TURKISH-SPEAKING MUSLIM INTERPRETIVE COMMUNITIES IN LATE MEDIEVAL ANATOLIA THROUGH THE PRISM OF THE *SĀ'ATNĀME* (THE BOOK OF THE HOUR)

by

Ece Derindere

MA Thesis in Comparative History, with a specialization
in Late Antique, Medieval, and Renaissance Studies.

Supervisor: Prof. Tijana Krstić

External Reader: Asst. Prof. Ferenc Csirkés

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(Turkey)

Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,

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Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU.

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Vienna, Austria
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Author's declaration

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

Vienna, 10 November 2024

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Signature

Abstract

This thesis examines the *Sā'atnāme*, a widely circulated but little-studied late medieval Turkish text, in light of the political, social, and religious transformations of post-Mongol Anatolia. It presents the *Sā'atnāme* as both a reflection of the context in which it was produced and an active force in shaping it. Arguing that the text highlights an interplay between *charisma-* and *scripture-loyal* Islamic orientations, prominent in the region, the thesis explores how the *Sā'atnāme* functioned as an alternative text to the Qur'ān and *hadith* while being a conduit for *sevāb* (meritorious reward granted by God) and *baraka* (blessings) within Turkish-speaking Muslim communities. Beyond its content, the thesis traces the *Sā'atnāme*'s manuscript journey, examining its dissemination and reception in the early modern Ottoman Empire through paratextual elements in its various manuscript copies. By linking the text's dissemination to the proliferation of *'ilm-i hāl* literature from the mid-16th century onward, this thesis offers insights into the religious history of Anatolia and expands our understanding of the newly emerging Turkish religious literature in the region.

Acknowledgments.

First and foremost, I want to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Prof. Tijana Krstić, whose unwavering support, patience, and constant feedback made this thesis possible. Working under her guidance not only made my time at Central European University meaningful but also profoundly contributed to my growth as a researcher.

Then I would like to give my heartfelt tribute to my family, here, in a written form, as I have this opportunity. I am thankful to have a father like Erdal Derindere, who instilled in me the power of reading from as early as I can remember. He encouraged me to ask the questions that I am grappling with today and helped me realize that answers to those questions are often not as straightforward as one might imagine. If there is one person that I will be forever indebted to, however, is my mother Nur Derindere. She is the reason why I turned out to be such a strong woman. Her unwavering support in every form has made it possible for me to study abroad and pursue my passion. I am also more than grateful to have a big sister like Elif Bahçıvan, who always has my back. The little human beings, Ayşe Sara and Siraç Bahçıvan, she brought to this world fill my life with the greatest joy.

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INTRODUCTION

In the studies of Islam in late medieval Anatolia, the existence of "heterodox" Turkish Islam associated with the "little tradition" of rural communities, contrasting with "orthodox" Islam associated with the "great tradition" of learned urban elites, had long been recognized. However, as I will discuss below, recent research has revised this binary model, sparking an interest in achieving a more sophisticated understanding of the diverse characteristics of Islam, its development and spread in Anatolia by studying the literary heritage of the peninsula in its political, social, and intellectual context. My thesis aligns with this ongoing scholarly effort. Focusing on a late medieval Anatolian text, the *Sā'atnāme* (The Book of the Hour), from the corpus of the newly emerging Turkish literature in the region, it aims to shed light on how this particular text offers valuable insights into the religious experiences of the Turkish-speaking Muslim communities, as well as the "type" of Islam spreading in the region.

I.1. Writing on Islam in Late Medieval Anatolia

With the arrival of the Seljuqs in the late 11th century, Anatolia gradually transformed from a Christian land into a predominantly Muslim one. This significant process of Islamization, which occurred alongside that of Turkicization of the region, roughly between the 12th and 15th century, was often studied in European historiography through the experiences of the Christian populations who were converting to Islam and their interactions with the Muslims.[1] At the same time, in the studies, two main paradigms, which were fundamentally opposed to each other, were employed: on the one hand, there was Speros Vryonis' interpretation of the spread of Islam in "Asia Minor" as coercion and destruction of Byzantine civilization and Christianity; on the other, there was Frederick W. Hasluck's idea of religious syncretism, which suggested

[1] For a discussion on how the term "Islamization" has been perceived in scholarship, see A. C. S. Peacock, "Introduction: Comparative Perspectives on Islamisation," in *Islamisation: Comparative Perspectives*, ed. A. C. S. Peacock (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), pp. 1–9.

that shared sacred spaces and saints fostered the blending of various elements from Christianity and Islam, resulting in the formation of an Islamic "heterodoxy" in the region and easing the conversion of Christians.[2] As a result, scholarly discussions on the subject often lacked variety and depth, and little attention was given to the inner dynamics of the religious life of the Turkish-speaking communities in Anatolia who had also recently embraced Islam and were in the process of acculturation to the religion.

Moving on to modern Turkish historiography, in a similar manner, the exploration of the Islamization of Anatolia had been static, as much of the scholarship was dominated by a narrative formulated by an early 20th-century scholar, Mehmet Fuat Köprülü. This narrative, generally labeled in the literature as the Köprülü paradigm, offered a religious and cultural history of Anatolia characterized by a nationalistic quest, focusing on—but also overemphasizing—the role of the Turkish-speaking communities in the development and spread of Islam in the region.[3] In a nutshell, Köprülü proposed a direct link between the "type" of Islam shaped in Anatolia (especially among the Turcophones)—often referred to as "Turkish" or "Anatolian" Islam—and Central Asian shamanism, and considered the spiritual and religious leaders of the nomadic Turkmen tribes (*baba*s) in Anatolia as the Islamicized version of the old Turkish shamans in Central Asia.[4] According to him, upon migrating to the

[2] For a short evaluation of these two approaches, see A.C.S. Peacock, Bruno De Nicola, and Sara Nur Yıldız, "Introduction," in *Islam and Christianity in Medieval Anatolia*, eds. A.C.S. Peacock, Bruno De Nicola and Sara Nur Yıldız (England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2015), pp. 7–11. For Vryonis' monumental book in which he deals with the fall of Byzantium and assigns the Turco-Muslim dominance in Anatolia as the main reason for it, see Speros Vryonis, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century* (Berkey, LA: University of California Press, 1971). To understand how Hasluck built his idea of religious syncretism—although he did not use this exact term—in late medieval Anatolia, see Frederick W. Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans*, 2 Vols., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1929).

[3] This caused an unbalanced representation of how different communities contributed to and were affected by the region's Islamization process, akin to what was observed in European historiography.

[4] In Köprülü's arguments, Ahmad Yasawi (d. 1166), a prominent Central Asian mystic, and the Yesevī Sufi order played a crucial role in establishing a cultural and religious continuity between Central Asian and Anatolian Turks. It should be mentioned, however, that Köprülü's ideas on the Yesevī Sufi order changed in the 1920s. First, in one of his most important works, Köprülü stated that the Yesevī Sufi order was originally Sunni but acquired a

peninsula, Turkmen tribes, guided by their *baba*s, maintained a strong attachment to their old shamanic beliefs and practices—even though they converted to Islam—as well as to their "nomadic lifestyles and orally passed on culture." Thus, they showed little interest in "orthodox" Sunni Islam, which had found its presence in the written Arabo-Persian culture of the urban centers, and instead, they became open to being influenced by "'deviant' popular Shiʿi and esoteric (*baṭinī*) currents."[5] This situation, Köprülü argued, paved the way for the emergence of two opposing forms of Islam in late medieval Anatolia: "high/orthodox/urban" Islam tied to Sunnism and "low/heterodox/rural" Turkish Islam tied to Bektashism and Shi'ism, which in later centuries epitomized itself in Kızılbash/Alevism.[6]

Irène Mélikoff and her student Ahmet Yaşar Ocak are the two leading scholars whose names should be mentioned right after Köprülü, as they closely followed his footsteps by expanding on the study of "heterodox" Turkish Islam in Anatolia and perpetuated this notion into contemporary scholarship. Similar to Köprülü, Mélikoff regarded the Alevi and Bektashi traditions as the main manifestations of Turkish Islam and primarily strengthened his argument regarding the influence of ancient Turkish shamanism on these traditions.[7] Introducing a more systematic analysis than Köprülü, she asserted that various Alevi and Bektashi rituals and concepts had their equivalents in shamanistic customs.[8] Ocak's stance, however, differed from

"heterodox" character in Anatolia due to the region's complex religious atmosphere. See, Mehmet Fuat Köprülü, *Türk Edebiyatında İlk Mutasavvıflar* (Ankara: Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Yayınları, 1976); for English translation: *Early Mystics in Turkish Literature*, eds. Gary Leiser and Robert Dankoff (London: Routledge, 2006). Later in his works, he revised this statement, arguing that the Yesevī Sufi order had non-Sunni traits even before its presence in Anatolia. See, for example, Mehmet Fuat Köprülü, *Anadolu'da İslamiyet* (İstanbul: Alfa Yayınları, 2017).

[5] Ayfer Karakaya-Stump, *The Kizilbash-Alevis in Ottoman Anatolia: Sufism Politics and Community* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2022), pp. 8–9.

[6] One of the important points in Köprülü's arguments was his reference to the eclectic and syncretic nature of "heterodox" Turkish Islam, in vain to Hasluck's ideas. However, while recognizing their influences, Köprülü did not emphasize the non-Muslim or non-Turkish elements that contributed to this so-called syncretism.

[7] It is important to note that in contrast to Köprülü, Mélikoff attributed the Shi'i elements in Turkish Islam to Safavid influence in later centuries. Ocak shares a similar view with Mélikoff on this issue.

[8] Mélikoff also qualified the Alevi and Bektashi traditions as syncretic. Apart from the dominant influence of shamanism, she noted Manichean and Christian elements in them. In this sense, her approach, according to

both Köprülü and Mélikoff. While he acknowledged the presence of shamanistic remnants in Alevi and Bektashi traditions, he stressed the influence of "non-Islamic religions and religious movements such as Buddhism, Manichaeism, Paulicianism, and Bogomilism" on them more.[9] Ocak also located the roots of these traditions within the sphere of Islamic formations—albeit "heterodox" and marginalized ones—rather than the pre-Islamic Turkish past, and he specifically highlighted the importance the Vefā'ī and Nizārī İsmā'ilī Sufi orders.[10]

In the past two decades, all three paradigms introduced here have come under considerable scrutiny. Vyronis's interpretation has been mostly criticized due to his heavy reliance on Byzantine sources, and challenged by "[the new findings of the] studies of fifteenth-century Christian communities based on Ottoman archival documentation."[11] Likewise, Hasluck's understanding of shared sacred places and saints as intermediaries for those converted from Christianity has been contested and the need for more careful consideration of the agency of religious figures alongside the intricate socio-political context surrounding shared sites has been highlighted. The concept of syncretism, too, has been reassessed, as scholars questioned its utility and neutrality as an analytical tool for explaining the "historical reality of religious differences" in late medieval Anatolia.[12] As for Köprülü's thesis (including

Peacock, De Nicola, and Yıldız, can be evaluated as "a complete fusion of the Köprülü paradigm with the Hasluck model." See Peacock, De Nicola, and Yıldız, "Introduction," p. 10 and fn. 32. For Mélikoff's works related to the subject matter, see Irène Mélikoff, *Hadji Bektach: un mythe et ses avatars: Genèse et évolution du soufisme populaire en Turquie* (Leiden: Brill, 1998); for Turkish translation: *Hacı Bektaş: Efsaneden Gerçeğe*, trans. Turan Alptekin (İstanbul: Cumhuriyet Kitapları, 1998); and Irène Mélikoff, *Sur les traces du soufisme turc : Recherches'sur l'Islam populaire en Anatolie* (İstanul: Isis, 1992); for Turkish translation: *Uyur İdik Uyardılar: Alevîlik-Bektaşîlik Araştırmaları*, trans. Turan Alptekin (İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1993).

[9] Ahmet T. Karamustafa, "Origins of Anatolian Sufism," in *Sufism and Sufis in Ottoman Society: Sources, Doctrine, Rituals, Turuq, Architecture, Literature and Fine Arts, Modernism*, ed. Ahmet Yaşar Ocak (Ankara: Turkish Historical Society, 2005), p. 73.

[10] See, most importantly, his *Türk Sufîliğine Bakışlar* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1996); *Türkiye Sosyal Tarihinde İslam'ın Macerası* (İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2010) and *Orta Çağ Anadolu'sunda İslam'ın Ayak İzleri: Selçuklu Dönemi* (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2011).

[11] See Peacock, De Nicola and Yıldız, "Introduction," p. 9 and fn. 25.

[12] See Tijana Krstić, "The Ambiguous Politics of 'Ambiguous Sanctuaries': F. Hasluck and Historiography of Syncretism and Conversion to Islam in 15th- and 16th-century Ottoman Rumeli," in *Archaeology, Anthropology and Heritage in the Balkans and Anatolia: The Life and Times of F.W. Hasluck, 1878-1920*, ed. David Shankland,

Mèlikoff and Ocak's contributions and revisions to it), although it was highly appreciated for turning scholars' attention to the Turkish-speaking communities as well as the texts they were producing and consuming, especially the application of orthodoxy vs. heterodoxy binary—which comes with other binaries, such as urban vs. rural and Sunnism vs. Shi'ism or Kızılbash/Alevism—to capture the religious picture of Anatolia before the late 15th century has received several objections.

Among these objections, perhaps the most frequently cited has been Cemal Kafadar's analysis, which, in his exploration of the complexities surrounding the Ottoman state's formation, underscored the challenge of "see[ing] 'heterodoxy in any act or sign of belief" in historical contexts where no clear, established authority or power structure existed to "rigorously defin[e] and strictly enforc[e] an orthodoxy." As this was exactly the case in Anatolia as well as the Balkan region between the 11th to 15th centuries, Kafadar suggested that "maybe the religious history of Anatolian and Balkan Muslims living in the frontier areas of [this] period…should be conceptualized in part in terms of a 'metadoxy,'"—a term that he described as "a state of being beyond doxies, a combination of being doxy-naive and not being doxy minded." He added that "even if one were able to identify some particular item of faith as heterodox, this would not necessarily imply "Shi'i" as it is usually assumed; questions of orthodoxy and heterodoxy, even if they are meaningful, should not be formulated along the lines of a Sunni/Shi'i sectarianism [in this particular historical context.]"[13]

In a similar vein, in his re-evaluation of the popular[14] contemporary texts written in Turkish, Rıza Yıldırım pointed out that any dichotomous—especially in terms of Sunni vs.

Vol. III (İstanbul: The Isis Press, 2013); Ayfer Karakaya-Stump, *The Kizilbash-Alevis in Ottoman Anatolia*, pp. 13–14; and Markus Dressler, *Writing Religion: The Making of Turkish Alevi Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 210–217.

[13] Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of Ottoman State* (Berkey: University of California Press, 1995), p. 76.

[14] Here, and throughout the thesis, I use the term "popular" in accordance with its conventional usage in everyday English language.

Shi'ite—view would fail to explain the religious situation in late medieval Anatolia. Drawing attention to Claude Cahen's arguments,[15] Yıldırım asserted that while certain 'philo-Alid' elements, such as the veneration of the *ahl al-bayt* (the household of the Prophet) and the commemoration of Karbala, are evident in these popular texts—previously interpreted as a sign of Shi'ism—they "should be located within the horizons of Sunni Islam." According to him, "many Alid elements of faith, which would later become excluded from 'Ottoman Sunnism,' were [in fact] accommodated within Sunni-labeled Islamic piety in [late medieval] Anatolia."[16] Sharing a similar stance, Markus Dressler, in his insightful article, "How to Conceptualize Inner-Islamic Plurality/Difference: 'Heterodoxy' and 'Syncretism' in the Writings of Mehmet F. Köprülü (1890–1966)," also contended that the application of any kind of dichotomous view of Islam to Anatolia's religious history largely stems from efforts to trace the origins of the sectarian division, which only began to emerge in the late 15th century in the region, ultimately leading to a retrospective interpretation of history. He further argued that such views tend to suggest certain religious traditions, particularly Kızılbash/Alevi beliefs in Anatolia, as less "authentically" or "properly" Islamic—a highly problematic idea that can be exploited for political and ideological purposes.[17]

[15] Yıldırım mainly refers to Cahen's "Le Problème du Shi'isme dans l'Asie Mineure turque préottomane," in *Le Shi'isme Imâmite: Colloque de Strasbourg (6-9 mai 1968)* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France), pp. 115–129, where Cahen addressed "the 'Shi'ite tinge of medieval Anatolian Islam." See Rıza Yıldırım, "Sunni Orthodox vs Shi'ite Heterodox?: A Reappraisal of Islamic Piety in Medieval Anatolia" in *Islam and Christianity in Medieval Anatolia,* eds. A.C.S. Peacock, Bruno De Nicola, and Sara Nur Yıldız (England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2015), p. 290.

[16] Yıldırım, "Sunni Orthodox vs Shi'ite Heterodox?," pp. 290, 306. See also Rıza Yıldırım, "Anadolu'da İslâmiyet: Gaziler Çağında (XII.-XIV. Asırlar) Türkmen İslâm Yorumunun Sünnî-Alevî Niteliği Üzerine Bazı Değerlendirmeler," *The Journal of Ottoman Studie*s (2014): pp. 93–124. The use of quotation marks for the term "Ottoman Sunnism" belongs to me, as this term does not refer to a single fixed definition. There is a substantial body of literature on what "Ottoman Sunnism" entails and how it developed as well as changed over the centuries. See, for example, Tijana Krstić and Derin Terzioğlu (ed.), *Historicizing Sunni Islam in the Ottoman Empire, c. 1450-c. 1750* (Brill: Leiden, 2021).

[17] Markus Dressler, "How to Conceptualize Inner-Islamic Plurality/Difference: 'Heredoxy' and 'Syncretism' in the Writings of Mehmet Fuat Köprülü (1890-1966)," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 37/3 (2010): pp. 241–260. Also, for the most comprehensive critical assessment of both Köprülü, Mélikoff, and Ocak's scholarship in a single work that I am aware of, see Markus Dressler, *Writing Religion,* especially pp. 186–210 and 252–268.

Notably, Ahmet T. Karamustafa, in his well-known book *God's Unruly Friends*, also opposed Köprülü's two-tiered understanding of Islam when looking at the deviant dervish groups during the late medieval period across the Near East, including Anatolia. He suggested the use of "a catch-all category of popular or low religion only confounds the researcher" to help "clarify the true nature of deviant dervish groups and the process of their emergence in the aftermath of the Mongol invasions." Viewing these groups' religiosities as part of "the popular religion of illiterate masses" rather than recognizing them as distinct religious phenomena, he argued, overlooks the specific features and elements that make these religiosities distinct from "the 'popular' versions of other religious trends such as millenarianism and messianism" in this period.[18] In his subsequent studies, we see that Karamustafa critiqued other aspects of Köprülü's approach as well, particularly his view on cultural preservation when investigating the religious life of the Turkish speakers in late medieval Anatolia.[19] He underlined that "speakers of Turkish (…) were not (...) mere repositories of culture but actual architects of it, and in the half millennium long history of their Islamization (…) it is their dynamism and agency, not their presumed preservation of 'archaic' lifeways, that need to be explored and explained." In line with this statement, after his examination of the corpus of Kaygusuz Abdal (d. c. 1444), a prominent Anatolian mystic, and connecting his findings from this examination to his previous works, he asserted that Kaygusuz

[18] Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends: Dervish Groups in the Islamic Later Middle Period, 1200–1550* (Salt Lake City, 1992), pp. 8–14.

[19] Karamustafa disputed Köprülü's assumption that the Yesevī Sufi order and Central Asian shamanism played a central role in the development of Anatolian Sufism, a term that scholars have used interchangeably with Turkish Islam. See Karamustafa, "Origins of Anatolian Sufism." However, it should be noted that in this article, Karamustafa mentioned consulting Devin DeWeese's unpublished findings on the Yesevī Sufi order at that time to support his argument. For Deweese's ideas regarding the role of the Yesevī Sufi order and Ahmad Yasawi in the Islamization of the Turks, and Köprülü's assumptions, see Devin DeWeese, "Khwaja Ahmad Yasavi as an Islamising Saint: Rethinking the Role of Sufis in the Islamisation of the Turks of Central Asia," in *Islamisation: Comparative Perspectives*, pp. 336–352. See also Ayfer Karakaya-Stump's *The Kizilbash-Alevis in Ottoman Anatolia,* where she criticized the idea that Kizilbash/Alevisim has Yesevī and Central Asian origins. Presenting new evidence, in this book, she revealed the strong Vefā'ī connections in the origins of Anatolian Sufism, a matter that was pointed out by a number of scholars before (mainly Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, Ocak, and Karamustafa) but did not receive the adequate attention.

Abdal was a central figure in the "development of a distinctly 'provincial' and 'latitudinarian' religious discourse," [which was particularly expressed] in Turkish" and resonated among "newly Islamizing nomads and recently settled 'new peasants'" in late medieval Anatolia. This religious discourse, which he termed as "vernacular Islam" and associated with "*abdal* piety," was not only uninterested in "Shari'a-centered practices" or "legal and theological scholarship" of urban traditions but also emerged as a direct reaction to them. Additionally, he identified this "vernacular Islam" as a foundational source of the Alevi-Bektashi tradition.[20]

The literature I have surveyed thus far shows that scholarship on the Islamization of late medieval Anatolia, particularly concerning the experiences of the Turkish-speaking Muslim communities, has moved beyond the views once steered the field. However, these "revisionist" steps have not been without limitations. Most studies—including, but not limited to, those cited here—have largely focused on the questions and issues related to the studies of Alevi-Bektashi traditions in Anatolia or the political and social history of the early Ottomans. This focus also has often led scholars to view Turkish texts as their primary sources, without necessarily considering them in relation to Arabic and Persian texts, despite the fact that all were produced and consumed simultaneously in the region. Moreover, although understandable, only a small fraction of the surviving Turkish texts from this period have been addressed in these studies. Consequently, while providing invaluable insights, they have offered only a partial understanding of what kind of Islam was practiced in this period after setting aside the concepts of "heterodoxy," "syncretism," and "orthodoxy."

[20] Ahmet T. Karamustafa, "Kaygusuz Abdal: A Medieval Turkish Saint and the Formation of Vernacular Islam in Anatolia" in *Unity in Diversity: Mysticism, Messianism and the Construction of Religious Authority in Islam*, ed. Orkhan Mir-Kasimov (Leiden: Brill, 2014), pp. 329–342. See also Ahmet T. Karamustafa, "Antinomian Sufis," *The Cambridge Companion to Sufism*, ed. Lloyd Ridgeon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 101–124; and Ahmet T. Karamustafa, "Situating Sufism in Islamizing Anatolia (Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries)," in *Sufis and Their Opponents in the Persianate World*, eds. Reza Tabandeh and Leonard Lewisohn (Irvine, CA: UCI Jordan Center for Persian Studies, 2020), pp. 141–165, where he also referred to the idea of the existence of a "vernacular Islam," associated with *abdal* piety, in late medieval Anatolia.

To my knowledge, the volume *Islamic Literature and Intellectual Life in Fourteenth- and Fifteenth-Century Anatolia*, which features different case studies of texts in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish, is the first comprehensive work that has addressed the above-mentioned limitations, along with some other shortcomings in the current scholarship on late medieval Anatolia. In the introduction to the volume, emphasizing the immense scope of the region's medieval literary heritage, Andrew Peacock and Sara Nur Yıldız have noted the urgent need to illuminate hundreds of texts in all three languages—many of which remain unpublished in manuscript form—by contextualizing them in their respective political and social environment, shaped by a multitude of actors,[21] and in relation to one another, in order to deepen our understanding of the region's literary currents and religious scenery. They have also particularly stressed the surprising "lack of attention paid to the literary production of the period by scholars of Turkish, given that this period witnessed the first great flowering of Turkish as a literary language." Unfortunately, as they have stated, with few exceptions, "texts in (…) Old Anatolian Turkish, [have not] seen as contributions to Islamic civilisation but as dry philological resources, evidence for the phonetic and grammatical characteristics of Turkish in the period before the rise of "classical" Ottoman Turkish in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries."[22] This approach, of course, has inevitably been accompanied by a general neglect of the broader historical and cultural significance of the manuscript copies of the texts, focusing solely on their written content while overlooking the trajectories of the manuscripts themselves.

[21] Peacock and Yıldız have emphasized a significant gap in scholarship: the limited attention given to the Mongol rule and the *beylik* period as essential contexts for understanding the production and consumption of the late medieval Anatolian texts.

[22] A.C.S. Peacock and Sara Nur Yıldız, "Introduction: Literature, Language and History in Late Medieval Anatolia, " in *Islamic Literature and Intellectual Life in Fourteenth- and Fifteenth-century Anatolia*, eds. A.C.S. Peacock and Sara Nur Yıldız (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag Würzburg in Kommission, 2016) pp. 19-45.

Andrew Peacock's monograph, *Islam, Literature and Society in Mongol Anatolia*, can be named as the most recent, in fact, only in-depth study on the formation of Islamic Anatolian society that follows the methodological foundation established in the previously stated volume.[23] In this study, Peacock has brought together various texts in Arabic, Turkish, and Persian, which, according to him, all "serve as a valuable first-hand source" for gaining insight into "the process by which Islam permeated politics, society, and culture" in Anatolia during the Mongol domination (1240-1380)—in his view, one of the most crucial periods of the history of the peninsula.[24] Providing a holistic understanding of cultural, social, and political trends of this period, he has demonstrated how these trends accelerated the spread of Islam across the region, and Anatolia became, in fact, more integrated into the broader Islamic Near East than it was during the Seljuk rule. It is notable that among these trends, Peacock has put a huge emphasis on the emergence of Turkish as a literary language in the region. According to him, the substantial number of Turkish texts from this period proves their role in shaping Islam in late medieval Anatolia.

Considering the limited number of studies employing more critical methodological approaches on the subject, especially as opposed to the abundance of un- or understudied literary evidence that is available, it can be said that much remains to be uncovered about the dynamics surrounding the formation of Islamic society in late medieval Anatolia. For this reason, in this thesis, with a focus on a little-studied late medieval Anatolian text, the *Sā'atnāme* (The Book of the Hour), I mainly seek to contribute to our existing knowledge about the characteristics of Islam that was taking shape and gaining influence in the region,

[23] Here, I should mention the project "IslamAnatolia: The Islamization of Anatolia c.1100-1500," coordinated by Andrew Peacock from 2012 to 2016, with substantial contributions from Sara Nur Yıldız and Bruno De Nicola. In the acknowledgments of his book, Peacock stated that this project led to the publication of his monograph. For more information on the project and its objectives, see https://www.islam-anatolia.ac.uk, accessed June 15, 2024.
[24] A.C.S. Peacock, *Islam, Literature and Society in Mongol Anatolia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), p. 9.

especially among the Turkish-speaking Muslim communities, by using self-conscious analytical tools and concepts.

I.2. A late medieval Anatolian Text: *Sā'atnāme* (The Book of the Hour)

The *Sā'atnāme* (The Book of the Hour) was compiled in plain Turkish in the late 14th century (?), by an obscure—most probably Sufi—*shaykh* named Hibetullah b. İbrahim.[25] Dividing a day into six periods, the text guides its readers and listeners on which prayers and devotional activities should be performed at each period to become a devout Muslim before the Last Hour comes. It places a huge emphasis on the moment of death and the subsequent period, beginning with the questioning by the angels *Münker* and *Nekir*, who determine whether one will be sent to hell or paradise, drawing heavily on the Islamic tradition of the torments of the grave (*kabir azābı*). What is relatively exceptional about the text is that, according to Hibetullah, anyone can secure a place in paradise by engaging with the *Sā'atnāme*—be it reading, listening, copying, or commissioning its copying and endowing it—and taking it as the ultimate guidance for their religious practices.

The existing literature on the *Sā'atnāme* mostly suffers from the previously mentioned approach that scholars of Turkish often apply to texts in Old Anatolian Turkish. As far as I am aware, the first study of the text is a master's thesis written by a Turkish Language and Literature student in Turkey, which provides a transcription of the *Sā'atnāme* based on its three 17th-century manuscript copies with a brief introduction.[26] Then, in a short article, Muhammet Yelten evaluates the text regarding its linguistic features based on a different 17th-century manuscript copy of it.[27] Ahmet Buran's book, sharing the same name as the text, follows this

[25] I believe that the text was most probably written down by one of Hibetullah's disciples during his preaching. For the reasoning behind my argument, see p. 41 and fn. 110 in this thesis.

[26] Mehmet Uzun, "Saat-name Hibetullah Bin İbrahim (Metin)," (MA Thesis, Marmara University, 1991).

[27] To my understanding, the text was introduced to the scholarship by Vasfi Mahir Kocatürk in his voluminous book *Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi: Başlangıçtan Bügüne Kadar Türk Edebiyatının Tarihi, Tahlili ve Tenkidi* (Ankara:

study. Opening with an introduction to the text, Buran provides a transcription of one of the 18th-century copies of the text along with an index.[28] Two more MA theses emerge after this book, again written by Turkish Language and Literature students in Turkey, both presenting a transcription of the text with short introductions that largely reiterate previously made remarks, along with a philological analysis.[29]

Among these studies, Buran's introduction stands out mainly for situating the *Sā'atnāme* alongside other *sā'atnāme*s (written both in verse and prose) found in library collections.[30] While no detailed study has yet been conducted on *sā'atnāme*s as a distinct genre or their place in Turkish literature, Buran, after examining several texts under the name of *sā'atnāme*,[31] notes their similarities to certain works in the Islamic literature, such as *'ilm-i nücūm* (the science of the stars) texts and *yıldıznāme*s (the books of the stars), which primarily contain astrological predictions and guidance.[32] According to him, similar to these texts, *sā'atnāme*s seem to associate each of the seven days of the week with one of the seven planets

Edebiyat Yayınevi, 1964), as he is the only scholar Yelten refers to in his article. For Yelten's article, see Muhammet Yelten, "Hibetullah b. İbrahim'in *Saatnâme*si ve Eserde Dudak Uyumunun Durumu," *TDED* 28 (1998): pp. 585–593.

[28] Ahmet Buran, *Sā'atnāme* (Ankara: Akçağ Yayınları, 2011).

[29] One of the theses is based on a 20th-century manuscript copy of the text. See Abdülkadir Bayram, "*Sā'atnāme (İnceleme-Metin-Söz Varlığı-Dizin)*" (MA Thesis, Yozgat Bozok University, 2012). The other thesis is based on a part of a manuscript copy of an unknown date. See Jale Acar, "Edirne Selimiye Yazma Eserler Kütüphanesi 22 Sel 7174'te Kayıtlı Bulunan Sāʿatnāme (vr. 38b-74a) Adlı Eserin Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Eğitimi Çerçevesinde Bilim Dili Açısından İncelenmesi" (MA Thesis, Marmara University, 2022).

[30] In his thesis, Mehmet Uzun also mentions that the content of this specific *sā'atnāme* diverges from other *sā'atnāme*s. However, Buran's research appears to be more thorough. It is also worth noting that Ahmet Buran's introduction is a revised version of a previously published article of his. See Ahmet Buran, "Türkçe Sā'atnāmeler ve Hîbetullah İbni İbrāhim'in Sā'atnāmesi," *Journal of Turkic Civilization Studies* 1/1 (2004): pp. 263–281.

[31] Buran, *Sā'atnāme*, pp. 14–16.

[32] For studies on other *sā'atnāme*s that have published since Buran's book, see Fatma Özçakmak, "Müellifi Bilinmeyen Manzum Bir Saatname Örneği: Risale-i Saatname," *Korkut Ata Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi* 7 (2022): pp. 245–263; Mehmet Emin Bars, "Leipzig Kütüphanesinde Kayıtlı Müellifi Bilinmeyen Bir Saatname Örneği," *Bingöl Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* 25 (2023): pp. 135–146; Enes İlhan, "Örnek Saatname Metni (Havass-ı Eyyâm) Işığında Günlere Dair Bazı İnanışlar ve Kaynakları," *Littera Turca Journal of Turkish Language And Literature* 6/3 (2020): pp. 443–68, and Esra Güzel Akalın, "Abdülganî bin Celîl Geredevî'nin Kitâb-ı Sâ'at-nâmesi," *Karabük Türkoloji Dergisi* 6/2 (2023): pp. 108–117.

(*kamer, ʻutārid, zühre, şems, merīh, müşretī, zuhal*)[33] and divide each day into seven periods, with each of these periods governed, again, by one of the seven planets. They guide their audience on the optimal timing for various activities and provide insights into personal traits and potential outcomes, based on the idea that the movements and alignments of the seven planets influence earthly events. Although the *Sāʻatnāme* also divides the day into different periods, these periods, namely *ahşām sā'ati, yatsu sā'ati, gökler sā'ati, uyku sā'ati, gaflet sā'ati,* and *ʻarş sā'ati*,[34] do not correspond to this seven-planet framework. Also, rather than mapping human activity and character onto celestial movements, the *Sāʻatnāme* aligns these periods with religious practices and states of devotion, aiming to direct its audience through a cycle of piety and remembrance of the divine.[35]

In his introduction, Buran, similar to other studies conducted both before and after him, also indicates that there is no available information on Hibetullah's life, nor are there any details regarding the place and date of the *Sāʻatnāme*'s composition.[36] He argues, however, that the text must have been written between the second half of the 15th century and the first half of the 16th century, given that there is no known manuscript copy of the text predates the mid-17th century.[37] This argument contradicts Yelten's claim that, based on its linguistic characteristics,

[33] Respectively: the Moon, Mercury, Venus, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn.

[34] Respectively: the time of evening, the time one and a half to two hours after sunset, the time of the skies, the time of sleep, the time of negligence, and the time of the throne. *Gökler sā'ati* (the time of the skies) and *ʻarş sā'ati* (the time of the throne) can also be translated as "the time of the heavens" and "the time of beyond the heavens," reflecting the Qur'anic cosmology that Hibetullah embraces in the text—a matter I will refer to in the second chapter of this thesis.

[35] Only towards the end of the text are the characteristics and impacts of the seven planets, along with other natural and astronomical signs, briefly described.

[36] During my thesis research, I also did not encounter any information about Hibetullah. Everything we know about him, which comes from the *Sāʻatnāme*, is that he was an *ʻālim*, *vā'iz*, and *shaykh*. Uzun also argues that Hibetullah might have compiled two other texts titled *Melheme* and *ʻİlm-i Nücūm*, as Hibetullah states in one instance: "In fact, it was explained in *Melheme* and *ʻİlm-i nücūm* that… " Although it is probable, this statement does not necessarily imply that Hibetullah refers to his own works; he might be referring to any works written under these names. I should also add that this statement is absent in the manuscript copy that I use for my analysis.

[37] It seems that Buran was unaware of Uzun's thesis, as one of the manuscript copies that Uzun utilized was from 1613, which predates the copy that Buran considers to be the oldest, dated to 1647.

the text most likely dates to the 14th century.[38] According to their statements, both scholars were unaware of the existing 14th- and 15th-century manuscript copies of the *Sā'atnāme* (precisely dated to 1375 and 1475). In this thesis, I will base my analysis of the text on its 14th-century copy—located in the Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Dr. Ali Sevil Akay collection, with the manuscript shelfmark 421/2—as this one currently appears to be the oldest surviving copy of the text.[39] It is possible that earlier-dated copies may surface in the future, given that there are already at least 300 known copies in libraries across a region from the United Kingdom to Egypt.[40]

Diverging from all these studies, Tijana Krstić briefly analyzes the *Sā'atnāme* in her book *Contested Conversions to Islam: Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* when discussing the early examples of Ottoman *'ilm-i hāl*s (catechisms). Stating that "the text has so far escaped the researchers' radar," she is the first to evaluate the text within its historical context and highlight its important aspects. She also presents some valuable findings from her survey of various manuscript copies of the text.[41] This thesis expands upon her foundational research.

[38] Yelten also states that Vasfi Mahir Kocatürk defined the text as a 14th-century advice book (*öğüt kitabı*) based on a manuscript copy in his personal library. Additionally, while Yelten argues that the text is a translation from an Arabic or Persian source, Buran disagrees with this argument. See Buran, *Sā'atnāme*, p. 18–19; Yelten, "Hibetullah b. İbrahim'in *Saatnâme*si," p. 588.

[39] Tijana Krstić informed me of the 15th-century manuscript copy of the text, which is located in the İBB Atatürk Kitaplığı, Nadir Eserler, K. 311; and I became aware of the existence of the 14th-century manuscript copy of the text through the IslamAnatolia project's database. After closely comparing this copy with the one transcribed by Buran, I realized that their content is strongly aligned, with only minimal differences.

[40] Buran identifies 233 manuscript copies of the text held in libraries both in Turkey and abroad. For his list, see Buran, *Sā'atnāme*, pp. 22–48. However, according to my research, there are 273 copies cataloged in the Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu Başkanlığı database, 16 copies in the Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Kütüphanesi, and 11 copies in the İBB Atatürk Kitaplığı—indicating that there are at least 290 manuscript copies of the text in Turkish libraries alone.

[41] Tijana Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam: Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), p. 35–37.

I.3. Thesis Outline & Research Methodology

To frame my analysis of the *Sā'atnāme*, in this thesis, I define Islam in late medieval Anatolia as a "discursive tradition" and situate the text as a part of it.[42] In doing so, firstly, I seek to provide an approach that avoids the pitfalls of the older conceptualizations in the field, such as heterodox vs. orthodox Islam, and emphasize the multifaceted nature of Islam in late medieval Anatolia which was defined by the ongoing interpretation and interaction within the political, cultural, religious, and intellectual currents of the peninsula and the broader Near East. Secondly, I intend to highlight the place of the *Sā'atnāme*—and through it, the newly emerging Turkish religious literature—in this dynamic environment.

Considering that the *Sā'atnāme* was produced in a predominantly illiterate world, where texts were mostly consumed aurally in various private and public settings, I also utilize the concept of "interpretive communities" in this thesis. In her above-mentioned book, Krstić proposes that "the spread of Islam in Ottoman domains entailed the formation of multiple "textual" or interpretative communities, [i.e.,] micro-societies organized around a common understanding of a 'text.'"[43] I suggest that this argument, the formation of micro-societies organized around shared interpretation and meaning of texts with the spread of Islam, can be stretched out to the outside of Ottoman domains and be applied across Anatolia. By focusing on this concept, as Krstić highlights, we can "break down the distinction between oral and written modes of communication and bring listeners into the realm of written texts"—in the case of the present study, into the realm of the *Sā'atnāme*. This approach would enable us to understand how Turkish-speaking Muslim communities, without implying an audience

[42] Talal Asad introduced this concept to critically examine how religious practices and beliefs, especially within Islam, evolve and are sustained over time as they interact with changing social, historical, and political contexts. For more on the concept of discursive tradition, see Talal Asad, "The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam," *Qui Parle* 17/2 (2009): pp. 1–30.

[43] She adds, "However, this text does not necessarily have to be a literary artifact; it could also represent a group experience (such as participation in the conquest of Rumeli), an individual life story (like the lives of warriors and saints), or simply a term." See Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam*, p. 27.

consisting of only a specific group or social stratum, might have engaged with this specific text.

Within this framework, in the first chapter of this thesis, I will outline the political, social, intellectual, and religious landscape of late medieval Anatolia. After giving a short overview of the Seljuq rule, I will move on to the Mongol domination in the peninsula and the subsequent *beylik* period, focusing on two main developments—namely the spread of Sufism and the rise of holy men, and the emergence of Turkish as a literary medium—which facilitated the Islamization of the peninsula to an unprecedented degree.

In the second chapter, building on the previous chapter and drawing on Markus Dressler's terminology, I will mainly argue that the *Sā'atnāme* is a text that embodies *charisma-* and *scripture-loyal* Islamic orientations—mirroring the religious, intellectual, and literary currents of late medieval Anatolia while being an active participant in shaping them. I will demonstrate how Hibetullah styles himself as a *vā'iz*; merges his personal charisma with his knowledge of the Islamic scriptures and, by doing so, creates a text that functions not only as an alternative religious guide to the Qur'ān and *hadith* but also as a source of *sevāb* (God's reward for good deeds and righteous actions) and *baraka* (blessings), and a key to entering paradise for the Turkish-speaking Muslim communities. While doing so, I will delve into the main aspects of the *Sā'atnāme*, uncover its objectives, and examine the strategies it employs to achieve them. Additionally, I will reflect on the type of piety the text promotes and consider the question of who its intended audience might have been.

Lastly, in the third chapter of the thesis, I will adopt "material philology"[44] as a conceptual tool to go beyond the content of the *Sā'atnāme.* I will explore the text's social

[44] Introduced by Stephen G. Nichols in his article "Philology in a Manuscript Culture," *Speculum* 65/1 (1990): pp. 1–10, this concept has prompted scholars to transcend the traditional focus on textual content alone and perceive the physical aspects of manuscript copies of a text—such as their material composition, production, transmission, and the conditions under which they were read and used—to understand their meaning and significance in various social and cultural contexts.

afterlife and trace its lasting influence up to the 20th century by examining the paratextual elements of various manuscript copies of the text, considering each of them as a unique historical artifact. Thereby, I will provide a general overview of how the *Sā'atnāme* was received, interpreted, and circulated within the Ottoman lands, as well as the questions of who engaged with it and what possible motivations they had.

FIRST CHAPTER

Framing the Political, Social, Intellectual, and Religious Landscape of Late Medieval Anatolia

It was not until the late 11th century, approximately four hundred and fifty years after the Prophet Muhammad received the first revelation of the Qur'ān, that Islam gained a foothold in Anatolia, following the Seljuqs' victory over the Byzantine imperial armies in the Battle of Manzikert. This was a turning point in the history of the peninsula—the beginning of a long period of cultural transformation during which Anatolia gradually integrated into the broader Islamic world against the backdrop of constant political conflicts. This chapter attempts to offer a brief evaluation of this dynamic era, from the late 11th century to the late 14th century, focusing on the key currents that will help elucidate the context in which the *Sā'atnāme* produced.

1.1 Anatolia Under the Seljuq Rule

In the late 11th and early 12th century, the Seljuqs of Rum were "just another piece in a mosaic of realms" in Anatolia. Decades before the Battle of Manzikert in 1071, various Turkmen tribes from Central Asia had been conducting raids into the eastern part of the peninsula. In the wake of the conquest, the influx of these Turkish nomadic groups intensified. While some established states under their respective dynasties, namely the Danishmendids, Saltukids, Artukids, and Mengücekids, others remained smaller factions. But all, including the Seljuqs, adeptly navigated the region's complex and changing environment, characterized by a web of military clashes, shifting alliances, and diplomatic interactions with other existing actors. Prominent among these actors were the Byzantines, controlling western Anatolia and parts of the Black Sea and Mediterranean coastlines; the Armenians, carving out a kingdom in Cilicia; and the

Crusaders, who were setting up temporary strategic footholds to extend their military and political leverage in the Near East.[45]

Only from the mid-12th century onwards the Seljuqs turned into the most influential polity in the region. Under the rule of Masud I (r. 1116-1156), they managed to use the internal struggles among the Danishmendids (their main rivals after the Byzantines) to their advantage and extend their influence into north-central and eastern Anatolia. They successfully protected their capital city, Konya, from a Byzantine assault, and later, they gained a military triumph against the Second Crusade forces in the Battle of Dorylaeum in 1147. Masud I's successor, Kılıç Arslan II (r. 1156-1192), continued this expansion and consolidated their rule, subjugating the Danishmendids to vassalage and defeating the Byzantine imperial armies once again in the Battle of Myriocephalum in 1176.[46] Under his reign, Islamic culture also began to flourish with the construction of architectural landmarks and the emergence of literary and scholarly activities.[47] However, the Seljuq lands were not yet the primary intellectual center of the region. In eastern Anatolia, other Muslim courts were actively sponsoring works written in Arabic—as it was the language of Islam—and Persian.[48]

[45] Bruno de Nicola, *The Chobanids of Kastamonu: Politics, Patronage and Religion in Thirteenth-Century Anatolia* (London: Routledge, 2024), p. 15.
[46] De Nicola, *The Chobanids*, p. 16.
[47] In Konya, Kılıç Arslan II initiated a building program encompassing a grand mosque, palace, and funerary complex in the Islamic style, which his successors continued to develop. Over the following years, numerous palaces, caravanserais, and pavilions were constructed in other cities, such as Aksaray, Kayseri, Alanya, and Antalya, within the citadels and the surrounding rural areas. See A.C.S. Peacock, "Court and Nomadic Life in Saljuq Anatolia," in *Turco-Mongol Rulers, Cities, and City Life*, ed. David Durand-Guédy (Leiden: Brill, 2013), pp. 194–201. Interestingly, despite their architectural contributions, Seljuq sultans generally did not prioritize the construction of madrasas and mosques; even when they did, these structures were typically confined to the citadel area, suggesting that promoting Islam was not their primary aim. Instead, Peacock argues that it was Iranian émigré artisans and merchants who played a crucial role in the Islamization of Anatolia, as they contributed to the rise of an urban middle class that particularly supported the building of mosques. See A.C.S. Peacock, "Islamisation in Medieval Anatolia," in *Islamisation: Comparative Perspectives from History*, ed. Peacock (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017).
[48] For details on the works, and scholars active at the court of Kılıç Arslan II, as well as those associated with other Turkish Muslim states, see Peacock, , pp. 33–35.

This situation changed in the first half of the 13th century, as the Seljuqs steadily absorbed the other prominent Turkish Muslim states and widened their domain over the peninsula. This political growth was accompanied by a financial upsurge driven by the control of various Black Sea ports, the opening of new silver mines, increased revenues from agricultural production, and the "booty from [the] raids and military campaigns in Christian territories."[49] The collapse of the Seljuq sultanate in Iraq in 1194 was another element that boosted their growing power since this occurrence positioned them as the sole heir to the prestigious legacy of the Great Seljuq Empire of Iran and Central Asia. Thanks to this newly acquired status, the Seljuq court developed a profound confidence and started to embrace "the sophisticated Persian cultural models" as a testament to their legitimacy to rule. The sultans adopted "regal names redolent of ancient Iranian legend as recorded in Firdawsi's [famous] *Shahnama*, such as Kaykhusraw, Kayka'us, and Kayqubad," and they were interested more in being active patrons of Perso-Islamic literature.[50]

During the reign of Alaal-Din Kayqubad I (1219-1237), the Seljuqs reached their "golden age." Alaal-Din's successful efforts to centralize administrative authority were instrumental in ensuring political stability. Combined with the thriving economy and the court's support for scholarly pursuits, this made Anatolia a haven for contemporary literati among whom were famous Sufis, notably Ibn Arabi (d. 1240), Najm al-Din Razi (d. 1247), and Baha al-Din Walad (the father of Jalal al-Din Rumi). Migrating from various corners of the Near East, mainly due to the political upheavals from the rise of the Khwarazmians and the Mongols, these intellectuals—along with the local writers—benefited from the patronage of the Seljuq sultans and the members of the ruling elite. The result was a substantial increase in

[49] De Nicola, *The Chobanids*, p. 24.
[50] Peacock, *Islam, literature and society*, pp. 36–37.

textual production in different genres in Persian and, to some extent, Arabic, which was largely religiously oriented.[51]

Despite these developments, the early 13th century was fraught with internal challenges, primarily because of the Sultanate's "patrimonial understanding of the reign." Before their rule ended, the Seljuq sultans had divided their territories among their sons and relatives, each bestowed with the title of *melik*. Often, these *melik*s, and even the military officials under them (*'āmir*s), treated the lands they oversaw not as part of a larger state but as personal dominions. Thus, this governance model, coupled with a lack of systematic succession planning, led to fierce competition and disputes between the local lords, undermining the state's ability to operate as a unified entity. Even during the time of Ala al-Din Kayqubad I—whose reign is considered the zenith of the central authority in Seljuqid rule—direct control over every part of the Sultanate could not be exerted.[52] This ongoing decentralization provided an opening for their nomadic subjects, particularly in the border areas, to act independently and even attempt to establish their own dynasties.[53]

Considering the internal challenges mentioned above, it comes as little surprise that when Ala al-Din Kayqubad I died in 1237, a dominant military and political elite bypassed his succession plans and installed Ghiyath al-Din Kaykhusraw II (instead of Ala al-Din's other son Izz al-Din Kılıç Arslan) as the new sultan (r. 1237-1246). Aiming to continue to expand eastward, Kaykhusraw II faced a Mongol threat in eastern Anatolia, which started to be felt at

[51] Ibid., pp. 37–40.

[52] De Nicola, The C*hobanids*, p. 16.

[53] One should also consider that the commonly perceived strict opposition between the Turkmens and the Seljuq court, both spatially and politically, is in fact misleading. While it is true that the Turkmens mainly occupied the peripheral areas of the Sultanate and occasionally clashed with the Seljuqs, they were also present around the major urban centers—including Konya—and sometimes built relationships with the sultans, even offered their support to them. Especially the sultans' seasonal travels, which mirrored the pastoral nomadic routes from the Mediterranean coast to the Anatolian plateau, and the construction of royal residences in rural areas frequented by the Turkmen population allowed for interactions between the two parties. See Peacock, "Court and Nomadic Life."

the time of his father.[54] Meanwhile, several Turkmen uprisings unfolded across Anatolia, and in 1240, a major rebellion headed by a popular religious figure, Baba İlyas (d. 1240), broke out. Weakened by this continuous turmoil, the Seljuqs reached a critical juncture at the Battle of Kösedağ in 1243. They suffered an overwhelming defeat against the Mongols, which led to their forced submission and the imposition of hefty tributes.[55] Although the dynasty in Konya officially prevailed, from this point on, the real power holders were the Seljuq officials who made alliances with the Mongol overlords and acted under their suzerainty.[56]

1.2 Mongol Domination and the *Beylik* Period

Initially, Anatolia briefly formed part of the Golden Horde (the northwestern part of the Mongol Empire) under the rule of Batu Khan (r. 1224-1255), with the Mongol General Baiju acting as the effective leader. However, in 1251, Hülegü's appointment by his brother Great Khan Möngke (r. 1251-1259) as the ruler of the Empire's western territories heralded drastic changes that affected the whole Near East, including Anatolia. In the 1250s, mobilizing a formidable army in Mongolia, Hülegü launched ambitious campaigns toward the west. First, he took control of cities in Iran, including the fortress of Ismailis in the Alamut Valley, which was once believed to be invulnerable. Then, establishing his stronghold in Tabriz, Hülegü founded the Ilkhanate in 1256, a new state that redefined the political boundaries of the previous Islamic dynasties in the region. By 1258, he sacked the city of Baghdad and killed the Abbasid caliph al-Mustasim. This momentous event marked the opening of a new chapter in Islamic history. Since the long-standing caliphal-sultanic-jurisprudential figure that gives a

[54] In the 1230s, the Mongols launched raids into several cities in eastern Anatolia, such as Erzurum and Sivas, and dispatched their emissaries to demand the Seljuqs' submission. In response, Ala al-Din Kayqubad I "nominally submitted to the Great Khan Ögetei (r. 1229–1241), keeping Anatolia as a subject region but without real Mongol control over the area," probably being aware of the severe consequences faced by those who had resisted the Mongols. However, he died before he could officially send his message to Ögetei. See De Nicola, The C*hobanids*, p. 17-19; Peacock, *Islam, literature and society*, pp. 40–41.

[55] De Nicola, The C*hobanids*, pp. 17–18.

[56] See Charles Melville, "Anatolia under the Mongols," in *The Cambridge History of Turkey Volume I: Byzantium to Turkey 1071-1453*, ed. Kate Fleet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 53–57.

sense of leadership to Muslim society (even if it was emblematic in the last centuries) ceased to exist, a pressing question arose: Who will be the new universal leader of the Muslim world? Following Baghdad's fall, Hülegü continued to grow his power and captured two other important cities, Aleppo and Damascus, with relatively little resistance. However, his progression was halted at the Battle of Ain Jalut in 1260, where he fought against the Mamluks of Syria and Egypt.[57]

In the midst of these developments, Hülegü compelled Baiju to switch his alliance from the Golden Horde to the Mongols of Iran and tasked him with reconquering Anatolia in his name. The peninsula, after all, was not just rich in resources and grazing lands for the livestock—particularly horses—that were essential to maintaining the Mongol military, but it had also become a vital frontier between the Ilkhanate and its adversaries: the Mamluks of Syria and Egypt and the Golden Horde.[58] Once the Mongol army entered into Anatolia on Hülegü's order, the existing power balance in the region inevitably altered, necessitating a reorganization of local governance.[59] Their presence also precipitated significant demographic shifts. On the one hand, many Turkmen tribes, fleeing from the Mongols, advanced to the Byzantine borderlands and established small states (such as those of the Aydınids, Karesi, and Germiyanids) where they could; on the other, a new wave of migration of nomad Turkmens,

[57] De Nicola, *The Chobanids*, pp. 19–20.

[58] Peacock, *Islam, literature and society*, pp. 43, 46. The rivalry between the Ilkhanate and the Golden Horde stemmed from the division of the Mongol Empire into four distinct khanates after Möngke Khan died in 1259. Each khanate, governed by different descendants of Chinggis Khan, pursued its own territorial ambitions, leading to conflicts over borders and control of strategic areas. For a recent scholarship on the Mongols, see, for example, Peter Jackson, *The Mongols and the Islamic World: From Conquest to Conversion* (New Haven, 2017).

[59] Peacock states that the "Golden Horde rule [in Anatolia was] rather distant and light touch, as the existing structures of the Seljuq Sultanate were left in place," which was also the case during the first years of the Ilkhanid rule. However, this situation differed in the 1270s. See A. C. S. Peacock, "Islamisation in the Golden Horde and Anatolia: Some Remarks on Travelling Scholars and Texts*," Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée* 143 (2018): pp. 151–164.

who accompanied Baiju's troops, contributed to the ongoing process of Turkicization of the region.[60]

Towards the end of the 13th century, the Seljuqs' influence in the region, which they maintained through their negotiations with the Mongol regime, waned as they increasingly found themselves at odds with the powerful Turkmen chiefs, who sought to establish their independent principalities. So, when the last Seljuq sultan, Ghiyath al-Din Masud II, died in 1308, the Ilkhans simply opted not to appoint a successor and put an effective end to the Seljuqs' existence in Anatolia. This decision was likely a consequence not only of the Seljuqs' reduced capacity to act as intermediaries but also of the diminishing dependency of the Ilkhanate on the local dynasties to obtain legitimacy or support for their rule in territories like Anatolia, especially after the reign of Ghazan Khan (r. 1295-1304). Ghazan, who ascended to power with the backing of renowned Muslims within the Mongol army, converted to Islam and employed "a vocabulary of Islamic kingship, [styling] himself as *pādshāh-i Islām*, 'king of Islam.' This model of political legitimacy that drew on steppe, Iranian and, from the end of the thirteenth century, Islamic elements accrued prestige to the Ilkhans," allowing them to exercise greater control and governance over their domains. Yet, unlike other regions, their initiatives for implementing a more direct administration remained mostly ineffective in Anatolia.[61] The peninsula continued to be a hub for heightened contests between various actors, including Greeks and Armenians. Soon after, with the decline of the Ilkhanate in 1335, the region entered what scholars refer to as the *beylik* period,[62] characterized by deep political fragmentation.

[60] Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, "Social, Cultural and Intellectual Life, 1071–1453," *The Cambridge History of Turkey Volume I: Byzantium to Turkey 1071-1453*, ed. Kate Fleet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 360–365.

[61] Peacock, *Islam, literature and society*, pp. 6, 49–50.

[62] Although the term *beylik* is widely used in scholarship, as Peacock points out, it poses certain challenges. First, it is an anachronistic term that does not appear in contemporary sources, which raises questions about its historical accuracy and relevance. Second, the absence of a clear definition for what constitutes a *beylik* results in inconsistent and selective categorization of certain polities as such by modern historians. See Peacock, *Islam, literature and society*, pp. 52–53.

Throughout the 14th century, numerous Turkmen *bey*s "claim[ed] some form of sovereignty and sometimes even [assumed] the titles of sultan and *padişah.*"[63]

Typically, much of the scholarship overlooked the role of the Mongol hegemony in the history of late medieval Anatolia, favoring a narrative that depicts a smooth transition from the Seljuq rule to the *beylik* period, which was also "generally treated only as a brief preamble to the rise of the Ottomans [(with hindsight the most important *beylik*)]."[64] However, the latest studies have shown that despite the engulfing political chaos, neither literary production nor cultural activities were interrupted during the Mongol and the subsequent *beylik* period in Anatolia. On the contrary, these periods experienced an unprecedented boom in the creation and exchange of ideas and the dissemination of texts, largely fueled by the immigrant Sufis and multilingual men of learning whose numbers kept rising from the second half of the 13th century onwards.[65] The existence of multiple courts also stimulated this intellectual flourishing as they competed with one another "to perpetuate their renown through the patronage of [these learned individuals]."[66] But most importantly, these periods were marked by two major developments that pushed the process of Islamization in Anatolia, hence its participation in the broader Islamic civilization: the penetration of Sufism into Anatolian society from political elites to the commoners, and the emergence of Turkish as a literary medium, "supplementing and eventually superseding Persian as the main literary and textual vehicle" in the region.[67]

[63] Peacock, and Yıldız, eds., "Introduction," in *Islamic Literature*, p. 23.
[64] Charles Melville, "Anatolia under the Mongols," p. 51.
[65] Scholars of Anatolian birth also frequently traveled to the Near Eastern cities, seeking education or employment. Those who returned to their homeland brought the knowledge as well as the copies of manuscripts they had acquired abroad, then passed them onto the next generations, "strengthening the bonds between Anatolia and the broader Islamic world." Peacock, and Yıldız, eds., "Introduction," in *Islamic Literature*, pp. 20–21.
[66] Also, both the Mongol rulers and Turkmen *bey*s were "heavily invested in constructing pious buildings. In fact, in this period formerly peripheral regions became more closely integrated into Muslim Anatolia." See Peacock, *Islam, literature and society*, p. 44.
[67] Peacock, *Islam, literature and society*, p. 8.

1.3 The Spread of Sufism and the Rise of Holy Men

Since early Seljuq times, Sufism, as the most prevalent form of Islam in the Near East, found its presence in Anatolia, as noted before, mainly through the movement of Sufis who migrated from the neighboring regions to the peninsula, whether for short-term stays or permanent settlement. Under the patronage of the royal court, they wrote many works and cultivated close relationships with both the sultans and the statesmen. That being said, from the mid-13th century onwards, their status went beyond litterateurs and they stepped into political matters. Especially in times of crisis, they maintained order and mitigated unrest in various regions. Central to this transition were the teachings of Ibn Arabi (1165-1240), one of the most influential and prolific Sufis of medieval times. Known as the "Greatest Master" among his admirers, Ibn Arabi spent a decade in Anatolia in the early 13th century, produced many writings on Sufi philosophy and metaphysics, and trained numerous disciplines.[68]

The legacy that Ibn Arabi left behind (not just in Anatolia but across the Islamic world) lies in the way in which he systematized the notion of *velāyet*, the spiritual authority and guardianship bestowed by God. Although this notion had existed for centuries within the doctrinal fabric of Sufi thought, Ibn Arabi produced a comprehensive framework that integrates it with a concept later termed "the oneness of being" (*vahdet-i vücūd*).[69] This concept proposes that everything in the universe, including human beings, is a manifestation of divine essence, meaning there is no true separation between the Creator and creation; rather, all things are interconnected and reflect the presence of God. Therefore, anyone aims to reach the divine truth "should explore every known path to knowledge in order to experience the infinity of the divine in one's self." Among "those who excel in this quest for knowledge of divine [can be

[68] For a closer look at this issue, see Sara Nur Yıldız and Haşim Şahin, "In the Proximity of Sultans: Majd al-Dīn Isḥāq, Ibn 'Arabī and the Seljuk Court," in *The Seljuks of Anatolia: Court and Society in the Medieval Middle East* (I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2013), eds. A.C.S Peacock and Sara Nur Yıldız, pp. 173–205.

[69] For a discussion on the notion of *velāyet* before Ibn Arabi's conceptualization, see Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Tasavvuf, Velâyet ve Kâinatın Görünmez Yöneticileri* (İstanbul: Alfa, 2021) pp. 101–127.

regarded as] saints (*evliyā'*, sing. *veli*), [also referred to by] Ibn Arabi as 'the heirs of prophets' and 'the friends of God.'"[70] However, not every saint has the same degree of closeness to the divine; hence, a hierarchy exists between them. At the top of this hierarchy sits the perfect man (*insan-ı kāmil*), who can embody the divine truth to its fullest and serves as the mystical pole (*kutb*) of their epoch, "entrusted by God with leading humanity to salvation."[71]

As Tijana Krstić points out, although Ibn Arabi's writings did not explicitly address practical applications of his ideas to the political community and were not even read and thoroughly understood by many Sufis due to the complexity and obscurity of his teachings, they still fostered a new political imagination in Anatolia. This was primarily due to the use of a language fashioned with Arabi's vocabulary and concepts among Sufis—including the ones who were not philosophically inclined or well-educated—which gradually spread beyond their milieu. Both the elites and Turkmen populations started to "search for individuals whose charisma made them likely candidates for the rank of the *qutb*, who would mediate between the seen and unseen world" and be their leaders.[72] Of course, "the absence of a defined political structure in [the peninsula]" was a huge factor in allowing this language to resonate with them and shape their expectations. In response to this environment, the Seljuks, and later both the Mongols and Turkmen *bey*s, strived to become patrons of Sufi *shaykh*s who identified themselves as the *kutb*. By doing so, they aimed to obtain religious validation for their rule, as the spiritual endorsement of Sufi saints suggested their worldly authority was favored by the divine will. It should be noted, however, that the alliances between these Sufi *shaykh*s and Anatolian rulers were symbiotic in nature; in return for their support, Sufi *shaykh*s received

[70] Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam*, pp. 40–41.
[71] Alexander D. Knysh, *Ibn 'Arabi in the Later Islamic Tradition: The Making of a Polemical Image in Medieval Islam* (Albany: Suny Press, 1999), p. 15.
[72] Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam*, p. 41.

protection, financial grants, tax exemptions, and, most importantly, enjoyed legitimacy for their social and religious status.[73]

Here, the important question is how the above-mentioned language that reflected Ibn Arabi's ideas circulated among the Turkmen population as well, given that almost all written works by Sufis were in Persian and destined to circulate among the courtly or elite circles at that time. This development was closely linked to the vernacularization of Sufi teachings into Turkish as a part of the process in which Turkish emerged as a literary language in Anatolia. Many Sufis, beyond the direct control of the courts, sought to broaden their reach by making the language of Islamic mysticism available to the general populace and began to produce texts in vernacular Turkish.[74] As their texts were widely disseminated through entering into the repertoire of popular preachers (*vā'iz*s, *kıssahān*s), they were actually successful in doing so.[75] Further, a high level of visibility of Sufi traditions across both urban and rural lives of the peninsula, facilitated by the establishment of Sufi hospices or lodges (*zāviye*s) under the patronage of Anatolian rulers or religious elites, where large communal gatherings around certain Sufi *shaykh*s took place, was crucial for this development.[76] The motives for patronizing

[73] With that in mind, especially the Mongols' relationships with Sufi saints and their circles (particularly the Mevlevis) seem to be not so straightforward. Also, it should be added that not all Sufis seek to connect themselves to the Anatolian rulers, as seen in the case of a famous Sufi family, the descendants of Baba İlyas. See Peacock, *Islam, literature and society*, pp. 80–101, 107–116.

[74] I will address the emergence of Turkish as a literary language in Anatolia in a separate section in this chapter.

[75] I should note that, while the term *kıssahān* can also be given as the translation for the term "storyteller," I make no distinction between them and *vā'izs* in this context, as they were not necessarily distinct groups of people. They engaged in similar activities and were likely perceived as such by their contemporaries. As Jonathan Berkey states, "[one] must be careful not to reify terms that, for the medieval Muslims who used them, had more flexible, functional, contingent, and overlapping meanings." See Jonathan Berkey, *Popular Preaching & Religious Authority in the Medieval Islamic Near East* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001) pp. 12–15.

[76] According to Ethel Sara Wolper, from the 1240s onward, *zāviye*s were the main religious buildings in Anatolia since they provided a broader audience an alternative space for many of the services typically provided by the madrasas, such as teaching, praying, and religious instruction. See Ethel Sara Wolper, *Cities and Saints: Sufism and the Transformation of Urban Space in Medieval Anatolia* (University Park, PA, 2003), p. 69. Elsewhere, Wolper argues that madrasas were also fulfilling the functions of *zāviye*s during this period by housing various Sufi rituals. See Ethel Sara Wolper, "Building Activity and Sufi Networks in Anatolia," in *Saintly Spheres and Islamic Landscapes*, eds. Daphna Ephrat, Ethel Sara Wolper and Paulo G. Pinto (Leiden: Brill, 2021), pp. 221–225.

a *zāviye* were multifaceted: they were cost-effective to build, served as a means for the patron to safeguard their own assets by endowing them as *vakıf* to the *zāviye* they founded, and also symbolized the formal acknowledgment of the patron's alliance with prominent local mystics, thereby enhancing their political reputation and moral standing.[77] Nonetheless, regardless of the reason for their construction, *zāviye*s functioned as essential centers for transmitting Sufi teachings—and, by extension, spreading Islam—to different levels of society, and the sanctification of Sufi *shaykh*s.

Revered for their piety and exemplary conduct, Sufi *shaykh*s were believed to acquire *baraka*—the divine blessing that originates from one's proximity to God. This divine blessing permitted them to display immense religious knowledge, intercede with God on behalf of people, and perform miraculous deeds (*kerāmet*), ranging from healing sicknesses to mind-reading or walking on water. Therefore, their charisma was derived not merely from their inherent spiritual qualities but also from the way they enacted these qualities to affect and inspire others and collective life.[78] To have any kind of connection with a living *shaykh*—speaking with, seeing, touching, or attending their sermons at a *zāviye*—was pivotal to any ordinary believer as it meant for them to partake in the *shaykh*'s *baraka* and experience the "sacred" firsthand. The opportunity to access *shaykh*s' *baraka* did not also vanish with their death. As the inanimate objects associated with them were considered to embody their *baraka*, their relics (even ephemeral traces that they left behind in certain places) and their tombs attracted many devotees. The *zāviye*s that contained the shrines of their founding *shaykh* (and those who followed) also turned into sites of pilgrimage (*ziyāret*) where people could continue

[77] Peacock, *Islam, literature and society*, p. 102.

[78] Daphna Ephrat, Ethel Sara Wolper and Paulo G. Pinto, "Introduction: History and Anthropology of Sainthood and Space in Islamic Contexts," in *Saintly Spheres and Islamic Landscapes*, eds. Daphna Ephrat, Ethel Sara Wolper and Paulo G. Pinto (Leiden: Brill, 2021), p. 3.

to absorb the "holy."[79] Visits to these shrines, accompanied by participation in collective prayers and Sufi rituals such as *zikr* recitations, were perceived as pious acts since they were driven by the desire to gain spiritual benefits for one's soul.[80]

As *zāviye*s grew more common, so did the importance of the Sufi *shaykh*s, which gave impetus to what we can call "the cults of saints" among the newly converted or converting Turkmens and the elites as well. So much so that for many, the first point of contact with Islam was often through the *zāviye*s or the Sufi *shaykh*s who resided in them.[81] It is not so possible to pinpoint what exactly made a Sufi *shaykh* to be seen as a saint since, "unlike Christianity, the process of recognizing a saint in Islam was both personal and informal, [and] often based on the popular consensus of common people."[82] However, as explained above, the belief in one's *baraka* and its performative nature must have been the key to being associated with sanctity. In this sense, it is imperative to underline that being a saint did not necessarily entail being a Sufi, nor did being a Sufi automatically mean one was considered a saint. However, the concept of sainthood was inextricably connected to Sufism. This connection especially became pronounced with the evolvement of informal networks of Sufi *shaykh*s into institutionalized religious communities known as orders (*tarīkat*) or brotherhoods. At the core of the organizational elements of these orders was the concept of *silsila*—a chain of transmission of religious knowledge and *baraka*. This unbroken spiritual chain legitimated the mystical authority of a Sufi *shaykh* by connecting them to the Prophet Muhammad, through a

[79] Sometimes, a shrine dedicated to a specific Sufi *shaykh* was built first, and then a *zāviye* was added nearby. Additionally, there were instances where the simple graves of Sufi *shaykh*s in local cemeteries became sites of pilgrimage.

[80] For a detailed discussion on the concepts of *ziyāret* and *baraka* in medieval Islam, see, for example, Josef W. Meri, *The Cult of Saints among Muslims and Jews in Medieval Syria* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

[81] Azfar Moin states that "there was hardly an aspect of public or private life in the eastern Islamic lands that remained untouched by these institutions of 'mysticism' and networks of 'devotion.'" See A. Azfar Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign: Sacred Kingship and Sainthood in Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), p. 5.

[82] Josef W. Meri, *The Cult of Saints*, p. 66.

succession of other Sufi *shaykh*s. By this means, the spiritual devotion of the followers or disciples (*mürīd*s) to their immediate *shaykh*s was deepened, while their sense of belonging to a larger sacred continuum was continually reinforced.[83]

1.4. The Emergence of Turkish as a Literary Medium

The exact date of the emergence of Turkish in Anatolia as a written language (known as Old Anatolian Turkish, the so-called precursor of Ottoman Turkish that emerged in the 15th century)[84] remains yet to be determined. The reason for this is mainly because most early Turkish texts have only survived in much later manuscript copies, which means that pinpointing when these works were originally written has been very much depending on analyzing the linguistic features of these copies, a method that presents a considerable challenge for contemporary scholars. Especially in Turkish academia, this challenge has been further exacerbated by occasional nationalistic biases involved in the process of dating these texts. This issue, in fact, can be traced back all the way to Köprülü, who argued that Turkish texts "naturally" started to be written after the establishment of the Seljuq state in Anatolia, leading to the emergence of a Turkish literature in the 13th century.[85] Similar claims had been

[83] See Nile Green, *Sufism: A Global History* (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), pp. 81-91. Judith Pfeiffer notes that we cannot speak about fully-fledged Sufi orders before the 15th century in Anatolia. See J. Pfeiffer, "Mevlevi-Bektashi rivalries and the Islamization of the public space in late Seljuq Anatolia," in *Islam and Christianity*, eds. Peacock, De Nicola and Yıldız, p. 309. It should also be acknowledged that Anatolia was home to various Sufi movements that had a considerable presence in social and political life. Among these were the *fütüvvet* organizations, fraternal groups rooted in Islamic chivalry, and deviant dervish groups who pursued a life of extreme renunciation and asceticism, often standing apart from societal norms. Due to the limited scope of this thesis, a detailed discussion of these topics is not included here. For a detailed account on *fütüvvet* see, for example, Peacock, *Islam, literature and society*, pp. 117–144. For a detailed account on deviant dervish groups, see, Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends*.

[84] As Peacock states, "in general Old Anatolian Turkish is distinguished by its orthographic conventions, a tendency to use a higher proportion of Turkish vocabulary as opposed to Arabic or Persian, a greater lexical and sometimes grammatical influence from Eastern Turkic dialects, and above all by the fact that its earliest centres of literary production lay outside the Ottoman realm." See Peacock, *Islam, literature and society*, p. 148. Thus, acknowledging the undeniable linguistic developmental relationship between the two, I believe the importance of treating Old Anatolian Turkish as a literary and cultural phenomenon in its own right should be highlighted.

[85] See Mehmed Fuad Köprülü, *Türk Edebiyatında İlk Mutasavvıflar* (Ankara: Diyanet İşleri Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1981), pp. 231–232.

made since then,[86] but more recently, the works of authors—such as Ahmed Fakih, Şeyyad Hamza, Şeyyad İsa, and Hoca Dehhani—previously dated to the first half of the 13th century or even earlier, and cited as evidence for such claims have been reevaluated, and they all have been placed in the 14th century. Of the works further cited, only those of Jalal al-Din Rumi and his son Sultan Walad remain dated to the 13th century. However, as Andrew Peacock proposes, these two authors' employment of Turkish most likely does not reflect anything related to the status of the language; rather, it seems to be primarily connected to their aim to showcase their extensive religious knowledge. Rumi, like many Sufis, "argued that divine revelation was a continuous process, and that God remained in direct communication with his Friends on earth in a variety of languages." Thus, in line with this principle, the writings of him and his son (as he was under his father's influence), along with Turkish, contained Greek and Arabic phrases and verses.[87]

Claims that the popular Turkish prose epics narrating stories of frontier life, such as *Battalnāme* and *Danişmendnāme*, were written in the 13th century, have also faced scrutiny. Indeed, these epics were circulating orally along the Byzantine border and across Anatolia during the 13th century, but now the consensus is that they were not written down until the 15th century.[88] In a similar vein, the idea that the decree issued by the founder of Karamanid *beylik*, Mehmed Bey, in the middle of a rebellion against Mongols in 1277, in which he commanded the use of Turkish instead of Persian from public spaces to the government administrations,

[86] Mecdut Mansuroğlu asserted that in the 13th century there was a rich Turkish literature, while Gönül Tekin dated several early Turkish texts to the same period. Also, Ahmet Yaşar Ocak and Zeynep Korkmaz suggested that many early Turkish texts were likely destroyed by the Mongols and the Crusades, implying the possible existence of a body of Turkish literature in the 13th century. See Mecdut Mansuroğlu, "The Rise and Development of Written Turkish in Anatolia," Oriens 7/2 (1954): 250-264; Gönül Tekin, "Turkish Literature: Thirteenth to Fifteenth Centuries," in *Ottoman Civilization Volume 2*, eds. H. İnalcık and Günsel Renda (Ankara, 2004), pp. 497-498; Ahmed Yaşar Ocak, 'Social, Cultural and Intellectual Life, 408-9; Zeynep Korkmaz, "Oğuz Türkçesinin Tarihi Gelişme Süreçleri," *Turkish Studies* 5/1 (2010): p. 27.

[87] Peacock, *Islam, literature and society*, pp. 155–156, 164.

[88] Ibid., pp. 153–154.

was an indication of the embrace of Turkish as a prestigious language in Anatolia by the 13th century, have contested by Sara Nur Yıldız.[89] Building on her arguments, Peacock states the present evidence that we have suggests that the regions under the Karamanid rule were actually among the last in Anatolia to embrace Turkish as a literary language, which likely occurred around the mid-15th century. According to him, Ibn Bibi (c. 1285), the author of the account which the information regarding Mehmed Bey's decree comes from, was probably trying to portray the Karamanid rebels negatively by emphasizing their supposed rejection of Persian—the established language of culture and civilization in Anatolia at the time—in favor of Turkish and cast them as barbarians. This is why, the story of Mehmed Bey does not necessarily point to "a decisive moment in the history of the Turkish language."[90] "Yet, if not literary true, [Peacock argues,] Ibn Bibi's [account] reflect[s] a more general situation that made the accusations against Mehmed Beg credible." "The late 13th century [was] exactly the period when Turkish first appeared as a written language in Anatolia"—with the earliest "reliably" dated Anatolian text being *Behcetü'l-Hadāyik*, a manual on the basics of the Muslim faith, written between the years 1270-1286[91]—and the early 14th century was when a literary and scholarly tradition in Turkish, largely comprised of religious texts, emerged.[92] Yunus Emre's

[89] Zeynep Korkmaz is an example of a scholar who made such an observation. See Zeynep Korkmaz, "Eski Anadolu Türkçesinin Türk Dili Tarihindeki Yeri," *Türk Dili Araştırmaları Yıllığı* 52 (2004): p. 103. The decree by Mehmed Bey has also been widely celebrated in modern Turkey as a key moment in the establishment of Turkish linguistic identity. Since 1961, this event has been commemorated annually with a language festival in Karaman, Mehmed Bey's hometown. See Sara Nur Yıldız, "Karamanoğlu Mehmed Bey: Medieval Anatolian Warlord or Kemalist Language Reformer? Nationalist Historiography, Language Politics and the Celebration of the Language Festival in Karaman, Turkey, 1961–2008," in *Religion, Ethnicity and Contested Nationhood in the Former Ottoman Space*, ed. Jorgen Nielsen (Leiden: Brill, 2012), pp. 147–170.

[90] Peacock, *Islam, literature and society*, p. 148–149.

[91] Peacock adds that some vernacular Turkish texts were produced in Central Asia in the 11th and 12th centuries, but these texts seem not to have made it to Anatolia. Therefore, they did not influence the emergence of Turkish as a written language there. Ibid., p. 149. Also, for the dating of the *Behcetü'l-Hadāyik*, see Mustafa Koç, "Anadolu'da İlk Türkçe Telif Eser," *Bilig* 57 (2011): pp. 159–174.

[92] Peacock, *Islam, literature and society*, p. 157. Peacock also notes that "Anatolia was not the only region where Turkish developed as a literary language in this period. Turkish was also used for official and literary purposes in the Golden Horde from the thirteenth century, while from the late fourteenth century the Mamluk courts of Egypt and Syria offered patronage to Turkish language writers from both Anatolia and the Golden Horde." According

(c. 1238-1320) poems, Gülşehri's *mesnevī*s, particularly his *Mantıku't-Tayr* (1317), Aşık Paşa's (1272-1333) *Garībnāme* (1330), can be named as the first notable representatives of this tradition.[93]

While the exact picture of why and how Turkish emerged as a literary medium in this period in Anatolia still has missing parts, the credit for its rise to a significant status in the region from the second half of the 14th century onwards has been predominantly given to the intentions of the rulers of the Anatolian *beylik*s.[94] Many Turkmen *bey*s, lacking education in Arabic and Persian, accepted Turkish as the official language of their states and sponsored literary and scholarly texts in Turkish in their journey to replicate the Perso-Islamic court culture and assert themselves as legitimate, independent Muslim rulers.[95] They started to patronize the translations and/or adaptations (whether in prose or verse) of all kinds of works—such as medical texts, *adab* (etiquette) literature, and prose manuals—previously produced in the medieval Islamic Near East. But, among these newly produced texts, the ones that relied on popular and authoritative Arabic (and to a lesser extent Persian) Qur'anic exegeses (*tefsīr*s), handbooks of Islamic jurisprudence (*fıkıh*), and explanations of *hadith* compilations (records

to him, these developments should have had an impact on the emergence of Turkish in Anatolia as a literary language. Ibid., pp. 179–187.

[93] It is particularly important that Aşık Paşa was openly saying in his *Garībnāme* that by writing in Turkish he was doing something new, and he asked his audience not to "judge" him for it. Ibid., pp. 160–162.

[94] According to Peacock, "the rise of Turkish [was] a direct consequence of the Mongol invasions, for it was only with the collapse of traditional forms of political legitimacy in central Anatolia that places such as Aydın, the Germiyanid lands and Kırşehir started to emerge as alternative centres of power, whose rulers or leaders required a new vocabulary and language in which to assert their authority and legitimacy." Ibid., pp. 187. In this sense, as he himself points out, the emergence of Turkish seems to be aligned with Sheldon Pollock's famous argument that vernacularization is a process that derives from the changing political powers where new authorities use vernacular as a tool to challenge the established cosmopolitan norms. Yet, Peacock also highlights some divergences between the case of Turkish and Pollock's conceptualization. On this issue, see Ibid., pp. 149–150. For more on Pollock's conceptualization, see Sheldon Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men: Sanskrit, Culture and Power in Premodern India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

[95] The Aydınid court was the first and most active among the *beylik*s to patronize Turkish. In the second half of the 14th century, other *beylik*s gradually joined them and began to support Turkish works regularly. Around this time, Turkish also started to be used as an administrative language. On the Aydinid court, see Sara Nur Yıldız, "Aydınid Court Literature in the Formation of an Islamic Identity in Fourteenth-Century Western Anatolia," in *Islamic Literature and Intellectual Life*. On the development of Turkish as an administrative language, see Peacock, *Islam, literature and society*, pp. 168–179.

of Muhammad's sayings and actions) were exceptionally favored by the *bey*s and their court members. Other than the political motivation for making Turkish a medium of Islamic textual production, this was due to a fundamental practical need as well. The Qur'ān, the foundational text of Islam, as it is, was not a medium through they could learn the basic tenets of Islam. While it was a highly venerated text, like for many Muslims of the non-Arabic speaking lands, it was an "ever-remote authority" to learn the religion in detail for the Turkish-speaking Muslims in medieval Anatolia.[96] Even without the language barrier, the Qur'ān was not a source that answered the question of "What does Islam say about" a certain issue or led one to improve their conduct precisely.[97] As such, scholars also choose to vernacularize these kinds of texts without being explicitly asked by their patrons to do so. Despite their close cooperation with the courts, they were driven by an ambition to go beyond the madrasa circles and an aristocratic audience, aiming to meet "the growing need among [the Turkish-speaking] Muslims, [both 'old' and recently converted ones,] for basic literacy in the Islamic textual tradition." In pursuit of this aim, many would modify the original texts they based their works on to better align with "the concerns and perspectives of their Turcophone audience." As Yıldız argues, this approach of "vernacularizing and adapting Arabic religious texts according to the needs of the Turcophone audience [was] an important element in the process of the Islamization of Anatolia and the neighbouring Balkan regions under Ottoman rule."[98]

Simultaneously with this movement, a vernacular religious literature—again, spanning various Islamic genres from hagiographies to catechisms, both in prose or verse—developed independently from royal patronage, which became more popular and widely circulated than

[96] The same applies to the existing body of *hadith* literature.

[97] Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam*, p. 29.

[98] Sara Nur Yıldız, "A Hanafi law manual in the vernacular: Devletoğlu Yūsuf Balıkẹsrī's Turkish verse adaptation of the Hidāya-Wiqāya textual tradition for the Ottoman Sultan Murad II (824/1424)," *Bulletin of SOAS* 80/2 (2017): p. 284. Also see Yıldız, "From Cairo to Ayasuluk: Hacı Paşa and the transmission of Islamic learning to western Anatolia in the late fourteenth century," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 25/3 (2014): pp. 263–297.

the works of courtly scholars. As briefly mentioned before, Sufi milieus played a critical part in this literature since they desired to speak to a broader audience and teach Islam on their own terms. However, as we can see in Rumi and Walad's case, it can be argued that Sufis' use of the vernacular in their text was a tool for something else as well, especially considering that they produced texts without having any patrons. Writing in the language spoken by the common people in the region must have served to "testify [their] own unique relationship with God as a channel of his communication," as they were demonstrating that they were directly receiving divine wisdom in the language most familiar to the community they are meant to guide. Also, it must have emphasized that their spiritual insights and teachings were directly relevant to everyday life, hence strengthening their socio-religious status as well as the perceived value of their work.[99]

It is pertinent to add that although a vernacular religious literature developed outside of the influence of the courts as well, drawing a strict line between the works of courtly scholars and those of "non-courtly" authors would be misleading since, in reality, that line did not exist. First and foremost, scholars who had strong ties with the courts were themselves Sufis; thus, they shared more or less the same sensibilities and objectives (providing insights on the Islamic tradition and edifying their audience) in their writings with the works of "non-courtly" authors in question. Second, both the genres these literatures covered and the sources they drew on—mainly the Qur'ān, *hadith*, and other popular *tefsīr* and *fıkıh* books (i.e., what people study in classes in madrasas and mosques)—frequently overlapped. So, in principle, many vernacular works functioned as intermediaries between well-established Islamic knowledge and the Turkish-speaking Muslim communities in this period, and they often included guidance on how to be a "proper" Muslim, each having its own interpretation of what this meant. The

[99] For example, according to Peacock, this is precisely the case for the use of Turkish by Aşık Paşa and Gülşehri See Peacock, *Islam, literature and society*, pp. 164–165.

reoccurrence of certain themes, such as eschatology[100] and the battle against unbelief, along with the usage of the stories about prophets, Islamic heroes and saints—especially Ali b. Abi Talib and the *ahl al-bayt*—from both the past and the present, may have been where the works of "non-courtly" authors slightly differed.

As for the wide circulation of the vernacular texts produced outside of the courtly domain, it can be argued that this was related to the means by which this literature was transmitted. As stated before, the majority of the texts belonging to this literature were in the repertoire of popular preachers "who embraced the task of transmitting basic religious knowledge to, instilling piety in, and encouraging pious behavior among the common people."[101] The importance of these figures, especially in the medieval Islamic world, should not be underestimated. In predominantly illiterate societies, many people engaged with written religious texts through these individuals' oral performances, where they utilized various vernacular texts—sometimes by directly reading them aloud and at other times by reshaping them according to the profile of their immediate audience.[102] Although we do not have concrete information regarding how and where these performances took place in late medieval Anatolia, drawing from similar studies made on medieval Islamic lands, it is very likely they were undertaken in a variety of public venues, such as mosques, madrasas, and *zāviye*s where everyone, regardless of age, gender, education level, status, and even religious background could listen to them. This way, popular preachers, who can also be identified as "key cultural

[100] Here, when I say "eschatology," I refer to the representations of the *hereafter*, not necessarily the events at the end of time, i.e., the appearance of Dajjal or Gog and Magog, the coming of Mahdi, etc. According to Peacock, the 14th-century vernacular Turkish works (at least the ones he is aware of) do not seem to mention these events. See Ibid., p. 240.

[101] Berkey, *Popular Preaching*, p. 14.

[102] Arzu Öztürkmen, "Orality and Performance in Late Medieval Turkish Texts: Epic Tales, Hagiographies, and Chronicles," *Text and Performance Quarterly* 29/4 (2009): pp. 327–331.

brokers," were "giving rise to different interpretive communities [around certain texts] in different segments of [Anatolian] society."[103]

What is more is that popular preachers were often Sufi *shaykh*s, or venerated in the same way they were due to their ability to act as a bridge between God and people through transmitting religious knowledge, especially in an eloquent and persuasive way. Their personal piety, embodying the values they preach, was another layer that added to their influence. Preachers who were also recognized as Sufi *shaykh*s were even sanctified, believed to possess *baraka* and have an intimate understanding of Islamic sources, particularly the Qur'ān and *hadith*. Therefore, their performances were perceived as more than just religious or moral instructions; listening to their words was thought to be a way of obtaining *baraka*, offering profound spiritual benefits to one's soul.[104] It should also be remembered that the Prophet Muhammad was recognized and valued as the "archetypical preacher" in the Islamic tradition, and one of the attributes of his charismatic authority was the fact that he profoundly expounded God's word. In this sense, popular preachers were mirroring him and connecting themselves to the Prophet's role as a divine messenger.[105]

[103] Krstić, "The Ambiguous Politics of 'Ambiguous Sanctuaries'", p. 255.
[104] This is one of the main reasons why sometimes local elites were also present in performances of popular Sufi preachers.
[105] Linda G. Jones, *The Power of Oratory in the Medieval Muslim World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 1–2, 21–23, 164, 218–225.

SECOND CHAPTER

The *Sā'atnāme* (The Book of The Hour): An Interplay Between the *Charisma*- and *Scripture-Loyal* Islam

In this chapter, the attention shifts to a particular late medieval Anatolian text, the *Sā'atnāme*. Through a close reading of the text, I will analyze how the trends and discourses of the historical context in which the *Sā'atnāme* was produced manifest themselves within the text itself. At the same time, I will demonstrate how the text, besides embodying its historical context, contributed to the formation of different interpretive communities among the Turkish-speaking Muslims in Anatolia and shaped the way they acculturated to Islam by imparting a formula to live and die as a devout Muslim.

2.1. The *Sā'atnāme*'s Engagement with Islam

As discussed in the previous chapter, Islam's presence in Anatolian society was far from binary, particularly due to the multifaceted ways in which Sufism permeated the peninsula. The veneration of God's friends as saints, often perceived as a phenomenon exclusive to the common people (i.e., so-called heterodox Islam), actually also had a scholarly origin and informed the lives of the political and religious elite, including the rulers. Similarly, thanks to the vernacular religious literature that emerged outside the courtly domain and the widespread oral circulation of this literature by popular preachers (*vā'iz*s, *kıssahān*s), the Islamic textual tradition, particularly the core precepts of the Qur'ān and *hadith*, played a significant role in shaping ordinary believers' religiosities as well. The question then arises: how can we move from merely acknowledging this fluidity and complexity of the religious manifestations in late medieval Anatolia and emphasizing the need to abandon binary oppositional categories (urban vs. rural, high vs. low, common vs. elite) that do not fit the social realities of the time? What

vocabulary can we use to conceptualize Islamic beliefs and practices of the Turkish-speaking Muslim societies, especially when looking at the texts they were engaging with and producing?

In my view, Markus Dressler's terminology, which he first introduced in his book *Die alevitische Religion: Traditionslinien und Neubestimmungen,* to essentially theorize the Alevi communities' relationship with orality, and later put it in a wider context, offers a very useful analytical lens to study diversity within Islam in late medieval Anatolia.[106] Dressler argues that in order to differentiate between Islamic orientations, we can focus on "the authorities they draw on in their religious practice," and based on this argument, he distinguishes "ideal-typically between *charisma-loyal* and *scripture-loyal* Muslim orientations." According to him, the former "organize[s] around the authority of individuals who have charisma from their believed ability to mediate between ordinary believers and the divine." The latter, on the other hand, revolves around "the authority of the scriptural tradition of Islam [(especially the holy texts)] and the law (sharia)." Dressler notes that this is merely one attempt to offer "a less ambivalent way of conceptualizing inner-Islamic plurality and difference" and that it is by no means a clear-cut distinction. In practice, these two Islamic orientations often complement rather than exclude each other, especially in societies with restricted literacy since individuals who were perceived as having charisma because of their ability to mediate between the divine and ordinary believers were often the very individuals who also interpreted and conveyed the meanings of holy texts to their communities.[107] I argue that this was precisely the case in late medieval Anatolia; given the high possibility of the prominent existence of such individuals,

[106] Markus Dressler, *Die alevitische Religion: Traditionslinien und Neubestimmungen* (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2002), pp. 17–20. Later on, Dressler repeated his argument while discussing the Köprülü paradigm. See Dressler, "How to Conceptualize Inner-Islamic Plurality/Difference," pp. 259-260; Markus Dressler, *Writing Religion: The Making of Turkish Alevi Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 235–236 and 270-271. I must add that Dressler's terminology came to my attention through one of Zeynep Oktay's articles. See Zeynep Oktay, "Alevi-Bektashi Literature as a Discursive Tradition: Interpretive Strategies, Orality, Charisma-Loyalty," *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 7/2 (2020): pp. 43–44.

[107] Dressler, "How to Conceptualize Inner-Islamic Plurality/Difference," pp. 259–260.

these two Islamic orientations coexisted simultaneously, both horizontally (across the same social strata) and vertically (across different levels of societal hierarchy), and I believe that the *Sā'atnāme* provides a unique window to this dynamic interplay in the region.

2.2. The *Charisma-Loyal* Aspect of the *Sā'atnāme*

By dividing a day into six periods (*ahşām sā'ati, yatsu sā'ati, gökler sā'ati, uyku sā'ati, gaflet sā'ati,* and *'arş sā'ati*),[108] and specifying the religious duties, as well as the moral and ethical dispositions that should be followed in each period, the *Sā'atnāme* primarily aims to regulate a Muslim's life and develop a sense of urgency for cultivating one's souls for the *hereafter*.[109] It opens with Hibetullah mentioning the sources that he consulted to compose the *Sā'atnāme* and a lengthy prayer that he invoked during which he made several claims regarding the text and himself. Following these, we see a scene where Hibetullah's disciples ask their *shaykh* to recite his holy prayer (namely *şehādet-i ūlā*) and share his wisdom on the hours of a day.[110] Upon this scene, Hibetullah raises his head and starts speaking, so the actual text—solely from his voice—begins. It is, therefore, plausible to argue that the *Sā'atnāme* was originally an oral performance written down by one of Hibetullah's disciples during one of his preaching sessions, with certain modifications made either during the process of writing or afterward.[111]

[108] For the translations of the names of these periods, see the introduction of this thesis, p. 13, fn. 34.

[109] The text also features several fictive sections; however, this thesis does not focus on these, as they neither form the core of the text nor are relevant to my analysis. For an example of such a section, where Hibetullah attributes the emergence of seasons and various weather conditions to the movements of an angel, see Hibetullah b. İbrahim, *Sā'atnāme*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Dr. Ali Sevil Akay 421/2, fol. 84a.

[110] Ibid., fols 11a-11b.

[111] During the prayer, there are a few transitional phrases that appear when Hibetullah makes claims about the text and himself. For example, we see a third-person voice interject, saying, "The compiler of this blessed book, a frail and weak particle of dust, Hibetullah b. İbrahim, may God have mercy upon him, says…" Then, Hibetullah starts to speak as if he is deceased, which I believe was a rhetorical move. Later, the narrative voice shifts to the third-person again, depicting Hibetullah from an outsider's perspective: "The compiler of this book, Hibetullah b. İbrahim, may God's mercy be upon him, with tears welling in his blessed eyes, reflecting on his sins with remorse, says…" and Hibetullah starts to speak again. These third-person voice remarks, along with the above-mentioned scene, suggest that one of Hibetullah's disciples may have transcribed his oral performance. The layout of the text, along with the use of repetition and phrases like "Let us return to our point," often used in oral tradition to bring listeners' attention back to the main narrative after a digression, further supports this possibility.

The first claim of Hibetullah appears to be that a commentary of the Qur'ān—without acknowledging which one—indicates that both *ümmīler* and *ümmī hatunlar* (common male and female Muslim believers) should read the *Sā'atnāme* and follow its stipulations, as doing so would earn them countless *sevāb.* Then he asks every person who reads the *Sā'atnāme* to dedicate their prayers as well as the *sevāb*s that they will receive from reading the text to his soul, both at the beginning and the end of their reading, and to take the text as their ultimate religious guidance. He hopes that by receiving prayers and *sevāb*s dedicated to his soul, he would be spared from the torments of the grave and that, on the Day of Judgment, the accumulation of the prayers and *sevāb*s he received will elevate him to the rank of being a neighbor to the Prophet Muhammad in paradise.[112] In addition to this request, Hibetullah urges his audience to copy the text or commission its copying[113] and endow it with a request for three *İhlās-ı Şerīf* and one *Fātiha* for their soul, and prays for those who carry out these actions to earn *sevāb* equivalent to performing Hajj, bestowing a thousand acts of kindness, practicing *nāfile namāz* (a type of non-obligatory prayer) a thousand times, fasting for a thousand days, and giving to charity a thousand *fulori*.[114]

A few pages later, while Hibetullah offers another prayer for all those who copied the text beautifully, all those who took the initiative to have it copied and endowed it, and all those who read it carefully and performed their duties according to its teachings to earn *sevāb*, he includes "all those who listened to the text attentively" in his list, indicating that he offers the act of listening to the text as a means to earn *sevāb* as well.[115] This suggests that when he

[112] This is why I believe that Hibetullah speaking as if he is already deceased was a rhetorical move. Ibid., fol. 3b.
[113] Hibetullah even specifies how he wants the text to be copied: from beginning to end and with neat handwriting. See Ibid., fols 6b–7a.
[114] Ibid., fol. 4a. *Fulori*, also known as *filori* or *filorin*, was a gold European coin widely used across Western Anatolia from the mid-13th century onwards due to the intense trade relations between Italian and Turkish states. It remained the most commonly used gold coin among Ottomans until the reign of Mehmed II, during which the term *fulori* began to be used for both Ottoman-minted and European gold coins. For more on this issue, see Halil İnalcık, "Filori," TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi, https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/filori, accessed May 1, 2024.
[115] Hibetullah b. İbrahim, *Sā'atnāme*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Dr. Ali Sevil Akay 421/2, fol. 7a.

encourages his audience to read the text, he clearly envisions them not only reading it individually but also reading it aloud for others to listen to. The reason why Hibetullah wants his audience to read the text aloud and to produce copies of it and endow them, i.e., to make the text available for many, might be related to his desire to receive as many prayers and *sevāb*s as possible dedicated to his soul. But, of course, it could also be a genuine effort to guide his audience in earning additional *sevāb*.[116] When a person shares the text with others, they will be leading them toward performing good deeds, thereby helping them to earn *sevāb,* and since this action is considered a good deed in itself according to Islamic principles, they will be earning *sevāb* as well.[117] For this reason, especially helping the physical circulation of the text would mean initiating or participating in a growing chain of *sevāb*, where each person who has a copy of the text donates another copy/copies of it for others to use or replicate, allowing whoever is involved in the process—potentially dozens of people, including themselves—to amass unprecedented spiritual merit.[118]

Hibetullah's suggestion that any form of engagement with the *Sā'atnāme* is a way to earn *sevāb*, in fact, goes further. He promises to seek the intercession (*şefā'at*) of Muhammad on the Day of Judgment for anyone who engages with the text, ensuring that, by the grace of God, they may enter paradise directly without being held accountable for their sins.[119] Right after this promise, he claims to be someone who received divine inspiration (*ilhām-ı rabbānī*) and that God has lifted the curtains from his eyes. He even cites an alleged conversation he had

[116] That being said, I believe that the main reason lies in the audience Hibetullah targeted with this text, a subject I will treat separately at the end of this chapter.

[117] As this is exactly what Hibetullah accomplishes by producing a text such as the *Sā'atnāme*, it is possible to suggest that even if Hibetullah did not seek personal gain, he would have still inadvertently benefited from the text reaching many people.

[118] In fact, Hibetullah describes a scene where people who used a certain copy of the *Sā'atnāme* implore God to grant the endower of that copy a place next to Muhammad in paradise on the Day of Judgement, and all the recited *İhlās-ı Şerīf*s and *Fātiha*s for the endower's soul by those people are gathered for them. He also adds that only God knows the true extent of *sevāb* one would receive if one were to have the text copied more than once and endow these copies, motivating the audience to do so. See Ibid., fols 4b–5a.

[119] It is worth underlining that even though Hibetullah involves himself in the process of intercession, he has a supportive role, whereas Muhammad remains the ultimate intercessor.

with God wherein God assures him that all his wishes will be accepted and those who show respect for the *Sā'atnāme* and follow its teachings will receive mercy (*rahmet*) and will be neighbors to Hibetullah in paradise (meaning also to Muhammad).[120] This section of the text, I argue, would instantly enhance Hibetullah's standing in the eyes of the audience, establishing him as a charismatic figure who possesses *baraka.* This, in return, would reinforce the credibility of his promise to secure Muhammad's intercession for their salvation, and confirm his role as a legitimate spiritual guide and status as God's Friend, not due to performing some miracles but due to his vast textual/scriptural knowledge—combined with the blessings he received from God—and his ability to transmit this knowledge through the *Sā'atnāme.* As a result, the audience would come to view the *Sā'atnāme* not merely as a source of *sevāb* or a conventional religious guide but as a sacred text infused with the potent force of Hibetullah's *baraka.* Most importantly, for them, any form of engagement with the text would then become a conduit for Hibetullah's *baraka* to flow directly into their lives—an intangible concept transforms into a tangible, easily accessible, transmittable, and reproducible entity that could transcend spatial, temporal, and even social boundaries.

This aspect of the text recalls the Islamic belief that the Qur'ān is the primary source of *baraka* and that any interaction with it—whether through reciting, reading, or listening to it—is *the* way to create a connection to God that would allow *baraka* to permeate in one's life. Even the presence of a copy of the Qur'ān in a home or a community is thought to provide protection from harm and foster a sense of spiritual well-being. I believe that Hibetullah sought to emulate precisely this sacred characteristic of the Qur'ān in the *Sā'atnāme*. Indeed, there are a few instances in the text where he refers to the *Sā'atnāme* as *mübārek,* an adjective that is used to describe someone or something as blessed or holy.[121] More intriguing is that, however,

[120] Ibid., fols 7a–7b.

[121] See Ibid., fols. 6a, 54b. In the Qur'ān, the Qur'ān itself is described as *kitābun mubārak* (6:92-155, 38:29), a blessed book, and the night of the revelation is referred to as *laylatun mubārakah* (44:3), a blessed night.

in the middle of the text, Hibetullah also openly positions the *Sā'atnāme* as a text that shares the same sacred status as the Qur'ān, since it fulfills the very same purpose (along with *hadith*)—providing the divine warning and guidance.[122] He indicates that he offers the *Sā'atnāme* to instill fear and awe in the hearts of people and to invite them to repent and be mindful of how they spend their time on earth so that they will excel first in the examination in the grave and ultimately in the final judgment on the Day of Resurrection.[123]

In line with these, in the same section, we see that Hibetullah also explicitly conceives the *Sā'atnāme* as a book *va'z* (preaching), and states that it is sent from God just like the Qur'ān, which implies that he styles himself as a *vā'iz*, a mediator of God's message, just like Muhammad.[124] *Va'z*, as an Islamic genre, is meant to admonish people and exhort them to live morally according to the precepts of the Qur'ān and *hadith*, making the fundamental texts of Islam accessible, and this was the exact role of *vā'iz*s—explaining the points from the Qur'ān and *hadith* relevant to people's daily lives and anxieties. Based on what Hibetullah preaches in the text, which I will examine shortly, it can be argued that he fulfills this role successfully and structures the text according to these objectives. In this sense, the *Sā'atnāme* acts as an alternative text to the Qur'ān, as well as to *hadith*, for the Turkish-speaking Muslim communities in Anatolia, just as Hibetullah claims. It echoes the key message of the Qur'ān and *hadith*: one will be accountable for their actions during their lifetime, and their soul will either be punished in hell or rewarded in paradise.

[122] He says: "This blessed book, the *Sā'atnāme,* along with the Qur'ān and *hadith*, is [a source of] advice (*öğüt*) for all of us. It is hoped that by reading [the *Sā'atnāme*, people] may attain the forgiveness of God (*magfiret*)." Ibid., fol. 54b.

[123] He says: "I recalled all [these people's] deaths and [what they experienced] doesn't a fear or inspiration spark in your heart? Or don't you want to receive the countless blessings of God? Or, after I recall all these torments, [features of] hell, and the punishments of *zebāni*s, don't you fear and tremble? Shouldn't you seek refuge in God's forgiveness from His wrath?" Ibid., fols 54b–55a.

[124] Ibid., fol. 54b.

Yet, it can be also argued, considering the points I discussed above, that Hibetullah amplifies the traditional role of a *vā'iz* and the general perception of a *va'z* through the claims he made about himself and his text. As mentioned in the previous chapter, some popular preachers—especially those who were also recognized as Sufi *shaykh*s—were sanctified due to their exceptional piety, deep religious knowledge, and perceived closeness to God, thus listening to their preaching was believed to be a powerful spiritual encounter, capable of imparting *baraka* and offering transformative moral and spiritual guidance. Hibetullah and the *Sā'atnāme* seem to exemplify this phenomenon; though, in this case, Hibetullah encourages his audience to perceive him and his preaching in these specific ways, weaving such directions directly into the text itself. This approach, of course, makes sense within the context of a written work. Unlike a live performance, where a preacher's charisma naturally inspires reverence, a text lacks the immediacy of the preacher's presence.

2.2. The *Scripture-Loyal* Aspect of the *Sā'atnāme*

Returning to the opening of the *Sā'atnāme,* we see that the first two sentences outline the sources Hibetullah consulted in composing the text. He states that the text is a compilation of old stories and sayings and includes material from "all books" that exist, giving some specific examples of *tefsīr* and *fıkıh* books.[125] Then, he starts to pray for his audience to remain steadfast in their faith (*īmān*) and commitment to the Qur'ān. He reminds them that God sent his messenger, the Prophet Muhammad, to guide humanity, and he showed the ways and actions to earn his *şefā'at* which are reflected in his *hadith* and can be found in Buhari and Muslim's collections (known as the *Sahīhayn*). He continues his prayer by pleading to God to be among

[125] Namely, *Tefsīr-i Netāyīhü's-Sanāyi'*, Levāmi' and *Tefsīr-i Fetāvī*. See Ibid., fol. 1a. Also, when Hibetullah mentions "the old stories and sayings" he most likely refers to the *Isrā'īliyyāt*—a body of narratives or traditions with pre-Islamic roots, primarily derived from Jewish and Christian sources—since many popular preachers during the medieval times, favored the use of *Isrā'īliyyāt* in their sessions. See Berkey, *Popular Preaching,* pp. 40–41.

those who successfully answer the questions of the two angels, *Münker* and *Nekir*—who appear when one dies to question the deceased on their deeds—thereby avoiding the torments of the grave, and those who easily cross the bridge of *Sırāt* which spans over hell and must be passed to reach paradise on the Day of Judgement as a final test.[126] A little further on, in the part where he makes his first claim about the *Sā'atnāme*, Hibetullah repeats that the text is drawn from different revered books, but this time he also stresses that it is supported by numerous selections from the Qur'ān and *hadith*.[127]

These immediate statements about the sources Hibetullah consulted to compose the *Sā'atnāme* were most certainly a strategic move by him to establish an authority for his text in the eyes of the audience by linking the text directly to the authority of the Islamic textual tradition, primarily that of the Qur'ān and *hadith*. In this way, from the very moment a person engages with the *Sā'atnāme*—whether reading or listening to it—they would instantly grasp its significance and recognize it as a credible piece of Islamic work. As for the accuracy of these statements, even without delving into the actual text, from the remarks Hibetullah made during his above-mentioned prayer, it is possible to suggest that he at least did consult *hadith* literature. The concept of the bridge of *Sırāt*, along with the beliefs in Muhammad's intercession on the Day of Judgement and a "preliminary" examination in the grave conducted by the two angels *Münker* and *Nekir* to determine whether one's soul belongs to hell or paradise—implying the existence of an "intermediary stage" between the individual death and the resurrection—are rooted in *hadith*. But, of course, one can also encounter these concepts and ideas in various Qur'anic exegeses (*tefsīr*s), another type of source Hibetullah claims to have consulted, since Muslim scholars traditionally used *hadith* literature to interpret and/or

[126] Hibetullah b. İbrahim, *Sā'atnāme*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Dr. Ali Sevil Akay 421/2, fols 1b–2b.
[127] Ibid., fols 3b–4a.

clarify ambiguous or complex passages in the Qur'ān, offering insights into their deeper implications.[128]

A more detailed analysis of Hibetullah's preaching in the *Sā'atnāme*, as we shall see shortly, fully confirms his reliance on the sources he initially claimed. Throughout the text, he adheres to the stipulations of the Qur'ān and *hadith* and aligns with the eschatological tradition defined by them. He frequently provides verbatim quotations from the Qur'ān, often indicating the sura where the quote is from, as well as *hadith*, specifying when he is directly quoting from the *Sahīhayn*. It is quite telling that Hibetullah places particular emphasis on the fact that he quotes not just any *hadith* collection but the *Sahīhayn*. In the Sunni tradition, the *Sahīhayn*—compiled by Muhammad al-Bukhari (d. 870) and Muslim b. al-Hajjaj (d. 875)—are considered the two most authentic *hadith* collections and are therefore held in the highest esteem after the Qur'ān. [129] Hibetullah's recounting of this collection, together with the Qur'ān, thus, most certainly serves as proof of his extensive textual knowledge and expertise while signaling to the audience that the *Sā'atnāme* is grounded in the most respected and reliable texts within the Sunni tradition.[130] Besides, by embedding these quotations—which vary in length from single

[128] It is interesting that while the Qur'ān contains several passages that emphasize the impossibility of any form of intercession, due to the widespread acceptance of certain interpretations of several verses—often supported by *hadith*—to this day, the belief in the intercession of God's intimate friends, especially Muhammad, remains to be prominent in the Islamic tradition. See Christian Lange, *Paradise and Hell in Islamic Traditions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p. 45.

[129] For more on the *Sahīhayn* and how they reached their status in the Sunni tradition, see Jonathan A.C. Brown, *The Canonization of al-Bukhārī and Muslim: The Formation and Function of the Sunnī Ḥadīth Canon* (Leiden: Brill, 2007). In one instance, Hibetullah also refers to the *Kütūb-ü Sitte*, which are the six most authentic collections of *hadith* in Sunni Islam, with the *Sahīhayn* being the foremost among them. See Hibetullah b. İbrahim, *Sā'atnāme*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Dr. Ali Sevil Akay 421/2, fol. 51b.

[130] According to Berkey, as noted by Krstić, "the inclusion of *hadith*, often fabricated or unsound, was a salient feature of popular preaching. In fact, one of the most contentious aspects of popular preaching in the eyes of the religious scholars was its noncompliance with the standards of transmission of religious knowledge. Even when the transmitted *hadith* was sound, in theory the preacher violated the 'golden rule' by not personally hearing it being transmitted but reproducing it from books." See Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam*, p. 36; Berkey, *Popular Preaching*, pp. 73–75. In a recent study, Nuha Alshaar also emphasizes the role of *hadith* in *adab* literature, an important Islamic genre that shares multiple characteristics with *va'z*. See Nuha Alshaar, "Ḥadīth and the Concept of Adab as Moral Education," in *Ḥadīth and Ethics through the Lens of Interdisciplinarity*, ed. Mutaz Khatib (Boston: Brill, 2022).

words to full sentences—into his text, Hibetullah exercises the freedom to put them in new contexts that differ from their original ones. This allows him a degree of flexibility to reinterpret and repurpose various parts from these texts and utilize them according to the messages he seeks to convey. In some instances, even his voice intertwines with the divine speech and acts as one, as he skillfully creates a flow between the two.[131]

In the *Sā'atnāme,* Hibetullah also mirrors the Qur'anic cosmology, together with the complementary details that come from *hadith* literature. He describes hell, the earth, and paradise as being layered on top of each other (in this order) and existing continuously, with both hell and paradise having seven layers that reflect the diversity in their inhabitants' moral and spiritual states.[132] He also refers to the throne of God (*'arş*), envisioned as a sphere that resides above all other realms of existence, beyond which is nothing but God, symbolizing His ultimate transcendence and authority. But, more prominently, he mentions the seven heavens/skies that lie between the earth and paradise, each of which is inhabited by numerous angels of various prominence who descend to earth to perform specific tasks assigned by God at different hours of the day, as well as during specific situations such as the time of an individual's death.[133]

[131] The observations I made here are drawn from Nuha Alshaar's "Introduction: The Relation of Adab and the Qur'an: Conceptual Historical Framework," in *The Qur'an and Adab: The Shaping of Literary Traditions in Classical Islam*, ed. Nuha Alshaar (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 1–58, where she discusses the usage of the Qur'ān in *adab* literature.

[132] Christian Lange notes that "paradise and hell, according to a certain (and as [he] argue[s], widespread) view in Islam, cannot be fixed in time; they are everywhen." He further attests that "in many instances of Islamic eschatological thought, this world and the otherworld do not simply coexist in time. According to him, "instead, there is a continuum between the two, a relationship of synchronicity, in the Jungian sense of a meaningful coincidence. (…) It is therefore often misleading to speak about the Islamic otherworld in terms of a "hereafter," an 'afterlife,' an 'afterworld,' or a 'world to come.' Notions about what happens after death and resurrection of course do exist in Islam, but equally strong, perhaps even stronger, is a sense that the otherworld is in a continuous and intimate conversation with the world of the here-and-now." See Christian Lange, *Paradise and Hell*, pp. 10–12.

[133] The presence of angels is so pronounced in the text that the entire text can be analyzed solely from this perspective. Unfortunately, due to the constraints of this thesis, I could not provide such an analysis.

Among these tasks, the most important seems to be meticulously documenting each pious and wrongful action, no matter how insignificant, performed by every person. Indicating that everyone, including *münāfık*s (disingenuous Muslims), *kāfir*s (unbelievers), and oppressors (*zālim*s) has a place designated for them in paradise, Hibetullah asserts that should someone perform a good deed, angels will immediately document that action in their account book (*defter*s) and convey what they documented to the angels of paradise, saying, "We witnessed this person performing such an action and desiring paradise." In response, their gardens in paradise will flourish with joy and fill with roses in preparation for the arrival of their souls. In stark contrast, if a person neglects a good deed or becomes occupied with a sin, angels will report this to paradise, and their gardens begin to weep, expressing sorrow and grief. Observing this situation and hearing what angels told paradise, hell's gate will open with a loud and wailing sound then the fire of hell will intensify, and *zebānī*s (the angels of hell) will start to prepare a spot for that person, filled with scorpions.[134] Similar to this depiction, Hibetullah argues that every person lives with a chain around their neck until their death; one end is held by the supreme angel of paradise (*Rıdvān*), and the other end is held by the supreme angel of hell (*Mālik*). While the supreme angel of paradise pulls a person towards *'İlliyīn*, the highest point of paradise, when they perform good deeds, the supreme angel of hell pulls a person towards *Sicciyin*, the lowest point of hell, when they sin.[135] This dynamic imagery—which continues throughout the text—serves as a powerful narrative tool and taps into a deep-rooted belief in Islam about the omnipresence and omniscience of God. It underscores the perpetual vigilance and sense of responsibility a Muslim should bear, knowing that their every action is under the gaze of angels and, by extension, of God, with instant repercussions.

[134] Hibetullah b. İbrahim, *Sā'atnāme*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Dr. Ali Sevil Akay 421/2, fols 25a–28a.
[135] Ibid., fols 51b–52a.

Connected to this dynamic imagery and what Hibetullah wants to achieve through it, we see that while he gives multiple descriptions of the features of paradise and its unparalleled beauty, as well as the rewards awaiting the faithful and pious after death, his descriptions of hell and the agonizing torments faced in the grave comprise a greater proportion of the text. After each mention of a good deed that should be performed, Hibetullah consistently details the excruciating punishments one will endure for neglecting that deed, not just in hell after the Day of Judgement but also during their time in the grave. Clearly, the time spent in the grave involves more than a preliminary examination by *Münker* and *Nekir*, it also serves as a period when one will experience a preview of their ultimate place in hell or paradise, depending on their actions during their lifetime.[136] In this respect, the *Sā'atnāme* speaks to a very common curiosity and concern of Muslims: what will happen to your soul from the moment you die until you are resurrected on the Day of Judgement? Indeed, for a medieval Muslim, the Last Hour could arrive at any moment, but still, it could also arrive two thousand years later.[137] The individual death, also entailing horrifying bodily destruction, on the other hand, although still unknown, was even more of an imminent and personal reality that warrants spiritual reflection and preparation. Building his text on the idea that one's suffering will start during their time in the grave, Hibetullah most likely tried to exhort his audience to have a deep sense of unease, thereby prioritizing their pursuit of salvation.[138]

[136] For instance, see Ibid., fols 17a-17b.

[137] There are countless studies that examined the high expectations of the end of times in the medieval period, both in Islamic and Christian traditions. In the Islamic context, it is known that as the era of Prophet Muhammad receded further into the past, these expectations intensified.

[138] The concept of *barzakh*, a term that is described in the Qur'ān as a "barrier" between this world and the *hereafter*, is often interpreted in the Islamic tradition as a "third space" rather than a line. See Christian Lange, *Paradise and Hell*, p. 122, esp. fn. 6; Tommaso Tessi, "The *barzakh* and the Intermediate State of Dead in the Quran," in *Locating Hell in Islamic Traditions*, ed. Christian Lange (Leiden, Brill, 2015), pp. 31–55. While Hibetullah builds his text on this idea, he does not use the term *berzah* (the Turkish translation of the term) anywhere in his text.

Moving on to the *Sā'atnāme*'s teachings, although Hibetullah organizes the text according to the six hours of a day and explains specific prayers and moral activities expected at each hour and their merits, we see that certain behaviors and practices are repeatedly advised or are more prominently emphasized by him. He essentially creates a structured hierarchy of pious actions, placing the three core religious obligations specified in the Qur'ān at the highest level: performing the five daily ritual prayers,[139] fasting during Ramadan, and almsgiving (*zekāt*). He puts particular emphasis on the gravity of neglecting daily prayers and failing to perform almsgiving, viewing these omissions as major sins. He even goes so far as to suggest that those who neglect these actions should not be buried as Muslims (*müslüman kabrine koymayalar*).[140] After these core religious obligations, Hibetullah gives great importance to hospitality, concealing other people's faults, and seeking repentance (*tövbe etmek*)—all of which are the principles both the Qur'ān and *hadith* repeatedly command. He refers to those who honor guests as *ehl-i cennet* (people of paradise), and those who do not as *ehl-i cehennem* (people of hell) and explains how guests should be treated—even if they are *kāfir*s—while touching upon the expected conduct of guests themselves.[141] He states that according to the Prophet Muhammad, turning away guests and not treating them right is among the habits of

[139] Hibetullah emphasizes that during prayer, your entire focus should be on the prayer itself and nothing else, and you should pray by heart with a sense of tranquility. See Hibetullah b. İbrahim, *Sā'atnāme*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Dr. Ali Sevil Akay 421/2, fol. 14b.

[140] Ibid., fol. 19b, 30b. Hibetullah occasionally states that these two practices are essential to Islam and considers them complementary, meaning that without one, the other loses its significance. See, for example, Ibid., fols 24a–24b.

[141] Regarding the expected conduct of the guests, Hibetullah advises his audience to always seek permission before entering someone's house. After entering, they should immediately greet the household members, avoid any treachery or betrayal, and sit properly during their stay. Then, addressing women, Hibetullah says that they should lower their gaze and be modest as guests, and even though leaving their hands and faces uncovered is not sinful (*günāh*), they should cover them anyway as it is not *cā'iz* (permissible). Moreover, Hibetullah reminds his audience how Solomon would step down from his throne when a guest arrived. Then, he recites a story of the prophet Abraham to highlight the importance of hospitality. Here, we see that Hibetullah recognizes both Solomon and Abraham as Muslims. See Ibid., fols 16a–20b. In another instance, Hibetullah also recognizes Jesus as a Muslim and even depicts him as the protagonist in a story regarding the origin of the *akşam* (evening) prayer. See Ibid., fol. 13a. This approach is not so surprising, considering these figures are also recognized as Muslims in the Qur'ān in the sense that they are all submitted to God's will. See the Qur'ān 4:163.

*cuhud*s (Jews) and *nasrānī*s (Christians), implying that hospitality is a value particularly cherished by Muslims.[142] In a similar vein, he argues that even if one has committed numerous sins, the act of concealing others' faults and showing forgiveness can still pave the way to paradise. He portrays a scenario in which, when faced with damnation, some of the inhabitants of hell testify before God on behalf of a person they knew—someone who had never revealed their sins or faults and had always generously forgiven their wrongdoings. In recognition of this person's compassion and forgiveness extended to others, God decides to grant entry into paradise to both the person and those who testified on their behalf.[143]

As for the practice of seeking repentance, Hibetullah gives the example of Muhammad, who, despite being "sinless," sought repentance multiple times in a day. Following the *sunna* (accepted practices associated with Muhammad and his companions), Hibetullah stresses that he, too, practices daily repentance and frequently urges his audience to do the same, particularly to ensure they do not face death without having repented.[144] To secure God's forgiveness, he also advocates for immediate repentance upon recognizing one's misdeeds. He cautions that after committing certain sins—namely disturbing other people's relationships, having ill intentions towards someone, and treating others unfairly—even if a person repents, God's forgiveness may not be granted for forty days. Moreover, if that person passes away within this period, unless they obtained forgiveness from those they wronged, they would lose the chance of receiving the Prophet Muhammad's *şefā'at* or God's guidance (*hidāyet*).[145] It should be noted that the concept of repentance has particular importance in the Islamic tradition since to repent is not merely an act of escaping punishment but is also a transformative process that

[142] Hibetullah adds that Muhammad also considers arrogance, engaging in conflicts with family members, and neglecting familial duties among the qualities of Jews and Christians. See Hibetullah b. İbrahim, *Sā'atnāme*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Dr. Ali Sevil Akay 421/2, fols 17a–17b.
[143] Ibid., fols 34b–35b.
[144] Ibid., fols 5b–6a.
[145] Ibid., fols 32b–33a.

purifies believers' hearts and souls, aligning them closer with the divine and enhancing their spiritual well-being. It also functions as a protective shield against future sins and a deterrent from returning to past misdeeds.

Closely related to the practice of repentance, Hibetullah also explains the concept of *ıskāt-ı salāt* in Islamic jurisprudence in detail. This concept, while not explicitly mentioned in the Qur'ān or *hadith*—which proves Hibetullah's consultation of books of *fıkıh*—suggests that if each missed obligatory prayer of a deceased is meticulously calculated, and an equivalent value is given to the poor, this payment could serve as compensation for the deceased's unfulfilled prayers. According to Hibetullah, with *ıskāt,* one can even make amends for any non-major sins or misdeeds; however, the practice does not apply to those who neglected obligatory fasting or prayers and were rebellious against God throughout their lives. Because of its potential to provide a measure of divine mercy, he strongly advises the audience to make provision for *ıskāt* in their wills—but not at the time of death, as this would merely be an action driven by fear—and ensure that their heirs will carry it out. He adds that even if a person did not specify in their will that *ıskāt* should be performed using their assets, their heirs are still obliged to fulfill it. Should the heirs fail to fulfill their request for *ıskāt*, the inherited assets become impermissible (*harām*) for them.[146] He also draws attention to the fact that *ıskāt* and *tövbe* are the opportunities offered by God for believers so that they will not stay in hell forever with *kafīr*s, which implies that even though Muslims receive punishment for their sins, the eternal hell is for unbelievers.[147] Thus, when someone questions whether *ıskāt* is *sünnet*, *farz* or *vācib*,[148] Hibetullah says, the response should be that it is none of these; rather, it is a practice

[146] Hibetullah also indicates that if a person did not have any assets to leave someone, i.e., did not have any heirs, thus could not ask anyone to practice *ıskāt*, their close friends should practice *ıskāt* on their behalf. For the parts regarding *ıskāt,* see Ibid., fols 33a–34a.

[147] Ibid., fol. 36a.

[148] In Islamic jurisprudence, *farz* refers to the actions that are obligatory and essential to the religion, directly commanded in the Qur'ān or *hadith*, and their neglect is considered sinful. *Vācib* refers to the actions equivalent

out of a desire to seek forgiveness from God for one's sins, advocated by Imam Abu Hanifa and *'ālim*s. This assertion is especially important as it shows that not only Hibetullah consulted books of *fıkıh* but also those authored by scholars from the Hanafi school of thought.[149] This, of course, is not much of a surprise given that the Hanafi school became predominant in Anatolia from the moment the Seljuqs brought Islam to the peninsula.[150]

Besides these teachings, Hibetullah informs the audience to avoid forbidden actions (*harām*) dictated both in the Qur'ān and *hadith*, such as adultery, fortune-telling, gambling, and drinking wine; and he condemns those who are untrustworthy, ungrateful to God, and those who harbor enmity in their hearts, gossip, treat others (especially family members, friends, and neighbors) disrespectfully, fail to ensure the welfare of their dependents (such as spouses, children, slaves) and wail after the death of their loved ones. He also alleges that even without explicitly saying, "I do not need the commands of God, and I am not part of the prophet Muhammad's *ümmet*," if you do not follow the commands of God, do not practice your daily prayers, do not avoid what is forbidden, and do not follow the *sunna*; you would implicitly reject the *hereafter* and abandoned your religion.[151] This suggests that, according to Hibetullah, one's faith is verified more by conduct than by verbal expressions. In other words, according to him, faith does not only constitute a static state of belief in the oneness of God and the

to *farz*, but within Hanafi (one of the four established legal schools in Sunni Islam, alongside the Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali) jurisprudence, it denotes obligations that are slightly less stringent based on strong but not definitive evidence, and deliberately neglecting them is still considered sinful. *Sünnet* refers to the actions that are highly recommended based on the practices and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, performing them brings spiritual rewards but neglecting them is not considered sinful.

[149] Another indication of Hibetullah's consultation to the Hanafi *fıkıh* books can be his categorization of the *vitr* prayer (often performed between the *akşam* and *sabāh* and prayers and regarded as the concluding prayer of the day) as *vācib*, meaning it is not as compulsory as the five daily prayers (*farz*), however, still is a significant obligation, and that deliberately neglecting it is considered sinful. See Ibid., fol. 5b. Any other Islamic schools of thought consider the *vitr* prayer as a highly recommended practice (*sünnet*).

[150] Wilferd Madelung, "The Migration of Hanafi Scholars Westward from Central Asia in the 11th to 13th Centuries," *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 43 (2002): p. 52.

[151] Hibetullah b. İbrahim, *Sā'atnāme*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Dr. Ali Sevil Akay 421/2, fols 26a–26b.

prophethood of Muhammad; rather, it requires constant cultivation, reaffirmation, and manifestation through actions and behavior.

The most striking parts of the text appear toward the end. Hibetullah depicts a dramatic scene in which deceased people speak directly to the audience from their graves at length about how they feel regretful because of all the wrongful actions they performed and all the religious duties they neglected during their lifetimes—listing basically all the teachings of the *Sā'atnāme*—and share their pain of experiencing severe punishment in their graves now, akin to those of the unbelievers (*kafīr*s). Intriguingly, we see that one of the actions these people neglected when they were alive was not engaging with the books or approaching the *shaykh*s and *vā'iz*s to help them learn their religion.[152] Then this scene transitions into another where God and *zebānī*s poignantly confront such a person on the Day of Judgment, recounting each of their transgressions.[153] Here, in one instance, *zebānī*s ask them: "Hasn't a learned man (*'ālim*) ever come to you, or haven't you searched for an *'ālim* who would tell you about these days? Haven't you asked an *'ālim* why we came to this world or how you should prepare for the Day of Judgment? Haven't you wondered?"[154] These two scenes are crucial since they not only give us insight into how Hibetullah, as a *shaykh, 'ālim* and *vā'iz* perceives his societal role as key in fostering religious knowledge and preparing ordinary believers for the *hereafter*, but they also reflect the broader religious and social realities of late medieval Anatolia, revealing that such figures held prominence within the religious lives of the Turkish-speaking Muslim communities.

[152] A similar scene can be found in the Qur'ān 23:99-100, where deceased people express a desire to return to the earthly realm to perform more good deeds from their graves, only to be faced with the realization that this is impossible. This scene is often cited as one of the few instances in the Qur'ān that implies the existence of an "intermediary stage."

[153] Hibetullah b. İbrahim, *Sā'atnāme*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Dr. Ali Sevil Akay 421/2, 55b–59b.

[154] Ibid., fols 64a.

After these scenes, Hibetullah starts to explore the experiences of different "types" of people at the time of death and the subsequent questioning they will face in the grave, one by one. These include those who do not follow the commands of God (sinners), boys and girls who have not reached adolescence (*erkek ma'sūmlar ve kız ma'sūmeler*),[155] women in particular circumstances (during pregnancy, postpartum, menstruation, when facing a serious illness, or when they are not in any of these conditions but have the contentment of their husbands),[156] *kafīr*s, those who die at the hands of the infidels, the poor (*yoksullar*), oppressed ones (*mazlūmlar*), sick individuals (*sayrular*), elderly people (*pīrler*), and revered figures (*'azīzler*).[157] Of these groups, the cases of sinners and *kafīr*s, in my opinion, are particularly notable.

Hibetullah vividly explains how the death of sinners, which he also labels as *münāfik*s, unfolds differently from that of "true" believers, as ordered by God. Their suffering begins on their deathbed with the arrival of angels of torment (*azāb melekleri*) and *zebānī*s; some transform into snakes, coiling around them, while others will thrust their hands into their mouths like a calf, severing veins and nerves, or plunge their hands through their eyes, extracting their brains. Throughout this ordeal, they plead with *zebānī*s for mercy, but *zebānī*s keep recounting their sins and torture them until death envelops their body. Then the angel of death (*'Azrā'il*)—who resembles a massive dragon that breathes fire, has a tail made of snakes, and each of its claws is like that of a lion—gazes intently at their face and simultaneously the earth in the disguise of a woman with dark eyes and teeth resembling ox's horns, presses heavily upon their chest while recounting their sins once more, heightening their terror and

[155] Their death is depicted by Hibetullah almost like a peaceful event. Angels gently seek their permission to take their lives and fulfill their final wishes before guiding their souls to paradise. Ibid., 68a–71a.

[156] This section in the text will be closely examined in the next chapter of this thesis.

[157] According to Hibetullah, the last six groups of people mentioned will be considered *şehīd*s (martyrs) when they die. However, he adds that if an elderly person does not pray or engage in acts of worship and is constantly immersed in sin, their death is not considered that of a *şehīd*. See Ibid., fols 76a–77a.

anguish. As they are overwhelmed with fear and thirst, the devil (*şeytān*) appears and offers them a glass of iced water in exchange for uttering "God does not exist" in a bid to strip them of their faith. This moment becomes the ultimate test for them: if they resist the temptation to drink the water and refuse to make that statement, they will have a chance to enter paradise. Otherwise, they are certain to face hell, with only two exceptions: receiving the intercession of the Prophet Muhammad or having left behind three endowed copies of the *Sā'atnāme*.[158]

Similarly, *kafīr*s will be given the opportunity to enter paradise if they repent at the moment of death. Angels will encourage them to repeat the following: "I have left the religion of unbelievers and embraced the true religion. Ascending to paradise is the truth for believers, while hell is the truth for unbelievers. The Qur'an is the truth, and its commands are real and obligatory for believers. Prayer, fasting, and almsgiving are the truth [for believers.]" Then they will escort them to paradise, present its splendors, and leave them there for a while. Unless they repeat these sentences and convert to the "true" religion after witnessing the wonders of paradise, angels of torment will intervene, and they will suffer a horrific death, and their time in the grave, which leads to eternal damnation in hell, will begin.[159] They may express regret for their decision and profess faith (*şehādet getirmek*) later, but it will not be accepted.[160] These opportunities depicted by Hibetullah for even those who do not follow God's commands or those who do not even believe in God during their lifetime suggest that according to him, dying with repentance and *īmān* is essential to guarantee the entrance of your soul to paradise.[161] This

[158] In this section, Hibetullah quotes numerous *hadith* in rapid succession, which indicates that his account of these events is directly drawn from this literature. See Ibid., fols 62b–69a.
[159] If they repeat these sentences, they will affirm these truths and become "true" believers who are committed to their religious obligations.
[160] Ibid., fols 72b–73b.
[161] The text also contains many instances of Hibetullah referring to the importance of dying with repentance and *īmān*.

stance closely aligns with the idea that while God is stern in punishment, he is most forgiving, and salvation is never beyond reach until the final breath if one proves their faith.

2.3. Defining the Type of Piety the *Sā'atnāme* Promotes

As illustrated so far, the *Sā'atnāme* displays essentially *charisma* and *scripture-loyal* Islamic orientations—it relies on both the compelling charisma of Hibetullah and the enduring textual tradition of Islam. Since Hibetullah's charisma is based on his knowledge of the Islamic textual tradition and his ability to transmit this knowledge through his text, a perfect interplay between the two Islamic orientations emerges in the *Sā'atnāme*. Yet, because of this same reason, when considering the defining characteristics of the text, particularly the type of piety it promotes, I believe that the text's *scripture-loyalty* stands out. The commitment to the Qur'ān, *hadith*, and the *sunna* lies at the heart of Hibetullah's teachings. Thus, it is reasonable to argue that the *Sā'atnāme* appears to favor what we can call a "Sunni" piety.

This statement, however, needs further explanation, as it comes with an important question: what kind of "Sunni" piety are we referring to? The term "Sunni" carry particular connotations that are deeply shaped by the historical contexts in which they are used, and these connotations vary significantly even within the same context. As discussed in the introduction of this thesis, scholars have argued that acceptable practices and beliefs within Sunni Islam were quite broad in late medieval Anatolia, for example, compared to when a more narrow, legally minded Sunnism shaped by the Ottomans' efforts in the region from the late 15th century onwards. Being a late medieval text, the *Sā'atnāme* seems to align closely with a more loosely defined Sunni Islam that characterized the religious landscape of Anatolia, as proposed by many scholars. In the text, while Hibetullah clearly urges believers to seek religious knowledge, the knowledge he emphasizes is confined to the basics of faith together with the essential religious duties and moral conduct one should practice—it is neither detailed nor bound by strict legal conformity. True believers, according to Hibetullah, are those who

consistently uphold their faith and complement it with the fulfillment of three of the five pillars of Islam and who engage in constant repentance throughout their lives, while he advises them to do outward practices (*'amel*) as well. However, as discussed before, at the time of death, those who did not consistently complement their faith during their lives will still be given a chance to escape from attaining the status of sinners or *münāfik*s if they prove the truth of their faith. Moreover, even *kafīr*s, those who lacked faith for the entirety of their life, have a final opportunity to profess their faith, and by doing so, they will become true believers. These cases in the text broaden the notion of who can be considered a true believer and eligible to enter paradise even more, linking piety less to lifelong practice and more to a sincere, conclusive moment of repentance and declaration of faith (*şehādet*).[162]

It is also important to note that while being a—most probably Sufi—*shaykh*, *'ālim*, and *vā'iz*, other than emphasizing the importance of such figures as being the sources of religious knowledge for believers and clearly expecting reverence for them (including himself) from his audience, Hibetullah does not stress the concepts that are associated with Islamic mysticism. We do not see that he advocates pious asceticism (*zühd*) or advises people to follow any kind of Sufi practices. So, while having elements of *charisma-loyalty*, the text does not necessarily have Sufi inclinations. Similar to this "absence" in the text, the *Sā'atnāme* also lacks any philo-Alid sentiments.[163] At the beginning of the text, Hibetullah praises the Four Rightly Guided

[162] It should be remembered that at the moment of death of those who have faith but did not fulfill their *'amel*, *şeytān* will attempt to prompt them into a denial that would represent a direct reversal of the *şehādet*. Also, see Tijana Krstić's article, "*You Must Know Your Faith in Detail*: Redefinition of the Role of Knowledge and Boundaries of Belief in Ottoman Catechisms (*'İlm-i ḥāls*)" in *Historicizing Sunni Islam*, where she evaluates various catechetical works written by Ottoman Rumi authors and demonstrates how the relationship between faith and knowledge evolved over the centuries in these texts, particularly in response to the political and societal shifts within the Ottoman Empire. According to her analysis, the *Sā'atnāme* appears to share certain similarities with İzniki's work.

[163] Derin Terzioğlu notes that "for most Sufis 'Ali was the paradigmatic mystic to whom God had first revealed the esoteric meanings of the Quran." This is why he was also regarded as the spiritual forefather of many Sufi orders and most Sufi lineages traced their spiritual authority back to the Prophet Muhammad through him. See Derin Terzioğlu, "Confessional Ambiguity in the Age of Confession-Building: Philo-Alidism, Sufism and Sunni Islam in the Ottoman Empire, 1400–1700," in *Entangled Confessionalizations?*, ed. Tijana Krstić and Derin Terzioğlu (Gorlag Press, 2022), p. 569.

Caliphs without giving any special treatment to the attributes of Ali.[164] This approach extends throughout the text, including his treatment of the *ahl al-bayt*, where no exceptional recognition is given. While these absences seem to be in line with the text's promotion of a "Sunni" piety that will somewhat align with "Sunnism" that prevailed in later centuries in Anatolia (or at least, does not conflict with it), it should be underlined, once again, due to the nature of Sunni Islam in late medieval Anatolia, Alid-tinged Sufi piety was a part of, rather than being opposed to, Sunni piety.[165] There are a number of vernacular texts from this period, in fact, that use a strong sympathetic tone towards both Ali and the *ahl al-bayt* but do not diverge from the broader Sunni tradition or disregard any core principles of Sunni creed.[166] So, even if the *Sā'atnāme* had demonstrated Alid loyalism or shown a stronger inclination towards a Sufi path to the divine, the type of piety the *Sā'atnāme* promoted could still fall within the scope of Sunni Islam.

Then, the critical question of why these elements are absent from the text comes to the forefront. I find this question particularly challenging, as we lack a comprehensive paradigm for understanding texts like the *Sā'atnāme*, which share the same objective of providing religious and moral instruction to the Turkish-speaking Muslims in late medieval Anatolia, and, more importantly, a precise answer to the question of what exactly "Sunni Islam" entailed

[164] Hibetullah b. İbrahim, *Sā'atnāme*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Dr. Ali Sevil Akay 421/2, fols 3a–3b.

[165] In later periods, special veneration of Ali b. Abi Talib and the *ahl al-bayt*, as well as various Sufi practices, came under scrutiny by the Ottomans, with many of these elements increasingly regarded as outside the boundaries of Sunni orthodoxy/praxy.

[166] Yıldırım, "Sunni Orthodox vs Shi'ite Heterodox?," p. 306; Terzioğlu, "Confessional Ambiguity in the Age of Confession-Building," pp. 567–571. That being said, Terzioğlu indicates that it would be misleading to assume expressions of philo-Alid sentiments and Sufi practices were uniformly suppressed, while, in reality, they were part of an ongoing negotiation shaped by the evolving sociopolitical landscape. Peacock, from a different perspective, also challenges the assumed clear-cut distinction on this subject between late medieval Anatolia and early modern Ottoman times. He points out that there are also certain texts from late medieval Anatolia that channel a stronger "pro-'Alid stance" accompanied by an "anti-Sunni tinge," and argues that while the veneration of 'Ali and *ahl al-bayt* could technically fit within "the broad confines of [Sunnism]," there was also "an atmosphere of sectarian tension" in the region well before the Ottomans' orthodoxizing efforts. See Peacock, *Islam, literature, and society*, pp. 209–212. Terzioğlu also makes a similar point in her article, "How to Conceptualize Ottoman Sunnitization: A Historiographical Discussion," in *Turcica* 44 (2012): p. 308.

in this specific historical context. In the absence of such a framework, we can only speculate about the possible reasons behind these omissions. Was the absence of Alid loyalism or explicit Sufi themes a result of Hibetullah's personal priorities or theological stance, or is it part of a wider phenomenon that we can trace in such texts? Can we interpret these absences as an implicit critique of these elements? These possibilities point to the need for further analysis with other similar contemporary texts to elucidate the *Sā'atnāme*'s position within its broader milieu.

2.4. The Question of Intended Audience

When it comes to the question of the text's intended audience, I believe that the promise of salvation attached to the *Sā'atnāme* for anyone who engages with it in any possible way clearly reflects Hibetullah's intention to reach a wide audience with his text. His inclusion of the actions of copying the text or commissioning its copying and endowing it to this promise, together with the passage where he claims that leaving behind three copies of the *Sā'atnāme* can lead to paradise even for those who have committed numerous foul deeds, are particularly telling as they show his deliberate effort to make the reproduction of the text an appealing prospect. In the same manner, his inclusion of the act of listening to his promise of salvation shows that Hibetullah recognized the social reality of his time and envisioned, even promoted, the dissemination of his text not only in the written form but also orally.

Hibetullah's encouragement to his audience to copy or have the text copied and endow it, if possible, more than once, also gives us more important clues about his foresight or desire for who might have the text at their hands. During the late medieval times and the early modern period, access to manuscript copies as well as two essential items that are needed to copy a text, paper and ink, was limited to small groups of people across the Near East. Texts as objects and the materials to produce them were costly and considered luxury items; thus, they were only available to those who could afford them. Further, their utility was confined to the literates,

making them prevalent in urban settings where literacy rates were most likely higher. So, someone who could copy a text or commission it to be copied and endow it could have only been a scribe or a wealthy patron who was able to hire a scribe, an administrator, merchant or artisan. Alternatively, such a text might have been owned, copied or endowed by an '*ālim* or a student associated with a madrasa, Sufi lodge, or mosque library—as these institutions were funded by various patrons to ensure that they had the necessary resources—for educational purposes. This suggests that while Hibetullah most certainly intended his text to be consumed by common people, he also imagined his audience to be beyond them, from all segments of society.[167] Considering this and given his desire for the text to be read aloud, I think it can also be argued that Hibetullah intended his text to be used by other *shaykh*s or preachers during their sermons.

Another point from the text reflecting Hibetullah's aim for a wide audience is his statement at the beginning of the text that the *Sā'atnāme* should be read by *ümmīler* and *ümmī hatunlar*, as it offers benefits to both of them. Indeed, he reinforces this statement throughout the text, occasionally reminding his audience that his preaching applies to both genders.[168] He also specifically encourages his male audience to educate not only their sons but also their daughters with the *Sā'atnāme*.[169] Further, as mentioned above, when discussing the moment of death of different types of people and their waiting until the Day of Judgement comes, he dedicates a whole separate section to women who reached adolescence, informing them about what awaits them in grave if they were to die during specific circumstances. Similarly, after the main narrative ends, Hibetullah also includes a *hadith* narrative—which was transmitted by Ali—featuring a conversation between a woman and Muhammad in which the woman asks

[167] In the text, Hibetullah also advises his audience to leave behind at least one copy of the Qur'ān to earn *sevāb*. Hibetullah b. İbrahim, *Sā'atnāme*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Dr. Ali Sevil Akay 421/2, fols 24b, 43b. This, however, again is not a kind of recommendation that everyone can follow for the above-mentioned reasons.
[168] See, for instance, Ibid., fols. 24a and 47b.
[169] Ibid., fols 60a.

questions regarding the responsibilities of a woman in a marriage and the rights of a husband over his wife, and Muhammed answers them. Two short dialogues between Muhammad and his daughter Fatma, and his wife Ayşe about the same subjects are also integrated into this conversation.[170] These remarks surely underscore Hibetullah's acknowledgment of the needs and worries of female members of the Turkish-speaking Muslim communities.

The fact that Hibetullah chooses to depict the moment of death of different types of people in the first place also reveals that he imagined his text to reach a wide and inclusive audience, and I believe, possibly even extending the non-Muslims within the Turkish-speaking communities. His graphic depiction of how a *kāfir* dies must have functioned as a stern warning about the risks of remaining outside the faith for the non-Muslims who might be reading or listening to the text. However, at the same, the same section should have been understood as a compassionate invitation for them to embrace Islam since Hibetullah includes the possibility of repentance even at the moment of death for them and stresses that God's mercy is so immense that no one is beyond redemption until their final moments, even if they faltered.

[170] Ibid., fols 86b–90b. Whether this story was originally part of the text is uncertain since we do not have the original copy of the text. As many manuscripts of the text include additional writings by various people who owned, copied, endowed, or used these copies, it is possible that this story was added later by someone else. However, since in many manuscripts, including the one I use, this story is treated as part of the text and it was frequently copied as such, I also consider it to be part of the text. Given that the text likely originated from one of Hibetullah's preaching sessions, I believe that it is quite reasonable to assume Hibetullah might have concluded his preaching with a story like this. I will also examine this section more closely in the next chapter of the thesis.

THIRD CHAPTER

Understanding the *Sā'atnāme* as a Historical Artifact

This chapter utilizes "material philology" as a conceptual tool to go beyond the textual content of the *Sā'atnāme* and to trace its social afterlife by examining the paratextual elements, such as colophons, seal impressions, ownership notes/marks, and marginal notes, of various manuscript copies of the text. In doing so, I aim to uncover (1) how the text circulated through the centuries, (2) identify the main actors—the owners, endowers, and copyists/scribes—facilitating this process (3) explore how these actors, along with other users and readers who also left their imprints on the manuscripts, interacted with the text.

3.1. The Social Afterlife of the *Sā'atnāme*

As mentioned in the introduction of the thesis, there are currently over 300 known copies of the *Sā'atnāme* housed in library collections spanning from the United Kingdom to Egypt.[171] With the oldest known copy dating to the late 14th century and the most recent to the 20th century, the text has evidently not only traveled across regions but also endured the passage of time, even finding a place in print culture.[172] This widespread circulation of the text surely reflects its remarkable success, which goes beyond the temporal and geographical context of its original production. I believe this success stems from the text's main feature—serving as an alternative text to the Qur'ān and *hadith*, especially considering "the proliferation of Turkish '*ilm-i ḥāl* literature in the central lands of the Ottoman empire after the mid-sixteenth

[171] Also, as Muhammed Yelten indicates, the manuscripts of the *Sā'atnāme* appear to fall into two distinct groups: the first group comprises those ranging from 60 to 100 folios, while the second group consists of those ranging from 120 to 150 folios. Examining the changes, as well as the included and excluded parts across the manuscript copies, will undoubtedly offer valuable insights into how people engaged with the *Sā'atnāme* and yield new findings.

[172] To my knowledge, at least four different print houses in İstanbul, including the Matbaa-i Amire (the first official state printing house in the Ottoman Empire, established in 1727), printed lithographed editions of the text between 1856 and 1906. For the newest copy of the text, see Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Necib Erdem, 158.

century."[173] Being essentially a book of *va'z*, the *Sā'atnāme* shares similar objectives and themes to the Ottoman *ilm-i hāl* texts, which were also essentially written to provide religious guidance and moral instructions to common believers. While new *ilm-i hāl* texts were produced to address specific concerns and discussions of their corresponding social and political contexts by Ottoman scholars, some of the medieval equivalent of these texts continued to be read and copied in the lands of the empire during the early modern period. The fact that most surviving copies of the *Sā'atnāme* date from the seventeenth century onward suggests that its continued circulation align with this broader trend of sustained interest in religious instructional texts.

Nonetheless, as Krstić argues, the appeal of the *Sā'atnāme* seems to be also closely tied to its "in-built formula," which encouraged the text's reproduction and circulation in a manner reminiscent of modern "chain letters" that promise good luck if forwarded to others.[174] People's response to this formula—centered on participating in a growing "network of *sevāb*" that can lead to your salvation—is reflected not only in the sheer number of surviving manuscripts copies of the text but also in the traces they left on them. Almost all the manuscript copies bear seal impressions and/or several ownership or donative statements (usually before or after the text), indicating that people endowed the text to a library, madrasa, or a *zāviye* for others to use, sometimes not just once, following Hibetullah's wish.[175] In most cases, in these statements, a request for prayers, specifically three *İhlās-ı Şerīf* and one *Fātiha*, for the endower's soul is included—just as Hibetullah encourages them to do so—from whoever

[173] Derin Terzioğlu, "Where İlm-i Hal Meets Catechism: Islamic Manuals of Religious Instruction in the Ottoman Empire in the Age of Confessionalization," *Past & Present* 220/1 (2013): p. 1.
[174] Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam*, p. 36.
[175] For example, I encountered two copies endowed by Salepcizade Hacı Ahmed Efendi to the Kemeraltı Cami Library in İzmir. See, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, İzmir, 744; and Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, İzmir, 833/1. Also, I should add that the manuscript copy I use to analyze the text does not bear any seal impression and ownership or donative statements, which is a very rare occurrence among the manuscripts copies I have surveyed.

copies, reads, or listens to the text.[176] Sometimes people also request prayers for both their living and deceased loved ones or they endow the text on behalf of a deceased loved one, asking for prayers for their souls.[177] In a similar manner, in the colophons, scribes ask from those who engage with the text to offer prayers for themselves often together with the text's endower, while also offering their own prayers for these individuals.[178]

It also caught my attention that a considerable number of the manuscripts were copied during "the three blessed months" in the Islamic tradition, namely *Receb*, *Şa'bān*, and *Ramazān*, and the month of the Prophet Muhammad's birthday (*Rabī'ülevvel*). I find it highly unlikely that these timings were coincidental, since traditionally Muslims strive to increase their acts of worship and perform more good deeds during these periods. In my opinion, scribes and patrons deliberately chose these months for copying the text, believing the *sevāb*s they would earn when engaging with the text would be amplified.[179] I believe that the preference for copying or commissioning the text copying during these "auspicious" times can also testifies to my argument that any type of engagement with the *Sā'atnāme* was likely perceived as a way to obtain *baraka* while being a source of *sevāb*. As Krstić observes, one can find numerous talismans and prayers, calculations, divination instructions, and devotional poems preceding or following the text in almost every copy. Agreeing with her interpretation that these traces left by various users of the manuscripts suggest that the text attained some kind of "magical aura" over time, I think that this magical aura can be explained by the *Sā'atnāme*'s

[176] See, for example, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Ömer Fazıl Aköz, 24; Balıkesir Kütüphanesi, Balıkesir İl Halk Kütühanesi, 869; Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Hacı Mahmud Efendi, 1942; Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Yazma Bağışlar, 4209.

[177] See, for example, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Satın Alınan Yazma Eserler, 322; Manisa Kütüphanesi, Manisa İl Kütüphanesi, 6815.

[178] See, for example, Edirne Selimiye Kütüphanesi, Selimiye Yazmalar, 7174; Edirne Selimiye Kütüphanesi, Selimiye Yazmalar, 4991; İBB Atatürk Kitaplığı, Nadir Eserler, K. 222; Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Yazma Bağışlar, 4209. It is worth noting that the scribes are sometimes also the endowers of the text.

[179] See, for example, İBB Atatürk Kitaplığı, Nadir Eserler, K. 311; Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Kütüphanesi, Yazma Eserler, 3092; Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Serez, 1634; Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Serez, 1652; Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Satın Alınan Yazma Eserler, 501; Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Kütüphanesi, Yazma Eserler, 3651; Milli Kütüphane, Milli Kütüphane Yazmalar, A. 548; Milli Kütüphane, Milli Kütüphane, A. 7542.

association with *baraka* in the minds of its audience as well.[180] These more personal and intimate engagements with the text—distinct from being an intermediary for its circulation to earn *sevāb* and receive prayers—demonstrate that people may have interacted with the *Sā'atnāme* as a sacred three-dimensional object, believing that the manuscripts themselves had spiritual efficacy.

That being said, various notes that include religious knowledge written by the users of manuscripts can also be found in multiple copies. This means that, at the same time, the *Sā'atnāme* continued to be simply perceived as an everyday religious guide, which is another reason why I initially find it logical to attribute some of the interest the text received to the rising popularity of *'ilm-i hāl* texts from the mid 16th century onwards. What is more is that people apparently use the manuscript copies of the text as a medium for preserving and sharing the religious knowledge they already have, believing it could benefit others. The topics of these user-added notes seem to be remarkably diverse, including stories such as a conversation between Muhammad and Gabriel,[181] an account about Jesus[182] and *hadith* narratives;[183] practical religious information such as an explanation of obligatory acts of ablution;[184] various prayers for strengthening faith,[185] seeking protection against the evil eye (*nazar*),[186] and for specific occasions such as funerals, Fridays,[187] or the night of *Berāt* (often referred to as the

[180] Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam*, p. 36. For exemplary manuscripts, see Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Kütüphanesi, Yazma Eserler, 4960; Amasya Beyazıt Kütüphanesi, Gümüşhacı Köyü, 20/01; Edirne Selimiye Kütüphanesi, Selimiye Yazmalar, 5058; Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Satın Alınan Yazma Eserler, 940; Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Mehmet Taviloğlu, 143, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Satın Alınan Yazma Eserler 501.
[181] Manisa Kütüphanesi, Manisa İl Halk Kütüphanesi, 8335.
[182] Konya Yazma Eserler Bölge Müdürlüğü, Yazma Eserler Müdürlüğü, 5530/1.
[183] Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Hacı Mahmud Efendi, 1811/01, and Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Yazma Bağışlar, 3066.
[184] Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Nuri Arlasez, 87/6.
[185] Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Hacı Mahmut Efendi, 1742.
[186] Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, İzmir, 833/1.
[187] Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Fatih, 2644.

Night of Forgiveness);[188] and information on Islamic rulings concerning menstruation (*hayız*) and postpartum bleeding (*nifās*) for women.[189]

When we move on to the question of who engaged with the *Sā'atnāme,* the answer is particularly striking. The names appear in the ownership and donative statements and the colophons in the manuscripts, such as Amine *kadın* b. *Çorbacızade Ağa*; Sadıka *hatun*, the wife of *Hacı Berber* Osman *Ağa*; *Molla* Yahya b. İslam; Arif *Ağazade* Halil Efendi; Muhammed *Ağa,* the son of *Kuyumcu* Hızır; *Hacı* Hüseyin b. Bekir; Fatma *hatun*, from the family of *Tamircioğlu* Mehmed *Ağa*; and *Hafız* Mustafa Efendi, the son of Dursun reveal that a diverse group of people, including family members of artisans, merchants, local elites, and wealthy households, were either owned, copied, or endowed the text.[190] The frequent appearance of titles associated with those who engaged in religious learning, such as *hafız*[191] and *molla*,[192] indicates that the text may have been present in educational settings. In fact, the manuscript copied in the madrasa of Şehzade Mehmed in İstanbul, previously noted by Krstić, further supports this possibility.[193] I also came across several manuscripts linked to more peculiar figures, shedding light on the diverse contexts in which the text might have circulated. These include a manuscript copied by an *imām* of the Grand Mosque of Bursa,[194] one endowed by a

[188] Bursa İnebey, Genel, 1134.

[189] Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Fatih, 2644.

[190] The italics highlight (except for the words *hatun* and *kadın*) the basis for my conclusions about the social backgrounds of the individuals mentioned. Most associations, I believe, are relatively straightforward, except for the term *hacı.* While this title essentially denoted someone who has completed the pilgrimage to Mecca, it also gives an idea about such person's financial standing, as undertaking such a journey required significant resources. Also, since a *hacı* was regarded as a profoundly pious individual who had fulfilled a sacred Islamic duty, it also usually gave people a social reputation regarding their moral integrity, often even extended to their family.

[191] A title given to a person who has memorized the entire Qur'ān. Many *hafız*s were associated with mosques or madrasas serving as Qur'ān reciters during religious gatherings.

[192] The term *molla* in the Ottoman Empire initially referred to high-ranking religious scholars and judges. From the 16th century onward, its usage broadened to include individuals from specific social classes, such as the *Beşik uleması*—those born into the ulama "class" through lineage—and eventually used by madrasa students or people who engaged religious duties in ceremonies or gatherings. See Hamid Algar, "Molla," TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi, https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/molla, accessed November 1, 2024.

[193] As a side note, this manuscript was also copied during the month of *Rabī'ülevvel*. See Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Serez, 1609.

[194] Manisa Kütüphanesi, Manisa İl Halk Kütüphanesi, 6815.

seal-bearer of a certain Sekbanbaşı (the chief of a type of irregular infantry force in the Ottoman Empire),[195] and another copied by a son of a certain Halveti *shaykh*.[196] Yet, my most intriguing findings were the two manuscripts bearing the seals of Ottoman sultans, Mustafa III and Osman III, indicating that the text even made its way into the Topkapı Palace Library.[197]

Beyond the clues offered by the names found in the manuscripts, diversity in the physical characteristics of the *Sā'atnāme* copies provides further compelling evidence of how individuals from different parts of the society, extending to those who have less privileged socio-economic and educational backgrounds, engaged with the text. As Krstić points out, the manuscripts range from copies written on lavish paper in an elegant, calligraphic style to those executed in shaky, barely literate handwriting copies that show significant wear from frequent use.[198] Notably, this wide range of handwriting styles is also evident in ownership and donative statements, as well as in user-added notes. Clearly, the paths of those with only functional literacy—who may have relied on basic reading and writing skills to engage with the written word—intersected with the *Sā'atnāme* just as much as those of individuals with advanced literary training, such as scholars, calligraphers, or members of wealthy families.

3.2. A Curious Relationship: Women and the *Sā'atnāme*

If there is one group that stands out for its extensive engagement with the *Sā'atnāme*, however, it is undoubtedly women. More than half of the manuscripts I have examined during my research were owned, commissioned, or endowed by them.[199] In many cases, women's names appear alongside those of their fathers, offering insights into their social status, as seen in some

[195] This copy was, in fact, the only copy I encountered with denotive statements written in *dīvanī* script. Unfortunately, I could not read one of them thoroughly. See Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Tercüme, 138.
[196] Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Satın Alınan Yazma Eserler, 397.
[197] Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, III. Ahmet Koleksiyonu, 3098, and Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Laleli, 1378.
[198] Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam*, p. 37.
[199] Ibid, p. 37. Although Krstić made this observation well before my research thus, I anticipated this outcome, the number was still significantly higher than I expected.

of the examples above. Still, numerous instances also exist where their names appear alone, accompanied only by titles such as *hatun* and *kadın*. The absence of additional details about their family ties raises the possibility, as Krstić suggests, that they may have been manumitted slaves.[200]

There are certain manuscripts, however, that reveal more intriguing insights. One notable example is a copy that "is said to be endowed by a slave woman (Fatma *cariye*)." Although this seems to be a unique instance, it still shows us the diverse social standings of women who contributed to the reproduction and circulation of the text.[201] Other examples are the two manuscripts owned and endowed by women whose names include the title of *molla*.[202] Considering that in the late Ottoman era, the title *molla* began to be used for women who performed religious duties—such as reciting the Qur'ān and the *mevlid*[203]—within female circles, it is tempting to link these instances to the usage of the text in religious settings, where it was intended to be read aloud by one person and listened to by others.[204] In fact, there is one manuscript that appears to confirm such an instance, containing a note after the text that requests prayers for the owner of the book, Meryem *hatun*, along with her father, mother, and all her deceased loved ones, from specifically the women who were present in a certain gathering and read the text.[205] The decision to record this request in writing rather than simply express it verbally during the gathering is particularly significant. It suggests that such gatherings, where the text was collectively read and heard by a group of women, were not uncommon. Meryem *hatun* likely anticipated that the text would circulate beyond her

[200] Ibid., p. 37.
[201] Krstić also mentions this manuscript. See Ibid., p. 37.
[202] See Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, İzmir, 744 and Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Serez, 1610.
[203] *Mevlid* refers to a religious text or poem that celebrates the birth of the Prophet Muhammad, with the most famous example being Süleyman Çelebi's *Vesīlet'ün Necāt.*
[204] Algar, "Molla."
[205] The note starts as "Now, it is requested from through the grace and generosity of the women present in this gathering who have read this book…" See Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Yazma Bağışlar, 4337.

immediate possession and be used in other gatherings attended by women. By writing a note, she must he tried to extend her request for prayers to future readers and participants in similar occasions.

At this point, a pertinent question emerges: why were women particularly drawn to this text? Aside from Hibetullah's repeated assertions that the teachings of the *Sā'atnāme* are equally relevant for female believers, I believe that certain parts of the text which specifically relate to the lives and struggles of women played a significant role in the text's appeal to them. As I mentioned before, Hibetullah devotes a considerable section to what awaits women if they were to die during pregnancy, postpartum, or menstruation; while suffering from a serious illness; or even if they were to die outside any of these states, but with their husbands by their side, pleased and content with them. What is important is that, in all these circumstances, women are promised the elevated status of *şehids*, a designation that carries profound spiritual significance in the Islamic tradition. This status ensures that they are spared the torments of the grave and granted immediate entry into paradise.[206] I argue that such a promise must been a source of consolation while also dignifying their certain compelling experiences, including being a "proper" wife to their husbands, offering them a sense of value and recognition within the religion that they believe in.

The last section of the *Sā'atnāme*, where Hibetullah delves into the subject of marriage—a cornerstone of Islamic social and ethical life—must also have played a significant role in capturing the attention of a female audience. By addressing the responsibilities and acceptable behaviors of wives towards their husbands from the voice of Muhammad, this section, I would argue, has an empowering tone for women in the sense that it provides them with the necessary knowledge of what to expect in a marriage and how to navigate their role

[206] Hibetullah also underlines that they will be neighbors to the wives of the Prophet Muhammad, Ayşe and Hatice, as well as his daughter Fatma, in paradise.

within it. Indicating Muhammad's warning that a woman should marry only if she believes that she can fulfill the rights of her husband upon her, this section demonstrates how a woman's afterlife is directly linked to how good of a wife she was during her lifetime. For example, even if a woman performs all the religious obligations yet fails to have the contentment of their husbands, she undoubtedly will be subjected to severe punishment both at the time of death and on the Day of Judgement, and eventually, burn in hell. In this section a woman also learns what is permissible for their husbands in disciplining them, setting clear parameters rooted in Islamic law. Hibetullah delineates four situations in which a husband may reprimand his wife: if she neglects her prayers, refuses the marital bed without a valid reason, fails to perform ritual purification (*gusül*), and leaves the house without his permission. While these stipulations may reflect a patriarchal framework for a modern reader, their inclusion in the text likely served an important function for an early modern female audience—it provided them with an awareness of their rights and constrained their husbands' authority to these specific scenarios.

Beyond these in-text elements that likely enhanced the text's appeal to women, it is worth noting that the *Sā'atnāme* was not the only text that can be considered part of the *'ilm-i hāl* literature, and that resonated with a female audience around the same period.[207] Krstić notes that the famous 17th-century Ottoman traveler Evliya Çelebi, in his descriptions of Gallipoli, mentions how "the poor and the rich, especially women, learned by heart the *Muhammediye* rather than the Qur'an" in the region.[208] She also refers to a recent study suggesting that over time, "the *Muhammediye* became a favorite piece of religious literature for women" to read during their religious gatherings at home. This attraction appears to have existed from the very

[207] I should also add that "while women were rarely, if ever, mentioned as potential readers in other types of text written by early modern Ottomans, it was quite common for *ilm-i hāl* writers to begin with an affirmation of the relevance of their subject matter to members of both sexes." So, in this sense, the *Sā'atnāme* shares another key feature with this literature. See Terzioğlu, "Where İlm-i Hal Meets Catechism," p. 90.

[208] *Muhammediye*, written by Yazıcıoğlu Mehmed Efendi (d. 1451), is one of the most influential and widely read religious texts in the Ottoman Empire. Even today, in modern Turkey, this text continues to be recited during various religious ceremonies and gatherings.

beginning, "as suggested by the fact that some of the early sixteen-century copies of the text were executed by women." Moreover, Krstić notes the enduring popularity of another well-known '*ilm-i hāl* text, Birgivi Mehmed Efendi's (d. 1573) *Vasiyetnāme,* among women. Apparently, throughout the Ottoman Empire, women "often commissioned [the text's] copying and donated it to libraries of pious institutions in North Africa, specifically for Turkish-speaking Muslims appointed to serve in those regions."[209] Considering these instances, I believe that exploring women's engagement with *'ilm-i hāl* literature in the Ottoman Empire presents a promising research avenue that can raise various questions regarding women's involvement in the production, circulation, and endowment of religious texts and the networks they were established through private religious gatherings.

[209] See Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam,* p. 33–34 and fn. 20 in the book's chapter one.

Concluding Remarks

In this thesis, I shed light on a little-studied late medieval Anatolian text, the *Sā'atnāme*, which nevertheless left a lasting impact on the religious lives of Turkish-speaking Muslim communities in the lands of Rum. Aligning my study with ongoing research that seeks to move beyond older conceptual frameworks—which have proven insufficient for understanding both the characteristics of Islam and the religious experiences of Turkish-speaking Muslims in late medieval Anatolia—in the first chapter, I provided an overview of the region's political, social, intellectual, and religious landscape, from the Seljuq period through the so-called *beylik* era, with particular attention to the aftermath of the Mongol conquest. This period, often mischaracterized as "dark times" before the rise of the Ottomans, was, one of the most dynamic and transformative eras in the history of Anatolia. It was during this time that the processes of Islamization—along with the region's deeper integration into the broader Islamic Near East—accelerated largely due to two key developments: the emergence of Turkish as an Islamic vernacular and the spread of Sufism along with the rise of holy men.

In light of these developments, in the second chapter, I argued for the prominence of *charisma-* and *scripture-loyal* orientations in late medieval Anatolia and demonstrated how the *Sā'atnāme*, as part of the newly emerging Turkish religious literature, both reflected and shaped these Islamic orientations in the region. By closely examining the text's content, I further suggested that the *Sā'atnāme* functioned primarily as an alternative text to the Qur'ān and *hadith* for Turkish-speaking Muslim communities in the region—including people from different social strata—while also serving as a source of *sevāb* and *baraka*, thanks to the salvational formula Hibetullah attached to it. I must add that by utilizing the above-mentioned concepts in my analysis, I sought—much like Dressler when he first introduced them—to use a vocabulary that resonates with the social realities of late medieval Anatolia while offering insight into a text deeply rooted in those realities. My intention was not to prescribe these terms

as definitive for discussing Islam in Anatolia but rather to highlight their potential as conceptual tools that can enrich our understanding of the region's religious history, a field that I believe is in need of such frameworks.

In the final chapter of this thesis, I explored the manuscript journey of the *Sā'atnāme*, an aspect often overlooked in studies of medieval Turkish texts, by employing the concept of "material philology." Analyzing the paratextual elements across various copies, I traced the text's enduring social afterlife across the Ottoman Empire, revealing that individuals from diverse socio-economic backgrounds actively engaged with the *Sā'atnāme*, not only as a practical source of religious guidance but also as a means of accumulating *sevāb*, collecting prayers for themselves and their loved ones, and associating themselves with *baraka*. Furthermore, highlighting the *Sā'atnāme*'s similar objectives and content, I suggested that the text's widespread circulation can be linked to a broader phenomenon: the proliferation of '*ilm-i hāl* literature in the Ottoman Empire, particularly from the mid-16th century onward.

Ultimately, with this thesis, I aimed to contribute to broader scholarly debates on the characteristics of Islam in late medieval Anatolia and the religious experiences of Turkish-speaking Muslim communities. It is my hope that, now that more is known about the *Sā'atnāme*—although I believe that there remains much to be explored regarding its content, circulation, and reception—the text can be more integrated into the discussions of late medieval Arabic, Persian, and Turkish texts that were circulated in Anatolia.

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