sunnitization policies were aimed at.

An evident part of Saltık’s heroism is his symbolizing the superiority of Islam, namely the Muslim Turks, and this most clearly manifests itself in the anecdotes concerning Christian rivals. Those rivals consist of clergy, rulers, and the alliances they establish with the goal of throwing the Muslim Turks away from the lands of Rum. The claim and emphasis of this superiority is more of a political nature than a religious one, however, it is supported by religious and intellectual debates that Saltık opens and wins at the end. Thus, the rivalry between those two groups includes not only military conflicts but also religio-political identities. The relevant anecdotes are furnished with fearful or promising prophecies, apocalyptical anxieties, and millennialist expectations common in the 16th century. Saltık, as the protector of the lands of Rum, represents evidence of their divine support, and the rightfulness of the Turks’ sovereignty on Rum, as he is an Islamic saint fighting for the Turk-Muslims. Saltık’s fate is the fate of the Turks.

Along with the frightening prophecies from Christian books, Saltık also takes his place in those written sources as the prophesied hero of the Turk-Muslims. Thus, he is even heralded by the very books that the Christian rivals use to find ways to overcome the Turks. The Christians will never be able to achieve their goals of conquering Rum as an invisible army, under the command of the Turk-Muslims, lives in the lands of Rum. The highest figures of Islam such as al-Khidr, the prophet Muhammad and Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib presage this truth, as do various prominent members of the Christian clergy who at the end have a grasp of the promised future by the “true” God. Every attempt to defeat the Turks ends with one core message, that the Turk-Muslims in the lands of Rum will survive and be victorious until the Last Days of the world.

The Devil-Dajjal often deceive the Christians, too, sometimes disguised as the Messiah, and causes them to create new alliances and start new wars. The “foolish” Christian rivals believe him and are humorously humiliated in many occasions. They are more often deceived by Saltık disguised as a monk, but also as the Messiah, though such deceptions often result in their deaths as a result of their own foolishness. Conversion is a rarer outcome than slaughter and many conversions result only as a threat of death, being defeated in a religious or intellectual debate, or very seldom voluntarily through witnessing a miracle worked by Saltık. In this sense, it is hard to argue that *Saltıknâme* contains an attitude of tolerance or empathy towards the Christians. This is perhaps natural as the Christians in the text are mostly the members of the clergy, the rival equivalent of the Ottoman ulama and the ruling class, not lay people.

The Ottoman dynasty and state are legitimized and glorified by Saltık’s identity as an adviser. Indeed, his adviser-legitimizing status is one of the manifestations of his heroism. The Ottoman dynasty is symbolized by Osman Gâzi in *Saltıknâme*. While Saltık has a conflictual relationship with the Seljukid sultans whom he heavily criticizes for not watching

over the lands of Rum, Osman Gâzi never does anything wrong. He is the military successor of Saltık, a promised leader with the support of all divine forces, predestined to be victorious until Doomsday. Therefore, Saltık always religiously and politically approves Osman Gâzi, the dynasty, and the state he would find, because he is a substitute for the Ottoman rulers whom the copy of the text sought to favor. It is also the answer as to why Saltık rises from the narrative as a performer and executer of the ideal world order constructed by the Ottoman state as aligned with the ulama. At the end, all Saltık's efforts are direct towards spreading this ideal order throughout the world. Nevertheless, he does not forget to counsel the ruling elite to be just, generous, stand against bribery and corruption and to choose the right viziers, namely from amongst the members of ulama coming from the *ecnebîs*. Thus, the “ecnebî” element in the narrative intersects with ulama, adding further weight to the argument that the patronage of 1591/2 edition of *Saltıknâme* is closely related to the ulama of the late 16th century. On the other side, there is the fact that the Sultan Murad III was a booklover and patron of various books, who spent much time reading and listening books in his palace. Interested mostly in history, Sufism, and wonder-tales, and charging an author to compose a book consisting of unheard tales, Murad III may well have been one of the reasons that *Saltıknâme* was copied towards the Islamic millennium, patronized by a member of both the ulama and of a certain faction in the court.

A detailed analysis of the court factions in the reign of Murad III comparing their political positions with the contents of *Saltıknâme* can even provide certain names or clues as to the possible patrons of the narrative. Furthermore, a meticulous study on the records of the borrowed books in Topkapı Palace Library in the late 16th century can reveal the identities of its copyist(s). *Saltıknâme* is an extraordinarily rich narrative and can be used as a historical source, not inspite of, but for the very reason that it has many anachronical elements, all of which present a researcher with promising and brilliant studies. Possible future studies on

the intertextuality between *Saltıknâme* and other popular texts from several genres of the period can reveal many more features and aspects of it, and that contribute to the field still in need to have fresh approaches, and brand-new arguments.

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