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OTTOMANS AND OTHERS: STATE AND SOCIETY IN EARLY OTTOMAN* HISTORIOGRAPHY

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Abstract

This paper aims to explore early Ottoman chroniclers' perception of the Ottoman state and society. Unlike 16th century Ottoman historians, who mostly display a shared "classical" Ottoman culture in their understanding and depiction of Ottoman state, early Ottoman authors' views on Ottoman dynasty and society may contribute our understanding of the nature of early Ottoman dynamism. Modern scholars have already clarified different aspects of the issue, trying to explain rise of the Ottoman principality relying on different theories such as gaza theory, Oguz-Turkic state tradition and Rumi identity and culture. This article aims to clarify early Ottoman authors' understanding of the Ottoman polity by focusing on their attitude in depicting Ottomans vis-à-vis others and state vis-à-vis society.

Key words: *Ottoman Dynasty, Ottoman State, Gaza, Turk, Turkman, Oguz, Rumi, Ottoman Historiography*

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ERKEN DÖNEM OSMANLI TARİHYAZIMINDA OSMANLILAR VE DİĞERLERİ: DEVLET VE TOPLUM

Özet

Bu makalenin konusu erken dönem Osmanlı Tarihyazımında Osmanlı devletinin ve kimliğinin nasıl algılandığıdır. 16. Yüzyıldan itibaren kaleme alınan eserlerde artık oluşmakta olan "klasik" kültürün etkisi baskın bir şekilde görülmektedir, ancak bu klasik formun hâkimiyeti öncesinde kaleme alınan eserlerde Osmanlı devletinin ve kimliğinin Tarih yazarları tarafından nasıl aktarıldığı erken dönem Osmanlı devletinin dinamizmini anlamamıza da katkı sağlayacak bir konudur. Osmanlı devletinin yükselişini açıklama amacıyla geliştirilen gaza teorisi, Oğuz-Türk devlet geleneği, Rumi kültürü gibi tartışmalar ile de ilişkili olan bu konu erken dönem Tarih yazarlarının eserlerinden hareketle irdelenmiş ve devlet-toplum, Osmanlılar ve diğerleri ikilemleri üzerine odaklanılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Osmanlı Hanedanı, Osmanlı Devleti, Gaza, Türk, Türkmen, Oğuz, Rumi, Osmanlı Tarihyazımı.*

Introduction

The early Ottoman chronicles and other historical works produced in the first two centuries of the emirate were not great in number but they display a wide range of variety in terms of style and content. This paper aims to show different attitudes adopted by 15th century Ottoman historians in constructing an image of "us" and "others" in political and social level. How did early Ottoman writers imagine Ottoman state and society? Were they valuing ethnic and tribal affiliations above other bonds or their solidarity depended more on moral values and religious doctrines? How did they identify themselves vis-à-vis the other segments of the society or neighboring peoples?

These questions are no doubt related with many problematics which were well studied by modern Ottoman historians; for instance, the early Ottomans' "identity" question, is directly related with the question of the emergence of the Ottoman state. Therefore, prominent historians from Halil İnalçık to Cemal Kafadar and Heath Lowry dealt with that question and they provided a fair answer for the nature of early Ottoman state. These studies contributed to the understanding of the term gaza and its relation with Islamic institutions by presenting different perspectives and interpretations. Similarly, Ottomans' tribal origins, the Ottoman dynasty's genealogy, and the role of Turkish state tradition in the rise of Ottoman state were well studied by contemporary historians in recent years.

I will try to explore this "identity question" within the context of early (15th century) Ottoman historiography, which means that classical formulation of the term the "Ottoman" or "Rumi" was not yet established firmly. Since it is largely a result of efforts and works of religious, administrative and intellectual elites employed by the Ottoman state in 16th century. Therefore, 15th century Ottoman society were not yet dominated by high culture articulated by well-educated and state-employed domestic learned elites, rather it was still under the influence of traditions and institutions of the pre-Ottoman period.

So, I will try to present a survey of early Ottoman historians' attitude toward identity issues and this survey will focus on how they define the ruling elite and how much they associate themselves with the ruling elite.

Besides, I will also try to illustrate their understanding of political, religious and social issues such as how they evaluate state's role in defining religious practices, or treating non-Muslim peoples within the Ottoman borders. Modern scholars had already studied early Ottoman chronicles in order to illuminate some aspects of early ottomans' political culture, such as ethnic origin of the Ottoman dynasty.¹ For example, F. Emecen argues that kayı origin

¹ Feridun M. Emecen, *İlk Osmanlılar ve Batı Anadolu Beylikler Dünyası* (İstanbul: Kapı Yayınları, 2021); Feridun M. Emecen, "Osmanlı Tarihçiliğinin Başlangıcı: İlk Manzum Tarihler", *Türk Tarihçiliğinin Asırlık Çınarı Halil İnalçık'a Armağan*, ed. Mehmet Öz - Serhat Küçük (Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü Yayınları, 2017), 105-117; Feridun M. Emecen, "Kayılar ve Osmanlılar: Sahte Bir Kimlik İnşası mı?", *Oğuzlar Dilleri, Tarihleri ve Kültürleri / 5. Uluslararası Türkiyat Araştırmaları Sempozyumu Bildirileri*, ed. Tufan Gündüz - Mikail Cengiz (Ankara: Hacettepe Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Enstitüsü Yayınları, 2015), 237-244; Salih Özbaran, *Bir Osmanlı Kimliği / 14.-17. yüzyıllarda Rûm / Rûmî Aidiyet ve İmgeleri* (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2004); Murat Cem Mengüç, "Interpreting Ottoman Identity with the Historian Neşri", *Living in the Ottoman Realm Empire and Identity, 13th to 20th Centuries*, ed. Christine Isom-Verhaeren - Kent F. Schull (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2016), 66-78; Murat Cem Mengüç, "The Türk in Aşıkpaşazâde: A Private Individual's Ottoman History", *Osmanlı Araştırmaları / The Journal of Ottoman Studies* XLIV (2014), 45-66; Zeynep Aycibin, "Erken Dönem Osmanlı Kaynaklarındaki 'Türk' Algısı Üzerine Yeni Bir Değerlendirme", *Abdülkadir Öcena Armağan Tarih'in Peşinde Bir Ömür*, ed. Hayri'nisa Alan vd. (İstanbul: Kronik Kitap, 2018), 139-151; Cemal Kafadar, "A Rome of Ones Own: Reflections on Cultural Geography and Identity in the Lands of Rum", *Muqarnas Online Muqarnas Online* 24/1 (2007), 7-25; Tufan Gündüz, "Osmanlı Tarih Yazıcılığında Türk ve Türkmen İmajı", *Osmanlı*, c.7, ed. Güler Eren vd. (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 1999), 92-97; Mehmet Öz, "Kuruluşun Aşamaları: Kaynaklar ve Literatüre Eleştirel Bir Bakış", *Osmanlı Tarihi Üzerine I: Kuruluş, Kimlik ve Siyasi Düşünce* (Ankara: Cedit Neşriyat, 2019), 13-34; Mehmet Öz, "Erken Dönem Osmanlı Kroniklerinde Türk Kavramı", *Osmanlı Tarihi Üzerine I: Kuruluş, Kimlik ve Siyasi Düşünce* (Ankara: Cedit Neşriyat, 2019), 74-104; Hakan Erdem, "Osmanlı Kaynaklarından Yansıyan Türk İmaj(lar)", *Dünyada Türk İmgesi*, ed. Özlem Kumrular (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2005), 13-26.

of the Ottoman dynasty was not an invention of 15th century historians as it was commonly accepted by modern scholars until recently. As archival and topographical evidences suggest, it might well be a historical reality that the Ottoman dynasty actually belonged to a branch of Kayı tribe, but it was re-remembered and propagated in 15th century after the Ankara defeat. Similarly, Zeynep Aycibin, agreeing with Emecen's findings, confirmed that early Ottoman chronicles used the term Turk interchangeably with Muslim, and they usually referred themselves and the Ottoman dynasty as Turk. Whereas this usage began to change in the 16th century, where most of the Ottoman authors observed the distinction between Turk and Muslim; they no longer used the term Turk referring to Muslim people of the empire or referring to Muslim people in the history. Murat Cem Mengüç is another contemporary historian who examined early Ottoman historiography with an emphasis on identity issues. Following Menage and İnalçık, he states that there are two rival traditions in the Ottoman historical writing, one emphasizing on Turkic character of the dynasty and prevailing among Turkish speaking ordinary people. The other tradition emphasizes on Islamic values or Persian literary tradition in eulogizing Ottoman dynasty as an ideal, ruler-oriented state and it does not stress on Turkic character of the dynasty. Following Jean Jacques Rousseau's term "private individual", Mengüç argues that Âşıkpaşazâde's case fits to the emergence of individuals who owns a considerable size of private property and who seeks his own political ends by negotiating power with the sovereign. In that case, Âşıkpaşazâde's history can be regarded as a means to reach that end and it uses and enhances the first tradition in early ottoman historiography, together with Anonymous Chronicles and Yazıcızâde's chronicle. Lastly, Salih Özbaran focused on usage of the term "Rumi" in Ottoman historical and literary texts and he argued that the Ottoman administrative and intellectual elites preferred to call themselves as "Rumi" instead of Turk and by that, they did not simply mean Muslim, Turkish speaking people living in Anatolia. For Özbaran, "Rumi" identity was not limited with Anatolia and it was not limited with Turkish speaking Muslim people; it included all of the peoples and religions of the empire which was inherited from the Roman Empire.

We will examine those 15th century sources of the Ottoman history within that context:

Ahmedî, *İskendernâme*, written between 1390 and 1410.²

Yazıcızâde Ali, *Tevârih-i Al-i Selçuk*, written in 1424 or in 1436.³

Şükrullah, *Behçetü't-Tevârih*, written in 1459.⁴

Karamânî Nişancı Mehmed Paşa, *Risale*, in 1480.⁵

² Ahmedî, *İskendernâme (inceleme-tenkitli metin)*, ed. Yaşar Akdoğan - Nalan Kutsal (İstanbul: Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu Başkanlığı, 2019); Salih Demirbilek, *Ahmedî'nin İskendernâme Adlı Eseri Üzerine İnceleme* (Edirne: Trakya Üniversitesi, Unpublished Dissertation, 2000); Caroline G. Sawyer, *Alexander, History and Piety A Study of Ahmedî's 14th Century Ottoman İskendernâme* (Columbia University, Unpublished Dissertation, 1997).

³ Yazıcızâde Ali, *Tevârih-i Al-i Selçuk (Oğuzname-Selçuklu Tarihi)*, ed. Abdullah Bakır (İstanbul: Çamlıca, 2017).

⁴ Şükrullah, "Behçetü't-tevarih", *Osmanlı Tarihleri*, ed. Nihal Atsız (İstanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi, 1949), 37-76; Şükrullah Efendi, *Behçetü't tevarih: tarihin aydınlığında* (İstanbul : Mostar, 2013).

⁵ Karamani Mehmed Paşa, "Tevarihu's-Selatinî'l-Osmaniyye", çev. Konyalı İbrahim Hakkı, *Osmanlı Tarihleri*, ed. Nihal Atsız (İstanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi, 1949), 322-369.

Aşıkpaşazâde, *Kitâb-i Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman*, written between 1484 and 1502.⁶

Anonymous, *Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman*, written between 1495 and 1510.⁷

Ahmedî's *İskendernâme*

Ahmedî's work *İskendernâme* is the earliest and the most important work reflecting the nature of the cultural environment in early Ottoman Anatolia. It's subject and content is largely derived from earlier Persian examples composed in verse like Firdevsî's (d.1020) *Şehnâme* and Nizamî's (d.1214) *İskendernâme*. But it is not merely a translation of earlier works, Ahmedî (d.1413) inserted religious, philosophical, political and historical subjects into his work and he ended up with a monumental encyclopedic volume. Ahmedî's work did not only transfer Persian-Islamic cultural heritage into Anatolian Turkish culture, it also presented a synthesis of Arab and Islamic culture with pre-Islamic Persian and Hellenistic cultural tradition in the example of Alexander the Great. It is well known that Firdevsî portrayed Alexander the Great in his *Şehnâme* as the last ruler of the Persian Keyani dynasty, son of Darius.⁸ Two centuries later, Nizami attempted to combine Islamic and Persian tradition in his *İskendernâme*, equating Alexander the Great with prophetic figure *Zulqarneyn* as mentioned in the holy Qoran. Ahmedî followed Nizami's path going even further by adding stories about Alexander the Great and Hızır, the legendary immortal figure of Turkic-Islamic tradition.⁹ For Ahmedî, Alexander the Great was the ancient ruler of the *land of Rum*, therefore, reading about Alexander's deeds also meant learning about distant history of their country.

We should keep in mind that *İskendernâme* is not just a chronicle, or a history work, it has a greater purpose of providing answers for essential questions such as the meaning of life, death and fate. We can safely argue that Ahmedî's work became quite popular in 15th century Anatolia by looking at extant manuscript copies, and some of them were illustrated copies, suggesting that they were crafted for the palace.

Ahmedî's *İskendernâme* treats Ottoman history as a part of global history of mankind. Furthermore, Ahmedî makes it clear that just like the prophet of Islam who is superior to earlier prophets due to becoming the last one, the Ottoman dynasty is superior to other dynasties that ruled in the world in the past, such as Chingisids or Ilkhanids etc. By doing so, he stresses on universality of the Ottoman sovereignty in the sense that their right to rule depends on God's will and their observance of justice, so their sovereignty is superior and more justifiable than those earlier dynasties such as Chingisids or Timurids. Ahmedî does not stress on the Ottoman dynasty's noble genealogy, though he vaguely refers to Ottomans' Oguz lineage. Instead, Ahmedî's views on the legitimacy of the rulers becomes apparent in

⁶ Aşıkpaşaoğlu Ahmed Aşıkî, "Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman", *Osmanlı Tarihleri*, ed. Nihal Atsız Çiftçioglu (İstanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi, 1949), 79-319; Aşıkpaşazâde, *Aşıkpaşazâde Tarihi [Osmanlı tarihi (1285-1502)]*, ed. Necdet Öztürk (İstanbul: Bilge Kültür Sanat, 2013).

⁷ Anonim, *Anonim tevarih-i Al-i Osman -F. Giese neşri-*, çev. Nihat Azamat (İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi, 1992); Necdet Öztürk, *Anonim Osmanlı Kroniği* (İstanbul: Bilge Kültür Sanat, 2015).

⁸ Demirbilek, *Ahmedî'nin İskendernâme Adlı Eseri Üzerine İnceleme*, 13.

⁹ Sawyer, *Alexander, History and Piety A Study of Ahmedî's 14th Century Ottoman İskendernâme*, 34.

a dialogue between Alexander the Great and Darius. According to *Iskendername*, Alexander replaced his grandfather Feylokos (Philip) as a local ruler upon his death, who was a vassal of the Persian ruler Darius (Darius I). So, when Alexander decided to conquer East, he was actually rebelling against his suzerain and his step brother. So, Darius II argued with Alexander over legitimate ownership of the country before going into war. Darius' claim was based on two important principles: first, land of Rum was conquered by sword, and second, he inherited it from his ancestors. That claim was rejected by Alexander on the grounds that real owner of everything in this world is God Almighty and he distributes wealth and kingship whomever he wishes. Secondly, it is more plausible to lay claim on things with one's own merits rather than his already dead ancestors' achievements.

1045. Bu ki şeh der kim kılıcumuzla Rûm
Alnup oldu bizüm ol merzibûm
1046. Hâlıkûndur mülk anı_ol pâdişâh
Kime kim diler virüp eyleye şâh
1047. Mülk anuñdur Mâlikü'l-Mülk Ol hemîn
Hîcdür Dârâb u İskender yakîn
(...)
1050. Dahı şeh didi ki bize tâc u taht
Degdi Keyhüsrevden ü hem mülk ü baht
1051. Taht Keyhüsrevden irdi-y-ise_aña
Şükkr kim Hakdan virildi uş baña
1052. **Mülk mi ol ki_anı Keyhüsrev vire**
Mülk ol kim kişiye Hakdan ere

Here, it is noteworthy that Ahmedî's Alexander never attempts to lay claim on the throne of Rum due to his hereditary rights since he was the grandson of King Feylekos and son of Darius I. Instead, he stresses on divine grace and the text make it clear that Alexander's right to rule is not limited with the land of Rum but it also covers the other countries conquered by him such as Syria, Egypt, Persia, Asia, China, India and Africa.

So, the first principle that Ahmedî reminds us is the divine origin of rulership, which also means that to become a universal ruler one does not need to have hereditary rights or a noble lineage. The second principle that Ahmedî clarifies in his versed narrative is that Alexander's fortune to be a universal ruler does not impose on other people religious or ethical liability to obey his rule; people would prefer to obey him if they are smart enough to see that it is for their own benefit. If they obey him, they collect the benefits of this obedience by becoming partners in Alexander's fortune:

2018. Her ki girmeye anuñ fermânına
Kasd itmiş ola kendü cânına
2019. Her kime k'ide inâyet Zü'l-Celâl
Aña isyân iden olur pâyimâl

However, it is certain that nothing is permanent in this world and especially rulership is bound to be temporary:

1987. Nevbet-iledür cihânda saltanat
Kimseye dâim virilmez memleket

The third principle and the moral of the story is given at the end of the work: everyone seeks glory and eternal life, Alexander the Great was the most successful figure in the world but even he could not get eternal life (*ab-ı hayat*) after a long struggle looking for it. His son, İskenderus b. İskender realized that even if you rule a thousand year in this world it means nothing compared to the eternal life. So, he preferred to live a simple and pious life, which eventually caused disorder among the people due to competing city rulers who proclaimed themselves as kings and attacked each other's kingdom.

In short, for Ahmedî, the real *ab-ı hayat* is knowledge and if one seeks eternal life, he should seek knowledge, and pursue a virtuous life free from greed, worldly pleasures and lust.

8262. İlm-durur dedüğüm Âb-ı Hayât
Kî'anı bulan nefse irişmez memât
8263. İlm ehli zinde-i câvid olur
Câhil olan ayşdan nev-mîd olur
8264. Ger meselde ne-durur dirseñ gürâz
Ol degüldür hergiz illâ hırs u âz

Within that context, though universal sovereignty is a sign of God's favor, Ahmedî does not consider rulership as a great success in itself, as it is expressed in the case of Chingis Han. As Ahmedî described, Chingis Han was a merciless infidel but his rule covered all of the world and he divided it among his sons; Berke was the sultan of Turks and Hulagu inherited Iran:

6680. Oğlınuñ biri Çağâtâ Hân-ıdı
Biri dahı Berke Türk sultân-ıdı¹⁰
6681. Biri Kıpçak-ıdı sorarsañ be-nâm
Virdi bu illeri anlara temâm

¹⁰ Berke was the third son of Coci and grandson of Cingiz Khan, he was the ruler of Altın Orda (Golden Horde) between 1256 and 1266.

6682. **Kâfir-i bi-rahm-ıdı Çingiz Hân**

Likin oldı devleti böyle ayân

6683. Verdi İrânı Hülâgûya temâm¹¹

Uydılar nâ-çâr aña hâs u âm

Ahmedî's work focuses on the land of Rum and Iran as the two principal geographic units and it also emphasizes two imperial tradition or two universal rulers Alexander and Chingis in the context of world history. Feridun Emecen had already pointed out that we see Ottoman's claim for universal rulership expressed in literary works such as Ahmed-i Dai's Divan or Abdülvasi Çelebi's Halilname in the early 15th century, when the Ottomans were still suffering from defeat in Ankara battle.¹² Ahmedî's İskendernâme exhibits that universal rulership idea as well, and it seems that it was very familiar concept for Anatolian Muslim people who witnessed and shared a similar political culture with peoples of Iran especially after the Mongol invasion. Universal leadership idea can also be regarded as a popular literary theme in the Persianate poetic tradition dealing with political world history. Ahmedî narrates the history of the Ottoman dynasty within that context juxtaposing it with the rule of infidel Mongol rule and he strongly emphasizes Islamic themes such as gaza, piety, generosity and justice in eulogizing the Ottoman sultans.

Ahmedî's work emphasizes on self-creating heroic characters such as Alexander the Great and Chinghis Han and it never stress on the Turkic or Rumi character of the people living, or soldiers fighting under the banner of Ottomans. He sometimes uses simply "halk" (people), and sometimes muslims, *ehl-i din* and *ehl-i ilm* to describe ordinary people. And for the military elite, Ahmedî calls them sometimes as "kişi" person or he refers them as *leşker* or *leşker-i İslam*:

7125. Uydı anda çoh kişi Ertugrula

Oldur iş kim dâniş-ile togrula

7126. Ol gelenlerle gönül berkitdi ol

Hak yolına canını terk etdi ol.

While describing the struggle between the Ottomans and Karamans, Ahmedî states that Tatar tribes and Turkoman tribes such as Varsak, Turgud, Türk, Rum and Şam were among the soldiers of Karamanids, whereas Gazi Murad were alone in that campaign and he succeeded in defeating "Turk and Tatar".¹³ *İskendernâme* emphasizes on sincerity of the Ottoman dynasty and attributes their achievements to their sincere endeavor in searching for God's favor. As a result, he states, the Ottomans achieved conquering many lands and cities from

¹¹ Hulagu was Cingiz Khan's grandson, and he was the founder and first ruler of Ilkhanids (1256-1265). His father Toluy was Cingiz Khan's youngest son, and his brother Möngke was the fourth great khan of the Mongols, who entrusted Hulagu with the conquest of Iran and Baghdad.

¹² Emecen, "Osmanlı Tarihçiliğinin Başlangıcı: İlk Manzum Tarihler", 107-111.

¹³ 7245. *Hem Tatar hem Türk olıban telef / Kılıcına oldılar anuñ alef.*

the infidels that no other dynasty in the history of Islam has ever reached.¹⁴ Ahmedî also praises Bayezid's aggressive expansion campaigns over other Turkish principalities stating that thanks to the just administration of the Sultan whole Rum country prospered and all the people enjoyed benefits of the Ottoman administration.¹⁵

Yazıcızâde Ali and Tevârih-i Al-i Selçuk

Ahmedî's Islamic, sedentary and Persianate view is not shared by all early 15th century Ottoman intellectuals; Yazıcızâde Ali who authored a lengthy work probably in 1424 on the history of Rum Seljukids; entitled *Tevârih-i Al-i Selçuk*. Yazıcızâde Ali did not provide an account of the Ottoman history in his work but like Ahmedî, he presented his view on the nature of the early Ottoman state.

Unlike Ahmedî, Yazıcızâde Ali emphasized on the role of Turkoman-Oguz tradition played in the formation of the Ottoman principality and he portrayed the Ottomans as a continuation of the Seljukids. Yazıcızâde begins his works with a brief account of world history and geography, explaining the origin of the Turkic tribes and their relation to each other. According to this account, Turkic peoples were descendants of Prophet Noah's son Yafes, who originally inherited land of Turkistan to be base of his conquests of other countries such as China, India, İnan Zemin, Rum, Damascus and Egypt.¹⁶ For Yazıcızâde, Turkic tribes shared the same lineage with the Mongol tribes, but some Turkic tribes chose to convert into Islam and they came to be known as Oguz, whereas those who did not accept Islamic faith were known as Mongol tribes.¹⁷

Yazıcızâde states that Oguz and Turkoman are synonymous terms referring to the same nomadic people, and the founder of the dynasty Osman Bey had recommended his son to maintain a nomadic way of life since it was the source of their power: "Merhum Kara Osman dahi, dayım bu ögüdi oğlanlarına virür imiş: "Olmasun ki oturak olasız ki beglik Turkmanlık ve yürüklik idenlerde kalur" dir imiş." (s.25)¹⁸ Then, Yazıcızâde explains how an efficient state organization is achieved by building upon the nomadic, tribal hierarchical relations. Thus, he also hints that the ottoman state was in fact a commonwealth of the Oguz tribes. For Yazıcızâde, Osman Beg was elected as the sultan of the Oguz people according to the Oguz customary law by other tribal leaders thanks to two reasons: his lineage to Kayı tribe and his rank in the service of the late Seljukid Sultan Kaykubad.¹⁹

¹⁴ 7302. *Âl-i Osmânuñ çün ihlâsı oldı hâs / Buldılar Hak Hazretinde ihtisâs / Kanda vardılar-ısa yol buldılar / İller alup halka gâlib oldılar. (...)* 7305. *Ey tevârihi bilen kişi ayân / Bilür-iseñ eylegil baña beyân / Kim kopalıdan Muhammed ümmeti / Kim olar-durur Halilüñ mülleti / Farz olalı bu halk üzre cihâd / Bularuñ bigi kim etdi icitihâd / 7308. Kâfir elinden bu mıkdar il ü şehır / Aluban kıldı mülükün cümle kaır.*

¹⁵ 7345. *Komadı ol yörede şehır ü diyâr / Kamusını feth itdi ol nâm-dâr / Geldi dâru'l-mülke vü oturdı şâd / Memleketde kıldı gâyet adlı dâd / Halk ol adlı çünki andan buldılar / Ulu kiçi işe meşgul oldılar / Bu kamu Rüm içre bir yer kalmadı / Kim anuñ adlı-y-le ma'mûr olmadı.*

¹⁶ "Yafes zürriyyatına Türkistan iklimini yir ve yurt virdi ki, anda çoğalup andan çıkup kalan iklimlere dahi padişah olup gaza ve cihad kılalar." Yazıcızâde Ali, *Tevârih-i Al-i Selçuk* (Oğuzname-Selçuklu Tarihi), 3.

¹⁷ "Anlar ki Oguz'la müttefik oldılar, müvahhid olup Tengri'yi bir bildiler; anlar ki ittifak itmeyüp Oguz'a uymadılar, kaır oldılar, adları Mogol ve Tatar oldı." s.5.

¹⁸ See also 751, stating that history shows us that it was nomadic people who always rised for power and founded new kingdoms.

¹⁹ "Kayıdan Ertugrul oğlu Osman Beg'i ucdığı Türk begleri dirilip kuriltay idüp Oguz Töresin sorışup han dikdiler" p.713

Yazıcızâde reminds his readers that Osman Beg's enthronement was arranged according to Oguz tradition and Oguz ceremonial gestures were not all forgotten during that time as it was in the 15th century. It is noteworthy that Yazıcızâde explains Osman Beg's ascension to throne as a consequence of Tatar invasion of Anatolia and collapse of Seljukid power, but he does not take a stand against Ilkhanids. For instance, he narrates Ilkhanids – Mamluk wars of 1299 from a perspective of Ilkhanids, stating how Ghazan Han –the padişah of Islam- asked for permission or fetva from the learned man to launch a campaign against a Muslim power who committed crimes against innocent Muslim peoples living under the rule of Ilkhanids.²⁰ Similarly, Yazıcızâde does not use a negative tone for Timurids or Karamanids in his work.

Yazıcızâde concludes his work by inserting a long story about Gazneli Mahmud and indicating its similarity to the events witnessed in Osman's Beg's time. Story tells that Mahmud was only a little boy when a group of Hindu learned men from the oldest temple in the city of Sumenat paid a visit for Mahmud's father, Sebuktegin in Gazni. They have presented very generous gifts and they asked only for a letter of immunity in return, which grants them freedom of religion when the city of Sumenat would fall into the hands of prince Mahmud in the future. As skilled astrologers, they had foreseen the future of their city a decade earlier. Accepting gifts, Prince Mahmud granted their wishes, but many years later, events developed in a way that their sacred idol were broken into pieces at the hands of Mahmud's soldiers revealing a rich treasure hidden inside. Anyway, Yazıcızâde concludes his work by stating that Christian monks from monastery of Margarit in the city of Siroz paid a similar visit to Osman Gazi before the conquest of Bursa. Bringing gold and silver, they asked for some legal and financial privileges because they had already foreseen Osman's rising star from Söğüt by observing sky.

The moral of the story is that Osman's rulership was predetermined and experts of astrology had foreseen it before the conquest of Bursa.

So, Yazıcızâde disagrees with Ahmedî on a number of issues such as role of Oguz traditions or Turkoman tribes in the formation of Ottoman state but both of them agree on one thing that the rise of Osman was written in the stars.

Şükrullah and *Behçetu't-Tevârih*

Şükrullah (d. after 1464) is another noteworthy historian of the 15th century whose world history *Behçetu't-Tevârih* (written in 1459) deals with the history of the Ottoman dynasty in the last chapter. *Behçetu't-Tevârih* is written in Persian and it resembles Ahmedî's *İskendername* in style and in content but it presents a more detailed account of the Ottoman and world history. Ahmedî and Şükrullah both concentrates on piety, generosity and justice of the Ottoman sultans, they indicate noble Oguz genealogy of the Ottoman dynasty but they portray Ottoman sultans as sultan of gazis or padişah of Islam, rather than Han of Oguz tribes.

²⁰ ibid, p. 715.

As I have mentioned above, Ahmedî seems to narrate the story of Alexander and history of Rum as if it is a part of their own story, whereas Şükrullah's chapter on various Turkic tribes or on peoples of Rum places a chronological or geographical distance between the reader and the subject. Şükrullah designed Behcetu't-Tevârih to be an encyclopedic resource for every Muslim interested in the creation of world and heavens, history of prophets, geography, astronomy, Islamic history, religious sciences and biographical information for prominent scholars of each Islamic discipline; *fiqh*, *hadis* and *kelam*. For the Ottoman history, Şükrullah follows a stereotypical description of the Ottoman sultans stressing on their justice, piety, sincerity, generosity and respect for learned people.

He singles out Ottoman sultans in their heroic endeavor to construct the Ottoman principality and avoids mentioning other significant figures who contributed to the development of the state. Within that context, for instance, he does not describe election of Bayezid I by army commanders after the death of Murad I in Kosova battle, or execution of Bayezid's brother, Yakub Çelebi. Similarly, Yıldırım Bayezid or Süleyman Çelebi died a natural death in Şükrullah's account, and he did not mention at all about İsa Çelebi's struggle for throne and his death at the hands of his brother.

Like Ahmedî, Şükrullah portrays sultans as self-creating heroes; their personal qualities and achievements are the sole reason for Ottoman power and each sultan ascended to the throne by his own fortune and capabilities, not by the consent and support of other commanders. Ertuğrul was appointed as a frontier commander by the Seljukid sultan Alaaddin and when Ertuğrul died, the same sultan appointed his son Osman to the same post with more power by granting him ceremonial objects like *tuğ*, *davul*, *kılıç* and *kaftan*.²¹ Like Ahmedî, Şükrullah presents Ottoman sultans and his soldiers as warriors of Islam and he maintains this sharp distinction between Muslim and infidel as if there is constant war between the two. And when it comes to explain wars with other Anatolian Muslim principalities, Şükrullah states that defending Muslim people against external attacks is even more important than expanding Islam's borders. Like Ahmedî, he emphasizes that Karamanoğlu gathered forces from Tatar, Türkmen and Varsak but Sultan Murad asked only for God's help, and he won the battle. About Ankara defeat, once more Şükrullah distorts historical reality and blames Tatar and infidel soldiers, stating that Tatar soldiers switched sides and infidel soldiers escaped the battlefield.

Karamânî Mehmed Paşa

Karamânî Mehmed Pasha (d.1481) wrote his work on Ottoman history in Arabic during the reign of Mehmed II. His work shares similar perspective with Şükrullah's Behcetu't-Tevârih and Ahmedî's İskendernâme; he idealizes Ottoman sultans and relates everything good over the land of Rum to their auspicious presence.²² Being a descendant of famous Sufi Mevlânâ Celâleddin Rûmî, Karamânî Mehmed Paşa served for 14 years as the head of Ottoman chancellery which eventually led him to the highest post; grandvizirate in 1478. He contributed to the formation of Ottoman central administration during the time of

²¹ Şükrullah Efendi, *Behcetu't tevarih: tarihin aydınlığında*, 377-379.

²² "Geniş sınırlı ülkenin içinde bir iyilik ve olgunluk yoktur ki ondan taşmış ve yayılmış olmasın." Karamani Mehmed Paşa, "Tevarihu's-Selatini'l-Osmaniyye", 349.

Mehmed II especially by his services in the codification of Ottoman laws. However, he did not express his contributions or anyone else's contributions to the construction of Ottoman administration in his work. His work aims to demonstrate Ottoman dynasty's hereditary and legitimate right to rule by enumerating achievements of the sultans which Karamânî reads as a sign of divine approval. Karamânî follows Şükrullah's account in stating that Seljukid Sultan Alaaddin Keykubad had appointed Ertuğrul as a leader of Ghazis and upon Ertuğrul's death Osman Bey enjoyed even higher rank granted from the Seljukid sultan.

Karamânî Mehmed's work includes earliest account of famous dream story and it is a little bit different from later accounts. In that version, it was Ertuğrul not Osman who had seen the dream and it did not end with a marriage with Sheyh Edebalî's daughter. Ertuğrul is hosted by a certain faqîh and he does not sleep during the night out of respect for the Holy Qoran. At the end of night, he falls asleep and learns that he and his line will be exalted in this world as a reward for his respect for the Holy Book.²³

Karamânî Mehmed Pasha indicates Oguz lineage of the Ottoman dynasty in a number of places but he does not ascribe it much significance. For Karamânî, it was Oguz descent that was honored by Ottoman dynasty's conquests and achievements not the other way around. And the most important of these achievements are; being the leader of ghaza, building mosques, madrasas, tekkes and imarets, being a center for learned men and defending *ehl-i sunnet* creed in the Muslim world, cleansing the land of Rum from heresy. Karamânî does not try to explain reasons for defeat in the Ankara battle or sources of conflict and hostility with other Muslim powers like Karamanids and Akkoyunlu. But he describes them as Turkmen without feeling any sympathy or affinity and he uses the term Turkmen for Karamanids, Karakoyunlus or Akkoyunlus and once for Uzun Hasan himself. He sometimes uses expressions like army of Rum, or country of Rum but mostly he uses "gazi" or "soldiers of Islam" (*leşker-i İslam*) to refer to the Ottoman side. He carefully observes a distinction between the sultan and his servants or soldiers and he associate state only with the Ottoman sultan and dynasty, not with any group of officials or supporters.

Aşıkpaşazâde, Kitâb-i Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman

Âşıkpaşazâde takes a stance just in the opposite of Karamânî Mehmed Pasha in his *Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman* which was written in the reign of Bayezid II probably in 1495. He harshly criticized Karamânî Mehmed Pasha for inventing unheard, unjust ways to find new financial resources for state treasury. But a more fundamental distinction between the two authors lies in their interpretation of the Ottoman history.

Unlike Karamânî Mehmed, Âşıkpaşazâde tries to demonstrate that the Ottoman success was a result of collective efforts of many people, who can be categorized under four headings: gâziyân-ı Rum, abdalân-ı Rum, baciyân-ı Rum and Ahiyân-ı Rum. Âşıkpaşazâde himself can represent at least two of these groups; abdalân and gâziyân and he tries to demonstrate that these groups laid the foundation of the Ottoman state and early Ottoman sultans themselves looked like abdalân and gâziyân in their actions and life style. We can show many passages displaying this aspect of Âşıkpaşazâde's History, but I think it will

²³ ibid. 344.

suffice to give only a few examples since it is already a well-known subject in Ottoman historiography. For instance, Âşıkpaşazâde's account of Osman's dream gained popularity in Turkish literature and it differs from Karamânî Mehmed Pasha's text radically: Osman Bey had a vision that a moon rises from Sheyh Edebali's chest and it lands on Osman's chest. Then a big tree begins to grow up over Osman's chest and its branches cover the whole world. Osman pays a visit to Sheyh and asks for interpretation of the dream. Edebali explains it saying that you will have my daughter's hand in marriage and your descendants will rule all over the world.

Another important passage presents a detailed account of Osman's relations with the Seljukid Sultan Alaaddin and how Osman received ceremonial gifts from the Seljuk Sultan. According to Âşıkpaşazâde, it was Osman not his father who first contacted with Sultan Alaaddin and eventually Osman received recognition from the Sultan in return of his respect and loyalty. But Âşıkpaşazâde emphasize on two aspects of that ceremony, which included beating the drum: first, that it signifies Osman Bey's authorization as a leader of frontier ghazis, and secondly, it proves how the Ottomans followed sufi traditions in all their actions; since it was an Abrahamic and sufi tradition to offer food for every visitor, and beating drum also meant inviting people for meal.

Âşıkpaşazâde does not hesitate to use the term "Turk" for the Ottoman state especially when he was quoting others' phrases for the Ottoman soldiers or administration. Whereas sometimes he uses Turkoman in a pejorative sense denoting their loose sense of fidelity. His work does not include a chapter on first Ottoman-Karaman conflict where Turkoman, Tatar and Varsak allied against the Ottomans. But he explicitly describes events and betrayals during conflict with Timurid forces. Âşıkpaşazâde states that Tatars betrayed first, then every provincial military unit betrayed the Ottoman sultan and joined their old leader on the other side, then Bayezid's sons including Çelebi Mehmed left the battlefield with their soldiers. Christian forces remained loyal and they fought very well until the end. So, unlike Şükruallah, Âşıkpaşazâde does not blame only Tatars and infidels for the failure in Ankara battle. He also does not hesitate to present a detailed account of struggles between brothers during interregnum era and he describes how frontier begs played decisive role in determining the future sultan. Likewise, Âşıkpaşazâde does not hesitate to describe army commanders' effective role in Bayezid's enthronement after the death of his father in Kosova. In short, Âşıkpaşazâde's portrayal of Ottoman sultans does not fit to an idealized sultan figure empowered by the heavens, but rather looks like a humble person looking for alliances and support of local leaders and even ordinary soldiers.

Anonymous Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman

Anonymous author of Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman was a contemporary of Âşıkpaşazâde and he composed his work during the reign of Bayezid II. His attitude towards Ottoman history resembles Âşıkpaşazâde's way but he relies on a number of different sources for some important issues. For instance, in the case of Osman's dream, Anonymous author states that Ertuğrul had a dream and he went to Konya seeking interpretation of a famous wise man called Abdülaziz who was respected by all including Seljukid Sultan Alaaddin. Tevârih narrates this short anecdote at the first place, then it continues with another version of the story saying some people argues that it was Şeyh Edebali who interpreted the dream. Then

he narrates the story that ends with Osman's marriage with Edebalı's daughter.

Anonymous *Tevârih* also differs from Âşıkpaşazâde's account in explaining Ottoman-Seljukid relations. It only states first part of the story saying that Ertuğrul sent his son Saruyatı as an emissary to Sultan Alaaddin asking for a place to settle. Sultan Alaaddin accepted their request and assigned them to Karahisar – Bilecik region. *Tevârih* does not include any other incident indicating that Osman received ceremonial gifts from the Seljukid Sultan authorizing his leadership among the frontier gazis. But it simply states that when Osman replaced his father many young warriors gathered around him and they have raided a lot conquering many places. As a result of these conquests, *Tevârih* adds the first Friday prayer was performed in Karahisar in 689/1290 or 699/1299 and Osman's name was pronounced in *hutbe*.²⁴

Like Âşıkpaşazâde, Anonymous author criticized establishment of new practices and institutions serving to centralization of Ottoman administration. Within that context, he is critical of madrasa educated bureaucrats, pashas and kadıs who gained wealth and power as the Ottoman principality expanded its borders. Unlike Âşıkpaşazâde, Anonymous author's critical perspective is not limited with central administrations actions, he also narrates and criticizes examples of fierce competition among frontier commanders. For instance, according to *Tevârih*, Hacı İlbeyi's achievements sparked enmity of Lala Şahin and his entourage and they conspired against him which ended with Hacı İlbeyi's death.

Tevârih especially criticizes fratricide and claims that early beys had good relations with their brothers and they used to consult with each other. *Tevârih* claims that fratricide was invented during the time of Bayezid, but when we look at section on Bayezid's enthronement, *Tevârih* states that it was commanders and officials (beyler) who decided to enthrone Bayezid and kill Yakub Çelebi. Bayezid was not among the decision makers during the process. In fact, *Tevârih-i Al-i Osman*'s style does not place Ottoman sultans at the center of the narrative, instead, it mostly emphasizes actions of local leaders, commanders, dervishes, or central officials. It aims to collect interesting stories and anecdotes of Ottoman history. As a result of this understanding, it includes a large part on legendary history of Constantinople while it never mentions Ottoman sultan's construction projects, charitable actions etc., unlike most of other chronicles which includes at least a paragraph at the end of each section. On the other hand, *Tevârih* sometimes uses terms like Osmanlı or Karamanlı not only to denote ruler class but to refer to ordinary people living under the banner of these principalities. For instance, he criticizes Karamanoğlu population living in İstanbul quarters for five generations who still feel loyalty to Karamanoğlu. He claims that they would enjoy it if the Ottomans were defeated by infidels.

²⁴ *Anonim Tevârih-i Al-i Osman – Giese Neşri*, haz. Nihat Azamat, İstanbul, Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınevi, 1992, s.9, *Anonim Osmanlı Kroniği* haz. Necdet Öztürk, İstanbul, Bilge Kültür Sanat, 2015, s.9

Conclusion

As a conclusion, early Ottoman historiography demonstrate a wide range of diversity in their approach to defining what is Ottoman? Those Ottoman chronicles that were composed for the palace in ornate, literary style like Ahmedî's İskendernâme, Şükrullah's Behçetüt-*Tevârih* and Karamânî's Risale show a similar attitude to limit borders of political by using the term for the Sultan himself. For them, Ottoman state was an achievement of the Ottoman dynasty and they are the source of legitimacy and well-being of every Muslim in the country. On the other hand, Yazıcızâde's work describes Ottoman state in broad terms and tries to include all Turkish (Oguz) people within that roof.

Âşıkpaşazâde aims to demonstrate that Ottoman state was founded by dervishes and dervish minded sultans and it needed to remain in that way, recognizing "Ottomanness" of these circles. On the other hand, Anonymous author of *Tevârih* widens range of the term even further by pointing out actions and achievements of middle ranked people that contributed to the foundation of the Ottoman principality and it also uses the term to denote ordinary people living willfully under the banner of Ottomans.

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