

The *Türk* in Aşıkpaşazâde: A Private Individual's Ottoman History

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Aşıkpaşazâde'deki Türk: Bir Özel Şahsın Osmanlı Tarihi

Öz ■ 15. yüzyılda Osmanlı aydınları tarih kitaplarını sivil güçlerini uyguladıkları bir platform olarak kullandılar. Bu makale Aşıkpaşazâde ve onun *Kitab-ı Tevarih-i Ali Osman* isimli Osmanlı tarihine odaklanıyor. Temel argümanı, bu kitabın sivillerin Osmanlı kimliği ve meşrutiyetinin oluşturulmasını nasıl etkilediklerinin bir örneği olduğu. Makale erken dönem Osmanlı tarih kitaplarında açık bir Türkçü söylemin ortaya çıkışını ve Aşıkpaşazâde'nin bu oluşumdaki rolünü inceliyor. Aynı zamanda, Halil İncılık ve Jean Jacques Rousseau'nun saptamalarına dayanarak Aşıkpaşazâde'nin hayatını teorik olarak irdeliyor. Aşıkpaşazâde'yi bir *private individual* (özel şahıs) olarak tanımlayan bu makale, bu gibi bireylerle erken modern dönem Batı devletleri arasında varolduğu kabul edilen politik güç paylaşımı dinamiklerinin 15. yüzyıl Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda da varolduğunun altını çiziyor.

Anahtar kelimeler: Osmanlı İmparatorluğu, tarih, tarih yazımı, kimlik, Türk, Türken, Aşıkpaşazâde, Halil İncılık, Jean Jacques Rousseau.

And just as the battle with infidel is God's work and the sultans and warriors who have engaged in it have acquired sanctity, so the recording of their deeds is a holy work, and the author is as entitled as they to a fatiha for the repose of his soul.

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1 V. L. Ménage, "The Beginnings of Ottoman Historiography," *Historians of the Middle East*, eds. P. M. Holt and Bernard Lewis, London: Oxford University Press, 1964, 178.

I summarized and wrote down the words and the legends about the Ottomans, filled with events. In that endless plain the pen spoke to my heart. As a helpless soul I gave my ear to the voice of my pen. My heart was amazed, then I began to speak.

Aşıkpaşazâde²

Introduction

The relationship between the Ottoman state and the fifteenth century Ottoman historians require more attention than it has received to date. The evidence suggests that where the interests of the state and political individuals conflicted, writing a history book have served as an alternative venue through which an individual could practice power. The impact of such history books were remarkable and it is in this respect that Aşıkpaşazâde's *Kitabı Tevarihî Ali Osman* offers an ideal example regarding the role of the individuals in the construction of Ottoman identity during its formative period. In particular, the emergence of an explicitly Turkic discourse within the early Ottoman history books at the end of the fifteenth century owes much to Aşıkpaşazâde's work. It is also possible to build a theoretical argument on Aşıkpaşazâde's experience to explain the relationship between the Ottoman state and its subjects. This essay will argue that Halil İnalçık's works, titled "The Emergence of Ottoman Historiography" and "How to Read 'Âshık Pasha-Zâde's History,'" confirm that Aşıkpaşazâde was a *private individual* in Jean Jacques Rousseau's sense of the term and he negotiated power with the sovereign in a similar fashion described by Rousseau.³ And, a close reading Rousseau's *Social Contract* and *On the Origins of the Inequality among Men* from this perspective suggests how commonly accepted dynamics of power sharing between the *private individuals* and the state associated with the early modern period Western empires, can also apply to the fifteenth century Ottoman Empire.

Early Ottoman historiography and Aşıkpaşazâde

Aşıkpaşazâde's unique place in early Ottoman historiography was mainly highlighted during the 1960's. In 1964, P. M. Holt and Bernard Lewis edited a volume titled *Historians of the Middle East*, to which Halil İnalçık contributed an essay

2 Aşıkpaşazâde, *Tevarihî Ali Osman*, ed. Kemal Yavuz & M. A. Yekta Saraç, *Âşıkpaşazade, Osmanoğulları'nın Tarihi*, İstanbul: K Kitaplığı, 2003, 51.

3 Halil İnalçık, "How to Read 'Âshık Pasha-Zâde's History,'" *Studies in Ottoman History in Honour of Professor V.L. Ménage*, eds. Colin Heywood and Colin Imber, İstanbul: The Isis Press, 1994, 139-56.

titled “The Rise of Ottoman Historiography.”⁴ It was in this essay that İnalçık presented a general picture of the emergence of history writing among the Ottomans. He also described how, after Mehmed II’s (r. 1451-1481) death and during Bayezid II’s reign (r.1481-1512), a group of Ottoman intellectuals who were members of the *ulema* produced Ottoman histories which propagated an Ottoman ideology prescribed by the new sultan.⁵ According to İnalçık, *ulema* constituted a group of individuals who acted as subsidiaries of a larger, and state sponsored phenomenon of historiography which was designed to satisfying Bayezid II’s needs,⁶ although they relied on two distinct lines of narrative sources, one very concise, eulogist and ruler oriented and the other, much longer and rooted in a Turkish and Anatolian oral tradition.⁷

To the same collection, Victor L. Ménage also contributed an essay entitled “The Beginnings of Ottoman Historiography,” and presented his general observations on the phenomenon.⁸ Like İnalçık, Ménage also believed there were two distinct narrative traditions, the presence of which determined the form and the content of early Ottoman histories. However, unlike İnalçık, he argued that “The real motives which prompted the historians of the fifteenth century to write are less openly expressed but more sincerely felt. The first is piety... This theme runs through all the later histories.”⁹ And, “Closely allied with this motive is the frank desire to entertain... That which to us seems a lean and barren sentence was to them the text for a winter evening’s entertainment.”¹⁰ During that year, Ménage was preparing a larger study, a source criticism of Neşri’s *Cihannüma*, which required a more comprehensive analysis of the differences between the two narra-

4 Halil İnalçık, “The Rise of Ottoman Historiography,” *Historians of the Middle East*, eds. P. M. Holt and Bernard Lewis, London: Oxford University Press, 1964, 152-67.

5 He wrote, “For this unusual activity in producing compilations on the general history of the Ottomans at that time, the first and foremost reason was no doubt Bayezid II’s desire to see such works written, and the *ulema* of his time responded to it. Bayezid II then wanted to use this means for shaping public opinion in his favor.” İnalçık, “The Rise of Ottoman Historiography,” 164. Readers should note that in a recently published essay I have criticized the premises of this thesis. Murat Cem Mengüç, “Histories of Bayezid I, Historians of Bayezid II; re-thinking late-fifteenth century Ottoman historiography” *BSOAS*, 3 (2013), 373-389.

6 İnalçık, “The Rise of Ottoman Historiography,” 164.

7 İnalçık, “The Rise of Ottoman Historiography,” 160.

8 Ménage “The Beginnings of Ottoman Historiography,” 168-179.

9 Ménage, “The Beginnings of Ottoman historiography,” 177.

10 Ménage, “The Beginnings of Ottoman historiography,” 178.

tive traditions, and how Neşri thrived to systematically combine them.¹¹ In other words, while an agreement was reached about the presence of two traditions, a difference of opinion emerged regarding the motives of the historians and how these influenced their histories.

Some thirty years later, in 1994, Colin Imber and Colin Heywood edited a festschrift to celebrate Ménage's contributions to Ottoman studies, to which İnalçık contributed his famous essay "How to Read 'Āshık Pasha-Zāde's History?'"¹² In this essay, İnalçık revisited his views on Aşıkpaşazâde's work, and argued that personal and political factors which were specific to Aşıkpaşazâde, in fact, greatly influenced the content of his Ottoman history. In this instant, he did not cite Aşıkpaşazâde as a state sponsored historian, but portrayed him as a person who was driven with his own passions and personal conditions to compose an Ottoman history.¹³

"How to Read 'Āshık Pasha-Zāde's History?'" brought Aşıkpaşazâde and along with him, early Ottoman historiography alive. It emphasized the importance of the author's voice and underlined a number of characteristics regarding Aşıkpaşazâde's life. One such characteristic was how Aşıkpaşazâde came from a distinguished Muslim Anatolian and Turkic background. Another characteristic was how he lived as a well recognized member of the Ottoman society. There was also his services to the Ottoman state in different capacities, his recognition as a member of the *ulema* and *müteferrika*, along with how his family served the Ottoman dynasty throughout history. Finally, there was the fact that Aşıkpaşazâde was a man of commerce who owned property, both real estate and slaves.¹⁴ According to İnalçık, these qualities determined Aşıkpaşazâde's personality, and the content of his history of the Ottomans.

Interestingly enough, these characteristics also qualified Aşıkpaşazâde as a perfect example of what Rousseau called a *private individual*. Given that Aşıkpaşazâde died at the turn of the fifteenth century, and the persisting arguments of how

11 V. L. Ménage, *Neshri's history of the Ottomans*, London, Oxford University Press, 1964.

12 İnalçık, "How to Read 'Āshık Pasha-Zāde's History'", 139-56.

13 "Aşpż's [sic] work is deeply influenced by and reflects the violent conflicts between the elite and the state, which arose as a result of the Conqueror's [Mehmed II] radical measures in taxation and landholding during his reign. It can be said that these disputes in which Aşpż [sic] himself was personally involved, lend his history a strong polemical character. When disputing he did not hesitate to present the facts in the direction of his arguments, ..." İnalçık, "How to Read 'Āshık Pasha-Zāde's History,'" 140-43.

14 Ibid.

political individual and citizenry evolved differently in the West than they have in the East, this is important to point. Two of Rousseau's works in particular offered modern scholars a stepping stone in their explanation of the differences between the medieval and the early modern subject, and his or her relationship to the state, namely *The Social Contract or the Principles of Political Right* (1762) and *On the Origins of Inequality among Men* (1754). Particularly in the latter, Rousseau proposed a universal pattern according to which *private individuals* emerged in history, negotiated power and made their voices heard to their rulers.

Rousseau attributed the emergence of *private individuals* mainly to the popularization of an otherwise what he called to be an unnatural concept, i.e., *private property*. He believed that in the case of the common people, acquisition of *private property* opened the path to the acquisition of political power.¹⁵ It is important to note that Rousseau wrote *The Origins* as a moral criticism of slavery, at a time when this institution was a heated topic of debate. Rousseau went far enough to describe the early modern state as a *political machine* which emanated inequality.¹⁶ As far as he was concerned, a civil society was a realm of inequalities perpetuated by the state and its servants. In this setting, slavery represented the most advanced stage of the inequality between individuals and as a concept sprang from the idea of *private property*. Nevertheless, he also recognized the cultural virtues of living in a civil society, such as arts, sciences and education, even if it required a sophisticated understanding of civility, and an even more sophisticated justification of the inequalities among people.

Aşıkpaşazâde's biography suggests that he perfectly fit Rousseau's definition of a *private individual*. He was a possessor of *private property*, and not only houses and shops which he used with commercial interest, but also slaves.¹⁷ Moreover,

15 "The first man who, having enclosed a piece of ground, bethought himself of saying "This is mine", and found people simple enough to believe him, was the real founder of civil society. From how many crimes, wars and murders, from how many horrors and misfortunes might not any one have saved mankind, by pulling up the stakes, or filling up the ditch, and crying to his fellows, "Beware of listening to this impostor; you are undone if you once forget that the fruits of the earth belong to us all, and the earth itself to nobody." Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*, trans. by G. D. H. Cole, Digireads, 2006, 39.

16 Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*, 2.

17 İnalçık "How to Read 'Âşık Pasha-Zâde's History," 141-142. And, regarding Murad II's Belgrade siege in 1442, he wrote, "I was present during this expedition. I bought a boy of 6 or 7 years old for 100 *akçe*. At the time a slave that could take care of a horse cost 150 *akçe*. From the raiders I received seven men (slaves) and wife(s). There were more slaves than soldiers at the time. In short, since the beginning of Islam many holy wars

his experiences followed closely with the one outlined by Rousseau. Consider, for example, how Rousseau explained the emergence of *private individuals* and their eventual acquisition of power in the following words:

Political distinctions necessarily produce civil distinctions. The growing inequality between the chiefs and the people is soon felt by individuals, and modified in a thousand ways according to passions, talents and circumstances. The magistrate could not usurp any illegitimate power, without giving distinction to the creatures with whom he must share it. Besides, individuals only allow themselves to be oppressed so far as they are hurried on by blind ambition, and, looking rather below than above them, come to love authority more than independence, and submit to slavery, that they may in turn enslave others.¹⁸

This process perfectly applied to Aşıkpaşazâde's case. He acquired his distinctions within Ottoman society mainly because of his Muslim Anatolian and Turkic background. His family enjoyed a special status within the Ottoman society, to the extent that when he wrote his Ottoman history, he opened it not with a lineage of the dynasty but with his own lineage, to show case his status as follows:

Oh *aziz* men. I am the *fakir derviş* Ahmed Aşiki, son of *şeyh* Yahya. *Şeyh* Yahya was the son of *şeyh* Selman, the son of *sultan* Aşık Paşa. Aşık Paşa was the son of Muhlis Paşa, the *mürşid* of the horizons, and the son of *baba* İlyas, the *kutb* of the age, as well as the *halife* of *sayid* Ebul Vefa. May their resting places be filled with bliss.¹⁹ (my italics)

This genealogy provided Aşıkpaşazâde's audience with his origins, and embodied numerous references to his family as the highly qualified members of the Anatolian folk Islamic tradition. The terms *şeyh*, *baba*, *sayid*, *mürşid* and *fakir* indicated ranks of affiliation with a greater religious tradition, in Aşıkpaşazâde's case Wafaiya. Higher ranks were evoked with *halife*, *kutb*, and *sultan*, to emphasize

were waged but nothing like this one was seen they said. Indeed what they said had happened. One day during that expedition I came to the high presence of the *padişah*, He gave me slaves. "My stately sultan, to transfer these slaves one needs horses and they would have expenses during the trip as well," I said. He gave me 5000 *akçe* and two horses. I came during that expedition back to Edirne with 9 slaves. Besides I had 4 horses. I sold the slaves for 300 and 200 each." Aşıkpaşazâde, *Tevarihî Ali Osman*, ed. Yavuz & Saraç, 198-99.

18 Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*, 60.

19 Aşıkpaşazâde, *Tevarihî Ali Osman*, 51.

his family's close proximity to the leading figures of the same order. As İnalçık put it, "one of his [Aşıkpaşazâde's] main purposes ... was to demonstrate how *Wafa'î khalifa* Edeb-Ali and his own family played a crucial role in the establishment and rise of the Ottoman dynasty."²⁰ And the prestigious genealogy cited by him embodied the cultural core from whom the Ottoman dynasty received its first religious legitimization, representing the "political distinctions" Rousseau mentioned which "lend themselves to civil distinctions".

During the late fifteenth century, a "growing inequality" between the Ottoman rulers and civilians evoked "passions" and "talents" in Aşıkpaşazâde, much similar to the way Rousseau emphasized. Later reign of Mehmed II saw many of the privileges of the Turkish speaking and Muslim Anatolian constituencies being revoked. The civil war between Cem and Bayezid which followed Mehmed II's death in 1481, and continuing presence of Cem as an heir to the throne during most of Bayezid II's reign, made the end of the century an era when the Turkic population sought to reassert its will and give a new direction the Ottoman *political machine*.²¹ And, their support of Bayezid II did pay off, when he returned their privileges.²²

Similarly, what Rousseau outlined as the sovereign's incapability of usurping "illegitimate power" without allocating distinctions to his privileged subjects was at work. There is so much to be said about the illegitimacy of the Ottoman *political machine*, and the role of the early Ottoman histories in its legitimization, but this cannot be taken up here. Nevertheless, one thing was obvious, Aşıkpaşazâde wanted to demonstrate how his family and the religious order they belonged to played a significant role in the establishment of the Ottoman legitimacy, and blessed the Ottoman religious imperialism. Along with a group of other historically conscious men, he argued that the Ottomans were the final Muslim sovereigns of the Christian frontier. This argument is what brings us to the bigger question, that is, what did Aşıkpaşazâde meant to achieve with his Ottoman history.

20 İnalçık, "How to Read 'Āshik Pasha-Zāde's History," 144.

21 Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*, 2.

22 In the particular case of Aşıkpaşazâde, İnalçık wrote, "In fact, Bayezid's reign [1481-1512] constituted a total reaction to the Conqueror's [Mehmed II] policies in all state affairs, in particular landholding. In contemporary works Bayezid was greeted as "the restorer of the Shari'a," or actually as one who restored the means of support to the *ulema* and *shaykhs*. [my italics] People made him a *wali*. Aşıkpaşazade underlines Bayezid II's act of justice in returning the *wakf* and *mülk* villages to their former possessors. By this act, he points out, Bayezid put an end to the old innovations and illegal (*bātil*) dispositions." İnalçık, "How to Read 'Āshik Pasha-Zāde's History,'" 146.

The Ottoman past and the boundaries of its “endless plain”

Although Aşıkpaşazâde was a member of the Ottoman *ulema* who assisted Bayezid II, his and his contemporaries' works also suggest that there were some major differences between the Ottoman state and the historians regarding what constituted the Ottoman past, and therefore the Ottoman identity. The two distinct narrative traditions which were previously mentioned operated according to these differences. In fact, Aşıkpaşazâde decided to become a historian at his old age mainly because of these differences; he wanted to set the record straight. And, he was able to write a seminal work, which one could safely argue, that changed the course of the Ottoman historiography for later generations.

The available data suggests that during the first 150 years of its life span, the Ottoman state did not possess a comprehensive history of its origins, i.e., a history which narrated its past from the very beginning. Ertuğrul (1191/1198 – 1281), Osman (r. 1299 – 1324), Orhan (r. 1326 – 1359), Murad (r. 1359 – 1389) and Bayezid's (r. 1389 – 1402) courts appear to be devoid of Ottoman histories; if they had such texts, these were lost for later generations. As late as Murad II's reign (r. 1421 – 44), apart from Ahmedi's *Dastan*, a handful of *Tarihi Takvimler* (*Royal Calendars*) and Yazıcıoğlu's *Selçukname*, there were no texts referring to the general duration of the Ottoman past, neither they were commissioned, and even though the Ottoman palace was accumulating remarkable libraries.²³ In contrast, after the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, there emerged numerous comprehensive Ottoman histories.

During the second half of the fifteenth century, Ottoman historians tailored a coherent Ottoman past, discussing and interpreting such subjects like Ottoman genealogies, Ertuğrul and Osman's dreams, their encounters with the Turkic and Muslim religious folk of Anatolia, and their legitimacy as the leaders of *gaza/cihad* in the Christian frontier. Other subjects, such as the conquest of Bursa and Edirne, as well as Bayezid I's reign and his quick demise remained controversial and popular topics. Similarly, the first theoretical arguments about the use and relevance of history books for educational purposes within this literature emerged during this era.²⁴ In short, a century after the foundation of the empire, its historians started

23 Franz Babinger, *Osmanlı Tarih Yazarları ve Eserleri*, trans. Coşkun Üçok, Ankara, Kültür Bakanlığı, 1992, 18-20.

24 Three historians who distinguished themselves in this respect were Şükrullah, Tursun Bey and Neşri. All three constructed theoretical arguments regarding the value and use of history books for the education of the rulers, their servants and general population. Şükrullah, *Behçetü'ttevarih*, ed. Nihal Atsız, *Osmanlı Tarihleri I*, İstanbul, Türkiye Yayınevi, 1947, 49. Tursun Bey, *Tarihi Ebul-Feth*, ed. Mertol Tulum, f.8a-8b. Neşri,

to discuss the origins of the Ottoman dynasty and its religious ideology. Another half a century had to pass before they begin to methodologically examine the Ottoman *political machine* from a historical perspective.

The two narrative schools previously mentioned crystallized in this respect, and one of the most obvious distinction between the two was the expressions of a Turkic identity in relation to the Ottoman dynasty. Those who followed the eulogist and ruler oriented tradition refrained from explicitly calling the Ottomans *Türk* or *Türkmen*. Those historians who followed the popular and folk oriented narrative regularly used the terms *Türk* and *Türkmen* to describe the Turkish speaking Muslim constituencies under Ottoman rule, and described the Ottoman dynasty as members of this larger community. In this context, Aşıkpaşazâde became the first historian who had a well known public persona and an authority, and who adopted this discourse explicitly within the pages of a comprehensive Ottoman history.

It is true that prior to the late fifteenth century, some authors stated the Ottomans were *Türk* and *Türkmen* in their origins. But these books were either non-Ottoman histories, such as Yazıcıoğlu's *Selçukname* or they represented the views of the non-Ottoman constituencies, such as Enveri's *Düsturname*.²⁵ Moreover, until 1480's, almost all historians exclusively relied on the eulogist and ruler oriented narrative.²⁶ Although they acknowledged that there existed a genealogy which linked the Ottomans to the *Türks*, they only referred to it in a fragmented fashion, and marginalized the Turkic roots of the dynasty.

The eulogist and ruler oriented narrative first became available with Ahmedî's *Dastan* (1412), and from him onwards was always adopted by authors who enjoyed a close relationships with the Ottoman palace.²⁷ In his work, Ahmedî completely

Cihannüma, ed. F. R. Unat and M. A. Köymen, *Kitab-ı Cihan-ünuma*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1995.f.1a-2b.

25 Enveri's *Düsturname* was in essence a history of Aydınöğuları. It was not used by later Ottoman historians as a source. Similarly, Yazıcıoğlu's *Selçukname* was, as indicated by its name, a history of the Seljuks. Enveri, *Destan*, ed. Irène Mélikoff-Sayar, *Le Destan d'Umur Pacha*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1954. Enveri, *Düsturname*, ed. Necdet Öztürk, *Fatih Devri Kaynaklarından Düstürnâme-i Enveri*, İstanbul: Kitabevi, 2003. Yazıcıoğlu, *Tevarih-i Ali Selçuk*, İstanbul: Topkapı Revan Kütüphanesi, No. 1390.

26 The only exception to this trend was Enveri's *Düsturname*.

27 Ahmedî was a member of Bayezid I and later his sons Süleyman Çelebi and Mehmed I's court. Mehmet Fuat Köprülü, "Ahmedî," *IA*, vol. I, 299-300. Farnz Babinger, *Osmanlı Tarih Yazarları ve Eserleri*, 12-14. V. L. Ménage, "A Survey of the Early

refrained from calling the Ottomans as *Türk* or *Türkmen*. He used the term *Türk* very sparingly, only in references to the Karaman alliance against Murad I.²⁸ These *Türks* later became the victims of the righteous Murad I, he wrote.²⁹ They represented a constituency which posed a danger to the Ottoman sovereignty. Also, Ahmedi made no attempts to compose a detailed Ottoman genealogy, only mentioning the names of Gündüz Alp and Gök Alp, and in passing. In other words, he was familiar with a version of an Ottoman genealogy but it was not crucial to fully cite it for his conception of Ottoman legitimacy.³⁰

A decade later Yazıcıoğlu declared that the Ottomans were *Türks*, but his claim would be marginalized by the later eulogist and ruler oriented historiography.³¹ Yazıcıoğlu's *Selçukname* was the only history book which was explicitly written for Murad II's court. Its title and content indicates a marginalization of the Ottoman identity in favor of the greater Seljuk heritage. Similarly, Yazıcıoğlu wrote during Murad II's early reign (1424), when military confrontation rather than diplomacy dominated the Ottoman state's relationship with its Turkic contenders, and there was enough justification to associate the Ottomans with the Anatolian *Türk* and *Türkmen* constituencies. It won't be surprising if the court decidedly refrained from boasting about its identity by commissioning an Ottoman history. This was to change at the aftermath of Murad II's reign. In any event, Yazıcıoğlu stated "From the sons of Oğuz, 24 lines were established. It was established that each and every one of them was named under a different title. And all were *Türkmen*, who now exist in Persia, Arabia, Levant, and Anatolia... the Tajik people called them *Türkmen* which meant those who looked like *Türk*."³² In short, the Ottomans were *Türkmen* people.

Ottoman Histories, with Studies on Their Textual Problems and Their Sources," Unpublished PhD. Thesis, University of London, 1961, vol. 1, 59. Şükrullah's carrier followed a similar pattern, as he served Bayezid I's sons Isa Çelebi and Süleyman Çelebi. He later served in Murad II's court. Nihal Atsız, *Osmanlı Tarihleri I*, İstanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi, 1947, 39-40.

- 28 Ahmedi, *İskendername*, ed. İsmail Ünver, *Ahmedi İskender-nâme*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1983, f.66.b. Ahmedi, *İskendername*, ed. Kemal Sılay, "Ahmedi's History of the Ottoman Dynasty", *JTS*, 16, 1992, 151.
- 29 Ahmedi, *İskendername*, ed. Ünver, f.66.b. Ahmedi, *İskendername*, ed. Sılay, 151.
- 30 Ahmedi, *İskendername*, ed. Sılay, 146.
- 31 Yazıcıoğlu, *Tevarih-i Ali Selçuk*, MS. Topkapı Revan 1390, f.9.b. For Murad II era diplomacy with Anatolian constituencies see Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, 22-23.
- 32 Yazıcıoğlu, *Tevarih-i Ali Selçuk*, MS. Topkapı Revan 1390, f.9.b.

After Istanbul's conquest and during Mehmed II's reign in general, Ottoman identity gained a new importance. In 1458 Şükrullah composed his *Behçetüttevarih* and followed the eulogist tradition first found in Ahmedi. In 1474 Mualî's *Hünkarname*, in 1481 Nişancı's *Risale* and in 1484 Al-Konevi's *Kitabı Tevarihî Ali Osman* followed course, repeating Şükrullah almost word for word.³³ All of these authors enjoyed close relationships with the palace and somewhat ignored, at least down played the importance of the Turkic roots of the dynasty for the legitimacy of Ottoman state. For example, Şükrullah and Nişancı employed the term *Türkmen* only in a negative connotation, in their references to the rebel alliance led by Karaman (during Murad I's reign).³⁴ And, Nişancı used it to describe Uzun Hasan, the leader of the Akkoyunlu federation, and the tribal lords in the Taurus Mountains who fought Mehmed II after this confederation was destroyed.³⁵

At the time, there seems to have emerged also a related stigma against the use of Turkish language. During the first half of the century we find Ahmedi and Yazıcıoğlu having composed their works in simple Turkish. During Mehmed II's reign and starting with Şükrullah, Persian emerged as a more popular language. Later, Mualî and Al-Konevi composed in Persian, while Nişancı resorted to Arabic. In other words, what was composed in Turkish during the reign of Mehmed I was translated into Persian and Arabic during Mehmed II's reign, instead of being utilized in Turkish. Besides avoiding ethnically loaded terms like *Türk* and *Türkmen* to describe the Ottoman dynasty and the Ottoman state, simple Turkish itself was targeted because it acquired an ideological relevance which did not suit the needs of the Ottoman *political machine*. This stigma seems to have survived long after Mehmed II's reign, for in 1490, we find historian Kemal explicitly arguing

33 Mualî, *Hünkarname*, ed. Robert Anhegger, "Mu'âlî'nin Hünkârname'si," *Tarih Dergisi*, vol. II, 1950, 1-2, 145-166. Nişancı Mehmed Paşa, *Risale*, ed. Nihal Atsız, "Risale," *Osmanlı Tarihleri*, İstanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi, 1947. Nişancı Mehmed Paşa, *Risale*, İstanbul: Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Aşir Efendi, 234. Al'Konevi, *Kitabı Tarihi Ali Osman*, ed. Robert Anhegger, "Mehmed B. Hacı Halil Ül-Kunevî'nin Tarih-i Âl-i Osman-1," *Tarih Dergisi*, vol. II, 1951, 3-4, 51-66.

34 Şükrullah, *Behçetüttevarih*, ed. Atsız, 51 and 55. Nişancı, *Risale*, ed. Atsız, 347.

35 The absence of the term *Türk* from Nişancı's work is particularly intriguing, because he was born and raised in Anatolia, in a Turkish speaking family from the line of Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi, that attached much importance to their roots. As the Grand Vizier to Mehmed II, he comes across as a historian who refutes not only the Ottoman but also his personal heritage. But, there are also references to the possibility that Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi was not fond of his Turkish roots. Sencer Divitçioğlu, *Osmanlı Beyliğinin Kuruluşu*, İstanbul: Eren Yayıncılık, 1996, 30. Nişancı, *Risale*, ed. Atsız, 357.

that Bayezid II was surrounded with courtiers who considered Turkish language a headache and discriminated against him for using it, although Kemal himself had adopted the eulogist and ruler oriented tradition for his history.³⁶

A number of other conflicting statements also indicate that the ideological importance of language choice was a taxing reality to the historians of this period. One of them comes from Al'Konevi in 1484 and it is later repeated by Idris Bitlisi in 1504; both authors complain about there being too many Ottoman histories composed in Turkish which lack accuracy and finesse.³⁷ Al'Konevi in particular states that these books were full of lies and he was resolved to travel and examine the architectural and archaeological evidence to prove that the Ottomans received the leadership of *gaza* directly from the Seljuks.³⁸ In contrast, we find Neşri (1495) writing there were not enough Ottoman histories written in Turkish.³⁹ While one could ask how many history books in Turkish were too many, it is obvious that

36 Kemal was told that his book was written in a language literary patrons of the age considered a headache. Kemal called himself and the Ottomans *Türks*, and considered the entire Turkish speaking population under Ottoman rule as *Türks*. He stated that he wrote his Ottoman history in Turkish for the *Türks* and he was a proud member of this community. Kemal, *Selatinname*, İstanbul Üniversitesi Nadide Eserler Kütüphanesi, TY 331, f.71.b. Kemal, *Selatinname*, ed. Necdet Öztürk, *XV. Yüzyıl Tarihçilerinden Kemal Selâtinname*, Ankara, Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2001, 157. He argued Christians believed, besides the Ottomans, all the Muslims of Anatolia were *Türk*. For example, in the first instance he wrote “At that time Germiyan became an enemy / but what should he know – he had not encountered the *Türk* before.” Kemal, *Selatinname*, f.13.b. Kemal, *Selatinname*, ed. Öztürk, 29. On the occasion of Süleyman Çelebi’s expedition to Rumeli, Kemal writes that it was Süleyman Çelebi’s wish to be buried facing the infidels. “And from time to time open my grave / see if I still face the infidels / if so they will be seeking the opportunity / those who killed many *Türk* should be killed as well.” Kemal, *Selatinname*, f.28.a. Kemal, *Selatinname*, ed. Öztürk, 62. Kemal, *Selatinname*, f.64.b, f.69.a, f.79.a. Kemal, *Selatinname*, ed. Öztürk, 141, 151, 172.

37 Ménage, “A Survey of the Early Ottoman Histories,” vol. 1, 103. İnalçık, “How to Read ‘Ashık Pasha-Zâde’s History,” 166.

38 Ménage, “A Survey of the Early Ottoman Histories,” 103. Al'Konevi, *Kitabı Tarihi Ali Osman*, 51-66.

39 Neşri, *Cihannüma*, ed. F. R. Unat and M. A. Köymen, *Kitab-ı Cihan-nüma*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1995. vol. 1, f.1.b. Neşri, *Cihannüma*, ed. Franz Taeschner, *Gihännümâ, Die Altosmanische Chronik des Mevlânâ Mehemed Neschrî*, Band I, Einleitung und Text des Cod. Menzel, Leipzig: Otto Harrasowitz, 1951, 2. Neşri, *Cihannüma*, ed. Franz Taeschner, *Gihännümâ. Die Altosmanische Chronik des Mevlânâ Mehemed Neschrî*, Band II, Einleitung und Text des Cod. Menzel, Leipzig: Otto Harrasowitz, 1953, 2.

at this point, at least for Al'Konevi and Idris Bitlisi, language choice was directly related to the questions of legitimacy. It was as if the content and the form, or the medium and the message had become unified.

Nevertheless, the argument for the use of the Turkish language appears to have resonated among the literary elite. Towards the end of Mehmed II's reign, Ahmedi's *İskendername* was circulated in greater numbers than ever, some commissioned by the palace.⁴⁰ And even a greater number of historians used Turkish. Of course the latter authors also acknowledged the *Türk* and *Türkmen* roots of the dynasty, and openly favored the popular narrative tradition. In this context, Aşıkpaşazâde could be described as a pioneer, and a maverick. When he completed his work in 1484, shortly after Mehmed II's death and during a major legitimacy debate, he became the first non-anonymous Ottoman historian who representing the Muslim Anatolian and Turkic Ottoman historiography.

To understand this aspect of Aşıkpaşazâde's work, we must ask what sources may have attracted Al-Konevi and later Idris Bitlisi's contempt, and what sources Aşıkpaşazâde used. The best candidate for the contempt of Al-Konevi and Idris Bitlisi was the anonymous *Tevarih-i Ali Osman*, which was by far the most popular and widely circulated history book of its time. This history was written in Turkish. It also, refrained from stating that the Ottoman dynasty received its mission of holy war, *gaza*, at the Christian frontier from the Seljuks. As it was previously mentioned, this was indeed what made Al'Konevi upset, and set him off to examine the ruins and the monuments of the land to prove them wrong. And, although it did not directly call the Ottoman dynasty *Türk*, *Tevarih-i Ali Osman* cited plenty of historical events in which the enemies of the Ottomans referred to them as *Türk*, mentioned the *Türks* of Anatolia and Rumeli, and explained how these populations assisted the Ottoman dynasty in its quest for power. On many occasions, it also employed the term *Türkmen*. In its rhetoric, there was a clear distinction between *Türk* and *Türkmen*: a *Türk* was a Turkish speaking Muslim city dweller while a *Türkmen* was Turkish speaking Muslim nomad.⁴¹ *Tevarih-i*

⁴⁰ Most copies of Ahmedi's *İskendername*, hence his *Dastan* date from the reigns of Mehmed II and Bayezid II. For example, there are 31 known copies found in Turkey. 14 of them don't have completion dates. Of the 16 copies which have completion dates, 7 are composed during Mehmed II's, 3 during Bayezid II's, 2 in Selim I's, 1 in Süleyman I's, 5 during Selim II's and 1 during Mehmed IV's reign. İsmail Ünver, *Ahmedi İskender-nâme*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1983, 25-26.

⁴¹ General references can be found in *Vienna Anonymous*, Wien: National Bibliothek, N. 23, f.37.a and f.50.a-b. *Giese Anonymous*, ed. F. Giese, trans. Nihat Azamat, İstanbul: Edebiyat Fakültesi Basımevi, 1992, 48-49. *Topkapı Anonymous*, ed. Necdet Öztürk,

Ali Osman also cited a detailed Ottoman genealogy, which left no doubt that it considered the Ottomans *Türks*.

What Al-Konevi and Idris Bitlis disliked about this text was exactly what appealed to Aşıkpaşazâde and what he utilized to set the record straight with the Ottoman state. Although he had his own qualms with the anonymous *Tevarih-i Ali Osman*, he relied on it heavily. Consider the obvious issue of genealogy, for example. As far as the lengthy genealogies of the Ottomans were concerned, the only non-anonymous book that preceded Aşıkpaşazâde's history was Bayatlı's *Câm-ı Cem-Âyîn* (c. 1481). This was, in its author's words, an annotated Ottoman genealogy, a summary of an *Oğuzname*, and curiously enough, the first text in which the term *Türk* referred directly to the Ottoman dynasty.⁴² It embodied a list of the names found in all later Ottoman genealogies. We do not know the original language of the *Oğuzname* Bayatlı used, but numerous Turkish copies of his reduction circulated during Bayezid II's early reign. It should be noted that it also included the story of Ottomans receiving the *gaza* from the Seljuks.⁴³

From 1484 onwards, taking the anonymous *Tevarih-i Ali Osman* books and the list of the Turkic rulers found in Bayatlı's work as their basis, a number of historians started to explicitly state that Ottomans were of *Türk* and *Türkmen* and composed varieties of Ottoman genealogies. These genealogies, along with the other familiar stories like founding fathers blessing dreams, and their receiving of the *gaza* from the Seljuks converged into a nucleus. Among the authors who conformed to this nucleus, Aşıkpaşazâde was the first Ottoman historian who called himself a *Türk*, wrote his own genealogy, included an explicit genealogy of the dynasty, incorporated the popular narratives from the *Tevarih-i Ali Osman*, with which he sometimes agreed and sometimes argued against, and used simple

Anonim Tevârih-i Âli Osman, İstanbul: Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Vakfı, 2000, f.23.a-b and f.30.b. Some of the examples include Christian neighbors of the Ottomans addressing them as *Türks*. *Vienna Anonymous*, f.7.b, f.24.b, f.26.a, f.86.a. *Giese Anonymous*, 11, 25, 26, 76. *Topkapı Anonymous*, ed. Öztürk, f.6.b, f.16.a, f.48.b, f.49.a, f.79.a. Some mention the Ottoman war slaves who will become janissaries being given to the *Türk* to learn Turkish, *Vienna Anonymous*, f.23.b. *Giese Anonymous*, trans. Azamat, 25. *Topkapı Anonymous*, f.15.b. And, some speak about the *Türks* of Rumeli helping Düzme Mustafa to fight against Murad II. *Vienna Anonymous*, f.68.a. *Giese Anonymous*, 63. *Topkapı Anonymous*, f.40.a.

42 He wrote, "Yafes was the father of the Turks. Since Yafes was the father of the Turks, Osman's old lineage was linked to him." Bayatlı, *Camı Cem Ayin*, Millet Kütüphanesi, Tarih Fihristi, 23, f.6.a. Bayatlı, *Camı Cem Ayin*, ed. Nihal Atsız, *Osmanlı Tarihleri*, İstanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi, 1947, 381.

43 Bayatlı, *Camı Cem Ayin*, f.20.a. Bayatlı, *Camı Cem Ayin*, ed. Atsız, 394.

Turkish.⁴⁴ He freely applied the term *Türk* to the Ottomans. He confirmed that their Christian neighbors called Ottomans as *Türk* from time memorable,⁴⁵ and on occasion Orhan himself referred to his men⁴⁶ as well as himself as *Türk*.⁴⁷ With the term *Türkmen*, Aşıkpaşazâde was much more specific. Even though he agreed that Ottomans were *Türkmen* in their origin,⁴⁸ he added how some *Türkmen* later rebelled against the Ottoman authority.⁴⁹ His references to the *Türkmen* remained positive only until Bayezid I's defeat by Timur,⁵⁰ and afterwards he used the term mostly to describe the nomadic Anatolian dynasties or confederations who troubled the Ottoman state.⁵¹

Aşıkpaşazâde's comfort with the term *Türk* could be attributed to his own origins. After all, his grandfather Aşıkpaşa's *Garibname* at times read like a patriotic Turkish poem.⁵² But, this was also an author who belonged to a new era. He was surrounded by historians who were interested in the overall question of who the Ottomans were, and who the *Türk* and *Türkmen* were, just like him. This is why, a few years later, in 1495, we find Neşri drawing a clear distinction between the two terms. He writes that among the *Türks*, Çanak Han, who was also known as Kara Han, was the first one who recognized Islam. Following his lead, some 2,000 *Türks* converted to Islam. This is why Çanak Han and his men became known as *Türki iman*, which was in time changed into *Türkmen*. Hence, Neşri claimed, *Türk* was the term applied to a larger group of people, from whom a certain segment converted into Islam; to be a *Türkmen* was to be a Muslim *Türk*.⁵³ The controversial nature of Neşri's statement put aside, it represents what one may call the next stage of a growing desire to solve ethnically charged issues. Evidently, Aşıkpaşazâde's work represents the same charged atmosphere.⁵⁴

44 For example, he repeated that the grave of Ertuğrul's father Süleyman was known as "Türk Mezarı." Aşıkpaşazâde, *Tevarihî Ali Osman*, 322.

45 Aşıkpaşazâde, *Tevarihî Ali Osman*, 332, 334, 336, 343.

46 Aşıkpaşazâde, *Tevarihî Ali Osman*, 349, 363.

47 Aşıkpaşazâde, *Tevarihî Ali Osman*, 351.

48 Aşıkpaşazâde, *Tevarihî Ali Osman*, 322.

49 Aşıkpaşazâde, *Tevarihî Ali Osman*, 406, 410.

50 Aşıkpaşazâde, *Tevarihî Ali Osman*, 322.

51 Aşıkpaşazâde, *Tevarihî Ali Osman*, 406, 410.

52 Aşık Paşa-yı Velî, *Garibname*, ed. Bedri Noyan, Ankara: Ardiç Yayınları, 1998.

53 Neşri, *Cihannüma*, ed. Unat and Köymen, vol. 1, f.4.b-5.a.

54 We should note that during this period, Tursun Bey, Safai and Uzun Firdevsi also used the term *Türk* to address the Ottomans. Tursun's references to Christians calling Ottomans *Türk* were numerous. Tursun Bey, *Tarihi Ebul Feth*, ed. Mertol Tulum,

In his old age, Aşıkpaşazâde gambled his status by daring to align himself with the popular and folk tradition. He put his reputation on line when he became the first author who showcased the *Tevarih-i Ali Osman* as a legitimate source of information. Perhaps he was too old to care for consequences and believed that it was time to seek his voice, the one reserved only for the *private individual*. When he completed his work, the two narrative traditions regarding the origins of the Ottomans remained divided. Among the later historians, it was Neşri, who brought them together, and by mainly relying on Aşıkpaşazâde's work as it embodied the popular narrative.

Interestingly enough, Aşıkpaşazade never cite the anonymous *Tevarih-i Ali Osman* as his source but argued that the information in his book regarding the early Ottoman history, up to the end of Bayezid I's reign (d. 1402) came from what he heard from others and in particular from an otherwise unknown source called Yahşi Fakih's *Menakıbnâme*. He wrote,

A group of friends were talking about the history of the origins and the good stories regarding the Ottomans. They asked this poor, and I answered them as I have known and read from Orhan Gazi's imam İshak Fakih's son Yahşi Fakih... [Yahşi Fakih] wrote the events and legends up until the time of Sultan Bayezid Han [Bayezid I]. Remaining dedicated to Orhan Gazi's imam İshak Fakih's son Yahşi Fakih, along with what I have heard from others, I summarized and wrote down the words and the legends about the Ottomans, filled with events. In that endless plain the pen spoke to my heart. I gave my ear to the voice of my pen like a helpless soul. My heart was amazed, then I began to speak.⁵⁵

The final sentences of this quote, where the ear listens to the pen and the pen's wisdom amazes the heart is a clear indication of how strong the tradition of oral

Târih-i Ebül-feth, İstanbul: Baha Matbaası, 1977, 82, 83, 94, 99, 137. He also made casual references to the Ottomans and Anatolian Muslims as *Türk*. During the events regarding Uzun Hasan, Tursun describes *Türkmen* as the enemy. Tursun Bey, *Tarihi Ebul Feth*, 96, 125, 127, 168, 172. Uzun Firdevsi most often referred to the occasions in which Christians called Ottomans *Türk* or when calling eastern Anatolia the land of Turks. Uzun Firdevsi, *Kutbnâme*, ed. Olgun and Parmaksızoğlu, *Firdevsî Rumi, Kutbnâme*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1980, f.29.b, f.31.b, f.32.a, f.34.a, f.68.a., f.72.b, and f.74.b. Safai, in particular described a crowd in a Venetian prison to be composed of mostly *Türk*, and elsewhere denoting the Ottomans. Safai, *Fethname-i İnebahtı & Modon*. İstanbul: Topkapı Revan Kütüphanesi, No. 1271, v. 131, f.105.a-b, f.70.a-b, respectively.

55 Aşıkpaşazâde, *Tevarih-i Ali Osman*, 51.

transmission of history was during Aşıkpaşazade's time. It is a testimony to how he wrote from memory, mostly remembering the material form the past readings and listenings in public. This makes it all the more significant how he thought it was necessary to state that his main source was a text, and a text with an author, the so called Yahşi Fakih's *Menakıbnâme*.

In a later section, Aşıkpaşazâde further elaborated who this Yahşi Fakih was, and it is there we find out why this reference was so important for Ottoman legitimacy. At the aftermath of Bayezid I's death (1402), and during the ensuing civil war (1402-14012), Aşıkpaşazâde was part of Mehmed I's vizier Bayezid Paşa's entourage. At one point he seems to have fallen sick, and left behind to recover in an Anatolian village. He writes,

At that time as someone who prayed for the sultan [Mehmed I], I stayed in the village. In the house of Orhan's imam Yahşi Fakih's son [İshak Fakih], in Geyve, I was sick. I took the *Menakıbı Ali Osman* [the Legends of the Ottomans] up to the time of Bayezid there from the son of imam and wrote it. Here I state it to be so.⁵⁶

The first striking feature of this statement is its casualness in terms of how the information regarding the identity of the source is divided into two episodes. It shows no signs of ingenuity; the story is told when its age arrives in the chronology. Although it would have been more convenient for Aşıkpaşazâde to write one full description of the event at the beginning of the book, and comfortably leave it there, we find him revisiting the subject some hundred folios later to add a few new details; that he took refuge in İshak Fakih's convent because he was sick during the civil war period, and the convent was located in Geyve. As soon as we do the math though, we grow suspicious; he is claiming he remembered this source some 60 years later and wrote it down. Moreover, he is the only Ottoman historian who mentions this source.

This being said, previous scholarship has proven that Aşıkpaşazâde indeed used an alternative source which he combined with the anonymous *Tevârihi Ali Osman*. Perhaps he remembered what distinguished this narrative from the others throughout his life, for he was accustomed to work from memory, especially in terms of history.⁵⁷ After all, he lived at a time of cultural shift from orality to literacy, as someone who was trained to use his memory. The distinct features of Yahşi Fakih's version of the Ottoman past could have survived with him easily and must

⁵⁶ Aşıkpaşazâde, *Tevârihi Ali Osman*, 150.

⁵⁷ V. L. Ménage, "Menaqib of Yakhshi Faqih", *BSOAS*, 26, 1963, 50-54. Halil Erdoğan Cengiz, "Yahşi Fakih", *Tarih ve Toplum*, 71, 1989, 39-41.

have appealed to him as a member of the religious order which this *Menakıbnâme* represented. They must have distinguished him from other intellectuals of the era who were interested in history as well, as they made him a colorful example of his age for us. They made him someone who had something different to say about Ottoman identity and of course gave him an identity of his own.

Another piece of information we discover in this later statement is equally significant, the location of İshak Fakih's convent, whose father was Orhan's imam. By all means, this must have sent a strong message to Aşıkpaşazâde's audience, back then and equally so today. The reference to the town of Geyve along with the reference to Orhan's imam takes us back to the geographic origins of the empire, to the Sakarya Valley, where everything that is Ottoman had begun. Geyve is only 90 miles north of Söğüt, and a place both Ertuğrul and Osman roamed with their warrior bands during the earliest days of the dynasty. It is the mythological core of the Ottoman identity. Interestingly enough, Aşıkpaşazâde's encounter with Yahşi Fakih's *Menakıbnâme* mimics the popular myths about Ertuğrul and Osman's dreams too. According to this common myth, two founding fathers of the Ottoman Empire also rested at a Turkic Muslim religious figure's convent in this region, where they witnessed their blessing dreams, received their religious blessings, and unified their genealogies with his. Could it be a coincidence that a century later Aşıkpaşazâde received a religious blessing of his history right there and then? Of course not. Conscious or not, this setting proves that "that endless plain" of Ottoman history, where Aşıkpaşazâde's "helpless soul" gave an ear to the "voice of the pen," had very clear ethnic, geographical and ideological boundaries, like all other identities.

Conclusion

During Bayezid II's later reign, when three authors were commissioned by the palace to compose histories, only one of them was written in Persian, namely İdris Bitlisi's (c. 1503). The other two, Ruhi (c. 1510) and Kemalpaşazade's (c. 1526) wrote in Turkish. Moreover, all three authors followed the popular narrative tradition which Aşıkpaşazâde legitimized. At the opening of his history of the Ottomans, Ruhi wrote,

Sultan Bayezid said: "Histories of the prophets are regarded as the best and most preferable, and thus *ulema* prefer to write this kind of histories, but the history of the Ottoman Sultans who are the most distinguished and honorable among others has not yet been the subject of a compilation written in a language for everybody's profit. It is desirable that it should have been." This statement of the Sultan made

me decide to collect the histories [of the Ottomans] in Turkish which are circulating in the Ottoman dominions.⁵⁸

If nothing, Ruhi's statement proves that 15 years after Aşıkpaşazade's work, at the end of Bayezid II's reign, there was a new norm taking shape, and the Ottoman palace had grown aware of the influence of the popular Turkish narratives. It shows how the Ottoman state became attuned to the necessity of convincing their subjects of their legitimacy in Turkish. The fact that both Ruhi, Idris Bitlisi and Kemalpaşazade followed Aşıkpaşazâde's lead, via Neşri's work, or on their own speaks to the same point as well.⁵⁹ It shows that not the history that the palace entertained for a century, but the history which was imposed on it from bottom up was now becoming the legitimate past. This trend continued long after Bayezid II's reign, for Kemalpaşazade's history became the standard blue print for the future historians. Meanwhile, Aşıkpaşazâde's history seems to have held its popularity well over a century; in 1630 it was still transported to the battle front, to be read to the men who fought in the Ottoman ranks.⁶⁰

This essay's main argument was how the acquisition of power in an authoritarian setting requires sophisticated modes of thinking and operating. Certain qualities, such as private wealth, public persona and proximity to the ruling elite can be instrumental for the *private individuals* in any epoch. The aim of this essay was to highlight Aşıkpaşazâde's case as an example of how some human experiences transgressed periods and cultural boundaries. Aşıkpaşazâde shows us why and how a *private individual* may negotiate power with the sovereign.⁶¹ Where his interests and the interests of the sovereign conflicted, how he or she may choose to be critical and vocal, to the degree that they may write a history of the sovereign from their unique perspective.

Similarly, this essay underlined that if İnalçık's 1994 essay represented a change of heart from his 1964 one, this was because he discovered a new Aşıkpaşazâde. It argued that this Aşıkpaşazâde was not a mouthpiece of the state propaganda

58 İnalçık's translation. İnalçık, "How to Read 'Āshık Pasha-Zāde's History," 165. *Rūhī Tārīhī*, ed. Yaşar Yücel and Halil Engin Cengiz, Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1992, 369.

59 On the sources of Kemalpaşazade's *Tevarih-i Ali Osman* see Ibn-i Kemal, *Tevarih-i Ali Osman*, ed. Şerafettin Turan, I. Defter, Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1991, 11-24. On the sources of Ruhi's Ottoman history, see Ménage, "A Survey of the Early Ottoman Histories," vol. 1, 124-25. On the sources of Idris Bitlisi's *Heşt Beşt*, see Ménage, "A Survey of the Early Ottoman Histories," vol. 1, 257-60.

60 İnalçık, "How to Read 'Āshık Pasha-Zāde's History," 156.

61 İnalçık, "How to Read 'Āshık Pasha-Zāde's History," 139-56.

machine but a *private individual*, in Rousseau's sense of the phrase, and a historically conscious person. He was more than a servant/ protégé of the state. He was a maker and a manipulator of the Ottoman *political machine*. Such unique personalities are what propel our discussions of Ottoman identity today. We listen to their voices, because they explain the Ottoman Empire as something other than an inanimate idea, an abstract structure, an economic or military entity. Aşıkpaşazâde was pivotal in the emergence of a Türkic discourse within the early Ottoman historiography, and in the legitimization of a popular narrative tradition. His voice helps us understand how an Ottoman individual and the Ottoman state negotiated power, and how the common frameworks which we rely on to explain such relationships in the early modern West could easily apply to the relationships found in the fifteenth century Ottoman Empire.

The Türk in Aşıkpaşazâde; a Private Individual's Ottoman History

Abstract ■ During the late fifteenth century Ottoman intellectuals used history books as a venue to practice civilian power. This essay focuses on Aşıkpaşazâde and his history of the Ottomans, *Kitâb-ı Tevârih-i Âli Osman*. The essay argues that the book was an example of how civilians contributed to the construction of Ottoman identity and legitimacy. It explains the emergence of an explicitly Türkic discourse within the early Ottoman history books and Aşıkpaşazâde's role in this phenomenon. The essay also evaluates Aşıkpaşazâde's life from a theoretical perspective, building on Halil İncik and Jean Jacques Rousseau's arguments. It describes Aşıkpaşazâde as a private individual, and suggests that the dynamics of power sharing between people and the state in the early modern Western empires were also present in the fifteenth century Ottoman Empire.

Keywords: Ottoman Empire, history, historiography, identity, Türk, Türkmen, Aşıkpaşazâde, Halil İncik, Jean Jacques Rousseau.

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