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THE MİHALOĞLU FAMILY: GAZİ WARRIORS  
AND PATRONS OF DERVISH HOSPICES\*

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*We must immediately engage the enemy before they spot us and become aware of our presence. By reason of the fact that among our troops are those of Mihallı and others who are sympathizing with the Kızılbaş, it is possible that during the night partisans of their creed may be tempted by the Şah's spies, and therefore either desert or engage only halfheartedly in the fight.*

– Words of Defterdâr Pîrî Çelebi addressed to Sultan Selim I on the eve of the Çaldıran Battle (August 23, 1514) as reported in the work of Hezarfenn Hüseyin Efendi.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Heman durmayub ve göz açtırmayub duruşulmak ve adû'nun gözü öğrenib alışmadan heman uruşulmak gerektir. Zîrâ ki askerden Mihallı taifesi ve sâyire, Kızılbaşa muhibb olub anların mezhebinde olanlar bu gice Şah'ın casusları iğvâsiyle câyiz ki öteye gitmek

When the seventeenth-century traveler Evliya Çelebi visited four of the principal Baba'i hospices (*tekkes*) in the European provinces of the Ottoman Empire, he not only described the magnificence of the monumental buildings which comprised them, but also left us valuable remarks which link the patron saints buried within them to various members of one of the most important dynasties of raider commanders (*akıncı begis*) in the Balkans, the Mihaloğluları. According to Evliya's understanding, the founding of the four *tekkes* in question, those of Otman Baba, Kıdemli Baba, Akyazılı Baba and Demir Baba (all located in the eastern Balkans in present day Bulgaria), are attributable to several prominent figures from the Mihaloğlu family, thus suggesting that these famous warlords favored a group of dervishes whose ideology differed greatly from that dominant in Evliya's lifetime, Sunni Islam.<sup>2</sup> The peculiarities of 'heterodox' religious movements in the region, where the four convents are situated (a wide area

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ihimali ola veyahut cenge el uciyle yapışalar, can ve [sic!] gönülden ceng itmiyeler. Hüseyin b. Ca'fer (Hezarfenn), *Tenkihü't-tevârih*, ms. Fâtih Ktb., No. 4301, fol. 114<sup>a</sup>, quoted after Selâhattin Tansel, *Yavuz Sultan Selim* (Ankara: Millî Eğitim Basımevi, 1969), 53, note 173.

- <sup>2</sup> The mausoleum (*türbe*) of Otman Baba is the only surviving original building of the complex, see Lyubomir Mikov, "Grobnitsata (tyurbeto) na Otman baba v s. Teketo, Haskovsko," [The Tomb (*türbe*) of Otman Baba in the village of Teketo, Haskovo region] *Balgarski Folklor* 2 (2000): 80-87 and Stephen Lewis, "Architectural Monuments as Touchstones for Examining History and Anthropology. The Ottoman Architecture of Bulgaria and the Shrine of Otman Baba in Bulgarian Thrace," *Europaea-Journal of the Europeanists* 4:2 (1998). For the convent of Kıdemli Baba see Machiel Kiel, "A Monument of Early Ottoman Architecture in Bulgaria: The Bektaşî Tekke of Kıdemli Baba Sultan at Kalugerovo – Nova Zagora," *Belleten* 25 (1971): 53-60; idem, "The Tekke of Kıdemli Baba Near Nova Zagora – Bulgaria. A Contribution to Its History and Date of Construction," in Abdeljelil Temimi (ed.), *Actes de IIIème Congrès International du Corpus d'Archéologie Ottomane dans le Monde sur Monuments Ottomans: Restauration & Conservation* (Zaghuan: Fondation Temimi, 2000), 39-46. Semavi Eyice studied the complex of Akyazılı Baba. See his "Varna ile Balçık Arasında Akyazılı Sultan Tekkesi," *Belleten* 31:124 (1967): 551-600. For Demir Baba's convent see Franz Babinger, "Das Bektaschi-Kloster Demir Baba," *Mitteilungen des Seminars für Orientalische Sprachen* 34 (1931): 1-10; Boris Iliev, "Teketo Demir boba, staro trakiysko svetilishte v Ludogoriето," [The Tekke of Demir Boba, an Old Thracian Sanctuary in the Deli Orman] *Vekove* 6 (1982): 66-72.

stretching from the vicinity of Edirne northwards to the mouth of the Danube River), have been long noted by historians. Several aspects of the history of the 'heterodox' dervish brotherhoods in the area have been the focus of scholarly attention and the subject of several important publications in which the significance of the *tekkes* of Otman Baba, Kıdemli Baba, Akyazılı Baba and Demir Baba for the history of the region have been acknowledged and discussed.<sup>3</sup> However, the existing scholarship concentrated primarily on two main themes, the customs of today's local Alevi population in the surrounding area and the architectural features of the standing buildings in the convents. The question of the existing close ties between their patron saints and the leaders of the Rumelian raiders, and the latter's possible patronage of some of the most sacred places for the Alevi Muslims in the Balkans has not yet been studied.

Bringing together evidence from a variety of archival and narrative sources this study aims to show the connection between the mighty Balkan

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<sup>3</sup> Frederick de Jong, "Notes on Islamic Mystical Brotherhoods in Northeast Bulgaria," *Der Islam* 63 (1986): 303-308; idem, "The Kızılbaş sect in Bulgaria: Remnants of Safavi Islam?" *The Turkish Studies Association Bulletin* 2 (1985): 21-25, idem, "The Turks and Tatars in Romania, Materials Relative to their History and Notes on their Present-day Condition," *Turcica* 18 (1986): 165-189; Thierry Zarcone, "Nouvelles perspectives dans les recherches sur les Kızılbaş-Alévis et les Bektachis de la Dobroudja, de Deli Orman et de la Thrace orientale," in *Anatolia Moderna IV: Derviches des Balkans, disparition et renaissances* (Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient, 1992), 1-11; Bernard Lory, "Essai d'inventaire des lieux de culte bektashis en Bulgarie," in Alexandre Popovic and Gilles Veinstein (eds.), *Bektachiyya: Études sur l'ordre mystique des Bektachis et les groupes relevant de Hadji Bektach* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 1995), 393-400; Irène Mélikoff, "La communauté kızılbash du Deli Orman, en Bulgarie," in Popovic and Veinstein (eds.), *Bektachiyya*, 401-409; idem, "Voies de pénétration de l'hétérodoxie islamique en Thrace," 159-170; Machiel Kiel, "Sarı Saltık ve Erken Bektaşilik Üzerine Notlar," *Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları* 2:9 (1980): 25-36; Lyubomir Mikov, *Izkustvoto na heterodoksnite myusyulmani v Balgaria (XVI-XX vek). Bektashi i kızılbashi/alevii* [*The Art of Heterodox Muslims in Bulgaria (XVI-XX century). Bektaşi and Kızılbaş/Alevî*] (Sofia: Akademichno Izdatelstvo 'Marin Drinov', 2005); Nevena Gramatikova, "İslyamski neortodoksalni techeniya v balgarskite zemi," [Islamic unorthodox tendencies in the Bulgarian lands] in Rossitsa Gradeva (ed.), *The Fate of Muslim Communities in the Balkans, Vol. 7: History of Muslim Culture in the Bulgarian Lands* (Sofia, IMIR, 2001), 192-281.

March Lords and the Baba'i dervishes<sup>4</sup> in general and to examine the ties of the Mihaloğlu family with these 'heterodox' dervishes in particular. Focusing on the changing political conditions in the Ottoman Empire from the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century, the paper discusses the process of gradual change of Ottoman society and 'marginalization' of the power of March Lords. Establishing a link between the nomadic population (*yürüks*), who venerated the patron saints of the above-mentioned *tekkes*, and the prominent *akıncı* commanders from the Mihaloğlu family, this paper argues that the relationship between the Baba'i dervishes, the nomads and the prominent *gazi* warriors from the famous raider commanders' family had its political context and is to be regarded as a reaction to and a contestation of the Ottoman government's attempt to establish a religious and political hegemony over certain centrifugal elements in the Ottoman society.

Because of the fragmentary nature of the records at hand, which point to a direct relationship between the raider commanders and the four 'heterodox' dervish convents mentioned above, it is necessary to present them in consecutive order so that the reasons to presume such connections

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<sup>4</sup> When Evliya Çelebi visited the complexes of Otman Baba, Akyazılı Baba and Kıdemli Baba, they were already incorporated into the network of the Bektaşî order. These dervish convents and their patron saints were, however, representatives of a distinct group of unorthodox itinerant dervishes, who were described as *abdals* and who will be designated in the present paper as Baba'i, a term with which their followers name themselves and gain distinction from the Bektaşîs up until the present. See Irène Mélikoff, "Les voies de pénétration de l'hétérodoxie islamique en Thrace et dans les Balkans aux XIV<sup>e</sup> – XV<sup>e</sup> siècles," in Elizabeth Zachariadou (ed.), *The Via Egnatia Under Ottoman Rule (1380-1699), Halcyon Days in Crete II. A Symposium Held in Rethymnon 9-11 January 1994* (Rethymnon: Crete University Press, 1996), 159-170. For a description of the early *abdals* see M. Fuad Köprülü, "Abdal," in *Türk Halk Edebiyatı Ansiklopedisi, Ortaçağ ve Yeniçağ Türklerinin Halk Kültürü Üzerine Coğrafya, Etnografya, Etimoloji, Tarih ve Edebiyat Lugati*, I (Istanbul, 1935), 21-56; Ahmet Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends: Dervish Groups in the Islamic Later Middle Period, 1200-1550* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1994), 46-49, 70-78; Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, "Babaîler İsyanından Kızılbaşlığa: Anadolu'da İslâm Heterodoksisinin Doğuş ve Gelişim Tarihine Kısa Bir Bakış," *Bellekten* 64:239 (2000): 129-159, esp. 138-139.

may be better illustrated. The important remarks of Evliya Çelebi, who clearly testifies to the Mihaloğlu family's affiliation with the Baba'i dervishes in the Balkans is a good starting point and indeed is a clear sign that as late as the mid-seventeenth century this bond was still alive in the common memory of the people living in the regions the traveler visited.

When Evliya visited the *tekke* of Otman Baba<sup>5</sup> in the course of one of his travels through Thrace, he claims to have seen and read an inscription at the very entrance of the saint's mausoleum, which referred to and connected the patron saint to two members of the Mihaloğlu family, Gazi Mihal Beg and 'Ali Beg.<sup>6</sup> Despite Evliya's claims, the text he refers to does not seem to be a dedicatory inscription (*kitabe*). The present day inscription placed above the gate of the tomb, although dating from the year cited by the traveler, does not contain the name of the patron.<sup>7</sup> Evliya's note alone could hardly be an evidence for Mihaloğlus' sponsorship of the construction of Otman Baba's *türbe*, but archival sources establish that a member of that family likewise patronized the convent at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Yahşi Beg, the son of Mihaloğlu İskender Beg, one of the most active *akıncı* commanders during the reigns of Mehmed II (1444-46; 1451-81) and Bayezid II (1481-1512), bestowed on the *zaviye* of Otman Baba the incomes of a rice-mill, which belonged to his own *vakf* property in the neighboring

<sup>5</sup> Otman Baba's *türbe* is situated in Teketo (Ott. *Otman Baba tekkesi*), now a quarter in the village of Trakiets, Haskovo district (south-east Bulgaria).

<sup>6</sup> *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, 8. Kitap, hazırlayanlar: Seyit Ali Kahraman, Yücel Dağlı, Robert Dankoff (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2003), 344.

<sup>7</sup> Evliya Çelebi recorded H. 912 (1506/1507) as the date of construction of Otman Baba's mausoleum. The current text over the gate of the *türbe* reads the same year, H. 912 (1506/1507). See Katerina Venedikova, "Svatbeni rituali, opisani v jitiето na Demir Baba," [Wedding rituals, described in the vita of Demir Baba] in Galina Lozanova and Lyubomir Mikhov (eds.), *The Fate of Muslim Communities in the Balkans. Vol. 4: Islam and Culture* (Sofia: IMIR, 1999), 214-215, who reads the date of construction as H. 913 (1507/1508). Alternative reading, based on the chronogram of the last line, H. 922 (1516/1517), is proposed by Zeynep Yürekli Görkay, *Legend and Architecture in the Ottoman Empire: The Shrines of Seyyid Gazi and Hacı Bektaş*, unpublished PhD dissertation (Harvard University, 2005), 207-208.

village.<sup>8</sup> The contribution of Yahşi Beg may be seen as supporting the story pointing to the Mihaloğlus as the actual founders of Otman Baba's complex, which circulated at the time of Evliya's visit there and suggests that it should not be entirely fictional and strongly allows us to infer that one or more of Yahşi Beg's predecessors, most probably 'Ali Beg, may well have sponsored its construction.<sup>9</sup>

Evliya's observation concerning the complex of Otman Baba is only one of many other occasions included in his account, which link the Baba'i dervishes in the Balkans and the descendents of Köse Mihal. When Evliya visited the *tekke* of Kıdemli Baba,<sup>10</sup> a disciple of Otman Baba, he had no doubts that the saint's tomb, gathering ritual space, kitchen and the stables of the convent had all been erected by Gazi Mihal Beg.<sup>11</sup> Gazi Mihal, however, could not have built these buildings, as he lived a century earlier than the actual construction of the *tekke* in the course of the first half of the sixteenth century.<sup>12</sup> Although Gazi Mihal was not the patron of Kıdemli Baba's *tekke*,

<sup>8</sup> The rice-mill (*dink*) of Yahşi Beg was situated between the *tekke* of Otman Baba and the village of Konuş. Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi [Hereafter: BOA], Tapu Tahrir Defteri [Hereafter: TT] 370, p. 341; BOA, TT 50, p. 131; BOA, TT 385, p. 366; BOA, TT 521, pp. 444-445.

<sup>9</sup> For the personality of Mihaloğlu 'Ali Beg and his military exploits during the reigns of Mehmed II and Bayezid II see Agâh Sırrı Lévend, *Gazavât-nâmeler ve Mihaloğlu Ali Bey'in Gazavât-nâmesi* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1956), 187-195; Olga Zirojević, "Smederevski sandjakbeg Ali beg Mihaloğlu," [The *sancakbegi* of Smederevo Ali Beg Mihaloğlu] *Zbornik za istoriju Matitsa Srpska* (Novi Sad, 1971): 9-27. For the same article in German see idem, "Der Sandschakbey von Mederevo Ali-Bey Mihaloğlu," in *VII. Türk Tarih Kongresi, Ankara 25-29 Eylül 1970. Kongreye sunulan bildiriler* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1973), 2: 567-577.

<sup>10</sup> The *türbe* of Kıdemli Baba is situated near the modern village of Grafitovo (Ott. *Tekke mahallesi*), several kilometers to the south of Nova Zagora (south-east Bulgaria).

<sup>11</sup> Evliya Çelebi *Seyahatnamesi*, 8. Kitap, 30.

<sup>12</sup> Gazi Mihal is buried next to his *zaviye* in Edirne. His tombstone gives H. 839 (1435/1436) as the date of his death. Ekrem Hakki Ayverdi, *Osmanlı Mimârisinde Çelebi ve II. Sultan Murad Devri 806-855 (1403-1451)* (İstanbul: Damla Ofset, 1989), 386. For the construction date of Kıdemli Baba *tekkesi* see Kiel, "The Tekke of Kıdemli Baba," 43-45 and Mikov, *Izkustvoto na heterodoksnite myusyulmani v Balgaria*, 46-52.

it is noteworthy that Evliya Çelebi attributes its construction to yet another Mihaloğlu family member.

Despite the anachronism, Evliya seems to insist on the connection between the Mihaloğulları and the largest Baba’i complexes in eastern Bulgarian lands. The Ottoman traveler also visited the *tekke* of Akyazılı Baba,<sup>13</sup> who was another disciple of Otman Baba and the ‘pole of the poles’ (*kutb al-aktab*)<sup>14</sup> after his death. According to Evliya, one of the most devoted disciples of Akyazılı Baba and his closest follower was Mihaloğlu Arslan Beg, who served the saint wholeheartedly in his lifetime and who even carried Akyazılı on his back while on campaign. Later on, again according to Evliya, when Akyazılı Baba died, Mihaloğlu Arslan Beg built his tomb and constructed a marvelous complex in his name.<sup>15</sup> The dedicatory inscription on the *türbe* of Akyazılı Baba is unfortunately lost. The assumption that it was built by Mihaloğlu Arslan Beg (whose name does not appear in known lists of the Mihaloğlu family members) remains both doubtful and unconfirmed by any other source. It is worth mentioning, though, that in the hagiography of the Baba’i saint Demir Baba there is an analogous character to that described by Evliya – a disciple and an attendant dervish of Akyazılı Baba by the name of Hacı Dede, who used to carry the saint on his back. Hacı Dede was the father of Demir Baba, the successor of Akyazılı Baba as a religious leader of the *abdals* in the Balkans.<sup>16</sup> The

<sup>13</sup> Akyazılı Baba’s *tekke* is located in today’s village of Obrochishte (Ott. *Tekke*), district of Varna (north-east Bulgaria).

<sup>14</sup> For this term’s implication in Sufi context see Halil İnalçık, “Dervish and a Sultan: An Analysis of the Otman Baba *Vilâyetnâmesi*,” in idem, *The Middle East and the Balkans under the Ottoman Rule: Essays on Economy and Society* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1993), 20-24.

<sup>15</sup> *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, 3. Kitap, hazırlayanlar: Seyit Ali Kahraman, Yücel Dağlı (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1999), 198-199; *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, 5. Kitap, hazırlayanlar: Yücel Dağlı, Seyit Ali Kahraman, İbrahim Sezgin (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2001), 53.

<sup>16</sup> See Bedri Noyan, *Demir Baba Vilâyetnâmesi* (İstanbul: Can Yayınları, 1976), 52; Nevena Grammatikova, “The Vita of Demir Baba and the Production of Manuscripts by Muslim Sectarrians in North Eastern Bulgaria (A Source About Their Cultural and



hypothesis that Mihaloğlu Arslan Beg from Evliya Çelebi's account and the dervish Hacı Dede from the vita of Demir Baba were identical personalities was put forward by Bedri Noyan.<sup>17</sup> This supposition is of course highly hypothetical, but it does in fact link all of the four principal Baba'i complexes in present day Bulgaria with members of the illustrious family of Mihaloğlu *akıncı* leaders. Indeed, an eventual association of the family with the region where the *tekke* was situated is suggested by the existence of a village in its immediate proximity which was named after Mihal Beg.<sup>18</sup>

With all due skepticism regarding Evliya's allegation that these *tekkes* were built by members of Mihaloğlu family, there are good reasons to assume that indeed there was a strong linkage between the dervish hospices of today's eastern Bulgaria. The patron saints of these four *tekkes* represented a distinct group of itinerant dervishes and were all disciples of Otman Baba, the most venerated religious leader of the fifteenth century wandering *abdals* in the Balkans. He was known for his dissident views and for his criticism of the Sufi masters who claimed superior rights in the guidance of the novices,<sup>19</sup> as well as for his open criticism of the political supremacy of the Ottoman dynasty.<sup>20</sup> What is more, as it becomes clear from his hagiography (*velâyetnâme*),<sup>21</sup> textualized shortly after his death, and

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Religious History),” [in Bulgarian with English summary] in Rossitsa Gradeva and Svetlana Ivanova (eds.), *The Fate of Muslim Communities in the Balkans. Vol. 2: The Muslim Culture in the Bulgarian Lands* (Sofia: IMIR, 1998), 400-432.

<sup>17</sup> See Noyan, *Demir Baba Velâyetnâmesi*, 17-18, 21-22 and idem, *Bektaşilik Alevilik Nedir* (Ankara: Doğu Matbaacılık, 1987), 522, 525.

<sup>18</sup> The village Mihal Beg (modern Bozhurets, district of Varna) is situated only several kilometers to the east of Akyazlı Baba's mausoleum. BOA, TT 370, p. 418.

<sup>19</sup> Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends*, 47-48.

<sup>20</sup> See İncalcık, “Dervish and a Sultan,” 24, 28-29; Yürekli Görkay, *Legend and Architecture in the Ottoman Empire*, 63-66.

<sup>21</sup> *Velâyetnâme-i Sultan Otman*, which is also referred to as *Velâyetnâme-i Sultan Baba* or *Velâyetnâme-i Şahî*, was completed in August 1483 by one of Baba's dervishes, Küçük Abdal (or also Küççük, Küçücek, Köğçek Abdal). See İncalcık, “Dervish and a Sultan”, 19. See also Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends*, 46-47; Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Marjinal Süfilik: Kalenderîler (XIV-XVII. Yüzyıllar)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1992), 99; idem, *Kültür Tarihi Kaynağı Olarak Menâkıbnâmeler (Met-*

therefore likely to contain a great deal of reliable historical information, Otman Baba appears to be the spiritual leader not only of the nomadic elements in the Ottoman society (represented by the *yürüks*), but also of the *gazi* warriors in the Balkans.<sup>22</sup> His *vita* speaks extensively about Otman Baba's role as spiritual guide to one of the most prominent raider commanders of the time, namely Mihaloğlu 'Ali Beg, to whom more than one and a half centuries later Evliya Çelebi attributed the construction of the saint's mausoleum. The biography of the saint contains the following interesting account:

On his way back from Istanbul 'Ali Beg met Otman Baba and his *abdals* sitting around a fire along the road to Edirne and joined the dervishes with the anticipation of receiving the saint's blessing.<sup>23</sup> On the next morning, because 'Ali Beg was hesitant of kissing the hand of Otman Baba, he pulled out his sword and offered it as a present to one of the Baba's servants. Seeing that, Otman Baba stopped him with the words: 'Take your sword back. This is my sword and this banner is my banner'. At that very moment 'Ali Beg went on his knees and kissed the hand of the saint. Receiving the grace of the *abdals* and the blessing of Otman Baba, 'Ali Beg and his men committed themselves to the *Rum Abdalları* and to the *Gazis*.<sup>24</sup> Thereafter the text of the *vita* presents Otman Baba as the driving force behind the military victories of Mihaloğlu 'Ali Beg and as responsible for the rich spoils acquired in the course of his raids, while 'Ali Beg is described as his reverent disciple and as a *gazi* warrior who venerated him as a saint.<sup>25</sup>

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*dolojik Bir Yaklaşım*) (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1992), 55; Noyan, *Bektaşilik Alevilik Nedir*, 517-518; Nevena Gramatikova, "Otman Baba – One of the Spiritual Patrons of Islamic Heterodoxy in Bulgarian Lands," *Études balkaniques* 3 (2002): 71-102.

<sup>22</sup> İnalçık, "Dervish and a Sultan," 24-26.

<sup>23</sup> *Velâyetnâme-i Otman Baba*, ms. Ankara Genel Kütüphanesi 643 (Ankara, Milli Kütüphane, microfilm No. A22). For a transliterated version of that source see Sevki Koca, *Velâyetnâme-i Şahi: Göçek Abdal* (Turkey: Bektaşî Kültür Derneği, 2002).

<sup>24</sup> *Velâyetnâme-i Otman Baba*, fol. 78<sup>a</sup>-79<sup>b</sup>.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*.

Aside from this indeed very suggestive episode, denoting openly the spiritual relationship between Otman Baba and 'Ali Beg, the text of the biography also contains information on the geographical area where the saint spread his influence. Most of the places the dervish had visited were in one way or another connected with Mihaloğulları in general and with Mihaloğlu 'Ali Beg in particular. The saint passed through Vize, whose conquest was closely associated with a Mihaloğlu family member,<sup>26</sup> and Edirne, where Gazi Mihal Beg had built a *zaviye* (later converted into a mosque), a *hamam*, and he built a bridge at the site of an earlier Roman one, which was thereafter known as Gazi Mihal Köprüsü.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, the vita of Otman Baba relates an episode in which 'Ali Beg is accompanied by the saint and his dervishes in one of his campaigns to Hungary. He went to Semendire (Smederevo) when Mihaloğlu 'Ali Beg was *sancakbegi* there, passing afterwards through two other cities, Vidin and Niğbolu, which were also seats of Mihaloğlu 'Ali Beg while he was holding the post of *sancakbegi*.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Hoca Sadeddin Efendi, *Tacü't-Tevârih*, İsmet Parmaksızoğlu (haz.), Cilt I (İstanbul: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1974), 136-137. According to the narrative, sultan Murad I sent an army led by a certain Mihaloğlu to lay siege to the fortress of Vize. Mihaloğlu kept the blockade until the sultan seized the nearby castles of Kırkkilise and Pınarhisarı, and when Murad arrived with his army to the already besieged Vize and joined the troops of Mihaloğlu, the castle finally surrendered to the Ottomans. It is possible to presume that the Mihaloğlu, mentioned in the chronicles, is identical with Hızır Beg, who built in 1383/4 a monumental complex, comprising of a mosque, a bath and a covered market (*bedesten*) in the city of Kırkkilise.

<sup>27</sup> Several members of the Mihaloğlu family were buried very next to Gazi Mihal's *zaviye*. See Ayverdi, *Çelebi ve II. Sultan Murad Devri*, 390-393; Ratip Kazancıgil, *Edirne İmaretleri* (İstanbul: Türk Kütüphaneciler Derneği Edirne Şubesi Yayınları, 1991), 29-30; Hikmet Turhan Dağlıoğlu, *Edirne Mezarları* (İstanbul: Devlet Basımevi, 1936), 23-26; Mustafa Özer, "Edirne'de Mihaloğulları'nın İmar Faaliyetleri ve Bu Aileye Ait Mezar Taşlarının Değerlendirilmesi," in *Trakya Üniversitesi I. Edirne Kültür Araştırmaları Sempozyumu (26-29 Ekim 2002 Edirne) Bildirileri* (İstanbul, 2005), 311-349. For the buildings of Gazi Mihal Beg in Edirne see Ayverdi, *Osmanlı Mimârisinde Çelebi ve II. Sultan Murad Devri*, 386-389, 469-471 and Kazancıgil, *Edirne İmaretleri*, 27-32.

<sup>28</sup> Koca, *Vilâyetnâme-i Şahi: Göçek Abdal*, 75. Mihaloğlu 'Ali Beg was holding consecutively the office of *sancakbegi* of several areas at the northern borders of the Ottoman Empire. He was *sancakbegi* of Semendire during the following years: 1462-1463, 1467-1472, 1475-1479, 1486-?, 1492-1494, 1498-1499. See Zirojević,

On their way back from the western Balkans, the dervishes along with ‘Ali Beg stopped in Edirne where they spent the night in the *zaviye* of Gazi Mihal Beg.<sup>29</sup> We often see Otman Baba in Ottoman Thrace, visiting Kazanlık, Yenice-i Zağra, Yambol, Eski Zağra, Filibe and their environs, from where in 1472 Mihaloğlu ‘Ali Beg recruited his *akıncıs* in order to take part in the campaign against Uzun Hasan in the following year.<sup>30</sup>

We see Otman Baba wandering about throughout the Balkans, but visiting mostly its eastern parts. He seems to have attracted his followers from among the *yürük* population of these areas, from Vize north to the mouth of the Danube River. The *yürüks* of Dobrudja and Deli-Orman, as Halil İnalçık first observed, served at the same time as raiders (*akıncıs*), under the leadership of the famous frontier *begs*.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, it is known that these nomadic groups were associated with the names of the lords of the marches since the early Ottoman conquests of the Balkans, when they accompanied prominent *akıncı* leaders of that era,<sup>32</sup> settled in the conquered territories and were granted a special military status by the frontier *begs*.<sup>33</sup>

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“Smederevski sandjakbeg Ali beg Mihaloglu,” 9-27.

<sup>29</sup> Velâyetnâme-i Otman Baba, fol. 79<sup>a</sup>.

<sup>30</sup> There are two registers that survived up until now of the right wing *akıncıs*, also known as “Mihallu akıncıları”. The first one dates from 1472 and enlists the raiders from the following Rumelian provinces – Zağra Yenicesi, Akça Kazanlık, Eski Hisar, Filibe, Hasköy, and Çirmen. See National Library “Sts Cyril and Methodius”, Sofia, Oriental Department [hereafter: NBKM], Call Nos. Pd 17/27 and OAK 94/73 (These fragments under different call numbers appear to be two parts of one register. For more information on that *akıncı defteri* see Mariya Kiprovska, *The Military Organization of the Akıncıs in Ottoman Rumelia*, unpublished M.A. thesis (Ankara: Bilkent University, 2004). The other *defter* dates from 1586 and is also related to the recruitment of the *akıncıs* of the *Mihallu* (i.e. right) wing. All of the *akıncıs* from the *kazas* of Niğbolu, Silistre, Varna, Kırk Kilise, Çirmen (the *nahiyes* of Yenice Zağra, Akça Kazanlık), Filibe (the *nahiyes* of Göpsu, Konuş), Sofya (the *nahiyes* of Köstendil, İhtiman), and Vidin were registered in that particular *defter*. See BOA, TT 625.

<sup>31</sup> İnalçık, “Dervish and a Sultan,” 25.

<sup>32</sup> For several occasions of transferring nomadic population in the Balkans see Ömer Lütfi Barkan, “Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda bir iskân ve kolonizasyon metodu olarak sürgünler,” *İstanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası*, XIII (1951-1952), 67-68, 69-72 and the second part of the same article in *İstanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi Mecmu-*

Although there is no explicit mention in the narrative sources of *yürük* or *Tatar* population transfers by Mihaloğlu family members, the territories from where later on the *Mihallu akıncıları* were conscripted<sup>34</sup> were regions densely populated by these nomadic groups.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, one may infer that a

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*ası*, XV (1953-1954), 209-237, 209-210; M. Tayyib Gökbilgin, *Rumeli'de Yürükler, Tatarlar ve Evlâd-ı Fâtiḥân* (İstanbul: Osman Yalçın Matbaası, 1957), 14-16.

<sup>33</sup> Turkish immigrants from Anatolia who came across to Rumeli along with Evrenos Beg and Turahan Beg, as well as the men led by the famous *uc begi* of Üsküp – Paşa Yiğit Beg, who transferred to Üsküp nomads from Saruhan, had been granted *timars* in the conquered lands. From a register for the *sancak* of Tirhala from 1454-1455, we learn that many of the *timars* were given to the people who came to this area along with Evrenos Beg and Turahan Beg. In another register for the *nahiyes* of Yeleç, Zveçan, Hodidede, Senitsa, Ras, Üsküp and Kalkandelen from the same year, there are 160 *timars* out of 189 which were given to the people (his *gulâms*) of 'İsa Beg, the son of İshak Beg. The same was true for the *timars* in the *vilâyets* of Bosna, Hersek and Yeleç for the year 1469, where most of the *dirlik*-holders were *gulâms* of the prominent leader of the frontier troops in the region of Skopje – İshak Beg. See Halil İnalçık, *Fatih Devri Üzerinde Tetkikler ve Vesikalar* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1954), 146, 149, 153.

From the earliest known Ottoman *tahrir defteri* for the *sancak* of Arvanid (1431-1432), we see that in the area controlled at that time by the son of Evrenos Beg – 'Ali Beg, who was enrolled as a *sancakbegi*, one third of the *sipahis* were mentioned as people who had come from Anatolia. For instance, for 26 *timariots* their origin is recorded either as "Saruhanlı (or Saruhanlıdan), *şürüliüp gelmiş*" or as "*şürüliüp gelmişin oğlu*". Another 16 *sipahis* were mentioned as "*Koca-İli'nden gelmiş*". See Barkan, "Sürgünler" (1953-1954), 215-216. See Halil İnalçık, "Ottoman Methods of Conquest," *Studia Islamica* 2 (1954): 124-125. These deportees came to Rumeli along with the hereditary *akıncı* leaders of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries and performed the service of *akıncıs* in the Balkans, for which service, on the one hand, they were granted lands and certain privileges by the *begs*, and, on the other hand, they themselves were loyal to their commanders in chief – the *akıncı* leaders.

<sup>34</sup> See note 30 above.

<sup>35</sup> İnalçık, "Dervish and a Sultan," 24-25. For the *Tatar* population in Rumeli see Gökbilgin, *Rumeli'de Yürükler*, 86-90. For different *yürük* groups settled in these areas see ibidem, 53-86, 90-100. One could obtain a fairly good idea for the areas populated by both groups from the maps that Gökbilgin published at the very end of his book. For the territorial spread of the Naldöken and Tanrıdağı groups of *yürüks* see the related articles by Sema Altunan, "XVI. Yüzyılda Balkanlar'da Naldöken Yürükleri: İdari Yapıları, Nüfusları, Askeri Görevleri ve Sosyal Statüleri," in Ali Çaksu (ed.), *Balkanlar'da İslâm Medeniyeti Milletlerarası Sempozyumu Tebliğleri (Sofya 21-23 Nisan 2000)* (İstanbul: IRCICA, 2002), 11-38; idem, "XVI. ve XVII. Yüzyıllarda Rumeli'de Tanrıdağı Yürüklerinin Askeri Organizasyonu," in Meral Bayrak (ed.), *Uluslararası Osmanlı ve Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türk-Bulgar İlişkileri Sempozyumu, 11-13 Mayıs 2005* (Eskişehir: Osman-

large number of them were engaged in raids under the command of the Mihaloğulları. The areas where Otman Baba and his dervishes were active were indeed predominantly populated by semi-nomadic people. These regions were known also as places from where the *akıncı* troops were mainly recruited. As a matter of fact, when one compares the location of the *yürük* populations and the *akıncı* troops, based on the data extracted from the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century survey registers (*defters*), it shows a striking concurrence of the territories where both of these groups were located – along the main military routs in the Balkans (*Via Egnatia*, *Via Militaris* and the road stretching between Vize and the mouth of the Danube River) followed by the first Ottoman conquests, where indeed the first Muslim settlers also appeared. The location of the four principal Baba’i *türbes* in the eastern Balkans in an area densely populated by *yürüks* and traditionally associated with the *akıncıs*, therefore, raises additional questions as to the audience of the dervishes’ activities there. The fact that the dervish hospices were built in regions where there were a large number of both *yürüks* and *akıncıs* alone, in my opinion, points out to the spiritual patronage that these Baba’i dervishes had over the frontier people and their military leaders – the *akıncı begis*.

Bringing together evidence of connections between the *akıncıs* and the *yürüks* on the one hand, and of close contacts between Otman Baba and the *yürüks*, on the other, one could assume that the unorthodox itinerant dervishes had an impact over the *akıncı* leaders’ religious beliefs. On the other hand, as İnalçık suggested, being practically of the same social background, these two groups had a strong partnership in their dissatisfaction from the imperial Ottoman policy of increased centralization.<sup>36</sup> Pointing out that the *yürüks* were willing to become *akıncıs* in order to escape the burden of paying taxes, İnalçık correctly attributed to

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gazi Üniversitesi, 2005), 189-200.

<sup>36</sup> İnalçık, “Dervish and a Sultan,” 24-25.

them a 'profound hostility toward the increasingly bureaucratized state' of the Ottoman sultans.<sup>37</sup> The hostility towards the autocratic power of the sultan was not alien to the nomads, but at the same time it was characteristic for another group of the society, namely the *akıncı* leaders. The mighty lords of the marches, including Mihaloğulları, also acted against the centralizing policy of the Ottoman dynasty, a process which could be best observed during the interregnum period after sultan Bayezid I's defeat at the battle of Ankara (1402).<sup>38</sup> Thus, it seems that *yürüks* on the one hand and *akıncı begis*, on the other, had their individual reasons to contest the centralizing policy of the Ottoman sultans.

The itinerant dervishes also shared these antagonistic views. In accordance with the *abdals'* religious doctrine, their goal was to help the oppressed and the weak.<sup>39</sup> An expression of their dissatisfaction with the centralizing efforts of Mehmed II is Otman Baba's open criticism directed at the sultan. According to his hagiography, as *kutb al-aktab* Otman Baba claimed not only spiritual supremacy, an expression of his dissatisfaction with the increasing influence of the '*ulema*', but also political priority over the sultan himself, proof of which is Mehmed's admission that the real sultan is Otman Baba and he is only his 'humble servant'.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, the dervish is presented as the one who stood behind the *gaza* victories of the Ottoman sultan. He himself was described as present at numerous battles against the 'infidels'.<sup>41</sup> In fact, the *gaza* is one of the distinct features of the *abdals'*

<sup>37</sup> Ibidem, 24, 25-26 and idem, "The Yürüks: Their Origins, Expansion and Economic Role," in idem, *The Middle East and the Balkans under the Ottoman Rule*, 110-111.

<sup>38</sup> For a partial account of the events during the Ottoman interregnum period see Elizabeth Zachariadou, "Süleyman Çelebi in Rumili and the Ottoman Chronicles," *Der Islam* 60:2 (1983): 268-296; Halil İnalçık, "Mehammed I," *EI<sup>2</sup>*, vol. VI, 973-977. So far the most comprehensive study on that period is Dimitris Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid: Empire Building and Representation in the Ottoman Civil War of 1402-1413* (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2007).

<sup>39</sup> İnalçık, "Dervish and a Sultan," 23.

<sup>40</sup> Ibidem, 29.

<sup>41</sup> Ibidem, 28-29.

ideology, whose principal place of gathering, not surprisingly, was the dervish convent of Seyyid Battal Gazi near Eskişehir, the patron saint of which was the semi-legendary Arab *gazi* warrior from the eight century, who distinguished himself in the wars against Byzantium.<sup>42</sup>

From the *velâyetnâmes* of Hacı Bektaş-i Veli, Hacım Sultan and Otman Baba it becomes clear that their followers gathered annually in Seyyid Battal Gazi Zaviyesi at a time of the religious holidays *Hacılar Bayramı* and *Kurban Bayramı*.<sup>43</sup> The vita of Otman Baba explicitly relates that each year the saint, along with his disciples (*mürids*), were wending their way (*Hacc-ı Ekber*) to Seyyid Battal Gazi Zaviyesi.<sup>44</sup> The convent of Seyyid Battal Gazi, on the other hand, was a focal point not only for the dervishes but also attracted the attention of the mighty lords of the marches as well. The extensive architectural patronage on the part of three members of the Mihaloğlu family throughout the complex testifies to their veneration of this proto typical *gazi* warrior.

Mihaloğlu 'Ali Beg sponsored the reconstruction of Seyyid Gazi's *türbe*,<sup>45</sup> which becomes apparent from the inscription over the northern window of the building, accepting in such a way Seyyid Battal Gazi as his protector in the wars against the 'infidels'.<sup>46</sup> Mihaloğlus' patronage over the

<sup>42</sup> Yürekli Görkay, *Legend and Architecture in the Ottoman Empire*, 145-162.

<sup>43</sup> Ocak, *Kalenderîler*, 175.

<sup>44</sup> *Velâyetnâme-i Otman Baba*, fol. 116<sup>b</sup>. Indeed, the 'heterodox' Muslims from eastern Bulgaria who venerate at present the *türbes* of Otman Baba, Akyazılı Baba and Demir Baba preserved their spiritual ties with Battal Gazi's complex, a demonstration of which are their annual visits to Şücaeddin Veli Sultan *tekke*, only several kilometers away from Seyyid Battal Gazi complex, which being a functioning *tekke* seems to have replaced in function Seyyid Battal Gazi's convent (which is now a museum) and become the principal gathering place for these Muslims.

<sup>45</sup> 'Ali Beg bestowed the incomes of one village and one farm in the vicinities of Eskişehir to the *zaviye* of Seyyid Gazi. BOA, Maliyeden Müdevver Defteri (MAD) 27, p. 54; Tapu ve Kadastro Genel Müdürlüğü, *Kuyud-u Kadime Arşivi* [Hereafter: KuK], Ankara, Sultanönü Evkaf Defteri No. 541, fol. 37<sup>b</sup>.

<sup>46</sup> Karl Wulzinger, *Drei Bektaschi-Klöster Phrygiens* (Berlin: Verlag von Ernst Wasmuth, 1913), 8; Yağmur Say, *Seyyid Battal Gazi Külliyesi*. Anadolu'nun İslamlaşması ve



*zaviye* was carried on by two of 'Ali Beg's sons. Mihaloğlu Mehmed and Ahmed Begs were the biggest sponsors of the hospice and were even buried in the complex, adjacent to the tomb of the great semi-legendary warrior. After the reconstructions the two brothers undertook at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the hitherto small place had been reshaped to become a religious complex of great importance.<sup>47</sup>

The patronage of Seyyid Battal Gazi's complex by three members of the Mihaloğlu family in the course of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries is an absolute attestation to their sympathy with the leaders of the 'gazi dervishes'. Mihaloğulları's homage to the *gazi* warriors is further substantiated by their sponsorship of the mausoleum (*türbe*) of Seyyid Gazi's alleged father. After inheriting two villages in the vicinity of Ankara from their famous fathers, Mihaloğlu İskender Beg and 'Ali Beg, the two cousins Yahşi Beg (who also sponsored the *tekke* of Otman Baba in the Balkans) and Mehmed Beg (the patron of Seyyid Gazi's convent) endowed them to the *türbe* of Hüseyin Gazi in the environs of Ankara.<sup>48</sup> Judging from the partially preserved dedicatory inscription over the entrance of Hüseyin Gazi's *türbe*, in which the year H. 878 (1473/4) is recorded, one is tempted to suggest that there is a strong possibility that 'Ali Beg himself was involved in the restoration or indeed construction of the mausoleum. In 1473 'Ali Beg was in charge of the command of the Rumelian *akıncı* troops in the

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Türkleşmesi Sürecinde Gazi-Eren-Evliyaların Rolü (İstanbul: SU Yayınları, 2006), 120; Aleksije Olesnicki, "Duhovna služba Bektašijskoga reda u akindžijkoj voisci. Prilog proučavanju kulta Đerzeleza i njegove popularnosti u Bosni," [Spiritual service of the Bektaşi order in the akıncı troops. Contribution to the study on the cult of Djerzelez and his popularity in Bosnia] *Vjestnik Hrvatskoga Arheološkoga Društva* 22-23 (1942-1943), 198-199. For more detailed analysis of both the architecture of Seyyid Gazi complex and the historical context of the architectural patronage of the Mihaloğulları see Yürekli Görkay, *Legend and Architecture in the Ottoman Empire*, 127-145, 203-210.

<sup>47</sup> Between 1511 and 1517 the then existing parts of the complex were renovated and at the same time several new buildings have been erected. See Yürekli Görkay, *Legend and Architecture in the Ottoman Empire*, 127-163 and Say, *Seyyid Battal Gazi Külliyesi*, 108-149.

<sup>48</sup> See BOA, TT 438, p. 378; KuK, Ankara Evkaf Defteri No. 558, fol. 109<sup>b</sup>-110<sup>b</sup>.

war against the Akkoyunlu ruler Uzun Hasan.<sup>49</sup> It seems possible then that ‘Ali Beg, along with his son Mehmed Beg and Yahşi Beg, who also participated in this campaign,<sup>50</sup> rebuilt the tomb of the legendary *gazi* hero after the successful military operation, as their patronage could be interpreted as a way of expressing their homage to the *gazi* warrior.

On the whole, it appears that members of the Mihaloğlu family not only worshipped the *gazi* heroes of Anatolia, but had a certain predisposition towards the dissident dervishes in the Balkans, who also seemed to have paid their homage to the *gazi* warriors, choosing the complex of Seyyid Gazi as their principal gathering place. These dervishes were known for their ‘unorthodox’ beliefs and their open dissatisfaction from the newly emerging Ottoman social order. Their divergence from other religious groups and thus their particularity is assertively expressed even by the distinctive architectural features of their convents. A detailed look at the architecture of the *türbe* of Otman Baba, similarly to the three other early *türbes* in Bulgaria (Kıdemli Baba, Akyazılı Baba and Demir Baba) reveals that it is a physical embodiment of Shiite symbolism.<sup>51</sup> These *türbes* are seven-sided rather than

<sup>49</sup> The existence of a *defter* (NBKM, OAK 94/73 and Pd 17/27), which compilation was ordered for the recruitment of *akıncıs* from the Rumelian provinces of the empire, testifies for these troops’ participation in the war against the Akkoyunlu ruler under the leadership of ‘Ali Beg. For further details see Kiprovska, *Military Organization of the Akıncıs*, 42-52.

<sup>50</sup> Mehmed Beg and Yahşi Beg were mentioned in the *akıncı* register from 1472 as being given the sum of money collected from several villages in order to provide for them during the campaign against Uzun Hasan. See NBKM, OAK 94/73, fol. 33<sup>b</sup> and 37<sup>a</sup>.

<sup>51</sup> More details on the architecture of Otman Baba’s mausoleum could be found in Mikov, “Grobnitsata na Otman baba,” 80-87; idem, *Izkustvoto na heterodoksnite myusyulmani v Balgaria*, 39-46; Kiel, “The Tekke of Kıdemli Baba,” 42-43; Lewis, “Architectural Monuments” and idem, “The Ottoman Architectural Patrimony of Bulgaria,” *Electronic Journal of Oriental Studies* 4 (2001), No. 30, 1-25. For the shrine of Kıdemli Baba see Kiel, “A Monument of Early Ottoman Architecture in Bulgaria,” 53-60; idem, “The Tekke of Kıdemli Baba,” 39-46; Mikov, *Izkustvoto na heterodoksnite myusyulmani v Balgaria*, 46-52. For the buildings in the complex of Akyazılı Baba see Eyice, “Akyazılı Sultan Tekkesi,” 551-600; Zarcone, “Nouvelles perspectives,” 7; M. Baha Tanman, “Settings for the Veneration of Saints,” in Raymond Lifchez (ed.), *The Dervish Lodge: Architecture, Art and Sufism in Ottoman Turkey* (Berkeley – Los Angeles – Oxford:

octagonal in shape, an architectural feature unknown in any other part of the empire.<sup>52</sup> Except the obvious relationship between the shrines' patron saints, who were all followers of Otman Baba, the architecture of the *türbes* undoubtedly shows an apparent connection. Coming back to Evliya Çelebi's account, according to which the Mihaloğulları were patrons of four of these

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University of California Press, 1992), 138; Bedri Noyan Dedebaba, *Bütün Yönleriyle Bektaşilik ve Alevîlik*, 5. Cild: *Dergâhlar* (Ankara: Ardiç Yayınları, 2002), 55; Mikov, *Izkustvoto na heterodoksnite myusyulmani v Balgaria*, 52-61. The convent of Demir Baba is studied by Iliev, "Teketo Demir boba," 66-72; Grammatikova, "The Vita of Demir Baba," 400-432 and Mikov, *Izkustvoto na heterodoksnite myusyulmani v Balgaria*, 61-72. See also Ananiy Yavashov, *Teketo Demir Baba: 'Balgarska Starina-svetinya'* [The Tekke of Demir Baba: 'Bulgarian Antiquity-Sanctuary'] (Razgrad: Razgradsko Arheologicheskoto Druzhestvo, 1934), 12, where the author mistakenly affirms that the building is octagonal in shape. The same mistake was later repeated by Babinger, "Das Bektaschi-Kloster Demir Baba," 1-10 and Hans-Jürgen von Kornrumph, "Zwei Weniger bekannte islamische Denkmäler in Bulgarien," *Südost Forschungen* 30 (1971), 293.

<sup>52</sup> The first scholar to point out to the peculiarity of the shape of the four *türbes* in eastern Bulgaria and to conclude on their inevitable connection was Machiel Kiel. See his "Sarı Saltık ve Erken Bektaşilik Üzerine Notlar," 32-33 and idem, "The Tekke of Kıdemli Baba," 42. For the latest interpretation on the seven-sided architectural construction of these *türbes* and the surviving parts of the *tekkes* see Mikov, *Izkustvoto na heterodoksnite myusyulmani v Balgaria*, 38-81, 321-329. According to Frederick de Jong this seven-sided shape may be read as a symbolic reference to the *Yediler*, the seven central figures of Shiism: Mohammed, 'Ali, Fatima, Hasan, Husain, the angel Gabriel, and Salman Pak, the helper of 'Ali in this world and the next. See Frederick de Jong, "The Iconography of Bektashism. A Survey of Themes and Symbolism in Clerical Costume, Liturgical Objects and Pictorial Art," *Manuscripts of the Middle East* 4 (1989): 7-29. The opinion that the "reverence for the figure 7 relates to the position of the Seven, or *yediler*, in the hierarchy of saints" is expressed also by Tanman, "Settings for the Veneration of Saints," 138. Another opinion is expressed by Irène Mélikoff who ascribed these *tekkes* to the Hurufî movement. See Irène Mélikoff, *Hadji Bektach: un mythe et ses avatars. Genèse et évolution du soufisme populaire en Turquie* (Leiden-New York-Köln: Brill, 1998), 124-125 and idem, "Voies de pénétration de l'hétérodoxie islamique en Thrace," 159-170. The influence of the Hurufî ideology over some groups of 'heterodox' dervishes in the Balkans and especially their veneration of the number 7 is also maintained by Zarcone in his "Nouvelles perspectives," 7. For a more general survey on the symbolic meaning of the number 7 see Jean-Paul Roux, "Les chiffres symboliques 7 et 9 chez les Turcs non musulmans," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 84:108 (1965): 29-53. For a description of numerous religious practices closely linked to the mystical number 7 preserved among the 'heterodox' Muslims in Bulgaria, as well as for an interpretation of the architectural style of the heptagonal *türbes* on the territory of eastern Bulgaria, see Mikov, *Izkustvoto na heterodoksnite myusyulmani v Balgaria*, 321-329.

*türbes* (Otman Baba, Akyazılı Baba, Kıdemli Baba and Demir Baba), and the fact that several Mihaloğlu family members sponsored extensively Seyyid Battal Gazi's convent, the principal gathering place of the itinerant dervishes, we may assert that the *akıncı* leaders had a strong connection with this particular group of dervishes, who were referred to by Ahmed Yaşar Ocak as *derviş-gazi*.<sup>53</sup>

The primary relation between the raider commanders and these dervishes must be looked for in their devotion to the *gaza* ideology and the emphasis on conquest. Having played a key role during the first Ottoman conquests, the *gazi* warriors of the marches were often represented in the narratives as being accompanied by the dervishes, who on the other hand

<sup>53</sup> Ocak, *Menâkıbnâmeler*, 56; idem, *Kalenderîler*, 99. Moreover, we may affirm that not only the family of Mihaloğlu, but also other hereditary *akıncı* families at the time, had a certain predisposition towards these dervishes. Thus, for example, we see Malkoçoğlu Bali Beg to request the registration of the *zaviye* of Hasan Baba veled-i Yağmur, after the latter has finally settled in his newly established dervish convent. See BOA, TT 50, p. 133; TT 385, p. 369; TT 521, p. 448. Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr, "Le règne de Selim I: tournant dans la vie politique et religieuse de l'empire ottoman," *Turcica* 6 (1975), 41. The same Malkoçoğlu Bali Beg has built the hospice of Pirzade outside the city of Tatar Bazari. BOA, TD 77, p. 635; See also Beldiceanu-Steinherr, "Le règne de Selim I," 41 and Machiel Kiel, "Tatar Pazarcık. The Development of an Ottoman Town in Central-Bulgaria or the Story of How the Bulgarians Conquered Upper Thrace Without Firing a Shot," in Klaus Kreiser, Christoph Neuman (eds.), *Das Osmanische Reich in Seinen Archivalien und Chroniken, Nejat Göyünç zu Ehren* (Istanbul, 1997), 40. His son, Malkoçoğlu Kasım Beg, rebuilt the tomb of Şücaeddin Veli in the early sixteenth century and another member of Malkoçoğlu family, along with a member of Evrenosoğulları, patronized the shrine of Hacı Bektaş. Yürekli Görkay, *Legend and Architecture in the Ottoman Empire*, 206, 174-184. A member of another prominent family – Timurtaşoğlu 'Ali Beg, is associated with Sultan Şücaeddin Veli, whose vita often presented the saint accompanying Timurtaş Paşa and his son 'Ali Beg in Rumelia. See Ocak, *Kalenderîler*, 97, 99. The military deeds of Gazi Evrenos Beg are praised in the hagiography of Seyyid 'Ali Sultan (Kızıldeli Sultan), another militant dervish in the Balkans. See Bedri Noyan, *Seyyid Ali Sultan (Kızıldeli Sultân) Vilâyetnamesi* (Ankara: Ayyıldız Yayınları, n.d.), 100-107; Rıza Yıldırım, *Rumeli'nin Fethinde ve Türkleşmesinde Öncülük Etmiş Bir Gâzi Derviş: Seyyid Ali Sultan (Kızıldeli) ve Velâyetnamesi* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2007), 174-179. According to Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr Kızıldeli Sultan and Hacı İlbegi, who came into Ottoman service after the annexation of the western Anatolian principality of Karasi and distinguished himself during the early conquests in the Balkans, are identical. See her "Le règne de Selim I," 46.

were the source of the ideological embodiment of their military victories. The role of these March Lords as well as the importance of the dervish brotherhoods during the early Ottoman period is the key to understanding their close affiliation.

The frontier lords from the prominent hereditary *akıncı* families took possession of strategically important areas along the main road networks in the Balkans, established themselves and created their own 'strongholds', ruling them like small principalities on the borders of the emerging Ottoman state. Moreover, leading their own loyal armies the *begs* played an important role in Ottoman internal politics, giving support to the prospective sultan of their choice, a fact that could be best observed during the Ottoman interregnum period.<sup>54</sup> The events from this period show that the influential frontier-lords, supporting the old traditions of the marches and as a reaction to Bayezid I (1389-1402)'s rule, opposed centralization, supporting the pretender for the Ottoman throne, who most guaranteed their privileges. The Ottoman princes were those who had to conform to the *begs*' wishes, as any disobedience of the warlords could cost them the throne.<sup>55</sup> It seems that the frontier lords' decisive role during the Ottoman princes' succession struggle was not restricted to the interregnum period, but their great authority and influence over domestic politics remained significant during the reign of

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<sup>54</sup> Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid*, 135-188.

<sup>55</sup> The *akıncı begis* appear to have been a decisive element in the struggle for power between Bayezid's sons. Musa Çelebi utilized the help of some Rumelian *begs* to defeat his brother Süleyman, who was supported by other frontier lords. The *uc begis* gained further prominence during Musa's reign, a clear attestation to which was the appointment of one of their leaders, Mihaloğlu Mehmed Beg, to the post of *beglerbegi*, which gained this frontier lord's control of all the military forces in the Balkans. See Halil İnalçık, "The Rise of the Ottoman Empire," in M. A. Cook (ed.), *A History of the Ottoman Empire to 1730* (Cambridge University Press, 1976), 33-34; Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid*, 137-142, 161-162. When Mehmed Çelebi crossed over from Asia to Rumeli to wage war against his brother, many of the *uc begleri* deserted Musa and gave their support to Mehmed, which gave him prevalence over the forces of his brother and finally resulted in Musa's defeat in 1413 near Sofya. See Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid*, 159-194.

Murad II (1421-1451).<sup>56</sup> The radical change in this situation of the sultans' strong dependence on the support of the powerful *begs* of the marches appeared when the Ottoman rulers came to realize that their full authority could be established only after diminishing the power of these frontier lords.

Already more than a decade ago Cemal Kafadar demonstrated that up until the time of Mehmed II different groups of the Ottoman society with their distinct features of more or less independent behavior had been 'marginalized' in the realm of the increasingly centralized Ottoman Empire.<sup>57</sup> It was a process that endured for a long time, but finally resulted in the weakening of certain segments of the Ottoman society. After the conquest of Constantinople different social groups, such as the Turkmen tribes and the 'heterodox' dervishes, as well as the frontier warriors (*gazis*) were increasingly reduced in position and were 'left out of the ruling stratum

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<sup>56</sup> Although there was a period of relative stability after the consolidation of the empire after sultan Mehmed I's accession to the throne, the *uc begis'* turbulent actions came once again to the fore as soon as the supremacy over the sultanate was contested by a new pretender after Mehmed's death (1421). The claimant Düzme Mustafa gained the support of the Rumelian frontier lords, led by Evrenosoğlu family. Similarly to the events from the preceding decade of instability, the sultan had to overpower the disobedience of the *begs* by gaining their support. Murad II released the imprisoned in Tokat Mihaloğlu Mehmed Beg, who after the death of Gazi Evrenos Beg (1417) was clearly the military commander with the highest authority among the frontier *begs*. Releasing him, Murad relied on Mehmed Beg's popularity in attracting the Rumelian *begs* on his side and thus succeeded in eliminating his rival. See Friedrich Giese, *Die Altosmanische Chronik des 'Âşikpaşazâde* (Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1929), 86-87; Faik Reşit Unat and Mehmed A. Köymen (eds.), *Kitâb-ı Cihan-Nümâ. Neşri Tarihi*, vol. 2 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1957), 559-561; Franz Babinger, *Die Frühosmanischen Jahrbücher des Urudsch* (Honnover: Orient-Buchhandlung Heinz Lafaire, 1925), 46-47, 112-113. Even after securing his sultanate, Murad was still highly dependent on the raider commanders' forces. The disobedience of the border lords at the battle of Zlatitsa (1443) almost caused a major military disaster to Murad and resulted in the imprisonment of Turahan Beg in Tokat. See Halil İnalçık and Mevlûd Oğuz (eds.), *Gazavât-ı Sultân Murâd b. Mehmed Hân. İzladi ve Varna Savaşları (1443-1444) üzerine Anonim Gazavâtnâme* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1978), 15-31; Halil İnalçık, *Fatih Devri Üzerinde Tetkikler ve Vesikalar* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1995), 57-58.

<sup>57</sup> Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds. The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley – Los Angeles – London: University of California Press, 1995), 138-150.

as an imperial, centralized polity emerged under the leadership of the House of Osman'.<sup>58</sup>

Mehmed II seems to be the first Ottoman ruler who, thanks to the increased number of the Janissaries, an army of slaves (*kuls*) obedient to his orders, managed to overpower the strong March Lords. It could be observed that during Mehmed's reign the frontier *begs* preserved to a certain degree their earlier status, but were gradually incorporated into the 'classical' military institutions of the Ottoman Empire. Preserving most of their possessions, the *uc begis* were assigned office as *sancakbegis*, keeping the hereditary command of the *akıncı* troops, but only as an integral part of the centralized Ottoman army, subservient to the sultan.<sup>59</sup>

Examples from the careers of several famous *akıncı* leaders, who were active during Mehmed's reign, constantly holding the office of *sancakbegi* of several frontier regions, illustrate this change. Thus, throughout his lifetime, Mihaloğlu 'Ali Beg held consecutively the office of *sancakbegi* of several areas, all of them (except that of Sivas) situated on the northern borders of the Ottoman Empire. He was *sancakbegi* of Vidin (1460-1462, 1463-1467, 1473-1475), Semendire (1462-1463, 1467-1472, 1475-1479, 1486-?, 1492-1494, 1498-1499), Sivas (1472-1473) and Niğbolu (1479-?).<sup>60</sup> The same was true for his brother İskender Beg who at various times held the same position in Bosnia, Serbia and Danubian Bulgaria. Hence, we can observe that during the reign of sultan Mehmed, the Mihaloğlu family retained its leadership in the Ottoman military advance on the northern marches of the empire. Its members, however, were appointed governors of several border districts for short periods of time, thus preventing the *akıncı* leaders from residing in their own strongholds. In such a way, though preserving their leadership on the borders, the descendants of the noble

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<sup>58</sup> Ibidem, 150.

<sup>59</sup> For more thorough examination of this issue see Kiprovska, *Military Organization of the Akıncıs*, 29-83.

<sup>60</sup> See Zirojević, "Smederevski sandjakkbeg Ali beg Mihaloğlu," 9-27.

families of the early period were reduced to Ottoman officials integrated into the military and administrative system of the fifteenth-century empire.

Mehmed's policy towards the members of the Mihaloğlu family was not exceptional. One could observe the same process with the position of the other *uc begi* families' members. Thus, Malkoçoğlu Bali Beg was in 1478 *sancakbegi* of Semendire, and after this – *sancakbegi* of Silistre. Malkoçoğlu Damad Yahya Paşa was *beglerbegi* of Bosnia between 1475-1481 and 1494-1501. Consequently Malkoçoğulları held frequently the *sancakbegliks* of Semendire, Belgrad, Bosna, Budin, İnebahtı, İstolni-Belgrad, and Vidin.<sup>61</sup> The grandson of Evrenos Gazi and a son of Evrenosoğlu 'Ali Beg, Şemseddin Ahmed, was in 1466 *sancakbegi* of Tırhala, and then of Semendire. Another descendant of Evrenos, his other grandson, Mehmed, son of 'İsa bin Evrenos, was at the very beginning of the sixteenth century *sancakbegi* of İlbasan, etc.<sup>62</sup>

Mehmed's policy allowed the *begs* to retain their superior position in the military hierarchy, thus preventing their extreme dissatisfaction and possible revolt. Towards the end of his reign, however, the sultan did not hesitate to confiscate the property and lands of the disobedient powerful lords.<sup>63</sup> The *vakf* of Malkoçoğulları in the region of Hasköy was confiscated

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<sup>61</sup> Franz Babinger, "Beiträge zur Geschichte des Geschlechtes der Malkoç-oghlu's," in idem, *Aufsätze und Abhandlungen zur Geschichte Südosteuropas und der Levante*, Vol. 1 (München, 1962), 355-377; Fahamettin Başar, "Osmanlı Devleti'nin Kuruluş Döneminde Hizmeti Görülen Akıncı Aileleri: Malkoçoğulları," *Türk Dünyası Tarih Dergisi* 6:66 (1992), 48-49.

<sup>62</sup> Irène Melikoff, "Evrenosoghulları," *EF<sup>2</sup>*, vol. II, 721; Fahamettin Başar, "Evrenosoghulları," *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. II, 539-541, 541.

<sup>63</sup> For the so called 'land reform' of Mehmed II see Nicoara Beldiceanu, "Recherches sur la réforme foncière de Mehmed II," *Acta Historica* 4 (1965): 27-39; Bistra Cvetkova, "Sur Certaines reformes du régime foncier au temp de Mehmet II," *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient* 6:1 (1963): 104-120. For a study on the consequences of Mehmed II's reform with a special look at the Anatolian provinces of the Ottoman Empire see Oktay Özel, "Limits of the Almighty: Mehmed II's 'Land Reform' Revisited," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 42:2 (1999): 226-246.



and apportioned as *timars* in 1475.<sup>64</sup> The same fate met the *vakfs* of the famous *akıncı* leader Firuz Beg in the region of Tırnovo.<sup>65</sup> Another prominent family of raider commanders, Minnetoğlus, was also deprived of its estates in Konaş (Upper Thrace), which was entirely dominated by the patronage of Minnetoğlu Mehmed Beg and his descendents.<sup>66</sup> The Mihaloğulları were not spared from the confiscation as well. Their hereditary revenues, deriving from a *mülk* in the *sancak* of Sultanönü, were also appropriated by the state during Mehmed's reign and were later on restored to their previous owners by Bayezid II.<sup>67</sup> The property of Mihaloğlu Mahmud Beg's *vakf* in İhtiman on the *Via Militaris* was also targeted by Mehmed's confiscation reform.<sup>68</sup>

Similarly to the actions aiming at marginalization of the *akıncı* leaders, the Ottoman government attempted to strengthen the control over certain dervish groups who did not conform to the centralistic politics. Their lands, granted by previous rulers, were yet another target of Mehmed's confiscation policy.<sup>69</sup> Moreover, the central authority's pressure towards these dervishes found expression in the undisguised persecution of these segments of the Ottoman society during the reign of Bayezid II, when the 'heterodox' *abdals* from the European provinces, including the followers of Otman Baba, became a target of maltreatment.<sup>70</sup> Likewise, the increasing 'sunnification' of the Ottoman centralized state led to a logical decrease in privileges for the

<sup>64</sup> See M. Tayyib Gökbilgin, *XV-XVI. Asırlarda Edirne ve Paşa Livası. Vakıflar – Mülkler – Mukataalar* (İstanbul: Üçler Basımevi, 1952), 276.

<sup>65</sup> Cvetkova, "Sur Certaines reformes du régime foncier," 116-117.

<sup>66</sup> Gökbilgin, *Edirne ve Paşa Livası*, 241.

<sup>67</sup> Ömer Lütfi Barkan – Enver Meriçli, *Hüdavendigâr Livası Tahrir Defterleri* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1988), 317 and Halime Doğru, *XVI. Yüzyılda Sultanönü Sancağında Ahiler ve Ahi Zaviyeleri* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1991), 57.

<sup>68</sup> Machiel Kiel, "İhtiman," *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, cilt 21 (İstanbul, 2000), 571-572.

<sup>69</sup> Ömer Lütfi Barkan, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda bir iskân ve kolonizasyon metodu olarak vakıflar ve temlikler. İstilâ devirlerinin Kolonizatör Türk dervişleri ve zâviyeler," *Vakıflar Dergisi* 2 (1942): 279-386.

<sup>70</sup> See İnalçık, "Dervish and a Sultan," 32-33.

dervishes. As a consequence, both elements of the *gazi*-dervish *milieu* in the Ottoman realm, which had previously been the driving force behind the Ottoman expansion, were left outside the newly emerging social order.

The diminished position of these segments of the Ottoman society had its natural reaction, which could be observed both in the literary production of these groups and their architectural patronage. The time when these dervish groups' oral lore was textualized coincided with the time of their marginalization at the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century, as at the same time their hagiographies (*velâyetnâmeler*) represented a clear example of their bitter opposition toward the centralistic policies of the Ottoman state. Unlike other Sufi hagiographies (*menakıbnâmeler*), these texts emphasized the century-long connection between the *gazi* warriors and the dervishes by virtue of whose joint enterprise the early Ottoman conquests were made possible and without whose help the Ottoman state itself would not have become the empire it had by the end of the fifteenth century. Typical of the *velâyetnâme* literature is its emphasis on conquests, holy war and heroism, thus not only forming a specific genre between Sufi hagiography and warrior epic, but being a token of the *gazi*-dervish dissatisfaction from the centralistic policies of the Ottoman sultans which led to their displacement in the Ottoman social order.<sup>71</sup>

The marginalization of each of these groups was the actual stimulus for their drawing closer together while forming a kind of alliance against the state's centralistic policy. As was recently suggested by Zeynep Yürekli Gökay, a symbol of their coalition became some of the major Bektaşî

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<sup>71</sup> The *velâyetnâmes* of Hacı Bektaş, Hacım Sultan, Otman Baba, Seyyid 'Ali Sultan, Abdal Musa and Şücaeddin Veli were all written during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. They are all characterized with their similarity to the holy warriors' medieval legends as the ones of *Battâlnâme* and *Dânişmendnâme* whose appealed audience was the *gazis* in Anatolia and the Balkans. For further details about anecdotes of military conquests and heroic deeds, included in the *velâyetnâmes* see Yürekli Gökay, *Legend and Architecture in the Ottoman Empire*, 57-73.

complexes in Anatolia such as Hacı Bektaş, Seyyid Battal Gazi and Şücaeddin Veli. This alliance, again according to this author, was undoubtedly confirmed by the time concurrence between the textualization of the *velâyetnâmes* of these three saints and the period in which these shrine complexes saw considerable architectural remodeling as a result of the *akıncı* families' patronage.<sup>72</sup> The architectural monumentality of the shrines of Seyyid Gazi and Hacı Bektaş characterized by their palatial appearance, on the other hand, had its political context, illustrating the aims of their patrons to justify their presence in the Ottoman realm. The hagiographies and the architectural style of the complexes were sound examples reflecting both groups' 'dedication to the ethics of the medieval frontier culture'<sup>73</sup> against the centralizing imperial policy of the Ottoman government at the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth centuries.

The architectural patronage of the Anatolian shrine complexes by raider commanders might be related, as Gökay puts it, 'to the formation of a social network in response to the imperial policies of the Ottoman state'.<sup>74</sup> This, however, still does not explain why the relationship between the 'heterodox' dervishes, concentrated around the biggest shrine complexes in the Balkans, and the frontier leaders, has not been declared by the latter in a similar manner in the European provinces, as was done in the Anatolian part of the empire. The imposing architecture of the convents of Otman Baba, Akyazılı Baba, Kıdemli Baba and Demir Baba alone suggests a sponsorship of a person with considerable wealth. The association of Mihaloğlu family members with the erection of at least three of these complexes by some sources thus seems reasonable, taking into account their patronage of the Seyyid Battal Gazi shrine.

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<sup>72</sup> See Yürekli Gökay, *Legend and Architecture in the Ottoman Empire*, 174-185, 206.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibidem*, 42.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibidem*, 19.

The reasons why the Mihaloğulları did not manifest their possible sponsorship over the Balkan shrine complexes must be looked for in the socio-political conditions of the period under question. Although since the time of Mehmed II their position was considerably reduced, they were still able to perform military raids against the enemies of the empire, which were their main source of livelihood. Even though the raider commanders and their retinues have been successfully subdued to the centralized Ottoman army already under Mehmed II, an attestation of their relative power and significance up until the beginning of the sixteenth century may well be observed during the succession struggle of the Ottoman princes between the sons of Bayezid II. New archival evidence demonstrate that the prospective sultan Selim I received strong support from the noble frontier lords' families in the Rumelian provinces of the empire in his struggle for the throne.<sup>75</sup> This, however, seems to be the last echo of their former influence over the internal Ottoman politics. Another military force in the face of the Janissaries in the capital appeared at the stage of Selim's struggle for power, without whose support his success would be more dubious. Testimony of the raider commander families' glorious past and former crucial role in the military expansion towards Europe, however, were their power bases in the Balkans. The cities and regions which developed under these families' patronage grew to centers of great importance in the Balkans, emerging not only as cultural centers, but also as their private residences, accumulating great amounts of wealth, which, devoted to their pious endowments, remained in their families for centuries.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> H. Erdem Çıpa, *The Centrality of the Periphery: The Rise to Power of Selim I, 1487-1512*, unpublished PhD dissertation (Harvard University, 2007), 166-258. I express my deep gratitude to Dr. Çıpa for sharing with me his findings and for giving me a copy of his work.

<sup>76</sup> More details on the Balkan cities developed under the patronage of the frontier lords could be found in the following studies: Machiel Kiel, "Yenice-i Vardar (Vardar Yenicesi – Giannitsa): A Forgotten Turkish Cultural Center in Macedonia of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Century," *Studia Bizantina et Neohellenica Neerlandica* 3 (1971): 300-329; idem, "Der

Therefore, it could be assumed that in fear of being ejected from the military posts and dispossessed, the frontier *begs* were hesitant to manifest openly and loudly their religious affiliation and patronage over the 'heterodox' dervishes in the Balkans. The same fears must have been shared by the dervishes themselves, who were increasingly persecuted by the authorities for their heretical religious practices.<sup>77</sup> They sought refuge in Anatolia under the 'umbrella' of the Bektaşî order which, due to the legendary association of Hacı Bektaş with the founding of the Janissary corps, enjoyed special treatment by the central authority and thus provided shelter to a variety of 'heterodox' dervish groups. The cults of Seyyid Gazi and Hacı Bektaş attracted not only 'heterodox' dervishes and raider commanders but also all kinds of social groups who felt threatened by the

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este Eroberer Thessaliens und Neugründer Larissa: Turahan Bey oder Evrenosoglu Barak Bey?" in idem, *Das Türkische Thessalien. Etabliertes Geschichtsbild versus Osmanische Quellen. Ein Beitrag zur Entmythologisierung der Geschichte Griechenlands*. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 114-126; Levent Kayapınar, "Teselya Bölgesinin Turahan Bey Ailesi ve XV.-XVI. Yüzyıllardaki Hayır Kurumları," *Abant İzzet Baysal Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* 1:10 (2005): 183-195; Yurdan Trifonov, *Istoriya na grada Pleven do Osvoboditelnata vojna* [History of city of Pleven up until the War of Liberation] (Sofia, 1933); Machiel Kiel, "Plewna," *Et*<sup>2</sup>, vol. 8, 317-320; Orlin Sabev, "Rodat Mihaloglu i myuyulmanskata kultura v Pleven prez XV-XIX vek" [The Mihaloglu family and the Muslim culture in Pleven during the 15<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries], in *730 godini grad Pleven i myastoto mu v natsionalnata istoria i kultura. Dokladi i saobshteniya ot nauchna sesia, provedena na 9 dekemvri 2000 g. v Pleven* [730 years-old city of Pleven and its place in the national history and culture. Papers and reports from a scholarly session held on December 9, 2000 in Pleven] (Pleven, 2002), 140-153; Machiel Kiel, "İhtiman," *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 21, 571-572.

<sup>77</sup> The dervishes, inhabiting the *tekke* of Kıdemli Baba, were proclaimed heretics and the *kadı* of the district was ordered to expel them from their cloister, as their property was to be given to "good orthodox *Sunni* dervishes". See Kiel, "The Tekke of Kıdemli Baba," 42. The inmates of Akyazılı Sultan *tekkesi* were also subject to the central government's persecution. They were investigated by the Ottoman authorities for they have been reported to produce wine; therefore the *kadı* was instructed to take control over the *tekke* and to prevent the manufacture of drinks there. See Eyice, "Akyazılı Sultan Tekkesi," 570. For the different measures undertaken by the central government to expel the *abdals* from Seyyid Battal Gazi complex at several occasions during the second half of the sixteenth century see Suraiya Faroqhi, "Seyyid Gazi Revisited: The Foundation as Seen through Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Documents," *Turcica* 13 (1981): 90-97 and Yürekli Görkay, *Legend and Architecture in the Ottoman Empire*, 145-176.

centralizing Ottoman policy, especially the nomads who were forced to sedentarization. The representatives of this social *milieu*, discontented with and opposing the imperial politics, were integrated in the emerging Bektaşî network. In the course of the following century the *tekkes*, which were the focal points of these dissident groups both in Anatolia and the Balkans, were absorbed and became the principal centers of the Bektaşî order.

### Conclusion:

We must immediately engage the enemy before they spot us and become aware of our presence. By reason of the fact that among our troops are those of Mihallı and others who are sympathizing the Kızılbaş, it is possible that during the night partisans of their creed may be tempted by the Şah's spies, and therefore either desert or engage only halfheartedly in the fight.

One should comprehend with no surprise the text of Hezarfenn Hüseyin Efendi, who quotes the words of the Defterdar Pîrî Mehmed Çelebi who uttered his fears in the presence of the sultan before the battle of Çaldıran (August 23, 1514). These comments are illustrative of the general concern of possible alliance between the *akıncı* troops under the leadership of Mihaloğulları, who adhere the Kızılbaş heresy, and the Safavid Şah İsmail. Although Hezarfenn compiled his story long after the described events took place, in all probability his narration reflects certain common views in the Ottoman society in the second half of the seventeenth century. One should not forget that by the time Hezarfenn wrote, a defined 'orthodox' social order has been established in the Ottoman state, from which the dissident dervishes and the *akıncıs* have successfully been displaced. Having been labeled as 'heretic', the dervishes who were patronized by the Mihaloğlu family, have been a subject of open hostility and repression by the Ottoman central power, some of them mingled into the Bektaşî order and others simply ceased to exist. The *akıncıs* and their leaders also lost their previously eminent position and have been effectively subjected to the centralized

Ottoman army. Denouncing them as Kızılbaş on the one hand Hezarfenn suggested their affiliation with the unorthodox religious movements, and on the other, he denounced their divergence from the established social order, in which 'kızılbaş' implied both heretic and rebellious.

It is logical to assert that Mihaloğulları's patronage over some dervish hospices both in the Balkans and Anatolia, may well be considered as their reaction to the Ottoman centralistic policy. Thus, the political processes in the Ottoman Empire of that time, including the attempts of 'sunnification' and the policies of 'marginalization' or diminishing the power of the March Lords, implemented by the central authority, to a large extent clarify the reasons which stimulated this prominent raider commanders' family to come into closer contact with another marginalized group of the Ottoman social order, namely the 'heterodox' dervishes. This was a process which endured for centuries, but had its fruits during the reign of Süleyman I, when the increased importance of the *'ulema* as part of the imperial policy displaced the dervish brotherhoods from the orthodox society.