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In Search of the Early Ottomans' Historical Consciousness: Reading *Saltukname* as a
Conceptualization of the Past

ZEKERİYA EFE ANTALYALI

117671004

DR. MURAT DAĞLI

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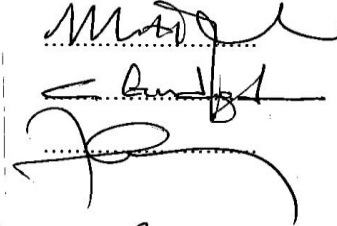
In Search of the Early Ottomans' Historical Consciousness: Reading *Saltukname* as a
Conceptualization of the Past

Erken Osmanlıların Tarih Bilincinin Arayışında: *Saltukname*'yi Geçmişin
Kavramsallaştırılması Olarak Okumak

ZEKERİYA EFE ANTALYALI

117671004

Tez Danışmanı: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Murat Dağlı
(İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi)
Jüri Üyesi: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Cihangir Gündoğdu
(İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi)
Jüri Üyesi: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Zeynep Oktay Uslu
(Boğaziçi Üniversitesi)



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ABSTRACT

The legendary hagiography of Sarı Saltuk, *Saltukname*, has been discussed and analyzed by different scholars and from different point of views. Yet, these works are still far from going beyond the conventional understanding of the hagiography-studies. In these works, much of the attention continues to be devoted to tackling whether Sarı Saltuk was a fictitious character or a “historical” one. Add to this, the works operating within a strict positivist *opus moderandi* and aim to sip out the “historical facts” from the “mythic” and “ahistorical” narratives of *Saltukname* to supplement more “historical works” on the early Ottoman state with “reliable data”. Diverging from these conventional approaches, this work considers *Saltukname* as a conceptualization of the past by Turcoman inhabitants of Dobruca who had migrated there from central Anatolia around the late 13th century and who were well aware of their Anatolian past. As Ebu'l Hayr Rum-i, the compiler of *Saltukname*, pointed out, the events and the deeds of Sarı Saltuk were compiled from the narratives of dervishes and were written down following strictly their “history”. Last but not the least, this work juxtaposes “proper history works” –such as Yazıcızade Ali’s *Tevârih -i âl-i Selçuk* and Ibni Bîbî’s *El Evamirü'l-Ala'iyye Fi'l-Umuri'l-Ala'iyye*—and *Saltukname* in order to point out where they diverge and converge in their narration of the same events. By comparing these texts, the work elucidates how a certain event had been re-shaped through the differences between oral and written tradition.

ÖZET

Sarı Saltuk'un epik menakıbnamesi, Saltukname, bir çok araştırmacı tarafından çok farklı bakış açılarından tartışıldı ve incelendi. Yine de, bu çalışmalar menakıbname çalışmalarının klasik yöntemlerinin ötesine geçmekten hala çok uzak. Bu çalışmalarda, odağın büyük kısmı Sarı Saltuk'un "tarihi" mi yoksa "kurgu" bir sima mı olduğunu anlamaya verilmeye devam ediliyor. Buna ek olarak, bir de katı bir pozitivist çalışma yöntemini takip ederek Saltukname'nin "efsanevi" ve "tarihdışı" anlatılarındaki "tarihsel olguları" ayıklayarak erken dönem Osmanlı devleti üzerine daha "bilimsel çalışmaları" "güvenilir bilgiler" ile tahkim etmeye çalışan bir anlayıştan da söz edebiliriz. Bu çalışma, klasik yaklaşımlardan ayrılarak, Saltukname'yi kendi bütünlüğüyle inceliyor. Bu çalışma Saltukname'yi 13.yy'da Anadolu'dan Dobruca'ya göçmüş ,ve bu geçmişinin de gayet farkında olan, Türk dilli topluluğun kendi geçmişlerinin bir kavramsallaştırması olarak ele alıyor. Böylece, bu çalışma Saltukname'nin bütünlüğü içerisinde bir 15.yy Balkan toplumunun kendi geçmişine ve "tarihe" dair düşünce alışkanlıklarını yansıttığını ileri sürüyor. Aynı zamanda, bu çalışma, Saltukname'nin bir başka göz ardı edilmiş veçhesi olan, kahramanlıkları, örnek kişiliği ve tepkileri ile Saltukname'nin önemli bir kısmını kaplayan Sarı Saltuk'un takipçilerinin gözünde bir "şanlı ata" olma gerçeği üzerine de düşünüyor. Bununla birlikte, bu çalışma aynı olayların anlatımında hangi noktalarda ayrıldıklarını ve denk düştüklerini görmek amacıyla—Yazıcızade Ali'nin *Tevârih -i âl-i Selçuk* ve İbni Bîbî'nin *El Evamirü'l-Ala'iyye Fi'l-Umuri'l-Ala'iyye gibi*— "düzgün tarih eserlerini" Saltukname ile karşılaştırıyor. Bu eserleri karşılaştırarak, bu çalışma bir olayın sözlü ve yazılı gelenekteki farklar vasıtasıyla tekrardan şekillendiğini gösteriyor.

INTRODUCTION

As of 2019, we are faced with a new strong wave of interest in the early periods of Ottoman State. Nurturing from various ways, such as historical-fictional tv-series, constant references to the politicians, and the worldwide revived nationalistic discourses, this interest in the early Ottomans ushered, perhaps at an unprecedented scale, in the inflation of book publishing to meet the demand. However, rather than being produced for the homo academicus milieu, this publishing increase mostly consists of the popular books published by both from the academics and “amateurs” as the demand comes from this way.

Not only this situation heightens the rupture between the academic and the popular works in terms of content and quality, but also casts the attention to more “popular” aspects of the early Ottomans such as the military, the greatness of the sultans, and their “purported” race. Thus, the other aspects of early Ottoman period such as their culture, beliefs, and world views have increasingly been overshadowed. It must be noted that not before this wave of interest even the academics were keenly interested in those aspects. However, it should not escape from the attention that this situation worsens what is already in poor condition.

This study aims to delve deep into the world views of the early Ottomans. In the orally dominated cultural life of the Byzantine-Ottoman frontiers, the best channels through which these mental structures or visions of the world came to life were epic tales, hagiographies and myths. Moreover, once these visions of the world were rendered into narratives, they did not simply become an inert mental representation of the exact moment they rendered. Rather they continued to be shaped by subsequent mental structures and, in return, to shape the ensuing generations’ visions of the world as they widely circulated amongst them. In this sense, this research examines the Saltukname

to understand the conceptualization of the past of a fifteenth century community in the Dobruca Region.

In the first chapter I seek the question of whether a history of mentalities possible for the early Ottoman period, through a historiographical and methodological survey. In this, I evaluate the sources and the methodologies of the students of the early Ottoman period. I also use the methodologies and sources of the students of different regions for comparative purposes.

In the second chapter, I first investigate the social context in which the Saltukname came to life. Then I examine the Saltukname by considering it as a conceptualization of the past by Balkan dervishes and the inhabitants of Dobruca and Deliorman who had migrated there from central Anatolia around the late 13th century. Also, the chapter tries to bring the theories and the historical information regarding the migration of the community together. In this, the chapter also attempt to the discuss the different accounts regarding the identity of Sarı Saltuk. Lastly, I specifically deal with the meaning that the Saltukname attributed to the period, which is the thirteenth century, against which Sarı Saltuk made his debut in the legendary stories.

In the third chapter, I consider the role of Sarı Saltuk who was a “glorious ancestor” in the eyes of his followers and whose exemplariness, deeds, and reactions constitute a good part of Saltukname. I also try to reconstruct the thirteenth century Anatolia as seen through the lens of Saltukname. Al this chapter tries to read Saltukname in the light of the “proper histories” to understand where they diverge and converge when narrating the same events. The reason of this comparison is to show that Saltukname, in essence, is a historical work rather than fantasies of a given community projected onto the past. In this, the chapter juxtaposes Saltukname with Ibn-i Bibi’s *El Evamirü’l-Ala’iyye Fi’l-Umuri’l-Ala’iyye* and the works relied upon it Müneccimbaşı Ahmed B. Lütfullah’s *Câmiu’d-Düvel* and Ali Yazıcızâde’s *Tevârih -i âl-i Selçuk*.

CHAPTER 1

Mentalities and Cultural History of the Early Ottomans: A Historiographical Survey

Regarding the weaknesses and the absences in the modern Ottoman historiography many things can be said and have already been said. However, it would be very hard to lament over a lack of any controversial issues and hot-headed debates in the Ottoman studies, even though they are often futile and away from producing constructive results. Apparently, the most famous and the firmly ongoing one is the debate over the emergence of the Ottoman State and the early Ottomans. It is not possible to say both the academia and the outside have lost their interest in the topic a century after the appearance of Herbert Adams Gibbons' *The Foundation of the Ottoman Empire* in 1916. Fifteen years later, in 1931, the leading historian, Mehmet Fuad Köprülü paved the ground for the oncoming debate with his *Bizans Müesseselerinin Osmanli Müesseselerine Te'siri Hakkında Bağzı Mülahazalar* as he furiously attacked the conclusions Gibbons had arrived at. Pointing out the institutional resemblances between Ottomans and its "Turkic" predecessors, Köprülü set out to debunk Gibbons' arguments which conclude that the early Ottomans managed to construct their state and transform into a world-dominating-Empire owing to what they had learned and copied from their predecessors, namely the Byzantine Empire. More precisely Köprülü's main aim was to belie the Gibbons' argument that the Ottomans had merely depended upon the Byzantine influences and practices in their endeavor but, according to Köprülü, the Ottomans had had whatever it takes to build a state and an empire in their own culture and intellectual inheritance.

However, the debate did not remain limited to these two names only as widely-renown names, such as Friedrich Giesse, Paul Wittek, Halil İnalçık, Mustafa Akdağ, Rudi Paul

Lindner, Ronald C. Jennings, Colin Imber, and Heath Lowry, did not hesitate to step in when their turns have come. Nor did the driving force behind the debate remain the same, the focus of the debate shifted from the institutions, the origins, and the military formation of the early Ottomans to the cultural environment within which they emerged, and to the cross-pollinations with their “infidel” neighbors, as the new names entered in and made their moves. What superseded the centrality and the importance of the debate on the ethnical origins of Ottomans, as well as the Byzantine influence on them, was the debate that centered on, as Linda T. Darling puts it, “the true nature of early Ottoman identity, and particularly the definition and role of *gaza* in it, for some time without closure”.¹ Decades after the first formulations of *gaza* by Paul Wittek, the scholarly debate and the research on the questions of “What is/was *gaza*?”, “Who is/was *gazi*” and “Was the early Ottoman State a *gazi state*?” seems to begin attract the attention again . Starting from the 1980s, after a period of “no lively debate producing research and ideas”, as Cemal Kafadar has underlined, “an impressive number of scholars” have incrementally been raising questions about Wittek’s *gaza* thesis and his formulation of *gaza* around which the relative consensus “prevailed for nearly half a century”.² Being the cornerstone upon which most of the recent studies have been built, whether they adhere or contradict to it, Wittek’s work and formulation of *gaza* is of important interest for any attempt to take stock of the field and the historiography of the early Ottomans.³ Apart from being the work that shed important light on the early Ottoman State, Wittek’s *gazi* thesis can be considered as the work which introduced early Ottoman historiography to the “proto-cultural history” and history of mentalities. For Paul Wittek can be regarded as the first who profoundly turned its face to the cultural environment within which early Ottomans had operated and through which

¹ Linda T. Darling, “Reformulating the Gazi Narrative: When Was the Ottoman State a Gazi State?,” *Turcica*, no. 43 (2011): 13.

² Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (University of California Press, 1996), 49.

³ H Erdem Çipa, “Paul Wittek, The Rise of the Ottoman Empire: Studies in the History of Turkey, Thirteenth–fifteenth Centuries, Edited by Colin Heywood,” *Journal of Early Modern History* 18, no. 1–2 (2014): 184, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15700658-12342394>.

they had made sense of the World, with his *gazi* thesis.⁴ Thus, Wittek's thesis and his works have indispensable place for the question that this chapter seeks: "Is the history of mentalities possible for the early Ottomans?"

Pointing out the aspects of Wittek's work which dealt with the cultural world and habits of thinking of the early Ottomans, and the sources through which Wittek deduced his arguments regarding the cultural history and habits of thinking of early Ottomans, this chapter shall first investigate how—and if at all—did *gazi* thesis and Wittek contribute to the emergence of cultural history and history of mentalities of early Ottomans. Later, this chapter will put the later works, which have claims to be in search of the mentalities and the cultural worlds of the early Ottomans, in dialogue with the thesis of Wittek in order to take stock of the field and to see the trajectory of the works in terms of the usage of the sources, of the historiography, and of the approach. Stated in the title, the over-arching interest of this chapter is to pursue the possibility and the plausibility of a research in the history of mentalities, in the habits of thinking of early Ottomans.

What nurtures this interest of the chapter is the widely-embraced reluctance towards the cultural world of the early Ottomans and the late Seljuks in the historiography and among the *homo academicus* milieu. Here, I must note that neither the author nor the chapter are the first and the only ones in pointing out this gap and the lack of interest. In a very recent workshop on the "problems of Turkish historiography" -- which was convened in 2018 and the proceedings of which were published in March 2019-- Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, a leading cultural historian, has underlined the problems of history of the mentalities -*zihniyet tarihi*-. Having emphasized "at first and beyond everything" the oddness of "this lack of interest" regarding history of mentalities in the Turkish historiography, Ahmet Yaşar Ocak has indicated the foremost reason for this reluctance as follows: "In my opinion, at the first place, comes the fact that the of importance of

⁴ Colin Heywood, "'Boundless Dreams of the Levant': Paul Wittek, the George-'Kreis', and the Writing of Ottoman History," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, no. 1 (1989): 32–50; Colin Heywood, "Wittek and the Austrian Tradition," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, no. 1 (1988): 7–25.

this kind of historiography is not well perceived, understood, more precisely is not considered important”.⁵ Sharing the diagnosis of Ocak, and following the above-mentioned steps, this chapters shall delve deep into the possibility of a history of mentalities regarding the early Ottomans. In short, this chapter shall attempt to reformulate, by taking account the way the historiography has taken, the question that Köprülü put forward almost a century ago: “Is the problem of the founding of the Ottomans Empire doomed to remain insolvable like a system of incomplete equations?”, and set out to investigate the ways of studying the cultural aspect of the early Ottomans with an eye to the historians’ craft.

Paul Wittek on the Cultural and Mental World of the Early Ottomans

In a lecture on May 6th, 1937, which was the third and the last part of a course of the three lectures on “The Rise of the Ottoman Empire”, Paul Wittek stated that, after an investigation of “the historical tradition of the origin of the Ottomans”, he “came to the conclusion that the oldest and the best tradition, the only one which stands the test of historical criticism, clearly shows the Ottomans as Ghâzîs and their chiefs as leaders of an ever-growing and powerful Ghâzi organization”.⁶ For Paul Wittek, “[a] Ghâzi state was a body that aimed at military conquest. The chief had the allegiance of his followers in return for the obligation to provide them the means of livelihood, which meant the acquisition of booty”.⁷ In Wittek’s account, the Ottomans were neither the only nor the strongest Ghâzi state of western Asia Minor of the time. Apart from the Ottomans, Wittek also considers Karaman, Germiyan, Karesi, and Mentеше states as Ghâzi states of the time.⁸ However, what differs them from the Ottomans in the eyes

⁵ Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, “Selçuklu ve Osmanlı Dönemi Zihniyet, Düşünce ve Kültür Tarihçiliği (Durum, Sorunlar, Öneriler),” in *Türk Tarihinin ve Tarihçiliğinin Meseleleri*, ed. Mehmet Topal and Ahmet Şimşek (Yazıgen Yayıncılık, 2019), 161.

⁶ Paul Wittek, *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire: Studies in the History of Turkey, Thirteenth–Fifteenth Centuries*, ed. Colin Heywood (Taylor & Francis, 2013), 57.

⁷ Wittek, 61.

⁸ Wittek, 57–60.

of Wittek is the fact that their relative failure in overcoming the problems arising from the nature of a Ghâzi State. These problems were, in Wittek's words, as follows: "[I]n its foundation Ghâzi state was so entirely composed of the warrior elements necessary that it at first lacked the elements necessary for the organization and utilization of the conquered territory, such as clergy, peasants, artisans, merchant."⁹ So a Ghâzi state was bereft of man and intellectual power that they needed to proliferate the lands they had conquered. And when there were no longer exterior wealth sources to raid, and thereby the process of raid and plunder came to halt, a Ghâzi state had to turn their eyes to lands and own resources they had conquered and had to sought ways to prosper them. But how could it have been possible since a Ghâzi state "had not the elements necessary for this purpose"?¹⁰ The key to solve this problem was attracting elements necessary for these purposes, such as clergy, peasants, and artisans for the organization of the conquered territory, from outside into their lands. And, Wittek further remarks: "The only Ghâzi State that succeeded in solving this problem was that of Ottomans".¹¹ For Wittek being a Ghâzi or being an active element of a Ghâzi state was something more than a way, a path or a polity that must be followed as one of the alternatives, in order to fulfill their ultimate goals. It was a shared ethos which banded the human elements of the early Ottoman state together and was the significant factor in the early Ottomans' thrust.¹² Ghâza was a window through which they made sense of their world and was a convincing reason to bear with the hardships of lives which might be far beyond our horizon. To elucidate how the concept of Ghâza had been immersed in the mental and the cultural world of early Ottomans, Wittek cites the answer of contemporary poet Ahmedî to the question of "Who is Ghâzi?":

"A Ghâzi is the instrument of the religion of Allâh, a servant of the God who purifies the earth from the filth of polytheism; the Ghâzi is the sword of God, he is the protector and the refuge of the of the believers.

⁹ Wittek, 61.

¹⁰ Wittek, 61.

¹¹ Wittek, 61.

¹² Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State*, 38.

If he becomes a martyr in the ways of God, do not believe that he has died – he lives in beatitude with Allâh, he has eternal life”.¹³

Giving a brief and rough sketch of what Wittek had been preoccupied with in the early Ottomans, I do not intend to move on with problematizing the Ghâza thesis. Especially after Cemal Kafadar’s path-breaking work *Between Two Worlds* that appeared in 1996, such an attempt would be at best a summary and a reformulation of his work.¹⁴ Rather, I would like to bring the attention on how Wittek’s analysis somewhat shifted the focus on early Ottomans from ethnic and political factors to the cultural world of early Ottomans. Referring to the literary works such as Ahmedi’s *Iskendername*,¹⁵ and the legendary tales of chronicles, a genre most of which had hitherto been considered “ahistorical”, Wittek went beyond the descriptive approach, which satisfied the prefixed definitions of Ghâza and was interested in ascribing who was Ghâzi or not in the early Ottoman state. To the contrary, Paul Wittek concerned himself with what it meant to be Ghâzi in the eyes of early Ottomans and how they defined and re-defined it. This difference can be traced in the ways in which Köprülü and Wittek tackled with Ghâza.

In dealing with Ghâza, Köprülü’s main goal was to compare Ghâzis, as “a social organization and class” with alps and alp-erens “that existed not only at the time of the collapse of the empire of the Anatolian Seljuks, but also during the very first conquests in Anatolia”.¹⁶ Köprülü regards both Ghâzis and Alps as elements of a “social class and organization”, as evidenced by his preference to place Ghazis and Alps under the heading of “Military, Religious, and Corporative Associations”. Köprülü’s emphasis on

¹³ Wittek, *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire: Studies in the History of Turkey, Thirteenth–Fifteenth Centuries*, 44.

¹⁴ See: Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State*, chap. The Moderns. 29-60

¹⁵ For a critical analysis of Wittek’s utilization of the source: Heath W. Lowry, “Wittek Revisited: His Utilization of Ahmedi’s *İskendernâme*,” in *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State* (State University of New York Press, 2003), 15–33.

¹⁶ Mehmed Fuad Koprulu, *The Origins of the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Gary Leiser (State University of New York Press, 1992), 89.

the social and the military aspects remains throughout the six pages in which he evaluated Ghâzis and Alps. Following this social and military analysis of Ghâzi and Alp “social organizations”, Köprülü comes to the conclusion that “the organization of alps on the marches of western Anatolia... associated with old Turkish traditions” was apparently different from “the organization of ghazis” which “was more of a city organization and was based on Islamic traditions”.¹⁷

From a different perspective, as Colin Heywood explained, for Wittek, Ghâzi “was not only the social element around which the nascent Ottoman state crystallized, but an ideal figure whose ethos permeates the whole subsequent history of the Ottoman state”.¹⁸ Paul Wittek considers Ghâza as part of a culture, as an ethos and a sense, as he goes after “a very exact idea as to what the Ottomans felt about themselves—and their state—that they were a community of Ghâzis, of champions of the Muslim religion”.¹⁹ Not only interested in how Ghâzis felt about themselves, Wittek furthers his evaluation of the habits of thinking of the early Ottomans by investigating the ceremonies and the objects through which Ghâzis distinct themselves from other communities. Wittek pays important attention to the objects of the ceremonies such as drinking-cups, but more important than that , for our inquiry, to the meanings the Ghâzis attributed to those materials and how those materials contributed to the sense of being Ghâzi.²⁰

Moreover, considering in his *Les origines de L'Empire Ottomane*—published in 1935, two years before the speech of Wittek—Köprülü had preferred to review, in conformity with then dominant paradigms of the historiography, “political and social history of Anatolia in the thirteenth century and the first half of the fourteenth century” under the headings: Major Political Events, Ethnic Factors , A Brief Outline of the Social and

¹⁷ Köprülü, 93.

¹⁸ Heywood, “Wittek and the Austrian Tradition,” 15.

¹⁹ Wittek, *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire: Studies in the History of Turkey, Thirteenth–Fifteenth Centuries*, 44.

²⁰ Wittek, 60–61.

Economic History, and Intellectual Life- the last one only takes one page-,²¹. Wittek's emphasis on the cultural environment through which the early Ottomans had made sense of their world becomes more striking and engaging. In his work, Mehmed Fuad Köprülü devoted his lengthy discussions on ascribing the ethnic origins of the Ottomans, asking whether they were from Qayı origin or not. Together with a huge space devoted on the major political events and the social history of medieval Anatolia, Köprülü shows almost no interest in investigating the mental and the cultural world of the early Ottomans. Apparently, Köprülü knew the new currents of historiography, and at times although superficial, was sensible to different aspects of the early Ottoman history. This can be seen from his references to "the mentality of medieval annalists", to "theological mentality" of medieval chroniclers.²² Even considering the fact that Köprülü had a close relationship with Lucien Febvre—the one of two pioneers of Annales school and who specifically dealt with the history of mentalities—assuming that Köprülü might have been out of touch with the new currents in the historiography becomes more and more fallacious. So, what led Wittek's research to diverge from that of Köprülü and somewhat from the dominant paradigms of the Ottoman historiography of the time?

Before starting to investigate this question, I must note that I am aware that this is a far-reaching question and there would be numerous reasons for this divergence, ranging from personal preferences to intellectual and political tendencies. I do not claim that I can completely answer this question, nor would I do an exhaustive research on the question. Rather, I would like to underlie a difference in Wittek's *modus operandi*, which at first glance could be seen unimportant, but which, as I shall try to show, to a great extent contributed and nurtured Wittek's interest and research in the cultural world of the early Ottomans. In this endeavor, to substantiate my argument and

²¹Koprulu, *The Origins of the Ottoman Empire*, 27–70.

²² Koprulu, 11.

to make the difference in Wittek’s research more intelligible, I compare Wittek’s *modus operandi* with that of Köprülü.

The reason for this selection is that Köprülü was another leading and may be the most renowned historian of the topic on which Paul Wittek conducted his research. Furthermore, Köprülü and his works have had a pivotal role in shaping the later generations’ both interests and works, hence in the lack of interest in the cultural aspects of the early Ottomans. Apparently, “Köprülü influence” still seems far from vanishing as in 2016, Ahmet Yaşar Ocak states: “Beyond being acknowledged as a "major authority", Köprülü has been a “cult”. Even today at the pinnacle of Turkish historiography, despite all criticisms and attempts to anachronize him, Köprülü is a ‘cult’.”²³ In contrast to that, Wittek and his works have by and large been ignored and rejected in Turkey for the forty years to come after his first publication.²⁴ Thus, to understand the *modus operandi* of Köprülü and compare it with that of Wittek is to understand the ways in which the historiography on the early Ottomans has been constructed. Maybe more important for our inquiry is to understand what has been left out through the construction process. As noted above, the history of mentalities is without a doubt one of these left-outs.

From “Essentials Facts” of Köprülü to “Minor Details” of Wittek

Working on and trying to reconstruct the mentalities, the habits of thinking of vast multitudes is definitely a hard task for the historians regardless of their knowledge and scholarship. As once noted by Jacques Le Goff, a leading student of the history of mentalities, “A great deal is said about the history of mentalities, few are the cogent examples that have been given”.²⁵ It is also not easy to find reference books and guiding

²³ Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, “Bugünün Dünya ve Türkiye Tarihçesinde Fuat Köprülü Ne İfade Ediyor? (Fuat Köprülü’nün 50. Vefat Yıldönümü Münasebetiyle),” *Vakıflar Dergisi*, 2016, 184.

²⁴ Heath W. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State* (State University of New York Press, 2003), 7.

²⁵ Jacques Le Goff, “Mentalities: A New Field for Historians,” *Information (International Social Science Council)* 13, no. 1 (1974): 81.

works on the field more than handful. Nevertheless, and despite the world-wide declining interest in the history of mentalities, some leading historians seem to have not lost their faith in it yet.²⁶ Among these names, Carlo Ginzburg has taken an important place. Although his *Cheese and Worm* deservedly attracted much of the attention, Ginzburg specifically and more theoretically dealt with the history of mentalities in his lesser known works such as *Clues: Roots of Evidential Paradigm*.²⁷

As hailed by Edward Muir “Ginzburg suggests for historians, especially for those who wish to recapture the beliefs and thoughts of the vast multitudes who until very recently lived outside of or on the fringe of literate, high culture”, *Clues: Roots of Evidential Paradigm* tackles the ways in which from “insignificant details” a historian could attain “comprehension of a deeper, otherwise unattainable reality”. In this, Ginzburg mainly build his arguments and conclusions upon what he calls “an epistemological model” that emerged in humanities during the last half of the nineteenth century. When explaining this “epistemological model”, Ginzburg pays important attention to Giovanni Morelli, a nineteenth century art-historian, whose method radically changed the craft of art historians, in which Morelli suggested that in order to identify the true artist of an art-work, instead of finding the most conspicuous characteristic of a painting, one should examine “the most trivial details that would have been influenced least by the mannerisms of the artist’s school”. For a copier it would have not been a great deal to imitate the most conspicuous parts of an art work as close to the original as possible, since these conspicuous parts are “the easiest to imitate” such as Leonardo’s smiles and eyes raised towards the heavens in figurines of Perugino.²⁸ Rather, the parts to which the artist did not devote hard labor, but “executed most rapidly and thus potentially freed from the representation of reality (tangles of hair,

²⁶ Peter Burke, “Strengths and Weaknesses of the History of Mentalities,” in *Varieties of Cultural History* (Cornell University Press, 1997), 162–82.

²⁷ Carlo Ginzburg, “Clues: Roots of Evidential Paradigm,” in *Clues, Myths, and the Historical Method* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013).

²⁸ Ginzburg, 97.

cloth ‘which depend more on the artist’s fantasy than the actual reality of the object’)” are the trustable agents in revealing the original identity of a painter.²⁹ In the same vein, Ginzburg goes on to discuss how small and conjectural evidences were used by other late-nineteenth century characters, Freud and Sherlock Holmes—or, Arthur Conan Doyle as its creator—to have insights about more general phenomena. Ginzburg underlies that this “conjectural paradigm” has deeply influenced the human sciences and played important role in the making of it.

To substantiate his arguments, Carlo Ginzburg finds the analogy in the endeavors of our hunter ancestors. How a hunter learned to trace and to reconstruct the shape and the movements of their invisible prey from the prints it left, such as tufts of hair, stagnating odors, and broken branches, is another example of “the minute investigation of even trifling matters, to discover the traces of events that could not be directly experienced by the observer”.³⁰ But more important for our inquiry, in spite of the accounts that claim the mentalities may seem to be opaque or hermeneutically sealed, Ginzburg says “there are privileged zones – signs, clues – which allow us to penetrate it.”³¹ And he further remarks, regarding what this chapter is in search of, as follows:

“The depiction of flowing vestments in Florentine Quattrocento painters, the neologisms of Rabelais, the cure of scrofula patients by the kings of France and England, are few examples of how slender clues have been adopted from time to time as indicators of a more general phenomena: the world view of a social class, a single writer, or an entire society.”³²

Thus, Carlo Ginzburg introduces his readers to a toolkit which has deep roots in human sciences and through which one would be able to acquire insights about the world view of vast multitudes. Although it is not the only available way to infiltrate into the world view of vast multitudes, the small and slender clues represent a crucial starting point

²⁹ Ginzburg, 111.

³⁰ Ginzburg, 103.

³¹ Ginzburg, 123.

³² Ginzburg, 124.

for those who are interested in the history of mentalities. Whether deliberately or unconsciously the negligence of these small clues would result in a total blindness to the mentalities, whereas otherwise they may lead one to it without any premeditated intention. However, this does not imply that working on the slender and small clues is the sole thing that either avoids one from entering into the world views or forcefully pushing one towards it. Rather, as I have noted above, among the other factors, this would be one of the differences which contributes to the trajectory of a *modus operandi*.

I have mentioned Mehmed Fuad Köprülü's relative lack of interest in the history of mentalities and now in the light of Ginzburg's work I would like to assess the possibility whether the *modus operandi* of Köprülü could have been one of the reasons for his negligence. Thanks to Köprülü's efforts in explaining his method of research and approach to the sources in two sub-headings in his *The Founding of the Ottoman Empire*, we have sufficient information and material in order to assess the characteristics of his *modus operandi*.³³ As a leading historian of his time, he was well aware of the problems of the field and the criticisms directed at the Ottoman historiography from various angles and hands. Dealing with these criticisms and problems, Köprülü's main concern seems to have been the "unfair conclusion" regarding the adequacy and the efficacy of the early Ottoman sources. Although Köprülü admits in advance that the sources of early Ottoman period impose a limit on the researcher in terms of quantity, he does not step back from proposing alternative means to overcome this shortcoming of the field. Having asked himself "what should one do about the inadequate Ottoman sources for the fourteenth century?",³⁴ Köprülü proposes that a researcher should analyze the Ottoman history "as a continuation of the history of Anatolian Seljuks and the different Anatolian beyliks" in order to find

³³ Koprulu, *The Origins of the Ottoman Empire*, 16–26.

³⁴ Koprulu, 21.

answers to the problems which have remained obscure up to that day.³⁵ In doing so, Köprülü warns the researcher:

“But the historian, unlike the annalist, does not need to know every event and every possible bit of information to satisfy his curiosity. There are thousands of *minor, insignificant* and *recurring* events recorded in the annals and other historical documents a lack of knowledge of which would be no obstacle whatsoever to understanding the historical development of a society.”³⁶

As Ginzburg has shown, given that the importance of insignificant details for understanding the world view of a social class, a single writer, or an entire society, these sentences of Köprülü would give us an idea about what might have led him away from investigating the mentalities and world views of the early Ottomans. Here I must note again that I do not present Köprülü’s preference as the sole determinant of his attitude towards the historiography or do now want to delineate a causality relationship in a strict positivistic manner between Köprülü’s consideration of insignificant details and his disinterest in the history of mentalities. Nor do I intend to condone or condemn Köprülü for not being interested in the world views of the early Ottomans on whom he conducted his research. Rather, I would like to bring the attention on, among the other things, how Köprülü’s preference to disregard “the minor and insignificant details” as the privileged zones which allow us to penetrate the world views of a given society or a person, may have played a role in diverging his account of that Paul Wittek since Wittek took the opposite path.

Köprülü further develops his method and calls “attention to the fact that a historical synthesis is completely different from an accumulation of material which has been criticized-- material the value of which is undermined and in which the significant has not been separated from the insignificant.”³⁷ To understand what Köprülü deems “insignificant”, a glimpse at his recurrent statements about the veracity of

³⁵ Koprulu, 23.

³⁶ Koprulu, 25. Italics are mine.

³⁷ Koprulu, 25.

hagiographies and legends – probably the main body of sources that we have for the rise of the Ottoman Empire—would be sufficient.

Mehmed Fuad Köprülü refuses “to attribute anything positive to the legends and genealogies that were fabricated for specific purposes by the annalists”.³⁸ Moreover, he does not hesitate to confess “frankly” in a guilty tone that they—the Ottomanists of his time—did not “even save[d] ourselves from the naïve stories of the old Ottoman chronicles”.³⁹

Of course, at some point Köprülü shows an interest in hagiographies and legends but this interest remains intact as long as their “careful criticization” yields an information for “more broad and scientific research”. In the same vein, being aware that “these kinds of works, no matter what they are, if subjected to careful criticism, are basic sources for research on social history” does not avoid Köprülü from classifying them in terms of “importance and trustworthiness” as manifested in his words: “I would not claim that all the works on the legends of the saints are of the same importance and trustworthiness as Aflaki’s”.⁴⁰ These words can be taken as the indicators of how Köprülü does not consider hagiographies and legends in their context, but rather he classifies them according to their ability to produce data for a “scientific historical research”.

Here, I do not claim that Köprülü was far away from apprehending the ways hagiographies and the legends of medieval Anatolia could inform our understanding of the period. In another work, *The Seljuks of Anatolia: Their History and Culture According to Local Muslim Sources*,⁴¹ which was first published in 1943, Köprülü, with all his erudite, shows us that he was against the traditional utilization of the

³⁸ Koprulu, 24.

³⁹ Koprulu, 14.

⁴⁰ Koprulu, 18.

⁴¹ Mehmed Fuad Köprülü, *The Seljuks of Anatolia: Their History and Culture According to Local Muslim Sources*, ed. Gary Leiser (University of Utah Press, 1992), <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=12489&site=eds-live>.

légendes hagiographiques. Having noted that the success of Western historians in making use of the genre of *légendes hagiographiques* as “historical sources”, Köprülü underlies the fact “the question of using the rather abundant sources concerning the legends of saints to shed light on many dark corners of medieval Muslim and Turkish history has somehow been neglected”.⁴² Thus, Köprülü highlights the possible implications of using the legends of saints as “historical sources”. But for the present chapter’s inquiry, the questions that should be put are: What “dark corners of medieval Muslim and Turkish history” can be illuminated by using *légendes hagiographiques*? If yes, would it be possible to acquire insights regarding the world views of early Ottomans from the legends of saints without paying attention to “thousands of *minor, insignificant and recurring events*” recorded in them as Köprülü suggested?

In the ensuing lines, Köprülü gives the answer of our first question, in analyzing Aflaki’s *Manaqib*, as follows:

“[T]his manaqib book has been limited primarily to the study of genealogy and political history. It is, however, an unrivaled source for religious and social history. No other historical document can compare with it in describing the daily life, organization of cities and villages, characteristics of nomads, relations among social classes, religious movements, economic conditions, dress, and customs of Anatolia in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.”⁴³

As noted above, Köprülü was well aware of the hagiographies’ possible implications for the different aspects of early Ottoman history as these words of him indicate. Having pointed out the value of *Manaqib* as a historical source for religious and social history, Köprülü neatly enumerates nine dark corners which can be lightened by the utilization of Aflaki’s *Manaqib*. All of these nine dark corners, one way or another, are related to the social history. Nevertheless, I must note that there is no evidence to consider Köprülü’s enumeration of these nine dark corners as *numerus clausus*. Rather, these nine can and very likely be the first ones that came to mind and/or constitute the

⁴² Köprülü, 38.

⁴³ Köprülü, 39.

selection of Köprülü in order to save space. Yet, even in both cases, is it not worth considering Köprülü's silence regarding the world views and the history of mentalities as somewhat noteworthy, given that the historian in question appreciated the specific references given to *Saltukname*, for the legendary hagiographies' historical value "for understanding the psychology of the Turkish conquerors of the fourteenth century and learning the moral and spiritual factors behind the conquest of the Balkans".⁴⁴

Indeed, Köprülü knew how going beyond the traditional utilization of these sources could usher in new perspectives towards the early Ottoman-late Seljuk history. But the way he analyzed his sources and his *modus operandi* in gathering information from these sources—by dismissing minor and insignificant clues—were taking Köprülü away from the privileged zones – slender signs, clues – which would allow him to step into the history of mentalities. However, I do not claim that Köprülü never realized that sources could be well served for the cultural history. To the contrary, Köprülü, as expected, was well aware of this relation, as he noted: "[W]e should by no means ignore such works, which are very important with regard to various branches of cultural history".⁴⁵ These words of Köprülü would be seen simply as the refutation by Köprülü himself of the relation between his negligence of the cultural world of the early Ottomans and his disinterest in the small and slender clues as privileged zones for the cultural history and the history of mentalities, which was the argument of the above-mentioned lines. But this refutation can only be plausible if we disregard the sentence preceded above the quoted words of Köprülü, which are:

"All religious and literary works written in Anatolia from the twelfth through fourteenth centuries, no matter how they differ in importance, can be considered as *supplementary sources* for the dark history of this period."⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Köprülü, 51.

⁴⁵ Köprülü, 52.

⁴⁶ Köprülü, 52. Italics are mine.

Even though Köprülü is interested in and is considered important for the sources which can be used to understand the cultural world and the world views of the early Ottomans, the importance he attributed to the cultural history is not adequate to be studied alone and rather it is a supplementary one. Thus, for Köprülü, even “such works” can be very important sources for cultural history. At the end of the day, the duty of cultural history and of these sources is nothing more than supplementing the broad scientific research on the dark history. Searching for essential facts for the social history seems to have outweighed the possibility for Köprülü to step further in the world views and the cultural history of early Ottomans. It was within this context that Köprülü’s interest on the cultural history became of secondary importance against the social history.

In compliance with the dominant paradigms of his time, the obsession with the origins of people and dynasties, alike Köprülü, was not missing among the conspicuous elements of Paul Wittek’s intellectual trajectory.⁴⁷ However, as noted above, this interest of him seems to have not isolated him from other aspects of the early Ottoman world. What concerns us in Wittek’s works is his attention to the cultural worlds and the history of mentalities of the early Ottomans. Already discussed, his account of the rise of the Ottoman Empire diverges from that of the other students of the topic. What constitutes the good part of this divergence is Wittek’s special attention to the spiritual ethos and cultural environment within which the early Ottomans came to rise. Not only preoccupied with the institutions, the origins, and the social conditions of the early Ottomans, Wittek was also in search of the lens through which the early Ottomans made sense of these institutions, social conditions, and their world.

In this sense, Wittek’s interest in the history of mentalities and consequently his formulation and conceptualization of Ghazâ represents an important milestone in the historiography. Although it is not possible to say that Wittek had been the first and the only one who realized the importance of Ghazâ for the early Ottoman history, stating

⁴⁷ İlker Evrim Binbaş, Preface to *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire: Studies in the History of Turkey, Thirteenth–fifteenth Centuries*, by Paul Wittek, ed. Colin Heywood (Taylor & Francis, 2013), xi

that the way Wittek studied Ghâza was path-breaking in that time would be very safe. So, what can we discern in his *modus operandi* to be considered important in leading Wittek's account to the cultural history and more specifically to the history of mentalities? Is there any difference between his *modus operandi* and that of Köprülü which we can conclude or, to be more prudent, suspect of having played a role in diverging their account of the early Ottoman history? Seeking answers to these questions in Wittek's works will be in the light of the evidential paradigm, which as Ginzburg has shown, was dominant at the turn of the 20th century and was widely employed by various disciplines in order to acquire insights regarding the world view of a social class, a single writer, or an entire society.

Paul Wittek's emphasis on the cultural history and world views of the early Ottomans is not peculiar to his early work, *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire*. Towards the end of his career, the cultural and the microhistorical character of his works had been more discernible. Without being less valuable from the earlier ones, Paul Wittek's last works, as Colin Heywood pointed out, "possess a distinct microhistorical element – large conclusions drawn from *small events*".⁴⁸ Among these late works, the article, *The Taking of Aydos Castle: A Ghazi Legend and its Transformation* which was published in 1965, is one of Wittek's most characteristic works and clearly displays the above-mentioned elements of Wittek's works.⁴⁹ Thus, an analysis of the Aydos Castle article would enable us to further reflect on Wittek's *modus operandi* and on the question of what might have played a role in his works' cultural character.

What constitutes the core of the article is the comparison between Neşri's and Aşıkpaşade's accounts regarding the Ottomans' capture of the Aydos Castle from

⁴⁸ Colin Heywood, Introduction to *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire: Studies in the History of Turkey, Thirteenth–fifteenth Centuries*, by Paul Wittek, ed. Colin Heywood (Taylor & Francis, 2013), p 20 n 69. Emphasize is mine.

⁴⁹ Paul Wittek, "The Taking of Aydos Castle: A Ghazi Legend and Its Transformation," in *Arabic and Islamic Studies in Honor of Hamilton A. R. Gibb*, ed. George Makdisi (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965).

Byzantines in 1328. Both authors composed their works at the end of 15th century under the auspices of Murad II. As advanced his eighties, Aşıkpaşazade was able to base his work upon what he had seen, heard, and gone through throughout his life. Moreover, as an ancestor of famous and great Anatolian family, Aşıkpaşazade had joined the Ghazis in Balkans and other places in his early ages, thereby he had made acquaintance with the Ghazi leaders and had taken the opportunity of entertaining “first-hand” narratives and stories regarding the events he wrote in his “History of the House of Osman”.⁵⁰ Unlike Aşıkpaşazade, Neşri seems to have not enjoyed such privileges and occasions. Composing his work, Neşri was, as Paul Wittek puts, “by necessity foremost a compiler, and so Neşri’s Ottoman History is a compilation in which the author added practically nothing to what he, rather cleverly and thoughtfully, brought together from various sources.”⁵¹ Wittek identifies Neşri’s main source, on which he built his works, as Aşıkpaşazade’s work. Although Neşri does not mention Aşıkpaşazade’s work as his source, Wittek highlights the extent of Neşri’s utilization of Aşıkpaşazade’s work by pointing out that if Neşri had not “efface[d] every trace of Aşıkpaşazade’s speaking of himself”, Neşri’s work would have been the reproduction “of this source with practically no change”.⁵² Yet, seemingly a small deviation of Neşri’s work from that of Aşıkpaşazade’s, in the narration of the taking of the Aydos Castle, could not manage to escape Paul Wittek’s attention. And, this becomes the point where Paul Wittek set out to work his magic.

In Aşıkpaşazade’s version of the taking of the Aydos Castle, he conveys the story as follows: One night, the daughter of the *Tekfur* of the Aydos Castle saw in her dream the exalted Prophet. In her dream she was stranded in a pit. Then appears a lovely-faced man and rescues her, having undressed and cleaned her up, he gives new clothes to the daughter of the *Tekfur*. She woke up in amazement and did not know how she should

⁵⁰ Wittek, 662–64.

⁵¹ Wittek, 664.

⁵² Wittek, 665.

interpret the dream. Being fascinated with the man in the dream, his image would not leave her heart and mind for day and night. At the moment she was thinking of him again, the Turks came up suddenly and laid the siege of the Aydos Castle. As the daughter of the *Tekfur* intended to go against Turks and fight against them, she saw that the leader of the siege was the man she had seen in her dream. Struck by the meaning of her dream, she wrote a letter to the Turks and proposed the handover of the castle if they leave now and sent few reliable men back at night. As she wrapped the letter around a stone and threw it towards the Turks, the letter fell just in front of a man named Ghâzi Rahman whom she had seen in her dream. Having discussed the daughter's proposal, the Turks decided to lift the siege and act in accordance with what she proposed. When asked by Akça Koça if there were any volunteers for the mission, Ghâzi Rahman immediately offered his service. When the time came, Ghazi Rahman arrived at the spot together with the other volunteers. The daughter was waiting. She helped them climb up the castle by tying a rope to the battlement of the castle and drooping it down to them. Ghâzi climbed up like a spider and opened the gates of the castle to the ghâzis waiting outside. Thus, they conquered the Aydos castle. Ghâzi Rahman brought the *tekfur* and the daughter to Orhan Gazi in Yenişehir. There, as his share from the booty, Orhan Gazi bestowed the daughter to Gazi Rahman alongside the considerable amount of the treasure he had brought.⁵³

Neşri's version of the story follows Aşıkpaşazade's account in its broad lines with the exception of seemingly small alterations in the details. Having detected at the beginning of the story Neşri substituted a youth for the Prophet and Wittek comments on this alteration as follows:

In 'Apz [Aşıkpaşazade] the girl's dream stands for a real apparition of the Prophet who hereby brings about the conquest of a castle which his Ghazis could not have otherwise achieved . . . His cleansing her from the dirt of a false creed and robing her with the shining "clothes of Islam" are by no means purely symbolic, but very real actions. With

⁵³ Wittek, 665–67.

N[eşri] all this is reduced to a girl's dream which, through the of the Prophet's actions to the youth and hereby divesting them of their religious significance, receives a strong erotic flavor.⁵⁴

Wittek furthers his analysis by pointing out to another alteration of Neşri. Whereas in Aşıkpaşazade's version the Ghâzi hero is named Rahman which is one of the ninety-nine names of God, Neşri prefers to name his hero Abdurrahman, which literally means slave of God. Having detected this alteration of Neşri, Wittek sees in it an attempt to get rid of unorthodox name of Rahman and to cast his account in a more pious tone.⁵⁵ However, for Wittek, the most significant difference is in the final remarks of the authors. Whereas Aşıkpaşazade concludes his words by writing "Hey friends, of everything in this story which I have written down, by God. I have obtained full knowledge. From this knowledge I wrote. Do not think I wrote out of imagination", Neşri contends himself by stating: "But God knows best". Paul Wittek reflects on this discrepancy as: "Neshri's short 'but God knows best' betrays his skepticism, whereas 'Ashiqpashazade assures his listeners earnestly that he had reached sure knowledge of the story and its every detail."⁵⁶ Thus, Wittek considers Aşıkpaşazade's work as a rich source from which one can deduce "the life and spirit of earlier times" and from which one can get insights about the mentalities of Ghâzis, such as "how they intensely felt the presence of the Prophet in their midst."⁵⁷ Moreover, Wittek does not step back from delving into the world views of Neşri by using these small evidences. As an inhabitant of a secure big town (Bursa), Neşri, in the eyes of Wittek, "finds the Aydos story, cannot regard it as anything but a fairy tale and, treating it as such, takes with it every liberty".⁵⁸ Neşri's elimination of the Prophet from the story was a manifestation of his pious world view since "Neshri felt it shocking that he should figure in the story at all and probably because he could not understand how the Prophet should be seen at the

⁵⁴ Wittek, 669.

⁵⁵ Wittek, 669.

⁵⁶ Wittek, 671.

⁵⁷ Wittek, 670–71.

⁵⁸ Wittek, 672.

head of the Ghazis”.⁵⁹ Furthering his reflections on Neşri’s mentality, Wittek shows how his world view played a role in composing his work as follows: “[A]s a rationalist, he turns the pious legend into a love story and, as something of a pedant, transforms the entire scene according to his ‘knowing better’.”⁶⁰

Thus, Paul Wittek gives us a good example of the cultural history of the early Ottoman period. His skillful analysis of the small clues opens a door in the history of mentalities, as Cemal Kafadar, regarding the Aydos Castle article, puts: “A minute comparison and analysis seemingly minor discrepancies reveals, however, that Apz’s version of the tale bristles with an insider’s understanding of the gazi mentality”.⁶¹

It seems that it would not be an overstatement to highlight the propinquity between Wittek’s methodology and the evidential model of the late 19th century that Carlo Ginzburg has shown us. However, to my knowledge, there is no direct evidence to conclude Paul Wittek was well aware of this model and proceeded accordingly. Yet, we know from Colin Heywood’s insightful studies on Paul Wittek’s life and works that he was deeply influenced by the German poet and thinker Stefan George (1868-1933).⁶² Stefan George’s influence on Paul Wittek led him to be a follower of neo-romanticism which prevailed in German culture in the years before and after the Great War.⁶³ Yet, it is still possible to detect commonalities with the evidential paradigm, when Colin Heywood comments on how this affiliations ultimately have affected Wittek’s history-writing:

[I]f we approach the earliest literary sources not as repositories of “hard” data, more or less susceptible to *Quellenkritik*, but as manifestations of *mentalitiés*- the unconscious formative attitudes and collective defense-mechanisms of an existentially primitive society, they may reveal more valuable “soft” insights to a historian less fettered

⁵⁹ Wittek, 672.

⁶⁰ Wittek, 672.

⁶¹ Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State*, 103.

⁶² Heywood, “‘Boundless Dreams of the Levant’: Paul Wittek, the George-“Kreis”, and the Writing of Ottoman History,” 35.

⁶³ Heywood, 42.

by strict methodology. In one sense Wittek may be regarded as having achieved this insight.⁶⁴

To conclude, in the above-mentioned paragraphs I attempt to point out the differences between Paul Wittek's works and that of Mehmet Fuad Köprülü with regard to their methodologies. In this, I try to contextualize their works and methodology within the evidential model of their period. Within this model, as Carlo Ginzburg has shown, at the turn of 20th century, in various fields of the humanities, small and slender clues were taken as the privileged zones through which one may step in the world view of a social class, a single writer, or an entire society. The ultimate goal of this investigation is to show how a research on the history of mentalities regarding the early Ottomans can be possible. To show this, on one hand I highlight Paul Wittek's interest in the history of mentalities and on the other hand I try to examine the methodology which allowed him to do so. Apart from Wittek's case study, on a more theoretical plane, with an eye to Ginzburg's work, I try to display how this model may help us to take the early Ottoman cultural and mentalities studies further and set out to show the solid roots of this model.

Having discussed the methodology, I now would like to move on with the sources of the early Ottoman cultural history. As I examine the recent works in the field, I will try to elucidate how these works make use of and also approach the sources. I must note that this endeavor does not claim to be an exhaustive work or claims to discuss all the works which appeared around the topic. Rather, the discussion will limit itself to the works which contributed to and made difference in the field. Indeed, there is no escape from being subjective and selective in this endeavor. Hence, it is needless to say that the selection of works reflects the author's account and does not claim to set the objective parameters for such comparison.

⁶⁴ Heywood, "Wittek and the Austrian Tradition," 19.

Where to Look in Searching of the Early Ottoman Mentalities?

In 1974, heralding a new field, the mentalities, Jacques Le Goff, a prominent student of the topic, did not forget to lead the historian to look how and what materials constitute the mentalities. For Le Goff, “everything is a source of instruction for the historian of mentalities.”⁶⁵ For example, in a fiscal and administrative document of 13th century, Le Goff prompts the historian to be in search of “What are the headings, what is the vision of power and administration that they reflect, what attitude to number do the methods of enumeration reveal?”⁶⁶ Same applies to those who want to understand the beliefs and attitudes of 7th century Merovingian society that the ornamentations of tombs, a small coin in the death’s mouth, and the weapons placed in the tomb are equally instructive for the historian of mentalities.⁶⁷

Of course, the history of mentalities as a research field had not come to life for the first time in 1974, as the title of Le Goff’s article *Mentalities: A new field* for historians may seem to suggest. Well aware of the past and the roots of the field, Jacques Le Goff’s emphasis on the novelty comes from the modification through which the approach had gone in the fifty years that separated him from Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre, the two founding-father of the *Annales* school.⁶⁸ In France, the mid-1970s was the heyday of the cultural history and its subfields, as Jacques Revel has shown: “[o]ver the previous twenty-five years, fewer than 10 percent of the articles published in the *Annales* dealt with cultural history (including the history of *mentalités*), but by the mid-1970s this percentage tripled.”⁶⁹ In the peak of its popularity, it must have not been hard to find allies and companions for the history of mentalities to forge new interdisciplinary

⁶⁵ Goff, “Mentalities: A New Field for Historians,” 89.

⁶⁶ Goff, 89.

⁶⁷ Goff, 90.

⁶⁸ Burke, “Strengths and Weaknesses of the History of Mentalities,” 162.

⁶⁹ Jacques Revel, “Introduction,” in *Histories: French Constructions of the Past*, ed. Lynn Hunt Avers and Jacques Revel (The New Press, 1995), 39.

alliances. It was anthropology, another prominent field of the 1970s, in which the cultural history and the history of mentalities would find its primary partner.

The off-shoot of this cross-pollination was the field that came to be known as “historical anthropology” which “gained prominence and absorbed to a great deal scholarly energy”.⁷⁰ In a sense, the historical anthropology served to the history of mentalities as a composite by taking up where it left off and creating a “whole new range of objects” such as family structures, attitudes towards death and life, myths, and form beliefs.⁷¹ But often “historical anthropology” was a new “façade for more traditional – and of course more respectable—practices in the areas of rural history, culture and mentalités”.⁷² From this alliance, one of the most important outcome was the borrowing of anthropology’s analytical tools by the historians of mentalities. Given Jacques Le Goff’s above-mentioned words, the history of mentalities was to a great extent open and ready to incorporate different sources and analytical tools. Among the borrowed tools, in Jacques Revel words, “especially the structural analysis of myth that Lévi-Strauss developed in the four volumes of *Mythologies*: Jean-Pierre Vernant, Pierre Vidal-Naquet and Jacques Le Goff led the way, and many followed.”⁷³ Among the followers was ,to name one among the many, Paul Veyne and his opus magnum *Did the Greeks Believe in Their Myths*, which was published in 1983.⁷⁴ Thus, through the seventies and eighties the history of mentalities in France, formed a strong bond with myths by virtue of its primary partner, anthropology. The myths and legends, once considered “ahistorical” to be a source by the strict positivists, were now important sources to which the historian of mentalities turned in order to reveal the world views, imaginations, and beliefs.

⁷⁰ Revel, 38.

⁷¹ Revel, 38.

⁷² Revel, 39.

⁷³ Revel, 38.

⁷⁴ Paul Veyne, *Did the Greeks Believe in Their Myths?: An Essay on the Constitutive Imagination*, ed. Paula Wissing (University of Chicago Press, 1988). Originally published in French in 1983.

In the same period, the early Ottoman cultural studies saw the first systematic and methodological effort to make use of the legends of saints and the myths in cultural history and more precisely, in the history of mentalities. That is Ahmet Yaşar Ocak's work *Kültür Tarihi Kaynağı Olarak Menâkıbnâmeler* which was originally published in 1983 as *Türk Halk İnançlarında ve Edebiyatında Evliyâ Menkabeleri*.⁷⁵

However, it must be noted here that Ocak's works are not the first which dealt with the issues of the Ottoman mentality. Starting from 1950's, Sabri F. Ülgener published works on especially, the concept of mentality and the economic mentality of Ottomans.⁷⁶ In his works, path-breaking for his time, Ülgener made extensive use of the poems and the literary sources—but not the menakıbnâme literature—to highlight how the economic mentality of Ottomans emerged and evolved when going through the times of economic crises and paucity. However, influenced mainly by the Weberian approach, more precisely that of Werner-Sombart, Ülgener's work operates within a different framework than the works deriving their influence muchly from the Annales' history of mentalities.

Little wonder Ahmet Yaşar Ocak studied in and got his doctoral degree from Strasbourg University, France. In his *Kültür Tarihi Kaynağı Olarak Menâkıbnâmeler* having laid the weaknesses and the inadequateness of the works dealing with these sources in the Ottoman cultural studies, Ocak sets as his main goal to research the cult of the saints in popular beliefs and to deal with the environment within which the legends of the saints came to the life. Also, he notes that then he would put some ideas on the legends of the saints' coming into being.⁷⁷ However, his work to a great extent tackles only the formal analysis of the legends. Dealing with the legends of the saints, Ocak mainly devotes his effort to specify the region, the hero, and the period of the

⁷⁵ Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Kültür Tarihi Kaynağı Olarak Menakıbnameler* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1992),

⁷⁶ See Sabri F. Ülgener, *İktisadi İnhitat Tarihimizin Ahlak Ve Zihniyet Meseleleri* (İstanbul: İsmail Akgün Matbaası, 1951).

⁷⁷ Ocak, *Kültür Tarihi Kaynağı Olarak Menâkıbnâmeler : Metodolojik Bir Yaklaşım*, XIII.

legend in question. In this sense, his work mainly is of an introductory character. Nevertheless, his work includes some arguments which would be considered as path-breaking for its time in the Ottoman studies.

Ahmet Yaşar Ocak is the first who systematically and methodologically underlies that these legends reflect the ideal world of the early Ottomans. Furthermore, he also points out that these heroes of the legends were representations of the value system of the society in question.⁷⁸ Maybe the most important aspect of the work for the early Ottoman cultural studies is its intention to ground a methodological base for further studies. He systematically leads the historian of mentalities to the legends and gears the historian with the basic tools necessary for this research. However, it must be noted that in doing so, Ocak's works fall largely behind his French counterparts. Nevertheless, this does not detract the importance of Ocak's work from being path-breaking in the Ottoman Studies.

One had to wait a decade for the work which would take up the analysis of the sources of the early Ottoman cultural world where Ocak left off. Path-breaking in many senses, Cemal Kafadar's *Between Two Worlds* has also dealt with these sources in an unprecedented way in the Ottoman studies.⁷⁹ Before going to it in more detail, in the introduction Kafadar makes it clear that how his approach to the myths and the legends of the early Ottomans differs. Kafadar has pointed out that the legends and the myths have “suffered from either an uncritical adoption as factual accounts—a naive empiricism—or a nearly wholesale dismissal as myths—a hyper empiricism.”⁸⁰ For Kafadar, the dismissal and the negligence of myths is the main barrier obstructing the use of hagiographies which “develop their own historical arguments, in terms of the parameters of that genre of course, with respect to the early Ottomans.”⁸¹ It is within this context that Kafadar suggests considering these sources as “internally coherent

⁷⁸ Ocak, 34.

⁷⁹ Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State*.

⁸⁰ Kafadar, 13.

⁸¹ Kafadar, 13.

positions articulated by authorial or editorial hand” in order to “appropriate the symbolic capital embedded in claims to success as gazis in their own ways through differing historical accounts”. Even from these remarks, it is apparent how Kafadar’s approach was ground breaking. The perspective he brought to the sources was unprecedented in the Ottoman studies. Apart from the novelty of his approach, his study of these sources is another remarkable contribution to the early Ottoman cultural studies. In his analysis, there is much to learn for the historian of early Ottoman mentalities. The way in which he treated Enveri’s *Dusturname* and revealed the gazi mentality in it is another manifestation of the possibility of a research on the early Ottoman world views and beliefs.⁸²

Two decades after Kafadar’s work, Gottfried Hagen’s latest article published in 2014, *Chaos, Order, Power, Salvation: Heroic Hagiography’s Response to the Ottoman Fifteenth Century* seems to represent the way the historiography has taken from the work of Ocak.⁸³ Gottfried Hagen set out to investigate the hagiographies in the light of Clifford Geertz’s pure anthropological works. Relying on Geertz’s conceptualization of religion as a religious system and defining it as “the main source from which people through the ages sought to construct a sense of meaning in their existence”⁸⁴, Hagen develops a different of approach to the Ottoman hagiographies. In this sense, Hagen’s approach to a great extent contributes to our knowledge on the hagiographies, as this collaboration with Geertz enables Hagen to show us that the hagiographies were instrumentalized by the early Ottomans to cope with the violence and chaos that surrounded them. As Gottfried Hagen concludes:

They can be read as reflections of common experiences, indicating widespread insecurity, violence, and suffering of the population, which constituted the audience of such tales. More importantly, however, these

⁸² Kafadar, 69–71.

⁸³ Gottfried Hagen, “Chaos, Order, Power, Salvation: Heroic Hagiography’s Response to the Ottoman Fifteenth Century,” *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 1, no. 1–2 (2014): 91–109.

⁸⁴ Hagen, 95.

narratives constitute attempts to cope with these experiences by sublimating them into a religious world view.⁸⁵

In a recent book, *Osmanlı Zihniyetinin Oluşumu: Kuruluş Döneminde Telif ve Tercüme* published in 2018, Ali Fuat Bilkan also offers a comprehensive formal analysis of the sources of early Ottoman history.⁸⁶ Having observed the general lack of interest to use literary sources among the modern Ottomanists, he aims at showing the value of, in his own words, “soft evidences” that can be found in these literary works. In mapping the sources of early Ottoman mentality, his work is beyond doubt the most comprehensive work in the field. The author’s knowledge about the little-known sources and his formal analysis of these works offers great insights for those who want to see what is in hand as a source for early Ottoman mentality. However, the way in which Bilkan conceptualizes and evaluates these sources is problematic. For instance, Bilkan sees a “national consciousness” in the emergence of these works written in Turkish in the 14th and 15th century Anatolia, and thereby sees the formation of “a proto-national state” in that period.⁸⁷ All in all, Bilkan’s work is still a reference book for the sources of early Ottoman mentality

By going through the works that have dealt with the early Ottoman cultural world and the history of mentalities with an eye to their utilization of the sources, I try to show how the legends, the myths, and the hagiographies are used to acquire insights on the world views of the early Ottomans. Despite the claims which do not find the early Ottoman written materials as sufficient to be a source for a history of mentalities, this survey shows that much has been done and yet there is still a great potential in these sources for future works.

⁸⁵ Hagen, 109.

⁸⁶ Ali Fuat Bilkan, *Osmanlı Zihniyetinin Oluşumu: Kuruluş Döneminde Telif ve Tercüme* (İletişim Yayınları, 2018).

⁸⁷ Bilkan, 93–98.

Chapter 2

Saltukname And Its World

The Dobruca and the Deliorman region, which were located at the northernmost point of the 15th century Ottoman State, was an underpopulated and under-institutionalized region in the northeastern Balkans.⁸⁸ As Nikolay Antov coins it in a very recent study, these regions were part of “the Ottoman Wild West”.⁸⁹ Etymologically, as a Turkish name, Deliorman literally means “Wild Forest”. As its name is somewhat suggestive of the unfavorable environmental conditions, the inhabitants of the region had to struggle amid hard conditions in order to make a living both before and after the Ottoman conquest.

However, the Dobruca region shows a different geographic and climatic character from that of the Deliorman region. Yet, it is not easy to say that this situation would have helped the inhabitants of Dobruca region in their livings, since the region is of a severe steppe climate. Prior to the Ottoman conquest, Ibn Battuta, the famous traveler, had been to the region in the first half of the 14th century. Descending from Crimea to the capital of the Byzantine, Ibn Battuta marked the region as the border between Crimean Turks and Byzantines. Also, he noted the unfavorable conditions of the Dobruca region:

“We came next to the town known by the name of Baba Saltik who, they say, was an ecstatic mystic, though stories are told of actions by him which are condemned by the [religious] law [Sharia]. This is the last town in Turkish territory. From here to the beginning of Greek territory it is a journey of eighteen days through uninhabited desert, for eight days

⁸⁸ Nikolay Antov, *The Ottoman “Wild West”: The Balkan Frontier in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 1.

⁸⁹ Antov, *The Ottoman “Wild West”: The Balkan Frontier in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*.

of which there is no water, so a stock of water is laid in and carried in large and small skins on the wagons.”⁹⁰

What Ibn Battuta found noteworthy to convey about the region was not limited to the geographical and the climatic conditions. A town named after a Muslim saint -baba- was deemed important to be mentioned by him, as well as the saint’s spiritual presence among the inhabitants of the town.

But more than that, Ibn Battuta seems to have been struck by the stories of Baba Saltık which for Ibn Battuta as a North African Muslim, had intolerable heterodox elements regarding the deeds. However, Ibn Battuta’s account on the region and Baba Saltık ends here. It may be because he thought these stories were too sinful even to be written down—Ibn Battuta’s account does not equip us with the content of the stories. Even he does not mention what he considered as “heterodox” in the stories. However, Ibn Battuta was not the only one who was struck by the stories of Baba Saltık. One and a half century after the visit of Ibn Battuta, Prince Cem, the son of Mehmed II the Conqueror, was to visit Babadağ and listen to the stories of Baba (Sarı) Saltuk. In contrast to that of Ibn Battuta, Prince Cem’s encounter with the stories of Sarı Saltuk would result in informing us the content of Sarı Saltuk’s stories.

Saltukname and Its Compilation

In the spring of 1473, Mehmed II set out for a military campaign against the Safavids. In accordance with the custom, before the departure, Mehmed II had left his son Prince Cem in Edirne to oversee the administration while himself as the Sultan was in the Eastern Anatolia for the military campaign. It happened while Prince Cem was staying in Edirne that a white wolf appeared in the Rumeli. The white wolf was hurting the country. Having followed by many other wolves, under the leadership of the white wolf, they captured men and lifted the cattle. Ultimately, Prince Cem levied his man

⁹⁰ Ibn Battuta, *Travels in Asia and Africa, 1325-1354*, ed. H. A. R. Gibb, *Broadway Travellers* 18 (Routledge, 2005), 153.

and hunted the white wolf down. Then Prince Cem descended to Tuna Baba. He visited Baba and listened Baba's deed from his followers. There, Prince Cem saw a certain Ebu'l Hayr-ı Rumi and assigned him to compile all the stories regarding the Baba throughout the region into a book.

Apart from the explanation of the book's *raison d'être*, Ebu'l Hayr-ı Rumi's statements would be read as an implicit statement of Prince Cem's care for his subjects. As a would-be sultan, Prince Cem first saves his subjects' lives and livings by killing the "white wolf" and ensures their economic and social well-being. Then he joins his subjects in the cultural sphere and shows great interest to the stories of his subjects. Having wandered around and gathered the stories of Baba, Ebu'l Hayr-ı Rumi organized these stories into a book in seven years and accorded each of them to others.⁹¹ This is how Ebu'l Hayr-ı Rumi, the compiler of the earliest extant copy of Sarı Saltuk's stories, explains the *raison d'être* of his work, *Saltukname*.

Thus, Ebu'l Hayr-ı Rumi dates the compilation to the years between 1473 and 1480. However, the earliest extant copy of *Saltukname* ends with the following lines: "This precious book, at the year of thousand,[1591] at the end of month Rebiülevvel, on Thursday, at the presence of the Sultans, has been completed."⁹² These conclusion remarks show us that the earliest copy in hand is reproduced almost a century after the first compilation of Ebu'l Hayr-ı Rumi. Undergoing reproduction over the sixteenth century, some features in *Saltukname* seem to be adjusted according to the influences from what happened in the days of the reproductions.

Most discussed and salient "addition" to *Saltukname* is, in Ahmet T. Karamustafa's words, "strong overtones of Ottoman-Safavi rivalries during the sixteenth century in the 1591 copy, and it is highly probable (at times certain) that Sarı Saltuk's Sunni

⁹¹ Ebu'l Hayr-ı Rumi, *Saltukname*, ed. Necati Demir and Mehmet Dursun Erdem (Destan Yayınları, 2007), 614.

⁹² Ebu'l Hayr-ı Rumi, *Saltukname*, ed. Necati Demir and Mehmet Dursun Erdem (Destan Yayınları, 2007), 616.

Hanafi credentials and his zeal against the heretical Shi'a". In this, Karamustafa lists two suspects: "[they] were either adder or, more likely, significantly played up by copyist".⁹³ The same also has been observed by Ahmet Yasar Ocak. Underlying how Sarı Saltuk was portrayed as the relentless warrior against Rafizi heretics, Ocak concludes that the copier reflected the propaganda and that the reactions to the character of Sarı Saltuk emerged with the Safavid-Ottoman war in the first decades of the sixteenth century. Thus, Ocak claims that the copier "added a new aspect to the character of Sarı Saltuk as having portrayed him as a warrior belonging to Hanefi sect and fanatic Sunni who fights against Rafizi sect".⁹⁴

Detecting elements that must belong to the sixteenth century, but not to the time Ebu'l Hayr-i Rumi compiled the stories (1473-1480), Ocak and Karamustafa both, and somewhat rightly, direct their sights towards a person different from the compiler, Ebu'l Hayr-i Rumi, in search of who did these additions. However, in contrast to what is generally accepted, Ebu'l Hayr-i might have added these elements to the narratives himself. What leads Ocak to not consider this possibility is the fact that the 1591 copy was reproduced from the original manuscript compiled by Ebu-l Hayr Rum-i 110 years ago. Thus, for Ocak, the original manuscript produced by Ebu-l Hayr Rumi prior to the Ottoman- Safavid rivalry could not have elements referencing this rivalry. However, the conclusion remarks of Ebu-l Hayr-i Rumi strongly suggest that he reproduced another manuscript after its first submission to Prince Cem in 1480, and the 1591 copy was based on this later reproduction. Having conveyed that he wandered around for seven years and gathered all these stories, then organized and compiled them into a book, Ebu'l Hayr-i Rumi explains, in a proud tone, what happened as the aftermath as follows:

⁹³ Ahmet T. Karamustafa, "Islamisation through the Lens of Saltuk-Name," in *Islam and Christianity in Medieval Anatolia*, ed. Andrews C. S. Peacock, Brunca De Nicola, and Sara Nur Yıldız (Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2015), 363.

⁹⁴ Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Sarı Saltık: Popüler İslâm'ın Balkanlar'daki Destanî Öncüsü (XIII. Yüzyıl)* (Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 2002), 7.

“I brought it [the book] to the presence of the Sultan, and I submitted it to him. Always, Cem Sultan would have it read, and would listen it, he would not listen Hamza stories, but he would always listen this story [Saltukname].”⁹⁵

To be able to record that Prince Cem would always listen to Saltukname, a great deal of time must have passed until the day Ebu'l Hayr-i Rumi had written down this anecdote. So, this strongly suggests that the 1591 copy was based on the latter reproduction of the original copy. However, this anecdote does not inform us when the reproduction has been completed by Ebu'l Hayr-i Rumi. Yet, some information may enable us to estimate, or given the lack of further evidence, to speculate the date of this reproduction.

We know, in 1481, a year after the compilation of Saltukname, Mehmed II, the father of Prince Cem and Bayezid II (r. 1481-1512), died. Following the death of Mehmed II, a struggle over succession broke out between his sons, Prince Cem and Bayezid II. After a series of wars which ended up with the victory of Bayezid II, Prince Cem fled first to Rhodes, then ended up in France and finally came to Italy in 1489 where he would live rest of his life under the custody of the Pope per the agreement reached between Bayezid II and Pope VIII Innocent. According to the agreement, Bayezid II was obliged to pay 40,000 ducas per year and in return Pope VIII Innocent promised Bayezid II for Prince Cem's incarceration. Having lost his hope to seize the throne, Prince Cem died in Naples on 24 February 1495, under the custody of Charles VIII. His death, in Nicolas Vatin's words, “relieved Bayezid II of the primary threat to his rule, but the sultan still needed to obtain his rival's corpse and inter it in Ottoman soil, to assure that a false pretender claiming to be his brother would not emerge. He achieved this in 1499 (after lengthy negotiations) and Cem was finally laid to rest in Bursa, in his brother Mustafa's tomb.”⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Rumi, *Saltukname*, 614.

⁹⁶ Vatin, Nicolas, “Cem”, in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, Edited by: Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Everett Rowson.

This course of events shows us that in order to know that Prince Cem would always listen to Saltukname instead of Hamza stories, Ebu'l Hayr-i Rumi, about whom we know almost nothing, must have been in his entourage throughout his stormy adventures. This possibility seems very unlikely since Ebu'l Hayr-i Rumi, who even narrated Prince Cem's wolf hunting with great respect, would have hardly missed the chance of narrating what had happened throughout the stormy life of Prince Cem. In this sense, his claims of attracting Prince Cem's interest seem to have been fabricated by Ebu'l Hayr-i Rumi in order to promote the value of his work and to portray his work as being proper work for a Sultan's taste.

However, then the arising question is: Which Sultan's attention was Ebu'l Hayr-i Rumi trying to catch by portraying Prince Cem as being pleased with his works as his ex-patron? Considering the above-mentioned strife between Prince Cem and Bayezid II, for Ebu'l Hayr-i Rumi it would be very unwise to present his work to Bayezid II by showing Prince Cem as his ex-patron. In this sense, it seems very unlikely that the reproduction of Ebu'l Hayr-i Rumi would have entered the library of Topkapı Palace during Bayezid's reign years (1481-1512).

But the events of the year 1512 might have opened the way for Saltukname, a book compiled under the patronage of Cem Sultan, to enter the Palace's library, and for Ebu'l Hayr-i Rumi, as a man of Cem Sultan, to re-seek patronage of a Sultan. In 1512, first time in Ottoman history, a son of the Sultan managed to topple his father from the throne. In attaining the throne, Selim I (r.1512-1520) did not persuade his father with reasonable and lovely words to renounce, but he preferred more straightforward ways such as levying an army and going into battle with his father, the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire. Although he lost the war against his father on 3 August 1511, in a short time span, Selim II managed to gain the support of Janissaries. In April 1512, with the

support of Jannissaries and that of the dignitaries, Selim I arrived the court and compelled his father Beyazid II to relinquish power.⁹⁷

In this atmosphere Selim's reign had started. In 1514, two years after ascending to the throne, Selim I levied his army and marched against Shah Ismail, the ruler of Safavids, and this battle was what would carry the Ottoman-Safavid rivalry to its peak point, as Ahmet Yasar Ocak points out for being reflected into the stories of *Saltukname*. Thus, during Selim's reign, Ebu'l Hayr-i Rumi, after thirty years of being out of favor, might have found a chance to present his work to the court. In this sense, in submitting his work to Selim I, it would be very wise for Ebu'l Hayr-i Rumi to embellish the narrative with "popular" and "on demand" elements in order to attract the Sultan's attraction.

Thus, as understood from the abovementioned remarks of Ebu'l Hayr-i Rumi, the 1591 copy was based upon a reproduction of the original copy submitted to Prince Cem back in 1480. And as shown above, Selim I's reign (1512-1520) seems to be the first and the most appropriate time for submission of the reproduction by Ebu'l Hayr-i Rumi. Therefore, these additions might have been executed by Ebu'l Hayr-i Rumi himself, rather than by a copyist or a different person from the compiler, as Ocak and Karamustafa suggest. By adding features which show Sarı Saltuk as the foremost enemy of Shi'a and the champion of Sunnis, Ebu'l Hayr-i Rumi might have ensured the attention of Sultan Selim – indeed, this means money – after long years of being out of favor. Yet, it must be admitted one more time that this explanation is not capable of going beyond being a deduction or a speculation due to the lack of further evidence both about the compiler himself, and the submission process of *Saltukname* and its reproductions.

This being said, now these questions must be asked: If we know that the compiler, or someone else, embellished the stories to personally, or otherwise, benefit from it,

⁹⁷ İnalçık, Halil, "Selim I", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs.

should we treat the stories of Saltukname as folk stories handed down to the fifteenth century? Or, rather should we see Ebu'l Hayr-i Rumi as the author of Saltukname but not the compiler? If we know that there are embellishments, can we read Saltukname as a conceptualization of the past of a fifteenth century Dobruca community? Or is it simply a “historical-fictional” work by a certain Ebu'l Hayr-i Rumi aiming at obtaining some “pişkeş”?

Regarding the extent of embellishments in the narrative, we encounter with “anachronic” and “propagandist” elements in a very small portion of Saltukname. Only in few instances, Sarı Saltuk wears the champion of Hanefi-Sunni Islam costume and when he so does, it lasts too short. Comprising different and various “kıssa of Sarı Saltuk”, these “fabricated elements” do not overwhelm the rest of the narrative. Even, it is very fair to say that these elements do not show a dust of influence in course of events in the rest of the narrative, say for instance Sarı Saltuk does not act within the moral codes of Hanafi sect, or does not hesitate to show “heterodox features” that sort ill with the teachings of Hanafi-Sunni Islam.

Besides, the language of the narratives heavily reflects “the folk character” of Saltukname. As Yorgos Dedes puts it:

“That there was a close relation between the oral material and its written version is borne out by the silence of the compiler regarding any literal adornment which he would have likely recorded with some pride had it actually occurred. It is also borne out by the vernacular nature of the language of written work, which is all in prose and indeed free of the literary features of the so called inşâ style that one might have expected for the audience of an Ottoman prince. The editorial declaration of the author of Saltuqname does not of course exhaust the problem of the sources of his compilation, but categorically exposes the oral basis and folk character of the work. Both features are in fact confirmed by the language and style of the written text”.⁹⁸

⁹⁸ Yorgos Dedes, *Battalname: Introduction, English Translation, Turkish Transcription, Commentary and Facsimile* (Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University, 1996), 44-45.

In this sense, considering Saltukname as a “production” but not the compilation of Sarı Saltuk’s stories would be throwing baby out with bathwater. Moreover, the historical core of the narratives highly suggests that the stories of Saltukname base upon a very rich oral tradition. Although the stories went through re-formulations through its way to the fifteenth century, as I shall delve deep below, it reflects cumulative historical experience of a community that migrated to the Dobruca region from the Anatolia in the second half of the thirteenth century.

The stories written down by Ebu’l Hayr-I Rumi, portray Sarı Saltuk as a wise mystic-warrior. As a pivotal figure, Sarı Saltuk never fails to appear whether in the battlefields or in the religious discussion with the infidels whenever he is needed. Speaking seventy-two languages, knowing much more than the infidels about their own religion, Sarı Saltuk is always the winner of the religious discussions which generally end with the opponent’s conversion to Islam. Not less successful in the battlefield, Sarı Saltuk is a very talented heroic warrior whose scream even is enough to force the enemy to forfeit.⁹⁹ Sarı Saltuk never hesitates to serve in the battlefields, ranging from Africa to Crimea, whenever Islamdom needed his help. And thanks to his supernatural skills, no war ends with the defeat of Sarı Saltuk and the Islamdom. Thus, Sarı Saltık embodies both the intellectual and the material superiority of Islam vis-à-vis the infidels. These legendary stories do not necessarily lack the historical context and do not break off with the well-known historical facts, as Zeynep Aydoğan puts it: “Warrior epics and hagiographies were two types of narratives in which frontier people articulated their histories around the legendary figures of warriors and dervishes.”¹⁰⁰ However, these stories are not always articulated by frontier people and they are not always told in the form of third person narrative, in contrast to what Zeynep Aydogan concludes. For

⁹⁹ Rumi, 45.

¹⁰⁰ Zeynep Aydoğan, “Creating an Ideal Self: Representations of Infidels in the Late Medieval Anatolian Frontier Narratives,” ed. Crisatine Isom Verhaaren and Kent Schull, *The Journal of Ottoman Studies*, 2012, 101.

instance, in the story of “Kaf Dağı”, the narrative, in a sudden, changes its third person view to that of first person as follows:

“Later, Serif narrates, as such:

-Thus, I believed to God. I niyaz eyledüm, when these men marched towards me.”¹⁰¹

These lines highly suggest that the stories of Saltukname, through the eyes of its audience and narrators, were not considered as stories told about Sarı Saltuk by some outsiders but the stories of Sarı Saltuk about which his himself informed his people. Thus, for the narrators of these stories, main responsibility was to not “reconstruct” what Sarı Saltuk did and went through, but their goal was to convey what happened as close as Sarı Saltuk himself informed his people to next generations.

Regarding the historical background, Ahmet T. Karamustafa underlies that much of the stories, in Ebu’l Hayr-ı Rumi’s *Saltukname*, were woven “around a historical core that can be roughly dated to the middle two quarters of the thirteenth centuries”.¹⁰² In this sense, Sarı Saltuk was a historical figure as well as a mystical one in the eyes of those who listened and conveyed his stories to following generations in the Dobruca region. Thus, the narrativization of Sarı Saltuk’s deeds and wonders was, at the same time, a conceptualization of the past. To put it differently, for the inhabitants of the Dobruca region, to listen to the legendary stories of Sarı Saltuk was to acquire insight as to what happened before they came to life. Furthermore, as the followers of Sarı Saltuk whom they called *Baba*, the Father, these narratives for them did not only explicate “what happened before us in the World” but also “what an ancestor, a father did before us in the World”.

¹⁰¹ Rumi, *Saltukname*, 114.

¹⁰² Ahmet T. Karamustafa, “Islamisation through the Lens of Saltuk-Name,” in *Islam and Christianity in Medieval Anatolia*, ed. Andrews C. S. Peacock, Brunca De Nicola, and Sara Nur Yıldız (Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2015), 353.

The legendary stories of Sarı Saltuk were an important element in shaping their historical consciousness of the community, rather than having been only “fun time stories”. This chapter shall delve deep into Sarı Saltuk’s legends and try to understand their conceptualization of the past and their world. But before that, in order to better understand *Saltukname*, we should turn our face to the people who listened, produced, and narrated these stories. Therefore, some questions must be put forward: Who were these people that both Ibn Battuta, around 1330s, and Prince Cem, in 1473, came across in the Dobruca region and were struck by the spiritual presence of Sarı Saltuk amongst them? What were their relationship to Sarı Saltuk? If we take Ibn Battuta’s words at its face value, how come did these Turcophone people end up in the Dobruca region prior to the Ottoman conquest?

The Dobruca Region and Sarı Saltuk

As Ibn Battuta noted, the Turkish speaking community that formed strong bonds with the cult of Sarı Saltuk was already in the region almost a century before the Ottoman conquest in 1396. However, the earliest account in hand, Yazıcızâde Ali’s *Tevârîh-i Âl-i Selçûk*, that informs us as to how, why, and from where Sarı Saltuk and his community came to the region, was written down between the years 1424-1435.¹⁰³ It is understood from the chronology of the events that Yazıcızade dates the migration around 1260.¹⁰⁴

Yazıcızâde Ali also gives the details of the journey as following: Having lost the war for the control of the Anatolia against his brother Rukneddin (1237-1264), Izzeddin Keykavus II (1235-1279) takes refuge in Constantinople. The Basileus of the Byzantine Empire welcomes and hosts him gladly during his stay. In return, Izzeddin Keykavus II offers his swords to the Basileus and fights against his enemies several

¹⁰³ Osman Gazi Özgüdenli, "TÂRÎH-İ ÂL-İ SELÇÛK", TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/tarih-i-al-i-selcuk>.

¹⁰⁴ Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Sarı Saltuk: Popüler İslâm’ın Balkanlar’daki Destanı Öncüsü (XIII. Yüzyıl)* (Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 2002), 58.

times in the Rumeli. One day, Izzeddin Keykavus II asks the Basileus to give them a land where they can wander around since, as nomad Turks, they cannot “sit in the city”. Upon Izzeddin’s request, Basileus bestows the Dobruca Region to them. Having granted the land, Izzeddin secretly calls his kinsfolk to settle them in the land. On the pretext that they move to Iznik for winter-stay, his kinsfolk appears in Uskudar then departs to Dobruca, and amongst the group, “the late Sarı Saltuk” also crosses to Dobruca.¹⁰⁵

This is how Yazıcızâde Ali describes the first journey of Sarı Saltuk and his community to the Dobruca Region. But, apart from being written down centuries after the event, another aspect of his work makes Yazıcızâde Ali’s account more “problematic”, and hence more engaging.

In composing his work, Yazıcızâde Ali mainly relied upon the medieval Persian historian, Ibn Bîbî (d. later than 1285), and his work, *el-Evâmirü'l-‘Alâ’iyye fi’l-umûri’l-‘Alâ’iyye*.¹⁰⁶ Ibn Bîbî’s parents had come to Anatolia from Persia around 1233 and served to the Seljuk ruler, Aleaddin Keykubad I as high-ranking court officials. Whereas his mother Bîbî Münecime was the soothsayer of the Sultan, his father *Mecdüddin Muhammed Tercüman* was a member of the Sultan’s inner circle and had been the person who was responsible for preparing the Sultan’s bed. Later he acted as the secretary of the council (divan katibi) for both Aleaddin Keykubad I and his successor Gıyaseddin Keyhusrev II (1237-1243). Thus, as an intellectual and the son of a privileged family, Ibn Bîbî secured a distinguished position in the court of Gıyaseddin Keyhusrev III (1266-1284) where he served as a high-ranking poet of the Sultan.¹⁰⁷ It was within this atmosphere, Ibn Bîbî has written down his History of the Rum Seljuks

¹⁰⁵ Ali Yazıcızâde, *Tevârih-i âl-i Selçuk: (Oğuznâme-Selçuklu tâRihi) : Giriş, Metin, Dizin*, ed. Abdullah Bakır (Çamlıca Basım Yayın, 2009), 631.

¹⁰⁶ Ibn-i Bibi, *El-Evâmirü'l-‘Alâ’iyye fi’l-Umûri’l-‘Alâ’iyye*, ed. Adnan Sadık Erzi (Ankara: Turk Tarih Kurumu, 1956),

¹⁰⁷ Abdülkerim Özaydın, “İBN BÎBÎ,” *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (TDV İslâm Araştırmaları Merkezi, 1999), 379.

which covers the period between the years 1192 and 1281. Although while writing on the earlier periods he had made use of Cuveynî's history, for the period between the years 1192 and 1281 he extensively, if not solely, based his work on what he had heard and seen as an intimate companion of the Sultan. Thus, as a high official in the Ottoman chancery who had a very good command of Persian, for Yazıcıoğlu Ali the history of Ibn Bibi was a precious asset upon which he would build his own history.

In good part of his work, as Paul Wittek puts it, "Yazıcıoğlu Ali translates from the full original version" of Ibn Bîbî's work.¹⁰⁸ Yet, it is not possible to say that Yazıcıoğlu's work is lack of significant and genuine additions. The journey of Sarı Saltuk is one of these additions of Yazıcıoğlu Ali to the works of Ibn Bîbî. Neither Sarı Saltuk nor the journey from Uskudar to Dobruca appears in the work of Ibn Bîbî. It seems from his work that, as contemporaneous with the event, Ibn Bîbî either did not know anything about Sarı Saltuk and the journey of his community or he did not find it as precious as to spare space in his work, or simply the event was fabricated by Yazıcıoğlu Ali in the 15th century. The problem is further complicated by other contemporary accounts', such as Aksarayî and Abu'l Farac, muteness about both Sarı Saltık and the journey of his community. Yet, as much this dilemma has led the scholars to turn away from dealing with the topic as it has attracted famous scholars, among whom are famous names such as Paul Wittek, Claude Cahen, Halil İnalçık, Elizabeth A. Zacharidiou and Ahmet Yaşar Ocak.

In 1952, Paul Wittek with his article *Yazıcıoğlu 'Alî on the Christian Turks of the Dobruja*, set out to display the ways Yazıcıoğlu Ali could have been informed about Sarı Saltuk and his community.¹⁰⁹ Having executed the minute investigation of where and how Yazıcıoğlu Ali diverges from Bîbî's work, Paul Wittek displays Yazıcıoğlu Ali's possible sources of information regarding the Turks of Dobruca. For Paul Wittek,

¹⁰⁸ Paul Wittek, "Yazıcıoğlu 'Alî on the Christian Turks of the Dobruja," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 14, no. 3 (1952): 643.

¹⁰⁹ Wittek, "Yazıcıoğlu 'Alî on the Christian Turks of the Dobruja."

Yazıcıoğlu has been able to narrate the events regarding Sarı Saltuk and the Turks of Dobruca Region through the “oral tradition, handed down from generation to generation”.¹¹⁰ Wittek shows these information channels as follows:

“[T]wo brothers from Zikhna when, after the accession of Murad II in 1421, they came to the capital, i.e. Adrianople, in order to have their privilege renewed at the chancery. Such a renewal was due at the beginning of each new reign. Yazijioghlu says that it was made 'recently', which gives very strong support to the acceptance of 1424 as the date of his work; it also conveys the impression that he had personally dealt with the matter. One thing is fairly certain: the Seljuk origin of the family was mentioned in their diploma since, as we are expressly told, it was for this reason that Bayezid I had granted the privilege. Without claiming literal accuracy, we may imagine how Yazijioghlu met Dimitri Sultan and Mikho Sultan: when the request for the renewal of this certainly exceptional privilege was laid before the chief of the chancery, i.e. as we assume, Yazijioghlu himself, the translator of Ibn Bibi would hardly have missed such an occasion to converse with descendants of the Seljuks”.¹¹¹

In order to show what this could tell about the Turks of the Dobruca, Wittek calls attention to the fact that “the relation in which it sets the Turks of Karaferia and Zikhna with the those of the Dobruja -- let us recall that Karaferia and Zikhna are two of the three places where Gagauz are found outside the Dobruja.”¹¹² Thus, Wittek concludes that the story was not fabricated by Yazıcıoğlu Ali but on the contrary, it was true as a historical event. In the same vein, Halil İnalcık takes it as a real historical fact.¹¹³

In 1965, with her article, *The Christian Grandsons of II. Keykavus in the Veroia*, Elizabeth Zachariadou bolstered the veracity of Yazıcıoğlu Ali's story.¹¹⁴ The main contribution of the article was the display of the hitherto known monastery registers

¹¹⁰ Wittek, 652.

¹¹¹ Wittek, 652.

¹¹² Wittek, 653.

¹¹³ Halil İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300-1600*, trns. Colin Imber (Phoenix Press, 2001), 187

¹¹⁴ Elizabeth Zachariadou, “II. İzzeddin Keykavus Un Veroia Daki Hristiyan Torunları,” *OTAM* 21 (2007): 245–57.

which mention the Christianized grandsons of Izzeddin Keykavus II in the Veroia region.¹¹⁵ These grandsons of Izzeddin Keykavus II were registered by their last name “Soultanos” which attests to their Sultan ancestors. Given the two men, with whom Ali exchanged words during their stay in Edirne, were bearing the last name “Sultan - Soultanos-“, Dimitri Sultan and Mikho Sultan, the picture of the Dobruca Turks’ root becomes lucid. However, even these scholarly works affirm Yazıcızâde Ali’s story of the journey from Uskudar to Dobruca under the leadership of refugee-sultan Izzeddin Keykavus II, yet it says nothing about the presence of Sarı Saltuk among these “travelers” as Yazıcıoğlu Ali has written down. Where and how did Yazıcıoğlu Ali acquire information on this?

Ahmet Yasar Ocak answers straightforwardly: “[T]here is only one answer for this: Yazıcıoğlu must have gathered the information from the Turks living in the Dobruca and the Karesi”.¹¹⁶ -- Yazıcıoğlu Ali noted down that, having been tired of the new Bulgarians ruler of the Dobruca, some of the Muslim migrants had returned to Anatolia around 1318, precisely to the Karesi Region, under the leadership of Khalil Eje who led the community after the death of Sarı Saltuk. Ocak furthers his account and suggests that these people must have conveyed the stories regarding their roots, which remained alive in their lore and oral narratives through one and a half century and among them, to Yazıcıoğlu Ali in the first decades of fifteenth century.

For Ocak, “probably, the source of the stories regarding Sarı Saltuk, whom even the Byzantine chronicles did not acknowledge, was these narratives.”. In this sense, Ocak does not see any reason to conclude that “these narratives [of Sarı Saltuk] have nothing to do with the reality”. Rather, Ocak comes to conclude that “[a]s a minority group living in the Dobruja, it was not possible for Turks to forget such an important story neither was it possible to fabricate it for them. Even the parts concerning the details were added later, the incident that once upon a time they migrated from Anadolu to

¹¹⁵ Zachariadou. 252-255

¹¹⁶ Ocak, *Sarı Saltuk: Popüler İslâm’ın Balkanlar’daki Destanı Öncüsü (XIII. Yüzyıl)*, 27.

Dobruca under the leadership of Sarı Saltuk, with its main lines, is definitely not something to be fabricated.”¹¹⁷

Thus, Ahmet Yasar Ocak affirms the existence of Sarı Saltuk among the group that migrated from Anatolia to Dobruca. Ocak’s suggestion that Sarı Saltuk’s strong spiritual presence made possible for Yazıcıoğlu Ali to be informed about Sarı Saltuk’s stories seems very plausible considering the fact that Sarı Saltuk’s followers of Dobruca were willing to convey his stories decades later to Prince Cem and Ebu’l Hayr- I Rumi. Furthermore, when Evliya Çelebi visited the Dobruca Region, more than two centuries later from Yazıcıoğlu Ali’s book, he too witnessed the strong spiritual presence of Sarı Saltuk in the region as well as Sarı Saltuk’s physical existence with all his shrines scattered throughout the region. However, Ocak does not show any concrete channels through which Yazıcıoğlu Ali could have been able to know Sarı Saltuk and his community with such details.

After a brief discussion of how Sarı Saltuk and his community ended up in the Dobruca region and from where and how they came, we may now return to the analysis of the Saltukname. By doing so, I consider Saltukname as a conceptualization of the past of Sarı Saltuk’s community in the Dobruca region. As discussed above, the stories of Saltukname was woven around a historical setting of the thirteenth century and these stories include real historical characters of the period such as Genghis Khan and Sultan Gıyaseddin Keyhüsrev I. In this sense, for Sarı Saltuk’s followers, these stories of Sarı Saltuk in the late fifteenth century were narrating and making sense of “what happened before us in the World” and “what an ancestor, a father did before us in the World”. This must have been a crucial element in shaping the historical consciousness of this community and, thereby, in attributing a meaning to the present situation in which they found themselves by coming to the World.

¹¹⁷ Ocak, 27.

Its Own World According to Saltukname

In his travelogue, O.G. de Busbecq, the Habsburg envoy to Suleyman the Magnificent, has noted down, what he had found striking in Turks' understanding of the history as follows: "Turks have no idea of chronology and dates, and make a wonderful mixture of all the epoch".¹¹⁸ If he had been able to take a glimpse into Saltukname, Busbecq might have been very proud of the accurateness of his observation.

Saltukname starts with preparing the audience for Sarı Saltuk's historical debut by establishing the genealogy of him which stretches back from Melik Danismend whose epic stories known as Danismendname, to Seyyid Battal, the heroic saint of Battalname.¹¹⁹ Sarı Saltuk was born to a far-famed warrior father whom the infidels feared so deeply for his well-known grandeur. Suffering very much from Sarı Saltuk's father, the lord of Harcenan (Amasya) set out a plan in order to get rid of him and had him poisoned by means of another Muslim, Hasan, in the city of Kastamonu. Upon the loss of her husband, Sarı Saltuk's mother Rebi fell into a deep grievance and did not marry anyone ever after. Sarı Saltuk was only three at that time.¹²⁰

In Saltukname, chronologically, these all happened shortly after when the Muslims landed on Cezire-i Uşşak (Sinop) from the sea to lay the siege.¹²¹ When the Muslims conquered Sinop and its castle, Saltukname furthers the account in order to allow the audience to grasp the temporal context:

"At the same time [Ol zamanda], Genghis Khan appeared from the East and attacked on the Caliph, he killed Caliph and took Bagdad and came to the Rum [Rum-ili], then crossed over the sea and knocked the infidel's head together. They [Mongols] came back to the Anatolia. The infidels of Üngürüs [Hungary] reached them from behind and slaughtered all the army of Genghis without even showing a modicum

¹¹⁸ Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (University of California Press, 1996), 33.

¹¹⁹ Rumi, *Saltukname*, 37–39.

¹²⁰ Rumi, 40.

¹²¹ Rumi, 39.

of mercy. Sultan Mahmud Sebüktigin from the House of Selcuk has been the ruler instead of the caliph. Sultan Tahir from Persia ascended to throne in the Egypt and ruled over the Egypt. Abbas [the house of the Caliph] has been weak; the House of Caliph has been demolished. Sultan Tahir stipulated that:

The ruler of Egypt must be from “kul”[slave], after sitting three days in the throne the caliph must hand over the throne to him[the *kul* ruler of the Egypt], he must rule with justice.”¹²²

Through the lens of Saltukname, the World waiting for Sarı Saltuk was full of terror: In the East, Genghis Khan was slaughtering the Caliph, the head of the Islamdom. Having continued attacking the infidels across the sea, Genghis Khan and his army were slaughtered as revenge by a Hungarian army on his return path in Anatolia. Thus, Anatolia came to be the playground of ferocious men of both the West and East. Mahmud b. Sebüktigin, a ruler from the House of Selçuk whose members came to be known by their success in warcraft in Islamdom, had taken the holy seat of the Caliph, the occupant of which had to be from the Arabic tribe “Qureysh” according to Islamic Law (Sharia). Hence, the rules of God were broken, Muslims abandoned the right path in the Islamdom. Sultan Tahir, another man who belonged to “slave milieu,” came to Egypt from Persia and made the descendants of the Caliph his puppet and ruled all over Egypt. Meanwhile, men of Islam were betraying one another for being in the service of the infidels in Anatolia. The Christian lords of the Anatolian cities were poisoning the good man of Islam such as the father of Sarı Saltuk. All in all, “it was the worst of the times”. And for the appearance of a savior, a hero, and a leader “it was the best of the times”.

At the same time, this abovementioned historical setting, in which Sarı Saltuk was to make his debut, is nothing but a strong endorsement of Busbecq’s above quoted observation. In weaving the historical background of Sarı Saltuk’s debut, Saltukname gives the details of the conquest of Sinop (Cezire-i Uşşak):

¹²² Rumi, 40.

“Muslims [...] came to Rum and landed on Cezire-i Uşşak. Even, the descendant of Seyyid Gazi and ‘Ali [cousin and son-in-law of Muhammed the Prophet], Seyyid Hasan ibni Hüseyin ibni Muhammed ibni ‘Ali came to there, conquered the castle [of Sinop] which controls the [Sinop] peninsula[cezire] and they got into it”.¹²³

As it is known from the Seljukid inscriptions in the Sinop Castle, Izzeddin Keykavus I had conquered the castle of Sinop in Hijra.611 (A.D. 1214/1215).¹²⁴

Having narrated the Sinop conquest, Saltukname comes to the appearance of Genghis Khan and announces his atrocities as follows: “*At that time [Ol zamanda]*, Genghis Khan appeared from the East and attacked on the Caliph, he killed Caliph and took Bagdad”.¹²⁵ Thus, Saltukname attributes the date of Genghis Khan’s appearance from the East and his murder of the Caliph to date of the conquest of Sinop Castle. Building on these words, there are two striking things in terms of Saltukname’s conceptualization of the past.

The first, Genghis Khan had never been either to Anatolia or to Bagdad, and the second it was not Genghis Khan but Hulagu Han who sieged and conquered Bagdad and consequently killed the Caliph. As a contemporary Syriac chronicler and witness of the incident, Abu’l Farac gives the full details and the date of the fall of Bagdad and the dead of the Caliph. In his history, Abu’l Farac notes that having taken the city of Bagdad in 1258, Hulagu Khan, the grandson of Genghis Khan, ordered that the Caliph be put into a sack and had him beaten to death.¹²⁶ However, in Saltukname’s conceptualization of the past this is attributed to the Genghis Khan who was already dead in 1258.

¹²³ Rumi, *Saltukname*, 39.

¹²⁴ See: Scott Redford, *1215 Seljuk Inscriptions of Sinop Citadel*, İstanbul (Koç Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2014).

¹²⁵ Rumi, 40.

¹²⁶ Gregory Abû’l Farac, *Abû’l Farac Tarihi II*, ed. Ömer Rıza Doğrul (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1987), 570.

In a sense, the attribution of his grandson's conquest and atrocities to Genghis Khan represents much more than "an anachronism". This would be seen as how the fame of Genghis Khan was still overwhelming in an attempt to recall the Mongols in the late fifteenth century minds. Looking from through the lens of Saltukname, Genghis Khan embodied the Mongol Empire in the narratives of a late fifteenth century community in the Balkans whose ancestors must have witnessed the Mongolian conquest of Anatolia. The historical mentality that make up Saltukname seems to have seen in Genghis Khan a better candidate to accomplish those grand historical events.

In the same vein, as the founder and the foremost leader of the Mongol Empire, Genghis Khan would have been more convenient, rather than one of his many grandsons, for the chaotic world that Saltukname envisaged in the thirteenth century Anatolia. This does not imply that this substitute was deliberately done in order to strength the debut and the of Sarı Saltuk. Rather, this is to say, whether deliberately or not, the appearance of Genghis Khan, instead of his grandson, stands to show the extent of the chaos in Saltukname's conceptualization of the past.

Later on, Saltukname narrates as follows: After the capture of Bagdad and the death of the Caliph, Genghis Khan comes to Anatolia and crosses over the sea. Having knocked the infidel's heads together up there, he comes back to Anatolia and suddenly being attacked from behind by the infidels of Hungary. The infidels destroyed all the army and Genghis Khan "without even showing a modicum of mercy." Implicit in the sudden death of the great commander, the founder of Mongol Empire, the conqueror of Bagdad, the killer of the head of Islamdom, was how strong the chaos in that period of Anatolia. Even, the great Genghis Khan could suddenly be the one whom the graveyard of Saltukname's chaotic world would claim next. The conceptualization of the past in Saltukname envisaged in the lands of their ancestors a convenient place for the Christians infidels of the West and the Pagan infidels of East to go at it hammer and tongs. Add to this the casual strife took place between Christians and Muslim of Anatolia that narrated throughout Saltukname, the audience of these stories in the

Dobruca region must have felt the chaos in the Anatolia at its highest- maybe more than it actually had been.

Regarding the extent of the chaos and the terror prevailing in the thirteenth century Anatolia in the envisagement of Saltukname and in the historical mentality behind it, the narrative does not hesitate -albeit rare- to make more explicit and direct statements. This can be particularly seen in the story of the migration of *erens* and *evliyas* from Central Asia steppes to the Anatolia. In narrating the arrival of Hacı Bektaşî Veli, whose role was pivotal in the Islamization of Anatolia and whose cult as saint has still great influence in modern Turkey, Saltukname informs us that he had arrived at Anatolia as disguised as pigeon. Knowing Hacı Bektaşî Veli will arrive soon in Anatolia, the erens of Anatolia, Uryan Baba (Naked Father) and Togan Ata (Hawk Father) was waiting him as they stared the sky. When they saw Hacı Bektaşî Veli in the form of pigeon came close them, Togan Ata disguised as hawk flew to greet him in the sky. When Hacı Bektaşî Veli the pigeon saw him as hawk, he transformed into human again and asked him:

“Server! Saints do not show themselves to the people in this ferocious and cruel form (vahsi yavuz surette görünmez). Why you are doing this?”

Togan Ata replied:

This is Rum-ili. Saints of here are mostly ferocious.”¹²⁷

As can be seen, through the lens of Saltukname Anatolia was a place in which even the saints of it were ferocious and cruel. And if the saints, whom one would expect to be milder and peaceful, were like that in Anatolia, then it is safe to assume that the historical mentality behind Saltukname, did not envisage the other actors of Anatolia such as ghâzîs, more peaceful than them. Hence, for the historical conceptualization of

¹²⁷ Rumi, *Saltukname*, 275.

Saltukname, the world in which all these actors piled up could have been nothing but suffering.

In setting the historical context, following Genghis Khan's death, Saltukname tells us that Mahmud Sebüktigin from the House of Seljuk sits in the stead of the Caliph.¹²⁸ As a matter of fact, this was both theoretically and practically not possible. Theoretically, according to Islamic law the caliph must be from the Arabic tribe "Qurayesh" and Mahmud Sebüktigin was anything but "Qurayesh". This was also practically impossible for the fact that Mahmud b. Sebüktigin (971-1030) had already died about two and a half centuries ago.¹²⁹

Mahmud b. Sebüktigin was the Sultan of Ghaznavid state and had reigned the years between (998-1030). In his reign, Mahmud b. Sebüktigin managed to transform his "tribal" state into a centralized one with the help of his Persian officials. His state organization, in which he divided his subjects into two as taxpayers (reaya) and non-payers such officials and soldiers, was to be the model for its successor states. Thus, his influence remained alive as an influential historical figure for many years to come. As C.E. Bosworth puts it:

"It was not for nothing that within half-a-century of Maḥmūd's death, the great vizier Niẓām al-Mulk [q.v.] could hold the Sultan up in his Siyāsāt-nāma as an exemplar for his own Saldjūq, masters, and the military state typed by that of the Ghaznavids became the model for many later Islamic powers, a large proportion of them likewise directed by Turkish military castes."¹³⁰

Therefore, it was not possible for Mahmud b Sebüktigin to overthrow the Caliph in the way Saltukname narrates. As a matter of fact, although nominally, Mahmud b. Sebüktigin appears one more time in Saltukname. This appearance clearly reflects how

¹²⁸ Rumi, *Saltukname*, 40.

¹²⁹ Erdoğan Merçil, "Mahmud-ı Gaznevi", TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/mahmud-i-gaznevi>

¹³⁰ C.E. Bosworth, "Mahmud b. Sebüktigin," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Encyclopaedia of Islam (Brill,), VI:65a, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/mahmud-b-sebuktingin-SIM_4795.

Mahmud b. Sebüktigin’s legacy was still vivid and alive in the minds of early Ottomans. Admonishing Alaeddin Keykubad II (d. 1257)—who was then in his middle-ages—Sarı Saltuk makes it explicit who Mahmud b. Sebüktigin was for the historical mentality behind Saltukname: “Padişah [Sultan] I advise you. Your ancestors are the House of Selçuk, of which first reign is of Sultan Mahmud b. Sebüktigin”.¹³¹ As these words urge us to consider the periodization of us as “moderns”, which splits Ghaznavids from Seljuks. What follows this sentence is explicitly stating what the period was through the lens of Saltukname:

“[Prior to you] There was a certain Alaeddin [r.1221-1237] from his house. You are the second, in his time, negligence, bribery, and oppression and cupidity were ubiquitous among the notables. Judges were entangled with bribery, injustice and innovation [*rüşvete ve hilaf-i şer’ ve bid’ate düşdiler*], and the disorder arose in the country, the subjects ran away from the oppression and took refuge to Bacu Han Tatar.”¹³²

And later in the narrative, Saltukname informs us that the wrongdoings of Alaadin I were still in full swing during the reign of Alaadin II and thereby drew a continuum in terms of the disorder in the region.¹³³

To turn back to the “anachronic” appearance of Mahmud b. Sebüktigin, similar to the case of Genghis Khan, the appearance of such a powerful historical figure in this temporal context, two and a half centuries after his death, in such a chaotic condition can be regarded as one another indication of what was the world before the debut of their father Sarı Saltuk for a fifteenth century community which migrated from there to the Balkans.

¹³¹ Rumi, *Saltukname*, 481.

¹³² Rumi, 481.

¹³³ Rumi, 479.

And the last piece of the historical background of Sarı Saltuk's debut in *Saltukname* is Sultan Tahir's capture of the Egypt. According to *Saltukname*:

“Sultan Tahir of Persia ascended to throne in the Egypt and ruled over the Egypt. Abbas [the House of the Caliph] has been weak; the sons of the Caliph has been demolished. Sultan Tahir stipulated that:

The ruler of Egypt must be *kul*(slave), after sitting three days in the throne the caliph must hand over him, he must rule with justice.”¹³⁴

As the story strongly suggests, this Sultan Tahir must be Sultan Baybars I who reigned the Egypt from 1260 to until his death in 1277. Sultan Baybars I was one of the *Çipçäk* Turk slaves purchased by the Eyyubi sultan Malik Şālih.¹³⁵ Known for their military skills, these Turkish warrior-slaves were purchased in order to form the backbone of the Ayyubid army. Thus, Sultan Baybars came to Egypt as a Turkish slave soldier to serve under an Arabic speaking Eyyubi Sultan. However, these, once slave and outsider, Turkish soldiers managed to get rid of their Arabic rulers in Egypt and to install themselves as the rulers of the Egypt around 1250.

Sultan Baybars I was the fourth of these Turcic rulers in the Egypt. However, his success and achievements led him to be known as the “real founder” of Turkish reign in the Egypt.¹³⁶ In 1260, Sultan Baybars I defeated the Mongol army under the leadership Hulagu Khan, the conqueror of Bagdad, and the killer of the Caliph, at Ayn'el Calut, today's Syria. Benefiting from the power vacuum that came to existence after the death of Caliph, Sultan Baybars I designed a member of the House of Abbas as the Caliph in the Egypt in order to legitimize the state and strengthen his rule over the Islamdom.¹³⁷ Indeed, this Caliph was not more than a symbolical element in the state organization of the Sultan Baybars I. Thus, Sultan Tahir, who ascended to throne

¹³⁴ Rumi, *Saltukname*, 40.

¹³⁵ G. Wiet, “Baybars I,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Encyclopaedia of Islam (Brill, n.d.), I:1124b, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/baybars-i-SIM_1304.

¹³⁶ Kâzım Yaşar Koprıman, “Baybars I”, TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/baybars-i>

¹³⁷ Wiet, “Baybars I.”

in Egypt, made the Caliph his puppet and stipulated that the Egypt be reigned by “a slave”, must have been the projection of Sultan Baybars in Saltukname’s conceptualization of the past.

Thus, a Ghaznavid Sultan from 10th century and the Turkish ruler of Egypt in the late thirteenth century was conceptualized in the same temporal context by the historical understanding behind the Saltukname. Also, the Seljuk conquest of the Sinop Castle in 1215 and the sack of Bagdad and the slaughter of the Caliph in 1258 were simultaneously happening in the eyes of Saltukname. The father of Sarı Saltuk had been killed by the members of same religion, in the same period and in the same region with the great leader of the Mongol Empire, Genghis Khan who actually died in 1227 during a military campaign on the China. The way the Saltukname sees the early thirteenth century Anatolia has a room for all of these to happen once. And these all encapsulated into the historical background against which Sarı Saltuk would make his debut. Yet, as much as they became hurdles against Sarı Saltuk's campaign, they were also to foster his success and make his legacy bigger as we shall see in the following chapter.

However, in seeing a disorder in the thirteenth century Anatolia, Saltukname is not alone. A contemporary chronicler, Kerimüddin Mahmud-i Aksarayi, in the introduction to his history book, *Müsâmeretü'l-Ahbâr*, narrates how he feels in writing what he saw, witnessed, and felt in the second half of the thirteenth century, as follows:

“What I have seen from the cruel fate is too hard to narrate. Because (if I say it out) no one would believe to me.

Due to the limit of time; from every meaningful word a scent, from every tragic event a wit, from every violence a mark, and from every sorrow a curse is narrated; prolonging contested words was avoided, and what I saw and witnessed were contended with.

[...]

Time was limited; work and grief caused by the disorder of tricky fate were too much.

[...]

Due to the attack of events and the culmination of grief of these disasters, I only narrated a bit of every event.

If I narrated [all the events], a thousand heart would be in deep sorrow”¹³⁸

Thus, the disorder that Saltukname’s conceptualization of the past envisaged in thirteenth century Anatolia was not historically baseless. Although different from above-quoted words of Aksarayi, the historical mentality behind Saltukname is no less successful in conveying the chaotic atmosphere of the thirteenth century Anatolia to the audience. The disorder and the chaos must have been felt so much in the thirteenth century Anatolia that its effect lasted through the fifteenth century, and not necessarily always in “a distorted form” as in the case of Saltukname. Ahmedî (1334-1413), in his *İskendername*, puts the extent of disorder in narrating the Mongol rule in the thirteenth century Anatolia as following: “There was no mercy, but a lot of cruelty”.¹³⁹

To put it together, the world waiting for Sarı Saltuk, in the eyes of Saltukname’s historical mentality, was full of chaos, deaths and unexpected games of the fortune. The conceptualization of the past behind the Saltukname envisaged a great uproar in the thirteenth century of Anatolia to such an extent that the great figures such as Genghis Khan, Mahmud B. Sebüktigin, and Sultan Baybars could have appeared in the same context and turned the World upside down. Furthermore, in doing so, Saltukname does not completely suffer from the lack of proper historical knowledge.

The way it narrates Sultan Baybars or Sultan Tahir is almost in match with the contemporary chronicles of him. Also, with a character substitution, the fell of Bagdad and the slaughter of the Caliph does overlap with the information found in the chronicles of the time such as Abu’l Farac’s history. This attests to fact that these

¹³⁸ Kerimüddin Mahmud Aksarayî, *Müsâmeretü’l-Ahbâr*, ed. Mürsel Öztürk (Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2000), 26–27.

¹³⁹ Tâceddîn İbrâhîm bin Hızır Ahmedî, *İskendername*, ed. Fûrkan Öztürk (İş Bankası Yayınları, 2016), 537.

narratives were drawing on the historical information tradition, handed down from generation to generation. In the orally dominated cultural life of the frontiers, the best channels through which these information and conceptualization of the past were epic tales, hagiographies and myths. Moreover, once these visions of the world were rendered into narratives, they did not simply become an inert mental representation of the exact moment they rendered. Rather they continued to be shaped by subsequent conceptualizations and, in return, to shape the ensuing generations' visions of the past as they widely circulated amongst them. In this sense, these narratives in Saltukname were not product of the fantasy but rather the history itself for the audience.

CHAPTER 3

The Past in Saltukname

As argued in the preceding chapter, in the eyes of Saltukname, Sarı Saltuk was born into a world which was full of terror, chaos, and unexpected games of fortune. To top it off, Sarı Saltuk had both lost his father at the age of three and was soon to be shocked by the demise of his mother who was in deep grievance with the death of her husband.¹⁴⁰

Having been left orphan by his ill fate, Saltukname conveys the extent of the misery into which Sarı Saltuk felt as follows:

“[H]is mother passed away. Having buried his mother, he sadly sat down. He had a master whose name Seravil, he came inside and asked:

- Why you are sad my corner of liver*? Serif burst into tears:

- Do you know my situation? My mother has passed away, I became lonely. They did show interest in others but why not me?”¹⁴¹

Upon this, his master Seravil took him to Emir Ali. Having explained the situation of Sarı Saltuk, Seravil asked Emir Ali to give him the place of his late father. Emir Ali, too, did not show any interest to him. Then they hit the road for Sultan Süleyman of the House of Sebüktigin who was in Azerbaijan at that time. They explained their situation to the Sultan with a petition. Sultan Suleyman wanted to see Şerif (Sarı Saltuk) who was fourteen at the time. Şerif came the Sultan’s presence, kissed his hand and showed respect to him. Upon seeing his beautiful face, the Sultan greeted him and ordered that he be given 40 *şahi* per day from his treasure. Then, Sarı Saltuk and Sultan

¹⁴⁰ Rumi, *Saltukname*, 40.

*Ciger-güşem.

¹⁴¹ Rumi, 40.

Suleyman came together to Anatolia where they would hunt together. Being impressed by Saltuk's hunting skills, the Sultan turned his face to Saltuk's master Seravil and told him that "Saltuk will be better than his father Hasan". The Sultan bestowed more goods and robes to him, and then sent him back to his hometown.¹⁴²

Thus, shortly after the demise of his mother and getting rejected by the local lord, Sarı Saltuk found his patron and started to shape his career. The unexpected games of Saltukname's world was one more time in action. Whereas the local lord refused them with no reason, it was enough for the Sultan of Persia (Ghaznavi) to see Saltuk's face to give Sarı Saltuk 40 şahi per day. Saltukname does not equip the audience with any clues regarding what might be the reason for this sudden change in Saltuk's fortune. Seen from the narratives of Saltukname, it was under the same conditions that the Sultan granted Sarı Saltuk what he requested while the local lord Emir Ali refused Sarı Saltuk and his master Seravil.

However, it must be noted that once Sarı Saltuk got the chance, he did not fail to show his talents to secure and strengthen his position. In this sense, although it was merely contagious to rip the ill fate off and had the fortune smile in the world of Saltukname, once one got that opportunity, he/her must prove his/her talents and merits to secure and strengthen it. Thus, the way in which Saltukname assures the reader about Sarı Saltuk's prodigiousness goes through first the unexpected games of fortune and then his deserving of the opportunity that the fortune presents to him. It was within this context that Sarı Saltuk, as a fourteen-year-old orphan, returned to his hometown in Anatolia after earning confidence from the Sultan and was ready to make his debut.

¹⁴² Rumi, 40–41.

Sarı Saltuk Making His Debut

At the time when Sarı Saltuk set foot in his hometown, the Christian lord of Harcinevan (Amasya) had the envoys of Tekfur Elyon Yahş who was a descendant of the Caesar of Rum (Kayser-I Rum) and resided in Konstantiniyye (Constantinople). The envoys were here to keep the lord of Amasya, namely Tırbanos, abreast of all the latest developments. The envoy gave the good news: “Three thousand soldiers of Genghis Khan were slaughtered in Filban. The king of Firenk (Latin Europe) and nine lords of the Rum made alliance and levied their soldiers. One million – “ten times one thousand” in the text-- soldiers of the Christians and the Nasranis will march and destroy these followers of Muhammed. . . [T]he lord of Rum, crossed the Gelinbolu strait with the soldiers of Andriyya [Edirne] city. All the people of the Rum, the folk Harcinevan [Amasya] and Yervuşak-i Tekur [Tekfur] should help him [...] The commander of the army is the lord of Üngürüs [Hungary], namely Serdal-ı Asferi. ”.¹⁴³

Having heard the good news, the lord of Amasya, Tırbanos gave a feast and ceased to pay tribute to the Muslim lord of Haynob [Sinop]. Then he informed the Muslim lord of Sinop with these words: “Be ready, you will see what they will do to you”.¹⁴⁴

When these words spilled out from the mouth of the envoy, Saltukname informs us, Sarı Saltuk was sitting next to the local lord, Emir Ali, who had refused his request to take the place of his late father. Here again, Saltukname does not narrate how these two became that much close after the bitter incident took place among them recently. Apparently, the Sultan’s credit on Sarı Saltuk had changed everything in a minute.

Upon hearing these daring words, Sarı Saltuk cut the envoy’s ear off and assured the envoy that the God is on Muslims’ side. Having heard what Sarı Saltuk did to the envoy of Tırbanos, the lord of Hungary became infuriated and levied his army. When the Muslim lords heard that the lord of Hungary come towards them with his army, they

¹⁴³ Rumi, 41.

¹⁴⁴ Rumi, 41.

reprehended Sarı Saltuk badly. Reminding that he was a little child, they questioned how dare he did that. Sarı Saltuk was really offended and he headed to his house to sleep. One more time, the things had dramatically changed for Sarı Saltuk: the day before he was sitting next to the local lord and now he was reprehended by the lords for causing big danger for Islamdom.¹⁴⁵

It did not take too much time before things changed again for Sarı Saltuk in a good way. On the same night, he saw his ancestor Seyyid Gazi (Battal Gazi) in his dream. In the dream, Seyyid Gazi called him as his “corner of liver” and said “stand up and make your debut” to him. Then he told him where he hid his horse, clothes, and war tools. Sarı Saltuk immediately went there and found all of what Battal Gazi mentioned to him. Sarı Saltuk girded the clothes, put the armor on and mounted the horse, and headed towards the city. When he arrived to the city, Sarı Saltuk declared that he goes for “ghazâ”. Upon this, his tutor Abdurrahman Suluk-i warned him that he must first take revenge of his father who died as a consequence of Tırbanos’, the lord of Amasya, poisoning plot. Sarı Saltuk one more time “got offended” and hit the road for Amasya.¹⁴⁶

Sarı Saltuk found Tırbanos at the valley of Tayy with his army waiting for Tekfur. Then, Sarı Saltuk decided to spy on Tırbanos. As he discovered that Tırbanos was going to the church daily to “perform his impiety”, Sarı Saltuk found the opportunity to first prove his superiority against these infidels in a different place than the battlefield. Having read the four holy books profoundly, knowing twelve languages—although the narrative later states that he knows seventy-two languages—and tutored by competent teachers, Sarı Saltuk easily managed to sneak into the church as one of them. Benefiting from the crowd of church, he sat amongst them without being noticed. Shortly after Tırbanos got back to his tent, the priests noticed him and asked him who he was. Sarı

¹⁴⁵ Rumi, 41.

¹⁴⁶ Kemal Yüce, *Saltuk-Nâme’de Tarihi, Dinî ve Efsanevi Unsurlar* (Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 1987).

Saltuk introduced himself as a subject of Tırbanos. Then, a discussion broke out with the question of Sarı Saltuk: “Why these infidels, Muslims are in the ascendant of us?”.¹⁴⁷

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Here it must be noted that this theme in which Sarı Saltuk discusses with the infidels is very persistent throughout the narrative. As expected, the discussion always results in the victory of Sarı Saltuk and at times in the conversion of the infidel. In an overwhelming portion of the discussions, Sarı Saltuk disguises himself as a Christian during the discussion and it always turns out that Sarı Saltuk is very knowledgeable about Christianity, even way more than Christians. For example, in his visit to Constantinople, Sarı Saltuk easily managed to convince even the most knowledgeable Christians, such as priests, that he was the Prophet. Admiring his knowledge and scholarship, *tekur* and priests submitted their allegiance to Sarı Saltuk. Thus, being on top of all of them, Sarı Saltuk assigned one of these priest as the patriarch (patrik).¹⁴⁸

It is clear that in narrating these events the historical mentality behind Saltukname aimed at reiterating the image of a fool and an inferior infidel in the mind of the audience. At times, this aim becomes very explicit as the narrative informs us that Sarı Saltuk managed to convince “the foolish and the unreasonable folk” (*akılsız ve idraksiz kavım*) to be beaten by him by saying that the one who bleeds the most would go to heaven.¹⁴⁹

However, implicit in the recurring statements of how Sarı Saltuk was knowledgeable, wise, and erudite, the attempt is to show Sarı Saltuk’s choice of being Muslim was not promiscuous, but a “rational one”. More precisely, by portraying Sarı Saltuk as almost the most erudite person in the World, the historical mentality behind Saltukname shows us once more that Islam is superior in the reasoning and the choice of a man who knows everything about Islam and Christianity. It might have been very reassuring for the

¹⁴⁷ Rumi, *Saltukname*, 42.

¹⁴⁸ Rumi, 59.

¹⁴⁹ Rumi, 58.

audience who was born and raised in a Muslim community, knowing that they would have chosen Islam had they had the chance of knowing Christianity and of course Islam too, with all its details as did Sarı Saltuk.

Turning back to his debut, Sarı Saltuk suppressed the priests in the religious discussion. But he did not content himself with that victory and killed all of these priests, as well as looting all of the precious goods in the church. Soon after, Tirbanos learned what happened at the church and who did it. Tirbanos sent another envoy to the lord of Sinop and demanded that Sarı Saltuk be given to him, otherwise he threatened them with taking the castle and killing all of the Muslims in it. Emir Osman, the son of Emir Ali, was asked by the forerunners of the city to give Sarı Saltuk to Tirbanos. Emir Osman rejected them by telling them the story of how the Caliph Osman advised the Muslims to protect the descendants of the prophet Muhammed. While his father, Emir Ali had not shown any respect to this descendant of the Prophet and even abstained him from giving the place of his late father, his son Emir Osman underlined that Sarı Saltuk was a descendant of the Prophet, thereby he must be protected at any cost, even the cost being Emir Ali's own life.¹⁵⁰

Yet, in the course of the narrative, it would be proven one more time that even Emir Osman was not consistent in his approach and anything could have happened in the world of Saltukname. Returning from the conquest of Kastamonu, upon getting suspicious of Sarı Saltuk for potentially taking all the booty, Emir Osman demanded that Sarı Saltuk be slaughtered. However, his *vezir* was not in agreement with him and replied as follows: "O Lord! He deserves better than this, you should give him your beloved daughter Nefise Banu".¹⁵¹ Upon this advice, Emir Osman suddenly changed his mind and opted for being Sarı Saltuk's father-in-law, rather than being his murderer.

¹⁵⁰ Rumi, 43–44.

¹⁵¹ Rumi, 60.

Alike Emir Ali, Sarı Saltuk did not fear from Tırbanos as he proved this by approaching Tırbanos disguised in “Frenk” shortly after the church incident. He introduced himself as “A Frenk”, a man “from West,” and declared his interest to serve him. Having accepted Tırbanos’ offer to join him in his campaign on the Islamdom, Sarı Saltuk was admitted to the inner circle (iç oğlan) of Tırbanos. Then, they went together to hunt. In a moment of loneliness in the hunt, Tırbanos called Sarı Saltuk to come near him. When Sarı Saltuk came next to him, Tırbanos suddenly attempted to “hug and kiss him.” In return Sarı Saltuk punched him in the chest and escaped from him. Then Tırbanos stood up and drew his sword. At that very moment Saltuk loosened his bow and shot Tırbanos from his neck. Having put his head into a sack, Sarı Saltuk left the scene.¹⁵²

Thus, by taking revenge from his father’s murderer, Sarı Saltuk made his debut in the Islamdom. However, in Saltukname’s eyes, it was not easy even for Sarı Saltuk to accomplish this mission in the thirteenth century Anatolia. He had to struggle with the words and threats of the Muslim lords and his Muslim companions as much as he struggled with the swords of the infidels. Saltukname explicitly shows how much Sarı Saltuk got offended from the words of the Muslims, let alone the suggestion of the forerunners of Sinop to turn him in to Tırbanos. In this case, even if Emir Ali had not died just before the demand of Tırbanos, being a descendant of the Prophet might not have saved the life of Sarı Saltuk, given the fact that Emir Ali had not granted him the place of his late father’s although he knew that Sarı Saltuk was a descendant of the Prophet. Regarding the possible meaning of this narrative of the unstable and confusing order in the hagiographic literature, Gottfried Hagen comments as follows:

“Whereas it may be debated how realistic a characterization this could possibly be, the crucial aspect for our present purposes is that it has to be a meaningful depiction. The pessimism over the unstable and confusing order of the world was a contemporary phenomenon which lends the narrative of saints and heroes their *raison d’être*, as the entire

¹⁵² Rumi, 44–45.

hagiography ultimately demonstrates that only saints and heroes were able to cope with the ‘chaos’ of the world.”¹⁵³

The other striking aspect of these stories is Sarı Saltuk’s inclination towards violence considering both the narrator and the audience of these stories venerated him as “a saint”. Given other Muslims’ objections towards Sarı Saltuk’s cutting the envoy’s ear off, his propinquity to violence did not merely emerge from the zeitgeist of the thirteenth century. Apparently, in these narratives, Sarı Saltuk has a predilection for violence more than the average of his time. In this sense, seeing such a ruthless character in a man whom they venerated as “saint” and “father” seems to have not detracted from the holiness of this man in the eyes of the audience and the narrators of this story. Considering that these stories were products of a community who lived in hard conditions on the Ottoman frontiers, or as Nikolay Antov termed it “the Ottoman Wild West”,¹⁵⁴ in the fifteenth century, this ruthless character of Sarı Saltuk might have been a good asset to have in the community’s origins and values since myth, in Marina Warner’s words, “conveys values and expectations which are always evolving”.¹⁵⁵

Sarı Saltuk Against “The World”

Following the death of Tırbanos, things were getting more complicated in the region. When “tekur (the lord) of Konstaniyye” heard what happened to Tırbanos, he immediately informed the King who was in Edirne at the time. The King commanded that the son of the lord of “Kıran” and the son of the lord of “Yunan” go first and “take the throne of Yunan from the Turks, which was in Kayseriyye and Karaman.”¹⁵⁶ Şemmas, the son of late Tırbanos, also levied his man and waited for the sons of Karaman and Yunan to join them.

¹⁵³ Hagen, “Chaos, Order, Power, Salvation: Heroic Hagiography’s Response to the Ottoman Fifteenth Century,” 104.

¹⁵⁴ Nikolay Antov, *The Ottoman “Wild West”: The Balkan Frontier in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

¹⁵⁵ Marina Warner, *Managing Monsters: Six Myths of Our Time* (London: Vintage, 1994), 14,

¹⁵⁶ Rumi, *Saltukname*, 45.

On the other side, Emir Osman informed the Sultan of the potential danger. The Sultan of the time, as Saltukname informs us, was Sultan Gıyaseddin Keyhüsrev from the House of Selçuk.¹⁵⁷ Upon the request of Emir Osman, Sultan levied his army and arrived in Sinop to strengthen the defense of the city. Furthermore, the Sultan sent his envoys from Egypt to Khorasan to call Muslims in the arms and in return, four thousand men arrived to Sinop throughout the Islamdom. Of course, Sarı Saltuk, the cause of the following danger, was present in Sinop with his one thousand men. And by the time Sultan arrived in Sinop, Sarı Saltuk had not rested but already conquered Amasya.¹⁵⁸

Meanwhile, the ranks of the Christians were to be reinforced with the newcomers from all around the World. Among these newcomers were Pope, the lord of Frenk,¹⁵⁹ the kings of Germany, Hungary, Eflak, Poland, and Caesar (Çesar),¹⁶⁰ as well as the prince of Venice.¹⁶¹ In short, all possible Christian infidels, which a Muslim of the fifteenth century could have conceived of, were lined up as enemies in front of Sarı Saltuk. Thus, through the eyes of Saltukname, the thirteenth century Anatolia was a place for all the Christian kings to put their internal strife and mundane issues aside and bond together in order to take revenge of a small local lord within it.

As a matter of fact, it is very hard to deem Saltukname's vision of the thirteenth century Anatolia as an incongruous product of a "myth-oriented mind". Through the first six decades of the thirteenth century, Constantinople was under the control of Latin Crusaders (*Frenks*) whom Pope designated and supported as the legitimate rulers of Constantinople. The Latin Empire was in control of the domains spanning from the Mora Peninsula to the northwest Anatolia. The ruling elite of the Latin Empire consisted of members from different and various dynasties of the Latin Europe. For instance, the Emperor Baldwin II de Courtenay (r. 1228-1261) was son of a French-

¹⁵⁷ Rumi, 46.

¹⁵⁸ Rumi, 46.

¹⁵⁹ Rumi, 47.

¹⁶⁰ Rumi, 51.

¹⁶¹ Rumi, 51.

Flanders noble family and had kinship with the king of Hungary,¹⁶² and he was married to Marie of Brienne, the Italy-born daughter of French-Champagne ruler of Jerusalem and Spanish Leon-Castille princess Berengaria of León.¹⁶³ In the south, the Principality of Antioch (1098-1267) was reigned by a branch of the House of Poitiers which had French-Italian roots.¹⁶⁴ In the west of it, there were Armenian rulers of Cilicia.

Thus, Saltukname's set up in which Sarı Saltuk found almost all of the Christian rulers of the World as enemies against himself, must have something to do with the historical realities of the time. The presence of the above-mentioned Christian Western crusaders in Anatolia left a mark in the oral narratives that were handed down to Ebu'l Hayr-I Rumi as part of his compilation of these stories in 1480. As argued in the preceding chapters, the narrative of Sarı Saltuk's deeds, for the audience of these stories, was to understand "what happened before us in the World". But, on the other hand, even though the setup had something to do with historical realities, it is very clear that the events taking place between the Christian kings and Sarı Saltuk apparently had some mythic elements, and believing in them may not have been possible for today's readers only, but also for the audience in the fifteenth century. In this sense, the question becomes: How can one think that Saltukname was the conceptualization of the past of a fifteenth century community and not just part of their mythical fantasies that they were aware of its "ahistoric" and "unreal" nature? As Claude Levi-Strauss puts it, this is a question of "where does mythology end and where does history start?" As an answer, Levi-Strauss urges that one must first realize the oral character of the myth. He furthers his answer as follows: "In the case, entirely new to us, of a history without

¹⁶² Georg Ostrogorsky, *Bizans Devleti Tarihi*, ed. Fikir Işıltan (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2015), 403.

¹⁶³ Guy Perry, *John of Brienne: King of Jerusalem, Emperor of Constantinople, c.1175–1237*, (Cambridge University Press, 2013), 16.

¹⁶⁴ Andrew D. Buck, "The Rulers of Antioch," in *The Principality of Antioch and Its Frontiers in the Twelfth Century* (Boydell & Brewer, 2017), 62–86.

archives, there being of course no written documents, there is only a verbal tradition, which is claimed to be history at the same time.”¹⁶⁵

Now, we can continue investigating what happened between Sarı Saltuk and these kings, and what it might have meant for the audience, the followers of Sarı Saltuk in the Dobruca Region. When the Pope arrived at the battlefield, as Saltukname narrates, he sent a letter to the Sultans of Muslim, Izzeddin Keykavus. In the letter, the Pope demanded that the Muslim leave all the Rum and retreat to the other side of the Euphrates River. Otherwise, the Pope states, “I brought all of the infidels in the World with me [...] If you say no, you will see what I shall do to you. And send immediately Şerif to me, I will do him my close companion(iç oğlan).”¹⁶⁶ Seen from the demands of the Pope, Sarı Saltuk was highly popular and was considered a character among the Christians too—even his acquisition into the ranks of the Christian world was equal to the incorporation of the whole central Anatolia to the Christian lands. The foremost enemy’s envy and admiration towards the champion of Islam and their father must have corroborated a sense of superiority among the audience which were the followers of Sarı Saltuk. But once again, Sarı Saltuk responded to the demand by cutting the ear and nose of the envoy off.¹⁶⁷

The following day, both Muslims and Christians were ready in the battlefield. Sarı Saltuk came forward and said that “The infidels! If the God allows, we will destroy all of you to such an extent that you will never be able to levy an army again”.¹⁶⁸ The infidels were amazed one more time by the greatness of Sarı Saltuk. Upon this, the Pope decided to play his strongest card and put Aliyon-i Rumi forward to settle Sarı Saltuk’s hash. Sarı Saltuk and Aliyon-i Rumi knew each other, and before the Pope and the other kings arrived to Sinop, they had already fought and the fight ended up with

¹⁶⁵ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Myth and Meaning* (Routledge, 2001), 16.

¹⁶⁶ Rumi, *Saltukname*, 47.

¹⁶⁷ Rumi, 47.

¹⁶⁸ Rumi, 48.

each one's attempt, with words, to proselyte the other. ¹⁶⁹ Now, they tried one more time to convince each other to convert. Aliyon-i Rumi told that he had seen a dream that night in that dream a black bird flew out from his stomach while a white one entered into him.¹⁷⁰

As soon as they realized that their attempts were futile, they began quarrelling with each other. This time Sarı Saltuk managed to smack Aliyon-i Rumi down and put his dagger on the throat of Aliyon-i Rumi, and gave him another chance to convert to Islam. Having Aliyon accept the offer of Sarı Saltuk, İvaz-i Lehi (Polish) and Amlak-I Rusi (Russian), Şeddad-i Çahi(Armenian) entered into the field to attack Sarı Saltuk and Aliyon. The duo managed to destroy all three of them. And just before the three attacked, Sarı Saltuk named Aliyon-i Rumi as İlyas-i Rumi, a Muslim name and in return, Aliyon gave him the name "Saltuh". The name by which the foremost champion of the Islamdom came to be known was given by "a freshman Muslim".

The fluid border between being Christian and being Muslim is also apparent throughout the narrative. Even when he was asked why he was killing the infidels, Sarı Saltuk replied, "The infidels are our enemy. Would one do nothing to his enemy alone when find it?"¹⁷¹ during an occasion when Sarı Saltuk saw the infidels, the sons of the lords of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and for "having no reason, Şerif did not attack them".¹⁷² During his expedition to "Rumeli", Sarı Saltuk, one way or another, killed or punished every infidel he encountered until he saw the sons of the lords of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Fascinating with their "pureness and beautifulness" when he saw the son of "Bosna begi" on his way, who was accompanied by a legion of Bosnian soldiers and the son of "Haresik tekuri", in order to marry the daughter of Laz (Laskarid), Sarı Saltuk lamented about them for being infidels as follows: "I wish they were

¹⁶⁹ Rumi, 46–47.

¹⁷⁰ Rumi, 48.

¹⁷¹ Rumi, 220.

¹⁷² Rumi, 81.

Muslims”.¹⁷³ Although Sarı Saltuk, who pledged to kill every infidel he encountered, may seem contradictory from the perspective of the audience listening to these stories in a village of 15th century Dobruca, a fight between the ancestors of then two Muslim communities in fact might be very confusing, since Bosnians had already converted to Islam by then. However, by not killing Bosnians who were to convert to Islam, Sarı Saltuk forestalls the emergence of a hard situation. If Sarı Saltuk had slaughtered them as being another “foolish infidels”, it would have been very hard to explain why Bosnians converted to Islam whereas all the others remained Christians. But in these settings of events, as beautiful and pure people, it would have been expected from Bosnians to realize the glory of Islam.

However, the reasons preventing one from, or leading one to convert to, Islam were not always stemming from “big things”. More precisely, Saltukname displays that in the decision to convert or not, the small and daily considerations were almost as effective as the promise of heaven upon the dead when the time has come, for having chosen the true religion. This is very apparent in the words of a Christian lord who was defeated by Sarı Saltuk in a combat and accepted to convert to Islam to save his life. Upon this, when Sarı Saltuk asked him why he had not converted before, the Christian lord of a castle near Constantinople confessed what prevented him as follows: “I feared the circumstances, but the fear of death made me forget it”. How Sarı Saltuk reacted to these words is another indication of the daily trapeditions’ role in one’s approach towards religious affairs. Sarı Saltuk commented as follows: “They [the infidels] do not fear from hell, but from the pain of death”.¹⁷⁴

Coming back to the case of conversion of Aliyoni Rumi, in Saltukname’s conceptualization of the past, it was very easy for one to trespass the boundaries between being Christian and being Muslim in the thirteenth century Anatolia. This was even possible within the duel which almost all the Christian and Muslims were

¹⁷³ Rumi, 80.

¹⁷⁴ Rumi, 264.

witnessing. Furthermore, the conversion did not necessarily have to be a pragmatic or a hypocritical mean to survive. As the conversion of Aliyon-i Rumi attested, the apostate could be very sincere in it to such an extent that he killed his recent religious fellows for being together with his recent infidel-enemy. So, what was the meaning of the merciful attitudes of Sarı Saltuk, who was ruthless even to the envoys, towards an infidel who attempted to kill him?

Arguing the syncretism and the coexistence between the Christians and the Muslim of Anatolia, Cemal Kafadar gives an answer to this question, with specific reference to Saltukname:

“For the self-confident proselytizer, after all, the world is not divided into ‘us’ and ‘them’ but into ‘us’ and ‘those who are not yet us’ or ‘those who may someday be among us.’ Why should we suppose that the gazis or dervishes would wish to repel the Byzantine peasants when they could appeal to them? At any rate, the Saltukname provides ample proof that a call for conversion coexisted with latitudinarian attitudes or gestures. Not that such syncretism was mischievously planned by a secret organization of gazis and dervishes who held a conference and decided that this would be the better ‘tactic.’ No one ever theorized it, either. It appears to have been a shared insight deriving from the cumulative experiences gained through the fusion of Islamic elements with pre-Islamic beliefs of the Turks on the one hand and Anatolian Christianity on the other.”¹⁷⁵

The cumulative experiences that Cemal Kafadar mentions, seem to have reflected within Saltukname, in Sarı Saltuk’s merciful attitudes towards Aliyon-i Rumi. Thus, whereas Saltukname’s conceptualization of the past lined all the Christian World in front of Sarı Saltuk as enemies, it was also well aware of the fact that the boundaries between the Christian and the Islam Worlds were, in Kafadar’s words, “constantly being redrawn”.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵ Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State*, 72.

¹⁷⁶ Kafadar, 72.

Reading Saltukname in the Light of “Proper Histories”

As argued in the preceding chapter in more detail, Yazıcızâde Ali’s *Tevarih-i Ali Selçuk* was mainly based on the contemporary historian Ibn Bibi’s history. Yazıcızâde Ali made additions to the work of Ibn Bîbî in the first half of the fifteenth century. In the addition of new information to the work of Ibn-i Bibi, Yazıcızâde Ali made use of the oral traditions handed down to him from various sources. His work *Tevarih-i Ali Selçuk* shows a synthetic character vis-à-vis the completely oral tradition of *Saltukname*, as it benefited from both the written and oral sources.

Owing to a written source at his disposal, Yazıcızâde Ali was able to scrutinize what he had been informed through the oral narratives in light of Ibn-i Bibi’s work. Probably, this capability enabled Yazıcızâde Ali to distinguish the oral narratives which had been “degenerated” and “contaminated” through their way into the fifteenth century. Yet, it is understood from his work that he did not consider all he had heard as too incongruous to be incorporated into the work of Ibn-i Bibi.

However, the situation was different for the stories that were compiled in *Saltukname*. With the lack of any “point of bearing”, a written source, and a reference point, how and in what form these stories would remain were only dependent on the memories and the narratives through which they made it to that day. In the purely oral culture, the reformulation of these stories throughout all generations was inevitable. As Jack Goody has underlined: “There is a danger in assuming that in purely oral cultures, long recitations are memorized with great accuracy. In many cases they are not and cannot be. If there is a version that has been printed, [...] then it may be read out or referred to, [...] when it provides a fixed text for reciter to refresh his memory. Even so, there may be problems with writers assuming that oral forms operate in the same way as fixed texts.”¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁷ Jack Goody, “The Folktale and Cultural History,” in *Myth, Ritual and the Oral* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 78.

But in the end, for each generation the narrative of their day was the most accountable version, given that their knowledge on the earlier versions was limited, if not completely lacking. As Paul Veyne points out:

“Aristotle and Polybius, so defiant when they are confronting Myth, did not believe in the historicity of Theseus or Aeolus, king of the wind, out of conformity or political calculation. Nor did they seek to challenge myths, but only to rectify them. Why rectify them? Because nothing that does not presently exist is worthy of belief. But then, why not challenge it all? Because the Greeks never admitted that the mythmaking process could lie to everyone about everything. The ancient problem of myth, as we will see, is bounded by two dogmas that were unconscious, or lie about everything to everyone, for knowledge is only a mirror; and the mirror blends with that it reflects, so that the medium is not distinguished from the message.”¹⁷⁸

In this sense, for the audience of Sarı Saltuk’s stories, it could not be expected from the dervishes—from whom Ebu’l Hayr-i Rumi compiled the stories¹⁷⁹ by coupling their religious and social leadership—to lie about their common past. Thus, the version in which Ebu’l Hayr-i Rumi heard and compiled these stories in 1480 was on one hand, the most believable one but on the other hand it probably had evolved into a totally different shape from the first version. Thus, an event which takes place both in *Saltukname* and *Tevarih-i Ali Selçuk* would appear in different forms. Yet, there was nothing for the audience of both works to avoid deeming their version as the most accurate one. Building on this, I shall examine an event that took place in both of them in order to show to what extent they transformed into different narrative forms.

As we have seen, *Saltukname* centers the first story chronologically around the conquest of Sinop by the Muslims, which as we know took place in 1214.¹⁸⁰ When the Muslims conquered the city of Sinop, *Saltukname* portrays Tırbanos, the lord of Amasya, as their foremost enemy in the region. In *Saltukname*, Muslims, under the

¹⁷⁸ Veyne, *Did the Greeks Believe in Their Myths?: An Essay on the Constitutive Imagination*, 57.

¹⁷⁹ Rumi, *Saltukname*, 614.

¹⁸⁰ Songül Mecit, *The Rum Seljuqs: Evolution of a Dynasty* (Routledge, 2014), 98.

leadership of Sarı Saltuk, were to take Amasya from Tırbanos' son Semmas shortly after the killing of Tırbanos by Sarı Saltuk. Saltukname further narrates that the ruler of the time was Gıyaseddin Keyhüsrev.¹⁸¹ Thus, in the historical setting of Saltukname, the Muslims conquered Sinop before Amasya. However, the contemporary chronicler, Ibn Bîbî tells us otherwise since he names Melik Nizameddin Argunşah as the lord of Amasya at the time Gıyaseddin Keyhüsrev I (r. 1204/1211) ascended to the throne.¹⁸² Furthermore, Paul Wittek concludes that “at the time of the Turkish invasion of the eleventh century, Amasya had been the first region in all Asia Minor to see the establishment of a Turkish ghazi principality, that of the Dânisment ghâzîs.”¹⁸³ But the most convincing evidence regarding the “inaccurateness” of Saltukname’s historical setting which places the conquest of Sinop chronologically before that of Amasya comes from a Seljukid inscription at the Sinop Castle. The inscription records the repairs enacted by the lords of Amasya immediately after the conquest and reads as follows:

“There is no god but God alone. He has no partner. Muhammed is the messenger of God. In accordance with the success granted by God, may He be exalted, in the days of great triumphant Sultan, the greatest Shah of Shahs, ‘Izz al- Dunya wa’l-Din Father of Victory, Kayka’us son of Kaykhusraw, Proof of the Commander of the Faithful, these two towers, and two curtain walls and three arches were built by the poor servant in need of the mercy of God, mubariz al Dawla wa’l-Din Bahramshah son of Qaymaz, and the emirs of Amasya in the year 612.”¹⁸⁴

Thus, the oral tradition handed down to the dervishes, from whom Ebu’l Hayr-i Rumi compiled the stories, seems to have been deviant from the real historical settings of the events of the thirteenth century Anatolia. Furthermore, a glimpse into the history of Amasya and its vicinities shows that there had been no ruler in the region whose name

¹⁸¹ Rumi, *Saltukname*, 46.

¹⁸² Ibn Bibi, *El Evamirü'l-Ala'îyye Fi'l-Umuri'l-Ala'îyye*, ed. Mürsel Öztürk (T.C. Kültür Bakanlığı., 1996), 41.

¹⁸³ Wittek, *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire: Studies in the History of Turkey, Thirteenth–Fifteenth Centuries*, 154–55.

¹⁸⁴ Scott Redford, *Legends of Authority: The 1215 Seljuk Inscriptions of Sinop Citadel, Turkey* (Koç University Press, 2014), 221.

was Tırbanos or anything close to it.¹⁸⁵ Thus, Saltukname gives the impression, within this narrative, that it deviates from the real course of the events of thirteenth century Anatolia in terms of both chronology and historical figures. Yet, does this necessarily lead us to conclude that Saltukname's narratives have nothing to do with the past of the community within which they had emerged? Therefore, can it not be seen as the conceptualization of the past? Rather, should the stories of Saltukname be seen as the fantasies projected onto the past?

In *Tevarih-i Ali Selçuk*, the conquest of Sinop is narrated in much more detail than Saltukname.¹⁸⁶ In Yazıcızade Ali's work, similar to that of Ibn-i Bibi, it was İzzeddin Keykavus who conquered the city of Sinop, whereas Saltukname names Gıyaseddin Keyhüsrev as the conqueror and the sultan of the time. Also, it was Kir Aleksî both in Yazıcızade Ali's and Ibn-i Bibi's work, rather than Tırbanos or Semmas as depicted in Saltukname, with whom the Muslims had to fight to take the city.¹⁸⁷ Similar to all the other accounts, *Tevarih-i Ali Selçuk* does not mention any magnate named as Tırbanos or Semmas in the region at that time. However, the start of the enmity between İzzeddin Keykavus and Kir Aleksî in *Tevarih-i Ali Selçuk* resembles very much how the Muslims and Tırbanos came to grips in Saltukname.

In the narrative of *Tevarih-i Ali Selçuk*, İzzeddin Keykavus decides to declare war against Kir Aleksî as he read a letter indicating that Kir Aleksî breached the agreement and disposed the property belonging the Sultan. Theing read loudly to the high officials of, İzzeddin Keykavus, they severely reacted to Kir Aleksî underl that Kir Aleksî was tax-payer of the sultan. Yazıcazde's *Tevarih-i Ali Selçuk* contended itself by repeating Ibn-i Bibi's words regarding the position of Kir Aleksî vis-à-vis İzzeddin Keykavus as it only states Kir Aleksî was "aràc-güzàr ve bàc-dàr ola" (tax and tribute payer) of the

¹⁸⁵ Hüseyin Hüsameddin Yasar, *Amasya Tarihi*, ed. Ali Yılmaz and Mehmet Akkuş (Amasya Belediyesi Kültür Yayınları, 1986).

¹⁸⁶ Ali Yazıcızâde, *Tevârih -i Âl-i Selçuk: (Oğuznâme-Selçuklu Târihi) : Giriş, Metin, Dizin*, ed. Abdullah Bakır (Çamlıca Basım Yayın, 2009), 220–27.

¹⁸⁷ Ali Yazıcızâde, 220.

Sultan.¹⁸⁸ Moreover, seventeenth-century historian Müneccimbaşı Ahmed B. Lütfullah further explains the position of Kir Aleksı vis-à-vis İzzeddin Keykavus in his history *Câmi'ü'd-düvel*. Although he, alike Yazıcızade Ali, based his work on that of Ibn-i Bibi, his book contains details regarding the tax-paying status of Kir Aleksı which is found neither in Ibn-i Bibi nor in Yazıcızade Ali. According to Müneccimbaşı Ahmed B. Lütfullah, “This *Tekfur* (Kir Aleksios) paid taxes annually to Gıyaseddin Keyhusrev, Rukneddin Suleyman, and their dad Kılıç Arslan. But, when İzzeddin Keykavus ascended to the throne and contested over the throne with his brother Alaeddin, the *Tekfur* stopped paying taxes as he saw İzzeddin Keykavus' reign impotent.”¹⁸⁹

Thus, the historiographical tradition that comes through Ibn-i Bibi's history puts quite clearly that Kir Aleksı was once a tribute payer of the Sultan. Then having thought that the situation changed in favor of himself, Kir Aleksı ceased to pay his tax and raided on the Sultan's lands. The sultan came to know what Kir Aleksı had done through the letter sent to him by the Muslims of the harassed lands of the Sultan. Once the council was informed about the letter, they encouraged the Sultan to wage war against Kir Aleksı, the lord of Canit (Samsun) and to take the castle of Sinop.

As mentioned above, *Saltukname* describes the conquest of Sinop by Muslims in passing and gives no further detail about it.¹⁹⁰ In *Saltukname*'s historical setting with the conquest of Sinop, Tırbanos, the lord of Amasya, becomes the foremost enemy of the Muslims in the region. Already shown above, this chronology of the events in the *Saltukname* was “ahistorical” and there was no Tırbanos in the region. However, when seen in the light of its contemporary “proper historical work” *Tevarih-i Ali Selçuk*, the context in which *Saltukname* places this “ahistorical” and “mythic” narrative indicates that the oral tradition of *Saltukname* was based upon “a historical core”.

¹⁸⁸ Ali Yazıcızâde, 220–21.

¹⁸⁹ Müneccimbaşı Ahmed B. Lütfullah, *Câmiü'd-Düvel II.*, ed. Prof. Dr. Ali Öngül (Kabalıcı Yayınevi, 2017), 49.

¹⁹⁰ Rumi, *Saltukname*, 39.

In Saltukname, soon after the conquest of Sinop, the enmity between Tırbanos and the Muslim lord of Sinop becomes explicit and turns into a war. Resembling the setting in Tevârih-i Ali Selçuk, the lord of Sinop and Sarı Saltuk next to it, was to learn the declaration of war by Tırbanos from a letter submitted by an envoy.¹⁹¹ Whereas in Tevârih-i Ali Selçuk the Muslim subjects of the Sultan informed the Sultan about the deeds of Kir Aleksî by sending the letter with an envoy, in Saltukname Tırbanos himself sent the letter with the envoy. Although the narratives of Tevârih-i Ali Selçuk and Saltukname diverge in the way in which the enmity turns into a war, they converge in “casus belli” of the war. Saltukname underlies that Tırbanos ceased to pay “his tax to the Sultan” since he thought that the tables have turned on the Muslims with the help of King of Hungary.¹⁹² In the same vein, the tax payer Kir Aleksî breached the agreement in both Ibn-i Bibi’s history and the works based on it, such as Câmiu’d Düvel and Tevârih-i Ali Selçuk.¹⁹³ Although Ibn-i Bibi and Yazıcızade Ali are silent on the reasons of the breach, the author of Câmiu’d Düvel, Müneccimbaşı Ahmed B. Lütfullah, as quoted above, attributes the motivations of Kir Aleksî in doing so to his belief that the tables have turned on Izzeddin Keykavus.

Apart from these small and slender clues, the bigger indication that these narratives might rely on a mutual historical core can be found in the difference of the names. At first glance, the names Tırbanos and Kir Aleksî may seem far away from indicating the same historical character. Yet, from a different perspective, they can also be seen as the names of the same historical figure. As Şükrü Haluk Akalın argued in his article *Ebu’l Hayr-ı Rumi’nin Saltuknamesi*, which is one of the earliest etymologic works on the epic, the names of the Christian lords in Saltukname take place in a degenerated

¹⁹¹ Rumi, 41.

¹⁹² Rumi, 41.

¹⁹³ Ali Yazıcızâde, *Tevârih -i âl-i Selçuk: (Oğuznâme-Selçuklu tâRihi) : Giriş, Metin, Dizin*, 221–22. Bibi, *El Evamirü’l-Ala’iyye Fi’l-Umuri’l-Ala’iyye*, 168–70; Müneccimbaşı Ahmed B. Lütfullah, *Câmiu’d-Düvel II*.

form owing to the transformation that they underwent in the Turkish dialect.¹⁹⁴ The name Tırbanos must have been subjected to this process.

In *Tevarih-i Ali Selçuk*, the identity of Kir Aleksî first comes as “Tekur-i Caniyet” (The lord of Samsun). Then, *Tevarih-i Ali Selçuk* gives us another information about Kir Aleksî—that he had sons in Caniyet and Tarabizon. Later, when *Tevarih-i Ali Selçuk* narrates the re-conquest of Sinop from Seljuks, Yazıcızade Ali prefers to name the conqueror of Sinop as “Tarabozon Tekuri”.¹⁹⁵ Thus, it becomes apparent that Kir Aleksî was Aleksios Komnenos (r.1204-1222), the ruler of the Trebizond Empire (1204-1461).¹⁹⁶ As can be seen from *Tevarih-i Ali Selçuk*, the king of the Trebizond Empire was known as “Tarabizon Tekuri” among Muslims. Given the resemblance between the names Tırbanos and Tarabizon, the name of “the fictional character” of *Saltukname*, Tırbanos was probably the “degenerated version” of the Tarabizon Tekuri per the Turcoman oral tradition. Considering that it was historically impossible for Tırbanos to be the lord of Amasya at the time of the taking of the Sinop Castle, the biggest enemy of the Muslims in the region was the ruler of Trabzonid Empire. Thus, the oral tradition behind *Saltukname* must have associated Kir Aleksî with the name of the land he ruled and recited him with that name in the historical stories.

Also, the narrative in *Saltukname* shows how the enmity between Tırbanos, later his son Semmas, and Gıyasseddin Keyhüsrev, and later his son Izzeddin Keykavus resulted in *Saltukname* includes resemblances with that of the taking of Sinop Castle by the Sultan Izzeddin Keykavus from Kir Aleksî in Ibn-i Bibi’s, Yazıcızade Ali’s works. Ibn-i Bibi, and the historical tradition that followed him through the seventeenth century, points out that Kir Aleksî’s capture by the soldiers of the Sultan in a feast near the

¹⁹⁴ Şükrü Haluk Akalın, “Ebü’l-Hayr-i Rûmî’nin *Saltuk-Nâme’si*,” *Türk Dili Araştırmaları Yıllığı - Belleten* 40 (1992): 37–59.

¹⁹⁵ Ali Yazıcızâde, *Tevarîh -i Âl-i Selçuk: (Oğuznâme-Selçuklu Târîhi) : Giriş, Metin, Dizin*, 634.

¹⁹⁶ Ostrogorsky, *Bizans Devleti Tarihi*, 399.

castle of Sinop played the crucial role in the surrender of Sinop castle.¹⁹⁷ Resembling this, in Saltukname, when the infidels came to destroy the Muslims shortly after the conquest of Sinop, Sarı Saltuk caught the leaders of these infidels in a feast as drinking wines and exchanging words and killed almost all of them there.¹⁹⁸

As we have seen above, having placed the conquest of Sinop before that of Amasya, the narrative of Saltukname has Gıyasedin Keyhüsrev conquer Sinop “ahistorically”. But before narrating the conquest of Amasya, Saltukname reports the death of Sultan Gıyaseddin Keyhüsrev and his son, Izzeddin Keykavus’ ascendance to the throne. Thus, in Saltukname’s historical setting, Izzeddin Keykavus was to take the castle of Amasya from Semmas, as his father Gıyasedin Keyhüsrev took Sinop from Semmas’ father, Tırbanos—of course in both cases with the help of Sarı Saltuk.¹⁹⁹

There is another striking parallel in these narratives regarding the events that took place around the conquest of Sinop. Following Sarı Saltuk’s journey to Dobruca, Yazıçızade Ali’s *Tevarih-i Ali Selçuk* narrates the attempt of “Tarabizon Tekuri” to take back the castle of Sinop. In the case of this journey, “Tarabizon Tekuri’s” attempt cannot be found in Yazıçızade Ali’s main source, Ibn-i Bibi’s history. Hence, this might be another information that Yazıçızade Ali deduced from the oral tradition, handed down from generation to generation in the region, as was in the case of Sarı Saltuk’s journey. Also, the fact that Yazıçızade narrates Tarabizon Tekuri’s pursuit immediately after Sarı Saltuk’s journey strengthens this possibility. According to Yazıçızade Ali, benefiting from the internal struggles of the Seljukids, Tarabizon Tekuri recaptured the castle of Sinop. In return, the vizier Muineddin Pervane (d.1277) who was the de facto ruler of the state at the time, laid siege to the castle of Sinop to take it back from Tarabizon Tekuri. Having sieged the castle for two years, Pervane managed to take it back. Then, *Tevarih-i Ali Selçuk* ironically depicts how the Sultan Rukneddin was in

¹⁹⁷ Bibi, *El Evamirü'l-Ala'yye Fi'l-Umuri'l-Ala'yye*, 168–75; Ali Yazıçızâde, *Tevârih -i Âl-i Selçuk: (Oğuznâme-Selçuklu Târihi) : Giriş, Metin, Dizin*, 220–27.

¹⁹⁸ Rumi, *Saltukname*, 50–51.

¹⁹⁹ Rumi, 71.

control of Muineddin Pervane. When Pervane requested that the revenues of Sinop be given to him the Sultan easily bestowed Sinop to him since, according to *Tevârih-i Ali Selçuk*, the word “La!” (No in Arabic) “only comes to the holy mouth of the Sultan Rükneddin when he does *kelime-i şahadet*. The land of Sinop is very beautiful place so that it is not stinginess to give this land but it might be the proper action.”²⁰⁰

The attempt to recapture of the castle of Sinop can also be found in *Saltukname*, but different from *Tevârih-i Ali Selçuk*, it was not Tarabizon Tekuri who sieged the castle but the son of Tekur, namely Alyonos. According to *Saltukname*, the son of Tekur, Alyonos, and his three-hundred-pieces levy caught the Muslims of Sinop unaware. When Alyonos came close to take the castle Sarı Saltuk appeared and saved it. Then, *Saltukname* narrates how the Muslims of Sinop welcomed and showed their gratitude to Saltık. However, suddenly Sarı Saltuk became sad when he learned that the booty sent to the Sultan as gift. *Saltukname* reports that Sarı Saltuk could not hide his sadness and expressed it as following: “Why the Sultans do not oversee this place? Is this the right way the Sultan should follow?”²⁰¹

In the following story, the narrative informs us, by means of a messenger who arrived to Sinop three days after the reconquest, that *‘Izzüddin* has succeeded *Sultan Gıyasüddin* upon his death.²⁰² Having informed the audience about this, the historical mentality behind *Saltukname* dedicates a great portion of interest to the vezir of *‘Izzüddin*, rather than the sultan himself. The narratives introduce the vezir ‘Affan to the audience as a descendant of *Ukbe kadı* (Ukbe the Judge) and as having been entangled with bribery.²⁰³ What the historical mentality behind *Saltukname* always and very explicitly aims to convey to the audience is that the Sultan was under the influence of ‘Affan.²⁰⁴ In this, *Saltukname* makes sure that Affan is known by the audience as

²⁰⁰ Ali Yazıcızâde, *Tevârih -i Âl-i Selçuk: (Oğuznâme-Selçuklu Târihi) : Giriş, Metin, Dizin*, 634.

²⁰¹ Rumi, *Saltukname*, 69–70.

²⁰² Rumi, 71.

²⁰³ Rumi, 73.

²⁰⁴ Rumi, 86.

the man who leads *the sultan* to the wrongdoings and the man who caused disorder in the region for having run after his own interests rather than that of the people and the state.²⁰⁵ Even Saltukname devotes paragraphs to narrate how Affan caused a rift between the Sultan and Sarı Saltuk by ill-advising the Sultan.²⁰⁶ Since there is no *vezir* named ‘Affan not only in the thirteenth century but throughout the Seljukid history, this may seem another fabrication of the “myth-oriented mind” of Saltukame. However, a closer look will reveal the historical core behind this narrative.

At first it should be understood that Saltukname does not inform us who is the ascendant of ‘Affan for no reason. Although it is not comprehensible who Ukbe the Judge was and why he appears in the narrative only by looking into Saltukname, a glimpse at Battalname clarifies who Ukbe the Judge was. In Battalname, Ukbe the Judge was the steward of the caliph but he was also secretly in contact with the Caesar in Constantinople. As a very greedy man, he conspired with the Caesar against the Caliph. When his treachery surfaced, Battal Gazi killed him for betraying the Caliph.²⁰⁷ As a matter of fact, later in the narrative Saltukname affirms this connection by having Sarı Saltuk say: “I will do to ‘Affan exactly what my ancestor Cafer Gazi [Battal Gazi] did to Ukbe”.²⁰⁸

Thus, the historical mentality behind Saltukname wants to convey to the audience that ‘Affan was a descendant of a treacherous judge who had betrayed his Sultan. But more than that, as mentioned above, the historical conceptualization of Saltukname gives much of its effort to underline how the Sultan was under the influence of this ‘Affan. As stated in Saltukname: “When Izzüddin ascended to the throne, this infidel[‘Affan]

²⁰⁵ Rumi, 93.

²⁰⁶ Rumi, 139–40.

²⁰⁷ Dedes, *Battalname: Introduction, English Translation, Turkish Transcription, Commentary and Facsimile*, 211–27.

²⁰⁸ Rumi, *Saltukname*, 93.

became powerful. All the authority was in his hand, and the Sultan firmly believed in him”.²⁰⁹

As mentioned in the narrative of Saltukname, ‘Affan appears immediately in the aftermath of the re-conquest of Sinop. As has been displayed, both “the proper history works” and Saltukname, drawing upon a mutual historical core, lament over the extraction of the booty by the Sultan with a slight difference. Whereas Ibn-i Bibi explicitly states his vezir Pervane Muineddin compelled the Sultan to give him the booty for being the “de facto” ruler of the time, Saltukname contents itself by saying all the booty went to the Sultan. As a matter of fact, the contemporary books explicitly state how powerful Pervane Muineddin was in his time. We know from contemporary sources, such as Aksarayî, that Pervane Muineddin was the key actor in deposing and enthroning the Sultans during the first decades of the thirteenth century’s second half.²¹⁰ In this sense, the “fictional character” Affan resembles Pervane Muineddin in terms of its influence on the ruler. Apart from this, per the reference to Ukbe the Judge, the attempt to associate Affan with the treachery might be another indication that his fictional Affan stands to signify Pervane Muineddin himself in the narrative of Saltukname.

Regarding the treachery of Pervane Muineddin, the contemporary sources have copious information. The most striking example of his power is the murder of Kılıcarslan IV in 1266. Upon secretly agreeing with Abaka Han, the Mongol ruler of Anatolia, Pervane Muineddin plotted his masters’ death and enthroned Gıyaseddin Keyhüsrev III. Pervane Muineddin was in the service of the Mongol rulers of Anatolia, rather than his own Seljukid masters. However, when he felt that Abaka Han ceased to trust him, per the advice of other Seljukid and Mongol notables, Pervane Muineddin immediately began to seek another ally. He secretly sent a letter to Sultan Baybars and invited him to Anatolia with his armies to take over the region. When Sultan Baybars came to

²⁰⁹ Rumi, 73.

²¹⁰ Kerimüddin Mahmud Aksarayî, *Müsâmeretü'l-Ahbâr*, 65.

Anatolia and entered Kayseri, he requested Pervane Muineddin to his court. Upon this call, Pervane Muineddin asked for fifteen days to appear in his court, and in the meantime, Pervane Muineddin secretly contacted Abaka Han once more. Having realized the treacherous polity of Pervane Muineddin, Sultan Baybars sentenced him to death as found of guilty when Pervane Muineddin arrived at his court.²¹¹ Thus, what Saltukname highlights as peculiar characteristics of this fictional Affan is also the trademarks of Pervane Muineddin.

It is apparent that there are parallels between Saltukname and the proper histories' narratives regarding the events taking place in the thirteenth century. Although largely deviant from "what actually happened", the conceptualization of the past behind Saltukname seems to rely upon a concrete historical core. Sharing this concrete historical core—upon which the oral tradition of Saltukname built its narrative—with the contemporary chronicles and later history books, Saltukname decorated this historical core with the values and expectations of the community in which the narratives emerged and evolved. By doing so, the historical core of the narrative becomes more or less indiscernible and thereby gives the impression that it has nothing to do with "the historical facts". As Jack Goody, in juxtaposing oral and written version of the same Slavic epic, highlighted:

"Common elements certainly exist over this period, but it is a rather short one. In addition, the printed sources of many these epics undoubtedly constrain narration, since these are often being referred to. Some of *guslari* were illiterate (but in what script?) but not all and those that could not read could still be strongly influenced by the printed sources, if only indirectly. Hence, as we have seen, one would expect much less variation there than in the case of a purely oral culture where there were no such mnemonics, no such constrains, no fixed text lying in the background. In any case, the epics are constantly being adapted to new situations as well as new ones being recreated."²¹²

²¹¹ MUHARREM KESİK, "MUÎNÜDDİN SÜLEYMAN PERVÂNE", TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/muinuddin-suleyman-pervane>

²¹² Goody, "The Folktale and Cultural History."

Here, it must be noted that as a matter of fact Saltukname might have not anything to offer in terms of “the historical facts” for those who do not study it in its context and want to deduce “the hard data” from Saltukname to supply a work on the aspects of the region and the period, say an economic or a political history. But, in contrast, when considered in its context, Saltukname provides plenty insight to understand what happened in the past according to a fifteenth century community who had migrated there from Anatolia. This endeavor to understand how a fifteenth century community constructed their past in their minds is of significance and entails great ramifications as it would allow one to see the consciousness of a fifteenth century men.

CONCLUSION

The lack of interest in the history of mentalities and the cultural history of the early Ottomans is quite apparent in the Ottoman historiography. One more time, as quoted above, I can bring Ahmet Yasar Ocak as a witness as he stated the same diagnosis in a conference in May 2019.²¹³ Among many possible reasons for this disinterest is not the possibility of a complete gap in terms of forerunners, mavericks, and good examples of this kind of works.

Departing from this point, in the first chapter I try to show that cultural history and history of mentalities have had deep roots in the early Ottoman studies. To support its point, the chapter underlies the aspects of Paul Wittek's works that tackle with the cultural sphere and the worldviews of the early Ottomans. Having brought forth this aspect of his works, in order to light the way for further research, the chapter continues with seeking the questions: Of what elements in his works and how did his methodology enable Paul Wittek to execute the examples of cultural history and history of mentalities?

In seeking these questions, the chapter juxtaposes the works of Paul Wittek with that of M. Fuad Köprülü, another leading historian of the time, whose works to a great extent deal with the social sphere of the early Ottomans. In comparing their works, this work investigates what differences in their methodology may have led them to diverge. Although the chapter acknowledges that many and various things could be the reason for this difference, ranging from personal preferences to intellectual and political tendencies, it seeks in particular if a difference in the methodology might have also contributed to this divergence.

²¹³ Ocak, "Selçuklu ve Osmanlı Dönemi Zihniyet, Düşünce ve Kültür Tarihçiliği (Durum, Sorunlar, Öneriler)," 161.

To better assess possible differences in their methodology, the work prefers doing it by placing them under the light of “evidential paradigm”. In that, the study resorts to Carlo Ginzburg’s study which historically evaluates and conceptualizes the evidential paradigm. Ginzburg’s study describes “evidential paradigm” as an “epistemological model” in which a historian, by looking at insignificant details, could comprehend a deeper, and otherwise an unattainable reality of “the world view of a social class, a single writer, or an entire society.”²¹⁴ Prevalent in the late nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, the evidential paradigm also provides the historical context in which the contemporaries of it, Paul Wittek and M. Fuad Köprülü, can be placed and analyzed. The inquiry moves on with pursuing whether in Wittek’s interest or Köprülü’s disinterest it is possible to speak of the influence of the evidential paradigm. However, the work does not center around and does not set its main goal in discussing evidential paradigm theoretically and investigating its influence in scholar works on the early Ottoman cultural sphere and history of mentalities. Beyond this, the chapter ultimately seeks to show how this model could allow future research to penetrate into the above-mentioned aspects of the early Ottoman world. In this, the chapter calls the attention to—once deemed insignificant—small and slender clues.

In the last part of the chapter, through a historiographical survey I discuss the sources and what can be deduced from them in terms of mentalities and cultural world of the early Ottomans. This part starts with the discussion of the rise of historical anthropology and the reformulation of history of mentalities in French historiography through 1970s. Firstly, the part underlies the call of this reformulation to understand everything can be a source for research regarding the mentalities, worldviews, and beliefs of a given society as formulated by Jacques Le Goff, the leading historian of the field. Then, the part goes on with how French history writing benefited from its collaboration with anthropology in the study of the mentalities. In this, the part

²¹⁴ Ginzburg, “Clues: Roots of Evidential Paradigm,” 124.

highlights the special attention given to the myths and to the folk tales in investigating the mentalities and the cultural spheres.

Having discussed the developments in France, the chapter does a historiographical survey in order to take stock of the early Ottoman cultural studies. In this part, much of the attention is paid to the sources of the Ottoman studies and how the scholars hitherto used it and what is gained from them. Having chronologically analyzed the way in which the sources have been used and the novelties in making use of them, the part ends with pointing out the possible ramifications and implications of using the hagiographies, legends of saints.

The second chapter starts with investigating the environment and the context within which Saltukname came to being. Pointing out the persistence of the narratives of Sarı Saltuk through the years in the region, the chapter attempts to show the importance of Sarı Saltuk and his narratives for the Turcoman inhabitants of the Dobruca region. The second chapter also briefly mentions the nature of these oral narratives in the eyes of these people. The chapter also argues that these narratives are also the means by virtue of which the audience of it came to know “what happened before us” and “what our ancestors did before us”. Thus, the chapter suggests that the narratives of Sarı Saltuk were crucial in shaping the historical consciousness of the audience, the inhabitants of the Dobruca, the descendents of Sarı Saltuk. Also, the chapter offers that these narratives were profound conceptualizations of the past and were important in making their historical consciousness. Thereby, it can be read as the indicator of historical mentality of a fifteenth century community.

Then, the second chapter sets out to investigate the historical conditions surrounding the narratives of Sarı Saltuk and influencing it. In this, the chapter discusses the scholarly works, and both modern and the Ottoman historiography on the roots of the community in Dobruca region who saw a father figure in Sarı Saltuk. Having analyzed the possible reasons for their presence in the Dobruca region, the chapter turns its face

to the nature of the channels through which this community handed down their narratives throughout generations. With few examples, the chapter underlies the oral nature of the narratives in this community.

In the last section, the second chapter sets out to see how a fifteenth century community saw the thirteenth century Anatolia within which the historical context for the stories of Sarı Saltuk came to being. Through the lens of Saltukname, the second chapter tries to reconstruct what the geography and the period within which Sarı Saltuk and their ancestors lived meant to the Turcomans inhabitants of the Dobruca region. Analyzing an “ahistorical” perspective of Saltukname, and looking at “anachronic” historical figure choices, I suggest that the thirteenth century Anatolia was full of terror and completely chaotic in the eyes of its audience. I also suggest that the stories of Saltukname were not only fun time stories for its audience but it was the history itself.

The first two part of the third chapter, particularly deals with Sarı Saltuk as he is narrated in Saltukname. Reading Saltukname as a conceptualization of the past by those who saw a glorious ancestor in Sarı Saltuk, the first two parts of this chapter try to reconstruct values and historical mentality of a fifteenth century community. First part of the chapter suggests that the mentality behind Saltukname only attributed the capability of coping with the chaos and the sufferings of the world to a man vested with super-natural skills, such as Sarı Saltuk. However, underlying the misfortunes from which Sarı Saltuk suffers in Saltukname’s eyes, the chapter also shows the extent of chaos the narratives envisaged, as it was not easy even for Sarı Saltuk to accomplish his mission in the thirteenth century Anatolia.

Also, the first part of the chapter t a look at the characteristic of Sarı Saltuk which might have been a good asset to have in the community’s origins and values since myth conveys values and expectations which are always evolving. In the same vein, the second part of the chapter does analyze “the chaotic” setting of Saltukname. Showing that the parts which may seem “mythic” and “ahistorical” at first glance rely upon

historical facts, the chapter suggests that it is very hard to deem Saltukname's vision of the thirteenth century Anatolia as an incongruous product of a "myth-oriented mind".

In the last part of the third chapter, this work tries to read Saltukname in the light of the "proper histories" to understand where they diverge and converge when narrating the same events. The reason of this comparison is to show that Saltukname, in essence, is a historical work rather than a fantasy of a given community projected onto the past. In this, the chapter juxtaposes Saltukname with Ibn-i Bibi's *El Evamirü'l-Ala'iyye Fi'l-Umuri'l-Ala'iyye* and the works relied upon it, such as Müneccimbaşı Ahmed B. Lütfullah's *Câmiu'd-Düvel* and Ali Yazıcızâde's *Tevârih -i âl-i Selçuk*.

The chapter shows that there are parallels between Saltukname and the proper histories' narratives regarding the events taking place in the thirteenth century. Although largely deviant from "what actually happened", the chapter concludes that the conceptualization of the past behind Saltukname seems to rely upon a concrete historical core. Sharing this concrete historical core—upon which the oral tradition of Saltukname built its narrative—with the "proper histories", the study concludes that Saltukname decorated this historical core with the values and expectations of the community in which the narratives emerged and evolved.

The first part of this work can be a base for future researches as it provides the reader with knowledge of the historiography and knowledge of the methodology which can be used in a research on the history of mentalities and cultural history. Also, the first chapter of this work gives an introductory knowledge of the sources in the field. Whereas it describes how these sources have hitherto been used in the Ottoman studies, it also shows the possibilities and the alternative ways by situating it within French history writing.

Although fragmented, the second half of the second chapter, as well as the third chapter show some aspects of early Ottoman mentalities as seen from Saltukname. As has been

said, these are fragmented researches and they are far away from providing a complete view of a certain mentality or worldview. In this sense, this work does not claim that it has taken the full picture of the mentality beneath Saltukname. Yet, it should be noted that as initial attempts in early Ottoman mentality studies—one of the most neglected fields in the Ottoman studies—these fragmented researches may serve as a base for future researches.

To complete the picture of Ottoman “mythic mind”, searching the mentality behind Saltukname alone is not adequate. As Saltukname itself shows in its first page, there are quite strong bonds between Saltukname and the epics, Danismendname and Battalname. Juxtaposing these narratives would usher in a clearer perspective of early Ottoman worldviews. Apart from this, comparing these epics that came into being on the Muslim side of the frontiers with that of the Christian side would allow us to understand if there were any “boundaries” between these two worlds as generally assumed.

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