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THE RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL PERCEPTION OF A 15TH CENTURY ABDĀL,  
OṢMAN BABA ACCORDING TO HIS WALĀYATNĀMA

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The Religious and Political Perception of a 15th Century Abdāl, Otman Baba According to  
His Walāyatnāma

Bir 15.Yüzyıl Abdalı olan Otman Baba'nın Velayetnamesine Göre Dini ve Siyasi Görüşleri

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation is about an antinomian *abdāl* Oṭman Baba, who made a name for himself and built a community in the 15<sup>th</sup> century Thrace and is based on his hagiography written by one of his followers, Küçük Abdāl. Addressing the question of how Oṭman Baba ascended to become such an influential community leader in the final three decades of his life, it sets forth a biography of him in the most extensive way.

By reviewing Oṭman Baba's interpretation of the significant Sufi concepts such as *al-Nūr al-Muhammadi*, unity of *nubuwwat* and *walāyat*; Sufi concepts such as *taşarruf*, *'aql*, *naşīb* and Sufi themes like *Waḥdat al-Wujūd*, *'Ana al-Ḥaqq*, *tanāsuḥ* and *ḥulūl*, this study deals with the belief and practices of the antinomian *abdāls*. Due to Küçük Abdāl emphasizing Ḥacı Bektaş Velī and Şarı Şaltuḡ in the *walāyatnāma*, it is argued that Oṭman Baba staked a claim on the Rumelian faction of the Bektaşī order.

As for his political stance, modern historians interpret Oṭman Baba as a non-conformist community leader, who was against the Ottoman central authority. However, by claiming to be the spiritual father, protector, and *murshid* of Meḥmed II and also to be the true power behind his successes, he did not only gain prestige but also underlined his political conformity and support to the Ottoman State.

In contrast to various historical records that define the antinomian dervishes with a harshly critical tone, methodologically, this dissertation is formulated by giving priority to the perception of a leader of one of these communities, Oṭman Baba's self-presentation, and self-defense.

## ÖZET

Bu tez 15. Yüzyıl Trakyası'nda kendisine isim yapmış ve cemaat edinmiş kural-karşıtçı bir abdal olan Otman Baba'yı konu ediniyor ve onun bir takipçisi olan Küçük Abdal'ın onun adına yazdığı velayetnameyi temel alıyor. Otman Baba'nın hayatının son birkaç on yılında nasıl son derece etkili bir cemaat lideri pozisyonuna yükseldiği üzerine en kapsamlı şekilde onun bir biyografisini ortaya konuyor.

Bu çalışma Otman Baba'nın Nur-u Muhammedi, nübüvvet ve velayetin birliği, tasarruf, akıl ve nasip gibi tasavvufi kavramlar ve Vahdet-i Vücut, Ene'l Hakk, Tenasüh ve Hulul gibi tasavvufi temaları nasıl yorumladığını inceleyerek kural-karşıtçı abdalların inanış ve uygulamalarına eğiliyor. Velayetname'de Hacı Bektaş Veli ve Sarı Saltuk'a verilen önemden ise Otman Baba'nın Rumeli'nin Bektaşî cemaatleri içinde hak iddiasında bulunduğu iddia ediliyor.

Siyasi ilişkilerinde ise Otman Baba'nın merkezi otorite karşıtı bir duruş benimsediği pek çok tarihçi tarafından ileri sürülmüştür. Ama Otman Baba kendisinin II.Mehmed'in manevi babası, koruyucusu, mürşidi ve başarılarının ardındaki gerçek güç olduğunu iddia ederek kendi prestijini arttırmakla kalmamış, Osmanlı Devleti'ni destekleyen ve siyasi anlamda devlet ile uyumlu bir abdal olduğunun da altını çizmiştir.

Kural-karşıtçı Sufi topluluklarının genel olarak kendilerinden olmayan yazarlar tarafından yazılmış tarihi metinlerde ağır bir şekilde eleştirilmesine karşın metodolojik olarak bu çalışma bu cemaatlerden birinin lideri olan Otman Baba'nın bakış açısına, onun öz anlatısı ve öz savunmasına öncelik verilerek formüle ediliyor.



## TRANSLITERATION AND USAGE

While I have conducted my research, I have come across huge inconsistencies in transliteration in Islamic Studies, as the rules change from scholar to scholar and even in a work itself. While scholars write Evliya Çelebi according to the modern Turkish, they would most likely write Şeyh Şaban Veli as Sheikh Shābān-i Wālī. This is quite problematic due to the double standards and also problems of mispronunciation. Transliteration techniques of Cemal Kafadar and Ahmet T. Karamustafa in their works *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* and *Vāhidī's Menāķib-i H̄voca-i Cihān ve Netīce-i Cān: Critical Edition and Analysis* have been a source of inspiration for me on this matter.

I have used Anglicized versions of internationally known words that can be found in English dictionaries, like the Quran, sheikh, dervish, and haji. As for the words and proper nouns that were generally in use during the Islamic civilization, I have used the classical transliteration alphabet and written words according to their original structure in their own languages. To give a few examples: *manāķib*, *tarīķat*, *walāyat*, and *abdāl*.

For the transliteration of the Turkish words and the terms and names derived from Arabic or Persian, which had been transformed in the Ottoman heartlands, I used an adaptation of the Arabic transliteration rules befitting to the Turkish and Ottoman languages. Thus, I have included the Turkish letters ç, ğ, ı/i, ö, ş, ü, to maintain the original vocalization. Accordingly, instead of writing Arabic/Persian names and words Shujā' al-Dīn Walī or *Walāyatnāma al-Oṭmān Baba*, I wrote their Turkified/Ottomanized versions Şücā'üddīn Velī and *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba*. However, while writing about the general Islamic concepts, I adhered to the original versions of these words, such as *walī* and *walāyatnāma*.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- FN* : Derviş Muhammed Yemini. *Fazilet-name: Giriş - İnceleme - Metin*, v. 1. edited and transliterated by Yusuf Tepeli. Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu, 2002.
- SN* : Ebu'l Hayr-ı Rumi. *Saltık-name*. transliterated by Necati Demir and M. Dursun Erdem. Istanbul: Uluslararası Kalkınma ve İşbirliği Derneği, 2013.
- HSV* : Gündüz, Tufan. "Hacı Bektaş Veli'nin Yol Arkadaşı Kolu Açık Hacım Sultan ve Velayetnamesi". *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Veli Araştırma Dergisi* 55, (2010): 71-96.
- HHBVV* : *Hünkar Hacı Bektaş Veli Velayetnamesi*. edited and transliterated by Hamiye Duran and Dursun Gümüšoğlu. Ankara: Gazi Üniversitesi, Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Veli Araştırma Merkezi Yayınları, 2010.
- OBV* : Küçük Abdal. *Otman Baba Velayetnamesi: Tenkitli Metin*. edited and transliterated by Filiz Kılıç, Mustafa Arslan and Tuncay Bülbül. Ankara: Grafiker Yayınları, 2007.
- MHCNC* : Vahidi. *Menakıb-ı Hacı-i Cihan ve Netice-i Can: İnceleme - Tenkitli Metin*. edited by and transliterated by Turgut Karabey, Bülent Şığva and Yusuf Babür. Ankara: Akçağ Yayınları, 2015.
- SŞV* : Yıldız, Ayşe. "Sultan Şücaaddin Baba Velayetnamesi". *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Veli Dergisi* 37, (2006): 49-98.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Among the innumerable Sufis and dervishes that have come to pass throughout history, some had a remarkably marginal reputation. Oṭman Baba, an *abdāl* of the 15th century, was one of them. Belonging to the fraternity of Abdālān-ı Rūm, he settled in his final destination, the Ottoman Rumelia and became respectably influential there after decades of wandering from Central Asia to Asia Minor. Today, his *silsila*, which had begun with Sultān Şücā'uddīn Velī and was carried on by Oṭman Baba, his successor Aqyazılı Sultān and later Demir Baba, continues to be remembered under the overwhelming umbrella of the Bektaşī cult. Though, what makes Oṭman Baba critical for the modern historiography is his hagiography of more than two hundred pages, written only five years after Oṭman Baba's death by his disciple Küçük Abdāl.

The hagiography titled *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba* is one of the longest in the literature, which began to be written after the Turkic socio-political organizations took root in Anatolia around the 11th and 12th centuries. Most accounts written about the claimed-to-be '*awliyā*' are brief and were written long after, even centuries later, their death, sometimes by a follower of the cult and sometimes by a foreigner. However, as a direct descendant of his *murshid*, Küçük Abdāl most likely witnessed a considerable number of the events documented, which is why the narrative is uncommonly descriptive and comprehensive. Manifold of the villages, towns, and cities visited by Oṭman Baba, a wide array of the state officials, Sufis and acquaintances he

met are mentioned in the text and the consistency between information about these details in the *walāyatnāma* and the other historical sources is astonishing. These properties of the hagiography make it significantly more credible when compared to its analogs, which are full of exaggerations and mythical elements.

Moreover, the *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba* is one of the rarer primary sources, a notable personal account that belongs to the members of the *abdāl* community. It reflects Oṭman Baba's and his followers' perspective on a variety of social events, their beliefs, interpretation of Islam and Sufism and how they positioned themselves in society and vis-a-vis their adversaries.

When all these unique features of Oṭman Baba and his hagiography are taken into consideration it will be obvious why it is vital to conduct a study on the subject.

### **1.1. INTRODUCING *MANĀḲIBNĀMAS* AS SOURCES OF HISTORY**

Oṭman Baba cannot be studied independently from his *walāyatnāma*. Unlike the other primary sources, which contain one or two ambiguous sentences about Oṭman Baba, his *walāyatnāma* is beyond comparison as it exclusively focuses on him. Thereupon, this thesis will provide a definition of the Islamic hagiography genre and its characteristics, the contextual hagiographies and the historiography about them.

As Sufism emerged within the Islamic world, significant Sufi personas began to leave their traces in the minds of the masses and the necessity to record their lives and achievements in a variety of texts arose. Among these, a distinct kind of Sufi hagiography called *manāḳibnāma*, has a crucial place. Although the plural term, *manāḳib* implies “virtues” and “abilities” in Arabic, over the course of the following centuries of Sufi literature it gained the meaning of short stories of *karāmat* [meaning: miracles performed by Islamic saints, who are known as “the friends of God”]. In the name of founders or primary leaders of the Sufi orders, short collections of these stories were written down with the titles of *manāḳibnāma* and

*walāyatnāma*.<sup>1</sup> In some cases, the writer was a direct disciple of the Sufi master and wrote first-hand accounts or acquired information from his master. However, quite often, the writer of a *manāḳibnāma* was a follower of the cult of the *walī* [m: a friend of God, plural: 'awliyā'] or simply a well-trained, literate person, who collected the orally transferred stories about his subject. These later writers also used the former records and works of *murshids* [m: a Sufi master, guide] or their *murids* [m: a Sufi novice] if there were any.<sup>2</sup>

As for the indigenous narratives of Sufism that emerged in Asia Minor and the Balkans and survive to the present day, it can be said that particularly among certain circles the tradition has evolved from an oral culture and narration of these *manāḳib*. From the 11th to the later centuries, the lands of Rūm were experiencing waves of migrations from eastern and southeastern regions. Among the newcomers were large numbers of Sufis of diversified backgrounds. Krisztina Kehl-Bodrogi remarks that these small Sufi coteries were fulfilling the common folks' need of belief with a tolerant and flexible understanding of Islam unlike the strict Sharia-oriented interpretation of Islam dictated by the 'ulamā.<sup>3</sup> *Manāḳibnāmas* of these Sufi peoples had a primary place in these circumstances. *Manāḳib* had a didactic side as oral narrations and written texts were composing the image of an ideal Muslim for the Turkic populations as well as the newly Islamicized segments of pre-Ottoman and Ottoman society. *Manāḳib* of the well-known and beloved Sufis were making the Islamic way of living easier to comprehend when compared to the complexities of the Quran and Hadith, which require a superior level of knowledge and interpretation ability. For the illiterate commoners, the recitation or vocal reading of *manāḳib* in social, religious or Sufi gatherings were effective

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<sup>1</sup> Ahmet Y. Ocak, *Kültür Tarihi Kaynağı Olarak Evliya Menakıbnameleri: XV-XVII. Yüzyıllar*, (Istanbul: Timaş Yayınevi, 2016), 21-22; Haşim Şahin, *Dervişler ve Sufi Çevreler: Klasik Çağ Osmanlı Toplumunda Tasavvufi Şahsiyetler*, (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2017), 15-17.

<sup>2</sup> Ocak, *Evliya Menakıbnameleri*, 66.

<sup>3</sup> Krisztina Kehl-Bodrogi, *Kızılbaşlar/Aleviler*, (Istanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları, 2012), 41.

methods of teaching Islam.<sup>4</sup> Especially among the parties which would be merged under the Bektaşī cult, these hagiographies were generally called *walāyatnāma*.<sup>5</sup>

Experts of these contextual *manāḳibnāmas*, divide these hagiographies into two categories indicating that some of the texts are more historically consistent than the others. *Manāḳibnāmas*, written while their subjects were still alive or shortly after their deaths, are more trustworthy in comparison to the ones, which are based on the orally transmitted *manāḳib*, and written down much later on.<sup>6</sup>

In this sense, the *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba* belongs to the former group. Abdūlbaki Gölpınarlı and Halil İnalçık distinguish the historical validity of the text from the rest of its counterparts in regard to several of its extraordinary features.<sup>7</sup> First of all, it is written by a *murid* of Oṭman Baba, who most likely lived during a significant amount of the incidents he wrote about in the *walāyatnāma*, or listened to them directly from his *murshid*. He wrote the *walāyatnāma* chronologically and elaborately only five years after Oṭman Baba's death. Names of people Oṭman Baba comes into contact with, places Oṭman Baba visits, dates and circumstances of substantial political and military events and many other details are consistent with other historical documents on the subject. The *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba* is much longer than other contemporary *manāḳibnāmas* with less mythical or analogical content.

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<sup>4</sup> Tijana Krstić, *Osmanlı Dünyasında İhtida Anlatıları: 15.-17. Yüzyıllar*, (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2015), 63; Rıza Yıldırım, *Seyyid Ali Sultan (Kızıldeli) ve Velayetnamesi*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2007), 38-39.

<sup>5</sup> Yıldırım, *Seyyid Ali Sultan (Kızıldeli) ve Velayetnamesi*, 37.

When I refer to the proto-Bektaşī and Bektaşī sub-genre, I use the term *walāyatnāma* and when I make mention of the hagiographies that belong to the Sharia-based Sufi orders or the Islamic hagiography literature as a whole I use the term *manāḳibnāma*.

<sup>6</sup> Mehmet F. Köprülü, "Anadolu Selçukluları Tarihi'nin Yerli Kaynakları: Umumi Bir Bakış" *Belleten* 7, no. 27, (1943), 424; Ocak, *Evliya Menakıbnameleri*, 62, 65-66; R. Yıldırım, *Seyyid Ali Sultan (Kızıldeli) ve Velayetnamesi*, 2, 41.

<sup>7</sup> Abdūlbaki Gölpınarlı, *Manakıb-ı Hüınkar Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli: Vilayet-name*, (Istanbul: İnkılap Kitapevi, 2016), VIII-IX; Halil İnalçık, "Dervish and Sultan: An Analysis of the *Oṭman Baba Vilayetnamesi*" in *The Middle East and the Balkans under the Ottoman Empire: Essays on Economy and Society*, ed. İlhan Başgöz, (Bloomington: Indiana University Turkish Studies, 1993), 19.

Due to the fact that *manāḳibnāmas*, similar to the other literary works concerning spirituality, are written with unrealistic elements, countless modern academics have ignored their scientific value. Many of these legendary details and *karāmat* have become stereotypes that can be found in multiple samples. There is also the problem of anachronism, as historical personages from different ages encounter one another or the subject of the *manāḳibnāma* lives an unnaturally long life in these texts. The most likely cause of this is by far due to mystical groups memorizing the oral and ritual methods instead of keeping detailed records. As stated above, *manāḳibnāmas* were written predominantly decades, even centuries after the *murshids*' deaths. More to that, *manāḳibnāmas* were not written simply to register life stories of the *murshids* for the next generations or to educate the masses about Islamic morals but they were written to praise the *murshids* and to legitimize their status as true '*awliyā*' in the eyes of the people. Even if the folklore writers received had not been passed on orally, it could have been deliberately revised to give prestige to the *murshids* and to the orders. In the end, writers of *manāḳibnāmas* were believers, who offered no allegations of so-called-objectivity when the subject was their semi-holy spiritual masters. Acquiring new followers, retaining the old ones and teaching them the ideals of *murids*, were all reasons why *manāḳibāmas* were written. Because of such factors, modern scholars had approached the genre with suspicion and disregard.<sup>8</sup>

Nevertheless, the same kind of propaganda and covering-up stand for all the primary sources, whether they are official state records or these kinds of folk literature. In addition, the authors of the well-accepted primary sources had taken religious texts as truth and quoted from

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<sup>8</sup> Suraiya Faroḳhi, "The Life Story of an Urban Saint in the Ottoman Empire: Piri Baba of Merzifon" *Tarih Dergisi* 32, Special issue in memory of İsmail H. Uzunçarşılı, (1979), 655-657; Gölpinarlı, *Vilayet-name*, VIII-IX; Ocak, *Evliya Menakıbnameleri*, 64-66; Şahin, *Dervişler ve Süfi Çevreler*, 18-19, 40; Yıldırım, *Seyyid Ali Sultan (Kızıldeli) ve Velayetnamesi*, 1-2, 39-40; Zeynep Yürekli, "Writing down the feats and setting up the scene: Hagiographers and architectural patrons in the Age of Empires" in *Sufism and Society: Arrangements of the mystical in the Muslim world, 1200-1800*, ed. John J. Curry and Erik S. Ohlander, (New York: Routledge, 2012), 94.

them without giving credit on many occasions.<sup>9</sup> It should not be forgotten that all the primary sources and modern research are subjective products and the claim of scientific objectivity has been challenged in humanities, leaving its place to literary elucidation.

*Manāqibnāmas* are our main source of information about the various factions and orders of Sufis, who were generally not acknowledged by official authorities and preferred to live in seclusion or among commoners. In these writings, right along with the stories of *karāmat*, the places Sufis visited, the peoples they had relations with and how they received their status, aspects like where they had come from, their ethnicity and the language they spoke, who their parents were and stories from their younger years, may be found. In this sense, these texts are not just mythical but they also have a biographical side. Hagiographies may contain clues about political defeats and scandals not detailed in the official documents or give complementary data about significant incidents such as invasions and wars. Furthermore, traces of personal information about the ruling elites' lives, characteristics, inclinations, and preferences on different matters that cannot be found in formal writings may be given in these texts. Likewise, information on topics such as hierarchical relationships between the *murshids* and *murids*, individualistic and communal ties between the Sufis and the rest of the population and customs, regulations and functions of *tekke/zāviye* complexes, can be gained by analysis of *manāqibnāmas*.

Being as *manāqibnāmas* refer to the *murshids*' travels to distant lands and contacts with numerous people, data about demographics and linguistics, social, religious and economic situations in diverse towns and cities, geographical changes, natural disasters, famines, and epidemics may be found in them. As they were believed to be instructional and moral texts in their time, they were also a manifestation of folklore, folk beliefs, and superstitions, traditions,

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<sup>9</sup> Faroqhi, "Piri Baba of Merzifon", 655; Köprülü, "Anadolu Selçukluları Tarihi'nin Yerli Kaynakları", 424.



judgments, expectancies, and practices of the society, in which they have been written down, and they should be examined accordingly. They are valuable for not only Historical but also for Sociological, Psychological, Religious and Literary Studies.<sup>10</sup>

Thankfully, the potential of the genre was recognized by a few Turkish academics and the foundations of Turco-Islamic hagiography studies were laid in Turkey. Mehmet Fuad Köprülü was the first scholar to use *manāḳib* next to historical sources to write his notable work *Early Mystics in Turkish Literature*. Abdŭlbaki Gŧlpınarlı and later Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, who have held positions of authority in the area, wrote multiple works about *manāḳibnāmas* and several other names right along with them, contributed to the domain. Still, it must be emphasized that for a long period of time many of those have exhausted their limited methodologies of reading hagiographies. Their perspective is mainly grounded on distinguishing the historical realities from the myths in order to write the biographies of the subjects, histories of the orders and philosophies of the movements.<sup>11</sup>

However, as Derin Terziođlu underlines, that has started to change as the focus of historical research shifts from broader issues to the personal histories of individuals.<sup>12</sup> With the newest generation of researchers and the growing numbers of varied methodologies, *manāḳibnāma* reviews have reached a whole new level in recent years. Another problem in the field, which has started to fade, is that the majority of Turkish scholars who paid regard to *manāḳibnāmas* were specialists of Turkish Literature, not historians. Nowadays more historians like Rıza Yıldırım and Zeynep Yŧrekli have been conducting their research on *manāḳibnāmas*

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<sup>10</sup> Ethel Sara Wolper, *Cities and Saints: Sufism and the Transformation of Urban Space in Medieval Anatolia*, (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press University Park, 2003), 19; Şahin, *Dervişler ve Sufi Çevreler*, 40-43; Yıldırım, *Seyyid Ali Sultan (Kızıldeli) ve Velayetnamesi*, 40-44, 57-62; Zeynep Yŧrekli, *Architecture and Hagiography in the Ottoman Empire: The Politics of the Bektashi Shrines in the Classical Age*, (Farnham, Surrey, Burlington: Ashgate, 2012), 1-4; Yŧrekli, "Hagiographers and architectural patrons in the Age of Empires", 94.

<sup>11</sup> Farođhi, "Piri Baba of Merzifon", 653; Derin Terziođlu, "Man in the Image of God in the Image of the Times: Sufi Self-Narratives and the Diary of Niyazi-i Misri (1618-94)" *Studia Islamica* 94, (2002), 140-141.

<sup>12</sup> Terziođlu, "Sufi Self-Narratives and the Diary of Niyazi-i Misri", 140-142.

but according to Suraiya Faroqhi, the disconnect between the two fields has not yet been overcome completely.<sup>13</sup>

## 1.2. LITERATURE REVIEW: THE SECONDARY SOURCES

Within this already limited academic area, there are only a few noteworthy works on Oṭman Baba and his *walāyatnāma*. The first name that comes to mind when the Kalandarī Baba is addressed, is Halil İnalçık and his article "Dervish and Sultan: An Analysis of the Oṭman Baba Vilāyetnāmesi". İnalçık emphasizes Oṭman Baba's ethnic background and how it determined his faction of followers, which are mostly the *Yörüks* of the Northeastern Balkans. İnalçık also gives significance to the conflict between the *abdāls* and Meḥmed II and argued that Oṭman Baba adopted a completely non-conformist stance against the Ottoman Empire. Theories of Nevena Gramatikova, a prominent name in the Bulgarian historiography with her articles on Oṭman Baba, parallel İnalçık's claims. Her most significant article on the subject is "Oṭman Baba - One of the Spiritual Patrons of Islamic Heterodoxy in Bulgarian Lands". However, in light of all the information the hagiography encapsulates, it can be deduced that Oṭman Baba was not politically oppositional or rebellious against the Ottoman State. His dissatisfaction with Meḥmed II took less than a year.

Ahmet Yaşar Ocak and Ahmet T. Karamustafa touch upon the issue in several pages in their monographs concerning the antinomian orders. Their works are respectively, *Kalenderiler: Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Marjinal Sufilik* and *God's Unruly Friends: Dervish Groups in the Islamic Later Middle Period*. Both historians acknowledge Oṭman Baba as a lead figure among the antinomian circles of Anatolia and the Balkans. However, despite the fact that both scholars write briefly about Oṭman Baba and his community in their comprehensive works, they differ completely about the identification of the community. Various details from

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<sup>13</sup> Suraiya Faroqhi, *Anadolu'da Bektaşilik: XV. Yüzyıl Sonlarından 1826 Yılına Kadar*, (Istanbul: Alfa Basım Yayım, 2017), 13.

*Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba*, right along with the other historical sources can be interpreted to find a middle ground between the two theories.

Other historians, such as, Zeynep Yürekli ve Nikolay Antov, examine the relationship between the Sufis and the Ottoman State and briefly refer to the Oṭman Baba community in their works *Architecture and Hagiography in the Ottoman Empire* and *The Ottoman “Wild West”*. These works are quite beneficial secondary sources as they demonstrate the contact between the Ottoman government and the Şücā‘ī/Oṭmanī *silsila* in spite of their *Bāṭinī* inclinations.

The last name worth mentioning is Irène Mélikoff, who conducted studies on the Oṭmanī community in the Balkans. Yet arguments of Mélikoff are merely based on oral history interviews and anthropologic observations. That is why, *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba*, right along with the other hagiographies belonging to the community, should be reviewed while dealing with her assertions, such as the community being Sevener/İsmā‘īlī Shiites.

Although there are brief references to Oṭman Baba and his *abdāls* in many other academic works, none of these contain any critical discussions or anything more than informative yet stereotypical passages. That is why it is not wrong to say that there is a lack of major academic research on Oṭman Baba and his community.

### **1.3. WHY CONDUCT RESEARCH ON OṬMAN BABA AND HIS WALĀYATNĀMA**

The lack of content in the Literature Review makes it clear that there are very few academic works giving a notable place to Oṭman Baba and his hagiography, let alone the research conducted solely on him. It is quite startling since the source material belongs to the Medieval Age with a limited number of many primary sources and it is one of the longest and most accurate examples of the Ottoman hagiography genre.

First and foremost, the *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba*, in spite of the writer's biased perspective on the subject and the common unrealistic motifs of the genre, is an incredibly rare and extensive biographical writing which belongs to the Medieval Age Ottoman Empire. Unlike many other *manāqibnāma* writers, Küçük Abdāl apparently took great pains to create a unique style and instead of replicating the cliché *manāqib* one after another, he managed to portray Oṭman Baba as a complex human being with a distinct personality. Throughout more than two hundred pages of the *walāyatnāma*, the loyal dervish of Oṭman Baba undertakes the task of presenting his *murshid* to the world. A dervish, who writes a biographical text about his spiritual master, would never want to step out of his master's principles and beliefs. Therefore, Küçük Abdāl in a sense became the mouth of Oṭman Baba and the picture he painted of his master, must at least to a great extent, be rooted in Oṭman Baba himself. For this reason, it can be argued that the *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba* has some autobiographical features and should be reviewed accordingly.

Secondly, the *walāyatnāma* is of great worth not only for its biographical aspect, but also due to the lack of written sources about the social classes Oṭman Baba was a member of, such as the ordinary folk, *Türkmens*, and *Yörüks* in the Balkans. The *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba* gives the reader a look at the social status, daily life, mindset, and faith of this section of the population and also their relations to the other social classes. The contrast between the urban and rural populations, agriculturalists and nomads, imperial elites and ghazi-warriors, ulama and *Abdāls*, and the 15th century atmosphere between the margins of the Balkan frontiers and the imperial capital are magnificently brought to life in the hagiography.

Thirdly, due to its having incredible insight and depth, the *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba* can be regarded as a classic for the antinomian dervishes as it consists of more than the regular components of the genre. Through long informative passages, explanatory paragraphs, and didactical verses, Küçük Abdāl detailed Oṭman Baba's words and actions, interpreting them

through the lens of Islamic history and Sufi doctrines. Alongside these passages, Küçük Abdāl clarified how to enter the Sufi path. It is an incredibly rich source illuminating the perception, beliefs, and practices of both Oṭman Baba, the contextual *abdāls* and more broadly the renouncer orders. These communities had been marginalized in various sources written by observers, who were looking at them from the outside and could not make sense of their incomprehensible mindset. As generally coming from the higher levels of society and being educated in Islamic Studies, these writers were regarding antinomian dervishes as being odd at best or accusing them of malignancy at worst. However, this text demonstrates the relationship between an antinomian community and the rest of society, their actions and reactions towards one another and how these events are portrayed to the reader. Thus, a critical reading of the *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba* is vital to researchers and historians who seek to look past the stigma and understand the rationale and philosophy of these dervishes.

If looked at from another angle, Küçük Abdāl put forth Oṭman Baba's ideology and opinions not only by narrating his behaviors and comments on the events taking place, but also by the using literary elements and miracle motifs. Because the group met a variety of people from Mehmed II to the highest positioned bureaucrats, *ghazi-begs*, simple soldiers and members of *ulama*, it is possible to make assertions about Oṭman Baba's relationship with the Ottoman State and its organs, as well as the external political agents. Therefore, it can be said that the *walāyatnāma* opens a window to the relationship between a specific community of antinomian *abdāls* and the Ottoman State.

To sum up, Oṭman Baba and his *walāyatnāma* have been under-studied and more thorough and elaborate research is required. It is clear that reviewing such a rich piece of personal and communal history only to question the credibility of its contents is insufficient. Another problem is that many scholars do not let the sources speak for themselves. Due to the fact that in most historical texts, antinomian dervishes have been disparaged as a deviant group,

a mainstream apprehension has developed. Some scholars, focusing only on the mainstream information, do not give enough place to the sources written by these dervishes themselves. In effect, these historians have contributed to the marginalization of these communities more or less.

This dissertation has been written with the aim of filling several gaps in the historiography. Along with writing extensively about Oṭman Baba, his hagiography and his place in historiography, this dissertation intends to review the accepted theories and ask critical questions. More to that, this treatise is not to solely write Oṭman Baba's biography or make a classical review of the *walāyatnāma*. On the contrary, the primary goals are to have a grasp of the daily life, world view, beliefs and practices of a 15th century *abdāl*, his followers, their insight on Islam and Sufism, relationship with their contemporaries and their political stance. To shift the common understanding of history writing and to put the emphasis on narrative, this dissertation is based on seeking answers to questions, such as, how and why a 15th century antinomian *Baba* and his disciples expressed themselves, how they constructed the life story and achievements of a *murshid* and in what image Oṭman Baba preferred to be remembered. New techniques, such as, reading and putting emphasis on the narrative in a primary source written by antinomian dervishes themselves and showing their point of view can broaden our horizons about these marginalized groups and their place in the contextual world. By doing this, the hope of this writer is to challenge the conventional historiography and pave a path to develop new perceptions and alternative reading methods in order to review unique primary sources of Islamic Mysticism.

#### **1.4. METHODOLOGY**

“Great poetry has some potential to inform readers about the life and times of the poet, but scholars generally acknowledge that this potential is very limited. Readers of a great poem do not ordinarily feel constrained to ask whether the poem's subject “really happened.” A successful poem reveals

far more about the inner life of the poet – and that of his or her reader. As in poetry, imagination in the hagiographies I look at here is an essential key to letting the smaller tales unfold the larger narrative.”<sup>14</sup>

These words, written in the Preface of John Renard's work *Friends of God*, gives us a hint of an alternative methodology to analyze *manāqibnāmas*. Until recently, the aim of social scientists, while reading the primary sources with biographical aspects, was to distinguish historical facts from personal accounts. But if the scholars conduct their researches by "letting the sources speak for themselves"<sup>15</sup> as Renard said, new perspectives arise, which illuminate the subjects like never before. Narrations are collections of partial reconstructions of the past and there is no past apart from the narrator's present, therefore, it is important for the historian to understand the narrator and his interpretation along with the subject he writes about.<sup>16</sup>

As mentioned above, within the analysis of *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba*, one's priority should not be to write Oṭman Baba's biography or historicize the events mentioned in the text but reveal the religious and political mindset of Oṭman Baba as a senior member of the contextual Abdālān-ı Rūm; describe how he and his followers perceived other religious and political figures in their surroundings; and explain how their relationships were with the other orders, institutions and the Ottoman Empire. The *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba* was written by a devoted *murid* of Oṭman Baba and has a self-constructive and self-presentational function working as if it is a curriculum vitae for the *murshid*. While examining the mentality and relationships of Oṭman Baba, this dissertation focuses on demonstrating how and why he created his image via the hagiography written by his dervish.

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<sup>14</sup> John Renard, *Friends of God: Islamic Images of Piety, Commitment, and Servanthood*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), xiv.

<sup>15</sup> Renard, *Friends of God*, xiii.

<sup>16</sup> Mark Freeman, "From Substance to Story: Narrative, Identity, and the Reconstruction of the Self" in *Narrative and Identity: Studies in Autobiography, Self and Culture*, ed. Jens Brockmeier and Donald Carbaugh, (Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2001), 286, 291.

Social scientists working in the fields of Anthropology and Oral History argue that both memory and narrative work selectively. Human beings remember some things and forget others. Thus, a narrator consciously or unconsciously includes only some of the critical information while ignoring irrelevant facts. The things which may annoy, upset or anger the audience or endanger the purpose of narration, if there are any, may be withheld by the narrator. Or contrarily, to please, draw attention to or achieve some sort of goal, select facts may be underscored. The narrator may try to convince or deceive the audience so he may even lie or fictionalize. These are several causes of self-editing, censorship, and self-promotion and it can be said that neither memory nor narration is only related to the individual but they also operate in accordance with the individual's environment.<sup>17</sup> These variances are applicable to the different forms of Sufi self-narratives and definitely to the hagiography literature which derives from the oral *manāqib* narrations.

In addition, it should never be forgotten that the approach of the narrator is the outcome of his lifetime experiences and *manāqibnāmas* in general and the *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba* particularly are attestations of believers. Even though Küçük Abdāl self-edited his writings more or less, he was obviously a devoted dervish of Oṭman Baba. He believed in what he had written, at least to some extent, and he certainly believed in the status of Oṭman Baba as *Insān-i Kāmil*, who had completed “the Greater Jihad” and reached perfection. Rıza Yıldırım states that it is vital to understand the core elements of Sufism if *manāqibnāmas* are to be fully understood and the relationship between master and dervish is one of them. In Sufism, it is believed that only through complete love, submission and obedience to the *murshid*'s will, can the *murid* proceed along his path of spiritual awakening.<sup>18</sup> Together with *karāmat*'s being a

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<sup>17</sup> Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, (New York: Routledge, 2010), 46, 78-79; Jerome Bruner, "Self-Making and World-Making" in *Narrative and Identity: Studies in Autobiography, Self and Culture*, ed. Jens Brockmeier and Donald Carbaugh, (Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2001), 31; Freeman, "Narrative, Identity, and the Reconstruction of the Self", 290; Charlotte Linde, *Life Stories: The Creation of Coherence*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 8-11.

<sup>18</sup> Yıldırım, *Seyyid Ali Sultan (Kızıldeli) ve Velayetnamesi*, 42-43.



normalized concept in Sufism, it is quite possible and even necessary for dervishes to perceive ordinary events in daily life as traces of their masters' divine intervention.

However, a large number of historians and scholars from the broader field of Social Studies examined the behaviors of these circles with a 21<sup>st</sup> century intellectual framework and secular rationale. They regarded the aims of these circles that did not align with their ideas, as achieving material gains by making propaganda or having influence over people by making mystifications consciously. In spite of the partial truth in these assumptions, it should be remembered that *manāqibnāmas* were religious products written by Sufis, for the sake of Sufis, to be read by Sufis and also the sympathizers of the *ṭarīqats*. All of these individuals shared a belief system with a completely authentic set of norms. Surely countless numbers of them must have believed in the verity of the codes they were devoting their lives to. Aside from making sense to modern scholars, the things they gave credit to were utterly in conflict with the contemporary *fiqh*. In fact, they had disputes among each other even about the basic principles of Sufism. The apprehension of legitimacy and reality changes correlatively to the context and communal perception. This frame of mind, alongside with subjectivity of the narrative and codifications of Sufism, should be taken into account while analyzing *manāqibnāmas*.<sup>19</sup>

On what rationale is, Omid Safi argues that defining philosophy as rational and mysticism as emotional and irrational experiences of human beings is a product of the post-Kantian and the post-Enlightenment Positivist epistemology. It is forgotten that our modern mental framework was completely incomprehensible for the rationale of a Sufi mystic, as well as a Sunni or Shiite worshipper who lived and believed in a Sharia-based political system. To cite from Safi's words: "The first difficulty lies in the bifurcation of reality into affairs deemed 'spiritual' as opposed to those of the "visible universe." Many Muslims - Sufis and otherwise -

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<sup>19</sup> Yıldırım, *Seyyid Ali Sultan (Kızıldeli) ve Velayetnamesi*, 42-43, 57-62.

would not see the responsibility of living in this ‘visible universe’ as God's *khalifa* as an ‘unspiritual’ activity.”<sup>20</sup>

At the same time, it has been ignored that the mental frameworks based on Sufism versus Sharia-based Islam do not correspond to each other, which resulted in the alienation, condemnation and even execution of many Sufis in the past, for their beliefs were ascribed as blasphemy. In addition, our differentiation of what "official and institutionalized religion" is determines a scale of sensibility between the alternative realities accepted by diverse groups of peoples and consolidates the evaluation of the majority over the minority.

*Karāmat* are perhaps the number one cause of historians' disregard of *manāqibnāmas*. On the one hand, miracles as an inseparable part of Sufism had been accepted by a major segment of the society. On the other hand, they were used as literary patterns and symbols to increase the influential and didactic quality of the *manāqib*. Among the commoners, these *karāmat* were seen as explanations to the things they could not understand and since they were perceived as solid evidence of *walāyat*, they were also used to consolidate the impact of the *murshid* and the order over the *murids* and the rest of the society.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, Rıza Yıldırım demonstrates how to benefit from *karāmat* motifs for historical research. He asserts that it is not important if the author claimed the incidents taking place in the *manāqibnāma* were caused by *karāmat*. The historian must look for whether the incident really happened. Yıldırım gives an example from the *walāyatnāma* of Seyyid ‘Alī Sulṭān, according to which a yell of a *walī* resulted in an earthquake. After carefully conducted research, Yıldırım discovered that an earthquake indeed happened in Gelibolu, in the year of 1354. As a result, Süleymān Paşa took advantage of the demolished city walls and managed to seize the city.<sup>22</sup> He also argues that by

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<sup>20</sup> Omid Safi, "Bargaining with Baraka: Persian Sufism, "Mysticism," and Pre-modern Politics" *Muslim World* 90, no. 3-4, (2000), 261-263, 267-268.

<sup>21</sup> Yıldırım, *Seyyid Ali Sultan (Kızıldeli) ve Velayetnamesi*, 43-44, 57-59, 103.

<sup>22</sup> Yıldırım, *Seyyid Ali Sultan (Kızıldeli) ve Velayetnamesi*, 43-44, 57-58.

interpreting the *karāmat* motifs themselves, it is possible for the historian to recognize the mentality of the period.<sup>23</sup>

Thereby, this dissertation intends to pay attention to the sentiment of an antinomian community leader, who had religious and political claims in the 15th century Ottoman Rumelia, giving priority to the testimony of his follower.

## 1.5. MANUSCRIPTS AND TRANSLITERATED EDITIONS OF THE *VELĀYETNĀME-I OṬMAN BABA*

There are multiple manuscripts of the *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba* in Milli Kütüphane and in personal collections. Two of the three manuscripts in Milli Kütüphane are scribed by Nihānī ‘Alī Yozgadī and Ḥasan Tebrizī and the last one is anonymous. It is also stated that there is another manuscript, scribed by ‘Alī Nā’ilī, in the New York, Bodleian Library.

As for the transliterated editions, there are a few versions but because not all of them have been made in academic standards, I have benefited from only the two of them; *Oṭman Baba Velayetnamesi* transcribed by Dr. Filiz Kılıç, Dr. Mustafa Arslan and Tuncay Bülbül; published in 2007 and *Türk Edebiyatında Velayetnameler ve Oṭman Baba Velayetnamesi*, the Post Graduate Dissertation of Yunus Yalçın, written in 2008. Both parties indicated they used the same 06 Hk 495 Ḥasan Tebrizī and 06 Hk 643 Anonymous manuscripts for their work. I give citations from the former work.

The main purpose of this dissertation is to focus on making inferences through an analysis of *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba*. Still, other sources have been beneficial to complement the thesis of Oṭman Baba, especially the hagiographies of Sulṭān Şüca’üddīn and Demir Baba.

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<sup>23</sup> Yıldırım, *Seyyid Ali Sultan (Kızıldeli) ve Velayetnamesi*, 57-61.

Yet it should be mentioned that some of these sources have no reference to Oṭman Baba or his *silsila* while others contain scarcely any sentences at all on the subject.



## CHAPTER II

### THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND THE HISTORIOGRAPHY

#### 2.1. THE CONTEXT: COLONIZATION AND ISLAMIZATION OF THE BALKANS

After several pages of introducing Islamic History and Sufism, Küçük Abdāl begins the first chapter of the *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba* by narrating his *murshid's* past until his arrival into the Ottoman lands. In the second chapter, he continues by saying there is a specifically dedicated *manḳiba* on Oṭman Baba's passage to Rumelia, where almost all the scope of the hagiography takes place. Oṭman Baba must have had motives to choose the region as his final destination to remain for more than two decades, make his name, build his community and leave his legacy. However, Oṭman Baba was not the only person who planned to head towards the west. Quite the opposite, that path has been walked and re-walked for centuries by thousands of settlers from differing backgrounds. Nikolay Antov describes these lands as "the land of opportunity" for "the-non-mainstream-minded," that is, the "undisciplined" from the perspective of the established order in the "core zones."<sup>24</sup> That is why, if we are to make sense of the mindset of Oṭman Baba and the environment he had become a part of, it is necessary to look back to the historical processes which had shaped the 15th century Ottoman Balkans.

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<sup>24</sup> Nikolay Antov, *The Ottoman "Wild West": The Balkan Frontier in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 56.

From the 11th century onwards, the lands of Rūm had been exposed to raids of *Türkmen* and an influx of warriors, farmers, merchants, craftsmen, intellectuals, the ulama, and dervishes. Along with all these free-standing individuals and small, independent coterie of newcomers, the power of the newly established political groups was also constantly growing. The political authorities, first the Seljuk State, then the Ottoman State and the territorial *begliks*, had tried to control the raids and migrations to fit their own interests.<sup>25</sup>

Above all, the western frontier had been turning from "No-Man's Land" into the territories of the *uç-begliks* with its newly forming, extraordinary population of nomads, raiders, adventurers, renegades and the *Bāṭinī* dervishes. The ghazi families on top of these *begliks* were the solitary administrative and military units the Seljuk and the Ottoman governments had on the borders. They were carrying out raids and conquering land but they were not completely subordinate to the central authority until at least the late 15th century. It seems that these sedentarized landlords with their private properties and *waqf* foundations invested a lot to establish new towns and infrastructural improvements in the terrain they held.<sup>26</sup>

In this context, it can be said that the colonization and the Islamization of the Balkans had started before the Ottoman advancement. Due to the historiographies in Turkey and the Balkan countries collide with each other drastically on the two phenomena, they constitute controversial fields of study on their own.<sup>27</sup> The Balkans is vast geography with numerous distinct ethnicities and differing socio-cultural and religious characteristics. The changing politics of the pre-Ottoman *begliks* and then the Ottoman State, the provincial ghazi families

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<sup>25</sup> Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 15; Ömer Lütfi Barkan, *Kolonizatör Türk Dervişleri*, (N.p.: Hamle Yayınları, n.d.), 8, 10. [https://www.academia.edu/26691851/%C3%96mer\\_L%C3%BCtfi\\_Barkan-Kolonizat%C3%B6r\\_T%C3%BCrk\\_dervi%C5%9Fleri.pdf](https://www.academia.edu/26691851/%C3%96mer_L%C3%BCtfi_Barkan-Kolonizat%C3%B6r_T%C3%BCrk_dervi%C5%9Fleri.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> Halil İnalçık, *Osmanlı Tarihinde İslamiyet ve Devlet*, (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, 2016), 34; Mehmet F. Köprülü, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun Kuruluşu*, (Istanbul: Alfa Basım Yayım, 2016), 123-129; Antov, *The Ottoman "Wild West"*, 48-49; Antov, *The Ottoman "Wild West"*, 48-49.

<sup>27</sup> Ines Aščerić-Todd, *Dervishes and Islam in Bosnia: Sufi Dimensions to the Formation of Bosnian Muslim Society*, (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 11-21; Antov, *The Ottoman "Wild West"*, 34-38.

and vassals and the varying semi-independent organizations, such as Sufi *ṭarīḳats*, and the diverse reactions to all these parties, make it challenging to assert a general claim on the subject. What is more, the conversion processes of the Islamicized communities in different geographies show incredible variances.<sup>28</sup>

It is a broadly recognized fact that during the Ottoman period, the government was in favor of colonization to push their political agenda. As for Islamization, it is widely accepted that conversions occurred not as a result of direct oppression of the victors but indirectly due to the will of the native populace and aristocracy to move up the social ladder in the Islamic Empire, which had a social structure grounded on religious classes. In addition, cadastral record books reveal that Christians remained as the dominant faction within the population of Eastern Rumelia up until the 16th century.<sup>29</sup> Rıza Yıldırım divides the Ottoman expansion into two periods in relation to the transformation of Ottoman strategy, which transpired on the basis of these two policies. Regarding this premise, during the first phase of the takeovers in Anatolia and Thrace, the Ottoman government gave weight to colonization and Islamization in the newly conquered areas. On the other hand, during the second phase of land acquisitions in the Inner and Western Balkans, the Ottoman State began to exhibit all of the characteristics of an empire and did not meddle with the local socio-cultural structures.<sup>30</sup>

In the first phase, it is known that nomadic *Yörük* tribes and myriads of other people with a wide range of occupations were brought from Anatolia to the Balkans, right along with the political rivals of the Ottomans, which were deported from their power centers and forcibly resettled in the region.<sup>31</sup> During the previous centuries, the lands which are located in modern

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<sup>28</sup> Antov, *The Ottoman "Wild West"*, 3, 38-39.

<sup>29</sup> Krstić, *Osmanlı Dünyasında İhtida Anlatıları*, 84.

<sup>30</sup> Rıza Yıldırım, "Dervishes, Waqfs, and Conquest: Notes on Early Ottoman Expansion in Thrace" in *Held in Trust: Waqf in the Islamic World*, ed. Pascale Ghazaleh (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2011), 27.

<sup>31</sup> Halil İnalçık, "The Yürüks: Their Origins, Expansion and Economic Role" in *The Middle East and the Balkans under the Ottoman Empire: Essays on Economy and Society*, ed. İlhan Başgöz, (Bloomington: Indiana University

day Eastern Bulgaria and Greece had suffered underpopulation in no small measure and when the Ottomans arrived, that served greatly to their colonization policy. The crowds were forced to both urban and rural regions and were motivated to raise new settlements. Ali Eminov provides the data on the percentage of dwellers' religious beliefs in the major urban spaces in the Southeastern Balkans and it seems that Muslims constituted a large part of the residents in the early 16th century, even outnumbering Christians in some of the towns and cities.<sup>32</sup>

Although migration and deportation policies of the Ottoman Empire continued to be on the agenda for centuries, in the latter phase, neither colonization nor Islamization was the main intent behind them, unlike before.<sup>33</sup> The Ottoman Empire only reformed the administration by assembling the *timar* system and repositioning the nobility in it. A considerable percentage of the native peoples converted to Islam to reach the top level of society in the Empire, take active roles in the administrative system and did not to pay a poll tax, which was expected to be paid only by non-Muslims. Yet, the aristocrats could preserve their positions within the new system as vassals and *timar* holders without conversion. In reality, the stance of the Ottoman Empire towards the conversions was not as it would have been expected, considering roughly one-third of the Empire's revenue was generated from the poll tax.<sup>34</sup>

While the *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba* encapsulates the final decades of Oṭman Baba's life, it also familiarizes the readers with the transitional stage between the two phases, the contextual Eastern Balkans, its society and particularly the *Yörüük* population, which seems to comprise a major part of Oṭman Baba's followers. Therefore, information should be given about the geography and its demographics.

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Turkish Studies, 1993), 106; Ali Eminov, "Islam and Muslims in Bulgaria: A Brief History." Academia, accessed May 7, 2019, 1-2. [https://www.academia.edu/3302330/Islam\\_and\\_Muslims\\_in\\_Bulgaria\\_A\\_Brief\\_History](https://www.academia.edu/3302330/Islam_and_Muslims_in_Bulgaria_A_Brief_History).

<sup>32</sup> Eminov, "Islam and Muslims in Bulgaria", 2-3.

<sup>33</sup> Antov, *The Ottoman "Wild West"*, 115.

<sup>34</sup> Eminov, "Islam and Muslims in Bulgaria", 1-9; Yıldırım, "Dervishes, Waqfs, and Conquest: Notes on Early Ottoman Expansion in Thrace", 27.



## 2.2. THE UNIQUE CASE OF DELIORMAN, DOBRUDJA, AND GERLOVO & THE TÜRKMEN/YÖRÜK POPULATION

To begin with drawing lines of Oṭman Baba's field of activity in the *walāyatnāma*, it can be seen that in nearly all of the *manāḳib* he is traveling within a square-shaped area with the corners representing Vidin in the northwest and South Dobrudja in the northeast borders of Bulgaria, Vardar Yenicesi/Giannitsa in Greece and lastly, Istanbul in Turkey. He rarely left this area and within its boundaries, he typically remained in the east, wandering between the Deliorman and Dobrudja regions, Karasu-i Yenice/Genisea in Greece and again Constantinople. This area corresponds directly to the first phase zone of colonization Rıza Yıldırım makes mention of, thus the Muslim inhabitants included people, such as the significant *ghazi-begs*, their raider warriors and nomadic *Yörük* tribes.

If we briefly summarize the history of this realm, it suffices to say that neither the *begliks*, nor the Ottomans were the first parties to bring in the Islamicized Turkic masses. Long before them, starting from the 11th century, diverse Turkic groups such as the Gagaouzes, the Pechenegs, the Cumans, and the Karakalpaks had already moved in. However, they were not colonizing. Their raids caused large scale desertion of Thrace and especially the Deliorman and the Dobrudja territories.<sup>35</sup>

The narratives of the first so-called colonization period of the Eastern Balkans revolve around the legendary figure Şarı Şaltuḳ. It is written in a number of primary sources that Şarı Şaltuḳ was a warrior-dervish and led a migration of Muslim *Türkmens* from the Seljuk State of Rüm to the Balkans in the 13th century. Even though the Sufi sources about him and *Şaltuḳnāme* are full of unrealistic elements and raise doubts, the existence of such literature

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<sup>35</sup> Antov, *The Ottoman "Wild West"*, 95-96; Eminov, "Islam and Muslims in Bulgaria", 2; H. T. Norris, *Islam in the Balkans: Religion and Society between Europe and the Arab World*, (London: Hurst & Company, 1993), 147-148.

suggests that the colonization and Islamization of the area was a popular theme among the contemporary Muslims and must have been actualized to some degree.<sup>36</sup>

Underpopulation of the Eastern Balkans gave place to colonization and Islamization in real terms after the Ottoman annexations in the 14th and 15th centuries. Nikolay Antov's studies on the demography of Deliorman and Gerlovo, show that the resettlements of the Muslims in the area began around the 15th century and reached a whole new level in the 16th century. According to his findings from the era, eighty-five percent of the Muslim newcomers were nomadic *Türkmen*s. Also, the environment was appropriate for the repositioning of the hordes engaged in animal husbandry, such that in the 16th century Deliorman and Gerlovo pastoralists became the meat suppliers of Edirne and the capital city Istanbul.<sup>37</sup>

In multiple *manāḳib*, the firm bond between Oḡman Baba and these *Türkmen* and *Yörüks* is visible, as they pay him visits and bring thousands of sheep as gifts.<sup>38</sup> As a matter of fact, he himself is called a *Yörük* speaking the Oḡuz language.<sup>39</sup> Hence, it is important to shed light on who the *Yörük* are and what they are known for.

Halil İnalçık, in his exclusive article about the *Yörüks*, differentiates the two terms *Türkmen* and *Yörük* and explains their usage in the Ottoman Empire. The term *Türkmen*, which implies ethnically Turkish people living a nomadic way of life, was used only for the nomadic Turks, who were living in the east of Asia Minor and beyond. As for *Yörük*, it was an administrative umbrella term used to call the Turkish, Kurdish or Arabic nomads, who moved into Western Anatolia or the Balkans.<sup>40</sup> İnalçık also informs the reader that the *Yörüks*

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<sup>36</sup> Ahmet Y. Ocak, *Sarı Saltık: Popüler İslamın Balkanlar'daki Destani Öncüsü, 13. Yüzyıl*, (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2016), 121-127; Antov, *The Ottoman "Wild West"*, 96-97.

<sup>37</sup> Antov, *The Ottoman "Wild West"*, 1-3, 107-117.

<sup>38</sup> *OBV*, 124, 131, 138.

<sup>39</sup> *OBV*, 16, 65.

<sup>40</sup> To differentiate the ethnically Turkish nomads from the overall group of *Yörük* in the Western Anatolia and Rumelia, I also use the term *Türkmen*.

constituted only 4.5 percent of the entire population of the Balkans in the early 16th century.<sup>41</sup> The organization of *Yörüks* created by the Ottoman Empire was first documented in *Ḳānūnnāme-i Āl-i ʿOsmān* and were divided into six *zeʿāmet*s in relation to their status and the places they settled. They performed together with the Ottoman army in colonization and establishment of new settlements.<sup>42</sup>

Despite the Ottoman State's utilization of *Türkmen* tribes, raiders and ghazi-warriors during the occupation of the Balkans and the colonization of some future outposts, the relationship between the central government and the *Türkmens* gradually strained and the tension climaxed as the Ottoman and Safawid Empires clashed in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. *Türkmens'* mobility in the countryside, where it was already difficult to regulate; their not being in need of protection of a higher authority and thus keeping their ancient self-autonomous tribal socio-political formation lies behind the dissension.<sup>43</sup> Even when the *Türkmen* tribes had to accept the Ottomans' being first among equals, they were always quite expressive about their dissatisfaction, which did not please the Ottoman dynasty in return. Consequently, throughout the course of the centralization and the bureaucratization of the Ottoman Empire, *Türkmen* tribes became more isolated and marginalized than ever before, held onto their collective identity, distanced themselves from the state and turned their faces to the Safawid East.

Yet another indicator of the alienation is that while the Ottoman Empire had been systematically rearranging and reforming its religious apparatuses, the *Türkmens*, and *Yörüks* in a broader sense, preserved their lasting version of Islam. Their interpretation of the religion had served greatly to all the agents within the political and military hierarchy since the outset

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<sup>41</sup> İnalçık, "The Yürüks", 100-103.

<sup>42</sup> Sema Altunan, "XVI.Yüzyılda Balkanlar'da Naldöken Yürükleri: İdari Yapıları, Nüfusları, Askeri Görevleri ve Sosyal Statüleri" in *Balkanlar'da İslam Medeniyeti Milletlerarası Sempozyumu Tebliğleri*, ed. Ali Çaksu, (Istanbul: IRCICA, 2002), 11-13.

<sup>43</sup> Halil İnalçık, "Tarihsel Bağlamda Sivil Toplum ve Tarikatlar" in *Global/Yerel Ekseninde Türkiye*, ed. E. Fuat Keymen and Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, (Istanbul: Alfa Yayıncılık, 2000), 93.

of the Ottoman Beglik but the relations began to deteriorate during Bāyezīd I's reign; worsened in the period of Meḥmed II and reached the bottom with Selīm I's 'Alevī massacres. Abdālān-ı Rūm were the missionaries of a belief intertwined with Sufism, which made it suitable for one-to-one or small community gatherings. As time passed all the lesser *abdāl* communities melted in the pot of the Bektaşī order, which underwent its own institutionalization process. Correlatively with the chain of events, the Shiite tendencies gave its place to complete transition to 'Alevism. In compliance with all these, we can turn now to the Abdālān-ı Rūm, the immense organization, Oṭman Baba was a member of.

### 2.3. DERVISHES IN THE CONTEXT

As Tijana Krstić cites from Clifford Geertz, despite the fact that religions are considered static and unchanging in theory, they modify constantly as they spread through nations and absorb new converts' cultural heritage.<sup>44</sup> That is why neither Islam nor any other religion is interpreted or practiced identically anywhere. The same applies to the Turks' conversion process. Starting from their first encounters with Islam, Turks had also interactions with the Sufi movements of Transoxania and Khorasan as both influencers and influenced. The movements of Malāmatiyya and Ḳalandariyya and the proto-orders such as Ḳalandariyya,<sup>45</sup> Ḥaydariyya, Naḳshbandiyya, and Yasawiyya were prevailing in the geography, where Turkic populations inhabited. Eventually, as Turks moved from Central Asia to as far as Rumelia, these movements and orders had already become an inseparable part of their culture and were carried away with them.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Krstić, *Osmanlı Dünyasında İhtida Anlatıları*, 70.

<sup>45</sup> There is a discussion between Ahmet Yaşar Ocak and Ahmet T. Karamustafa about the name of the movement/disposition. While it has been referred with the name of Ḳalandarī Order since Köprülü and later by Ocak; Karamustafa proposed a new term "New Renunciation" for the movement. He and a great deal of historians use Ḳalandariyya, only to refer the order. I discuss this matter in the next chapters.

<sup>46</sup> Mehmet F. Köprülü, *Anadolu'da İslamiyet*, (Istanbul: Alfa Basım Yayım, 2013), 31-34; Norris, *Islam in the Balkans*, 87.

As mentioned before, beginning in the 11th century, various dervish groups were reaching the lands of Rūm. Right next to the orders from Transoxiana and Khorasan, the migrations brought orders from different parts of the Islamic world such as Rifā'iyya, Suhrawardiyya, Wafā'iyya, Khalwatiyya, and Kubrawiyya and at the same time completely new orders, like Mawlawiyya and Bektaşiiyya, were born out of this extremely diverse setting in Anatolia. Though when focusing our attention to the 13th and 14th centuries Ottoman territories, the most compelling dervish group is none other than Abdālān-ı Rūm.<sup>47</sup> The debates about Abdālān-ı Rūm, the term's meaning, and the proto-orders which were parts of it are noted in the following chapters. However, I want to stress that all the orders, that managed to get in the lands of Rūm, were altered to some degree and some parted from their origins like the contextual Wafā'ī Branch, which had come from Iraq and underwent a great change in Anatolia, becoming a cornerstone of the Abdālān-ı Rūm.

Otman Baba and his *abdāls* considered themselves members of Abdālān-ı Rūm, which is considered as a fraternity of wanderer and warrior-dervishes, that was popular among rural and nomadic peoples and were more tolerant to non-Muslims and more inclusive to non-Islamic practices. These *abdāls* were not like the Sharia-oriented orders, which were welcomed among the sedentary and literate peoples. In this respect, *uç-begliks* were appropriate for the lifestyle and ideals of these *Bāṭini* dervishes. Within the frontier society, *Yörüks* were constituting a significant percentage of their followers and rallying around the spiritual leaders they call *baba* and *dede*. The greatest reason behind the existence of Abdālān-ı Rūm in the Ottoman zone was the grand Wafā'ī-Baba'ī Revolt, which had taken place in the heartlands of the Sultanate of Rūm in the 13th century. It is claimed by historians that as a result of their failure, *abdāls*, who

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<sup>47</sup> Ahmet Y. Ocak, "Osmanlı Beyliği Topraklarındaki Sufi Çevreler ve Abdalan-ı Rum Sorunu (1300-1389)" in *Osmanlı Beyliği: 1300-1389*, ed. Elizabeth A. Zachariadou, (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1997), 161-163. Köprülü, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun Kuruluşu*, 146-147.

were the prime initiators of the rebellion, escaped to the frontiers, where the Seljuk administration was least powerful.<sup>48</sup> It is true that the Ottoman Beglik, the *Wafā'ī babas*, and many other individual *abdāls* had solid relations. The Ottoman authorities were granting tax-free lands to the dervishes and allowing them semi-independence during the foundation years. So what was the incentive for these policies?

During its outset, the Ottoman government had not determined its religious stance, which would turn out to be an Ottomanized version of Sunnism in the 16th century. In order to maximize the efficiency of governmentality, Islam would be standardized and bureaucratized into the format of Sharia-oriented Sunnism. As a result, the Ottoman rulers would collide with their former allies, who would not be content with the centralization of the government. The alienation of the *Türkmen/Yörüks*, ghazis, and *abdāls* would turn these communities and several others towards Safawi Shiism and the relations became strained as decades passed by.<sup>49</sup> However, in the 13th and 14th centuries, the Sunni/Shii or the Sharia-based/*Bāṭinī* dichotomy was not apparent in the minds of the society. Cemal Kafadar describes the possible frame of mind in the frontiers with these words:

"Maybe the religious history of Anatolian and Balkan Muslims living in the frontier areas of the period from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries should be conceptualized in part in terms of a "metadoxy," a state of being beyond doxies, a combination of being doxy-naive and not being doxy-minded, as well as the absence of a state that was interested in rigorously defining and strictly enforcing an orthodoxy. None of the frontier powers seem to have that kind of an interest."<sup>50</sup>

## **2.4. ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE OTTOMAN GOVERNMENT AND THE *ABDĀLS* OF RŪM**

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<sup>48</sup> Antov, *The Ottoman "Wild West"*, 50, 59; İnalçık, *Osmanlı Tarihinde İslamiyet ve Devlet*, 38-39; Ocak, "Osmanlı Beyliği Topraklarındaki Sufi Çevreler ve Abdalan-ı Rum Sorunu", 164.

<sup>49</sup> Derin Terzioğlu, "Sufis in the Age of State-Building and Confessionalization" in *The Ottoman World*, ed. Christine Woodhead, (New York: Routledge, 2012), 87.

<sup>50</sup> Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 76.

It is known that the subjugation of the Balkans by the Ottoman forces brought an inflow of dervishes with it. Instead of secluding themselves and concentrating on their spiritual training, these dervishes got involved in social, political and religious affairs, as Oṭman Baba exemplifies. The *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba* is not the only hagiography that displays how concerned and active the dervishes were about the worldly matters. In the *manāḳibnāmas*, which were written in the early periods of the Ottoman Empire, dervishes were predominantly portrayed as having direct relations with the Sultans, aristocracy, and bureaucracy, always making room for themselves in the system. On this matter, Derin Terzioḡlu and Zeynep Yürekli, write that hagiographies and epics were written as alternative histories to the chronicles by the dervish communities in order to manifest their role in the foundation of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>51</sup> That is why, if the claims of Küçük Abdāl about Oṭman Baba's relations with Meḡmed II and his perception of the government are to be discussed, then the ties and mutual history between Abdālān-ı Rūm, the society, and the Ottoman government must also be put on the table.

The first thing a researcher should investigate is what Abdālān-ı Rūm meant to the people in the 15th century. Ahmet Karamustafa argues that the population of Anatolia and Rumelia grew religiously inclined to glorify the lineage of Muhammad and get committed to the 'awliyā'. This tendency paved the way for the orders and Sufis to have an extraordinary place within the society and affected people from various backgrounds and especially the ones who claimed *walāyat*, to relate their bloodline to the lineage of the prophet to be known as Sharifs or Sayyids.<sup>52</sup> This was caused by the people's tendency to learn Islam not from the Quran or Shāria but from the sacralized prototypes of Muhammad and *Ahl al-Bayt*. Rıza

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<sup>51</sup> Derin Terzioḡlu, "Sunna-minded sufi preachers in service of the Ottoman state: the nasihatname of Dervish Hasan addressed to Murad IV" *Archivum Ottomanicum* 27, (2010), 244; Yürekli, *Architecture and Hagiography in the Ottoman Empire*, 7-8.

<sup>52</sup> Ahmet Karamustafa, "Anadolu'nun İslamlaşması Bağlamında Aleviliḡin Oluşumu" in *Kızılbaşlık Alevilik Bektaşılık: Tarih-Kimlik-İnanç-Ritüel*, ed. Yalçın Çakmak and İmran Güneş, (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınevi, 2015), 47-49.

Yıldırım underlines that the population preferred to have *babas* and *dedes*, who shared their cultural values and ideals, instead of sheikhs and *‘alims*, who tried to discipline people to follow the strict rules of Sharia.<sup>53</sup>

The religiosity of the Abdālān-ı Rūm was not unrelatable for the Ottoman Beglik. They were valuable allies because of their capability to legitimize the state in front of the public, their attendance to *Ghaza*, spiritual support for the army and aids in the initiation of new settlements, colonization, and Islamization of the lately conquered lands.<sup>54</sup> The *abdāls* proved the might of their hold over the masses by playing critical roles in the formation of *begliks*, such as the Ottomans and Karamanids and bringing the Sultanate of Rūm to the verge of a catastrophe,<sup>55</sup> so they should be approached with care and caution. First and foremost, the Ottoman State should pay attention to the triangle of close relationships between the real power holders in the region, which were the *uç-begs*, the nomadic *Türkmen*, and the dervishes.<sup>56</sup> This trio was so connected that in some cases the boundaries setting them apart were vanishing, such in a way that among the *Türkmen* clan leaders, there were some *abdāl*, *baba*, and *dede* figures, who undertook the mission of spiritual leadership of their clans.<sup>57</sup> On account of this basis, it is quite sensible for the Ottomans to merge their dynasty via marriage with the offspring of Şeyḫ Edebālī, a prestigious Wafā’ī sheikh and a *murid* of Baba İlyās, the sublime leader of the Wafā’ī-Baba’ī Revolt. The marriage bonds between the household of Şeyḫ Edebālī and the esteemed families of Çandarlı Halil Paşa and *mudarris* and *faḳīh* Tacüddin Kürdi is proof of how high the status of a Wafā’ī sheikh and probably members of Abdālān-ı Rūm could reach in the frontiers. On the other hand, the Ottoman dynasty forged another politically rewarding

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<sup>53</sup> Yıldırım, *Seyyid Ali Sultan (Kızıldeli) ve Velayetnamesi*, 104-105.

<sup>54</sup> Antov, *The Ottoman "Wild West"*, 56.

<sup>55</sup> Barkan, *Kolonizatör Türk Dervişleri*, 12-13, 16, 23.

<sup>56</sup> Antov, *The Ottoman "Wild West"*, 59.

<sup>57</sup> Antov, *The Ottoman "Wild West"*, 50; Barkan, *Kolonizatör Türk Dervişleri*, 15, 39.



marriage bond in the next generation by marrying Orhan Beg to the daughter of a Byzantine tekfur.<sup>58</sup>

Some of the dervishes and *abdāls* were arriving at the lands, which were planned to be subjugated in the near future and paved the way for the operations. Some others were fighting with the Ottoman units, taking their parts in the conquests and even becoming *timar* holders. Furthermore, they ignited the *Ghaza* spirit and freshened the faith of the soldiers and the raiders, who sympathized with them and believed in their words, and made these men believe that their actions were sanctified.<sup>59</sup> There were also dervishes arriving after the seizures, but without any difference, they were setting up their *tekke*, *zāviye*, *misāfirhāne*, and *'imārets* and ratifying these foundations to the sultan. Now and then the sultan himself or the *ghazi-begs* were granting tax-free lands and supporting dervishes financially. In return, they were expecting these pious endowments to open a new door to colonization and Islamization and to ensure supervision over the local population. There are records of such endowments from the 15th and even 14th centuries. Within these foundations, dervishes were engaged with activities such as farming, charity works, distributing food and providing accommodations to the dervishes and travelers. As might be expected, novice dervishes were also trained and missionary activities were conducted in order to promote Islam among the native non-Muslims. Visitors were welcomed as guests for three days but if they desired to remain, they needed to be accepted as dervishes and be involved in the division of labor and the daily routine of the lodge, just like all the other dervishes. As villages appeared slowly around these pious endowments, mosque and madrasa complexes were constructed under state sponsorship and the expanding settlements developed into towns and cities. When all these services provided by the dervishes are taken into account,

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<sup>58</sup> Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 15, 74, 128-129.

<sup>59</sup> Aščerić-Todd, *Dervishes and Islam in Bosnia*, 1-3, 32-37, 53; Barkan, *Kolonizatör Türk Dervişleri*, 26; Yıldırım, *Seyyid Ali Sultan (Kızıldeli) ve Velayetnamesi*, 59-61.

their influence on the urbanization of the Balkans between the 14th and 16th century becomes more evident.<sup>60</sup>

A lot of scholars explain this phenomenon with *abdāls*' concerning themselves with the conversion of non-Muslims and their proclivity to be more open-minded to syncretism, unlike the other dervish sects or the ulama. Indeed, gaining converts to Islam is a commonly discussed subject in the *walāyatnāmas*, just like it is in the epics such as *Baṭṭālnāme*, *Şaltuḡnāme*, and *Dānişmendnāme*. The impact of the area they resided in and the peoples they became acquainted with along with the policy of the Ottoman administration to take Christians to the raids as soldiers, installing Christian military units in some of the outposts and making them *tımar* holders, must have resulted in accustomedness between the Muslims and the Christians. That atmosphere of coexistence would naturally have its own impacts over the dervish groups of the frontiers.<sup>61</sup> In brief, dervishes, and *abdāls*, who were affecting and affected by their surroundings, paved the way for the simple peoples to feel warmer about Islam.<sup>62</sup> Aside from these facts, it should be noted that a number of academicians exaggerate the matter of tolerance, interaction, and eclecticism between the two religions and communities. In the end, as Cemal Kafadar underlines, there were two sides which were at war with each other.<sup>63</sup>

## 2.5. HISTORIOGRAPHICAL CONTROVERSIES: KÖPRÜLÜ PARADIGM

Mehmet Fuad Köprülü is one of the founding fathers of modern Turkish history and academic studies on Sufism in Turkey. His famous methodology to analyze Islam and Sufism in Asia Minor and the Balkans is based on a dichotomy of orthodoxy versus heterodoxy. Although

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<sup>60</sup> Reşat Öngören, "Balkanlar'ın İslamlaşmasında Sufilerin Rolü" in *Balkanlar'da İslam Medeniyeti Milletlerarası Sempozyumu Tebliğleri*, ed. Ali Çaksu, (Istanbul: IRCICA, 2002), 47-50; Antov, *The Ottoman "Wild West"*, 58-59; Aşçeriç-Todd, *Dervishes and Islam in Bosnia*, 1-8, 32, 35-36, 57-59, 68-79; İnalçık, *Osmanlı Tarihinde İslamiyet ve Devlet*, 40-41; Yıldırım, "Dervishes, Waqfs, and Conquest: Notes on Early Ottoman Expansion in Thrace", 25-29.

<sup>61</sup> İnalçık, "Tarihsel Bağlamda Sivil Toplum ve Tarikatlar", 87; Krstić, *Osmanlı Dünyasında İhtida Anlatıları*, 85-90, 92-93.

<sup>62</sup> Aşçeriç-Todd, *Dervishes and Islam in Bosnia*, 3-8; Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 15, 72-74.

<sup>63</sup> Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 84.

"Köprülü Paradigm" has been under criticism with quite strong arguments for years, an alternative theorem has not replaced it yet. Let alone the contemporaries and students of Köprülü, even today's historians who denounce the theorem are having difficulty in conducting their studies without using archetypes of Köprülü.

Hereunder, orthodox or high Islam is identified as the authentic, undisputed Islam, which preserves the essence of the religion by means of written sources, doctrines, and practices that presumably defy time. It is learned and transmitted by the madrasa educated elites and the ulama, including the average urban citizens. Because of its legitimization by the government and theologians and the central position of its practitioners both in administrative and hierarchical terms, it is also called as core Islam. According to this assumption, the opposite heterodox, low or folk Islam contains the marks of other religions and folklore in its syncretistic structure in compliance with its practitioners' background. It is not institutionalized with canon regulations or it does not have its written sources but it is for the most part orally transmitted by illiterate practitioners, such as rural populations and nomads, also known as the peoples of the peripheries.

The first and foremost problem with this paradigm is the hierarchical and social evolutionary appraisal of sedentary over nomadic, urban over rural, core over periphery and giving more credit to the written sources than the oral narratives. For Köprülü, heterodox Islam is a watered down, incomplete and distorted version of the orthodox original. Yet throwing a glance at only a small number of different variations of Islamic orthodoxies that have occurred all around the Islamic world demonstrates that none of the orthodoxies or heterodoxies can reflect the "real" Islam but they are only interpretations nourished by local histories, cultures and countless social variables. The Köprülü Paradigm makes sense only if history is investigated through the lens of a selected orthodoxy, which in our case is the lens of the Ottoman State Sunnism. By adhering to the Köprülü Paradigm, historians involuntarily

overviewed the events from the perspective of the Ottoman orthodoxy and consolidated the alienation of the opposite group.<sup>64</sup>

As can be seen, another problem in this formula is the dual division that causes polarization in multiple levels. Sects, movements and orders, even Sunni/Shiite inclinations were positioned in this discourse by numerous historians, due to the fact that specialists like F. W. Hasluck, H. T. Norris, J. K. Birge, Irène Mélikoff, Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, and Ahmet Y. Ocak evaluated the "heterodox groups" as Shiite or at least inclined to Shiism. They shared *Bāḫinī* [m: esoteric] beliefs such as *tanāsuh* and *ḥulūl* that could be perceived as heretical according to the orthodox authorities. All of them including the *abdāls*, lost their distinctive identities and dissolved under the Bektaşī cult and 'Alevism, which was a novel formation of the Safawi imprint in the Ottoman lands. Specifically, with this turn, the heterodox groups' relations with the Ottoman government hit bottom and they became predominantly non-conformist against the State. But it should not be forgotten that if one thinks within the orthodox-heterodox paradigm, the Safawi Empire and Shiism have their own Sharia-oriented orthodoxy with religious elites, sophisticated written texts, doctrines, and practices. So the contextual heterodoxy, which is defined above, is as different from Orthodox Safawi Shiism as it is to Orthodox Ottoman Sunnism.<sup>65</sup>

As quoted from Kafadar earlier, there was no political or religious authority to impose the "true Islam" for the pre-15th century society of the frontiers. Religious belief was not defined with the inclusive or exclusive limitations determined by the Ottoman or Safawi Empires. While Sunni-ization of the Ottoman Empire was taking place in the following

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<sup>64</sup> Ayfer Karakaya-Stump, *Vefailik, Bektaşilik, Kızılbaşlık: Alevi Kaynaklarını, Tarihini ve Tarihyazımını Yeniden Düşünmek*, (Istanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2016), 6-10; Markus Dressler, "How to Conceptualize Inner-Islamic Plurality/Difference: 'Heterodoxy' and 'Syncretism' in the Writings of Mehmet F. Köprülü (1890-1966)", *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 37, no. 3, (2010), 245, 247.

<sup>65</sup> Karakaya-Stump, *Alevi Kaynaklarını, Tarihini ve Tarihyazımını Yeniden Düşünmek*, 8.

centuries, the counterparty, which ended up being drawn to the Safawi Shiism, comprised of the communities that remained outside of the Ottoman transformation.<sup>66</sup>

Also, there are miscellaneous contexts where boundaries of Sunni-Shiite division become vague and even disappear. Sufism is a key factor in setting up a bridge across the gap between Sunnism and Shiism because, with a few exceptions, the larger number of the Sufi orders embrace principles from both Sunnism and Shiism. There are examples of dispositions and orders that have been identified as Sunni by some scholars and Shiite by the others, that have both Sunni and Shiite branches and that convert from one denomination to the other officially. In other words, if Sufism is on the table, there is transitivity within the Sunni/Shiite dichotomy. But of course, the subject of transitivity between Sunnism and Shiism, like the subject of tolerance and eclecticism between religions, should not be taken lightly, as a great deal of the *ṭarīkats* openly defines themselves as Sunni or Shiite, despite their affections for the opposite party.<sup>67</sup>

These are a few of the many critiques of the Köprülü Paradigm but it is not possible to ignore the dual framework entirely. Given the fact that an immense, cross-border schism between Sunnis and 'Alevīs occurred in the 16th century, the process of polarization must have taken at least a century beforehand. On the one hand, the Wafā'ī-Baba'ī Revolt, the identifiable common or similar social, political and religious traits of the rebels, their non-conformism against the Seljuk Sultanate of Rūm and the *abdāls'* withdrawal to the frontiers, manifest the existence of an ambiguous polarity among the peoples of Rūm dating back as early as the 12th and 13th centuries. The conventional requirement for defining terms to make the historical phenomena and continuum intelligible applies to this subject as well.

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<sup>66</sup> Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 73, 76; Terzioğlu, "Sufis in the Age of State-Building and Confessionalization", 87.

<sup>67</sup> Derin Terzioğlu, "How to Conceptualize Ottoman Sunnitization: A Historiographical Discussion", *Turcica* 44, (2012-2013), 307-308; Terzioğlu, "Sufis in the Age of State-Building and Confessionalization", 90-91.

However, there is the more recent belief that the aforementioned polarity in its entirety cannot be defined with simplifying dichotomies of orthodox/heterodox, conformist/non-conformist, Sunni/Shiite because there had been no certain definition of "two sides" in terms of the 16th century yet. That is why, if one were to formulate defining terms, one should be very careful about making generalizations, since what may reflect the truth partially, may also cloud perception and narrow analysis.

While a long chain of "heterodox" *abdāls* starting from Hacı Bektaş Velī showed no signs of non-conformism against any political entities, there were also "conformist heterodoxies" supporting the Ottoman Empire in various ways. There were many well-educated sheikhs and *‘alims*, such as leading figures Şeyh Edebālī, Hacı Bayram Velī, and Aşkemseddīn, within the ranks of the "heterodox orders" such as Wafā’iyya and Bayramiyya. Another phenomenon that breaks the generalization of the hypothetically disordered structure of heterodoxy is the incredible reorganization and institutionalization the Bektaşī order surpassed and its operation by different groups of heterodoxies in vast geography. Ayfer Karakaya-Stump argues that the *‘Alevī* and proto-*‘Alevī* groups and the Bektaşī and Wafā’ī orders did have their own canonical written documents just like any other bureaucratized formation. But as already written, these exceptions should not prevent researchers from making definitions or formulating the historical processes.

As for the Sunni/Shia dichotomy, there is no evidence that the groups that would evolve into the *‘Alevī* community in the 16th century, had defined themselves as Shiites before the polarization finalized under the Safawi impact. The Shiite tendencies, *Bāṭinī* notions, the sympathy for *‘Alī* and the rest of the *Ahl al-Bayt* have been normalized elements for a good part of the Sufi *ṭarīqats* and with few exceptions, all the orders, regardless of their being Sunni or Shiite, trace their *silsila* to *‘Alī*. On account of that, heterodox circles' sharing these views is insufficient to claim that they were Shiites. After all, the "heterodox" spiritual leaders were not

Shiite *‘ālims* or *faḳīh*, but dervishes and leaders of Sufi orders, who built their beliefs upon the structures of Islamic Mysticism. The orders they were members of are still causing controversy around the world, even though they are compelled to be classified within the narrow categories of Sunnism and Shiism. Albeit ‘Alī, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn had a special place in the collective consciousness of the pre-16th century heterodox communities, there is no reference to the Imams in their texts that were scribed before the rise of ‘Alevism. Furthermore, there were religious leaders, their sons, and followers with the names of ‘Ömer and ‘Oṣman within the heterodox body. Therefore, for these groups, their religious beliefs must have reflected their Sufi and *Bāḳīnī* dispositions, not Sunni or Shiite standards. Moreover, if their Sufi dispositions consisted of concepts from both Sunnism and Shiism, it can be said that in the early periods, lands of Rūm must have been more prone to nonsectarianism when compared to what was soon to come.

To avoid error, historians should try to set the modern Sunni/‘Alevī/Shiite categories aside and make their investigations not moving from present to past but from past to present. Only then can the process of polarization be accurately realized and Sufism and *Bāḳīnī* ideas can be differentiated from the orthodoxy of Shiism. In this context, instead of using orthodox/heterodox or Sunni/‘Alevī/Shiite dichotomies to make the subject easier to commentate and comprehend, the terms Sharia-based Islam and mystical/*Bāḳīnī* Islam can be used as Karakaya-Stump suggests.<sup>68</sup>

## **2.6. HISTORIOGRAPHICAL CONTROVERSIES: THE ṬARĪḲATS AND THE ABDĀLS OF RŪM**

The word *abdāl*, which has been used synonymously with *budalā* [m: fool] in Sufi terminology, had connoted *zāhid* [m: ascetic], *faḳīh* [m: an expert of fiḳh] or *muḥaddith* [m: an expert of

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<sup>68</sup> Karakaya-Stump, *Alevi Kaynaklarını, Tarihini ve Tarihyazımını Yeniden Düşünmek*, 9.

Hadith] when it first came into use. Beginning in the 12th century, the term started to be used among the Iranian and Turkic populations with the meaning of “dervish”. At the height of its usage, within the dervish communities in the lands of Rūm around the 15th century, it’s meaning changed from “dervish” to “lunatic”. In the 16th century, *abdāl* also implied "idle wanderer" or "beggar" and was synonymous with *Ḳalandarī*, *‘ishk*, and *torlaḳ* but in the 18th century, the term went out of use.<sup>69</sup>

Without a shadow of a doubt, the most contentious usage of the term *abdāl* in Anatolia and Rumelia belongs to ‘Aṣıḳpaṣazāde, who referred to Abdālān-ı Rūm [m: the *Abdāls* of Rūm] as one of the four most important fraternities of the lands of Rūm, right next to *Aḥīs*, *Bacıs*, and Ghazis. Even today, historians cannot meet on common grounds about which groups were included within the formation and which were not. Some authorities even alleged that Abdālān-ı Rūm was a distinct Sufi *ṭarīḳat*, peculiar to the lands of Rūm.

The first academician to conduct studies on *abdāls*, was again Mehmet Fuad Köprülü. If far-reaching studies of Köprülü are to be summarized, his arguments were based on the heterodox groups' predominantly being Yasawī and *Ḳalandarī-Ḥaydarī* dervishes, who were illiterate, nomadic *Türkmen* from Central Asia. For him, these groups, which are called "Horasan Erenleri" [m: the Saints of Khorasan] colloquially, could not be Islamicized in orthodox Sunni standards and retained their pre-Islamic pagan beliefs and practices in their new religion. Historians are critical of this theory pointing out to the many shortfalls and errors of the Köprülü Paradigm.

Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, who takes syncretism of heterodoxy one step further, asserts that these dervishes were not only influenced by Turkic Shamanism as Köprülü stated but also

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<sup>69</sup> Mehmet F. Köprülü, "Abdal" in *Türk Halkedebiyatı Ansiklopedisi: Ortaçağ ve Yeniçağ Türkülerinin Halk Kültürü Üzerine Coğrafya, Etnoğrafya, Etnoloji, Tarih ve Edebiyat Lügati*, (Istanbul: Burhaneddin Yayınevi, 1935), 27-29; Süleyman Uludağ, "Abdal" in *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, (Istanbul: TDV İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi, 1988), 59.



Manicheism, Buddhism and miscellaneous forms of Indo-Iranian Mysticism. Ocak's thesis is rejected by Ahmet T. Karamustafa, who approaches the subject from another stance and defines the alternative Malāmatī-Ḳalandarī movements as a reaction to the mainstream Islamic and societal norms.<sup>70</sup> Due to the fact that classical Sufism was also standing on the pedestal of asceticism and antinomian dervishes reformed these old ways, Karamustafa calls the movement as the New Renunciation/Yeni Zühhd.

Looking from another angle, Ayfer Karakaya-Stump remarks that not all of the supposedly-heterodox orders that came to Anatolia, were the Malāmatī-Ḳalandarī orders with Central Asian origins, hence Köprülü's argument of pre-Islamic Turkic influence on non-orthodox orders does not reflect the historical situation adequately enough. The prominent place of the Wafā'ī order from Iraq within the *Bāṭinī* orders of Anatolia between the 12th to 14th centuries and the Kurd and Zaza *Yörüks'* constituting a significant percentage of the *Bāṭinī* and later 'Alevī communities are two of the indicators of this.<sup>71</sup> As a matter of fact, even though Köprülü did not make mention of the Wafā'ī *tarīkat* and did not emphasize as much as the Yasawī or Ḳalandarī-Ḥaydarīs, he alluded to another Iraqi order; Rifā'iyya as a part of the Anatolian heterodoxy.<sup>72</sup> Based on the select primary sources, Rifā'iyya has been associated with some *Bāṭinī* groups such as Wafā'iyya or Ḥaydariyya or *Bāṭinī* dervishes like Şarı Şaltuk.<sup>73</sup>

Another question is whether Yasawī dervishes came to Anatolia. While historians doubt the existence of Yasawiyya in Anatolia due to lack of documentation, Karamustafa indicates that there is no sign that Aḥmet Yasawī undertook the duty of spreading Islam among the Turks

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<sup>70</sup> Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends: Dervish Groups in the Islamic Later Middle Period 1200-1550*, (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1994), 10-13; Ahmet T. Karamustafa, "Yesevilik, Melametilik, Kalenderilik, Vefa'ilik ve Anadolu Tasavvufunun Kökenleri Sorunu" in *Osmanlı Toplumunda Tasavvuf ve Sufiler*, ed. Ahmet Y. Ocak, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2005), 73.

<sup>71</sup> Karakaya-Stump, *Alevi Kaynaklarını, Tarihini ve Tarihyazımını Yeniden Düşünmek*, 10-11, 188-189.

<sup>72</sup> Köprülü, *Anadolu'da İslamiyet*, 38-39, 53.

<sup>73</sup> J. Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 39; Machiel Kiel, "Şarı Saltuk" in *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, (Istanbul: TDV İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi, 2009), 149; Haşim Şahin, "Vefaiyye" in *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, (Istanbul: TDV İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi, 2012), 602.

or sending dervishes to Anatolia or that he was interested in the *Bāṭinī* école.<sup>74</sup> Together with this, there is also the puzzle of Hacı Bektaş Velī's origins.

The *silsila* of Hacı Bektaş Velī is still an unresolved query today. One of the most broadly acclaimed opinions is built upon the testimony of 'Aşıkpaşazāde, who wrote that Hacı Bektaş Velī and his brother came to Anatolia in search of Baba İlyās. Also, by raising Hātūn Ana, he served greatly to Bacıyān-ı Rūm but there is no mention of his finding of the Bektaşī order. 'Aşıkpaşazāde also claims that the relationship between the Bektaşīs and the white cap the Janissaries wore, was the outcome of a mere coincidence.<sup>75</sup> Consistently with this, Rıza Yıldırım marks Hacı Bektaş Velī as a Wafā'ī successor of Baba İlyās and states that there were two branches of Wafā'iyya and Bektaşīyya was one of them. While the Bektaşī branch became popular in the Ottoman territories, the familial branch 'Aşıkpaşazāde belongs to, arrived in the area much later and became ineffective in the foundational years of the Ottoman Beglik. This is why, 'Aşıkpaşazāde stressed the link between his ancestor Baba İlyās and the locally important leaders Hacı Bektaş Velī and Şeyh Edebāli, hinting that his ancestors had also a crucial role in the establishment of the Empire.<sup>76</sup> This narrative of 'Aşıkpaşazāde may reflect the truth. Or his attitude may be clarified with a rivalry between the most prominent two orders, Wafā'iyya and Bektaşīyya, in the frontiers. He may have tried to consciously trivialize Hacı Bektaş Velī and present him as only a follower of a predominant community leader Baba İlyās and not the founder of his own order. Another possibility is it may only be about Hacı Bektaş Velī's paying a visit to Baba İlyās to be granted *ijāzāt* from him because after all, there are

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<sup>74</sup> Karamustafa, "Yesevilik, Melametilik, Kalenderilik, Vefa'ilik ve Anadolu Tasavvufunun Kökenleri Sorunu", 78-80; Karakaya-Stump, *Alevi Kaynaklarını, Tarihini ve Tarihyazımını Yeniden Düşünmek*, 190.

<sup>75</sup> Aşıkpaşazade, *Aşıkpaşazade Tarihi: Osmanlı Tarihi (1285-1502)*, trans. Necdet Öztürk, (Istanbul: Bilge Kültür Sanat, 2013), 307-308.

<sup>76</sup> Rıza Yıldırım, "Hacı Bektaş Veli ve İlk Osmanlılar: Aşıkpaşazade'ye Eleştirel Bir Bakış", *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Veli Araştırma Dergisi* 51, (2009), 128-131.

innumerable examples of dervishes pledging their obedience to multiple masters and being granted their *naşīb* [m: predestined spiritual claim] in their lifetime.

According to a second view, which is centered on *Velāyetnāme-i Hacı Bektaş Velī* and 'Evliyā' Çelebi's *Seyāhatnāme*, *silsila* of Hacı Bektaş Velī reaches to Aḥmet Yasawī through Loḡmān Perende. However, the absence of any other sources confirming this information or the existence of Yasawiyya in Anatolia similarly weakens this possibility. In this regard, Karamustafa notes that neither 'Aşıkpaşazāde nor Elvān Çelebi manifested that Hacı Bektaş Velī was a *murid* of Baba İlyās and the parallelism between the *Velāyetnāme-i Hacı Bektaş Velī* and *Fakrnāma* of Aḥmet Yasawī and the supreme respect to Yasawī in the *walāyatnāma* can only be explained with a probable contact between Aḥmet Yasawī and Hacı Bektaş Velī.<sup>77</sup> What is more, in his *walāyatnāma* Hacı Bektaş Velī meets with Ḳuṭb al-Dīn Ḥaydar Zāvagī, who is also referred to as a link to the Yasawī *silsila*. It is known that the legendary Ġāzī Şarı Şaltuḡ was a successor of Hacı Bektaş Velī. However, the marginal and antinomian image of Şarı Şaltuḡ and his successor Baraḡ Baba, and his followers' growing their mustaches while performing *Chahār Darb* and the name of one of the followers of Şarı Şaltuḡ, Bahrām Shāh al-Ḥaydarī,<sup>78</sup> make us think that despite Şarı Şaltuḡ's being a *murid* of Hacı Bektaş Velī, he might also have been influenced by Ḳuṭb al-Dīn Ḥaydar and the *silsilas* of the Bektaşī and the Ḥaydarī orders might have been synthesized by Şarı Şaltuḡ and his followers.

In any case, some or perhaps all of the above-mentioned dervish groups joined the Wafā'ī-Baba'ī Revolt led by the two Wafā'īs, Baba İlyās and Baba İshāḡ. After the failure of the rebellion, bands of *abdāls* moved to the frontiers. In this immense upheaval, it is not known which of the dervish circles supported the Wafā'ī circles and which of them avoided participating in the rebellion. Yet when looking at the dimensions of it, dervishes from other

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<sup>77</sup> Karamustafa, "Yesevilik, Melametilik, Kalenderilik, Vefa'ilik ve Anadolu Tasavvufunun Kökenleri Sorunu", 78-82.

<sup>78</sup> Ocak, *Sarı Saltık*, 106-120.

*tarīkats* must have also taken part in it. After the dust of the rebellion settled, the names of two orders, which took shelter and were recorded in the Ottoman territories, became distinguished from others. It is known that although chronologically it is impossible for them to meet, Şeyh Edebāli and Geyikli Baba were affiliated with Baba İlyās, maybe acknowledging him as the *pīr* [m: the elder] of the Anatolian branch of the order. On the other hand, the acknowledgment of Hacı Bektaş Velī as a *pīr* in the *walāyatnāmas* and writings about *abdāls* like Abdāl Mūsā, Kaygusuz Abdāl, Hacım Sultān, Kızıldeli Seyyid ‘Alī Sultān, and Şādık Abdāl reveals that they were the forefathers of the organizing Bektaşī order. Apart from these, there were also *abdāls* such as Abdāl Meḥmed, Abdāl Murād and Kumral Abdāl, whose liaisons are unknown. However, apparently, Wafā’iyya and Bektaşīyya were the two leading orders among the populations of the frontiers in this period.

A much smaller *Bāṭinī* community other than the Wafā’ī-Bektaşīs appeared at the end of the 14th century in the vicinity of Eskişehir. This specific *silsila* of Qalandarī école can be traced back to Sultān Şücā’üddīn, who was the *murshid* of Oṭman Baba. Although his master, spiritual genealogy or the *pīr* of his *silsila* are not written down in his hagiography, the lifestyle, Sufi perception and practices of Sultān Şücā’üddīn Velī make it clear that he was an antinomian community leader. To what extent the renouncer communities of Asia Minor regarded him as an authority is not known, but he settled near the Tomb of Seyyid Baṭṭāl Ġāzī, the greatest spiritual center of these communities in Anatolia and was buried there after his death. His *silsila* and community, which is called Baba’īs today without any connection to the Baba’īs of the 13th century, continued with Oṭman Baba, Aқыazılı Sultān and Demir Baba in the region of Deliorman and became a distinct subgroup of the Bektaşī cult.<sup>79</sup> The Şücā’ī *silsila* and Oṭman Baba's place in it will be discussed in detail in the third chapter.

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<sup>79</sup> Since the spiritual genealogy of Sultān Şücā’üddīn is not known and I do not want the two Baba’ī communities to get confused, I will call Sultān Şücā’üddīn’s *silsila* which starts with him and continues with Oṭman Baba, Aқыazılı Sultān and Demir Baba, as "the Şücā’ī/Oṭmanī *silsila*", not as Baba’īs.

While there is information known about the *Bāṭinī* orders, all the dervishes coming from these factions united with a phenomenal consistency on a single matter: calling themselves as *abdāls*. In spite of several exceptions, these dervishes avoided using titles such as Sufi, sheikh and *zāhid*, which they used for the communities they criticized in their writings, the communities of the Sharia-oriented orders. In contrast, taking a glimpse at the hagiographies of the dervishes would be enough to realize nearly all of them used titles such as dervish, *abdāl*, *eren*, *baba*, and *dede* to refer themselves.

As indicated in the beginning, the concept of Abdālān-ı Rūm, which communities it covered and which communities it excluded has been open to discussion for decades. Köprülü and İnalçık interpreted the Abdāls and *Ḳalandarīs* as matching words and additionally, İnalçık asserted that *Bāṭinī* Sufis were separated into two categories in accordance with their conformity with the government and Sharia. On account of İnalçık's evaluation of the *Wafā'ī* dervishes as conformist and the Abdāls non-conformist, it can be said that he perceived the *Wafā'ī ṭarīkat* as a separate organization from Abdālān-ı Rūm.<sup>80</sup> Whereas, taking *Vāhidī's Menākīb-ı Hoca-i Cihān ve Netīce-i Can* as a precept for his theories, Karamustafa concludes in the Abdāls' being a separate group with antinomian traits. Unlike İnalçık, he disengages not *Wafā'īs* but *Bektaşīs* from the Abdāls.<sup>81</sup> Whilst Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, without making a distinction between the Abdāls and *Ḳalandarīs*, addresses all the *Bāṭinī* orders as "*Ḳalandarī disposed*" orders.<sup>82</sup> As can be seen, when the matter is terminology and the meaning of the term *abdāl*, theories are so diverse that it is almost impossible to reach a consensus.

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<sup>80</sup> İnalçık, *Osmanlı Tarihinde İslamiyet ve Devlet*, 39-40; Köprülü, "Abdal", 28-38.

<sup>81</sup> Ahmet T. Karamustafa, "Kalenders, Abdals, Hayderis: The Formation of the Bektaşīye in the Sixteenth Century" in *Süleyman the Second and His Time*, ed. Halil İnalçık and Cemal Kafadar, (Istanbul: ISIS Press, 1993), 139-140.

<sup>82</sup> Ahmet Y. Ocak, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Marjinal Sufilik: Kalenderiler: XIV-XVII. Yüzyıllar*, (Istanbul: Timaş Yayınevi, 2016), 137-144.

Moreover, some dervishes from particular orders, which were associated with their *Bāṭinī* counterparts, also preferred to be called *abdāls*, *babas* or *dedes*. Köprülü claimed that Mawlawiyya, Adhamiyya and Ḥalwatiyya, especially its Gülşenī branch, were sharing some antinomian tendencies and there were examples of *abdāls* such as the Ḥalwatī ‘Alā’eddīn Abdāl.<sup>83</sup> Another interesting finding is about the two Naqshbandīs, ‘Aynī Dede and Şemsī Dede who were in the occupant Ottoman armies in Bosnia. It is indicated on their tombstones that they had participated in the *Ghaza* at the command of Meḥmed II, played roles in colonization and used titles such as *dede* and *şah*, the same as the *Bāṭinī* dervishes. Therefore, it can be deduced that Sharia-based communities and orders had also contributed to the *Ghaza* activities as Ines Aščerić-Todd argues.<sup>84</sup> It can also be taken as a hint for historians to rethink the borders between the Sharia-based Islam and the *Bāṭinī* Islam.

When all of these are taken into consideration it is inevitable to ask the question: Did an inclination to the *Bāṭinī* Sufism have to be related to dervishes' homelands or orders? Or was it defined by their lifestyle and their positioning ‘Alī and *Ahl al-Bayt* right next to Muhammad in the core of their beliefs? In the end, even though all the dervishes were members of a community with a *silsila*, they had their own personal orientations as the formation of varying branches within the orders demonstrated. Notwithstanding, Şeyḫ Edebāli was a Wafā’ī, he did not use the title of *baba* or *abdāl* and used the title of sheikh. Another eye-catching example is about Ḥacı Bayram Velī's two most colliding *murids*, Aqşemseddīn, who was also known as the Aqşeyḫ, and Bıçaqçı ‘Ömer Dede, who became a lead figure in Turkish Malāmatī école. The two prior mentioned Naqshbandīs' usage of the titles that are unusual for their order can be explained this way. That is why, instead of thinking that Abdālān-ı Rūm was composed of some specific orders, it may be a loose fraternity of dervishes from different orders, dispositions and

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<sup>83</sup> Köprülü, "Abdal", 31.

<sup>84</sup> Aščerić-Todd, *Dervishes and Islam in Bosnia*, 36-41.

backgrounds, who shared a similar way of living, mindset and Sufi perception with *Bāṭinī* tendencies and only differed from each other in small details. On this matter, Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı enlisted Abdālān-ı Rūm among some *Bāṭinī* orders and stated that whatever titles the dervishes referred to themselves, both in their appearances and beliefs, they were sharing the same indistinguishable characteristics.<sup>85</sup> In this case, would not any *murshid*, whether he was a *baba*, *dede*, *abdāl* or even a sheikh, such as Şeyḫ Edebālī and Aḳşemseddīn, be an *abdāl* or simply a dervish of Rūm? 'Aşıkpaşazāde, who must have grown up in a family with a culture of *Bāṭinī* Sufism and believed in the existence of 'awliyā', may have meant the "real" friends of God in Rūm, without thinking in discriminatory boundaries when he wrote the famous phrase.

## **2.7. HISTORIOGRAPHICAL CONTROVERSIES: ALANDARIYYA OR SOCIALLY DEVIANT RENUNCIATION**

Before getting into a detailed examination of the persona of Oḡman Baba, the historical debates about alandariyya as a disposition and an order must be touched upon. alandariyya, the alandarī Disposition or New Renunciation as Karamustafa added to the glossary, is a movement overarching a handful of orders and communities. The most well-known of these orders is the alandarī order, founded by Jamāl al-Dīn Sāvī and gave its name to the overall movement. The alandarī order is also known as the Jawlaḳī order, due to the *jawlaḳs* worn by its members. Without any relation to the former one, the other most renowned order Ḥaydariyya was found by uṭb al-Dīn Ḥaydar Zāvagī. In addition to these, Jāmī, Adhamī, Ni‘matullāhī, Shamsī, Madārī, and Jalālī orders were also regarded under the collective identity of the alandarī Movement. And the question of whether the disposition should share its name with the alandarī order as it was first introduced by Köprülü and used and re-used by numerous

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<sup>85</sup> Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, *Yunus Emre ve Tasavvuf*, (Istanbul: İnkilap Kitapevi, 1992), 49.

historians, or it should be entitled with a new term “New Renunciation” invented by Karamustafa, should be answered.

Karamustafa declares that since an order's name was not enough to connotate such a large-scale movement that aimed to repopularize asceticism in a deviant way in Sufism, the new terms New Asceticism or New Renunciation were better choices compared to *Ḳalandariyya*.<sup>86</sup> As a response, Ocak remarks that what really matters is the usage of the word “*Ḳalandarī*” by the first known members of the movement, such as Bābā Ṭāhir ‘Uryān to describe themselves much before the establishment of the *Ḳalandarī* order.<sup>87</sup> In point of fact, while making a comparison to *Malāmatiyya*, Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī uses the term *Ḳalandariyya* like an umbrella term to refer to a faction covering multiple communities.<sup>88</sup> The meaning of the term *Ḳalandar*, when it first came into use in the 10th century, was public house or tavern, where *Ḳalandarī* or in other words *Ahl-i Ḥarābāt* [m: the Peoples of Ruins] gathered.<sup>89</sup> Meanwhile, many poems written in this theme began to constitute a new genre named *Ḳalandariyyat*, that had no connections with Sufism. Prior to the emergence of the *Ḳalandarī* order, the individual mystics' started to use a word with the meaning of a literary genre to define themselves and the word's gaining a new meaning in Sufi terminology show that the word *Ḳalandarī* was used not only for the *Ḳalandarī* order. On account of these, it can be concluded that there are no reasons not to use both Köprülü and Ocak's entitlement of *Ḳalandariyya* or *Ḳalandarī* Disposition and Karamustafa's novel term New Renunciation to refer to the broader antinomianism.

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<sup>86</sup> Karamustafa, "Yesevilik, Melametilik, Kalenderilik, Vefa'ilik ve Anadolu Tasavvufunun Kökenleri Sorunu", 86-87.

<sup>87</sup> Ocak, *Kalenderiler*, 46-48.

<sup>88</sup> Shahabuddin Suhrawardi, *The Awarif-ul-Ma'arif*, trans. H. Wilberforce Clake, (N.p.: n.p., 1891), 140. <https://archive.org/details/UmarSuhrawardiAwarifAlMaarif/page/n3>

<sup>89</sup> Mohammad Reza Shafiei Kadkani, *Qalandariyya der Tarikh: Degerdisihaye yek Ideoloji*, (Tehran: Intishaharat-i Sehen, 2008), 37-45.



If studies on alandariyya were investigated chronologically, again the priority would be given to writings of Mehmet Fuad Kprl. Kprl presumed that the two above-mentioned renouncer orders had been established by the Turks of Central Asia, who preserved their traditions and Shamanistic belief and practices under the veil of Islam and Malmatiyya of Khorasan.<sup>90</sup> His theorem was enhanced by Irne Mlikoff and Ahmet Yaar Ocak.

Ocak, who wrote a monograph on alandariyya, following in the footsteps of Kprl, does not evaluate it as a separate movement from Malmatiyya. Ocak's difference from his predecessor is his assuming alandariyya as a Malmat branch that has its origins in Zoroastrianism, Mazdakism, and Khurramism. As a consequence, neither Kprl nor Ocak has not seen any noteworthy distinction between Malmatiyya and alandariyya.<sup>91</sup> Yet another critical element in Ocak's theorem is all the parties enlisted under the title of *Btinism*, including Waf'iyya and Bektaiyya, are called alandar or alandar disposed.<sup>92</sup> Likewise, Nevena Gramatikova, who has conducted research on Oman Baba and Sufism in Bulgaria, regards alandariyya as a sub-group of Malmatiyya with reference to Ocak and all the *Btin* Turkic mystics as alandars.<sup>93</sup>

It is clear that this approach is extremely reductionist, for as much as the discrepancies between all these varying groups were as many as their commonalities. They had been bound to different founder *prs* through different *silsilas* and had had diverse beliefs and practices. At the bottom of this reductionist approach is the fact that Kprl and Ocak do not sufficiently lay emphasis on the huge gap between Malmatiyya and alandariyya.

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<sup>90</sup> Kprl, *Anadolu'da slamiyet*, 33-38; Kprl, *Osmanlı mparatorluunun Kuruluu*, 149-152.

<sup>91</sup> Ocak, *Kalenderiler*, 54-68.

<sup>92</sup> Ocak, *Kalenderiler*, 137-168, 261-276.

<sup>93</sup> Nevena Gramatikova, "Oman Baba - One of the Spiritual Patrons of Islamic Heterodoxy in Bulgarian Lands" *tudes Balkaniques* 38, no. 3, (2002), 78-79.

Despite the fact that historians have alternative categorizations for écoles, J. Spencer Trimingham's triple formulation of Şūfiyya, Malāmatiyya, and Ẓalandariyya should be considered.<sup>94</sup> Şūfiyya or Sufism as it is generally known, emerged as the first form of Islamic Mysticism in history and remained as a particular école while the other movements came into existence. Later the term has gained a new connotation denoting the Islamic Mysticism as a whole.<sup>95</sup>

Şūfiyya appeared in various areas of the Islamic world around the 8th century but mainly it was centered in Baghdad and Basra and these Şūfī communities had limited interaction with each other. In Şūfiyya, it was intended to discipline *nafs* [m: self, psyche, ego] by adopting an ascetic lifestyle and secluding in *ribāṭs* or *ḥānḳāhs*. Şūfis also practiced fasting, salat, *ḍikr*, and *samāʿ* and they were expected to submit themselves fully to their *murshid* and trust in God in every matter, which is called *tawakkul*. By doing so, under the guidance of their *murshids*, the dervishes would rise in *maḳāmāt* [m: the spiritual stages] and reach God and the secret *Bāṭinī* knowledge of the Quran and Islam, in other words, *ʿIlm al-Bāṭin* or *ʿIlm al-Ledūn*. However, they were not interested in scholarly pursuits such as *fiḳh* or *kalām*. Şūfis did not hesitate to expose their identity to society by means of their attire and daily living and they were also called as *zāhid*, *ʿābid* and *nāsik*.<sup>96</sup>

Malāmatiyya was born in the 9th century as a reaction to the ultra-conservative Karrāmiyya and in the following ages, by interacting with Şūfiyya it became a new form of mystic école that was influential especially in Khorasan.<sup>97</sup> In Malāmatiyya it is believed that spiritual development should continue while good deeds, prayers, and worship should be

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<sup>94</sup> Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, 264-269.

<sup>95</sup> I use the word Sufism/Sufi as the modern umbrella term implying all forms of Islamic Mysticism and mystics and use the word Şūfiyya/Şūfī for the specific école and its members.

<sup>96</sup> Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *Sufism: The Formative Period*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 1-26.

<sup>97</sup> Ahmet T. Karamustafa, "Yesevilik, Melametilik, Kalenderilik, Vefa'ilik ve Anadolu Tasavvufunun Kökenleri Sorunu", 85.

performed without making any display. The aim of this is to abstain from flaunting, thus manifestation of piety is completely rejected. It does not mean that these practices were not performed but it means that they were performed in secrecy. That is why, guild organizations, like Futuwwa and Aḥīyān-ı Rūm, which kept their religious and mystical codes in the background of their guilds and work principles, are regarded under the Malāmatī école.<sup>98</sup> The best known practitioners of Malāmatīyya in Anatolia were definitely Bayramīs. Şomuncu Baba, who had a reputation of distributing bread to the people while concealing his identity and his successor Hacı Bayram Velī, who worked in the fields with his followers for the sustenance of the order, can be given as examples to the Malāmatī masters. Love and sincerity have also a very important place in Malāmatīyya, with the internalized passive identity in order to hinder the exposure of their piety. However, there are politically active members, such as, Bıçağcı 'Ömer Dede and his successors, who carried the sect to the social margins after Hacı Bayram Velī.

Ḳalandariyya or New Renunciation is different from both Şūfiyya and Malāmatīyya. Like the Şūfis, but not in exactly the same way, Ḳalandarī disposed dervishes had embraced ascetic life out of their refusal of worldliness. At the same time, they had adopted practices such as wandering, mendicancy, celibacy and taking each day as it comes. In manifold sources, their disinterest and even disrespect to the religious services are recorded but the fact that there are some references to prayers in the Ḳalandarī writings should be considered. As Karamustafa puts it, there is a much deeper philosophy underneath the anarchist attitudes of the Ḳalandarīs. In comparison with the Şūfis, who adhered the societal or Islamic criterions rigorously and the Malāmatīs, who kept their identities, belief, and practices hidden, the Ḳalandarīs lived in

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<sup>98</sup>Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, *Melamilik ve Melamiler*, (Istanbul: Alfa Basım Yayım, 2017), 23-25; Trimmingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, 265-266.  
Sara Sviri, "Hakim Tirmidhi and the *Malamati* Movement in Early Sufism" in *Sufism: Critical Concepts in Islamic Studies*, v. 1, *Origins and Development*, ed. Lloyd Ridgeon, (London & New York: Routledge, 2008), 153-163.

contrast to the norms in the most marginal way. The ideals of all three movements were manifested in their dress codes. While Sūfīs were wearing special clothes to show their status and Malāmatīs avoided any distinguishable outfit, New Ascetic orders were externalizing their opposition to the Islamic taboos in differing images and practices. Nudity, wearing sacks, chains, bells, animal furs, bones and horns, having scars and tattoos on their skin, the practice of *Chahār Darb*, which is shaving or burning hair, beard, mustache, eyebrows and eyelashes and lastly using drugs were among the definitive identifiers of New Renunciation. These enactments had often led the ulama and common peoples to associate Ḳalandarīs with insanity, corruption, perversity and even devilry. However, it should not be thought that only lower class and uneducated people were joining the Ḳalandarī communities. There were well-educated scholars intellectuals, poets and governmental elites among their ranks.<sup>99</sup>

Perhaps Ḳalandariyya had been born under the influence of Malāmatiyya, but it subsequently became divergent and opposite on many issues. The wide breach between the two independent dispositions makes it impossible to use them synonymously. On this matter, Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī's words can be taken as a guide, as by briefly explaining and comparing Malāmatiyya and Ḳalandariyya he showed that they were two separate écoles.<sup>100</sup>

Mohammad Reza S. Kadkani, without any relation to Köprülü and his school, also argues that the origins of multiple belief and practices of Ḳalandariyya should be sought in a part of the pre-Islamic history. In his case, this is the Sassanid Iran and its culture, philosophy, literature, and religion. He remarks that artists and poets like 'Aṭṭār, Sanā'ī, Rūmī, and Ḥāfeẓ inspired the Ḳalandarī philosophy and principles of destroying taboos. He also says that shaving facial hair was based on the Sassanid traditions.<sup>101</sup> If one were to have a look at the geographies where the first Ḳalandarīs founded their orders and established their area of activity, cities in

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<sup>99</sup> Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends*, 1-23; Wolper, *Cities and Saints*, 6.

<sup>100</sup> Suhrawardī, *The Awarif-ul-Ma'arif*, 140.

<sup>101</sup> Kadkani, *Ḳalandariyya der Tarikh*, 50-51, 62-67, 74-77.

Khorasan such as Nishapur, Torbat-e Jam and Torbat-e Heydarieh and cities in central Iran such as Hamadan and Saveh would be of interest. Considering the fact that the pre-Islamic culture had not dissolved in a day and historical and cultural continuity cannot be outmatched, New Renunciation must have naturally been affected by the pre-Islamic past and non-Islamic religions, as Kadkani and other historians with similar ideas claim. Yet it would be an error to regard the whole école as distorted and a less-Islamic interpretation of Sufism or a complete composition of pre-Islamic religions' remnants. At this point, it should be kept in mind that despite its protestant and marginal features, Kalandariyya is a Sufi sect and an interpretation shaped within the Islamic framework as Karamustafa underlines.

## CHAPTER III

### THE ŞÜCĀ'Ī/OṬMANĪ COMMUNITY

It is known that the renouncer orders had crossed the threshold of Anatolia in the 13th century, gained new followers among urban and rural residents and affected different Sufi communities. Both Ḥacı Bektaş Velī and Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī had contacts with these coteries.<sup>102</sup> However, only several of the numerous antinomian dervishes and *abdāls* of the lands of Rūm are acknowledged as disciples of the prominent Ḳalandarī disposed orders.

In *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba*, it is written that before moving to the Balkans, Oṭman Baba remained and wandered Anatolia for years. From his utmost respect and sending his *abdāls* to the tomb of Sulṭān Şüçā'üddīn in the periphery of the Seyyid Ġāzī Complex, it can be deduced that in his past, Oṭman Baba had been a member of the Şüçā'ī community.<sup>103</sup> He was the person who carried the community over to Thrace, and after his death, the community was guided respectively by two other important leaders, Aḳyazılı Sulṭān and his successor Demir Baba. Yet in the texts produced by the community, neither their order nor the founder of the *silsila* is noted. The earliest recorded name of the *silsila* is Sulṭān Şüçā'üddīn.

#### 3.1. THE ANTINOMIAN COMMUNITY OF THE ŞÜCĀ'Ī/OṬMANĪ SILSILA

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<sup>102</sup> Ocak, *Kalenderiler*, 113-119, 126-127; Kadkani, *Qalandariyya der Tarikh*, 193-194.

<sup>103</sup> *OBV*, 244, 248-249.

Sultān Şücā'üddīn Velī or Şücā'üddīn Baba, who was also referred to as Sultān Varlıđı and Şefgüllü Beg, was referred to as *Kuṭb al- 'Ārifīn* and the *Kuṭb* of the lands of Rūm in his and his successor Oṭman Baba's hagiography. According to the same sources, he had been an esteemed senior *walī* during the Timurid invasion in 1402 and lived through the reign of Meḥmed I and at least a period of the reign of Murād II. Thus he must have lived around the second half of the 14th and the first quarter of the 15th centuries.<sup>104</sup> He was buried in the village of *Aslanbeyli*, which had borne his name previously and which is located quite close to the Seyyid Ğāzī Complex. His *türbe* [m: tomb] was constructed long after his death under the patronage of Malkoçođlu Kāsım bin Bāli Beg in 1515-16.<sup>105</sup> It is not certain who granted him *ijāzāt* or which *silsila* he was attached to but the fact that he and his *abdāls* are described as *'uryān* [m: naked] and followers of Ḥacı Bayram Velī speak of him as "a person whose eyebrows and eyelashes tore out" in the *walāyatnāma* of Ḥacı Bayram Velī, give us a hint about his affiliations. Sultān Şücā'üddīn calls his *murids* with the titles of *abdāl* and *köçek/küçük*, which Köprülü associates with Kalandarī circles.<sup>106</sup> In his hagiography, he and his dervishes settle in a cave, a grove and a *vīrān* [m: desolate, ruined] place compared to Karbala and they are depicted as wandering dervishes without a proper dervish lodge. A dervish of his, Abdāl Meḥmed, lives in the dirt of a public bath in Bursa for eighteen years. All these details imply that Sultān Şücā'üddīn and his dervishes were an antinomian community.<sup>107</sup> While the local people, ghazis and Sufi sects, the ulama, governmental offices and even people from Persia and India visited him respectfully, others showed hostility. These different encounter stories might be fictionalized in order to bring prestige to Sultān Şücā'üddīn, yet there are traces of his influence such as the name of his large and famous antinomian community "'Üryān Şücā'īler" and their symbolic clubs "the

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<sup>104</sup> *OBV*, 11-12; *SŞV*, 55, 64, 67.

<sup>105</sup> Yürekli, *Architecture and Hagiography in the Ottoman Empire*, 126-128.

<sup>106</sup> Köprülü, "Abdal", 31.

<sup>107</sup> *SŞV*, 55-97.

Şücā'ī club". Likewise, there are also villages and *tekkes* all around Anatolia and Rumelia named after him.<sup>108</sup>

Another person admirably mentioned in the *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba* is Ƙara Şāmit, who according to the source, was martyred in foreign lands. This figure in the hagiography has been ignored by the historians but according to the *walāyatnāma* of Sulṭān Şücā'üddīn, there were three individuals named Yünlü Şāmūt, Zincirli Şāmūt and Ƙara Şāmūt in the Şücā'ī community. In his hagiography, Sulṭān Şücā'üddīn sends these three *abdāls* to request Timur to leave Anatolia and in return, Timur gives his word. In *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba*, Küçük Abdāl indicates that Oṭman Baba arrived in Anatolia during the Timurid invasion but he does not define how.<sup>109</sup> If indeed any of these stories are true and Oṭman Baba did come with Timur's cortege, then he might have met with Ƙara Şāmit there, who certainly must have been older and had a great impact on Oṭman Baba.

Although his name is not celebrated in the hagiographies and little is known about him, 'Üryān Baba was seemingly one of the luminaries of the Şücā'ī/Oṭmanī cult. It is thought that he was a contemporary of Sulṭān Şücā'üddīn, and similar to him, the lodge and tomb of 'Üryān Baba are sited in a village very near to the Seyyid Ğāzī Complex. In the same way with Sulṭān Şücā'üddīn, the village was named after him as his tomb is located there but today the name of the village is Yazıdere. There is a belief that 'Üryān Baba was a successor of Sulṭān Şücā'üddīn,<sup>110</sup> but there is no evidence to support it. In another respect, there is a *walī* with the name of 'Üryān Baba, in the chapter where Hacı Bektaş Velī steps in Anatolia in *Şaltuḡnāme* compiled by Abū al-Ḥayr-i Rūmī.<sup>111</sup> Although *Şaltuḡnāme* is not a reliable source and chances are remote, this fragment of information indicates that 'Üryān Baba might have been the first

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<sup>108</sup> Haşim Şahin, "Şücaüddin Veli" in *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, (Istanbul: TDV İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi, 2010), 247-248.

<sup>109</sup> *OBV*, 16-17, 32, 47, 246; *SŞV*, 88.

<sup>110</sup> Ahmet Y. Ocak, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Marjinal Sufilik: Kalenderiler: XIV-XVII. Yüzyıllar*, 248.

<sup>111</sup> *SN*, 275.



known agent of the *silsila*. As far as time goes, the *silsila* always bore the same word 'uryān, that 'Üryān Baba used as an epithet. In the vicinity of the Seyyid Ġāzī Complex, there are Sufi burial grounds and tombs and in all likelihood, the majority of these people were the members of the same community or at least the same order.

Beyond these, there are also other *abdāls* named Aḥmed Baba and ĶaraĶoĶaĶ Baba in the *walāyatnāma*, whom Oṭman Baba gave *ijāzāt* and sent to the town of Vize in Kırklareli. The same *abdāls* are present in the hagiography of Demir Baba. Other than them, the several *abdāls* of Oṭman Baba, whose names are given in his hagiography, are Deli Umur and Kemāyil, who join the coterie leaving the Bektaṣī community of Bāyezīd Baba ve Mü'mīn Dervīṣ; and Deli Baḥṣı and Ḥasan, two *abdāls* Oṭman Baba selects to guide his *murids* after his death. Unfortunately, there is not enough information about these dervishes.

After Oṭman Baba started his own community in the Balkans and died in 1478, the most significant event associated with the community was the failed assassination attempt on Bāyezīd II; this was until his recognized successor AĶyazılı Sulṭān made a name for himself in history. The perpetrator is referred to as a Ķalandarī, Ḥaydarī and *torlaĶ* in histories.<sup>112</sup> OruĶ Beg, who depicted the event more comprehensively than Matrakçı Naṣūh and Theodore Spandounes, specified that the assassin wore Ḥaydarī adornments, such as, rings and chains on his ears and neck and called out that he was the Mahdī while attacking. The incident took place in 1492 when the Sultan and his escorts were out of the city of Manastır/Bitola. Three years later, the *Ķādī* of Edirne was ordered to inspect the dervishes, *abdāls*, 'ishĶs and all the *Ahl al-Bid'at* [the people for Islamic innovations] in Filibe/Plovdiv and Zaĝra/Stara Zagora. Consequently, fifty followers of someone named Meczūb 'Oṣman Dede were taken to Edirne,

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<sup>112</sup> Ocak, *Kalenderiler*, 165; Matrakçı Nasuh, *Tarih-i Sultan Bayezid: Sultan Bayezid Tarihi*, ed. Reha Bilge, trans. Mertol Tulum, (Istanbul: Giza Yayıncılık, 2012), 48; Theodore Spandounes, *On the origin of the Ottoman Emperors*, ed. & trans. Donald M. Nicol, (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 138-139.

interrogated, tortured and whilst two of them were sentenced to death, the others were driven to Anatolia.<sup>113</sup> Since these two centers are very close to the tomb of Oṭman Baba, whose cult was the largest renouncer community in Bulgaria at that time, this Meczūb 'Oṣman Dede might really be Oṭman Baba himself. An anonymous chronicle reported that the assassin seemed like a Ḳalandarī and Ḥaydarī with chains. Hans Joachim Kissling transcribed the text but the word following several illegible words is 'uryān, which is a keyword used by the Ṣücā'ī/Oṭmanī community. According to the anonymous chronicle, the same process of surveillance and punishment took place as a result.<sup>114</sup> When the pieces come together it can be said that the offender could possibly be related to the Oṭmanī community, which was accused by his actions.

However, there are additional intriguing facts that raise doubt. The construction of the tomb of Oṭman Baba was authorized during the reign of Meḥmed II according to Nikolay Antov and it was finished in 1506-1507. A tax register from 1515-1516 shows that before his death, Bāyezīd II issued an edict to protect the real estate of the Oṭman Baba *tekke*. Why would Bāyezīd approve the construction of a tomb and dervish lodge of a marginal Sufi leader, order construction of a magnificent kiosk next to the tomb and put it under his protection, whose dervish had attempted to murder him?<sup>115</sup>

Either way, it is not certain who ascended to the community leadership after Oṭman Baba's death except the two *abdāls*, Deli Baḥşı and Ḥasan, mentioned in the hagiography.<sup>116</sup> The first person who acquired a great level of public recognition after Oṭman Baba was İbrahim-

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<sup>113</sup> Oruç bin 'Adil, *Oruç Beğ Tarihi: Osmanlı Tarihi (1288-1502)*, ed. Necdet Öztürk, (Istanbul: Bilge Kültür Sanat, 2014), 133, 145.

<sup>114</sup> Hans Joachim Kissling, *Sultan Bajezid's II. Beizehungen zu Markgraf Francesco II. von Gonzaga*, (Munich: Max Hueber Verlag, 1965), 12-13; İnalçık, "Dervish and Sultan", 32.

<sup>115</sup> Refik Engin, *Balkanlardaki Yattır, Türbe, Tekke ve Zaviyelerimiz*, (Istanbul: Akademik Kitaplar, 2014), 273; Antov, *The Ottoman "Wild West"*, 89-92; Yürekli, *Architecture and Hagiography in the Ottoman Empire*, 129; Evliya Çelebi bin Derviş Mehmed Zilli, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi: Topkapı Sarayı Kütüphanesi Bağdat 305 Numaralı Yazmanın Transkripsiyonu – Dizini*, v. 8, ed. & trans. Seyit Ali Kahraman, Yücel Dağlı and Robert Dankoff, (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2003), 342-344.

<sup>116</sup> *OBV*, 259.

i Sānī, who came to be known as Aқыazılı Sulṭān. There is little known about him. In *Fazīletnāme* written by the reputed 'Alevī poet Yemīnī and in the hagiography of Demir Baba, it is written that Aқыazılı Sulṭān "had emerged" in 1496 and was the *Ḳuṭb al-Aḳṭāb* during the reign of Sultan Süleymān I.<sup>117</sup> Again, it is unclear whether or not Oṭman Baba and Aқыazılı Sulṭān met and if not, in the *silsila* who was the intermediary between them. In any case, Aқыazılı Sulṭān chose to settle in Dobruja, a very remote corner of the Ottoman Empire where the Bulgarian and Romanian border is today. Antov claims that the choice was a consciously made one due to the oppression the community had been suffering.<sup>118</sup> The most extensive source about Aқыazılı Sulṭān is the *walāyatnāma* of his *murid*, successor and spiritually adopted son, Demir Baba. As stated in the hagiography, written in 1620, Aқыazılı Sulṭān makes a request to one of his *abdāls* Hacı Dede to marry, which he does not want to accept because of his fear that marriage would disrupt his spiritual training with Aқыazılı Sulṭān. However, when Aқыazılı Sulṭān asks him that since he himself cannot have a child, how Ḳara Demir would be born, the *abdāl* accepts the proposal. In the long chapter concerning the wedding day, there are plenty of prominent people of the community in attendance, such as, Ḳademli Baba, the second most important leader figure in the community after Aқыazılı Sulṭān; Aḥmed Baba and Ḳaraḳoçaḳ Baba, who are mentioned in the *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba* as Oṭman Baba's dervishes, and dervish Yemīnī. When Demir Baba is born and grows into adulthood, Aқыazılı Sulṭān passes his status of the *Ḳuṭb al-Aḳṭāb* and *Ḳuṭb al-Ālam* to his son before his death.<sup>119</sup> These highest positions within the commonly shared belief of an esoteric hierarchy of the 'awliyā' are used consistently for the four fathers of the Ṣūcā'ī/Oṭmanī *silsila*; who are Sulṭān Ṣūcā'üddīn, Oṭman Baba, Aқыazılı Sulṭān and Demir Baba in the three hagiographies and Yemīnī's *Fazīletnāme*. In the *walāyatnāma* of Demir Baba, Oṭman Baba is commemorated as the grand *pīr* of the

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<sup>117</sup> *DBV*, 52; *FN*, 239.

<sup>118</sup> Antov, *The Ottoman "Wild West"*, 89.

<sup>119</sup> *OBV*, 51-52; *DBV*, 50-75.

community and his tomb is visited as a sacred place multiple times.<sup>120</sup> Tombs like these and many other respected leaders of the Oṭmanī community are located in close proximity to Oṭman Baba's tomb, which is in Hasköy/Haskovo, Aқыazılı Sultān's tomb and dervish lodge, which are in Balçık/Balchik, Demir Baba's Tomb, which is in Kemaller/Isperih, and Ҷademli Baba's Tomb, which is in Yeni Zağra/Nova Zagora. It is documented that Aқыazılı Sultān dervish lodge operated during the rule of Selīm I.<sup>121</sup> From all of this data, it can be seen that Oṭmanī community was localized in Eastern Bulgaria.

As already mentioned above, another striking name at the wedding of Ҷacı Dede is Yemīnī. In the hagiography of Demir Baba, Yemīnī prays the salat of Muṣṭafā Baba and in *Fazīletnāme* speaks highly of Oṭman Baba and Aқыazılı Sultān, he confirms their claims of *kuṭbiyyat* but he does not make any mention of Ҷacı Bektaş Veli.<sup>122</sup> Conjecture can be made that he was a member of the Oṭmanī community. However, Yemīnī is also referred to as a dervish of Mü'mīn Dede in the *walāyatnāma*.<sup>123</sup> This particular Mü'mīn Dede might be Mü'mīn Dervīş of the Bektaşī order, who is the primary opponent of Oṭman Baba in *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba*. If so, it must be asked why there are no Bektaşī affiliations in Yemīnī's work. The Mü'mīn Dede community might have been absorbed by the Oṭmanī community completely or Mü'mīn in the *walāyatnāma* of Demir Baba might have been a different person, an *abdāl* of the Oṭmanī community. Yemīnī's being referred to as a Bektaşī today is a result of the absorption of the renouncer orders to the Bektaşī cult in the 17th century as he was not a Bektaşī himself.<sup>124</sup> Moreover, the subtext of *Fazīletnāme* and Yemīnī's

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<sup>120</sup> *DBV*, 57, 73, 79, 110, 114, 146-147, 162.

<sup>121</sup> Semavi Eyice, "Aқыazılı Sultan Asitanesi" in *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, (Istanbul: TDV İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi, 1989), 302.

<sup>122</sup> Rıza Yıldırım, "Abdallar, Akıncılar, Bektaşılık ve Ehl-i Beyt Sevgisi: Yemini'nin Muhiti ve Meşrebi Üzerine Notlar" *Belleten* 75, no. 272, (2011), 66-67, 71; *DBV*, 57, 72; *FN*, 239.

<sup>123</sup> *DBV*, 57.

<sup>124</sup> Aydın Kirman, "Yemini" in *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, (Istanbul: TDV İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi, 2013), 420; Yıldırım, "Yemini'nin Muhiti ve Meşrebi Üzerine Notlar", 52.

indication that he had written it to the ghazis of the Balkans, show that he lived side by side with his audience experiencing the culture and traditions of the borderlands.<sup>125</sup>

Ahmet Karamustafa remarks that right along with Yemīnī, poets like ‘Askerī, Kelāmī, Yetīmī, Şemsī and Ḥayretī were also from the same community.<sup>126</sup> There are also other contemporary peoples such as Kız Aña, ‘Alī Baba, Demirhanlı Ğāzī ‘Alī Baba, and Hızır Baba, whose tombs are built with similar architectural design, decorated with the same symbolic motifs and located in the same region. In some of these tombs there are inscriptions declaring that they are Şücā’ī/Otmanī and for the others, there are historical attestations like the hagiographies or ‘Evliyā’ Çelebi’s *Seyāhatnāme*. In all the oral and written sources, the four fathers shine through numerous other names.<sup>127</sup>

Regardless of the number of their followers and their influence, the Şücā’ī/Otmanī community, just as all the other renouncer orders and communities, was absorbed into the overgrowing Bektaşī cult in the 17th century. Yet other texts like *Fazīletnāme* reveal that they were still able to preserve their authentic identity in the 16th century. In Vāhidī’s *Menākīb-ı Hoca-i Cihān ve Netīce-i Cān*, the Şücā’ī/Otmanī community is described as a separate unit along with the familiar New Ascetic orders. It is not exactly known how the ties between the *abdāls* and the Bektaşīs had been before and how the accumulation occurred but the increasing references to the Bektaşī order in the hagiographies show us that the bond had been growing stronger little by little in the 15th and 16th centuries. This subject will be touched upon in a more extensive way in the 6th chapter. Despite everything, the present day Şücā’ī/Otmanī circles still retain their originality under the title of Baba’ism and perceive Otmanī Babas as their community

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<sup>125</sup> Yıldırım, "Yemini'nin Muhiti ve Meşrebi Üzerine Notlar", 63-65; *FN*, 108.

<sup>126</sup> Karamustafa, "Kalenders, Abdals, Hayderis: The Formation of the Bektaşīye in the Sixteenth Century", 139.

<sup>127</sup> *DBV*, 57-66

Refik Engin, *Balkanlardaki Yatur, Türbe, Tekke ve Zaviyelerimiz*, (Istanbul: Akademik Kitaplar, 2014), 172-191, 237-243, 245-253.

*pīrs*, not Hacı Bektaş Velī. Additionally, Rıza Yıldırım points out that the migrant community members from Bulgaria had solidified their attachments to Sulṭān Şücā'üddīn after they had settled in Turkey, which demonstrates the uninterrupted bond between Şücā'ī and Oṭmanī communities in Anatolia and Bulgaria.<sup>128</sup>

### 3.2. A CRITICAL DEBATE ON THE IDENTITY OF THE *ABDĀLS*

In *Menākīb-ı Hoca-i Cihān ve Netīce-i Cān*, several sets of dervishes visit Hoca Cihān one by one. Qalandarīs, Abdāls and Ḥaydarīs are the first three groups that the reader is informed about. This second faction is also called Abdālān-ı 'Üryān and Abdālān-ı Rūm and they are referred to as "the orphans of Seyyid Ġāzī" and "the *köçeks* of Oṭman Baba". Their leader Qurban Baba's master is 'Üryān Baba.<sup>129</sup> Using this as a reference, Ahmet Karamustafa argues that the Şücā'ī/Oṭmanī community was neither Qalandarī nor Ḥaydarī but a distinct, localized faction of renouncers named "the Abdāls" or "Abdālān-ı Rūm".<sup>130</sup> He also distinguishes the Abdāls from the other New Ascetic orders by their spoken language. Hereunder it is asserted that Turkish was spoken by the Abdāls, while Persian was the mother tongue of their Qalandarī, Ḥaydarī, Jāmī, Adhamī, and Shamsī counterparts.<sup>131</sup> Nikolay Antov, approving Karamustafa's theories, makes his own explanation to clarify the confusion about the exact meaning of the term *abdāl*. His opinion is that there are two different connotations of the word. One is a general denotation, such as, dervish, *'ishk* and *torlak* as 'Aşıkpaşazāde used in the phrase "Abdālān-ı

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<sup>128</sup> Rıza Yıldırım, "Bektaşī Kime Derler?: "Bektaşī" Kavramının Kapsamı ve Sınırları Üzerine Tarihsel bir Analiz Denemesi" in *Kızılbaşlık, Alevilik, bektaşılık: Tarih-Kimlik-İnanç-Ritüel*, ed. Yalçın Çakmak and İmran Gürtaş, (Istanbul: İletişim Yayinevi, 2015), 78-80; Yürekli, *Architecture and Hagiography in the Ottoman Empire*, 28.

<sup>129</sup> *MHCNC*, 144-146, 153.

<sup>130</sup> Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends*, 46-47, 70-78; Karamustafa, "Kalenders, Abdals, Hayderis: The Formation of the Bektaşīye in the Sixteenth Century", 139.

<sup>131</sup> Ahmet T. Karamustafa, "Kaygusuz Abdal: A Medieval Turkish Saint and the Formation of Vernacular Islam in Anatolia" in *Unity in Diversity: Mysticism, Messianism and Construction of Religious Authority in Islam*, ed. Orkhan Mir Kasimov, (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 330.

Rūm", with the meaning of "*abdāls* of Rūm". The other connotation is that it is a proper noun to refer to the Şücā'ī/Oṭmanī community as an order or organization.<sup>132</sup>

However, can we be sure of the reliability of Nikolay Antov's explanation about the two different connotations? Or does it put forth an inconsistency between how the term was used by the contemporary dervish circles. As mentioned in the second chapter, *abdāl*, right along with the other Sufi titles, was used according to the personal inclinations of the Sufis from various and irrelevant communities. Therefore, it was far from having two well-defined connotations in the Medieval era. Furthermore, historians have made differing claims about the meaning of the term. Despite Karamustafa's claims, Ahmet Yaşar Ocak insists these antinomian communities' referring to themselves as *abdāls* did not change the fact that they were *Ḳalandarīs*.<sup>133</sup> To make an inference correctly, comparing the Şücā'ī/Oṭmanī community with the rest of the antinomian orders is essential.

As an example to the wandering non-materialistic renouncer dervishes, in his hagiography, Oṭman Baba is constantly on the move, appearing and disappearing in various places without letting anyone know. Since he refuses to establish his own dervish lodge, he stays in the houses of his acquaintances and probably *murids* and in the lodges of varying coteries. Another feature of the community that is stressed in the *walāyatnāma* is not to accumulate worldly assets or riches. Oṭman Baba refuses to take coins from high state officials and when he accepts he distributes them among the common people with the other gifts and livestock that is brought to him.<sup>134</sup> What is more, the concept of *Ḥarābāt/Vīrān* is one of the fundamentals of being a renouncer dervish. Emphasizing that it is a practice of the *Ḳalandarī*

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<sup>132</sup> Antov, *The Ottoman "Wild West"*, 55, 62, 71-72.

To highlight the difference between the general term and the specific organizational term Antov writes the first letter of the former with a lower case and the first letter of the latter with a capital case. I will do so, to show which denotation I am referring to.

<sup>133</sup> Ocak, *Kalenderiler* 57, 137-144, 151-168.

<sup>134</sup> *OBV*, 25, 30-31, 37, 40-41, 48-50, 76, 83-84, 94-99, 125, 131, 138, 195, 214-217, 221-224.

*abdāls* to seclude themselves in the mountains, forests or other desolate places and survive by consuming very little food in nature, Nevena Gramatikova asserts the Oṭmanī faction was a Ẓalandarī one.<sup>135</sup> As a matter of fact, in the hagiographies of Sulṭān Şūcā'üddīn and Oṭman Baba, this theme is used over and over again. Both the leaders and their acolytes dwelled in caves, forests, mountains, inappropriate places like public baths and were even held in captivity and slavery. In one of the earlier *manāḳib* in which Oṭman Baba is depicted as living by himself in solitude, a group of young men finds him with a green mouth because of the herbs he had been eating.<sup>136</sup>

The *abdāls* also practiced celibacy and did not accept women to their community as the *walāyatnāma* shows. In the *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba* the Sufi leaders who accept women in their communities are severely criticized.<sup>137</sup> The latter implementation seems changed in the next generations of the *silsila*, as in the *walāyatnāma* of Demir Baba, the community has a very prominent female member Ẓız Aña.<sup>138</sup> However, all these traits are adopted by more or less all the antinomian communities and orders.

If we have a glance at the distinctive Ẓalandarī traits in the three hagiographies of the elders, there are many *manāḳib*, in which the *murshids* or their *murids* undress and become 'uryān; practice a form of *Chahār Darb* by shaving their hair, beard and eyebrows; or simply wear woolen sacks made of goat hair. These were the characteristic enactments of Jamāl al-Dīn Sāvī, the founder of the Ẓalandarī *silsila* and the dervishes of his path.<sup>139</sup> The renown *manḳiba* about the life-changing encounter of Jamāl al-Dīn Sāvī and Jalāl-i Dergezīnī is the perfect tale of the belief and philosophy behind these marginal Ẓalandarī practices. According to this

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<sup>135</sup> Gramatikova, "Otman Baba ", 88-89.

<sup>136</sup> *OBV*, 16, 25, 29-31, 36, 38-39, 51-52, 101, 220-221, 265; *SŞV*, 58-59, 63.

<sup>137</sup> *OBV*, 46, 150; *DBV*, 54.

<sup>138</sup> *DBV*, 57-66.

<sup>139</sup> *OBV*, 25-28, 51-52, 76, 90-91, 97, 100, 127-128, 133, 139, 142, 232, 250-251; *SŞV*, 56, 58, 65, 70-71; *DBV*, 102, 124.



narrative, Jamāl al-Dīn comes across an extraordinary hermit as he visits a graveyard in Damascus. Jalāl-i Dergezīnī, who is naked except for a leaf on his genitals, has isolated himself from the rest of society and remained at the graveyard eating herbs for three years. Dergezīnī advises him that if he wants to find answers to his questions, he should renounce the world. Affected by the things he heard, Jamāl al-Dīn Sāvī prays that no obstacle, not even as small as a strand of hair, should remain between himself and God and finds out that all the hair on his body has fallen off that night. When Dergezīnī sees this miracle he realizes that Jamāl al-Dīn Sāvī is a superb *walī* and the two begin to spend time together and seclude themselves.<sup>140</sup> Religious seclusion, consuming only plants, shaving or burning body hair and remaining naked are all distinctive *Ḳalandarī* customs and they are all given place in especially the hagiographies of Sulṭān Şücā‘üddīn and Oṭman Baba which cannot be a coincidence. Putting a symbolic emphasis on these routines can only be explained by deliberately made references to the founder of the *Ḳalandarī* order. Also, as befitting to Vāḥidī’s report that *Ḳalandarī* dervishes wear gold colored or black wools, in the *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba* it is openly written in many chapters that the subject of the text wore black sacks.<sup>141</sup> After all, between Vāḥidī’s definitions of the *Ḳalandarīs* and the *Abdāls* there are not any special distinguishing practices that one group performed and the other did not and the two factions were almost identical according to Vāḥidī’s interpretation.<sup>142</sup> When the appearances, beliefs and practices of the Şücā‘ī/Oṭmanī community are examined, no reason can be found to think that these *abdāls* were not *Ḳalandarīs*.

On the other hand, there were several signs that the Şücā‘ī/Oṭmanī bands might have been *Ḥaydarīs*. The most discernible practices of the *Ḥaydarī* order were wearing chains and rings all around their diverse body parts and not shaving their mustaches while performing

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<sup>140</sup> Kadkani, *Qalandariyya der Tarikh*, 213.

<sup>141</sup> *OBV*, 40, 133, 155, 162, 182; *MHCNC*, 119.

<sup>142</sup> *MHCNC*, 119-120, 144-146.

*Chahār Darb*. In the hagiographies, there are only a few lines that give us clues about their being Ḥaydarīs, which are Sulṭān Şüca'üddīn's having an *abdāl* named Zincirli Şāmūt [m: Şāmūt with chains] and only one verse mentioning that Oṭman Baba had chains in his hair.<sup>143</sup> Aside from these, in both hagiographies in the passages, where it is noted that they were shaving their hair, beard, and eyebrows, mustache is never listed.<sup>144</sup> Above all, the most significant detail about the community constituting a Ḥaydarī branch is the before mentioned two records which delineate the perpetrator of the assassination attempt of Bāyezīd II as a Ḥaydarī and the link between him and the Oṭmanī community.<sup>145</sup> Lastly, Oṭman Baba's association with the legendary ghazi of the Balkans, Şarı Şaltuḡ, might also be an accepted marker since it has been asserted that Şarı Şaltuḡ and his *murids* could have been Ḥaydarī or at least Ḥaydarī inclined.<sup>146</sup> This subject will be discussed further in the 6th chapter, as well as a deep analysis of Oṭmanī and Bektaşī relations.

Apart from the most obvious two options, the other antinomian orders should also be taken into consideration if we are to understand which *silsila* the Şüca'ī/Oṭmanī community leaders were linked to. In the *walāyatnāma* of Oṭman Baba, Ḥacı Bektaş Velī and İbrāhīm Adham al-Balḡī are referred to with the highest regards and in one of the chapters, their follower bases are also praised.<sup>147</sup> Still, there are also allusions to other famous Sufis, such as, Manşūr al-Ḥallāj, Abū Bakr al-Shiblī, Ma'rūf al-Karhī and 'Imād al-dīn Nesīmī.<sup>148</sup> The belief and practices of the Şüca'ī/Oṭmanī *silsila* were closer to the Ḳalandarī and/or Ḥaydarī orders than the Bektaşīyya or Adhamīyya. In addition, in the *walāyatnāma*, Oṭman Baba openly expresses that Sulṭān Şüca'üddīn is his only equal and his *murids* should love his *murshid* and visit his *türbe*. However, while Oṭman Baba sends his followers to visit the Seyyid Ğāzī Complex and

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<sup>143</sup> *OBV*, 116; *SŞV*, 88.

<sup>144</sup> *OBV*, 76, 100, 142, 233; *SŞV*, 68.

<sup>145</sup> Oruç bin 'Adil, *Oruç Beğ Tarihi*, 133, 145.

<sup>146</sup> Ocak, *Şarı Saltuk*, 106-120.

<sup>147</sup> *OBV*, 12, 46-47.

<sup>148</sup> *OBV*, 60, 120, 146, 158-160, 10-181, 219.

Sultān Şüca'üddīn's tomb, there is no mention of visitation to the tomb of Hacı Bektaş Velī. In the hagiography of Sultān Şüca'üddīn there is not even the slightest reference to Hacı Bektaş Velī or İbrāhīm Adham. There is only a short *manķiba*, in which a Bektaşī dervish visits Sultān Şüca'üddīn.<sup>149</sup> Taking all of these facts into account, it can be said that the Şüca'ī/Otmanīs were neither a branch of Bektaşī nor Adhamī orders, but particularly after Otman Baba their relations with Bektaşīyya gained strength.

Three of the four fathers of the community have their own *walāyatnāmas* and further examination of these valuable sources can give us more information about the connection of the Şüca'ī/Otmanīs to the diverse école and orders. For instance, the two attention-grabbing motifs *niķāb* and roses, which require further research.

A mutually used motif in the hagiographies of both Sultān Şüca'üddīn and Otman Baba is *niķāb*. In the two separate verses of the first text, it is specified that Sultān Şüca'üddīn wears a green *niķāb*. As for Otman Baba, in a *manķiba* the writer points out that his master also wore a *niķāb* for a time and with a green spear he went to the Christian territories to help the people in need.<sup>150</sup> It should not be taken as a coincidence that such symbolic clothing was brought for both of the two claim-to-be- 'awliyā' from the same *silsila*. *Niķāb* has a history, related to the belief that 'Alī was the person who arrived at his funeral after his death and took away his dead body while his face was covered under a *niķāb*. This special *manķiba* about 'Alī is actually referred to in the hagiography of Sultān Şüca'üddīn and in *Şaltuķnāme*.<sup>151</sup> Thorough research about this theme in various sources from the école of Kalandariyya can provide more specific detail about the identity of the Şüca'ī/Otmanī community.

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<sup>149</sup> *OBV*, 11-12, 46-47, 58-117, 138-151, 242-244, 248-250; *SŞV*, 62.

<sup>150</sup> *OBV*, 56-57; *SŞV*, 73, 79.

<sup>151</sup> *SŞV*, 64, *SN*, 427

Another literary device that is used in both hagiographies is the combination of roses with the theme of nudity, which brings the distinctive *Ḳalandarī* traits to mind. In both sources, *Sultān Şücā'üddīn* and *Oṭman Baba* find themselves in situations that they need to prove their reliability as true Muslims since they are the people of *Ḥarābāt*. While *Sultān Şücā'üddīn* is accused of immorality by one of his followers, *Oṭman Baba* is found not to be adequately clean and pure enough because of his appearance. In the former case, *Sultān Şücā'üddīn* climbs a tree to give a fruit to this particular *murid*, who has come to kill him. As his pant falls off, the *murid* sees that there are roses covering *Sultān Şücā'üddīn*'s genitals. In the latter case, *Oṭman Baba* reads the minds of men he has been working with and knows that they think wrongly of him. So he calls them to pray *namāz* together and as he rolls off his skirts to perform *ābdast*, they see roses on his genitals. In both *manāḳib*, the wrongdoers feel shocked and ashamed at the same time and apologize from the '*awliyā*'.<sup>152</sup> As this is a very extraordinary motif used in both hagiographies, a *manḳiba* that might be found in similar narratives would become a key to illuminate the origins of the community and to which *silsila* they were linked to.

In light of all this information, it can be inferred that the *Şücā'ī/Oṭmanīs* might have been a completely independent faction named *Abdālān-ı Rūm* as *Karamustafa* argues or a localized branch of either the *Ḳalandarī* and/or *Ḥaydarī* orders, which used the title *abdāl* and *Abdālān-ı Rūm* to refer to their followers. In the history of Sufism there are countless examples of Sufi leaders who claimed that they were given *ijāzāt* from multiple *silsilas* of different orders and therefore, they were combining divergent beliefs and practices in their own system. In short, it can be said that it is not certain if the *Şücā'ī/Oṭmanīs* were an independent Anatolian formation or a faction of one of the more well-known orders. The only thing that is certain is

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<sup>152</sup> *OBV*, 31-32; *SŞV*, 56.

that the Şücā'ī/Oṭmanī community had a divergent identity among all the antinomian dervish communities of Anatolia and the Balkans.



## CHAPTER IV

### OṢMAN BABA, HIS LIFE AND THEORIES ABOUT HIM

#### 4.1. THE NARRATIVE OF KÜÇÜK ABDĀL

If one were to write the biography of OṢman Baba, the only reliable source about his life is his *walāyatnāma*. Apart from this account, there are not any other primary sources which involve more than a few lines or verses about him. Unlike the other pieces of literature, the content of the *Velāyetnāme-i OṢman Baba* is not limited only to the typical *karāmat* stories. The hagiography also has a chronologically written biographical aspect, which is extremely rich in information because of the unusual length of the text. Therefore, correlatively with the fluctuations in the life of OṢman Baba and as his religious and political impact grows, the content of the *walāyatnāma* also changes. However, this alteration does not disrupt the integrity of the text. There are also interspersed passages throughout the *walāyatnāma*, in which Küçük Abdāl explained the didactical messages of the *manāḳib* or the Sufi themes, doctrines, and teachings of OṢman Baba.

There is a stock *walī* character without a distinctive personality in all the examples of the genre. He trains and conveys his *murids* to their spiritual destiny and distributes *naṣīb* [m: pre-determined material and spiritual shares in life] among people. He is tested by people, who do not believe in his *walāyat* and shames them by performing *karāmat*. He endures persecution but at the end, his enemies are always punished by divine justice and sometimes by his own

will. In some samples, such as the *walāyatnāma* of Seyyid ‘Alī Sultān, the subject is formulated with the traits of not only a *walī* but also a ghazi-warrior. Yet in almost none of the hagiographies, the reader is given extraordinary information about the individuality of the subject. There is only a narrow and prototypical presentation of the religious and political trends. Befitting to the objective of writing, the hagiographers focus on proving the *walāyat* of the subject, not recording his identity, personality or past life. Even if there are *manķibas* about the subjects’ previous days to *walāyat*, they are written full of mythic elements and miracles in order to paint a flawless and legendary image of the subject and create an idol that would strengthen the belief of the dervishes, bring new followers and patrons and make a name for the order.

These general attributes of the subject do not apply fully to Küçük Abdāl's successfully multi-dimensional portrayal of Oṭman Baba. This is a result of Küçük Abdāl's being not a regular follower of the cult, who writes the hagiography decades and even centuries after the death of his subject without ever meeting him and who aims to build a legend in compliance with what he had listened to or read. On the contrary, Küçük Abdāl is a disciple, who shared years with Oṭman Baba and saw him as a real human being. That is why, in this unusually long *walāyatnāma*, the reader has the chance to examine the complex and thus more human characteristics of Oṭman Baba and how he reacts unconventionally to the ordinary events. However, naturally, the mindset and literary framework of the period bound the biographical contents of the narrative. In the end, it should not be forgotten that the text is a hagiography with some biographical elements.

There is also the fact that Küçük Abdāl's personal devotion to Oṭman Baba. His commitment must have led him to ignore his master's faults and exaggerate his virtues. All of this aside, it is known that not only centuries old hagiographies but also all the modern literary

categories are inevitably intertwined with the writers' bias. That is why, like in every other source, the reader experiences the dilemma of doubt versus reliance.

Küçük Abdāl declares his goals to write the *walāyatnāma* more than once, which are to inform readers about who the *murshid* and *murid*, the real 'awliyā' and hypocrites are and to teach everyone their place so that they would not talk wrongly about the friends of God and become deniers when they meet them personally. He also adds that he wrote the hagiography for the future dervishes in order for them to know who Oṭman Baba was, how he lived and suffered and the message he delivered.<sup>153</sup> It can be deduced from the first line of the statement that the *walāyatnāma* was written to improve *abdāls'* radical reputation and as an answer to the disbelievers, who have been skeptical about Oṭman Baba, his community and principally the whole 'awliyā'. Hence, Küçük Abdāl openly suggests that the *walāyatnāma* was written for self-presentation and image reproduction purposes which applies not only for Oṭman Baba and his community but for the overall class of misunderstood 'awliyā', who were basically the *Bāṭinī* dervishes of the Ottoman world. As a matter of fact, the long passages of descriptions and explanations about the path of *walāyat*, who 'awliyā' are and what it means and takes to be a *walī*, are serving to this self-constructive function. Aside from that, it is also indicated that the *walāyatnāma* was written with didactical intentions for the dervish readers to refresh their belief. All of these confirm the above-mentioned claims of the historians about the motivations of hagiographers. The aforementioned statements of Küçük Abdāl shows that the incentives of a 15th century hagiographer were quite close to the modern biographers'. This also suggests how Küçük Abdāl managed to construct the personality of the Oṭman Baba better than the usual stock *walī* character.

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<sup>153</sup> *OBV*, 36, 48, 136, 275.



Oṭman Baba's passage to Thrace and the following conquest of Istanbul are the subjects of the opening chapters of the *walāyatnāma*. Küçük Abdāl neither introduces the family, homeland or socio-economic status of his master, nor gives any details about his engagement to Sufism or years of training. There is in fact nearly no information about Oṭman Baba's past before that dual milestone. The hagiographies produced in Anatolia and the Balkans are divided into two categories on this matter. As a prevailing pattern, unrealistic elements increase as the *manāḳib* about pre-*walāyat* life of the *murshids* has more place in the hagiographies, which severely affects the reliability of the texts. As mentioned before, the aim of writing these mythic elements is to canonize the subject and lay emphasis on his supremacy as a *walī*. In the more realistic *walāyatnāmas* like *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba*, only pieces of information about the subject's past might or might not be given. The chain of events usually starts after the subject is given *ijāzāt* and achieves *walāyat*, has become capable of starting his own community and establishes his own lodge. In fact, this trivialization of the apprenticeship years of the subjects also serves their interest because only by ignoring the flaws and human side of their subjects, writers can consolidate their authority and present them as *Insān-i Kāmil*, literally “the perfect human beings”. This excelling portrayal of the subject is justified with the Sufī mindset that the *murids* should accept and fully believe in their *murshid* as *tajallī* of God [m: God's manifestation on earth].

To conclude, it should be accepted that the *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba* has a different place among its kind. It is a hagiography about Oṭman Baba, his religious and political views, as well as his personality and achievements; it details the ups and downs of the last quarter of his life story and the years he established his cult in Thrace out of nothing, which are definitely more than stereotypical *karāmat* stories. A work that focused so much on the individuality of a person was ahead of its time.

#### **4.2. THE BIOGRAPHY AND THE PERSONALITY OF OṬMAN BABA**

In his *walāyatnāma*, Oṭman Baba is depicted as a heavily-built *Yörük*, who came from Khorasan and spoke the Oğuz dialect.<sup>154</sup> His contacts with the *Türkmen/Yörük* population of the Balkans, the ghazis, shepherds and wrestlers and his choice of weaponry as bow and arrows can be interpreted as a confirmation of his *Türkmen/Yörük* identity. Also Halil İnalçık accentuated that the pronunciation of the letter "k" as "kh" in the *walāyatnāma* denotes the Azeri accent of Oṭman Baba.<sup>155</sup> He is known as Oṭman Baba among the common folk, however, the research suggests from both the hagiography and sources like *Faz̄iletnāme*, *Dīvān* of Şādık Abdāl and the inscription on his tomb, Oṭman was acquired later on along with his many nicknames and epithets. According to the same sources, his real name among 'awliyā' was Hüssām Baba or Hüssām Şah, which was actually a shorter version of Hüsāmeddīn with respect to a single reference in the hagiography of Demir Baba. Apart from these, he was also known as Ğanī Baba, Şarklı Koca, Şomun Abdāl, Sulṭān Baba and Yörük Kocası.<sup>156</sup>

There is an inscription on the tomb of Oṭman Baba today, according to which Oṭman Baba left Khorasan in 1388 and died in 1478. Küçük Abdāl also writes that Oṭman Baba died in 1478, so if the latter date is true, the initial one cannot be true as well.<sup>157</sup> In *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba*, it is mentioned that Oṭman Baba came to Anatolia "with Timur".<sup>158</sup> It is not certain what is meant by this phrase but Oṭman Baba might have arrived in Anatolia within the entourage or armies of Timur or in a broader sense, in the same period as the Timurid invasion.

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<sup>154</sup> *OBV*, 15-16, 212.

<sup>155</sup> İnalçık, "Dervish and Sultan", 20.

<sup>156</sup> Ocak, *Kalenderiler*, 158; *OBV*, 1, 16, 26, 29, 42, 51, 64-65, 93, 140, 155; *DBV*, 79, 110, 119; *FN*, 239; Sadık Abdal, *Sadık Abdal Divanı*, ed. Dursun Gümüšoğlu, (Istanbul: Horasan Yayınları, 2009), 74; Yürekli, *Architecture and Hagiography in the Ottoman Empire*, 129.

<sup>157</sup> Lyubomir Mikov, *Bulgaristan'da Alevi-Bektaşî Kültürü*, (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2008), 139-140.

Gökhan Yurtoğlu, "Oṭman Baba'nın Tarikatı'na Dair" *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Veli Araştırma Dergisi* 80, (2016), 139-140. To see the whole inscription, look at Gökhan Yurtoğlu's article.

"Horasan'dan yedi yüz doksanda huruc eyleyüp

Nice abdal ile geçip Rumeli'ye haliya

Seyyida olsun dua fetvine tarih diyelim

Hem sekiz yüz seksen üçde göçdi şol Osman Baba"

<sup>158</sup> *OBV*, 17.

Interestingly, there are two similar *manāḳib* in the hagiographies of Sultān Şücā'üddīn and Oḡman Baba, in which Sultān Şücā'üddīn asks Timur to leave the lands of Rūm. In the hagiography of Sultān Şücā'üddīn, one of the three dervishes he sends to Timur is ara Şāmit, who is mentioned as a beloved and respected superior of Oḡman Baba in *Velāyetnāme-i Oḡman Baba*.<sup>159</sup> Although it is a very doubtful claim, if Sultān Şücā'üddīn really sent his dervishes to Timur's encampment for some reason, it has no significance whether the dervishes came into his presence or not, because the relation between Oḡman Baba and the Şücā'ī community might have begun there in 1402. Could the date 1388 be the birth year of Oḡman Baba? If it was, he could have arrived at Anatolia when he was fourteen, which is not unlikely.

Along with these possibilities, the *manāḳib* with Timur might have been fictionalized as there are many analog stories in nearly all the hagiographies, proving the superiority of the subjects over the worldly leaders. All the four fathers of the Şücā'ī/Oḡmanī community claimed that they were *ḳuṭbs*. Tales, in which Sultān Şücā'üddīn sends his dervishes to Timur to force him to leave Anatolia, Oḡman Baba is the spiritual father and *murshid* of Meḫmed II and Süleymān I resents not being invited to a wedding organized by Aḳyazılı Sultān, are a must to have in the hagiographies, as they were all written in order to gain prestige to these community leaders. Oḡman Baba might not have even come to Anatolia the same year with the Timurid forces. However, every piece of information needs to be taken into consideration, if the life story of Oḡman Baba will be written.

Chronologically, the next major event mentioned in the *walāyatnāma* is "the emergence" of Oḡman Baba as the *Ḳuṭb al-Aḳṭāb* in the lands of Rūm in 1429.<sup>160</sup> This might be interpreted as a declaration of Oḡman Baba's reaching the highest level of the Sufi hierarchy, twenty-seven years after his arrival in Anatolia and engagement with the Şücā'ī community.

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<sup>159</sup> *OBV*, 31, 47, 246.

<sup>160</sup> *OBV*, 16.

Küçük Abdāl writes that Oṭman Baba traveled all around Anatolia, primarily in the Western Anatolian lands of Germiyan, Şaruhan, and İznik.<sup>161</sup> Yet this phase is also passed over with only a few *manāḳib*, all discussed briefly in the first chapter.

When Murād II was still on the throne, Oṭman Baba leaves Anatolia for a short period of time and goes to a local named Sa'īd Çukuru in Azerbaijan. He remains there as a guest of Er Hacı, who was probably a lodge owner and the Sufi master of the region and returns to Anatolia with two companions.<sup>162</sup> A century later, the marked geography of Sa'īd Çukuru/Chokhur-e Sa'd [چخور سعد] would give its name to the province of Yerevan of the Safawi Empire. We can deduce that Oṭman Baba might have been from the area or at least spent a portion of his life there as he had acquaintances in Sa'īd Çukuru, which supports Halil İnalçık's theory about his Azeri accent, but it is not certain. When Oṭman Baba returns he goes to a hill near Istanbul and swears to take the city and recite azan in its churches.<sup>163</sup>

Oṭman Baba's passage to Rumelia, where the remainder of the *walāyatnāma* takes place, is narrated with a special *manḳiba* of walking on water. Although the event does not happen directly on the Bosphorus but on Lake Terkos, it is still a turning point because, after that *manḳiba*, Oṭman Baba remains in Rumelia until his death. In the chronologically arranged hagiography, this *manḳiba* is just after the journey to Sa'īd Çukuru and before the third chapter, which details Meḫmed's ascendance to the throne and the conquest of Istanbul. He wanders there for a time and visits Babaeski in Kırklareli, Deliorman, Misivri/Nessebar, Gerluva/Karlovo and when Istanbul is taken by the Ottoman forces, he is in Dırnava/Veliko Tarnovo. Therefore, it is known that Oṭman Baba passed to Rumelia before 1451 and traveled around until 1453. Even if he had had a community or home in Anatolia, it is not indicated in

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<sup>161</sup> *OBV*, 18, 30.

<sup>162</sup> *OBV*, 19-20.

<sup>163</sup> *OBV*, 19-20.

the text and there are no other records that indicate such. As a matter of fact, in the initial episodes and during his passage to Rumelia, he is always alone and travels by himself.<sup>164</sup>

From that point onwards, Oṭman Baba does not leave Thrace except to take trips to Istanbul. Based on the hospitality he receives from homeowners in different settlements and the several *manāḳib* in which single or small groups of people become his dervishes, we can expect that Oṭman Baba began to make a name and a community in this period.<sup>165</sup> The process of dervish-hood is explained in chapter eight. While Oṭman Baba passes through Zağra/Stara Zagora, a farmer recognizing him from past Sufi gatherings, approaches him, kisses his hand and asks to go with him. Oṭman Baba kindly refuses his request and tells him to wait until he returns from his journey. When Oṭman Baba returns, he tells the farmer to visit his dervish lodge in Yanbolu/Yambol if he wants to become a dervish. The farmer does so and joins the *abdāls* of Oṭman Baba.<sup>166</sup> This *manḳiba* is highly informative. Despite the fact that his crowded community is still not explicitly mentioned in these chapters, it appears that acolytes of Oṭman Baba began to convene in a lodge in Yanbolu/Yambol at this stage. This also crystalizes how the single or small groups of people in various towns and cities maintained their contacts with Oṭman Baba, although they did not contribute to his never-ending travels.

Over the course of encountering people, Oṭman Baba helps building of a bridge, works in threshing places, carries water, looks after animals and cures people and while doing all these for free, he recruits new followers. He also grants fortune to the ones who welcome him and believe in his *walāyat* and performs *karāmat* to the others, who doubt, try to test or openly challenge him. Because of his appearance, he is taken as a runaway or lunatic again and again. But as a wandering *abdāl* who is all by himself, Oṭman Baba faces far worse situations than being subjected to disrespect and insults. He is restrained, taken as a slave and forcibly put to

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<sup>164</sup> *OBV*, 22-23.

<sup>165</sup> *OBV*, 52, 54, 57.

<sup>166</sup> *OBV*, 56-57.

work or prosecuted more than once but he does not bow down to his oppressors. In all these *manāqib*, a bypasser or an acquaintance of his captors, free him. In a *manqiba* after one of his captors learns his real identity from a bypasser, begs for forgiveness and becomes a dervish of Oṭman Baba.<sup>167</sup> These people are introduced as nomads, shepherds, hunters, farmers, slavers, smiths, wrestlers and carters and there are other examples from different occupations both from urban and rural areas. Halil İnalçık argued that followers of Oṭman Baba were substantially of *Yörük* and *Türkmen* origins due to him being a *Yörük*, the references given in the *walāyatnāma* to the *Yörük* populace and the modern day 'Alevī followers of the Oṭmanī cult in the Deliorman and Dobrudja regions.<sup>168</sup> Correspondingly, a few generations later Yemīnī dedicates *Fazīletnāme* to the ghazis of the lands of Rūm.<sup>169</sup> However, the followers of the Oṭmanī *silsila* were not restricted to a single fraction of the population.

Even though Oṭman Baba remained in Anatolia for almost half a century, he began to form his own community only after his passage to Rumelia. This constant wandering and recruiting includes the year of 1456, when Oṭman Baba confronts Meḥmed II for the first time and warns him mockingly not to launch an expedition to Belgrade in the sixth chapter. If the given dates are accurate, for a man who must have been a teen in the year 1402, this is a very late age to still be recruiting followers. However, the historical accuracy and elaborate details of the *walāyatnāma* can make a researcher think twice about considering Küçük Abdāl's narrative. Both Oṭman Baba himself and the people around him call him "old" throughout the hagiography<sup>170</sup> and there is no reason not to think that he inaugurated his community in his old age. For this reason, Küçük Abdāl's leaving Oṭman Baba's past out of the *walāyatnāma* and

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<sup>167</sup> *OBV*, 16-19, 26, 30-32, 34-35, 48-49, 52-54.

<sup>168</sup> İnalçık, "Dervish and Sultan", 24-26; *OBV*, 73-74, 94, 124-125, 130-131, 138-141.

<sup>169</sup> *FN*, 108.

<sup>170</sup> *OBV*, 17, 65, 130, 155-156, 161.

starting the narrative from his passage to Rumelia is very critical because it marks a new chapter in his subject's life.

Küçük Abdāl makes mention of a group of *abdāls*' traveling with Oṭman Baba for the first time in chapter eight. However, only after dervishes of Bektaşī Bāyezīd Baba and Mü' mīn Dervīş leave their masters to join the community of Oṭman Baba in the fourteenth chapter, Küçük Abdāl starts to refer the *abdāls* constantly.<sup>171</sup> Hereafter, the *abdāls* loyally follow Oṭman Baba wherever he goes and he instructs them according to his will.

In the eleventh chapter, Küçük Abdāl begins to give place to the encounters between Oṭman Baba and the other Sufis and community leaders, which always end up with Oṭman Baba's granting *naşīb* to his respectful visitors or outmatching his corrupted rivals. As one might expect, these *manāķib* are written in order to demonstrate the supremacy of the subject over all the Sufi circles befittingly to the hagiography literature. However, it should be emphasized that a great deal of the mentioned Sufis were real and historical personalities. To give a few examples, Koyun Baba, who encounters Oṭman Baba near Lake Terkos and carries him on his back while walking on water in *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba*, has a tomb in Osmancık, Çorum. He is also referred to as a resident of Osmancık in the *walāyatnāma*. Oṭman Baba's dervishes Aḥmed Baba and Kāraķoķak Baba make an appearance at the wedding of Hacı Dede in the hagiography of Demir Baba. The tombs of Bāyezīd Baba and his successor Mü' mīn Dervīş, who are the greatest opponents of Oṭman Baba according to the *walāyatnāma*, are also located in Bulgaria.

By chapter seventeen, Oṭman Baba has built a remarkable reputation for himself. Crowds of commoners and dervishes pay him visits and bring him gifts, sheep and alms and Oṭman Baba grants them *naşīb*, heals the ill and distributes what is brought to him among the

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<sup>171</sup> *OBV*, 54-55, 76-80.

people in need.<sup>172</sup> In the twenty-fifth chapter, while describing one of these gatherings, Küçük Abdāl writes that all the shepherds of Dobrudja have become followers of Oṭman Baba, bringing sacks of coins and thousands of sheep with them. Admiration and respect to Oṭman Baba have increased excessively with the local people and the contemporary Sufis in this period.<sup>173</sup> There are around two or three hundred *abdāls* in this gathering. In the forty-sixth chapter, the number of the *abdāls* are given as one-hundred seventy-three, meaning that during the period of the seventeenth chapter, the numbers of the community members reached a climax.<sup>174</sup> However, we cannot ignore the fact that all of these are essential *manāḳib* for the consolidation of the imagery of *Ḳuṭb al-Aḳṭāb* and *Ḳuṭb al-‘Ālam*; exaggerations should be expected.

Between the twenty-first and twenty-sixth chapters, the focus on the hagiography slowly turns into the ever-mounting problems of the community. Oṭman Baba and his *abdāls* get into trouble with urban dwellers and are prosecuted in many different cities for unconventional public statements, *abdāls'* disturbing the peace by cutting and burning trees in Hırsova/Harşova, extinguishing the furnace of a public bath in Yanbolu/Yambol, throwing meats of a butcher's shop to the mud, messing the market place and chasing people with sticks in Edirne. While noting these incidents, Küçük Abdāl also tries to make logical explanations for their attitudes. The event in Edirne is especially interesting because Oṭman Baba accuses the butcher of selling "human meat" and calls the people of Edirne as "eaters of human meat".<sup>175</sup>

Oṭman Baba also reprehends, affronts and beats some of his disrespectful *abdāls* and nonmember Sufis. He even curses the ones who bear enmity or take action against him, causing serious malformations and even death. He never abstains from any legal or administrative

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<sup>172</sup> *OBV*, 95, 98-99.

<sup>173</sup> *OBV*, 124-125.

<sup>174</sup> *OBV*, 161, 213.

<sup>175</sup> *OBV*, 54-55, 119-120, 162-164.



officials or apologizes for any of his deeds in the *ḳāḏī* courts he and his followers are taken to.<sup>176</sup> However, as an outcome of the multidimensional characterization of Küçük Abdāl, Oṭman Baba does not react the same in each situation.

The plainspoken and bad-tempered *murshid* sometimes acts patiently, as if he does not understand the true intention of people. The most remarkable instances exposing the personality of Oṭman Baba are the intermittent *manāḳib* between chapters nine and thirty-one. These chapters describe the conflicts between Oṭman Baba and Bāyezīd Baba/ Mü‘mīn Dervīş, who were not real ‘*awliyā*’ but only hypocrites as stated in the text. As being aware of the truth, Oṭman Baba accepts Mü‘mīn Dervīş’s invitation to visit the dervish lodge of Bāyezīd Baba and begins to meddle with the structure of the community. In spite of his awareness of their negative opinions of him, he stays with them pretending to not understand their intentions. When they try to get rid of him, he persistently finds and provokes them. He spoils Mü‘mīn Dervīş’s plans of stealing incomes of the Oṭmanī community, winning his *abdāls* to their side or having the Oṭmanī community arrested.<sup>177</sup> He manages to overmatch his opponents each and every time due to his *walāyat*, which grants him the true knowledge of other people's thoughts and plans and the things that are going to happen in the distant future.

All in all, Oṭman Baba is definitely portrayed as more unpredictable, irritable and marginal when compared to all the other subjects of the contemporary hagiographies. Considering his unfaltering statements and behaviors, the authoritarian image he inhabits as a community leader becomes consolidated. Obviously these are motivating lessons for future cult members; to be honest, respectful and obedient and a warning for the nonbelievers and enemies of the community to stand clear.

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<sup>176</sup> *OBV*, 59-61, 65-67, 75, 87-88, 95, 105, 117-118, 137, 143, 150-151.

<sup>177</sup> *OBV*, 58-151.

Throughout these chapters, Küçük Abdāl gives some accurate details and clues about military campaigns and the private lives and personalities of the elites. Due to this, the community seems to be a highly political one and have their own social network. However, it is unclear how many of the state officials were interested in them. And another critical fact of the political contents of these *manāḳib* is that they let historians know the timeline of the important chain of events. In chapter thirty-two there is a reference to the Battle of Otlukbeli, which took place between the Ottoman and Akkoyunlu States in 1473. Oṭman Baba started to establish his community and get in touch with the governmental figures after he passed to Rumelia in the mid-century. This would mean that within approximately twenty years, from being an unaided wandering dervish he managed to make himself a legend, at least to a fraction of the society and at best the *murshid* of Meḥmed II.

Yet again, the course of events changes with another milestone, a *manḳiba* about a dream in thirty-ninth chapter, which foreshadows the upcoming hostility Meḥmed will bear against Oṭman Baba. An *abdāl* from the community dreams that with the order of Meḥmed II, first Maḥmūd Paṣa and then Şehzāde Muṣṭafā Çelebi, attacks Oṭman Baba. However when they fail to bring him to the Sultan, Meḥmed himself attempts to get Oṭman Baba and as he fails he, his son and his Grand Vizier retreat and leave. Shortly after this dream narrative, the news of consecutive deaths of Muṣṭafā Çelebi and Maḥmūd Paṣa arrive at the community, in 1474.<sup>178</sup> Soon afterward, Meḥmed receives an indictment about unconventional statements made by Oṭman Baba and decides to sentence Oṭman Baba to death along with his community. However, after a nightmare, he changes his mind and sends an enactment to the *ḳādī* of Edirne to seize Oṭman Baba and his *abdāls* and bring them to Istanbul.<sup>179</sup> It goes without saying that Küçük

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<sup>178</sup> *OBV*, 177-184.

<sup>179</sup> *OBV*, 189-190.

Abdāl implies that the deaths of Muştafâ Çelebi and Maḥmūd Paşa were caused by Meḥmed's corruption and taking action against Oṭman Baba.

Along with being a supremely unrealistic narrative, the intricate personification of Oṭman Baba in these chapters is outstanding. Even though Oṭman Baba is as aggressive as ever and never backs down from anything, there are hints of his sorrow and weariness due to the arrest warrant upon him and his community. He seems disappointed in Meḥmed, whom Oṭman Baba claimed to be the spiritual father and supporter, has now issued their incarceration. Following the dream *manḳiba*, Oṭman Baba cries for the first and last time in the *walāyatnāma* and asks himself what to do with his son, Meḥmed. Referring to the Black Sea, which he always traveled to, Oṭman Baba says that now the sea floods wildly.<sup>180</sup> In another *manḳiba*, one of the *abdāls* sees a vision of a man who descends from the sky to the earth and asks Oṭman Baba for permission to annihilate the sinners tormenting him. Oṭman Baba refuses and tells him to be patient.<sup>181</sup> These allegorical *manāḳib* imply that disasters would happen in the future and the divine forces would rather punish Meḥmed as they had punished his son and the Grand Vizier but Oṭman Baba stopped them.

This turn of events can be interpreted in different ways. As mentioned before, there is no certain evidence of the asserted relationship between Oṭman Baba and Meḥmed II. However, after the perpetual complaints and charges and the community returns from the threshold of a death penalty, the most reasonable scenario is that Küçük Abdāl might have wanted to write these events in a more pleasant way in order to vindicate the community and prevent more problems with the State. But ultimately, the idea should be entertained that Oṭman Baba could have been a pro-State person, who always backed Meḥmed II's policies and supported him not

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<sup>180</sup> *OBV*, 184.

<sup>181</sup> *OBV*, 187.

by miracles but by speaking out. Hence, he might have felt betrayed when he received the news of his detention.

In the wake of a number of dreams and miracles, Meḥmed finally realizes he has treated Oṭman Baba unjustly and recognizes him as his spiritual father and *murshid*. Around this time, the Sultan sends Gedik Aḥmed Paşa to subjugate Kefe/Feodosia, so it can be inferred that Oṭman Baba and Meḥmed II reconciled in 1475. Thereafter, until the death of Oṭman Baba in 1478, Meḥmed remains his faithful *murid* according to the *walāyatnāma*. The Sultan always asks for his blessings while planning military operations, defends him against the accusations of the ulama and ensures the safety of the community.<sup>182</sup>

By declaring his master as the spiritual father and the divine power behind one of the greatest monarchs in his time and the conqueror of Istanbul, Küçük Abdāl actually draws attention to not only spiritual but also earthly supremacy of Oṭman Baba. The otherworldly status of the 'awliyā' is always manifested by their precedence upon worldly leaders.

At the end of the hagiography, it is written that Oṭman Baba informs and soothes his *abdāls* about his imminent death. They move to Hasköy/Haskovo, where Oṭman Baba would be buried in 1478. Approximately two thousand people from varying backgrounds attended the funeral, including the ulama. The number might be exaggerated but even if it is, that overstatement is naturally made for a person who claimed to be *Ḳuṭb al-Aḳṭāb* and *Ḳuṭb al-Ālam*.<sup>183</sup>

### 4.3. ALLEGATIONS ABOUT OṖMAN BABA

Countless theories and claims about Oṭman Baba have been put forward by scholars, but it must be known that some are groundless, and few others are mistaken.

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<sup>182</sup> *OBV*, 258-270.

<sup>183</sup> *OBV*, 268-269.

To begin with, Ahmet Yaşar Ocak argues that Oṭman Baba was born in 780/1378, citing the hagiography where an *‘ālim* says: "As I have seen in a book, the prophet had announced that a man will come after the year of eight-hundred eighty and he will claim *‘Ana al-Ḥaḳḳ* and his claim will be approved. This is that man, praise him." Several other scholars acknowledge Ocak's words without giving a look at the source itself.<sup>184</sup> However, Hijri year 880 corresponds to 1475-1476, which is three years prior to Oṭman Baba's death. The birth year of Oṭman Baba is not given in the *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba* or in any other primary source.

The second claim of Ocak is that Oṭman Baba and his *abdāls* joined the wars in the Balkans. Indeed, in one of the earlier *manāḳib*, Oṭman Baba, on horseback and holding a green spear, tells a farmer that he is going to the Christian territories to help the people in need.<sup>185</sup> However, this *manḳiba* is dated after 1456, which means that he was around the age of seventy and Küçük Abdāl does not mention Oṭman Baba's attending to the war. On the other hand, Küçük Abdāl remarks in many different chapters that Oṭman Baba attended, led and even directed Ottoman battles spiritually. According to one *manḳiba*, an invisible army of *abdāls* fights behind the legendary warrior Şarı Şaltuḳ, who takes his orders from Oṭman Baba. Additionally, these celestial armies of *abdāls* do not always fight for the Muslims. On the contrary, in the specific *manḳiba* they turn against the Ottoman army and caused their failure, which has its own explanation in the previous passage, where Oṭman Baba warns the commander of the Ottoman army Süleymān Paşa as he visits him to ask his blessings. Oṭman Baba tells him not to pass the river in order to win the war and as is seen, Süleymān Paşa does not listen to him. In many *manāḳib* Oṭman Baba orders his *abdāls* to pluck grasses, cut and

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<sup>184</sup> Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends*, 47; Ocak, *Kalenderiler*, 156; *OBV*, 219; Gramatikova, "Oṭman Baba", 85, 87; Haşim Şahin, "Oṭman Baba" in *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, (Istanbul: TDV İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi, 2007), 6-8.

"Ve hem bir kitābda görmüşümdür ki Ḥazret-i Risālet buyurmuş ki: Sekiz yüz seksen yılımdan sonra bir kişi gelse gerektür ve da'vā-yı ene'l ḥaḳḳ idüp ḥükmin geçürse gerektür. Pes şāyed bu kimse ol kişidür ve ol 'azīz ola." Oṭman Baba Velayetnamesi, 162.

<sup>185</sup> *OBV*, 56-57.

burn trees and dig holes in the ground somewhere safe and far from the war, as they believe their actions are killing their enemies on the battlefield. In one such *manāḳib*, Oṭman Baba's thigh blackens and when an *abdāl* asks what happened, Oṭman Baba tells him that the battle has been hard and exhausted him. However, in not one of these chapters does Küçük Abdāl refer to Oṭman Baba's or any of his *abdāls* joining any battles physically or Oṭman Baba's using his sword, bow, and arrows literally.<sup>186</sup>

Ocak also propounds that the writer of the hagiography of Ḥacım Sulṭān refers to Oṭman Baba as 'Oṣman Baba, one of the spiritual sons of Ḥacım Sulṭān. However, there is no proof that can verify his statement since in the *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba*, it is openly stated that Oṭman Baba was not a native of Anatolia and came from Khorasan. On the other hand, 'Oṣman Baba was put into his mother's womb in the Seyyid Ğāzī Complex by a miracle of Ḥacım Sulṭān.<sup>187</sup> Consequently, it is not likely that the two are the same person.

Another assertion was made by Nevena Gramatikova. According to Gramatikova, Oṭman Baba spread the propaganda of *Bāṭinī* Sufism among *Türkmens* while he was in Sa' id Çukuru between the years of 1451-1453. Halil İnalçık also marked Azerbaijan as the starting point of Oṭman Baba's Sufi career. In the referred section of the *walāyatnāma*, it is only said that Oṭman Baba went to Sa' id Çukuru in Azerbaijan and remained there for a while with a native *walī* named Er Ḥacı and turned back to the lands of Rüm with the aim of taking Istanbul.<sup>188</sup> As the *manḳiba* of Meḥmed II's ascension to the throne in 1451 is after the journey to Sa' id Çukuru, Oṭman Baba must have gone to Azerbaijan and returned to Anatolia before 1451, when Murād II was still alive. Between the years 1451 and 1453 he must have traveled in the aforementioned cities in Bulgaria. It can be deduced from this passage that Oṭman Baba

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<sup>186</sup> Ocak, *Kalenderiler*, 157; *OBV*, 108, 114-115, 127-129, 152-152, 225-229.

<sup>187</sup> Tufan Gündüz, "Hacı Bektaş Veli'nin Yol Arkadaşı Kolu Açık Hacım Sultan ve Velayetnamesi", *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Veli Araştırma Dergisi* 55, (2010), 93-94; Ocak, *Kalenderiler*, 156.

<sup>188</sup> İnalçık, "Dervish and Sultan", 26; Gramatikova, "Oṭman Baba ", 86; *OBV*, 19-20.

indeed had contacts in this area but there is no information or the smallest hint in the hagiography about the homeland of Oṭman Baba, where he engaged with Sufism and his *murshid*, how he passed his time in Azerbaijan or what his social circle was there. He even calls himself as a dervish of Khorasan in the forty-sixth chapter.<sup>189</sup> Therefore, claims of Gramatikova and İnalçık remain uncorroborated until more information about the subject is uncovered.

A series of false allegations were also made by H. T. Norris and Irène Mélikoff, which are based on Mélikoff's anthropological observations conducted among the 'Alevī communities of Deliorman, more than her readings of the historical texts and hagiographies. As a consequence, she deduced that Demir Baba was a rebellious and non-conformist follower of Şeyḫ Bedreddīn. Norris, on the other hand, wrote that Ğanī Baba with the real name of Hüsam Şah, was a different person than Oṭman Baba. He also mistook Aқыazılı Sulṭān 's name İbrahim as the name of Oṭman Baba and confirmed the notes of Mélikoff about Demir Baba.<sup>190</sup> However, if the *walāyatnāmas* of Oṭman Baba and Demir Baba were read, it would be seen that none of these allegations are true. There are no historical verifications of non-conformism or any rebellious acts of Demir Baba. Moreover, chronologically he cannot be a *murid* of Şeyḫ Bedreddīn as Şeyḫ Bedreddīn lived before Oṭman Baba and there is no evidence of contact between the Bedreddīnī and Oṭmanī communities between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. Demir Baba must have been taken as a member of the Bedreddīnī *silsila* by the oral narratives in the later centuries.

Apart from all of these assertions, the name of Oṭman Baba has been a subject of a great many discussions among historians. The name 'Oşman is a Turkified derivative of 'Uṭmān and

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<sup>189</sup> *OBV*, 212.

<sup>190</sup> H. T. Norris, *Popular Sufism in Eastern Europe: Sufi Brotherhoods and the dialogue with Christianity and 'Heterodoxy'*, (New York: Routledge, 2006), 43-48; Irène Mélikoff, *Hacı Bektaş: Efsaneden Gerçeğe*, (Istanbul: Cumhuriyet Kitapları, 1999), 89-90; Irène Mélikoff, "Bulgaristan'da Deliorman Kızılbaş Topluluğu" in *Uyur idik Uyardılar: Alevilik-Bektaşilik Araştırmaları*, (Istanbul: Demos, 2015), 136-137.

similar to Abū Bakr and ‘Omar it has become taboo among Shiite and ‘Alevī circles. As the Oṭmanī cult and community converted to ‘Alevism in the 16th-17th centuries, the name Oṭman became preferred within the ‘Alevī literature.<sup>191</sup> However, it seems it was spelled as Oṭman back in the days of Oṭman Baba as well, since Küçük Abdāl wrote his name as Oṭman in 1483. Küçük Abdāl wrote the name of the town Osmançık, the Ottoman government and the related phrase "Osmanoğulları/sons of Osman" the same way as he wrote Oṭman Baba, with a "t/ت" not with an "s/س". Furthermore, Küçük Abdāl details that Oṭman Baba, whose real name is Ḥüsāmeddīn, chose the name Oṭman for himself to make a reference to his being the spiritual father of Meḥmed II and thus his being the spiritual patron of the Ottoman Empire. The fact that he himself chose a derivative of the name ‘Uṭmān basically shows that he did not share the idea of *tabarru*’ [or *tabarrā*, meaning: disengagement and bearing enmity against the enemies of Muhammad and *Ahl al-Bayt*]. Therefore, the local usage of Oṭman in the place of ‘Oṣman might be a result of not Oṭman Baba's paying special attention to revert it, but his and the local people’s pronouncing the original name that way.<sup>192</sup>

Both in the hagiographies of Oṭman Baba and Demir Baba, it is stressed that the community leaders were celibates. However, in a document Refik Engin shares it is written that Selīm I granted privileges to the sons of Oṭman Baba and “Dede Bāli son of Oṭman” is noted below the registry.<sup>193</sup> On the other hand, in the *walāyatnāma* of Demir Baba, it is stated that Demir Baba is related to Oṭman Baba through his father, Ḥacı Dede. According to the source, Oṭman Baba had a son named ‘Abdi and a grandson Tūrān, who was the father of Zeynel ‘Abidīn and grandfather of Ḥacı Dede. Contrastingly, in the same lines and at the beginning of the *walāyatnāma*, it is written that ‘Abdi was the son of Seyyid ‘Alī, who was the son of

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<sup>191</sup> Mikov, *Bulgaristan'da Alevi-Bektaşî Kültürü*, 40.

<sup>192</sup> *OBV*, 22, 42, 52, 214.

<sup>193</sup> Engin, *Balkanlardaki Yatur, Türbe, Tekke ve Zaviyelerimiz*, 266.



Bahaeddin and grandson of ‘Alī-i Bozorg.<sup>194</sup> Since the time period between Oṭman Baba and Demir Baba is too short, the information might be rightly given. Abdi might be a spiritually adopted son of Oṭman Baba just as Demir Baba was to Aḳyazılı Sultān. However, one should always bear in mind that Oṭman Baba might have fathered one or more children when he was young. For the reason that there is no information in the *walāyatnāma* about Oṭman Baba’s past before he enters Thrace as a senior *walī*, it is possible for him to have previously had a family.

#### 4.4. SUNNI OR SHIITE

The last discussion about Oṭman Baba that should be given place in this chapter is the question of whether he and his community were Sunni or Shiites. Actually, the same discussion applies to all the pre-16th century *Bāṭinī* orders. A great number of historians abstained from making a direct statement about the subject. But another major group assess the *Bāṭinī* orders and communities were inclined to Shiism or were directly Shiites because of their utmost respect to *Ahl al-Bayt*, their adoption of *Bāṭinī* beliefs such as *Waḥdat al-Wujūd*, *tanāsuh* and *ḥulūl*, their not giving much importance to Shar’i practices and most significantly, their allegiance to ‘Alevīs during the Sunni/‘Alevī Schism in the 16th century Ottoman Empire. Though because it is not certain, review of the information is still needed on this subject.

Historians share a tendency to analyze history through the lens of the religious and political agenda of modern times, which is defined as an "anachronistic back-projection that has its roots in official the 16th century Ottoman discourse" by Rıza Yıldırım. Therefore, Yıldırım emphasizes that the *Bāṭinī* communities of the pre-16th century and the ‘Alevī Creed were not directly correlated but we tend to think they were, as the major part of the *Bāṭinī* communities converted to ‘Alevism in the following centuries. According to Yıldırım many dogmas, such as attaching particular importance to ‘Alī and *Ahl al-Bayt* and sharing *Bāṭinī*

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<sup>194</sup> *DBV*, 51, 119.

beliefs, which were associated with Shiism/‘Alevism in later centuries, were accepted by the Sunnis without any complications in the 13th and 14th centuries. Yıldırım reviews the sources produced by Sufis before the 16th century and later appropriated by the ‘Alevī circles. In these sources, the four caliphs are praised, not the Imams and among the *Bāṭinī* community there are people named ‘Ömer and ‘Oğman. These facts demonstrate that these communities were not Shiites but Sunnis, yet their perception of Sunnism was quite different than the perception in the 16th century.<sup>195</sup> Yıldırım does not focus his attention on the antinomian orders but makes general assumptions about the Sufi *Bāṭinism*, which includes the *Ḳalandarī* disposed groups. And the 15<sup>th</sup> century was a transitional age in this formula.

On the other hand, Shiite scholars do not recognize the renouncer orders as Shiite, on account of their esoteric beliefs such as *tanāsuh* and *hulūl*, since such notions are not accepted within the Shiite Sharia-based Islam as well. In this respect, it can be said that the antinomian orders were close neither to Sunni nor Shiite Sharia-oriented interpretations of Islam. The elements, which are mistaken as implications of Shiism, have in fact different connotations in the New Renunciation.<sup>196</sup>

Regardless of the context, they were found in and their religious and political variances, almost all the Sufi orders acknowledge ‘Alī as the preeminent *walī* by tracing their *silsilas* to him. Moreover, despite a great percentage of Sufis being Sunni, they share the belief of divine guidance of a leader with the Shiites. However, while in Shiism the position of spiritual leadership and esoteric knowledge is transferred genealogically, in Sufism it is accessible for whoever manages to transmit his soul to perfection. For the Shiites, the Imams are

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<sup>195</sup> Köprülü, *Anadolu'da İslamiyet*, 109-117; Rıza Yıldırım, "Anadolu'da İslamiyet: Gaziler Çağında (XII.-XIV. Asırlar) Türkmen İslam Yorumunun Sünni-Alevi Niteliği Üzerine Bazı Değerlendirmeler", *The Journal of Ottoman Studies* 43, (2014), 109-116; Rıza Yıldırım, "Sunni Orthodox vs Shi'ite Heterodox?: A Reappraisal of Islamic Piety in Medieval Anatolia" in *Islam and Christianity in Medieval Anatolia*, ed. A.C.S. Peacock, Bruno de Nicola and Sara Nur Yıldız, (Farnham, Burlington: Ashgate, 2015), 300-307.

<sup>196</sup> Gramatikova, "Otman Baba ", 79; Ocak, *Kalenderiler*, 198.

intermediaries between the people and God. Though Sufis believe that the spiritual progression and communion with God can be achieved by a composition of Sharia, *Ṭarīkat* and *murid*'s complete submission to *murshid* like a dead body in the hands of its washer. Yet another similar but also slightly different element between Sufism and Shiism is that the highest seat of authority in Sufism, which is *Ḳuṭb al-‘Ālam wa al-Zamān*, belongs to Mahdī in Shiism. For this reason, Shiite Sufi scholar Aziz ad-Din an-Nasafi's interpretation that the circle of *walāyat* started with the death of Muhammad and Ṣāhib al-‘Ālam wa al-Zamān is the contemporary Imam, is like a connective bridge between the Shiite and Sufi doctrines.<sup>197</sup>

On this matter, Abdūlbaki Gölpınarlı specifies that because of their loyalty to *Ahl al-Bayt*, all the Sufi orders are more or less, knowingly or unknowingly under the impact of Shiism and only a smaller group openly declares themselves Shiites. A person who understands the philosophy of *Waḥdat al-Wujūd*, cannot adopt the act of *tabarru’* as he would know everything and every event is a result of God's will. Thus, he cannot hold a grudge even against the enemies of Muhammad and *Ahl al-Bayt*. Therefore, a Shiite Sufi can only be a member of the Mufaḍḍila sect of Shiism, who were integrated with the Sunnis. For Gölpınarlı, all the Sufis are Mufaḍḍila,<sup>198</sup> which clarifies why Sufis do not identify themselves with the norms of Sunnism or Shiism but make sense of the world according to their own philosophy.

As all these facts are put forth, the hagiographies of the pre-16 century Şücā‘ī/Oṭmanī notables should be examined. Irène Mélikoff, drew attention to the symbolic place of number seven within the Şücā‘ī/Oṭmanī community and argued that they were Sevener/Ismā‘īlī Shiites.<sup>199</sup> The same exceptional usage attracted the notice of several more historians. In the

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<sup>197</sup> Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, 133-137.

<sup>198</sup> Gölpınarlı, *Melamilik ve Melamiler*, 197-198.

<sup>199</sup> Irène Mélikoff, "14.-15. Yüzyıllarda İslam Heterodoksluğunun Trakya'ya ve Balkanlar'a Yerleşme Yolları" in *Sol Kol Osmanlı Egemenliğinde via Egnatia*, ed. Elizabeth A. Zachariadou, (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1999), 179.

*Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba* seven was used in multiple *manāqib*, just as it was used in the tombs of the community members.<sup>200</sup> After visiting the *türbe* and *tekke* of Oṭman Baba, 'Evliyā' Çelebi writes in his *Seyāhatnāme* that the grand *murshid* descended from the seventh son of the seventh Imam Mūsā ibn Ja'far al-Kāzīm and illuminates us about the oral narrations of his time.<sup>201</sup> There is also the fact that in the hagiography, Oṭman Baba praises and puts himself into the place of Şarı Şaltuḡ more than anyone else. Şarı Şaltuḡ was the master of another antinomian Sufi, Baraḡ Baba, who was associated with the Sevener Shiism and Ḥaydariyya and suffered from prejudices and accusations similar to Oṭman Baba.<sup>202</sup>

Aside from these, the symbolic usage of seven might have been unrelated to Ismā'īlism. Although Al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidī and 'Alī al-Hujwīrī wrote that the 'awliyā', who were on the stage of Forty, were called "the Abdāls", Ibn al-'Arabī, in his work *al-Futūḡāt al-Makkīyah* stated the Seven were the Abdāls and God rule the seven skies through these Seven Abdāls.<sup>203</sup> In compliance with the latter theory, in the *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba* the Seven are named as the Abdāls and given a special description, unlike the other hierarchical stages. That is why the usage of seven might not have been related to Shiism but it might have an esoteric meaning for the community.<sup>204</sup>

In the *walāyatnāma* of Oṭman Baba, there are no references to Abū Bakr, 'Omar or 'Uṭmān, yet *Ahl al-Bayt* is given an exceptional place. The murderers of Ḥasan and Ḥusayn are

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<sup>200</sup> *OBV*, 12, 44, 66, 77, 83, 90-91, 100, 115, 149, 153, 159, 184, 210, 265; Mikov, *Bulgaristan'da Alevi-Bektaşî Kültürü*, 33-39; Nathalie Clayer and Alexander Popovic, "Osmanlı Döneminde Balkanlardaki Tarikatlar" in *Osmanlı Toplumunda Tasavvuf ve Sufiler*, ed. Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2014), 302; Engin, *Balkanlardaki Yatır, Türbe, Tekke ve Zaviyelerimiz*, 237, 241, 245, 248, 273.

<sup>201</sup> Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatname*, v. 8, 343.

<sup>202</sup> Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, "Barak Baba" in *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, (Istanbul: TDV İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi, 1992)

<sup>203</sup> Sufis shared the idea that there was an unseen hierarchy of elite Sufis ruling the earthly and aethereal matters. Their name was *Rijāl al-Ġayb* [m: the Unseen Men]. The stages of this hierarchy can be listed from top to bottom as: The One, *Kuṭb al-'Ālam wa al-Zamān* who was also one of the Three; the Seven, the Forty, the Three Hundred and the Thousand. I will explain this belief in the fifth chapter in a more detailed way.

<sup>204</sup> Süleyman Uludağ, "Ricalü'l Gayb" in *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, (Istanbul: TDV İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi, 2008), 81-83; Uludağ, "Abdal", 59-61; *OBV*, 44.

questioned harshly and after a *manķiba* about one of the captivities of Ođman Baba, Yazid is compared to the oppressors and tyrants. These two are small but obvious examples of *tabarru*’. In contrast, Ođman Baba is frequently associated with Maħdī and in the most noteworthy examples, he is titled as Maħdī-i Şāhib-i Zamān. The references to Maħdī and *Ķuţb al-‘Ālam wa az-Zamān* are used hand in hand with each other, which fits perfectly to Aziz ad-Din an-Nasafi's explanation of Shiite Sufism.<sup>205</sup> In the hagiography, there is also another item that can be correlated to Shiism, which is the unity of Muhammad and ‘Alī. According to the belief, they were created from the same divine essence *Nūr* [m: light] and when that essence was split into two, the light of *nubuwwat* [m: prophethood] passed to Muhammed and the light of *walāyat* passed to ‘Alī. Hence, *walāyat* is as important as *nubuwwat* and its successor on earth.<sup>206</sup> Lastly, despite the fact that there are no clues of the Shiite movement of Sheikh Junayd in the hagiographies of Sulţān Şücā‘üddīn or Ođman Baba, it should be remembered that Ođman Baba had some acquaintances in Azerbaijan, the center of the Şafawī order, so he should be familiar with the early periods of the Shiite/‘Alevī movement.

However, there is also the fact that Ođman Baba decided to call himself Ođman and declared himself the spiritual father of Meħmed II and the patron and savior of the Ottoman Empire, which was on the path of a strict Sunni-ization. Even though Ođman Baba resents and punishes Meħmed from time to time, he does not make any major criticisms against Meħmed's social, religious or political policies openly or does not show any enmity against the Ottoman Empire.<sup>207</sup> Küçük Abdāl writes that Ođman Baba supported the Ottoman armies spiritually against the Akkoyunlu State, challenged and overmatched the *murshid* of Uzun Ħasan, the father-in-law of Sheikh Junayd. There is no evidence of sympathy for the Akkoyunlu or Safawi

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<sup>205</sup> Trimmingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, 133-137; *OBV*, 8-9, 19, 199, 256, 258.

<sup>206</sup> Yıldırım, "Yemini'nin Muhiti ve Meşrebi Üzerine Notlar", 62.

<sup>207</sup> Historians generally argue that Ođman Baba was a non-conformist dervish but I do not agree with this thesis and I will concentrate on this subject in the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter.

leaders or any enemy of the Ottomans in any of the three hagiographies. Even so, the community might have been fearful of ever speaking out against the State.

Another *Bāṭinī* notion *al-Nūr al-Muhammadī* is addressed in the *walāyatnāma* in accordance with the Sufi formulation, meaning that as God's first creation, *al-Nūr al-Muhammadī* was not granted specifically and only to Imams but to all the '*awliyā*'. There are no references to the Imams but the concept of *walāyat* is at the center of the hagiography. In spite of the previously mentioned instances of *tabarru*', before his death Oṭman Baba counsels his *abdāls* to never hold a grudge against anyone, not even his enemies, believing that befriending a friendly person is easy but the real merit is befriending an enemy.<sup>208</sup>

These confusing elements in the hagiography, particularly Oṭman Baba's choice of name and Küçük Abdāl's lack of reference to the Imams considerably diminish the possibility of their being Shiites. As the 15<sup>th</sup> century was a transitional age, they could have been a Shi'izing Sunni community, which had previously shared the metadoxical Sunni mindset Rıza Yıldırım mentions. That is why, they must not have identified themselves in the Sharia-based Sunni or Shiite norms but in the esoteric framework of Sufism and perhaps the Mufaḍḍıla set of norms as Gölpınarlı noted. Yet, after the death of Oṭman Baba and the emergence of the Shiite/'Alevī movement in Rumelia, the community must have started to publicly give way to Shiism. The assassination attempt on Bāyezīd II and his order to disband the *abdāls*, the Ottoman authorities' distrust on Miḫaloḡlu family because of their Shiite tendencies and close relations with the Şücā'ī/Oṭmanī community, the evident Shiite notions in *Faẓīletnāme* and the *abdāls*' associating themselves with the twelve Imams in *Menākīb-ı Hoca-i Cihān ve Neṭice-i Cān*, is the proof.<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>208</sup> *OBV*, 264.

<sup>209</sup> Krstić, *Osmanlı Dünyasında İhtida Anlatıları*, 79; Yıldırım, "Yemini'nin Muhiti ve Meşrebi Üzerine Notlar", 73-79; Yürekli, *Architecture and Hagiography in the Ottoman Empire*, 42; *MHCNC*, 156.

## CHAPTER V

### THE SUFI MINDSET OF OᒦMAN BABA

The *Velāyetnāme-i Oᒦman Baba* starts with a prologue, in which Küçük Abdāl narrates the genesis, the central place of Muhammad and ‘Alī in the creation and the fundamental themes of Sufism. Both in this introduction and in the following chapters, his explanations are supported with verses from the Quran and Hadith and infused with his short poems. The simple yet profound writing style of Küçük Abdāl gives readers the idea that he was knowledgeable in the doctrines of Islam and Sufism.

#### 5.1. NUBUWWAT, WALĀYAT AND AHL AL-BAYT

It is a widely accepted belief in Sufi circles that *nubuwwat* was succeeded by *walāyat*.<sup>210</sup> Küçük Abdāl also gives great weight on the subject that *nubuwwat* and *walāyat* are twin and equal ranks, and *walāyat* is the shepherd and protector of *nubuwwat*. When Adam is created, he sees the name of Muhammad on the gate of the highest level of heavens. Then *Nūr* is given to Adam and as he asks what it is, God tells him it is the light of the last prophet that will be passed down to generations of prophets. When it reaches ‘Abd al-Muᒦᒦalib in the fifty-sixth generation, it will be divided into two and the light of *nubuwwat* will pass to ‘Abd Allāh and the light of *walāyat* will pass to Abū ᒦālib and from the fathers to sons, Muhammad and ‘Alī. *Nubuwwat* is exoteric, apparent and the prophets invite everyone to religion. *Walāyat*, on the other hand,

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<sup>210</sup> Krstić, *Osmanlı Dünyasında İhtida Anlatıları*, 67; Trimmingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, 163.

is esoteric, secretive and only for the divinely privileged people. While Muhammad is the highest ranked prophet upon all the other prophets, 'Alī's position of the supreme *walī* has always been concealed and has never been recognized by the overwhelming majority of Islamdom. Küçük Abdāl cites the Hadiths Muhammad mentioned 'Alī, that they are of the same flesh, blood and spirit and if he himself is the city of knowledge, 'Alī is its gate.<sup>211</sup> In the same chapter, it is also written that Ḥasan was given *nubuwwat* and Ḥusayn was given *walāyat*.<sup>212</sup> It is written in the *walāyatnāma* that in the times of *nubuwwat*, people had denied the prophets and had not believed in religion unless witnessing miracles and it was the time of *walāyat* and people refused to believe in 'awliyā'. However, denying *walāyat* is the same with denying *nubuwwat* and there is no difference between denying *nubuwwat* and denying God.<sup>213</sup>

This chapter in the *walāyatnāma* was written as a reference to the Sufi belief of *al-Nūr al-Muhammadī* [m: the Muhammadan Light], according to which, the light of Muhammad was the first and the most beautiful creation of God since He created Muhammad from His own light and soul. In this theme, the Hadiths "If it was not for you, I would not create the universe," and "The first thing God created was my Light" have a central place. While the first one is cited in the *walāyatnāma*, the second is indirectly explained.<sup>214</sup>

Küçük Abdāl indicates that human beings are deputies of God on earth. Everything else is created in the service of mankind and mankind is created to reach God. Hereunder, the verse "I have only created Jinns and men, that they may serve Me." is given from the Quran.<sup>215</sup> This

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<sup>211</sup> These two Hadiths and the below mentioned several were so popular among the Anatolian and Balkan Muslims and especially in the *Bāṭinī*-inclined circles that a researcher can easily come across with them in oral narratives and written literature. They are still very well-known in modern Turkey. Yet as much as they are popular, they have caused controversies among the Islamic scholars, and the authenticity of some of these Hadiths are not accepted by the majority of these experts. However, for this study, their authenticity is not important. What matters is that the contextual people believed in the authenticity of these Hadiths.

<sup>212</sup> *OBV*, 2-8, 31-32, 234-235.

<sup>213</sup> *OBV*, 8-12, 27, 31-32, 39, 42-43, 65, 118, 204-205.

<sup>214</sup> *OBV*, 2-3.

<sup>215</sup> *OBV*, 12, 78, 233-234; The Quran 51:56

<http://www.wright-house.com/religions/islam/Quran/51-winnowing-winds.php>



belief is compatible with the Hadiths "I was a hidden treasure and wanted to be known" and "If I was not, you would not be. If you were not, I would not be known." which have a prominent place in Sufi theory. There are more explanatory paragraphs in the *walāyatnāma* concerning the sacred bond between God and mankind. As God has created the spirit of human beings from His own being, they are superior to all other creatures and capable of perceiving the attributes, and the benevolent and terrifying deeds of God. Their hearts are created to be houses and thrones of God, that is to say, to be fulfilled with love.<sup>216</sup>

## 5.2. 'ANA AL-ḤAḤḤ AND WAḤDAT AL-WUJŪD

Oṭman Baba makes a claim of 'Ana al-Ḥaḥḥ ever so often. There are also controversial statements such as "God is in my robes", "I have created the earth and all the living things on it", "I talk with God", which are all explained with the doctrines of 'Ana al-Ḥaḥḥ and *ḥulūl*.<sup>217</sup> Küçük Abdāl expresses in many different parts of the *walāyatnāma* that Sufis have a hierarchical system based on spiritual *maḳāmāt*. Only the ones who have sacrificed their individuality and desires, can get on top of that hierarchy, claim 'Ana al-Ḥaḥḥ and speak such words. They have no worldly or spiritual yearning but God. The spiritual path has three stages. In the first stage, the dervish has desires and takes the things he wants. In the second stage, he no longer desires anything but takes what is given to him. In the final stage, he does not want or take anything.<sup>218</sup> Dervishes have to pass through these stages because only if the heart can be emptied, God can fill it. The fulfillment of this principle is described as "To die before you die" in Sufism.<sup>219</sup> The person, who achieves it, vanishes within the eternity of God and he becomes God with God, sees with God, hears with God and speaks with God. Whatever he says or does, it is with the order of God, as Mehmed retells the Hadith "Whoever is for God, God is

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<sup>216</sup> *OBV*, 78, 220-221, 233-235.

<sup>217</sup> *OBV*, 20, 159.

<sup>218</sup> *OBV*, 12-13, 26-27, 263-266.

<sup>219</sup> Renard, *Friends of God*, 5.

for him", while he tries to clarify the words of Oṭman Baba to the ulama.<sup>220</sup> Thereby, what is meant by 'Ana al-Ḥaḳḳ is not that the person himself is God. On the contrary, his personality is completely annihilated and his body becomes a shell in which God manifests Himself, as a drop cannot retain its being in the sea. Küçük Abdāl writes that if a person reaches this stage and says "I have created the earth and all the living things on it", this is not of his arrogance but truth.<sup>221</sup>

This doctrine is related to the Sufi belief that God manifests Himself in all his creations. In Sufi theology, there is a difference between God's *Zāt* [m: self] and *tajallīs* [m: manifestation] and the entire cosmos and all the creations reflect God's *tajallīs*. Yet despite the difference of the *Ḥaḳḳ* [m: the Creator] and *ḥalḳ* [m: the created], there is an emphasis on Sufism that all the creations originate from God and turn back to God in a perfect circle. The universe may seem full of conflicts and contradictions but in fact, all are one and since God is the creator of everything, nothing can be bad.<sup>222</sup> The two statements of Oṭman Baba in two separate *manāḳib* are based on this philosophy. When Oṭman Baba is asked what he is doing in a desolate mountain, he answers "There are not any desolate places". Similarly, after drinking dirty water of a public bath, he says "There are not any filthy creations."<sup>223</sup> Things may look unfavorable but a person who sees the reality would know everything is God, God is everywhere and nothing can be negative.

If a person claims 'Ana al-Ḥaḳḳ, as a perfect man, he must have seen the *Zāt* of God through the spirit of Muhammad. There is a short passage about having a sight on *Zāt* in the hagiography. According to this, a *walī*, who is not "the *Ḳuṭb* of *Ḳuṭbs*", can only have a

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<sup>220</sup> *OBV*, 12, 20, 101, 221.

<sup>221</sup> *OBV*, 159.

<sup>222</sup> Lloyd Ridgeon, "A Sufi Perspective of Evil" in *Sufism: Critical Concepts in Islamic Studies*, v. 2, *Hermeneutics and Doctrines*, ed. Lloyd Ridgeon, (London & New York: Routledge, 2008), 124-125; Gramatikova, "Oṭman Baba", 73-74.

<sup>223</sup> *OBV*, 31, 72.

temporary vision and only a *Ḳuṭb al-Aḳṭāb* can maintain his sight of God permanently. The visions of the lesser *'awliyā'* vary according to their stages. Similarly, the *'awliyā'*, who have not reached the stage of *ḳuṭbiyyat*, cannot eliminate their desire of heaven completely.<sup>224</sup> A contemporary of Oṭman Baba, 'Abd al-Rahmān Jāmī, also indicated that a small elite group among the *'awliyā'* constantly saw God and no higher stages in the Sufi hierarchy exist.<sup>225</sup> This shows that despite the differences between their orders, Sufis shared a great many beliefs and Oṭman Baba was informed about the preceding and up-to-date Sufi theology and literature.

There is a *manḳiba* about Oṭman Baba's having sight on *Zāt*. One day, during the period Oṭman Baba and his *abdāls* were in Kaligra/Kaliakra, Oṭman Baba suddenly tells his *abdāls* to perform *namāz*. As soon as they speak Allāhu Akbar, Oṭman Baba's spirit leaves his body and comes back only one hour later when he is still in the prostrating position. Küçük Abdāl writes that at that point Oṭman Baba had a vision of *Zāt* and each and every rak'at of such a *namāz* equals seventy thousand rak'at.<sup>226</sup>

If one is to comprehend the religious perception and Sufi philosophy of an antinomian *murshid*, then one should analyze it within its own mindset and decipher the Sufi values and teachings. Without reading the text as a whole and understanding the notions, such as *Waḥdat al-Wujūd* and *'Ana al-Ḥaḳḳ* and the nuances between impiety and Sufism, statements like "I worship the God I see" or "Man has devoured God and Muhammad and that man, whom God manifests Himself, is no one but me", cannot be analyzed properly.<sup>227</sup> In the first case, an *abdāl* makes the explanation that they experience the love of God from His *tajallī* upon Oṭman Baba. It should be emphasized that the *abdāl* does not use the word *Zāt*. As for the second statement, it has a parallel meaning with another famous Hadith "God, who does not fit into the universes,

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<sup>224</sup> *OBV*, 13-17, 122-123.

<sup>225</sup> Halil İnalçık, "Dervish and Sultan", 21.

<sup>226</sup> *OBV*, 122-123.

<sup>227</sup> *OBV*, 146, 233.

fit in the heart of His devoted servant". The *nafs* [m: self, mind] of the person, who has completed his spiritual journey and purified himself from his individuality, does not get in his way between himself and God and only then God can manifest Himself on that person.

There are also misapprehensions about *tanāsuh*. In the *walāyatnāma*, Oṭman Baba frequently says that he is Adam, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad, ‘Alī, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn. He makes another statement saying that he has come to this world again and again within hundreds of thousands of years.<sup>228</sup> What is implied by these words is not literal reincarnation, as there have been numerous Sufis making similar declarations. Yet the concept of reincarnation does not exist in Islam. What Oṭman Baba means is not that he is literally all of them or all of these people from different ages were the same person. He means that there is no distinction between the prophets and ‘*awliyā*’, who annihilated their personalities and became manifestations of God.

Another misconception belongs to Irène Mélikoff. Mélikoff, in consonance with Mehmet Fuad Köprülü and Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, asserted that heterodox Islam was the fruit of syncretism of Islam with the pre-Islamic and non-Islamic religious beliefs. She argued that within folk religion, the pre-Islamic Turkic God Tengri metamorphosed into ‘Alī, which is why Bektaşīs perceived ‘Alī as God and worshipped him.<sup>229</sup> However, it should not be forgotten that Mélikoff made such deductions based on her anthropological observations and analysis of the ‘Alevī-Bektaşī poetry and she did not make any reference to neither to the history of Sufism nor the Sufi concepts. It cannot be said that neither the antinomian dervishes nor the Bektaşīs worshipped ‘Alī or believe he is the *Zāt* of God. Hence, understanding the nuances between *Zāt*

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<sup>228</sup> *OBV*, 160.

<sup>229</sup> Irène Mélikoff, "Bektaşī-Aleviler'de Ali'nin Tanrılaştırılması" in *Tarihten Teolojiye: İslam İnançlarında Hz. Ali*, ed. Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2014), 77-80; Irène Mélikoff, "İlk Osmanlıların Toplumsal Kökeni" in *Osmanlı Beyliği: 1300-1389*, ed. Elizabeth Zachariadou, (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1997), 150-152; Mélikoff, "14.-15. Yüzyıllarda İslam Heterodoksluğunun Trakya'ya ve Balkanlar'a Yerleşme Yolları", 187.

and *tajallī*, the notions of *'Ana al-Ḥaqq* and *ḥulūl*, are very important when analyzing any Sufi text, the hagiographies or the 'Alevī-Bektaşī poetry.

Interpreting the Sufi notions according to the Shar'ī knowledge or modern and secular rationale has always given rise to huge misunderstandings and never reflected the truth. The ill-fated execution of Mansūr al-Ḥallāj might be the most famous example of evaluating such provocative statements without looking thoroughly at the speaker's perspective. In addition, analyzing the belief system of an antinomian community according to the Shar'ī Sunni set of norms would mean recognizing Sharia-based Sunni Islam as the authentic core Islam and the other interpretations of the religion as corrupted or even false. If this is done, the only conclusion that can be drawn would be that the subject declared his godship or he was mentally disturbed. However, reviewing his statements within the Sufi framework, conclusions would be quite different. As mentioned before, the subject of this dissertation is to address an antinomian order from their own perspective and to give voice to their own narratives.

In the *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba*, it is implied that people think they live according to their own life choices. But in fact, each and every occurrence is designed by God. Because *'awliyā'* are aware of this situation, they act according to the will of God regardless of whatever befalls them. In one *manḳiba*, in which Oṭman Baba is captured and is forced into labor, one of his captors talks about him to a few carters. One of them named Aḳbaş, decides to see the captive, visits Oṭman Baba and asks him what he does. Oṭman Baba, implying his captors are animals, answers that "he has been shepherding his captors" while he waited for Aḳbaş. Eventually, Aḳbaş sets Oṭman Baba free. On the surface, Aḳbaş seems like the rescuer of Oṭman Baba but it is implied that Oṭman Baba remained there with his own will and waited for Aḳbaş to come and rescue him because this event was designed for them to meet.<sup>230</sup> In another

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<sup>230</sup> *OBV*, 48-49.

*manķiba*, while Oṭman Baba and his *abdāls* are taken to Istanbul, the same message is openly stated. Küçük Abdāl, notes that it was Oṭman Baba, who made Meḥmed give the order of arrest and it was not the Sultan's own doing. Oṭman Baba tells the carter, who takes them to the capital city, that "You are not the carter, I am". When he asks his *abdāls* where they are going and the *abdāls* say they have been arrested and taken to Istanbul, Oṭman Baba tells them "No, they are not taking us, I am taking them". In another account when Oṭman Baba and his *abdāls* are summoned to Istanbul, the oxen cannot pull the cart until Oṭman Baba points at them.<sup>231</sup> These events illustrate that God is making the decisions, not the men and Oṭman Baba follows his own destiny. So it is not incomprehensible for him to claim that all these people, captor or captive, are himself since every person in this scheme is a the manifestation of God.

### 5.3. 'AWLIYĀ' AND THE STAGES OF WALĀYAT

The literal meaning of *walī* is "friend" and it is also one of the names of God. In the Quran, more than twenty verses God is referenced as the friend and savior of His worshippers and servants. In some of these verses, it is remarked that some of the prophets and worshippers "befriend" God.<sup>232</sup> In Sufi terminology *walī* is used as "the friend of God". However, because each and every *walī* are not close to God equally and have a different distance to reach God, there are various stages of *walāyat* enlisted in a hierarchy. It is indicated in the Quran that God gives a light named *Furķān* to the hearts of his '*awliyā*', who fear God and endure hardships. *Furķān* lets the '*awliyā*' distinguish truth from lies and appreciate God.<sup>233</sup>

In terms of Sufi literature, although human beings look like men they have an animalistic nature. Küçük Abdāl describes the *walī*, or in other words *al-Insān al-Kāmil* [m: the Perfect

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<sup>231</sup> *OBV*, 183, 199, 201, 248.

<sup>232</sup> Bekir Topalođlu, "Veli" in *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, (Istanbul: TDV İslam Arařtırmaları Merkezi, 2013), 24-25.

<sup>233</sup> Süleyman Uludađ, "Veli" in *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, (Istanbul: TDV İslam Arařtırmaları Merkezi, 2013), 25-28.

Man], as the person who manages to tame his *nafs* and develops a human nature, making him a perfect and full man.<sup>234</sup> On the other hand, Küçük Abdāl defines *abdāl*, as the person who devotes himself to purify his soul from all his desires, understands that everything is from God and reached the second of the three degrees of apprehension, which is 'Ayn al-Yaḳīn. From this passage, it can be understood that *abdāl* is the dervish, who is still on his *Sayr wa Sulūk* [m: spiritual journey]. Sufism is also defined as "the lore of *Sayr wa Sulūk*" and the path towards God had also been described as "the *Mi'rāj* of the soul".<sup>235</sup> As noted above, Küçük Abdāl's giving information about the Sufi themes in a quite complex and comprehensive way shows that Oṭman Baba was knowledgeable about the philosophy and various classics of Sufi literature and made his claims accordingly, which is not expected from an illiterate nomad.

Küçük Abdāl also makes reference to *Rijāl al-Ġayb* [m: the Unseen Men] and the secret Sufi hierarchy. According to the belief, the elites of the Sufi hierarchy had the esoteric knowledge of God and administered everything that happens in the world and universe.<sup>236</sup> *Ḳuṭb al-Aḳṭāb* [m: the *Ḳuṭb* of *Ḳuṭbs*] is on top of this hierarchy and is the One among the highest Three. The stages of the Seven, Forty, Three-Hundred and Thousand follows them and due to their proximity with God, 'awliyā' are on these stages.<sup>237</sup> It can be understood from Küçük Abdāl's narrative that from the highest to the lowest there are *Ḳuṭb al-Aḳṭāb*, *Ḳuṭbs*, 'awliyā' and dervishes.

The word *Ḳuṭb* means the axis and al-Hujwārī stated that all the material and spiritual entities revolve around the axis and everything stands upon him. Ibn al-ʿArabī wrote everything

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<sup>234</sup> *OBV*, 11-12, 43-44, 265.

<sup>235</sup> Süleyman Uludağ, "Süluk" in *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, (Istanbul: TDV İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi, 2010), 127-128; *OBV*, 26, 267, 272.

<sup>236</sup> Krstić, *Osmanlı Dünyasında İhtida Anlatıları*, 67; Trimmingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, 164; Uludağ, "Abdal", 59-61.

<sup>237</sup> *OBV*, 43-44.

revolves around their own axis as they are like shafts of mills.<sup>238</sup> As a matter of fact, Oṭman Baba describes himself as the iron pole from earth to the sky at the beginning of the *walāyatnāma*.<sup>239</sup> They are believed to be responsible for the governance of the universe. Each and every part of the world, no matter what religion its inhabitants believe in, have a *kuṭb*. The Three are called as *Ḳuṭb al-Aḳṭāb*, *Ḳuṭb al-Akbar*, *Ḳuṭb al-Irshād*, *Ḳuṭb al-‘Ālam wa al-Zamān*, and *Ġavṣ al-A‘zam* but there is inconsistency among the sources about the exact status of the Three and which title belongs to whom. Yet, it is known that *Ḳuṭb al-Aḳṭāb* has the authority to dismiss a *kuṭb* from his position and to appoint a *walī* as a *kuṭb*. As he dies, one of the other Two takes his place.<sup>240</sup>

Küçük Abdāl wrote that as the *Ḳuṭb al-Aḳṭāb* and *Ḳuṭb al-‘Ālam wa al-Zamān* [m: The Axis of the Universe and the Time], Oṭman Baba was sovereign over eighteen thousand worlds, had the power of twenty-four thousand prophets and commanded one-hundred and twenty-four thousand *‘awliyā’*.<sup>241</sup> The surah about Moses' visitation to Ḥiḍr to learn *‘Ilm al-Ledūn* and his failure to rely on his *murshid* thrice, has been interpreted by some Sufis in a way that suggests *‘awliyā’* can precede over prophets.<sup>242</sup> Also, it is written in the *walāyatnāma* that Oṭman Baba and his community were charged with their claims to have the Three, the Seven and the Forty among their members.<sup>243</sup>

At this point, a brief review of a *manḳiba*, which gives information about the hierarchical and competitive relationship between the Sufis is needed. On the day of a battle between the Ottoman and Akkoyunlu States, as Oṭman Baba urges his *abdāls* to cut down trees

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<sup>238</sup> Süleyman Ateş, “Kutub”, in *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, (Istanbul: TDV İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi, 2002), 499.

<sup>239</sup> *OBV*, 16.

<sup>240</sup> Krstić, *Osmanlı Dünyasında İhtida Anlatıları*, 67; Trimmingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, 163; Ateş, “Kutub”, 499.

<sup>241</sup> *OBV*, 13, 134, 162, 209, 221.

<sup>242</sup> Ethel Sara Wolper, “Khidr and the Changing Frontiers of the Medieval World” *Medieval Encounters* 17, (2011), 134.

<sup>243</sup> *OBV*, 190.



and burn them, the Akkoyunlu loses the battle and the son of Uzun Hasan dies. Oṭman Baba asserts that he has killed thousands of men with each blow but at the same time he is wounded on his thigh. The next day, *abdāls* see that Oṭman Baba shouts at and defies the *murshid* of Uzun Hasan, who is miles away. Then Uzun Hasan asks his *murshid* ‘Abdurrahmān Baba, why they were defeated and ‘Abdurrahmān Baba answers that there was a *walī* of Rūm named Oṭman Baba he could not overcome at the battlefield.<sup>244</sup> Notwithstanding the unrealistic elements of the *manḳiba*, it provides to the reader critical information about the beliefs of an antinomian community. According to this, a lesser *walī* can oppose even the *Ḳuṭb al-Aḳṭāb* and tire him. This means that ‘*awliyā*’ do not always act in harmony and they try to outmatch each other if the occasion requires.

There are some key notions Küçük Abdāl uses while he clarifies the degrees of knowledge of ‘*awliyā*’. These are ‘*Ilm al-Yaḳīn*’, ‘*Ayn al-Yaḳīn*’ and ‘*Ḥaḳḳ al-Yaḳīn*’. ‘*Ilm al-Yaḳīn*’ is the apprehension based on information and intelligence. ‘*Ayn al-Yaḳīn*’ is the apprehension based on senses and ‘*Ḥaḳḳ al-Yaḳīn*’ is the apprehension based on personal experience, which is the most reliable among the three.<sup>245</sup> In one of the *manāḳib*, a scholar verifies the *walāyat* of Oṭman Baba with ‘*Ilm al-Yaḳīn*’. In another, this time an *abdāl* advocates for his master and argues that they have witnessed the *walāyat* of Oṭman Baba with their own eyes, which is described as ‘*Ayn al-Yaḳīn*’ by Küçük Abdāl. In one of the final chapters, while defending Oṭman Baba against a group of ulama, Meḥmed says that he has witnessed the *walāyat* of Oṭman Baba by both ‘*Ilm al-Yaḳīn*’ and ‘*Ayn al-Yaḳīn*’ and that Oṭman Baba speaks with ‘*Ayn al-Yaḳīn*’ and ‘*Ḥaḳḳ al-Yaḳīn*’. However, the ulama cannot take it to the next level and remain at the degree of ‘*Ilm al-Yaḳīn*’.<sup>246</sup> Küçük Abdāl emphasizes the fact that while the ulama have only

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<sup>244</sup> *OBV*, 152-154.

<sup>245</sup> Yusuf Şevki Yavuz, “Hakka'l Yakın” in *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, (Istanbul: TDV İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi, 1997), 203-204; Gramatikova, “Otman Baba”, 90.

<sup>246</sup> *OBV*, 84, 146, 162, 219, 221.

read the definition of *walāyat* and could never comprehend that there is a *walī* in front of them, the *abdāls* can see the real qualities of Oṭman Baba and Meḥmed has passed through both steps.

The three degrees of knowledge also has a significant place in Bektaşiyya, but in a more dogmatized way. The definition of the Doctrine of Four Gateways made by J. K. Birge is almost completely parallel to the above-mentioned explanation. According to this, a *murid*'s spiritual journey can only be completed by passing through the Four Gates, which are Sharia, Ṭarīkat, Ma'rifat and Ḥaḳīkat. The *murid* may get bogged down in one of these phases and cannot continue in his spiritual development. John Kingsley Birge wrote a metaphorical definition of the Four Gateways that he heard from a *murshid*, which parallels the usage of Küçük Abdāl with these words:

"A mystic leader of Islam, one who sought as my mürşit to teach me, explained to me the meanings of these four terms by taking the idea of "sugar" as an example. One can go to the dictionary to find out what sugar is and how it is used. That is the *şeriat* Gateway to knowledge. One feels the inadequacy of that when one is introduced directly to the practical seeing and handling of sugar. That represents the *tarikāt* Gateway to knowledge. To actually taste sugar and to have it enter into oneself is to go one step deeper into an appreciation of its nature, and that is what is meant by *marifet*. If one could go still further and become one with sugar so that he could say, "I am sugar," that and that alone would be to know what sugar is, and that is what is involved in the *hakikat* Gateway."<sup>247</sup>

In *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba*, the ulama, who are on the Gate of Sharia, the Sufis, who cannot pass through the Gate of Ṭarīkat and the 'awliyā', who waste time on the Gate of Ma'rifat are severely criticized. It is also added that Oṭman Baba is well informed about all these stages of the Sufi lore.<sup>248</sup>

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<sup>247</sup> John. Kingsley Birge, *The Bektashi Order of Dervishes*, (London: Luzac & Co., Ltd., 1965). 102.

<sup>248</sup> *OBV*, 42-43, 132.

Another term that is used in the *walāyatnāma* is *al-Lawḥ al-Mahfūz*, a term given in the Quran. Allegedly, every being that is born and dies and every event that takes place in the universe are written on *al-Lawḥ al-Mahfūz* [m: the Secret Tablet].<sup>249</sup> Küçük Abdāl writes that 'awliyā' are able to read this esoteric source of information. In plenty of *manāḳib*, Oṭman Baba knows things that he normally cannot know. Moreover, he reads the hearts and faces of people he meets and sees their true nature, minds and their stages of *walāyat*.<sup>250</sup>

When we compare two *manāḳib*, we can deduce that not all the 'awliyā' are capable of reading *al-Lawḥ al-Mahfūz*. In the first one, a *walī* named Naṣūh Baba visits Oṭman Baba and respectfully presents him three roses. For a while, Oṭman Baba keeps the roses on his chest and at last Naṣūh Baba asks one of the *abdāls* to go and ask for the roses back from Oṭman Baba. Oṭman Baba gives one of the roses back to Naṣūh Baba and acquiring his spiritual *naṣīb*, he leaves the house. In the second *manāḳib*, Oṭman Baba stays as a guest in the lodge of a *walī* named Umur Baba. One day, Umur Baba shows Oṭman Baba the pine cones he has and boasts that while Oṭman Baba grows trees, Umur Baba makes them fruit. This greatly irritates Oṭman Baba and saying that while Umur Baba makes trees fruit, he trains the stranded dervishes and feeds the people in need, he leaves the lodge. Surprised by the answer of Oṭman Baba, Umur Baba asks the people around him who Oṭman Baba was and only then he understands the spiritual stage of the person he has disrespected.<sup>251</sup>

From the narrative of Küçük Abdāl, it can be understood that Naṣūh Baba visits Oṭman Baba, knowing that he is a superior of himself and humbly asks for spiritual fortune. As for Umur Baba, it is not indicated that he was a hypocrite or a liar to claim *walāyat*. On the contrary, according to the narrative, his capability of making trees fruit demonstrates that he is a real

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<sup>249</sup> Yusuf Şevki Yavuz, "Levh-i Mahfuz" in *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, (Istanbul: TDV İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi, 2003), 151.

<sup>250</sup> *OBV*, 17, 27, 78, 83-84, 100, 134, 156, 159, 234.

<sup>251</sup> *OBV*, 68-70, 81-82.

*walī*. However, apparently Umur Baba cannot read *al-Lawḥ al-Mahfūz* as Naşūh Baba does, which means that despite 'awliyā' can perform miracles, it does not mean all the lesser 'awliyā' would know everything.

#### **5.4. THE TASKS OF THE 'AWLIYĀ': TAŞARRUF, 'AQL, KİSMAT AND NAŞİB**

There is much information about the tasks of 'awliyā' in the hagiography. It is mentioned that they watch over the world and decide the fate of people as well as the happenings taking place on earth, help the ones in need, train new dervishes and guide them to their destiny. Küçük Abdāl writes that God has not given such power to any other of His creations.<sup>252</sup>

##### **5.4.1. .TAŞARRUF**

To show how Oṭman Baba controls the events, Küçük Abdāl writes that Oṭman Baba lies on a hill for forty days in front of Istanbul and ensures the conquest of the city. His spiritual intervention into the battles exemplifies the *taşarruf* [m: the capability to intervene in the events] Oṭman Baba uses on behalf of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>253</sup>

A *mankıba* can be given as an example to display the complexity of the *taşarruf*. By the order of Meḥmed II, Süleymān Paşa visits Oṭman Baba asking for his blessings to campaign in Kara Boğdan/Moldova. However, Oṭman Baba dismisses Süleymān Paşa and tells him they are going to lose the war. Süleymān Paşa, in order not dishonor himself, does not inform the Sultan about Oṭman Baba's warning and launches the campaign. However, an invisible celestial army of fifty-seven thousand *abdāls* led by Şarı Şaltuḳ changes sides during the war. A ghazi, terrified by the things he sees, asks Şarı Şaltuḳ why they fight for the Christians. Şarı Şaltuḳ

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<sup>252</sup> *OBV*, 27, 57, 100-101, 220, 234, 275.

<sup>253</sup> *OBV*, 19, 27, 38-39, 108, 114-115, 127-128, 152-154, 166-169, 224-233, 258-259.

answers that this is God's will and tells the ghazi to run away. The next day, when the war is over, Oṭman Baba summons Şarı Şaltuḡ back.<sup>254</sup>

The first thought that can be drawn from this *manḡiba* is that regardless of their personal preferences, the *taşarruf* of the 'awliyā' is not limitless. It was believed that as the servants of God, 'awliyā' had to follow the orders even if it meant to fight for the enemy. What is more, the meaning behind the implications of *ḡulūl* and *tanāsuḡ* and Oṭman Baba's claims of being God and Şarı Şaltuḡ is explicit in this *manḡiba*. As Şarı Şaltuḡ receives his orders from Oṭman Baba and Oṭman Baba from God, there is no difference between the friends of God, as they all fulfill the decisions of God.

Oṭman Baba and the 'awliyā' have *taşarruf* not only over incidents but also over people. He interferes with natural phenomena, befallings and even death of people. He cures people and allows infertile women to get pregnant. But sometimes he causes natural disasters, physical deformities, and even death by cursing people.<sup>255</sup>

#### 5.4.2. 'AḡL

Although the *taşarruf* of the 'awliyā' have an impact over the course of events, it is the virtues and good intentions of the people that affect 'awliyā' to use their *taşarruf* for the benefit of people. When Oṭman Baba is insulted or persecuted, future positive events may possibly turn into disasters or vice versa; the people, who kindly and respectfully approach him or follow his advice may be rewarded unexpectedly. These changes in fate happen not only because Oṭman Baba uses his *taşarruf*, but they also occur by divine interference. In brief, people are responsible for the things they think or the way they act and they are expected to use their 'aḡl [m: intelligence, wit] to make the right choices.

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<sup>254</sup> *OBV*, 225-228.

<sup>255</sup> *OBV*, 65-67, 75, 87, 97-99, 105, 132, 162, 184, 230, 240.

'*Akl* has a significant place in Sufism. It is what takes people to the gates of a dervish lodge, makes them decide to abandon earthly pleasures and dedicate themselves to Sufism. However, the limited intelligence of mankind is not enough to understand Sufism. It only works to perceive materialistic and scientific information but it is inadequate for the understanding of divine concepts, which can only be understood with Godly love.<sup>256</sup>

As the dervishes aim to annihilate their individuality, they also intend to defuse their own limited mind. As they proceed on their path, they find out their capability to attain the infinite intelligence of God. A dervish who is about to become a *walī* would eventually think and act according to God's will, instead of his own flawed logic. However, the bond between man and God can only be established if the dervish is close to reaching the stage of *Fanā'* [annihilation], in which he completes his annihilation and *Baqā'* [m: abiding], in which he completely dissolves in God. Until then, the dervish is responsible for acting in contrast with his *nafs*.

Focusing on the subject of '*akl*, the same *manāḳib* about Naṣūh Baba and Umur Baba exemplify how a person should and should not use their intelligence. Forasmuch as Naṣūh Baba uses his mind to approach Oṭman Baba reverentially and ask his *naṣīb*, Umur Baba does not use his mind and unnecessarily mistreats a *walī* he does not know.<sup>257</sup> To give another example from the *walāyatnāma*, when Maḥmūd Paṣa visits Oṭman Baba in Hasköy/Haskovo, Oṭman Baba warns him about his forthcoming death and tells him he can still do something about it. Maḥmūd Paṣa panics and orders his servants to bring five-thousand coins to Oṭman Baba and ask to extend his life. But after a harsh response of scholars, he gives up his idea of sending the coins and soon is executed.<sup>258</sup> Küçük Abdāl actually implies that Maḥmūd Paṣa had a chance

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<sup>256</sup> Ridgeon, "A Sufi Perspective of Evil", 127; Uludağ, "Akıl", 246-247.

<sup>257</sup> *OBV*, 68-70, 81-82.

<sup>258</sup> *OBV*, 166-167.

to save his life by sending the coins to Oṭman Baba and pleading for his life. However, by not using that chance, he paved the way to his own execution.

### 5.4.3. *KİSMAT & NAŞİB*

'*Akl* definitely has a role in directing people to distinguish good from evil. If the *abdāls* did not believe that, Küçük Abdāl would not sermonize his future readers to find the right way of Sufism. However, there is also the fact of *kısmat* [m: destiny] and *naşīb* [m: the pre-determined material and spiritual shares in life] in Islamic knowledge. If the person is not destined to have material or spiritual gain, he cannot attain anything by using his intellect. According to Sufism, if people do not have spiritual *naşīb*, they would not believe in *walāyat* even if they are warned or they witness miracles.<sup>259</sup> That is why the notions of *kısmat* and *naşīb* are conjoined to each other.

In many *manāḳib*, some of the people who come across with Oṭman Baba and do not know his real identity, are impressed by his aura and even a smaller number realize who he is. Though the others, despite witnessing many events and miracles, refuse to believe him and continue to insult and oppress him. Whenever Oṭman Baba undergoes a problem, someone from the crowd relieves him from his problems and most of the time this person is given his material or spiritual *naşīb*. Some even join the community and become *abdāls*. However, interestingly there is not any regular pattern of rewards. While someone who does a great favor to Oṭman Baba may be rewarded with a material gain, another one, who does nothing special, may be taken as a dervish as it is his destiny.<sup>260</sup>

When reminded of the *manḳiba* concerning the carter Aḳbaş, the question of why Aḳbaş decides to visit an enslaved man and the other carters do not, can only be answered with the

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<sup>259</sup> Ridgeon, "A Sufi Perspective of Evil", 132-133.

<sup>260</sup> *OBV*, 18, 26, 31, 54-55, 70, 94, 98-99, 106-109, 117-126, 151, 160-162, 260.

concepts of *kısmat* and *naşīb*. As Küçük Abdāl writes, when Oṭman Baba sees Aḳbaş, he tells him that he has been waiting for him. However, when compared to this, there is an even more interesting *manḳıba*, in which the captor of Oṭman Baba, apologizes and becomes his dervish.<sup>261</sup> If Oṭman Baba was not captured, Aḳbaş could not rescue him and if Oṭman Baba's wicked captor did not enslave him, he could not learn from his mistakes, repent and become a dervish. So what is implied in the *walāyatnāma* is that everything happens for a reason. Although *manāḳıb* like these are stereotypical in all the hagiographies, in the *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba* the logic behind these stories is explained according to the Sufi philosophy.

As for the miracles performed by Oṭman Baba, he enters people's dreams and gives them messages. At the same time, his *abdāls* or other people rarely have visions.<sup>262</sup> Küçük Abdāl writes that nothing can hurt 'awliyā'. Fire and water would not injure them, blades and arrows would not cut them and they do not need anything from anyone. They do not feel sorrow and the world is like a ring on their fingers.<sup>263</sup> Oṭman Baba performs a great deal of the miracles that can be seen in the other hagiographies and with the usage of these motifs of *karāmat*, Küçük Abdāl creates the perception that God granted super-natural powers to his 'awliyā'.

## 5.5. SECRECY

Despite the fact that Oṭman Baba repeatedly expressed who he was and had a crowded community, the text demonstrates *walāyat* was a questioned concept in the 15th century Ottoman Empire. This is explained by the secret *Bāṭinī* nature of *walāyat*. Küçük Abdāl writes that as long as the *walī* does not give out his real identity, he would remain unknown and people would either perceive him as a normal person like themselves or be deceived by his scruffy appearance and consider him a hypocrite or mentally ill. However, even though the entire body

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<sup>261</sup> *OBV*, 48-53.

<sup>262</sup> *OBV*, 18, 133, 177-181, 190, 194-195.

<sup>263</sup> *OBV*, 22, 30, 63, 101, 110, 158-160, 172, 217.



of a *walī* is an eye and sees and knows everything, they do not speak what they know. Küçük Abdāl, also writes that for a person to build his own community and train his followers, he needs to train himself first. Before his funeral, Oṭman Baba tells his *abdāls* that the words of 'awliyā' have hidden meanings that people cannot understand, yet their denial and contempt does not change reality.<sup>264</sup>

## 5.6. HOW TO BECOME A WALĪ

So how does a person "train himself" and get to the stage of *walāyat*? In the hagiography, it is stated that *walāyat* cannot be achieved by intellect or hard work, because it is a combination of Godly inspiration, discovery, and miracle. So much so that, not only a scholar but also an illiterate man can become a *walī*. If the *walī* is well-educated then he would write literary works and be beneficial for countless people. However, a person who does not know the esoteric lore cannot become a *walī* by preaching or reading and memorizing the Quran. For Küçük Abdāl, the hidden meaning of the Quran can only be understood by the wisdom of *walāyat*. Regardless of his education, Oṭman Baba has a grasp of Sharia, Ṭarīkat, Ma'rifat and Ḥaḳīkat degrees of knowledge.<sup>265</sup>

In the final chapter of the *walāyatnāma*, the question of how a person should be in order to walk the path of Sufism is answered. For a dervish to complete his *Sayr wa Sulūk*, he should remove earthly desires from his heart and pleasures from his life and live in deprivation. He should sleep less and should not seek comfort. He should restrain his greed and ambition, keep the secrets of the path, be generous and patient. He should not lie, gossip or look for the weaknesses of other people. He should be ready to endure the hardships of the path in order to arrive at his destination and he should learn to be a servant and to be a friend of God.<sup>266</sup> A

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<sup>264</sup> *OBV*, 10-11, 13-14, 39, 43-44, 274.

<sup>265</sup> *OBV*, 42-44, 132.

<sup>266</sup> *OBV*, 267-268, 272.

person who is not on the path of Sufism can also do all these but according to Sufi creed, he would still be unable to unite with God. Then what makes Sufism exceptional and leads Sufis to God? The loyalty and absolute devotion to the *murshid*, who is the guide and trainer of his *murids* will lead to one to godliness.

The path of Sufism is full of ordeals. Küçük Abdāl writes that only the '*awliyā*' understand how much they have suffered to attain their current stage and relationship with God. If the torments of the seven hells, miseries and challenges are not withstood, then the love and wisdom of God would not be granted to the *murid*. Nevertheless, if the *murid* feels the divine love just once, he can never give up his path. People rejoice in their good fortune and express their discontent about their sufferings. Though only the friends of God would comply with anything from God without complaining because only the lovers would endure anything coming from their loved ones. But ordinary people and the ulama are in a vicious cycle. Because they do not know of the divine love, they cannot give consent to the difficulties from God and in return, they remain deprived of the divine love.<sup>267</sup>

There are some *manāḳib* that describe going through troubles in the *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba*. For example, telling his *abdāls* that they have come into the world to suffer, Oṭman Baba orders them to eat only mush and remain standing in rain and snow. While the community is taken to Istanbul he also orders his dervishes to dump out all of their water in order to suffer and die from thirst just as Ḥasan and Ḥusayn. In another case, Oṭman Baba gets angry with an *abdāl*, who wants to ascend the spiritual ranks. He tells the *abdāl* that he has been burned seven times and the *abdāl* has not even been burned once.<sup>268</sup>

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<sup>267</sup> *OBV*, 265-266.

<sup>268</sup> *OBV*, 175, 198, 265.

The text illustrates the inverse proportion between suffering and purification of the dervishes from worldly yearnings. Nonetheless, enduring hardships without any complaints is a general code of Sufism and not an exceptional principal for the antinomian orders.

## 5.7. THE ANTINOMIAN PATH

Having strict moral and religious values, living as an ascetic, submitting to the *murshid* and accepting everything that comes from God are the basic rules nearly all the Sufi orders share. Yet, there are also differentiating beliefs and practices in each order. That is why, one should investigate the distinctive doctrines of the Şücā'ī/Oṭmanī community.

As it is known, the theme of *Ḥarābāt* [m: ruins] is perhaps one of the most significant concepts of the New Renunciation. The dervishes from this école, lived far from civilization and isolated themselves in the mountains, forests, and caves; at least for a period of their lifetime. In cities, they lived in desolate and filthy places in poverty. Some of them even resided in dens of vice like public houses, gambling houses, and brothels. Their goal behind living in this manner was self-deprivation from the beauties and comforts of the world, living a hard life among the indigent people and to train dervishes among them. *Ḥarābāt* was also a manifestation of the sacrifices made and the misery dervishes fell into because of Godly love. Naturally, the dervishes of this école dressed accordingly to their social environment. They wore sacks, wandered barefoot and begged for a living. Some of them were confused with mentally ill people.<sup>269</sup>

In *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba*, the theme of *Ḥarābāt* is referred to several times. In the initial chapters, it is written that Oṭman Baba wears rags and wanders around and resides in

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<sup>269</sup> Ahmet T. Karamustafa "Antinomian Sufis" in *The Cambridge Companion to Sufism*, ed. Lloyd Ridgeon, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 113-114; J. T. P. De Bruijn "The *Qalandariyyat* in Mystical Poetry, from *Sanā'ī Onwards*" in *The Heritage of Sufism*, v. 2, *The Legacy of Medieval Persian Sufism (1150-1500)*, ed. Leonard Lewisohn, (Oxford: Oneword Publications, 1999), 79-84.

nature, public baths, soup kitchens, and various places. Almost everybody takes him for a runaway slave or deranged; some even enslave him. Even the ones who try to converse with him, find him odd, consider him irreligious and cannot associate *walāyat* with him.<sup>270</sup> As specified by Küçük Abdāl, Oṭman Baba is aware of it all but people's thoughts and attitudes reveal their true character.

The theme of *Ḥarābāt* is grounded upon the notions of *Waḥdat al-Wujūd* and *ḥulūl* in the hagiography. In truth, everything is one and only and God manifests himself everywhere, nothing can be bad or filthy and nowhere can be desolate.<sup>271</sup> So how can an *al-Insān al-Kāmil* think negative about the *Ḥarābāt*?

*Ḥarābāt* is also the key factor behind the philosophy of asceticism of the community. Küçük Abdāl notes that 'awliyā' should not be inclined to take possessions, as Muhammad did not keep anything except an old coarse woolen cloth and a straw mattress for living. Befittingly, Oṭman Baba and his followers wear woolen sacks. He sacrifices his beloved horse Bār-ı Yek, which is mentioned several times in the *walāyatnāma*, saying that a *Ḳuṭb al-Aḳṭāb* cannot have a horse. He does not take any property for granted. Oṭman Baba calls the coins, gifts, and sheep brought to him "crap", which implies that he does not give importance to material gains. He becomes furious when Meḥmed or the Ottoman officials offer him sacks of coins and refuses the proposal of Meḥmed to build him a dervish lodge of his own. And all the gifts and donations that are accepted are fed to or distributed among the people in need. Eventually, Oṭman Baba ends up with the epithet Ġanī Baba.<sup>272</sup>

There is a *manḳiba* in the hagiography in which Oṭman Baba notices the beggary of one of his *abdāls* and disapproves the generally accepted practice of the antinomian dervishes. In

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<sup>270</sup> *OBV*, 16, 18-19, 24-26, 29, 34, 51-54.

<sup>271</sup> *OBV*, 31, 72.

<sup>272</sup> *OBV*, 40, 45-46, 97-99, 106-107, 124, 131, 173, 175, 201, 214, 221, 224, 236.

the *manķiba*, one of his followers brings the money he has earned from begging to the community. Oṭman Baba disapproves of this and reprehends the *abdāl*, albeit the *abdāl* does not realize why his *murshid* got angry with him and continues to beg for money. The next time Oṭman Baba sees him, he makes his dervish swear not to beg ever again. Just before this *manķiba* the verse of "It is We Who portion out between them their livelihood in the life of this world"<sup>273</sup> from the Quran is written. Küçük Abdāl also states that a dervish should not wish or receive the wealth of the world since he should only crave for his union with God.<sup>274</sup>

The renouncer dervishes deprived themselves of contact and affairs with other people. Even though it is not clearly mentioned in the text, the lifestyle of Oṭman Baba and the rest of his community signals this idea. Alongside the *manāķib*, in which Oṭman Baba retreats into solitude, it is written in a small number of passages that Oṭman Baba and his dervishes were celibate. As there is a critical verse about the Sufi sheikhs with female followers, it can be deduced that there were no women in the community either.<sup>275</sup>

The most striking antinomian theme in the hagiography is renunciation of the social norms and social deviance. As stated earlier while comparing the Şūfī, Malāmatī and Ƙalandarī écoles, the most distinctive trait of Ƙalandariyya is its marginalism. Unlike, the Şūfīs, who practice Sufism in a conformist way and the Malāmatīs, who conceal their Sufi identity from the rest of the population, the antinomian dervishes express their criticisms against the society, the ulama and Şūfiyya as excessively as possible. For this reason, getting familiar with the mentality behind their marginal practices would prevent us from misunderstanding Oṭman Baba.

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<sup>273</sup> The Quran 43:32. <http://www.wright-house.com/religions/islam/Quran/43-ornaments-of-gold.php>

<sup>274</sup> *OBV*, 263.

<sup>275</sup> *OBV*, 25, 31, 151.

Above all, the theories and practices of *Ḥarābāt*, extreme asceticism and celibacy are against conventional Islam and its morals. In contrast to the classical ascetics, the renouncer dervishes combined deprivation with deviant practices such as nudity, beggary, alcohol and drug consumption, shaving or burning facial and body hair and bearing iron rings on their limbs and genitals. They were unconcerned with the Shar'ī practices and violated societal and religious norms.<sup>276</sup> Oṭman Baba does not show tolerance to the misdeeds of people regardless of their socio-political status. Every so often he uses his club to beat the disobedient and impudent people and he does not abstain from cursing his opponents. He and his *abdāls* disturb the peace wherever they are able to and Oṭman Baba gives voice to the controversial Sufi themes bluntly. They are charged with blasphemy and heresy several times. If all of these are taken into account, we can conclude that the community did not accept the rules of the social order and were non-conformists on religious matters. As the ulama and Şūfiyya attach particular importance to growing a beard, Küçük Abdāl criticizes their formalist piety, accuses them of being pretentious and compares their beards to dog fur. Oṭman Baba forces his primary adversary Mü'mīn Dervīş and an Ottoman *ḳādī*, whom Meḥmed II sends Oṭman Baba for consultation, to shave their beards.<sup>277</sup>

Along with these, Küçük Abdāl also stresses that Oṭman Baba and his community did not deviate from the fundamental principles of Islam and more precisely, their methods have not contradicted Sharia. The references to the Quran and the Hadith are used to promote their ideology and it is indicated that Oṭman Baba was not only knowledgeable about the lore of Ṭarīkat, Ma'rifat and Ḥaḳīkat but he was also well-informed about the lore of Sharia. There are a few *manāḳib* regarding *namāz* in the *walāyatnāma*. In the two of them, young people are skeptical about the religiosity of Oṭman Baba and wonder if he performs *ābdast* and prays

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<sup>276</sup> Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends*, 17-23, 90-96.

<sup>277</sup> *OBV*, 53, 143, 156, 218, 233.

*namāz*. In both cases, Oṭman Baba feels their prejudices and he not only performs *ābdast* and prays *namāz* but he also performs *karāmat*, astonishing and embarrassing them. Yet at the same time, in another *manḳiba* he says that he has never washed his hands but he has never taken an impure step either. As there are *manāḳib*, in which he performs *ābdast*, he must have meant that an *al-Insān al-Kāmil* can never be impure as God manifests Himself in him. In the same chapter, Oṭman Baba accuses the public and the ulama of being impure animals and Küçük Abdāl adds that *ābdast* cannot clean the filth of *nafs*, greed, ambition, and evil.<sup>278</sup>

If the hagiographies and epics of a wide range of the *Bāḳinī* groups are reviewed, it can be seen that there are matching references to the Shar'i practices. Rıza Yıldırım asserts that in the hagiographies and epics of Hacı Bektaş Velī, Kızıldeli Seyyid 'Alī Sulṭān, Seyyid Baṭṭāl Ğāzī, and Şarı Şalṭuḳ, there are depictions of 'awliyā', who performs *namāz*, fast and refuse to drink alcohol.<sup>279</sup> In the hagiography of the founder of the Ḳalandarī order, Jamāl al-Dīn Sāvī, it is mentioned that he and his companion Jalāl-i Dergezīnī performed *namāz* together. Jamāl al-Dīn Sāvī makes an appearance also in *Şalṭuḳnāme* and performs *namāz* with Şarı Şalṭuḳ. Another name is Baraḳ Baba, the famous *murid* of Şarı Şalṭuḳ and whom the contemporary Arab writers refer to as very disciplined on the matter of *namāz*. In the texts, it is written that he had a habit of chastising his followers, who neglected their daily prayers.<sup>280</sup>

However, in a great deal of the sources about the antinomian dervishes, their ignorance of the Shar'i practices has been recorded. Indeed, in the hagiography of Demir Baba, a dervish from the community Örumcek Abdāl tells a mufti that "You have abolished the Sunna, asceticism, and alms and we have abolished *namāz* and fasting".<sup>281</sup> So all of these *manāḳib* might have been interspersed in order to portray the subjects befitting the Sunni piety. They

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<sup>278</sup> *OBV*, 29-32, 111, 122, 250-251.

<sup>279</sup> Yıldırım, "Sunni Orthodox vs Shi'ite Heterodox?", 298-299.

<sup>280</sup> Nihat Azamat, "Kalenderiyye" in *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, (Istanbul: TDV İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi, 2001), 253-256; *SN*, 370.

<sup>281</sup> *DBV*, 131-132.

might have been added by the authors, who were aware of the reputation their orders had, which was to highlight that they were indeed doing their religious duties. Or else, these chapters might have been written without a special aim. A historian should take each and every possibility into consideration and never forget that each generalization has its own exceptions.

According to Rıza Yıldırım, the subjects of the hagiographies and their communities did not place emphasis on the Shar'î doctrines; not because of their ignorance or refusal of Sharia but for them, the focal point of Islam was not formalism but disciplining *nafs* in order to reach divine love. For this reason, even though there are meager references to *namāz* and fasting, they do not take a significant place in the hagiographies.<sup>282</sup> Accordingly, while there are six *manāḳib* either Oṭman Baba and/or his followers perform *namāz*, there are many more references to charity and alms in the *walāyatnāma*.

Although Oṭman Baba's performing *namāz* and denouncing beggary are given place in the hagiography, other negative practices associated with the renouncer orders, such as self-laceration or alcohol and drug consumption, are not mentioned. As the constant accusations and legal punishments the community endured are borne in mind, Küçük Abdāl's silence about the aberrant practices of his community becomes more meaningful. He might have tried to illustrate the community in a more Sharia-oriented image and censor some of their activities, which are forbidden according to Islam. After all, as it is in all the biographical narratives, the writer was aware that his work would represent his *murshid* and the whole Oṭmanî community; not only in front of the Ottoman administration and the ulama but also the future generations. Therefore, the *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba* must be the most presentable, refined and edited version of Küçük Abdāl's memories of Oṭman Baba and his days with the community.

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<sup>282</sup> Yıldırım, *Seyyid Ali Sultan (Kızıldeli) ve Velayetnamesi*, 104-105.



The last thing to keep in mind while reviewing the *walāyatnāma* is the rationale and faith of the Ẓāliq̄ dervishes. Küçük Abdāl and the rest of the community must have believed at least a major part of the narrative. As *murids*, they were expected to blindly attach themselves to their *murshid*, believe in his perfection and obey each and every word of him. The logic behind submission to a *murshid* is the belief that he is an *al-Insān al-Kāmil*, whose own self has been vanished within God and words and actions are of God's will. And as it is written in the *walāyatnāma*, only a person who has completed his *Sayr wa Sulūk* can guide his *murids* to their destination.<sup>283</sup> The text and the *karāmat* motifs are apocryphal and polytheistic according to the Shar'ī or secular reasoning. However, for a dervish, who internalized the logic of Sufism and *Bāṭinism*, there are not any unrealistic or irrational elements in the text, and it is completely reasonable. Herewith, there are no hints of idolatry or polytheism in the hagiography for a dervish, since for him the alternative Shar'ī or secular rationales are not valid. Forasmuch as Cemal Kafadar puts into words, a hyper-orthodox scholar may perceive a *Bāṭinī* dervish un-Islamic, but it does not change the fact that the *Bāṭinī* dervish himself and a large segment of the population perceive him as a religious Muslim.<sup>284</sup>

We should remember that *Bāṭinism* had been alienated since the beginning of the Sunnization of Ottoman politics, especially because of the characteristics of its followers. As it did not comply with the agenda of the religious and the political authorities, it equated profaneness. However, this does not mean that these religious movements were less Islamic. On the contrary, the communities like the Oṭmanīs argued that Sufism was "the High Islam", as the esoteric knowledge *ʿIlm al-Ledūn* and *ʿIlm al-Bāṭin* and divine love was destined only for the privileged minority and required top-level spiritual training. According to their point of view, Shar'ī Islam was the pedestal of the religion with the basic, exoteric rules and practices that every Muslim

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<sup>283</sup> Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, 164; Yıldırım, *Seyyid Ali Sultan (Kızıldeli) ve Velayetnamesi*, 42-43.

<sup>284</sup> Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 53-54.

was responsible to follow. That is why the ulama was looked down on in the hagiographies because, despite their claims of being experts of Islamic knowledge, they knew only the elementary principles of Islam. On this matter, Ahmet Karamustafa argues that Sufis believed they were chosen as they were friends of God and after the stage of *Fanā*' they thought that their interest in other people would diminish. Yet they were still obliged to be role models for society.<sup>285</sup> So, if one is to claim the superiority of one religious movement over the others, the first question one should ask is which frame of mind would be taken as the center of the religion and which perspective is the righteous one.

Küçük Abdāl does not only explain the beliefs and behaviors and the religious and political stance of Oṭman Baba, but he also grounds the principles and the philosophy of the Ḳalandarī école. His clarifications about the integrity of *nubuwwat* and *walāyat*, the beliefs of *Waḥdat al-Wujūd* and *'Ana al-Ḥaqq*, the ranks, tasks, and powers of *'awliyā*' are made due to the need of giving voice to the community. As Oṭman Baba and his community were repeatedly taken to the *ḳādī* courts and returned from the threshold of execution, they must have known that they had a blasphemous and polytheistic image. Consequently, Küçük Abdāl publicizes Oṭman Baba, the community and their religious beliefs in order to show that they did not do anything against Sharia. On the contrary, their oppressors and persecutors, the hypocritical *'awliyā*' and deniers of *walāyat* were the ones, who wronged Islam.

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<sup>285</sup> Ahmet T. Karamustafa, "Walaya According to al-Junayd (d.298/910)" in *Reason and Inspiration in Islam: Theology, Philosophy and Mysticism in Muslim Thought - in honor of Hermann Landolt*, ed. Todd Lawson. (London: The Institute of Ismaili Studies in association with I. B. Tauris, 2005), 65-69.

## CHAPTER VI

### OᒖMAN BABA'S RELATIONS WITH THE OTHER SUFIS AND ORDERS

When looking at the different orders that are detailed in the *Velāyetnāme-i Oᒖman Baba*, one would discover a surprisingly narrow range. It has already been mentioned that Kūçük Abdāl does not specifically name the Őücā'ī/Oᒖmanī community in the *walāyatnāma*. The same applies to the *babas* and dervishes Oᒖman Baba contacts or has a relationship with. There are only a few clues about the affiliations of one or two of all these Sufis and seemingly they are Bektaşīs. Apart from that, there are no allusions to any other orders. In another respect, the only group, which is named according to their broader école and obviously frowned upon, is the Őūfīs. The ulama, which has strained relations with the Oᒖmanī community, can also be added to the list.

It has been already mentioned that Kūçük Abdāl does not describe any of Oᒖman Baba's connections within their order, except Sultān Őücā'üddīn and Kara Őāmit. In the hagiography, Oᒖman Baba states that Sultān Őücā'üddīn was his only equal and tells his *murids* to visit his tomb, which is compared to the pilgrimage to the Kaaba.<sup>286</sup> These details illustrate that Oᒖman Baba did not consider any other order equal to his own *silsila*.

However, if there are any other Sufis Kūçük Abdāl gives more place in the hagiography than Sultān Őücā'üddīn, they are Hacı Bektaş Velī and his famous successor Őarı Őaltuğ. Oᒖman

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<sup>286</sup> *OBV*, 12, 244, 248-249.

Baba claims that he is the embodiment of Hacı Bektaş Velī and Şarı Şaltuğ at the same time and Hacı Bektaş Velī is named as the previous *Ḳuṭb* of the lands of Rūm before Sulṭān Şücā'üddīn. The third person, who is as venerated as Sulṭān Şücā'üddīn and Hacı Bektaş Velī, is Ibrāhīm Adham al-Balḫī and it is noted that he was also a *Ḳuṭb* for seven years. Both *pīrs* of the Bektaşī and Adhamī communities are spoken highly of.<sup>287</sup> As Oṭman Baba prioritizes asceticism and deprivation, it is quite normal for him to praise these two *pīrs* and their orders. According to the Muslim tradition, Ibrāhīm Adham had been the Sultan of Balkh but he renounced all material possessions and earthly pleasures as well as his throne. In all the primary sources that refer to Hacı Bektaş Velī, associate him with a very simple, ascetic life without religious or political affiliations. However, the references made to Ibrāhīm Adham are fewer in number than the references to Hacı Bektaş Velī. As for Şarı Şaltuğ, he appears in the *walāyatnāma* more than the other three and also in a different manner. In more than one *manḳiba*, Oṭman Baba declares himself as Şarı Şaltuğ and performs miracles related to him.

Particularly in the passages about Oṭman Baba's claim of '*Ana al-Ḥaḳḳ*', Manşūr al-Ḥallāj is frequently mentioned. However, Oṭman Baba's statements such as "Manşūr's bow is my *kepede*"<sup>288</sup> and that many people like Manşūr are among his *murids*, show that Oṭman Baba did not accept him as his equal.<sup>289</sup> Apart from these, there are few references to famous Sufis Abū Bakr al-Shiblī, Ma'rūf Karḫī and 'Imād al-Dīn Nasīmī and it is also mentioned that Oṭman Baba visits the tomb of Abū Ayyūb al-Anşārī near Istanbul.<sup>290</sup>

A *manḳiba* from the hagiography of Sulṭān Şücā'üddīn, consolidates the idea that both he and his *murid* Oṭman Baba perceived themselves superior to almost all of their peers. In his hagiography, Sulṭān Şücā'üddīn intuitively feels that Nasīmī, Ḳaygusuz Abdāl and Kemāl Ümmī are

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<sup>287</sup> *OBV*, 12, 23, 46-47, 60-61, 64-67, 102-111, 117, 180, 228-229, 242.

<sup>288</sup> *Kepede* is a type of bow which is used only by the novice archers.

<sup>289</sup> *OBV*, 158-160.

<sup>290</sup> *OBV*, 60, 126, 146, 158-160, 219, 245.

about to visit him to test his *walāyat*, so he leaves his cave. When the dervishes arrive and see that Sulṭān Şücā'üddīn is gone, they doubt his *walāyat* as he did not foresee guests were coming to see him and left. They find Sulṭān Şücā'üddīn's ram, kill and then cook it. Meanwhile, Sulṭān Şücā'üddīn arrives and curses them for their arrogance and impudence. In the future, Kemāl Ümmī, who strings up the ram, would be hanged by the order of Sultan Murād II and Nasīmī, who skins the ram, would himself be skinned. The writer of the text must have read the hagiography of Abdāl Mūsā previously since he writes that Kaygusuz Abdāl has served to his *murshid* Abdāl Mūsā for forty years and Abdāl Mūsā prayed for him to never lose material and spiritual wealth and joy. However, the curse of Sulṭān Şücā'üddīn preponderates the prayer of Abdāl Mūsā and after that incident, Kaygusuz Abdāl, who has traveled various realms, never travels again.<sup>291</sup> This *manḳiba* is also narrated by Latīfī in his work *Tezkiretü'l Şuara*.<sup>292</sup>

Beyond all of these, Küçük Abdāl gives place to Oṭman Baba's meetings with many other Sufis in the *walāyatnāma*. He notes nearly every single detail about where and when Oṭman Baba, his fellows and opponents gather. Yet as the historical sources are extremely rare and limited about most of these figures, it is not possible to trace them all. Still, the text is an extraordinarily rich source detailing the interactions between different Sufis.

Just as the *karāmat* stories, all of these *manāḳib*, in which one of the '*awliyā*' overmatches the other, are written purposefully, to prove the precedence of the subject over his peers. Sulṭān Şücā'üddīn and Oṭman Baba might have never met the people mentioned in their hagiographies. However, these kinds of *manāḳib* are very valuable to display the possible friendships and rivalries between the community leaders; their meetings and testing, insulting and challenging each other. As all these Sufis were quite famous in their time, they might have been included in the hagiographies just to gain prestige to Sulṭān Şücā'üddīn and Oṭman Baba.

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<sup>291</sup> ŞŞV, 64-67.

<sup>292</sup> Latīfī, *Tezkiretü'ş Şu'ara ve Tabsıratü'n-Nuzama: İnceleme-Metin*, ed. Rıdvan Canım, (Ankara: Ankara Kültür Merkezi Başkanlığı, 2000), 470-471.

However, as they were all contemporaries, the meetings that are narrated in the hagiographies might have also taken place in history.

As Oṭman Baba claimed to be the *Ḳuṭb al-Aḳṭāb* of his time, it is expected that not each and every Sufi around him are paid tribute in the *walāyatnāma*. While all these names are referred in the *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba*, there is also the question of why many other renowned ones such as Aḳṣemseddīn, Ḳızıldeli Seyyid ‘Alī Sulṭān or Şeyḫ Bedreddīn were passed over? It is believed that Küçük Abdāl's not giving place to two of the most important figures of the Ottoman Balkans and the reputed *murshid* of Meḫmed II is a consciously made choice and the possible reasons behind this will be illuminated under the following titles.

### 6.1. OṬMAN BABA AND THE BEKTAŞĪ ORDER

As Ḥacı Bektaş Velī and Şarı Şaltuḳ are the two most referred Sufi figures in the *walāyatnāma*, the only order mentioned in the *walāyatnāma* is Bektaşiyya, which is startling for a renouncer *abdāl*'s hagiography. In spite of his criticisms of the several Bektaşī community leaders and lesser members, Oṭman Baba's discomfort originates not from the order itself but from his perceiving the popularization of Bektaşiyya negatively and the majority of the Bektaşī affiliated groups as hypocrites. Küçük Abdāl's naming Ḥacı Bektaş Velī right next to Sulṭān Şücā'üddīn is a sign of Oṭman Baba's sympathy for Bektaşiyya. Besides Küçük Abdāl draws an analogy between the famous *manḳiba* of Ḥacı Bektaş Velī's entrance to Anatolia and the *manḳiba* of Oṭman Baba's return to Anatolia from Azerbaijan. In both *manāḳib*, the 'awliyā' of Khorasan, Ḥacı Bektaş Velī and Oṭman Baba miraculously arrive in Anatolia by flying and their being on top of the Sufi hierarchy is declared by the native 'awliyā' of the lands of Rūm.<sup>293</sup>

As for the warrior-dervish and celebrated hero Şarı Şaltuḳ, he was believed to play a critical role in Islamization of the Balkans. One of his seven tombs is in Kaligra/Kaliakra,

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<sup>293</sup> *HHBVV*, 205; *OBV*, 12, 19-20.

Dobrudja, within the domain of the Oṭmanī community. In the *walāyatnāma*, Oṭman Baba visits the tomb and Kaligra Fortress and performs miracles to prove that he is Şarı Şaltuḡ. Kaligra is also the place, where the famous dragon *manḡiba* of Şarı Şaltuḡ comes to pass and interestingly Küçük Abdāl gives place to this particular *manḡiba* in the *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba*. Much later in the *walāyatnāma*, Oṭman Baba gives orders to Şarı Şaltuḡ, who is the commander of a celestial army of fifty-seven thousand *abdāls*.<sup>294</sup>

There is no doubt that Oṭman Baba was mainly from a renouncer order. However, all these details can be attributed to his tracing his *silsila* to not one, but two orders cohesively. Seemingly, Oṭman Baba made a claim on the Bektaşī *silsila* via Şarı Şaltuḡ, who preceded him by at least a century. These should not make one wonder since there have been numerous Sufis throughout history, who traced their spiritual lineages to more than one *silsila* and the class of Sufis, who claim to be spiritually guided by a *murshid* they have never meet face to face or who is already dead, is entitled Uwaysiyya. If this was the case, it can be deduced that the excessive references to Bektaşīyya in an antinomian *abdāl*'s hagiography were quite rationally made by the author.

Despite the appreciation the Bektaşī order gets in the *walāyatnāma*, Oṭman Baba is generally discontent with the Bektaşīs he meets. His bitterness is well-grounded according to Küçük Abdāl, as Oṭman Baba's claim upon the Bektaşī legacy and the claim of *tanāsuh*, that is to say, his being the embodiment of Hacı Bektaş Velī and Şarı Şaltuḡ, was not accepted among the Bektaşī circles for a very long time. The current lodge owner, where Şarı Şaltuḡ killed the dragon, frankly says to Oṭman Baba's face that if Oṭman Baba does not perform a *karāmat*, he would not believe Oṭman Baba's claim of being Şarı Şaltuḡ. On top of that, the dervish guard of Şarı Şaltuḡ's tomb does not accept Oṭman Baba's claims at all.<sup>295</sup> During the years the order

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<sup>294</sup> *OBV*, 23, 102-111, 117, 228.

<sup>295</sup> *OBV*, 109-110, 117-118.

was rapidly popularizing and the number of its members were rapidly growing, Oṭman Baba criticized the people, who joined the order for material gains, despite their lack of interest in Sufism and the Sufis, who played roles of 'awliyā' but in reality, were interested in only filling their pockets. While Oṭman Baba is taken to Istanbul, he asks one of his guards, "whose cap does he wear and whose sword does he wield?" The guard, who is presumably a Janissary soldier, replies that his cap belongs to Ḥacı Bektaş Velī and his sword belongs to 'Alī. In return, Oṭman Baba asks why the soldier does not recognize his master then.<sup>296</sup> In another *manḳiba*, an agnate of Ḥacı Bektaş Velī named Maḥmūd Çelebi, sends a precursor to declare that he is Ḥacı Bektaş Velī and on the road to visit Oṭman Baba. When Oṭman Baba hears this, he becomes furious. He mocks Maḥmūd Çelebi's flamboyant outfit, does not let him come into his presence or kiss his hand and curses him for his pride and insolence. After Küçük Abdāl narrates this incident, he writes that if readers of this event get curious as to why Oṭman Baba treats a descendant of Ḥacı Bektaş Velī that way, the answer is that in spite of Maḥmūd Çelebi's appearance of a remarkable *walī*, his heart is full of vanity, egoism, hypocrisy, and greed.<sup>297</sup>

Oṭman Baba's greatest opponents are Bāyezīd Baba and his *murid* and successor Mü'mīn Dervīş, who were settled in Zağra/Stara Zagora. It is written in the *walāyatnāma* that these two Bektaşī *babas*, who visit the tomb of Ḥacı Bektaş Velī, claimed *walāyat*, *ma'rifat* and *karāmat* but in fact, they did not possess any of these gifts from God. According to the *walāyatnāma*, Bāyezīd Baba remained on the stage of piety and asceticism but he was not a *walī*, which can be translated as the Ṭarīkat Gate of the Four Gates Doctrine. As for Mü'mīn Dervīş, Küçük Abdāl disparages him harshly by using the words ambitious, arrogant, greedy, impertinent and mischievous to define him. The *manāḳib* detailing the encounters between Oṭman Baba and the two Bektaşī *babas* explicitly show that there was a rivalry for the followers

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<sup>296</sup> *OBV*, 201-202.

<sup>297</sup> *OBV*, 242-243.



and financial resources between the two communities. At the end of the events, while the Bektaşī followers leave their master Mü‘mīn Dervīş to join the Oṭman Baba community, Mü‘mīn Dervīş tells a few of his remaining followers to rob one of Oṭman Baba’s *abdāls*, conspire against the antinomian master with the *kāḍī* of Pravadi/Provadia to imprison him and to steal his dervishes.<sup>298</sup>

If these elements in the *walāyatnāma* are analyzed, it can be deduced that Oṭman Baba was getting a foothold within the Bektaşī order. But his making a demanding entrance to the Bektaşī circles must have annoyed some of the Bektaşī masters like Bāyezīd Baba and Mü‘mīn Dervīş and triggered a feeling of competition among them. The crowds’ gathering around the charismatic personality of Oṭman Baba must have reduced the number of followers and the income of their community. As a consequence, the two groups must have had a rivalry to win over the *Bāṭinī*-inclined population of the eastern Balkans. From the fact that the competition between the two communities is narrated in nearly one-third of the hagiography, we can see that their connection must have taken years before the tension reached its climax. As the current commitment of the Bulgarian Muslim population demonstrates, the Oṭmanī community must have attained a greater socio-religious influence over the local people than the Bāyezīd Baba/Mü‘mīn Dervīş community. However, even though the Oṭmanī community managed to take a significant share from the followers of the Bektaşī order, it could not take hold over the entire *Bāṭinī*-inclined populace in the Balkans.

Due to the fact that Küçük Abdāl did not refer to the Kızıldeli Seyyid ‘Alī Sulṭān and his companion Seyyid Rüstem Ğāzī is surprising, as they had been famous leading figures of the Bektaşī order in the Balkans. Forasmuch as Oṭman Baba’s adoption of the spiritual legacy of a popular but also much more ambiguous and mythicized figure, Şarı Şaltuḡ, instead of a

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<sup>298</sup> *OBV*, 58-67, 73-81, 85-89, 92-93, 138-151.

well-known historical person and the top-ranked agent of the Bektaşī order in the Balkans, should be given attention. For Oṭman Baba, making a claim upon the legacy of Şarı Şalṭuḡ must have been easier and more influential, as he was a folk hero with unclear historicity, unlike Kızıldeli Seyyid ‘Alī Sulṭān, whose lodge was perhaps the most institutionalized Bektaşī center in the Balkans at that time. In respect to this, the Kızıldeli community could have been the most significant obstacle in Oṭman Baba’s way of making a claim in the Bektaşī order. For all these reasons, Küçük Abdāl might have laid emphasis on Şarı Şalṭuḡ and ignored Seyyid ‘Alī Sulṭān in the hagiography.

However, the issue of competition between the Oṭmanī community and the Bektaşī order should not be exaggerated. As mentioned above, in the later chapters of the *walāyatnāma*, the Bektaşī notables such as Maḥmūd Çelebi, visits Oṭman Baba. Also the hagiography of Demir Baba illustrates the amicable relationship between the two communities in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. That is why, it can be argued that Oṭman Baba must have managed to make himself accepted in the Bektaşī circles in his later years and even though the communities might have distanced themselves from each other from time to time, it was not a permanent situation.<sup>299</sup>

The authors’ giving a special place to the Bektaşī order in the hagiographies of Oṭman Baba and Demir Baba must have also been related to the process of the Bektaşī cult’s absorption of the Oṭmanī community. When looking at the three hagiographies of the community respectively, it can be seen that in the *walāyatnāma* of Sulṭān Şücā‘üddīn, there are no sympathetic references to the Bektaşī order or the Bektaşī elders. However, in the *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba*, the *kuṭbiyyat* of Hacı Bektaş Velī is confirmed, Oṭman Baba claims that he is the embodiment of two of the Bektaşī elders and stakes out his claim upon the Bektaşī legacy, despite his discontent for some Bektaşī masters. And in the *walāyatnāma* of Demir Baba,

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<sup>299</sup> Rıza Yıldırım, "Bektaşī Kime Derler?", 77; *OBV*, 242-243.

Aқыазılı Султān and Demir Baba have close relations with the Қызıldели Сейид ‘Alī Султān community and it is written that the warden of the Қызıldели dervish lodge gave *ijāzāt* to Demir Baba. Accordingly, the community members not only visit the tomb of Oтman Baba but also the tomb of Сейид ‘Alī Султān. While in two different *manāqib*, Aқыазılı Султān and Demir Baba are directly referred to as Bektaşīs, in another, Demir Baba is defined as “bound to Oтman Baba” and “not a Bektaşī”.<sup>300</sup> Moreover, while the community members are predominantly referred to as *abdāls* in the hagiographies of Султān Шүcā‘üddīn and Oтman Baba, in the *walāyatnāma* of Demir Baba, the titles dervish and *eren* are used as much as *abdāl*. Despite the contradictory statements, these examples show that throughout the centuries the antinomian identity of the community began to disappear little by little as they grew attached to the Şarı Şaltuқ and Kızıldели Bektaşī communities and the overall Bektaşī cult.

Particularly after the Sunni/‘Alevī Schism, the relations between the Ottoman government and various antinomian orders and communities reach a breaking point, which must have closed the gaps between all these *Bāṭinī* communities. There is also the fact that the Ottoman administrators started a massive reorganization process within the Bektaşī order in the 16<sup>th</sup> century with the cooperation of some of the Bektaşī community leaders. This process turned the order into a massive cult that combined many different orders and communities within its boundaries. The goal of the Ottoman authorities was to increase the controllability of all the *Bāṭinī* communities. As a result of all these, the disintegration of the renouncer orders and the Şүcā‘ī/Oтmanī community within the Bektaşī cult must have become inevitable.

## **6.2. THE THREE WARRIORS: ‘ALĪ, ŞARI ŞALTUҚ AND OТMAN BABA**

The idols of the Oтmanī community and the populace of the Balkans were by and large spiritually guided ghazi and warrior-dervish figures. The archetype of these characters is ‘Alī,

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<sup>300</sup> DBV, 71, 110-113, 117-120, 124.

who is regarded as the lion of God and known by shouldering the gate of the Khaybar Fortress during the Battle of Khaybar. In the Medieval period, such heroic figures like Seyyid Baṭṭāl Ġāzī, Dānişmend Ġāzī, Şarı Şaltuġ, Seyyid ‘Alī Sultān, and Seyyid Rüstem Ġāzī became popular among the Muslim populations of Anatolia and Thrace. They were glorified predominantly among certain segments of society and their images were produced and reproduced within the same stereotypical patterns. In the *walāyatnāma*, Küçük Abdāl pays attention to portray Oṭman Baba befittingly to these patterns.

In accordance with the philosophy of *tanāsuh*, Oṭman Baba identifies himself as Muhammad, ‘Alī, Ḥasan, and Ḥusayn throughout the *walāyatnāma* but ‘Alī is by far the most frequently referenced name. Especially during times of need or when Oṭman Baba becomes furious and means to punish people, he draws his double pointed sword named *Zū'l-fikār*. Yet at the same time, in two *manāķib* Küçük Abdāl sheds light on the symbolic usage of the word and notes that what is implied by *Zū'l-fikār* is not a sword but Oṭman Baba himself.<sup>301</sup> It cannot be said if Oṭman Baba really had a split-bladed sword as it is written in the *manāķib* but it seems Vāḥidī too witnessed *abdāls*’ giving an exceptional place to *Zū'l-fikār* as a symbol of ‘Alī.<sup>302</sup> The resemblance between Oṭman Baba's horses Kāra Turna, a black horse which was given to him by Miḥaloġlu ‘Alī Beg, and Bār-ı Yek, his beloved horse that he sacrifices in the end and Duldul, the famous mule of ‘Alī, is emphasized in the *walāyatnāma* in more than several passages. Also, the other horses he rides are always described as "like Duldul".<sup>303</sup> While Oṭman Baba is portrayed matching ‘Alī, his *abdāls* are put in the place of Ḥasan and Ḥusayn. When five of his *abdāls* are restrained, Oṭman Baba confronts the responsible *ķādī* and asks why they put “his Ḥasan and Ḥusayns” in jail. Similarly, when they are waiting for the final decision of

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<sup>301</sup> *OBV*, 150, 155, 177-178, 181, 183-184, 193, 199.

<sup>302</sup> *MHCNC*, 144.

<sup>303</sup> *OBV*, 74, 92, 114, 148, 152, 155, 166, 169, 173-174, 256.

Mehmed II, he calls his *abdāls* as sons and offspring of Muhammad.<sup>304</sup> Zeynep Yürekli's article about the spiritual value of *Zū'l-fikār*, reveals to what extent 'Alī and *Zū'l-fikār* became a significant symbol among Janissary soldiers, ghazi-warriors and specifically for the Miḥaloğlu family, which gives an idea why Oṭman Baba identified himself as 'Alī.<sup>305</sup>

In this pyramid of ideal heroes, Seyyid Baṭṭāl Ġāzī has also a principal position. He was iconized as if he was the *pīr* of all the *Ḳalandarī* disposed communities and dervishes of the lands of Rūm. Since Sulṭān Şūcā'üddīn and his community were settled in the periphery of the Seyyid Ġāzī Complex, the dervish-hood years of Oṭman Baba must have passed under the shadow of the legendary ghazi-*pīr*. That is also why, Seyyid Baṭṭāl Ġāzī might have had a role for Oṭman Baba's self-identification with Şarı Şaltuḳ, as it is asserted that Şarı Şaltuḳ descended from Seyyid Baṭṭāl Ġāzī in *Şaltuḳnāme* and it was believed that both warrior-dervishes played crucial roles on the Islamization of Anatolia and Rumelia.<sup>306</sup>

Despite the fact that the spiritual lineage of Şarı Şaltuḳ is traced back to Ḥacı Bektaş Velī, diverse primary sources hint to his antinomian beliefs and practices. He and his dervishes were referred to as *'ishḳ*, played tambourines and *kudüm*, consumed opium and engaged in begging. In *Şaltuḳnāme* he meets with Jamāl al-Dīn Sāvī, the founder of the *Ḳalandarī* order. At first Şarı Şaltuḳ refuses to befriend Jamāl al-Dīn Sāvī as he is an antinomian dervish, who practices *Chahār Darb* but after a while, they become as close as brothers.<sup>307</sup> Şarı Şaltuḳ's famous *murid* Baraḳ Baba and his followers shaved their facial hair except for their mustaches, consumed opium, wandered around half-naked and danced wearing bells and bones. The name of Baraḳ Baba is also enlisted among the successors of Ḥacı Bektaş Velī in his hagiography.<sup>308</sup>

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<sup>304</sup> *OBV*, 150, 213.

<sup>305</sup> Zeynep Yürekli, "Dhu'l-faqar and the Ottomans" in *People of the Prophet's House: Artistic and Ritual Expressions of Shi'i Islam*, ed. Fahmida Suleman, (London: The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2015), 163-167.

<sup>306</sup> *SN*, 37.

<sup>307</sup> *SN*, 370-372.

<sup>308</sup> *HHBVV*, 773.

Another *murid* of Şarı Şaltuğ was named Bahrām Shāh al-Ḥaydarī. These facts allude to the idea that the Şaltuğī community might have identified themselves as Ḥaydarīs as much as Bektaşī.<sup>309</sup> In the hagiography of Ḥacı Bektaş Velī, Kūṭb al-Dīn Ḥaydar is depicted as a ghazi, which fits the pattern. His being referred to as the spiritual son of Aḥmet Yasawī and an acquaintance of Ḥacı Bektaş Velī can also be taken as a connection.<sup>310</sup> Even if all these historical figures have never met, the *Bāṭinī* circles of the 15th century Thrace believed in their bond. This belief adds another dimension to Oṭman Baba’s relationship with different *silsilas* and communities.

There are also other symbolic details that may be related to Oṭman Baba’s tracing his *silsila* to Bektaşīyya via Şarı Şaltuğ. The first among these is the emphasis on the colors green and red in the *walāyatnāma*. As mentioned before, the color of daily clothing of Oṭman Baba is stated as black in multiple *manākib*. However, the day he dies, he wears green and red garments. Küçük Abdāl frequently mentions celestial people with green or red caps and clothing. Similarly, when Oṭman Baba and his community have hardships and Oṭman Baba claims that he will take up arms against his enemies, he always mentions his red bow and green arrows right next to *Zū'l-fikār*. In two of the early *manākib*, it is also indicated that he wields a green pike. In the cases they are threatened, he orders his *abdāls* to wear red.<sup>311</sup> Interestingly in *Şaltuğnāme*, it is indicated that Şarı Şaltuğ was also wearing a green and red cap.<sup>312</sup> Besides, when Ḥacı Bektaş Velī gives Şarı Şaltuğ his *walāyat*, he gives a bow and seven arrows,<sup>313</sup> another already mentioned symbol, the number seven.

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<sup>309</sup> Kiel, “Sarı Saltuk”, 147-150; Ocak, *Sarı Saltuk*, 106-120.

<sup>310</sup> *HHBVV*, 99-127.

<sup>311</sup> *OBV*, 56, 66, 92, 183-184, 187, 210-211, 256.

<sup>312</sup> Gölpınarlı, *Yunus Emre ve Tasavvuf*, 35.

<sup>313</sup> *HHBVV*, 423.

The top-line detail in the *walāyatnāma* showing the importance of the number seven is Oṭman Baba's seven-sliced turban that he made for himself.<sup>314</sup> As mentioned before, 'Evliyā' Çelebi narrates that Oṭman Baba descended from the seventh son of the seventh Imam Mūsā ibn Ja'far al-Kāzīm.<sup>315</sup> While some historians like Irène Mélikoff argued that the usage of the number seven was related to the Sevener/İsmā'īlī Shiism, others like Nikolay Antov correlated the number with Hurufism.<sup>316</sup> Whether the Oṭmanī community was Shiite or not, the real reason behind the usage of the number seven may be related to Oṭman Baba's tracing his *silsila* to Şarı Şaltuḡ. There are not any references to the number seven in the *walāyatnāma* of Sulṭān Şücā'üddīn. However, in addition to the bow and seven arrows in the *walāyatnāma* of Hacı Bektaş Velī, there is also the fact of ascriptions of Barak Baba to the Sevener Shiism. Regardless of the fact that the Şaltuḡī Sufis were using the number as a symbol of Shiism or not, the number was seemingly a distinctive symbol of the Şaltuḡī *silsila*.<sup>317</sup> However, further research should be conducted and the literary works of Şaltuḡī Sufis must be reviewed to prove this connection.

Despite the fact that we do not know to what extent Şarı Şaltuḡ was favored by the antinomian circles, all these details show that Oṭman Baba did not trace his *silsila* only to the Abdālān-ı Rūm via Sulṭān Şücā'üddīn, but he also traced his *silsila* to the Bektaşī *silsilas* via Şarı Şaltuḡ, making a claim on both formations. This may also be a piece of pivotal information to understand and answer how and why the Şücā'ī/Oṭmanī community dissolved within the Bektaşī cult. One may think the disparaging of some of the contemporary Bektaşīs in the *walāyatnāma* are for demonstration of the superiority of the renouncer orders over Bektaşīyya. Indeed, his being the successor of Sulṭān Şücā'üddīn, made him the spiritual heir of the Şücā'ī *silsila* and the Seyyid Ğāzī Complex, despite his residence in Rumelia. However, Oṭman Baba's

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<sup>314</sup> *OBV*, 90-91, 100.

<sup>315</sup> Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatname*, v. 8, 343.

<sup>316</sup> Mélikoff, "14.-15. Yüzyıllarda İslam Heterodoksluğunun Trakya'ya ve Balkanlar'a Yerleşme Yolları", 179; Antov, *The Ottoman "Wild West"*, 76-77.

<sup>317</sup> Ocak, "Barak Baba", 61-62.

claim of being the embodiment of Şarı Şaltuğ is also a direct claim to the spiritual legacy of Hacı Bektaş Velî. The image Küçük Abdâl establishes does not put one order against the other. On the contrary, it integrates the Abdālân-ı Rûm and Bektaşî legacies into one person, his *murshid*.

As it can be seen, the distinctive place of ‘Alî and Şarı Şaltuğ among the idols of the Şücâ‘î/Otmanî community should be analyzed multi-dimensionally. Associating the subjects with the ideal figures and making use of Islamic motifs had been standardized in the hagiographical narratives. This procedure was established to glorify the subject as much as possible and to give him a seat among the notables of the Islamic tradition so that he would be considered a legend in the eyes of acolytes and the public. In the Anatolian and Rumelian folklore, poetry, epics and oral narratives, ‘Alî has an irreplaceable place with his mount and blade and the above mentioned ghazi-dervish heroes are in fact locally reproduced alternative versions of the same archetype. Within a certain framework of morals and virtues, these ghazi-dervish figures were icons that not only the common people but also the Sufis looked up to. The narrative that combines these icons and symbols in the personality of Otman Baba must have brought some advantages to the Otmanî community before the populations with the *Bâtinî* tendencies, the Sufi fractions affiliated with Bektaşîyya, various military groups such as *Türkmen/Yörük* raiders, ghazis and Janissary infantries and even the Ottoman government itself. Especially the reproachful dialogue between Otman Baba and the Janissary soldier can be interpreted as Otman Baba’s pretension over not only the nomadic warriors but also the Janissary units, as he claimed to be the prime successor of Hacı Bektaş Velî in his time. In conclusion, it can be said that the popularization of the warrior-dervish archetype in this era was a result of the mutual interaction between these Sufis and society.

### **6.3. BOUND BY MYTH: THE DRAGON, HİDR-ELIAS AND OŦMAN BABA**



The most important reference given to Şarı Şaltuğ in the *walāyatnāma* of Oṭman Baba is Küçük Abdāl’s rewrite of the famous dragon *manķiba* of Şarı Şaltuğ. The *manķiba* have slightly different versions in the *walāyatnāma* of Hacı Bektaş Velī and the epic of Şarı Şaltuğ but in all of them, Şarı Şaltuğ manages to kill the seven-headed snake/dragon of Kaligra/Kaliakra Fortress. Interestingly, the snake/dragon is not a commonly used motif in the genre, except the hagiographies of renouncer community leaders like Sultān Şücā‘üddīn, Oṭman Baba, Demir Baba, Koyun Baba, and Hacım Sultān, who was perhaps the most antinomian successor of Hacı Bektaş Velī. In the *walāyatnāma* of Hacı Bektaş Velī, the only *manāķib* about eliminating snake/dragons are of Şarı Şaltuğ and Hacım Sultān. In the *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba*, Oṭman Baba claims that he killed the seven-headed dragon in Kaligra himself. There are also several more *manāķib*, in which Oṭman Baba removes the hazards of snakes and dragons by performing miracles.<sup>318</sup>

Abbas Daneshvari stresses that dragon iconography has always been used as a metaphor for people’s *nafs* and evil in Islam, which is quite true.<sup>319</sup> However, in these antinomian hagiographies, these motifs are used with references to Hıdır and Elias, who were believed to be the first two people to kill the snake/dragon. Hıdır and Elias have a place in both *Şaltuğnāme* and the *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba* and in the latter text, they are mentioned along with the dragon and Jesus Christ. What is more, at the end of the *walāyatnāma*, Oṭman Baba is buried on a hill named Hıdır-Elias and today the tomb of Oṭman Baba is located in the southeast of a village named İlyasça.<sup>320</sup> Ethel Sara Wolper writes that Hıdır was known by making barren lands green, holding the secrets of esoteric knowledge, wandering invisibly and appearing suddenly when people were in need as the immortal servant of God, which sounds quite familiar to the

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<sup>318</sup> *DBV*, 84-92, 94, 97; *HBBVV*, 431-437, 825-827; *HSV*, 77.90-91; *OBV*, 24, 84, 102-104, 109-111, 125-126, 148, 203, 210; *SN*, 261, 267-270; *SŞV*, 64.

<sup>319</sup> Abbas Daneshvari, “The Iconography of the Dragon” in *Manifestations of Sainthood in Islam*, ed. Grace Martin Smith and Carl W. Ernst, (Istanbul: The ISIS Press, 1993), 16-20.

<sup>320</sup> Engin, *Balkanlardaki Yatur, Türbe, Tekke ve Zaviyelerimiz*, 256; *OBV*, 57, 126, 268-270.

concept of 'awliyā'. In the Turkish folklore, he was also an embodiment of courage and strength and depicted as a warrior and dragon-slayer on horseback.<sup>321</sup>

Küçük Abdāl uses all these features to describe Oṭman Baba in many *manāḳib*. In both hagiographies of Sulṭān Şücā'üddīn and Oṭman Baba, there are analog *manāḳib* in which Sulṭān Şücā'üddīn and Oṭman Baba, covering their faces with *niḳāb*, lend a helping hand to the people who need it. What is more, in that particular *manḳiba* Oṭman Baba is on horseback and holds a spear.<sup>322</sup> All these similarities are not surprising as a number of historians already underlined that the *manḳiba* of Ḥiḍr-Elias' killing dragon on horseback with a spear, has its roots in the pre-Islamic cults of St. Theodore, St. George and St. Nicholas in the Anatolian and Balkan cultures, which is quite valuable information exemplifying how Islamic culture absorbed pre-Islamic elements.<sup>323</sup> The antinomian community leaders, including Oṭman Baba, were obviously associating themselves with Ḥiḍr and Elias, unlike the other Sufis, but their motives must be subjected to further researches.

#### 6.4. CONSPICUOUS BY THEIR ABSENCE: ŞEYḤ BEDREDDİN

Historians like Halil İnalçık regard Oṭman Baba as a non-conformist Sufi like Şeyḥ Bedreddīn and compare these exceptional figures in many respects.<sup>324</sup> It is true that Oṭman Baba, like his predecessor Şeyḥ Bedreddīn, made himself a name in the same geographic area; they both gained followers from the antinomian dervishes, *Türkmen/Yörüks* and a wider range of matching demographic groups; they had close relations with the Miḫaloğlu family and took journeys to the region of Azerbaijan/Armenia during the Timurid invasion.<sup>325</sup> If all these are

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<sup>321</sup> Wolper, "Khidr and the Changing Frontiers of the Medieval World" 123, 136.

<sup>322</sup> *OBV*, 56-57, *SŞV*, 73.

<sup>323</sup> F. H. Hasluck, *Sultanlar Zamanında Hristiyanlık ve İslam*, v. 1, (Istanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları, 2012), 256-267; Oya Pancaroğlu, "The Itinerant Dragon-Slayer: Forging Paths of Image and Identity in Medieval Anatolia" *Gesta* 43, no. 2, (2004), 151-158; Ocak, *Sarı Saltık*, 78-79, 82.

<sup>324</sup> İnalçık, "Dervish and Sultan", 24, 30; İnalçık, *Osmanlı Tarihinde İslamiyet ve Devlet*, 39.

<sup>325</sup> Michel Balivet, *Şeyh Bedreddin: Tasavvuf ve İsyan*, (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2000), 49-51, 56-57, 66-67, 69; İnalçık, "Dervish and Sultan", 24;

taken into consideration, should one not expect Oṭman Baba to sympathize with Şeyḫ Bedreddīn and adopt his non-conformist religious agenda? Surprisingly Küçük Abdāl does not make any reference to Şeyḫ Bedreddīn, one of the most notable and influential Sufi names of the Balkans, as he referred to many others.

First of all, notwithstanding their certain similarities, the hagiography of Şeyḫ Bedreddīn, written by his grandson Ḥāfız Ḥalīl, describes the huge gap between the famous sheikh and Oṭman Baba. According to his *manāḳibnāma*, the grandfather of Şeyḫ Bedreddīn was a respected vizier in the Seljuk court; his father was a notable ghazi in the Balkans; and his mother was the daughter of a local Christian notable. Bedreddīn's wife and daughter-in-law would also be native Christian women. After receiving a top quality education in Edirne, Bursa and Konya, Bedreddīn moved to Cairo to pursue higher education and became an elite *‘ālim* of *fīkh*. In Cairo, he met his Sufi master Sheikh Ḥusayn 'Aḥlātī and becomes his dervish. Again according to his *manāḳibnāma*, Timur offered him a high ranking administrative position but he refused it and turned back to Anatolia. After he returned, he became a *ḳāḏī-‘asker* under Şehzāde Mūsā Çelebi. However, things did not go as planned and as soon as Mūsā was dethroned, Şeyḫ Bedreddīn was exiled to İznik, from where his escape to Rumelia would trigger the Şeyḫ Bedreddīn Uprising that left its mark on history. Among the people who support Bedreddīn, there are not only antinomian dervishes and *Türkmen/Yörük* but also Christian groups. Although there are not any hints of non-conformism in his work *Vāridāt*, Şeyḫ Bedreddīn has been associated with rebellious ideas against the Ottoman central authority and unusual theories for a 15th century scholar, such as inter-religiosity, equality of Muslims and Christians and equal division of properties.<sup>326</sup>

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<sup>326</sup> Balivet, *Şeyh Bedreddin*, 34-35, 38-52, 68-72, 109.

This basic information demonstrates Bedreddīn's difference from Oṭman Baba. Although both Sufis had antinomian dervishes, Şeyḫ Bedreddīn was not only a highly educated 'ālim and kādī-asker of a şehzāde, Hakkı Erdem Çıpa asserts that Bedreddīn's tracing his lineage to the Seljuk court was used to consolidate the revolt.<sup>327</sup> In addition, there was a huge socio-cultural disparity between Bedreddīn and his murids. Whereas in the walāyatnāma of Oṭman Baba, there is no emphasis on Oṭman Baba's identity, lineage, family, education or previous occupation to dervish-hood. On the contrary, he makes every effort to remain as an Ahl-i Harābāt, lives with his abdāls and shares their lifestyle. For him, walāyat could only be earned by suffering and "burning in fires" and it was superior to all the material gains and status.<sup>328</sup> Although Küçük Abdāl indicates that Oṭman Baba was well-informed about the lore of Sharia, Tarīkat, and Haḳīkat,<sup>329</sup> in all likelihood, Oṭman Baba did not receive a higher education in a madrasa like Şeyḫ Bedreddīn. In this respect, Oṭman Baba's socio-cultural environment and the constant suspicion and oppression of the ulama and Şūfiyya must have embittered him against these groups that Bedreddīn was a member of.

Another fact that separates Oṭman Baba from Şeyḫ Bedreddīn is his being celibate. Şeyḫ Bedreddīn was married and had children. Moreover, his familiarity and connection with the Christian population and his inter-religious ideology must be rooted in his mother, wife and daughter-in-law's being Christians. As for Oṭman Baba, unlike many other Sufis who lived on the frontier, there are no indications of his relationship with Christians or any type of pursuit to convert them to Islam. In the epics and especially the Bektaşī walāyatnāmas, there are innumerable manāḳib with the theme of subjects' fighting Christians and/or converting them to Islam. However, it is strange that not even one non-Muslim figure is mentioned in the

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<sup>327</sup> Hakkı Erdem Çıpa, "Contextualizing Şeyh Bedreddin: Notes on Halil b. Isma'il's Menakıb-ı Şeyh Bedreddin b. İsrail", in *Şinasi Tekin'in Anısına: Uygurlardan Osmanlıya*, ed. Günay Kut and Fatma Büyükkarcı Yılmaz, (Istanbul: Simurg, 2005), 286-287.

<sup>328</sup> *OBV*, 265.

<sup>329</sup> *OBV*, 132.

*Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba*, one of the longest examples in the literature. Nevertheless, it is recorded in tax register of the *zāviye* of Oṭman Baba, dating from between 1515 and 1516 that fourteen of the twenty resident dervishes were sons of men named ‘Abdullāh, a name given to the converts. In the following years, Christian sons of converts continued to form a major part of the *zāviye* community. This shows us although Oṭman Baba might not be specifically interested in converting Christians to Islam, increasing numbers of non-Muslim converts were drawn to the community after his death.<sup>330</sup>

It should also be noted that there is no reference to Şeyḫ Bedreddīn in the hagiography of his contemporary Sultān Şücā‘üddīn either. However, it is not surprising as Sultān Şücā‘üddīn, like his successor Oṭman Baba, had a completely different lifestyle than Şeyḫ Bedreddīn. The only common ground between the Şücā‘ī/Oṭmanī community leaders and Şeyḫ Bedreddīn was their antinomian followers. Regardless of what Oṭman Baba thought about Şeyḫ Bedreddīn and his movement, it is known that he had already enough problems with the Ottoman State. Thus, even if Oṭman Baba sympathized with him, it is normal for Küçük Abdāl not to reference the stigmatized sheikh.

## **6.5. CONSPICUOUS BY THEIR ABSENCE: AĞŞEMSEDDİN**

Ağşemseddīn has always been famed for being the *murshid* of Meḫmed II and spiritually supporting the Ottoman armies during the Siege of Istanbul. However, in these respects, he must have been the primary rival of Oṭman Baba and that must be why his name was completely omitted in the *walāyatnāma*. When reviewing the relationship of the two opposing Sufi masters, the first thing to focus on is the friendship of their *murshids*, Sultān Şücā‘üddīn and Hacı Bayram Velī.

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<sup>330</sup> Antov, *The Ottoman "Wild West"*, 91-92.

In the hagiography of Sultān Şüca'üddīn, it is indicated that Hacı Bayram Velī decides to visit Sultān Şüca'üddīn for the birth of a special boy. However, his followers object to this saying that Sultān Şüca'üddīn is an ambiguous character, who practices *Chahār Darb*. Hacı Bayram Velī warns his *murids* not to appraise 'awliyā' according to their appearance and taking his two hundred dervishes with him, visits Sultān Şüca'üddīn. Meanwhile, as Sultān Şüca'üddīn knows they are coming, he orders his *murids* to make preparations for their guests and he himself heads out to welcome them. Hacı Bayram Velī and Sultān Şüca'üddīn converse for three days and in the end, Hacı Bayram Velī's request of a boy is granted to him. As they return, Hacı Bayram Velī reprehends his dervishes about the things they said about Sultān Şüca'üddīn. Soon after a boy named İbrahim is born.<sup>331</sup> In spite of this positive narrative, it is unknown if the good relationship between the two community leaders was sustained by the next generations.

As for the successors of Sultān Şüca'üddīn and Hacı Bayram Velī, Oṭman Baba claimed to be the *murshid* of Meḥmed II, who had been associated with Aḳşemseddīn since the Siege of Istanbul. Therefore, he must have heard a lot about the Bayramī sheikh throughout his lifetime. As their *murshids* were acquaintances, Oṭman Baba and Aḳşemseddīn might have met when they were younger. However, Küçük Abdāl never mentions if they ever met, what Oṭman Baba thinks about Aḳşemseddīn or Meḥmed's having relations with another *murshid* once. The only connection to Aḳşemseddīn in the *walāyatnāma* is Oṭman Baba's visitation to the tomb of Abū Ayyūb al-Anşārī, which was found by Aḳşemseddīn during the Siege of Istanbul.

To understand if the two Sufis had any kind of relationship, a few compelling facts come to light when revising other sources. According to Machiel Kiel's citing from a 17<sup>th</sup> century scholar Edirnevī 'Abdurrahmān Ḥibrī, there were rumors of Oṭman Baba's being a *murid* of

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<sup>331</sup> *SSV*, 82-86.

Akşemseddin; Edirnevî Hibrî argued this was untrue. Kiel thought otherwise since Bayramiyya is a Malâmâtî order and there is a close connection between the two protestant écoles of Malâmâtiyya and Kalandariyya.<sup>332</sup>

It is known that Hacı Bayram Velî had been a mudarris who had had close ties with the Ottoman upper classes but then left his office within the ulama to become a dervish of the Sufi master Şomuncu Baba of the Şafawî order. Likewise, his most famous successor Akşemseddin was also a mudarris. According to the popular belief, Akşemseddin did not approve Hacı Bayram Velî's Sufi practices and decided to be a follower of Zeynüddin Hâfî in Aleppo. However, while in route to Aleppo, he dreams Hacı Bayram Velî pulling him to Ankara and turns back. We also know that Hacı Bayram Velî was called to the capital city by Murâd II because of rumors and complaints about him and his community, similar to Oğman Baba.

Indeed, the two communities parallel each other in some aspects but there are also major differences. Despite the fact that Hacı Bayram Velî and Akşemseddin left the ulama and got into the Malâmâtî école, they were still well-educated intellectuals, who lived in urban regions, unlike anything a marginal wandering ascetics or an antinomian *Yörüük* Baba ever was.<sup>333</sup> After all, the response given by the dervishes of Hacı Bayram Velî displays the huge social gap between the two communities.

If we return to the rumor Edirnevî Hibrî commentated, there are no other sources that can verify this speculation. But it is still critically important that Oğman Baba and Akşemseddin were associated in some circles in the 17th century. Even if it is a rumor, this gives rise to the idea that there must be a reason behind associating the two Sufi masters. They may have met

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<sup>332</sup> Machiel Kiel, "Sarı Saltık ve Erken Bektaşılık Üzerine Notlar" *Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Dergisi* 3, no. 9, (1980), 32.

<sup>333</sup> Fuad Bayramoğlu, *Hacı Bayram-ı Velî: Yaşamı-Soyu-Vakfı*, v. 1, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1989), 14-26; Orhan F. Köprülü and Mustafa Uzun, "Akşemseddin" in *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, (Istanbul: TDV İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi, 1989), 299-302.

each other at some point in their lives or had a positive or negative relationship, which was known by contemporaries. From two pieces of information from the *walāyatnāma* and the writing of Edirnevī Ḥibrī, two different inferences can be drawn.

First, the author and the circles who put forward the *manḳiba* and the rumors might have been trying to prove the superiority of Sulṭān Şüca'üddīn over Ḥacı Bayram Velī and Akşemseddīn over Oṭman Baba. Although it is indicated Sulṭān Şüca'üddīn and Ḥacı Bayram Velī had friendly relations, it is Ḥacı Bayram Velī who visits Sulṭān Şüca'üddīn to make a request. As for the *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba*, the subject's statement that he came to the lands of Rūm to make Meḥmed the Sultan and to take Istanbul shows that he did not take Meḥmed's relationship with Akşemseddīn seriously or he wanted to undervalue the spiritual leadership of Akşemseddīn during the conquest of Istanbul. All these possibilities mean that the Şüca'ī/Oṭmanī *murshids* implied their supremacy over the Bayramī *murshids*. The silence of Küçük Abdāl may hint to a competition, but it may also hint to the mere irrelevance of the different communities, as his aim was to focus on and to praise his master, a *Ḳuṭb al-Aḳṭāb* and he could not do so by praising a famous Sufi who is known as the *murshid* of Meḥmed II.

On the other hand, although the relationship between Şüca'ī/Oṭmanīs and Bayramīs may seem hierarchical, there is no information indicating a negative connotation, which may lead to another possibility. Oṭman Baba might have perceived Akşemseddīn as a lesser ranked *walī* compared to himself but due to the affinity of their communities, he might have preferred to remain silent about his precedence over Akşemseddīn, especially on the matter of the Sultan. If they ever met in an amicable environment, Oṭman Baba's comparing himself to a fellow Sufi and emphasizing his superiority would be regarded as a great discourtesy. The most courteous way of emphasizing that he and not Akşemseddīn was the spiritual father of Meḥmed would be to simply overlook Akşemseddīn's past with Meḥmed.



On this subject, Halil İnalçık commented that Akşemseddin could not convince Mehmed to understand the impact of the 'awliyā' over the conquest of Istanbul. But according to Küçük Abdāl, Oṭman Baba managed to dominate the Sultan and made him believe in his power.<sup>334</sup> In fact, a letter written by Akşemseddin to Mehmed soon after a defeat before the conquest of Istanbul demonstrates that Mehmed had doubts and questioned Akşemseddin's spiritual power.<sup>335</sup>

Either way, the information is insufficient to pursue this matter more. The relationship between the two master Sufis can only be illuminated with the future discoveries of new sources.

## 6.6. THE ADVERSARIES: SŪFĪYYA AND ULAMA

If there is a group of mystics Oṭman Baba disliked without a doubt, they were the Şūfīs. In fact, the negative perspective against Şūfiyya is visible in most of the texts produced by the *Bāṭini* inclined communities. Ahmet Karamustafa points out the alteration of the term Şūfī to "Sofu" and its unfavorable connotation of "religiously hypocrite" and "bigot" in Ottoman Turkish.<sup>336</sup>

It is not certain which orders and communities Küçük Abdāl includes under the école of Şūfiyya and which ones he excludes. However, the fact that Şūfīs are always associated with *ālīms*, *zāhids*, *ābids*, sheikhs and mullahs in the *walāyatnāma*, point out to the mystic groups, who focused on Shar'i doctrines and practices, were referred by the word Şūfī. The reasons behind Oṭman Baba's aversion to this company was caused by their generalizable denial of *walāyat*, testing the 'awliyā' and evaluating the *karāmat* according to their logic. Their perception of

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<sup>334</sup> İnalçık, "Dervish and Sultan", 28.

<sup>335</sup> Akşemseddin, "Letter of Skeikh Aq Sems ed-Din to Mehmed II" trans. W. L. North, Carleton College, accessed May 07, 2019.

[https://apps.carleton.edu/curricular/mars/assets/Letter\\_of\\_Sheik\\_Aq\\_\\_\\_ems\\_ed\\_Din\\_to\\_Mehmet\\_II\\_for\\_MARS\\_website.pdf](https://apps.carleton.edu/curricular/mars/assets/Letter_of_Sheik_Aq___ems_ed_Din_to_Mehmet_II_for_MARS_website.pdf)

<sup>336</sup> Karamustafa, "Kaygusuz Abdal", 332-333.

Islam was solely based on asceticism and formalism and they refused to believe in the esoteric concepts of divine love and *'Ana al-Ḥaḳḳ*.

Tijana Krstić remarks that the Ottoman authors of the first *'Ilm al-Ḥāl* and *'Aḳā'id* books received an education based on the Akbari system, which paved way for the ulama to be familiar with the Sufi themes and doctrines.<sup>337</sup> But it seems their education was not enough for them and Şūfis to accept marginal mystics like Oṭman Baba. When Oṭman Baba meets people from these groups, by and large, they deny his *walāyat*, report him to the authorities and even demand his execution. They generally charge Oṭman Baba and his community of blasphemy, not performing *namāz* and fasting and disturbing the peace.

Throughout the *walāyatnāma*, people from different urban and rural regions, administrative and military elites and bureaucrats, city dwellers, and nomads all pay visits and respect Oṭman Baba, except the ulama and Şūfiyya. Near the end of the *walāyatnāma*, Meḥmed II makes peace with Oṭman Baba and recognizes him as his spiritual father once and for all. For this reason, he receives regular complaints from these circles, in spite of his previous order to throw anyone who makes a complaint against Oṭman Baba into the sea. Apparently, the ulama and Şūfis were judgmental and displeased with an antinomian *abdāl's* attracting so much attention and getting material and socio-political support from notables. In the end, *'ālims* and *zāhids* gather and ask Molla Gürānī and Molla Ḳırımī to lead them and speak on their behalf. The assembly approaches the Sultan and asks him why he aids a profane man like Oṭman Baba, who sets a bad example for society.<sup>338</sup> If one reminds oneself that Molla Gürānī had been Meḥmed's teacher since his youth, it can be deduced that even the closest confidants of the sultan was discontent with the bond between him and Oṭman Baba.<sup>339</sup>

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<sup>337</sup> Krstić, *Osmanlı Dünyasında İhtida Anlatıları*, 69.

<sup>338</sup> *OBV*, 215-222, 237, 250-251.

<sup>339</sup> Franz Babinger, *Mehmed the Conqueror and His Time*, ed. William C. Hickman, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 24.

If the speech of Meḥmed is summarized, he indicates that he has witnessed the true state of Oṭman Baba by both *‘Ilm al-Yaḳīn* and *‘Ayn al-Yaḳīn*. The mullahs, despite their knowledge of Sharia, cannot touch the heart of the Sultan, but Oṭman Baba is aware of his feelings, thoughts and moves. When the ulama ask the Sultan how dare Oṭman Baba to behave defiantly in the name of God and Islam, Meḥmed answers with a metaphor; he says that if he sends a soldier to some land and by the order of the Sultan the soldier burns and sacks everywhere, who can call that soldier to account. The same notion applies to Oṭman Baba, as he speaks and acts by God’s will but they cannot comprehend the true meaning of his words. Meḥmed also adds that he has become acquainted with countless Sufis but he has never feared anyone as he fears Oṭman Baba.<sup>340</sup> Küçük Abdāl’s writing these words as if Meḥmed said them were in order to make the most effective defense of Oṭman Baba against these groups of adversaries in real life. An analog of this highly questionable *manḳiba* takes place in the *walāyatnāma* of Sulṭān Şücā‘üddīn between Sulṭān Şücā‘üddīn and Molla Fenārī. However, in that case, Sulṭān Şücā‘üddīn convinces Molla Fenārī of his *walāyat* by performing a miracle.<sup>341</sup>

A few conclusions can be drawn from this. First of all, in this narrative of Küçük Abdāl, it is noteworthy that Oṭman Baba does not defend himself but the Sultan, as the highest ranking authority in the whole Ottoman State, advocates for him and explicitly says that he is afraid of Oṭman Baba, which brings the legendary status of Oṭman Baba to its peak. While his opponents are the most eminent *‘ālims* of the Ottoman State, he does not even confront them nor defend himself, as his advocate is the Sultan himself. On the other hand, the reputation of his accusers is as important as his advocate, as there are no *‘ālims* superior than Molla Gürānī and Molla Ḳırımī in the lands of Rūm, but even they fail to discipline Oṭman Baba. As Oṭman Baba watches Meḥmed like an invisible eye and is behind the Sultan’s each and every success, his

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<sup>340</sup> *OBV*, 218-221

<sup>341</sup> *SŞV*, 67-68.

social and religious authority becomes limitless, which leads to the topic of the political relationships and perception of Oṭman Baba. Of course, these are only the claims of Küçük Abdāl.



## CHAPTER VII

### THE POLITICAL STAND OF OᒢMAN BABA

#### 7.1. THE *ᒢUᒢB* AND THE CONQUEROR

What is interesting about the *Velāyetnāme-i Oᒢman Baba* is that, notwithstanding Oᒢman Baba's much earlier arrival to the lands of Rūm, it begins with Meᒢmed II's succession to the throne in 1451. Halil İnalçık also highlights this feature of the *walāyatnāma* and writes that it is unusual for a hagiography writer to record the life and achievements of a Sufi in close relation with a monarch.<sup>342</sup> Indeed, the lives of Oᒢman Baba and Meᒢmed II are narrated as they were destined for each other and their stories continue to be connected until their consecutive deaths in 1478 and 1481.

From the beginning of the *walāyatnāma* to its end, Küçük Abdāl makes mention of Meᒢmed II innumerable times. In fact, in the first chapters of the *walāyatnāma*, Oᒢman Baba appears in Meᒢmed's dream saying that he has come to the lands of Rūm to make the young *ᒢehzāde* a sultan. He also adds that he will show Meᒢmed his true self when Meᒢmed reaches the age of forty and if he cannot appreciate it then it will be wasted.<sup>343</sup> In the same chapter, Oᒢman Baba arrives at a hill viewing Istanbul, stays there for forty days and utters that he has come to conquer the city and to recite azan in its grand churches. Küçük Abdāl refers to the city

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<sup>342</sup> İnalçık, "Dervish and Sultan", 28.

<sup>343</sup> *OBV*, 18.

as İslāmbol.<sup>344</sup> Right after that, in the 2nd chapter, Oṭman Baba leaves Anatolia, the land he has been wandering for decades and passes Rumelia, where he will remain for the rest of his life and build his community. In the following chapter, Meḥmed becomes the Sultan and Istanbul is conquered.<sup>345</sup> What is important to note is Küçük Abdāl's taking these years, Meḥmed II's ascending to the throne and the conquest of Istanbul as landmarks to start the *walāyatnāma*. In the 5th chapter, when Oṭman Baba arrives in Istanbul, he preaches to the citizens to build new structures in the place of old devastated ones and repair the city walls since it is the city of Ḥasan and Ḥusayn. According to Küçük Abdāl, these words of Oṭman Baba foreshadowed Meḥmed's famous reconstruction project of the city.<sup>346</sup>

The subjugation of Istanbul was given importance in the *walāyatnāma* due to its paramount place in the political vision of Oṭman Baba. As is known, the symbolic meaning of the conquest has always been massive. Since the earliest ages of Islam, Islamic armies had marched to the ancient Roman capital, which was a holy place for the Christian world, left many martyrs like Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī behind, and returned empty-handed. Küçük Abdāl appropriates the most significant event of the century, the conquest of the marvelous capital of the Byzantine Empire to his *murshid* and declares its conqueror Meḥmed II, his spiritual son. Ultimately, the earthly equal of “the *Ḳuṭb* of all *Ḳuṭbs*” must be as prestigious as him. In this regard, Oṭman Baba's suggested father-son and *murshid-murid* relationship with the Sultan must have improved his reputation in no small measure, since Meḥmed not only conquered Istanbul but also expanded the Ottoman domains in both the east and west, made manifold bureaucratic, economic, infrastructural and military reforms.

This quick introduction to the *walāyatnāma* does not go on like this in the following chapters and Küçük Abdāl turns his attention to Oṭman Baba's journeys, meetings with the

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<sup>344</sup> *OBV*, 19.

<sup>345</sup> *OBV*, 22-28.

<sup>346</sup> *OBV*, 36.

general public and his Sufi peers and building his community. However, throughout the *walāyatnāma*, Küçük Abdāl links Oṭman Baba and Meḥmed II by giving place to their contact or encounters. Ever so often Oṭman Baba states that Meḥmed is his son and he himself is behind all the successes of the Sultan.

The 6<sup>th</sup> chapter is exclusive to a series of these encounters between Oṭman Baba and Meḥmed II. After the conquest, during his preparations for his campaign to Belgrade in 1456, Meḥmed meets with Oṭman Baba face to face for the first time near the Silivri Gate of Istanbul. Oṭman Baba bluntly yells at Meḥmed not to go to Belgrade if he does not want to withdraw and flee. The Grand Vizier Maḥmūd Paşa prevents the raging Sultan from drawing his sword and warns him that the person who says the words is a *walī* and should not be laid a finger on. Küçük Abdāl writes that the arrogant Sultan, who does not take heed of Oṭman Baba's words, went to Belgrade, could not capture the city and turned back to Istanbul in failure.<sup>347</sup>

The second encounter is as shocking as the first one for Meḥmed. While traveling the streets of Istanbul, he suddenly crosses path with Oṭman Baba, who tells him to answer his question at once: Who is the Sultan, Meḥmed or himself? Meḥmed recognizes Oṭman Baba this time and both he and Maḥmūd Paşa remember how his warning not to go to Belgrade came true. The Sultan dismounts from his horse, kisses Oṭman Baba's hand, and tells him that Oṭman Baba is the Sultan and Meḥmed is humble and helpless compared to him. While leaving, Meḥmed sends Oṭman Baba a pouch of coins with one of his servants. Irritated by this act, Oṭman Baba refuses to touch the "crap" and sends it back, which astonishes the Sultan.<sup>348</sup> Likewise, it is written in Critobulus's History that Meḥmed had a habit of traveling on his horse within the streets of the capital city and distributing coins to the citizens.<sup>349</sup>

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<sup>347</sup> *OBV*, 38-39.

<sup>348</sup> *OBV*, 39-40.

<sup>349</sup> Kritovulos, *Kritovulos Tarihi (1451-1467)*, ed. Koray Karasulu, Trans: Ari Çokona, (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2018), 108.

In the third account, Meḥmed finally acknowledges Oṭman Baba's *walāyat*. Küçük Abdāl writes that Meḥmed has been disguising himself and visiting different dervish lodges in Istanbul, wondering if anyone recognizes him. During one of those visitations, he unexpectedly sees Oṭman Baba walking towards him. Again, Oṭman Baba asks an enigmatic question of who Oṭman is. This time ready to answer, the Sultan says: "You are Oṭman, not I". Content with the answer, Oṭman Baba responds that he really is Oṭman and Meḥmed is his son. After turning back to his palace, Meḥmed sends a pouch of coins one more time. Like before, Oṭman Baba is detested and hits the pouch with a stick, scattering all the coins and causing people to rush and grab them. As soon as the Sultan hears of Oṭman Baba's response, he believes in the *walāyat* of the eccentric Sufi. Küçük Abdāl notes that the incident made Oṭman Baba famous not only in Istanbul but in nearby cities and towns.<sup>350</sup>

Then, until the 21<sup>st</sup> chapter, Küçük Abdāl focuses on different subjects. In the 21<sup>st</sup> chapter, it is written that Meḥmed and his armies set up their camp on the same spot where Oṭman Baba camped seven years earlier and foresaw Meḥmed and his men doing the same. Meanwhile, Oṭman Baba is in Istanbul and sends one of his *abdāls* as a messenger to Meḥmed. When the *abdāl* reaches the encampment he realizes it is the same spot where Oṭman Baba and his dervishes had once camped and delivers Oṭman Baba's message to Meḥmed that he will assist him during battle. Pleased with what he has heard, when the Sultan wins the battle and returns to his capital city, he donates to the community of Oṭman Baba.<sup>351</sup>

After that, the next political incident is the Battle of Otlukbeli in 1473, in which the son of Uzun Ḥasan dies. According to the *walāyatnāma*, during the battle, Oṭman Baba, who is with his dervishes away from the battle, tells his *abdāls* to cut some trees and burn them. He suggests to one of his dervishes to burn one of the trees with him. Yet the dervish answers he cannot. Then Oṭman Baba tells him to burn the tree first by cutting it into pieces and the dervish does

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<sup>350</sup> *OBV*, 40-41, 48, 54.

<sup>351</sup> *OBV*, 114-115.



so. However, as a side note, Küçük Abdāl writes the tree was the body of Uzun Hasan and if the *abdāl* had carried out Oṭman Baba's words instead of saying he could not, Uzun Hasan would be dead and his lands would be taken by the Ottoman armies but because the *abdāl* refused his *murshid*'s words, the battle was barely won and Uzun Hasan survived.<sup>352</sup> What is understood from Küçük Abdāl's narrative is within the seventeen years between 1456 and 1473, Oṭman Baba developed a loose acquaintance with Meḥmed II, whom in return began to believe in his *walāyat*.

Thereafter, the course of events, which starts with the above-mentioned dream *manḳiba* that foreshadows Meḥmed's giving an issue to bring Oṭman Baba and his community to Istanbul, takes place. If one were to remember that chapter in brief, one of the *abdāls* dreams that while Oṭman Baba sits at a threshing floor, three horsemen arrive. Meḥmed is one of them and orders his Grand Vizier and his son to remove Oṭman Baba from the threshing floor by force. In both instances, Oṭman Baba comes close to unsheathing his sword but he restrains himself. However, when Meḥmed himself comes to shoulder him out, Oṭman Baba draws his sword completely and threatens Meḥmed, who escapes from the field immediately.<sup>353</sup>

As mentioned earlier, in many chapters previous to chapter 39, it is visible to see that the community of Oṭman Baba was having trouble in various cities and towns. The number of indictments placed on them increases so rapidly and they are brought to courts more than ever that even the Sultan hears of these complaints. At first, Meḥmed directly gives the order to execute them, but after a dream, in which Oṭman Baba asks him whose dervishes he is about to slaughter and asks "Should I kill you by the order of God?", he changes his mind and gives another order to bring Oṭman Baba and his community to the capital city.<sup>354</sup>

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<sup>352</sup> *OBV*, 152-153.

<sup>353</sup> *OBV*, 177-179.

<sup>354</sup> *OBV*, 190.

As the community reaches Istanbul, by the order of the Sultan, they are placed in the Kılıç Monastery to wait for the final judgment. There, talking to himself Oṭman Baba challenges the Sultan by declaring he is going to tear down the imperial palace to show Meḥmed his true self. That evening, natural disasters, such as earthquakes and floods, take their toll upon Istanbul. In the palace, a kiosk collapses and all the birds that are kept in a special place are struck and killed by lightning. Horrified by the disasters, Meḥmed gathers his astrologers and scholars and asks them what has caused such destruction to the city. The general opinion of the ulama is that Meḥmed has defied someone who has the power and knowledge of twenty-four thousand prophets. While they all put forward their ideas, Meḥmed remembers the stakes and hooks he ordered to be prepared to impale Oṭman Baba and his community and realizes that the man the ulama are talking about is Oṭman Baba. Thereupon he sends three of his most trusted men to inspect Oṭman Baba and report back to him. When they return all the three inspectors praise Oṭman Baba and one of them remarks that he saw Oṭman Baba as a grand *walī*.<sup>355</sup>

Küçük Abdāl's description of what befell the community and their reactions to their misfortunes is incredibly vivid, especially when compared to the other examples of the genre. Although Oṭman Baba scolds their guards harshly and does not make any concessions throughout the process, the dialogues between the *murshid* and his *murids* and Küçük Abdāl's explanations and usage of *karāmat* motifs, make these chapters extremely depressing. The group was certainly ready to face death at any moment and they were determined to hold their ground while they awaited their fate. When the vizier Sinān Paşa along with the *ḳādī*-*asker*, *defterdār*, and *subaşı* visits them in the Kılıç Monastery, Oṭman Baba treats them sternly in an unflinching way and tells Sinān Paşa three times to take the lives of his *abdāls* right then and there. Küçük Abdāl also writes that seven community members died during their days of

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<sup>355</sup> *OBV*, 204-209.

confinement. He mythicizes these deaths by indicating that an *abdāl* dreamt that the seven *abdāls* were martyred during a spiritual battle with the enemy forces of Meḥmed.<sup>356</sup>

The process of this spiritual battle starts right after the death of Şehzāde Muştafā Çelebi and the execution of Maḥmūd Paşa in 1474 and ends before the Campaign of Kefe/Feodosia in 1475, as Meḥmed becomes a loyal *murid* of Oṭman Baba and sends Gedik Aḥmed Paşa to ask Oṭman Baba's blessing before the military operation. Küçük Abdāl associates the unfortunate experiences of his *murshid* and community members to the corruption of Meḥmed and the Ottoman State.

If we are to demonstrate the contents of the dialogue, when the *kāḍī- 'asker* asks Oṭman Baba if he knows God, Oṭman Baba tells he not only knows but also communicates with God. When the surprised *kāḍī- 'asker* demands to see the God Oṭman Baba converses with, Oṭman Baba asks a question as an answer: "Who do you think you are talking to?". Then he tells Sinān Paşa to kill his *abdāls* thrice. Sinān Paşa embarrassed of what Oṭman Baba says, tells him that he and the other officials are only the dust and dirt on the feet of Abdālān-ı Rūm and asks how they can kill them. However, his answer provokes Oṭman Baba and he snaps at the vizier saying that if they were the dust and dirt on the feet of Abdālān-ı Rūm would they turn out to be such thugs. After brief talks, the impressed *defterdār* tries to give Oṭman Baba one hundred coins, which brings Oṭman Baba to boil and make him dismiss the officials. As the *abdāls* bring their horses and Sinān Paşa does not want to disrespect Oṭman Baba by mounting in front of him, one of the *abdāls* forcefully mounts him and the officials are cast out the monastery. According to Küçük Abdāl, Sinān Paşa was really impressed by Oṭman Baba. When he comes into the presence of Meḥmed, he says that his soul has shivered at the first moment

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<sup>356</sup> *OBV*, 210-215.

he saw Oṭman Baba, who knew everything Meḥmed told them to ask. He also adds that Oṭman Baba must have been the strongest *walī* on earth.<sup>357</sup>

After this incident, the relationship between the Sultan and the *Baba* transforms into a bond between a *murshid* and his *murid*. According to the *walāyatnāma*, Meḥmed recognizes the authority of Oṭman Baba and begins to send gifts and sacks of coins every week. As Oṭman Baba becomes increasingly famous, everyone, including the highest ranking viziers and amirs, pay visits to Oṭman Baba and bring food, presents and even more sacks with them. Küçük Abdāl writes that enough food was brought to feed all the people and even dogs around the World but the *abdāls* give away all the excess donations to the people in need. The ulama, *dānişmends*, *zāhids* and Şūfīs are the exceptions though. As mentioned in the 6th chapter of this study, they gather under the leadership of Molla Gürānī and Molla Kırımī to appear before the Sultan due to their discontentment with Oṭman Baba and his *abdāls*. However, their efforts yield no results. From that point onwards, Meḥmed begins to visit Oṭman Baba to converse with him and consult with him about the state of affairs and sends his commanders to ask Oṭman Baba to sanctify the campaigns. What is more, the Sultan begins to call Oṭman Baba “father” and treats him with great care, humility, and respect.<sup>358</sup>

In these last chapters of the *walāyatnāma* there are short intermittent *manāḳib* about everyday life, which demonstrate Meḥmed’s commitment to Oṭman Baba. In one of them, Oṭman Baba orders his *abdāls* to cut and burn the trees in front of the royal palace. When the Sultan notices the smoke and learns that it is the deed of Oṭman Baba, he invites him to the palace. As Oṭman Baba enters the salon, Meḥmed thinks to offer his own seat to his *murshid* but before he can say anything Oṭman Baba sits in Meḥmed’s seat and asks: “Did you think all these properties were without an owner?”. The bewildered Sultan and the *Baba* talk for some

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<sup>357</sup> *OBV*, 212-215.

<sup>358</sup> *OBV*, 215-251.

time. During their conversation, Oṭman Baba enlightens Meḥmed about *'Ilm al-Bāṭin*. He tells Meḥmed that if he wishes to see God in human form, he should look at Oṭman Baba and he adds that he is the real Sultan and Meḥmed is only a citizen. Meanwhile, Meḥmed has food prepared and Oṭman Baba tells him to eat while he stands still. After eating for a time, Meḥmed calls Oṭman Baba again to eat with him. However, Oṭman Baba replies that as Meḥmed ate he himself became satisfied and was no longer hungry. This occurrence is construed by Meḥmed as an example of *Waḥdat al-Wujūd*, because their bodies function as if they are one. Still, Oṭman Baba does not shy away from reprimanding Meḥmed due to his enduring pride being the Sultan. As their conversation ends and Oṭman Baba rises from his seat to leave, Meḥmed asks if he can go with him. Yet, Oṭman Baba refuses saying that he needs Meḥmed as he is and he will return for him. As Oṭman Baba leaves, Meḥmed asks the *abdāls* why Oṭman Baba visited him and where he is going. The *abdāls* reply that it was the last farewell of the grand *murshid* and they are going towards Edirne.<sup>359</sup>

The *Walāyatnāma* ends as it begins. Following the narration of Oṭman Baba's funeral in 1478, Küçük Abdāl writes that on the day of Meḥmed II's death in 1481, the spirit of Oṭman Baba visited the Sultan's palace and Meḥmed delivered his soul for his love of God and became a martyr.<sup>360</sup> Apparently, Küçük Abdāl disregarded the fact that Meḥmed II died on his way to another campaign in Hünkar Çayırı, Kocaeli.

## **7.2. THE POLITICAL IDEOLOGY OF OṬMAN BABA AND THE RELIGIOSITY OF MEḤMED II**

Küçük Abdāl's statements, such as, Oṭman Baba came to the lands of Rūm in order to make Meḥmed the Sultan and to take the city of Istanbul and he was the spiritual father of Meḥmed,

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<sup>359</sup> *OBV*, 252-255.

<sup>360</sup> *OBV*, 273.

for whom the Sufi master took the name Oṭman<sup>361</sup> and many other elements demonstrate that the ideological message the writer tried to give that the Oṭmanī community was in favor of the Ottoman State. However, what might be the reasons of this approval in spite of the radical *Bāṭinism* of the community? Further to that, how did the contemporary political events affected the relationship between Oṭman Baba and Meḥmed II?

The tumultuous political climate in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman Empire was determined according to the huge social and governmental transformations dictated by Meḥmed II. However, long before him, during the foundational years of the Ottoman Beglik, *Bāṭinī* inclined dervish coteries were welcomed to the Ottoman domains with open arms. Additionally, as it is mentioned in the *walāyatnāma*, *Türkmen/Yörüük* populations with thousands of raiders and ghazis had played a critical role in the territorial expansion in Rumelia. In this framework, Ottoman State's adopting an Islamizing colonization policy in the Balkans must have been influential to earn the support of these circles. The famous myths of Şarı Şaltük, which were written down in 1480 by the order of Şehzāde Cem,<sup>362</sup> perfectly demonstrates how the themes of colonization and Islamization were popular among at least a segment of the Ottoman Muslims, which definitely included Oṭman Baba.

As is seen in the hagiography, Oṭman Baba claimed that he is the one who backed the Ottoman armies in the battles. He could relate to the aforementioned factions of the society both ethnically and religiously as he was a *Türkmen abdāl*, who shared their lifestyle, customs, traditions, and interpretation of Islam. His motives as a community leader, who lived in the frontiers, were correlated with the motives of the *Türkmen* ghazis and raiders around him. Hence, his interest in the Ottoman political and military agenda and especially in the *Ghaza* policy in the west is an indicator of his sympathy for the Ottoman State. It cannot be a coincidence that there are not any *manāḳib* about Oṭman Baba's personal relations with the

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<sup>361</sup> *OBV*, 18-19, 42.

<sup>362</sup> Gölpınarlı, *Yunus Emre ve Tasavvuf*, 33.

non-Muslims or his efforts to convert them in the hagiography, while he declares that he came to the lands of Rūm to take Istanbul, which he defines “the city of Ḥasan and Ḥusayn” and recite azan in its churches.<sup>363</sup> And as a matter of fact, Rumelia as his choice of location to establish his own community even though he has traveled all around Anatolia for decades can be interpreted as a clue of his ideology. Therefore, Oṭman Baba must have been annoyed with Mehmed II’s giving weight to the process of centralization and Sunni-ization and prioritizing the ulama and the Janissary corps over the dervishes, ghazis, and raiders.

It was previously mentioned in the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter that Oṭman Baba had difficulties with the ulama and Şūfiyya. There is also the fact that while *Türkmen/Yörüük* population, ghazis, *begs* and *sancağ-begs* were treating Oṭman Baba and the overall *Bāṭinī* circles with great concern and respect, the passage in which Oṭman Baba reproaches the Jannissary soldier and questions his commitment, shows that he was not content with Jannissaries taking the central position of the *Türkmen* raiders in the Ottoman military forces. However, as the Ottomans were entering a new era under the rulership of Mehmed II, Oṭman Baba was already a senior Sufi in his seventies, who had backed the government for decades. There is also the fact that he was the leader of a community, which had been carrying the heavy burden of social stigma. Küçük Abdāl makes it clear in the hagiography that Oṭman Baba was dissatisfied with the direction Mehmed II and the Ottoman government had turned. Nevertheless, it can be argued that in spite of his general disapprobation with the state of affairs, because of his ideologic orientation for favoring the welfare and expansion and for the benefits of his community, Oṭman Baba remained politically conformist with the Ottoman administration and Mehmed II.

In addition to the problematic reputation of the community, it is known that hagiography writers have always used stories of subjection of top-ranked officials or governors to their *murshids* in order to gain prestige and legitimacy to the community leaders and to draw new

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<sup>363</sup> OB, 19, 36

followers to the cult. So Küçük Abdāl may have wanted to justify his order, dervish brothers and *murshid* in the eyes of more people and to earn the trust and backing of the government by mythicizing and glorifying their perhaps much simpler experiences with the government

It is also a known fact that Meḥmed II put the land confiscation policy into action in the last decade of his rule, which dealt a big blow to various different societal groups including the Sufis. According to Nicoară Beldiceanu and Oktay Özel, the land reform was partially applied from 1472 onwards and it was fully promulgated in the year 1476.<sup>364</sup> This application caused the Miḥaloğlu family, who had close relations with the Şücā'ī/Oṭmanī community, to lose their lands in the vicinity of the Seyyid Ġāzī Complex.<sup>365</sup> Still, according to the *walāyatnāma*, the relationship between Oṭman Baba and Meḥmed II improved in 1475 and remained perfect until the death of Oṭman Baba in 1478. In the 48<sup>th</sup> chapter of the *walāyatnāma*, Meḥmed acts in contradiction with his reform policies and offers to build a palace-like *tekke* for Oṭman Baba, grant him *waqfs* and assign a salary to him. Oṭman Baba refuses to have a *tekke*, saying that he does not need it. His advice not to put one stone over the other<sup>366</sup> actually hints to his ideas about dervishes having *tekkes* and the land confiscation policy. However, it is unusual for Meḥmed II to make such an offer while his official policy opposed his private life.

As for Oṭman Baba, who spent his whole life in the *Ḥarābāt*, he could not refute the principles of their path of asceticism and counseling his dervishes. At the same time, it was a rational move to reject having a dervish lodge in a period when all the other Sufi communities were losing their real estate properties and Oṭman Baba had already drawn so much attention. However, during the years of 1475-1478 when the land reform was in effect, it is striking that Oṭman Baba and Meḥmed II were depicted as a fatherly *murshid* and a loving and respectful *murid* towards each other. For example, in the course of a night when Meḥmed was sick and in

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<sup>364</sup> Oktay Özel, "Limits of the Almighty: Mehmed II's 'Land Reform' Revisited" *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 42, no. 2, (1999), 228, 233.

<sup>365</sup> Yürekli, *Architecture and Hagiography in the Ottoman Empire*, 87-88.

<sup>366</sup> *OBV*, 223.



agony, Oṭman Baba instructs his *abdāls* to cut the trees in Kılıç Monastery and burn them in order to cure and please the Sultan. The next morning the Sultan hears the news, recovers and rejoices. He sends three hundred coins to Oṭman Baba with the message that he begs his pardon from his father.<sup>367</sup> Even if the sincerity between the duo was completely invented by Küçük Abdāl, it means Oṭman Baba did not give significance to the land confiscations. Perhaps as an *Ahl-i Ḥarābāt*, who had criticized and fought against the accumulation of wealth in the Sufi communities, he even perceived the act well-deserved and disciplinary.

It is a known fact that right from its beginning, the Ottoman dynasty had been affiliated with the *Bāṭinī* disposed dervishes and especially the *Wafā'ī* Babas. However, due to reasons such as Meḥmed's interest in the Western art and culture and his land confiscation policy, modern historians have not been attentive to the possibility that he might have had Sufi affiliations as well. Instead, it is a widely accepted theory that Meḥmed was not fond of the Sufi circles.<sup>368</sup> But whatever his thoughts were, like each and every person Meḥmed must have been influenced by his cultural environment and the contextual beliefs he was born into. In accordance with it, there are clues alluding to the fact that he was interested in some Sufi movements in certain periods of his life.

Many scholars meet on the common ground that Meḥmed II was open-minded on the matter of alternative religious-philosophical movements. He was even associated with Atheism and Christianity by some academicians such as Franz Babinger and it is known that at an early age he was attracted to Persian culture and *Bāṭinī* Sufism. Babinger writes that among the people he met there was the librarian and *mudarris* Molla Lütḫī, who was alleged with heresy in his later life. Meḥmed also received Ḥurūfī Sufis between 1444-1446, which distressed his mentors like Faḥreddīn-i 'Acemi and resulted in the end of their meetings. In truth, it is an overlooked fact that Meḥmed's eminent tutor and advisor Akṣemseddīn, despite his madrasa

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<sup>367</sup> *OBV*, 230-231.

<sup>368</sup> Babinger, *Mehmed the Conqueror and His Time*, 410-415.

education, was a Bayramī sheikh of the Malāmatī école. If these are all taken into consideration it can be said that Meḥmed was quite familiar with the *Bāṭinī* Sufism. But still, it is generally accepted that in his later years Meḥmed distanced himself from the Sufi circles.<sup>369</sup> In the *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba*, after the failed Siege of Belgrade in 1456, it is noted that the young Sultan disguises himself as an urbanite and roams among the dervish lodges, wondering if there is a real *walī* who can identify him.<sup>370</sup> It is feasible for a twenty-three year old Sultan to be impressed by the extraordinary sight and behaviors of Oṭman Baba after their three random encounters.

Sources indicate that Meḥmed had a skeptical nature and did not have blind confidence in the Sufis. Aḳşemseddīn’s statement of “A further result of this defeat was that I was personally accused of having failing to achieve the object of my prayers and that my prophecies are therefore groundless.” in a response letter written to Meḥmed after a defeat in 1452 shows that the Sultan was bluntly questioning the *walāyat* of the senior Sufi.<sup>371</sup>

In the *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba*, similar personality traits of Meḥmed are noticeable. He appears arrogant and quick-tempered in the *manḳiba* of his first encounter with Oṭman Baba. His disbelief of the *walāyat* of the *Baba* alter only after he loses the Siege of Belgrade, encounters Oṭman Baba randomly for the second and third time, hears his enigmatic words and Oṭman Baba angrily refuses to take the coins he sent to him.<sup>372</sup> Despite it all, Oṭman Baba manages to build good relations with the young Sultan after their third encounter and maintain their contact in the following years. However, Küçük Abdāl indirectly asserts that Meḥmed became more skeptical and relentless as he got older. His corruption is depicted with the various

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<sup>369</sup> Babinger, *Mehmed the Conqueror and His Time*, 410-415; Balivet, *Şeyh Bedreddin*, 40; Krstić, *Osmanlı Dünyasında İhtida Anlatıları*, 81, 98-100; Terzioğlu, "Sufis in the Age of State-Building and Confessionalization", 90.

<sup>370</sup> *OBV*, 40-41.

<sup>371</sup> "Letter of Skeikh Aq Sems ed-Din to Mehmed II" trans. W. L. North, Carleton College.

<sup>372</sup> *OBV*, 38-41.

literary means in the dream *manāḳib*. He disregards his past experiences with Oṭman Baba without a second thought and quickly orders Oṭman Baba's execution. When he finally believes in Oṭman Baba, it is only after witnessing and hearing about a dozen of *karāmat*. In the imaginary narrative of Küçük Abdāl, the arrival of a celestial figure to convince Oṭman Baba to punish the ill-mannered tormentors of the community also reveals how the community members perceived the incidents and what they expected to happen. From this point of view, Küçük Abdāl's portrayal of Meḫmed fits the broader approach about him in the historiography.

Of course, these are only little bits and pieces of information. Yet still, they illustrate the likelihood that Meḫmed II had an inclination to Sufism in some periods of his life; his doubts and dilemmas and his being a much more rational and distrustful man who did not attach himself blindly to any movement compared to the other sultans and contemporaries. That is why, Oṭman Baba's converting him to the Sufi path and making him believe that all of his successes were achieved by the support of the *Ḳuṭb al-Aḳṭāb*, is a grand accomplishment. For his reason, the relationship between the duo takes a huge place in the hagiography. Moreover, all the information the *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba* provides demonstrate that it can be considered as a complementary source to the current historiography as it verifies numerous historical facts.

### **7.3. OṬMAN BABA, THE HIGHER BUREAUCRATS AND THE GHAZI-BEGS**

Throughout the *walāyatnāma*, Oṭman Baba meets with various officials like the *Sancaḳ-Begs* 'İsā Beg and Miḫaloḫlu 'Alī Beg, the grand viziers and viziers Maḫmūd Paṣa Angelović, Gedik Aḫmed Paṣa, Sinān Paṣa, Süleymān Paṣa, and Dāvud Paṣa. In these *manāḳib*, Oṭman Baba tests these men, initiates some, helps others in their expeditions spiritually. However, not all of them gain his approval. The differences between these figures are easily distinguishable.

Among all the viziers only Maḫmūd Paṣa Angelović has a distinctive place. With regard to Küçük Abdāl's using the word "münkir" [m: denier] in the verses following one of the

*manāḳib*, Nevena Gramatikova argues that Oṭman Baba and Maḥmūd Paṣa disfavored each other. There is also a passage in which Oṭman Baba tells Maḥmūd Paṣa “You were an infidel once but I have saved you”.<sup>373</sup> Whereas there is no tension between the two men in any of the chapters where they meet.

Maḥmūd Paṣa is the only figure present when Meḥmed encounters Oṭman Baba at the start of the hagiography and he warns the Sultan that Oṭman Baba is a *walī* and should not be harmed. In their final meeting, Maḥmūd Paṣa, who has been residing in his mansion in Hasköy/Haskovo after he was suspended from his position following the Battle of Otlukbeli, learns that Oṭman Baba is in town. He visits Oṭman Baba “with joy” and there Oṭman Baba foretells that he is going to die soon but there is still hope for him. When Maḥmūd Paṣa returns to his residence with shock and anxiety, he orders his servants to prepare five thousand coins to give Oṭman Baba and to ask for a long life and prosperity. However, when the *dāniṣmends* learn of this, they rise up against Maḥmūd Paṣa, threatening to destroy their books if he gives the coins to Oṭman Baba. Thereupon, Maḥmūd Paṣa gives the five thousand coins to them instead of Oṭman Baba in order to pacify them, which frustrates Oṭman Baba in return. Gathering his *abdāls* Oṭman Baba visits one of Maḥmūd Paṣa’s gardens and tells his followers to cut and burn the trees. Küçük Abdāl writes that Maḥmūd Paṣa did not realize why Oṭman Baba did so and because of his own misunderstanding and misjudgment he has turned down his own fortune. In the following verse, Küçük Abdāl criticizes the ulama and non-believers but it does not mean that there was hostility between Oṭman Baba and Maḥmūd Paṣa.<sup>374</sup> Unlike the other viziers, in the initial two *manāḳib*, Maḥmūd Paṣa affirms *walāyat* of Oṭman Baba and in the third, he treats him warmly. Furthermore, all these *manāḳib* happen prior to Meḥmed II recognizing Oṭman Baba as his *murshid*, so he does not show courtesy to Oṭman Baba in order

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<sup>373</sup> Gramatikova, "Oṭman Baba", 96; *OBV*, 166-167.

<sup>374</sup> *OBV*, 38-41, 166-167.

to impress the Sultan as the other viziers do. Oṭman Baba's harsh words towards Maḥmūd Paşa about being an infidel may be related to his being of *devşirme* origin and Oṭman Baba might have taken credit for his conversion to Islam.

The following point in the *walāyatnāma* is the *abdāl*'s dream and Maḥmūd Paşa's execution. What is interesting is that both Şehzāde Muştafā Çelebi and Maḥmūd Paşa are involved in the dream narrative. Küçük Abdāl implies that Maḥmūd Paşa did not mourn Muştafā Çelebi's death as he should have. In fact, there were rumors that the Şehzāde had a brief relationship with Maḥmūd Paşa's wife and the Grand Vizier returned this nefarious offense by poisoning him. According to Gelibolulu Muştafā 'Alī, Maḥmūd Paşa stopped wearing black, the procedural color of mourning only a week after the funeral, which resulted in Meḥmed II's imprisoning and later, executing him.<sup>375</sup> As for Küçük Abdāl, he writes that when Maḥmūd Paşa went to the capital city for the funeral, he did not wear black befittingly to the mourning traditions but wore white, which triggered the angered Sultan to sentence him to death.<sup>376</sup> Was Oṭman Baba aware of this feud between the two men, and even if he was, what details did he know?

In addition, it should be mentioned that a *manāḳibnāma* was written in the name of Maḥmūd Paşa similarly after his death. However, Theoharis Stavrides, in his extensive monograph about the famous Grand Vizier, notes that the hagiography of Maḥmūd Paşa is quite different than the hagiography of Oṭman Baba and the other examples of the literature. Stavrides highlights the fact that Maḥmūd Paşa was not depicted as a Sufi or a *walī* who performed *karāmat* in his *manāḳibnāma*. Contrarily, his personal traits such as fairness, generosity, courage, wisdom, and piety; his political and military attributes and his rhetorical skills are

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<sup>375</sup> Gelibolulu Mustafa Ali, *Künhü'l Ahbar: Fatih Sultan Mehmed Devri - 1451-1481*, v. 2, ed. & trans. M. Hüdayi Şentürk, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2003), 182-183.

Babinger, *Mehmed the Conqueror and His Time*, 331; Theoharis Stavrides, *The Sultan of Vezirs: The Life and Times of the Ottoman Grand Vezir Mahmud Pasha Angelović (1453-1474)*, (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 344-352.

<sup>376</sup> *OBV*, 180-184.

stressed by the writer. At the end of the text, Meḥmed II's giving the order of Maḥmūd Paşa's execution is narrated and severely criticized, as the former Grand Vizier is referred to as a martyr.<sup>377</sup>

The fact that he is highly praised not only in his *manāḳibnāma* but in many other primary sources written by the court historians and the discontent of the public about his execution point out that during his lifetime Maḥmūd Paşa managed to embellish his high profile with the affection of different social circles. Oṭman Baba's sympathy for Maḥmūd Paşa might have been rooted in his good reputation as well. Further to that, Oṭman Baba might have wanted to associate himself with such a popular governmental elite to confirm and consolidate his own influence. However, it should be remembered that the hagiography of Maḥmūd Paşa was written much later than the hagiography of Oṭman Baba, hence Küçük Abdāl could not have been influenced by it.

In the final chapters of the text, after Meḥmed recognizes Oṭman Baba's authority, it is written that countless bureaucrats, including the highest ranking viziers and grand viziers, begin to visit Oṭman Baba. Despite the fact that they act respectfully, it can be said that at least the majority of them were not meeting with Oṭman Baba because of their personal love or faith. Küçük Abdāl does not describe them as having much sympathy. They were specifically sent to Oṭman Baba by Meḥmed before military operations to ask for his blessings. For instance, when Süleymān Paşa comes to see Oṭman Baba, the leader of the *abdāls* tell him that he is a shepherd and he will lose the war if he passes the river and dismisses him. Because of his embarrassment, Süleymān Paşa keeps the words of Oṭman Baba secret but he loses the war anyway. Concerning Gedik Aḥmed Paşa, Oṭman Baba refers to him as "the State of Meḥmed" yet he also finds

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<sup>377</sup> Stavrides, *The Sultan of Vezirs*, 356-392.

Ahmed Paşa too arrogant and relentless. Ultimately, Ahmed Paşa conquers Kefe/Feodosia and returns victoriously but his soldiers report his cruelty and Mehmed imprisons him.<sup>378</sup>

There are also several *manāḳib* in which Oṭman Baba meets with the viziers in everyday life, which exhibits another dimension of their lives. In one *manāḳib*, Oṭman Baba warns his *abdāls* not to travel down a specific path because there are wolves. Days later they see Ahmed Paşa with a group of hunters coming towards them from the same path. Ahmed Paşa behaves disrespectfully to Oṭman Baba and the *murshid* reprimands him. While the ashamed Grand Vizier tries to leave the area, his horse humiliates him, which gives the crowded group of *abdāls* an opportunity to mock him. Because of this event, along with the indictment of Ahmed Paşa, ninety-three *abdāls* are sent to Anatolia. But soon after their “pilgrimage” to the Seyyid Ğāzī Complex and the tomb of Sulṭān Şüçā‘üddīn, all the *abdāls* turn back to Istanbul without any complications. In yet another *manāḳiba*, Oṭman Baba and Dāvud Paşa meet in a bazaar. While Dāvud Paşa tries to kiss his hand, Oṭman Baba takes Dāvud Paşa’s fur coat and rides away on Dāvud Paşa’s horse.<sup>379</sup>

Unlike the viziers, the *sancaḳ-begs* in the Balkans do not approach Oṭman Baba unwillingly or carry out a procedure to please the Sultan. In the *manāḳib* of Oṭman Baba’s journeys throughout the Balkans, he meets the *Sancaḳ-Begs* Miḫaloĝlu ‘Alī Beg of Semendire/Smederevo and ‘İsā Beg of Varna. However, these men treat Oṭman Baba with utmost sincerity, respect, and politeness. They wish Oṭman Baba to sanctify their expeditions and after their successes, they visit and bring gifts and bestowals to Oṭman Baba.<sup>380</sup>

In the 12th chapter, when Oṭman Baba meets with Miḫaloĝlu ‘Alī Beg for the first time, ‘Alī Beg is the *Sancaḳ-Beg* of Semendire, which must coincide with his first term of

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<sup>378</sup> *OBV*, 212-216, 221-222, 225-228.

<sup>379</sup> *OBV*, 237, 247-249.

<sup>380</sup> *OBV*, 73, 127-130, 168-171.

assignment in the area between the years of 1462-1463.<sup>381</sup> This also means that the strong bond between the Oṭmanī community leaders and the Miḥaloḡlu ghazi family was founded between 1462-1463. Their second meeting in the 36th chapter is dated between 1473-1474, after the Battle of Otlukbeli and before the death of Şehzāde Muştafā Çelebi and the execution of Maḥmūd Paşa. The duo encounters each other near Edirne and spends several days together. In both of their meetings, ‘Alī Beg shows Oṭman Baba great love and regard and Oṭman Baba proclaims ‘Alī Beg’s sword his own sword and ‘Alī Beg’s banner his own banner. Küçük Abdāl also states that Oṭman Baba was the spiritual protector of both ‘Alī Beg and his raiders and ‘Alī Beg’s people and ghazis were trusted friends of the *abdāls*.<sup>382</sup>

#### **7.4. THE TOMB OF OṖMAN BABA AND THE PATRONS OF THE COMMUNITY SHRINES**

It is unknown who built the tomb of Oṭman Baba. However, the research suggests it might have had something to do with Oṭman Baba’s possible relationship with the Ottoman elites. Machiel Kiel remarked that the *türbe* of Oṭman Baba, who died in 1478, could have been built by Meḥmed II.<sup>383</sup> However, the inscription on the tomb is dated between 1506-1507, during the reign of Bāyezīd II.<sup>384</sup> Moreover, if Meḥmed II had ordered the construction of the tomb before his own death in 1481, Küçük Abdāl would certainly make mention of it in the *walāyatnāma* as he finished writing it in 1483. The fact that Meḥmed II did not give an order to establish a tomb for his *murshid* and spiritual father does not make sense and the absence of information on the matter raise doubts. In the end, the events between Oṭman Baba and Meḥmed II might

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<sup>381</sup> Mariya Kiprovskā, "The Miḥaloḡlu Family: *Gazi* Warriors and Patrons of Dervish Hospices" in *The Journal of Ottoman Studies* 32, (2008), 214.

To see the exact years of all of his instatements please look at Kiprovskā’s article.

<sup>382</sup> *OBV*, 73, 168-171.

<sup>383</sup> Kiel, "Sarı Saltık ve Erken Bektaşılık Üzerine Notlar", 30.

<sup>384</sup> Engin, *Balkanlardaki Yatır, Türbe, Tekke ve Zaviyelerimiz*, 273.



be completely fictionalized or largely exaggerated additions by Küçük Abdāl. But there are thought-provoking details that hint otherwise.

Lyubomir Mikov emphasizes the fact that the deaths of Oṭman Baba and Meḥmed II are very close to each other and that construction of a tomb as complex as 'Evliyā' Çelebi described would take much more than three years. Mikov adds that even though 'Evliyā' Çelebi's descriptions of the tomb are not completely credible, they may still be true and Meḥmed II could really be the one who began the construction of the tomb.<sup>385</sup> Nikolay Antov gives a clearer picture of the subject and argues that there is a reference to the Sultan prior to Bāyezīd II in the 1515-1516 dated tax register of the tomb. The "*pādiṣāh*" in the text, who is Meḥmed II, authorized the construction of the tomb and Bāyezīd II issued a newer edict for confirmation. To give a citation of the document:

"The *zaviye* of the late Osman Baba, in the district of Hasköy. According to the old [i.e. previous] register an order obeyed by the world was issued by the *padiṣah*, the refuge of the world, which made the *zaviye* authorized. It has been entered in the [old] register that it has been determined that they (?) exercise possession of his estate and *tekye* in the prescribed boundaries and if sheep are brought from the vicinity to be sacrificed it should be seen to it that no tax-collector may intervene and attempt to levy taxes [on the sheep]. Thereafter, the late Sultan Bayezid Han issued another imperial edict, ordering that if anyone comes and questions the rights over the *tekye* and the orchards, gardens, and water-mills related to it by saying "this is my *waqf*," that person should be hindered and refuted in doing so."<sup>386</sup>

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<sup>385</sup> Mikov, *Bulgaristan'da Alevi-Bektaşî Kültürü*, 37.

<sup>386</sup> Antov, *The Ottoman "Wild West"*, 89-91.

"Zāviye-i merhūm 'Osmān Baba. Hāsköy nevāhisinde ber müceb-i defter-i 'atīk, ḥāzret-i pādiṣāh-ı 'ālem-penāh hükm-i cihan-muṭā' erzānī kılmış yurdunu (?) ḥudūd ile ve tekyesini taṣarruf idüb iḳāmet ide eṭrāfdan gelen ḳurbān için ḳoyuna 'āmil daḥl itmeye ve resm ṭāleb kılmaya nazar kılinub muḳarrer kıldı deyü deftere ṣebt olunmuş. Ba' dehu merhūm ve maḡfūr lahu Sultan Bāyezīd Hān tekrār hükm-i ṣerif ṣadaka idüb emr eylemişdir ki zikr olan tekye ve ana müte'allik olan bāḡa ve bāḡçeye ve deḡirmanā kimesne "vaḳfımdır" deyü nizā' iderse men' ve def' oluna deyü,"

According to 'Evliyā' Çelebi, Bāyezīd II built a magnificent kiosk near the tomb. There were also other people who contributed to the establishment of the *türbe*. An inscription on the gate indicates it was established by Miḥal Ġāzī and his son İki Yürekli 'Alī Beg. However, Zeynep Yürekli claims that the mentioned İki Yürekli 'Alī Beg was the son of Evrenos Ġāzī and he should not be confused with Miḥaloğlu 'Alī Beg, son of Miḥal Ġāzī.<sup>387</sup> The current inscription on the tomb's porch confirms the dates but lacks information about the builders. Furthermore, some properties of the Oṭman Baba dervish lodge were endowed by İskenderoğlu Yaḥşi Beg, the nephew of Miḥaloğlu 'Alī Beg. What is more confusing is that Edirnevī 'Abdurrahmān Ḥibrī, a contemporary of 'Evliyā' Çelebi noted that the tomb was constructed by a member of the Malkoçoğlu ghazi family.<sup>388</sup> All in all, it seems that the construction of the tomb began during the reign of Meḥmed II, under the patronage of Miḥaloğlu and perhaps more ghazi families and it was completed within Bāyezīd II's reign with some additional structures financed by Bāyezīd.

When examining the tomb of Oṭman Baba's famous successor Aқыazılı Sultān, 'Evliyā' Çelebi writes that it was constructed by Miḥaloğlu Arşlan Beg who never left his *murshid*'s side and carried him on his back wherever he wanted to go.<sup>389</sup> There are no historical records of this Miḥaloğlu Arşlan Beg. However, Bedri Noyan Dede baba claimed that Arşlan Beg might be Ḥacı Dede, the father of Demir Baba, since Ḥacı Dede is referred to as the loyal dervish of Aқыazılı Sultān, who carries his *murshid* everywhere on his back according to the *walāyatnāma* of Demir Baba.<sup>390</sup> With all being said, nothing confirms who built the tomb. But still the tombs of Oṭman Baba and Aқыazılı Sultān share the same architectural features, which means they

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<sup>387</sup> Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatname*, v. 8, 342-344; Yürekli, *Architecture and Hagiography in the Ottoman Empire*, 129.

<sup>388</sup> Antov, *The Ottoman "Wild West"*, 91; Kiprovska, "The Miḥaloğlu Family", 197; Kiel, "Sarı Saltık ve Erken Bektaşılık Üzerine Notlar", 32.

<sup>389</sup> Evliya Çelebi bin Derviş Mehmed Zilli, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi: Topkapı Sarayı Kütüphanesi Bağdat 305 Numaralı Yazmanın Transkripsiyonu – Dizini*, v. 3, ed. & trans. Seyit Ali Kahraman and Yücel Dağlı, (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2006), 198.

<sup>390</sup> *DBV*, 17-18, 52.

were built in the same period, possibly by the same builders. 'Evliyā' Çelebi also wrote that the tombs of the two other critical Oṭmanī community leaders, Kademli Baba and Demir Baba were also built by the Miḥaloğlu family. With regard to all these, Mariya Kiprovska indicates that despite his mistakes, it cannot be a coincidence that 'Evliyā' Çelebi linked the four most significant tombs of the Oṭmanī community leaders in the Balkans to Miḥaloğlu family.<sup>391</sup>

In order to see the bigger picture, the structures of the Anatolian branch of the community should also be discussed. Remodeling of the Seyyid Ġāzī Complex started in 1493-1494 and ended in 1515-1516. Under the Bektaşī policy of Bāyezīd II, Miḥaloğlu 'Alī Beg and his two sons Aḥmed and Mehmed Begs, whose family originated from Eskişehir and still owned lands there, sponsored the reconstruction of the complex and the two brothers were buried there. Similarly, Sulṭān Şüca'üddīn and 'Üryān Baba's tombs in the periphery of the Seyyid Ġāzī Complex were designed completely with the same architectural features. There is an inscription on Sulṭān Şüca'üddīn's tomb saying that Malḳoçoğlu Kāsım bin Bāli established the *türbe*. Zeynep Yürekli argues that these three buildings could have been constructed by Miḥaloğlu and Malḳoçoğlu families cooperatively.<sup>392</sup>

In light of this information, it can be seen that the bond between the Şüca'ī/Oṭmanī *silsila* and Miḥaloğlu family was definitely real as they might have sponsored the construction or restoration of seven of the tomb/dervish lodge complexes and started endowments to the Şüca'ī/Oṭmanī *silsila*. Also, the Malḳoçoğlu and Evrenosoğlu families might have also had a connection to the community.

## 7.5. THE ŞÜCĀ'Ī/OṬMANĪ SILSILA AND THEIR POLITICAL CONNECTIONS

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<sup>391</sup> Kiprovska, "The Miḥaloğlu Family", 198-200.

<sup>392</sup> Kiprovska, "The Miḥaloğlu Family: Gazi Warriors and Patrons of Dervish Hospices", 207-209; Yürekli, *Architecture and Hagiography in the Ottoman Empire*, 78, 87-88, 126-133.

To get a better understanding of the political relations of Oṭman Baba, one should investigate the community-wide perspective by reviewing the hagiographies of Sulṭān Şücā'üddīn and Demir Baba. In all of these *walāyatnāmas* there is a common point of view regarding the community leaders as the spiritual sultans and the Ottoman Sultans as the earthly sultans. Thus, the subjects of these hagiographies always side with the Ottoman administration over its western or eastern enemies. The *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba* has the richest content of the three of them but still, the passages referring to the sultans or the top level administrative classes in the other two hagiographies also have noteworthy details. Although nearly all examples of the genre involve these kinds of *manāḳib*, the Şücā'ī/Oṭmanī community leaders' consistency on their self-acknowledged support to the Ottoman authorities is surprising.

In the hagiographies of both Sulṭān Şücā'üddīn and Oṭman Baba, there are *manāḳib* describing Sulṭān Şücā'üddīn warding off Timur from Anatolia. The *manāḳib* have parallel but different information, yet what is important is not whether the event really took place or not, but the symbolic meaning of the story. Hereunder, Sulṭān Şücā'üddīn is the *Ḳuṭb* of the lands of Rūm, which makes him the *Bāṭinī* ruler and the protector of the surrounding area. For this reason, he is wrathful toward Timur, who defeated and captured Bāyezīd I and weakened the Ottoman sovereignty disastrously.<sup>393</sup>

Apart from that, there are *manāḳib* showing that Sulṭān Şücā'üddīn had contacts within the royal family and with the other prominent elites of his time. The most significant among them is Emine Ḥātūn, the mother of Murād II. According to the *walāyatnāma*, Emine Ḥātūn herself made pastries for one of Sulṭān Şücā'üddīn's adept *abdāls*, Abdāl Meḥmed, who was sent to Bursa by Sulṭān Şücā'üddīn and lived there in a public bath for eighteen years.<sup>394</sup> There are also Timurtaşoğlu 'Alī Beg and Laçinoğlu Paşa among the visitors of Sulṭān Şücā'üddīn.

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<sup>393</sup> *OBV*, 12; *SŞV*, 87.

<sup>394</sup> *SŞV*, 63-64.

Specifically, Timurtaşoğlu ‘Alī Beg is described as a devoted follower of the *Baba*. In a *manķiba*, in which Sultān Şücā‘üddīn is referred to as the superior of the *pādişāh*, he spiritually assists Timurtaşoğlu ‘Alī Beg and the Ottomans to defeat its primary rival, the Karamanid Beglik.<sup>395</sup> There is also a *manķiba* in the *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba*, describing a battle in which Oṭman Baba spiritually intervened a battle in the Balkans resulting in the armies of Murād II winning the war.<sup>396</sup> The verses such as “The deniers among the ‘awliyā’ are rebels” and “Long live your state, my *pādişāh*” in the *walāyatnāma* of Sultān Şücā‘üddīn sets forth the subject’s being a strict supporter of the Ottoman State.<sup>397</sup>

Orhan Köprülü specified that the hagiography of Sultān Şücā‘üddīn must have been written at the end of the 15th century or the beginning of the 16th century,<sup>398</sup> which corresponds to the same period in which Küçük Abdāl wrote *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba*. This cannot be a coincidence due to the fact that in the final chapters of the hagiography of Oṭman Baba, the Anatolian Seyyid Ğāzī branch of the community recognizes Oṭman Baba as their master and the Anatolian and Rumelian branches unify.<sup>399</sup> It seems that a need to record the lives and *manāķib* of the community elders as well as associating them with the Ottoman elites was born in these decades. If the *walāyatnāma* of Sultān Şücā‘üddīn was written before the Safawid threat affected the Ottoman Empire, just as *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba*, then it can be said that the community members hoped to win the sympathy and favor of the Ottoman State. However, if the text was written in the 16th century, when the radical community began to have extreme tension with the government due to the assassination attempt of Bāyezīd II and the overall Safawid impact, the aim of the writers must have been to reform their image in the eyes of the administration and to earn their trust. Also, if the hagiography of Sultān Şücā‘üddīn was written

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<sup>395</sup> *SŞV*, 77-82.

<sup>396</sup> *OBV*, 108.

<sup>397</sup> *SŞV*, 74, 80.

<sup>398</sup> Orhan Köprülü, “Velayet-name-i Sultan Şücaüddin” *Türkiyat Mecmuası* 17, (1972), 177.

<sup>399</sup> *OBV*, 246.

after the *Velāyetnāme-i Oṭman Baba*, then its writer was surely under the influence of Küçük Abdāl's Ottomanist narrative and tried to maintain the image Küçük Abdāl had built for the community.

Bāyezīd I's plans to bureaucratize and centralize the government were interrupted by the Timurid invasion in 1402, but Meḥmed II tied up the loose ends his great-grandfather left behind. However, according to the hagiographies, neither Sulṭān Şücā'üddīn nor Oṭman Baba let the sultans' grand projects influence their political stand and as mentioned above, Oṭman Baba did not seem to have any problems with the land confiscation policy. As a result, it can be said that even if they were dissatisfied with the overall situation, the initial three of the four elders of the Şücā'ī/Oṭmanī *silsila* acted diplomatically, continued to promote the Ottoman Empire and tried to establish relations with the Ottoman notables. As is seen, even such a radical person like Oṭman Baba, who did not tolerate disobedience, did show patience to win over Meḥmed II. If these theories have truth in them, it can be said that the initial three of the four elders took their steps tactfully and probably thought their community's future.

The *walāyatnāma* of Demir Baba begins with the declaration that the Ottoman Empire had a Sultan named Süleymān, who had a *kuṭb* and spiritual father named Aқыazılı Sulṭān. In the first chapters, the Sultan's *hāşeki* becomes ill and Ҷademli Baba, who is second in command in the community after his close friend Aқыazılı Sulṭān, is called to Edirne to cure the illness. Ҷademli Baba is warmly received and when the *hāşeki* wants him to stay, Ҷademli Baba says that one of their dervishes Hacı Dede is soon to be married and he needs to arrive at the wedding in time. Before long, the Sultan hears of this and summons Ҷademli Baba. Growing anxious, Ҷademli Baba visits the Sultan and fearfully asks if he had done something wrong. Then Süleymān asks why he was not invited to a wedding organized by Aқыazılı Sulṭān. Relieved to see that the Sultan was not angry with him, Ҷademli Baba tells Süleymān that he is the Sultan and does not need an invitation to go anywhere. Thereafter, Süleymān sends him away with

packs of coins, multitudinous gifts and his greetings to Aқыazılı Sulṭān. But the story continues and a few days after the wedding begins, the Sultan arrives at the wedding in disguise. Because that only Aқыazılı Sulṭān and Ҷademli Baba know his true identity, he remains there for a time without having issues. The passage, in which Süleymān is highly praised, concludes with the note that “Back then, the sultans were friends of *'awliyā*”. Yet, there are even more passages referring to Süleymān I in the hagiography. Among these, the most significant detail is that he bestowed one-quarter of the Fortress of Budin to Aқыazılı Sulṭān and a dervish lodge was built there for the community.<sup>400</sup>

Excluding the parts concerning Aқыazılı Sulṭān, the hagiography of Demir Baba is similar to the ghazi epics, especially *Şaltuḡnāme*, as Demir Baba was not only a *walī* but also a warrior and a wrestler. In that vein, his chapters are different from the chapters about Aқыazılı Sulṭān. More importantly, Demir Baba did not claim any association with the Ottoman dynasty, unlike his predecessors. On the contrary, it is written that Aḡmed I tried to test his *walāyat* in various ways such as sicking lions and tigers on him and shooting arrows and firing away at him. Yet, Demir Baba survived by performing *karāmat*. Similar to Oṭman Baba, he did not let celestial forces to kill the Sultan, who persecuted him. However, when Aḡmed I recognizes his *walāyat* and offers him material gains, Demir Baba refuses to take them and reproves Aḡmed bitterly, saying that he could not value a *walī* and has fallen from grace. Then he leaves the presence of the Sultan never to turn back.<sup>401</sup> This *manḡiba* is very critical as it marks the period when the Şüca'ī/Oṭmanī *silsila* parted ways with the Ottoman dynasty and withdrew their support. The exact date of this *manḡiba* is not given in the hagiography but as Aḡmed I ruled between 1603 and 1617, the Ottoman dynasty lost the favor with the Şüca'ī/Oṭmanī community leaders in the first decades of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It is interesting to see this piece of information

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<sup>400</sup> *DBV*, 52, 58-62, 83, 109.

<sup>401</sup> *DBV*, 132-133.

fits the other historical sources in a way that the ideological and religious transformation of the community from non-sectarian *Bāṭinī* Sufism and political conformism to a politically non-conformist Shiite branch, 'Alevism was finalized in the first decades of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Apart from the hagiographies, there are informative historical documents and Refik Engin gives place to some of these, in his work on the Sufi *tekke* and *türbe* complexes in the Balkans. In these indictments and edicts from the time of Bāyezīd II and Selīm I, it is written that both Sultans confirmed all the properties, guaranteed their safety, and ordered not to levy taxes on these premises.<sup>402</sup> As for Anatolia, the Seyyid Ġāzī Complex was restored and new structures were added during the rule of Bāyezīd II, Selīm I and Süleymān I. Court historians documented that during the campaigns of the Safawid Empire, Selīm in 1514 and Süleymān in 1534-36 and 1548-1549 traveled through the Seyyid Ġāzī Complex, visited the tomb of Seyyid Baṭṭāl Ġāzī, made donations and conversed with the dervishes. These were definitely unexpected actions from the sultans who were on their way to war with Safawids. However, it appears that Selīm and Süleymān wanted to ensure the community of *abdāls* remained on their side. The Ottoman authorities' fear that Miḥaloğlu family could turn their coats while during the Battle of Çaldıran in 1514 illustrates that the Shiite beliefs and sympathy towards Safawids had already taken shape in the Şücā'ī/Oṭmanī communities.<sup>403</sup> However, if all the claims made in the three hagiographies and the Sultans' contributions to the Şücā'ī/Oṭmanī shrines are taken into consideration, the possibility that the Ottoman dynasty had a loose acquaintance with the *silsila* beginning with Sulṭān Şücā'üddīn should not be ignored. If there was such a familiarity between the dynasty and the community, it could have influenced the hagiography writers to propagate the Ottoman administration as well.

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<sup>402</sup> Antov, *The Ottoman "Wild West"*, 89-91; Engin, *Balkanlardaki Yatır, Türbe, Tekke ve Zaviyelerimiz*, 227, 230-231, 266-269.

<sup>403</sup> Krstić, *Osmanlı Dünyasında İhtida Anlatıları*, 78-79; Yürekli, *Architecture and Hagiography in the Ottoman Empire*, 9, 43, 98.



Nevertheless, several years after Süleymān's last visit between 1556-1558 and 1159-1560 the dervishes of the Seyyid Ġāzī Complex were arrested. Eventually, the Sunnis among them were released but the indictments on the Şücā'ī/Otmanī communities in Anatolia and the Balkans demonstrate that there were many criminals and bandits among them who disturbed the peace in no small measure in the localities they inhabited. The Ottoman elites used various methods to discipline them but could achieve only limited results.<sup>404</sup>

In a group of documents written about the Aқыazılı Tekke from the years 1559-1560, the deceased Aқыazılı Sulṭān is spoken highly of, yet according to the indictments, a group of dervishes lead by Mevvāc/Ḳaraca 'Alī were producing wine, selling it to the *levends* and making trouble in the region. Süleymān I issued a warrant to bring the dervishes to Istanbul. However, a new message was sent noting that many notables from the neighborhood ulama bore testimony saying that the warden of the lodge Şeyḫ 'Abdülkerīm was innocent and the majority of the lodge dwellers also complained about the same group lead by Ḳaraca 'Alī. As a result, Ḳaraca 'Alī and his followers were taken to the capital city.<sup>405</sup> By all appearances, even if the first three of the four elders had relations to the Ottoman Sultans to some extent, after the death of Aқыazılı Sulṭān, the loose acquaintanceship seems to have disappeared. Contrarily to his spiritual father and *murshid* Aқыazılı Sulṭān, Demir Baba severed his ties with the Ottoman dynasty in his old age after the persecutions of Aḫmed I.<sup>406</sup> It should also be reminded that the words the writer of the hagiography of Demir Baba written “Back then, the sultans were friends of 'awliyā” means that the following sultans were not like Süleymān I.<sup>407</sup>

Based on the rebellions of *Türkmen/Yörük* populations and *Bāṭinī* inclined Sufis, the assassination attempt on Bāyezīd II and the following deportation of the Ḳalandarī disposed

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<sup>404</sup> Orhan Köprülü, “Abdal” in *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, (Istanbul: TDV İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi, 1988), 61-62; Ocak, *Kalenderiler*, 191, 245-24; Yürekli, *Architecture and Hagiography in the Ottoman Empire*, 39, 43-45.

<sup>405</sup> Engin, *Balkanlardaki Yatır, Türbe, Tekke ve Zaviyelerimiz*, 226-227, 230-234.

<sup>406</sup> *DBV*, 132-133.

<sup>407</sup> *DBV*, 60-62.

dervishes to Anatolia and indictments and inspections both in Anatolia and the Balkans in the 16th and 17th century, modern scholars tend to include the pre-16th century Şücā'ī/Oṭmanī community with the rebellious Shiite/'Alevī circles without giving a second thought. However, the monetary privileges the shrines achieve from the Ottoman sultans beginning with Meḥmed II to Süleymān I should not be ignored completely. The new constructions and restorations all around the community centers; the Sultans' visitations to the Seyyid Ġāzī Complex despite the radicalism of the community; three of the four elders' open promotion of the Ottoman elites and their claims of having relations with the sultans and the governmental elites, are of great importance.

Despite the occasional unease with the State, at least the initial three of the four fathers of the Şücā'ī/Oṭmanī community continued to support the Ottomans or tried to create an illusion. One thing is certain, they were deliberately giving all these references to the Ottoman sultans in their hagiographies. Küçük Abdāl's indication that Oṭman Baba took his name Oṭman for the sake of Meḥmed II,<sup>408</sup> in spite of his being the most radical and aggressive among the community leaders, should make one rethink previously made generalizations.

## **7.6. A CRITICAL REVIEW: NON-CONFORMIST OR NOT?**

Halil İnalçık, who conducted research on Oṭman Baba, wrote one of the few noteworthy articles in literature, named "Dervish and Sultan: An Analysis of the *Oṭman Baba Vilāyetnāmesi*." İnalçık asserted that Oṭman Baba was a politically non-conformist community leader in the same category with Şeyḫ Bedreddīn and Şah Kulu. He also argued that Oṭman Baba claimed that he would put an end to injustice as he identified himself as Maḥdī. In order to achieve that when the social order fell apart, Oṭman Baba would leave *walāyat* and claim the sultanate to bring order. This means that Oṭman Baba aimed to actively take part not only in the religious

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<sup>408</sup> *OBV*, 42.

but also political arena. İnalçık defines the perspective of the Oṭmanī community as “*abdāl militancy*”. According to him the *Türkmen/Yörüks* in the Balkans who were not content with the central authority and its policies gathered around him and empowered his authority against the central government. İnalçık took the matter as far as saying that Oṭman Baba intended to bring down the Ottoman State.<sup>409</sup> On the other hand, there are some misunderstandings on the subject.

It is quite natural for any political leader to feel threatened by a religious authority’s claim of being the ruler of the World and the universe, as there are countless examples of messianic movements’ causing chaos in Anatolia and in other parts of the world. If some parts of Küçük Abdāl’s narrative have come to pass, Oṭman Baba’s claim of being superior over everyone including Mehmed II as the *Ḳuṭb al-Aḳṭāb* could have been the primary cause the Sultan gave the order to execute him. However, Mehmed’s interpretation of Oṭman Baba’s claims does not have to reflect Oṭman Baba’s real objectives.

The position of *ḳuṭbiyyat* has been a part of Sufism for centuries. In spite of the belief that the *ḳuṭbs* govern the World and the universe and are friends of God does not give them right to worldly positions. According to the belief, the ‘*awliyā*’ have a completely secret and esoteric formation *Rijāl al-Ġayb* and ordinary people cannot distinguish their real identity or understand the meaning behind their words. In Sufi belief, *ḳuṭbs* do not display their true selves to the masses or make claims of political leadership like caliphs. But it is believed that they ruled the World with their power of *walāyat*. This theme is repeated constantly in the hagiography of Oṭman Baba. So one cannot claim that Oṭman Baba was a non-conformist Sufi only by referring to his words and ignoring his deeds. This is due to the fact that in history, a large part of Sufis who claimed they were *ḳuṭbs* or who were associated with *ḳuṭbiyyat* after

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<sup>409</sup> Halil İnalçık, *Osmanlı Tarihinde İslamiyet ve Devlet*, 39; Halil İnalçık, "Dervish and Sultan: An Analysis of the *Oṭman Baba Vilāyetnāmesi*", 24-30; Halil İnalçık, "Tarihsel Bağlamda Sivil Toplum ve Tarikatlar", 95-96.

their deaths, did not have non-conformist relations with the political authorities. Some even had political apathy.

Within this framework, the Sufis Oṭman Baba refers to with respect and equates himself to are Ibrāhīm Adham, Ḥacı Bektaş Velī, Şarı Şaltuḫ, and Sulṭān Şücā'üddīn. It is not a coincidence that Oṭman Baba or Küçük Abdāl do not refer to Sufis such as Baba İlyās, Baba İshāḳ, Şeyḫ Bedreddīn or any other politically non-conformist Sufis. On the contrary, they cited apolitical Sufis, who lived in semi-seclusion with or without their followers and visitors. Ibrāhīm Adham, who was once the ruler of the city of Balkh, renounces everything including his worldly seat and political power to become a friend of God. Despite the fact that Ḥacı Bektaş Velī lived in a politically chaotic context among countless revolting Sufis, he did not become a part of the Baba'ī Rebellion and lived his life in political neutrality, at least according to the extremely limited information we have. While Şarı Şaltuḫ is known as a folk hero associated with 'İzzeddīn Keykāvus II in a conformist relationship, all the information we have about Sulṭān Şücā'üddīn points to the fact that he lived simplistically in nature with his coterie of dervishes. All of these figures are high-ranking *kuṭbs* according to Oṭman Baba. Similar to him, there are not any references or implications to any non-conformist leaders or groups of neither Sulṭān Şücā'üddīn nor Demir Baba in the hagiographies.

Oṭman Baba's assertion about his being *Ḳuṭb al-Aḳṭāb* and ruling the universe should not be analyzed as he claimed the sultanate for himself. It is more of a claim that he ruled the World and the universe secretly and spiritually just like his predecessors. The greatest example of this is his assertion that he controlled the wars and made the Ottoman armies victorious in general. He achieves all this by ordering his *abdāls* to dig holes in the ground, pluck grasses, cut trees and burn them, which is completely irrational and disruptive, especially in the eyes of the urban folk and the ulama. Indeed, all of these can be interpreted as religious non-conformity.

He claims of 'Ana al-Ḥaqq' but he does not gather crowds around him or provoke them about political matters.

If the entire *walāyatnāma* is reviewed it would be obvious that Meḥmed had limited but positive relations with Oṭman Baba between the years of 1456 and 1474. It is always implied that Oṭman Baba supports the Ottoman cause, until their relations break down in 1474, which results in Meḥmed becoming a believer of Oṭman Baba. The events in 1474 have been emphasized by a great many historians without paying regard to the previous or following events. However, the criticisms and *karāmats* of Oṭman Baba to warn and punish Meḥmed II should not be interpreted as a political rivalry between the two, which ended up with the Sultan's subordination to an adversary with political claims.

According to the Sufi belief, spiritual authorities and friends of God are far superior to worldly leaders, whose area of control is incredibly limited compared to the 'awliyā'. According to the 'awliyā' and *kuṭb* based Sufism, even the Sultans have to bow their heads when they appear before the friends of God. That is why the *manāqib* in which the spiritual authority outmatches the earthly authority are standardized in the genre and have examples in the majority of the hagiographies. However, the same Sufi belief also involves the doctrine that the 'awliyā' and *kuṭbs* cannot use their powers to seize worldly positions or possessions. On the contrary, they are nearly always known as common people and even *majzūb*. They are expected to live an ascetic life and keep their esoteric secrets to themselves. These are also the same themes Küçük Abdāl highlights throughout the whole hagiography.

Meḥmed II's subordination to Oṭman Baba does not make him less of a powerful monarch; contrarily, it makes him a dervish and because that submission to *murshid* is one of the most significant duties of a dervish, it is not a political defeat but a religious achievement. After the events in 1474, Oṭman Baba becomes someone who Meḥmed and his viziers consult with on various issues. He must have also become freer and lived more comfortably as he was provided

near-limitless financial opportunities. Yet, his political status did not change anytime in the hagiography; he was still only a civilian community leader, who could have been executed if the Sultan changed his mind. Because of that, Meḥmed's subordination to Oṭman Baba was not political but it was only religious. Thus, details indicating that make one think that Oṭman Baba was politically non-conformist does not point out to his political stand or non-conformity but they signal his religious non-conformity.

### 7.7. A CRITICAL REVIEW: NEGOTIATION BY SUBORDINATION

The *manāḳib* about the Ṣücā'ī/Oṭmanī elders' relationship to the Ottoman Sultans are typical examples of a common theme that is used in many hagiographies. Omid Safi analyzes these kinds of connections by comparing Bābā Ṭāhir's *manāḳib* with Sultan Ṭuḡrul and Abū Sa'īd to the Seljukid government elites. Safi briefly explains the theory of Hamid Dabashi, according to whom these connections can be formulized by political authorities' subordination to the mystics. Yet for Safi, mystics' using their sanctifying power, *baraka*, to legitimize the political claims of the leaders and sanctifying their military causes could only be acquired by these leaders' providing them economic resources and building them dervish lodges. That is why Safi argues that this kind of relationship was not based on subordination but it was mutually beneficial.<sup>410</sup>

The hagiography of Oṭman Baba consists of multiple *manāḳib* that verify Safi's formula. In the course of their first meetings, Meḥmed tries to give pouches of coins to Oṭman Baba twice but Oṭman Baba refuses to take them. However, when Meḥmed becomes a *murid* of Oṭman Baba at the end of the *walāyatnāma*, he sends Oṭman Baba sacks of coins every week and this time Oṭman Baba takes Meḥmed's and his other guests' gifts and donations.<sup>411</sup>

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<sup>410</sup> Safi, "Bargaining with Baraka", 264-266, 270, 275-279.

<sup>411</sup> *OBV*, 39-41, 223, 246.

There are other examples such as the one above. When Maḥmūd Paşa decides to give five thousand coins to the ulama instead of Oṭman Baba, Oṭman Baba orders his dervishes to cut and burn the trees in the garden of the former Grand Vizier, as if signing death warrant of Maḥmūd Paşa.<sup>412</sup> In the *manḳiba* describing the first meeting between Oṭman Baba and Miḥaloḡlu ‘Alī Beg, Oṭman Baba tells ‘Alī Beg that he owes him twelve rams. After some time, before going on an expedition, ‘Alī Beg sends eight rams to Oṭman Baba. However, when the expedition ends he sees that they have captured exactly thirty-two thousand sheep. Realizing that for each ram he had given Oṭman Baba, he was given four thousand sheep, the ghazi-warrior becomes embarrassed of what he had done and visits Oṭman Baba with various bestowments, sheep and a beautiful black horse.<sup>413</sup> There are also other *manāḳib* like these in the *walāyatnāma*. In these, Oṭman Baba does not take the gifts and donations of disrespectful people or the ones who doubt him; he accepts only the truly sincere donations from his believers.

The elites are not the only group who brings gifts and bestowments in order to have material or spiritual *naṣīb* from Oṭman Baba. While common people and *Türkmen/Yörüks* visit him with presents and sheep, Oṭman Baba heals the sick, grants children to infertile women, and many other material and spiritual *naṣīb* to his visitors. However, Küçük Abdāl writes that all of these donations were distributed among the people.<sup>414</sup> This type of behavior can also be regarded as the lowest level of what Safi argues. It shows that negotiations were not only made between the ‘*awliyā*’ and the governors for important subjects but anyone could pay a visit to a *walī* to demand something, such that it was a normalized communication pattern for anyone who declared their *walāyat*. That is why, as the status, economic power and demands of the visitors grew higher, the offerings increased proportionately.

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<sup>412</sup> *OBV*, 167.

<sup>413</sup> *OBV*, 73.

<sup>414</sup> *OBV*, 81, 98-99, 106-109.

Apart from material gains, these transactions between the people and Oṭman Baba brought him fame. After the initial encounters between Oṭman Baba and the Sultan, people begin to recognize him as the *walī* who shocked the Sultan with his *karāmats*.<sup>415</sup> Not only his relationship with Sultan and the viziers but also his relationship with the *ghazi-begs* must have made him incredibly popular among the *ghazi-warriors* and the *Türkmen/Yörüks*.

Safi adds another dimension to his theory by pointing out that when monarchs subordinate to the '*awliyā*', there are always viziers as witnesses.<sup>416</sup> It being a public discourse not only guarantees *walāyat* and truthfulness of the *walī* but it also earns the *walī* reputation. In the hagiography describing Oṭman Baba's first two meetings with Meḥmed II, Maḥmūd Paşa, who was second in command of the government, is present both times. Also, there is a crowd of witnesses nearly in all of the *karāmat* stories.

However, Safi's definition of these connections as negotiation instead of subordination is not sufficient enough to correspond to the complexity of this type of discourse. They can only be interpreted with a combination of the terms Dabashi and Safi use: "negotiation by subordination". A political figure can only be granted his wishes by accepting the superiority of the *walī*, both in the spiritual and earthly realms. Thus, whoever the visitor is or whatever he brings, his negotiation with a self-claimed *walī* can only be actualized by his subordination. If a political figure decides to treat a *walī* as his equal or inferior, let alone he would lose his chance to be granted his wish, but he could even be punished by divine intervention. The greatest reason for this '*awliyā*' are the delegates and friends of God on earth and their secret status was assumed much higher when compared to any other worldly positions. Safi mentions its reason but does not put as much emphasis on it as he needs to do.<sup>417</sup>

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<sup>415</sup> *OBV*, 48, 54.

<sup>416</sup> Safi, "Bargaining with Baraka" 271, 275.

<sup>417</sup> Safi, "Bargaining with Baraka" 266.



Safi's most significant mistake is his repeating what he criticizes in the works of many other historians. Safi argues that although innumerable modern scholars study Sufism and non-Western mysticism, they cannot pass over their Western Christian mindset.<sup>418</sup> Yet the same applies to the 21st century positivist secular rationale. If we look through the lens of the latter rationale, the above mentioned social connections do seem similar to a material transaction between the political and religious authorities. Indeed, there has been a good deal of political and military leaders who dealt with the Sufis impudently, even punishing and executing masses of them.

However, in the Sufi theory, the Sufis are '*awliyā*' and because that no one but them can communicate with God, the '*awliyā*' are accepted as intermediaries between God and people. Hence, '*awliyā*' negotiate on behalf of God and the only way a negotiation can be fulfilled is to submit, since it is not the '*awliyā*' but God Himself who rewards the submission.

In this framework, as human beings cannot do anything for God, they can only win His favor by their good deeds and the greatest merit is subordination to a friend of God, a *murshid* that trains his *murids* to convey God. Therefore, God expects people to respect and serve the '*awliyā*'. Yet at the same time, He makes his friends reputable by ensuring the subordination of esteemed people to them. It is true that what makes the *walāyatnāma* of Oṭman Baba such an extraordinary source is the astonishing relationship between the two and Meḥmed's recognition of Oṭman Baba as his superior and *murshid*.

As it is mentioned in the *walāyatnāma*, regardless of how they seem from the outside, the '*awliyā*' do not need anything because God somehow meets all of their needs. That is also why they cannot get hurt; because God would not let it happen. The *walī* does not need someone's help but people gain God's utmost favor only by assisting the '*awliyā*'. On the other

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<sup>418</sup> Safi, "Bargaining with Baraka" 260-263.

hand, there are instances where God can be punitive. People who wrong Oṭman Baba, whatever their status may be, get punished by God somehow. According to the *walāyatnāma*, all of the natural disasters in Istanbul and the deaths of Maḥmūd Paşa and Şehzāde Muştafā Çelebi were caused by Meḥmed's wrong deeds.

This is why the relationship between the 'awliyā' and the other people can not be taken as only a negotiation; subordination is an indispensable part of it. What is more, the difference between God and the friends of God becomes transparent in these passages. In one such *manāḳib*, Oṭman Baba prevents the celestial figures from punishing Meḥmed. In another, he himself vows to punish him by himself. Then who is the punisher? It seems the boundaries between God's *Zāt* and *tajallīs* are indefinite.<sup>419</sup> Consequently, negotiation is not the correct word to define the complex relationships between the political figures and the Sufis, who claim to be friends of God and *kuṭbs* ruling the universe.

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<sup>419</sup> *OBV*, 187, 207.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CONCLUSION

As an antinomian *abdāl* who lived in the late-14th and 15th century, Oṭman Baba wandered around Anatolia for decades before passing through Rumelia in his old age. Settling in Ottoman Bulgaria, he established his own Sufi community which was a branch of the Seyyid Ġāzī école he had been a member of. According to his hagiography, the immense community of Oṭman Baba included members from various socio-economic backgrounds, yet the *sancaḳ-begs*, *ghazis* and *Türkmen/Yörük* populations of Thrace were among his most loyal followers. Among those, Miḫaloḡlu ‘Alī Beg and his entire *ghazi* family had a distinctive place as dervishes of the community leaders and patrons of the tombs and dervish lodges in Anatolia and Rumelia.

Nevertheless, due to their marginal Sufi beliefs and disruptive actions in towns and cities, Oṭman Baba and his community were stigmatized and indicted many times. In the end, the community was arrested and brought to Istanbul by the order of Meḫmed II, where they returned from the threshold of death miraculously.

Despite all of this, from the beginning to the end of the *walāyatnāma*, Küçük Abdāl stressed that Oṭman Baba had always supported and promoted the Ottoman government since the days of Murād II, during the Siege of Istanbul, and nearly all of the expeditions and campaigns to the west and east throughout the reign of Meḫmed II. This was not surprising as Oṭman Baba asserted that he was the spiritual father of Meḫmed II, which is why he had come

to the lands of Rūm. Even though it is not expected from an antinomian community leader to sympathize with the Ottoman authorities and despite dire relationships with the agents of Sharia-oriented Sunni Islam, which was promoted by the government, Oṭman Baba did so.

The Şücā'ī/Oṭmanī community must have been satisfied with the Ottoman State's close relationship with the *Bāṭinī* dervishes and Islamization and colonization policies in the Balkans in the past. However, during the reign of Meḥmed II, certain actions must have annoyed Oṭman Baba to a great extent. Importance was given to the ulama instead of the dervish communities; bureaucratized and Sharia-based Sunni Islam was formed according to their will and the Jannisary units' replaced the ghazi families, who were the primary followers of the Şücā'ī/Oṭmanī community. What is more, as "the Ottoman State" transformed into "the Ottoman Empire", their policies of Islamization and colonization were put to an end in order to adopt rapid expansionism and governmentality. In spite of all of this and Meḥmed II's adopting an aggressive attitude toward Oṭman Baba, it is quite puzzling that Oṭman Baba remained an advocate of Meḥmed II and the Ottoman administration. As the leader of a radical renouncer community, which was constantly under pressure from the state apparatuses, Oṭman Baba's primary motive to support Meḥmed II and the Ottoman government must have been to caution and to harmonize with the central authority in order to safeguard his community interests. Yet in addition to that, Oṭman Baba could have also been pleased with the ongoing expansionism of the government as he appeared to have been very interested in the conquest of Istanbul and the raids and campaigns, specifically in the Balkans. What is more, as an ascetic Sufi, who opposed to the accumulation of riches, Oṭman Baba did not seem to be bothered by Meḥmed's land confiscation policies either. It is claimed in the hagiography that they established a bond in the middle of the decade when Meḥmed II promulgated his policy. Hereby, this study is a reminder history cannot be analyzed with a basic, unidimensional cause and effect relationship.

In addition, this dissertation demonstrates how an antinomian community leader benefited from his relationship with the Ottoman Empire and Meḥmed II in order to consolidate his authority. The greatest evidence of Oṭman Baba being the *Ḳuṭb al-Aḳṭāb* and superior to all of his contemporaries was his making himself accepted by Meḥmed II, the conqueror of Istanbul and Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, who approached the Sufis with great suspicion.

Consequently, this work stresses that the oversimplifications and generalizations, such as declaring all the antinomian dervishes non-conformist in their political relationships with any central authority including the Ottoman government should be transcended. This thesis is also a reminder that within an order and even in the smallest community, there are always critical divisions based on Sufi beliefs and political ideology. The Ṣüca'ī/Oṭmanī community definitely had such divisions but the initial three of the four elder community leaders strongly supported and promoted the Ottoman authorities regardless of what their incentives were.

As for the Sufi circles, Oṭman Baba did not limit his domain of influence only to the antinomian *abdāls* but he also claimed a place for himself in the popularization of the Bektaşī network. His personification of himself with Ali, Ḥacı Bektaş Velī and the folk hero Şarı Şaltuḳ, must have increased the number of his followers without a doubt, which must have resulted in rivalries between his community and, such as, Bāyezīd Baba and the Mü'mīn Dervīş Bektaşī faction. In this regard, this dissertation illustrates how a renouncer community leader staked a claim upon the legacy of another order and how he made himself accepted among the Bektaşī circles. That is why this study provides insight into the relationship between the various *Bāṭinī* disposed communities by touching upon the affinity between the Ṣüca'ī/Oṭmanī community and the Bektaşī order in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, by making a comparison between the hagiographies of the three generations of the same *silsila*, it sheds light on how an antinomian community was slowly absorbed into the broader Bektaşī cult.

On the other hand, demonstration of a radical *Bāṭinī* community's metadoxical set of beliefs reveals that some historians' association of the pre-16<sup>th</sup> century *Bāṭinī* communities to Shiism has been erroneous. According to this, scholars should pay more attention while commentating on the beliefs of the pre-16<sup>th</sup> century society and dervishes of the lands of Rūm and should not evaluate these populations according to the binary conception of Sunnism and Shiism, which was produced in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

At the same time, this thesis highlighted the fact that perceiving the Sharia-oriented Sunni Islam as the official and true Islam degraded the alternative forms of the religion and made them look "less Islamic". By giving priority to the historical sources written by madrasa educated scholars and ulama and acknowledging their attestations over the others, modern historians renew the unfounded hierarchy that has been produced and reproduced for centuries. The *walāyatnāma* of Oṭman Baba shows that for the Sufis with *Bāṭinī* beliefs, only the chosen people were destined to learn the esoteric knowledge *'Ilm al-Ledūn* by training themselves in the Sufi path and the rest of the society and the ulama were on the lowest, exoteric stage of the religion.

Lastly, in this thesis, the *Bāṭinī* Sufi belief of Oṭman Baba was subjected to a review. According to this, Nūr al-Muhammadī, the first creation of God, was the divine light which was divided into two and while the light of prophethood passed to Muhammad, the light of sainthood passed to 'Alī. 'Alī is the supreme leader of the *'awliyā'* and his children with Fāṭima, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, also carried the divine light. This is why *Ahl al-Bayt* had a very important place for the *Bāṭinī* Sufis. What is more, it was believed that each and every creation of God is His manifestations and that is why everything is one and only one. In this framework, Oṭman Baba was an *al-Insān al-Kāmil* and the *Ḳuṭb al-Aḳṭāb* due to the fact that he had annihilated his self for the love of God and among his followers, there were the Three, the Seven and the Forty. Küçük Abdāl wrote that regular people did not know of the secret and spiritual organization of

the *kuṭbs* and '*awliyā*', who were responsible for training young dervishes, granting *naṣīb* to people and governing the world.

By reviewing a profound Sufi text such as this, not only information about the beliefs of Oṭman Baba and the Şücā'ī/Oṭmanī *abdāls* but also many other renouncer communities have been obtained. Furthermore, this study draws attention to the antinomian philosophy and the rationale behind the deviant appearances and practices of the Ƙalandarī disposed dervishes.

At the same time, the comparative reading of the sources that belong to the antinomian orders and communities not only in the Ottoman Empire but in the whole Islamic world is vital; this is the only way more information can be gathered about these little-known Sufi *silsilas* and communities.

In light of all of this information, this dissertation was written in order to clarify Oṭman Baba's life and code of belief, as he lived a very active and influential life and left his mark on not only the Sufi thought but also on the social and political environment of the 15<sup>th</sup> century Rumelia. By analyzing the hagiography of an antinomian community leader, this writer's aim was to illuminate the lives, beliefs, and practices of the *Bāṭinī* inclined *abdāls* and the overall antinomian dervish communities in Anatolia and the Balkans according to their own view. If research on these groups should continue, before focusing on the sources written by outsiders, the first step should be to review the writing by the subjects themselves.

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