bilig
AUTUMN 2025/ISSUE 115
145-167

Araştırma Makalesi / Research Article

Portrayal(s) of Hünkâr Hacı Bektaş in the Fifteenth Century*

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Abstract

This article examines the portrayals of Hünkâr Hacı Bektaş (d. c. 1270), who has been one of the most influential *veli*s (friends of God) among warriors and diverse dervish groups throughout the centuries. The persona of Hacı Bektaş has acquired new meanings within the transformed cultural and social contexts in different historical eras. This short analysis is limited to three intertextually related texts from the fifteenth century: the *Ḫıżırnāme* (1476), the *Ṣaltuḳnāme* (c. 1480), and the *Velāyetnāme* (c. 1481). Among these three works, while the *Ṣaltuḳnāme* and the *Velāyetnāme* have been subjects of numerous studies, as they include crucial details for understanding the historical events in pre-Ottoman and Ottoman times in Anatolia, the *Ḫıżırnāme* did not attract the attention of scholars until recently. With a particular focus on the portrayals of Hacı Bektaş in these three intertextually related texts, this study aims to generate new research questions for future studies about the historical image of Hacı Bektaş.

Keywords

Hacı Bektaş, *Hızırnâme, Saltuknâme, Velayetnâme,* portrayal.

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* The findings of this study are based on the author's PhD dissertation titled The Journey of an Ottoman Warrior Dervish: The Hızırname (Book of Khidr), Sources and Reception (SOAS, 2015).
Date of Arrival: 24 June 2024 – Date of Acceptance: 18 November 2024
Citation: Kocaer, Sibel. "Portrayal(s) of Hünkâr Hacı Bektaş in the Fifteenth Century." *bilig*, no. 115, 2025, pp. 145-167, https://doi.org/10.12995/bilig.8182.

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Hünkâr Hacı Bektaş'ın On Beşinci Yüzyıl Betimlemeleri*

Sibel Kocaer**

Öz

Bu makale, gaza ehlini ve çeşitli derviş topluluklarını yüzyıllar boyunca derinden etkileyen veliler arasında yer alan Hünkâr Hacı Bektaş'ın (öl. 1270 civarı) on beşinci yüzyıldaki betimlemelerini incelemektedir. Farklı tarihsel dönemlerde, değişen ve dönüşen sosyal ve kültürel bağlamlarla birlikte Hacı Bektaş'ın kimliğine yeni anlamlar yüklenmiştir. Bu çalışmanın kapsamı, birbirleriyle metinlerarası ilişki içinde olan on beşinci yüzyıla ait üç eserle sınırlandırılmıştır: *Ḫıżırnāme* (1476), *Ṣaltuḳnāme* (1480 civarı) ve *Velāyetnāme* (1481 civarı). Bu üç eserden ikisi, *Ṣaltuḳnāme* ve *Velāyetnāme*, Osmanlı döneminde ve öncesinde Anadolu'da gelişen tarihsel olayları anlamamızı sağlayacak önemli ayrıntılar içermeleri nedeniyle sayısız çalışmaya konu olmuşken *Ḫıżırnāme* yakın zamana kadar araştırmacıların dikkatini çekmemiştir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, birbiriyle bağlantılı bu üç eserdeki Hünkâr Hacı Bektaş betimlemelerine odaklanarak, Hünkâr Hacı Bektaş'ın tarih içinde değişen ve dönüşen imgesi ile ilgili gelecekteki çalışmaların ufkunu açacak yeni sorular teşkil etmektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Hacı Bektaş, *Hızırnâme, Saltuknâme, Velayetnâme*, betimleme.

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* Bu çalışmanın bulguları, yazarın The Journey of an Ottoman Warrior Dervish: The Hızırname (Book of Khidr), Sources and Reception (SOAS, 2015) başlıklı doktora tezine dayanmaktadır.
Geliş Tarihi: 24 Haziran 2024 – Kabul Tarihi: 18 Kasım 2024
Atıf: Kocaer, Sibel. "Portrayal(s) of Hünkâr Hacı Bektaş in the Fifteenth Century." *bilig*, no. 115, 2025, ss. 145-167, https://doi.org/10.12995/bilig.8182.

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Introduction

Hünkâr Hacı Bektaş, or Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli, is one of the most significant and influential religious personas for the history of Anatolia who has been attributed the title *veli* (Radtke and O'Kane; Renard; Karamustafa, "Walāya according to al-Junayd"; Öztürk; Topaloğlu; Uludağ, "Veli"). Despite various significant information on the persona of Hacı Bektaş that survives in certain manuscripts from different historical periods, the only biographical work on his life that survives today is the *Velāyetnāme* (Uzun Firdevsî, *Vilâyet-nâme*; Uzun Firdevsî, *Manzum Vilâyet-nâme*), and for this obvious reason, the *Velāyetnāme* has been the core source for all studies on Hacı Bektaş and the Bektashi literature. The texts related to the *Velāyetnāme* are also crucial sources for understanding the image of Hacı Bektaş, however, if a text related to the *Velāyetnāme* was composed during the same period as the *Velāyetnāme* or predates it, that text becomes even more crucial for analysing the content, structure, and authenticity of the *Velāyetnāme* itself. The dates of composition for the *Ḫızırnāme* (Bardakçı; Kocaer) and the *Ṣaltuḳnāme* (Ebu'l-Hayr-ı Rumi, *Saltukname*; Ebu'l-Hayr-ı Rumi, *Saltuk-name I-III*) intersect with the date of the *Velāyetnāme*, in other words, these three works represent the same historical era in many ways, as they were composed almost in the same years. This evidence makes the *Ḫızırnāme* and the *Ṣaltuḳnāme* even more important for the *Velāyetnāme* studies.

In terms of its genre, the *Velāyetnāme* is typically categorised alongside hagiographical works (*menākıbnāme*) that narrate the miraculous deeds of religious figures. Besides, it can also be categorised with the biographical works of legendary heroes, such as the *İskendernāme* (Ahmedî; Hamzavî; Faustina Doufikar–Aerts; Zuwiyya),[1] the *Baṭṭalnāme* (Dedes) or the *Ṣaltuḳnāme*. In fact, these two categories cannot be separated by clear borders, and sometimes resemblances between texts are more helpful for today's readers than differences in understanding the aim of their author(s) and their reception by the intended audience. However, academic disciplines often initially analyse their materials by categorising them into distinct titles, separating them from related items in various ways, and thus isolating them within constructed boundaries. In the case of the *Velāyetnāme*, there is a tendency to read this text as a part of the *menākıbnāme* genre.

Consequently, much of the secondary literature has focused either on the religious deeds of Hacı Bektaş or on the religious network mentioned in the text. However, this kind of reading, which guides today's readers with pre-accepted categorisations, creates restrictions in their minds and prevents them from recognising links and transmissions between various texts.[2]

One of the episodes in the *Velāyetnāme* appears to be a remarkable example challenging the ways we read the texts from earlier centuries. When Sarı Saltuk arrives at a castle and learns that everyone has fled due to the fear of the seven-headed dragon living there, he immediately confronts it. When the dragon attacks him back, he forgets to use his sword, and he immediately calls Hızır (Khidr/Khizr) to help him. At that moment Hızır is sitting with Hünk*â*r Hacı Bektaş. When Saltuk calls for help, Hacı Bektaş sends Hızır to remind him to use his sword. Thanks to Hızır, Sarı Saltuk cuts the seven heads of the dragon one by one with his own wooden sword (Uzun Firdevsî, *Vilâyet-nâme* 46). This episode includes rich intertextual material circulating both orally and in written form for centuries, and therefore, the defeat of the dragon by Saltuk should be examined within intertextual context, as well as within historical context. In this episode, the message in the portrayal of Saltuk is clear for the audience in terms of power relations, but the connotations of both the dragon and Hızır are also of crucial importance to understand all the hidden meanings thoroughly. Unfortunately, this is the most complicated and difficult part for today's readers, as we are not familiar with the popular stories of İskender widely circulating in the region, nor with the cult of Hızır that can be traced in almost every kind of text in that era. In the sixteenth century for example, the Dutch ambassador Ogier G. de Busbecq visited a dervish lodge near Amasya and documented in his notes the wide circulation of stories about İskender and Hızır in the region, although his aim seems to be to criticize alterations in the stories about St. George (Roider 54-55). Today, in academic discourse we define those alterations with the terms such as *adaptation*, *transmission*, *version*, or *variant*. In any case, Busbecq's comments are inspiring for today's readers as they provide valuable information about the circulation of shared stories in Anatolia.

To be portrayed as a dragon slayer is a prominent chracteristic for many warrior protagonists in heroic narratives, and to associate the episode of

Saltuk in the *Velāyetnāme* solely with narratives about İskender would be a quick conclusion. However, the more we read the İskendernāme works by different authors, both in Persian and Turkish, and in other languages, the more the portrayal of Saltuk in the *Saltuknāme* appears as an İskender-like warrior and wanderer. Furthermore, tales of both Alexander the Great and İskender slaying dragons were widely circulated among various social groups for centuries (Stoneman 215-216). Hence it was very likely that the encounter of *İskender with a dragon echoed in the minds of the audience of the Velāyetnāme* when they read or listened to the episode of Saltuk as a dragon slayer. Additionally, the companionship of Hızır in this episode intensifies the echoes of İskender narratives, even for today's readers who are familiar with those narratives. All in all, Alexander the Great, or Büyük İskender, was praised as the greatest conqueror for centuries, and almost all warriors, including the Ottoman sultans, were depicted in his likeness or even portrayed as superior (Krstic 134-135; Bağcı; Anooshahr 86-100).

In the preface to the Turkish translations of three articles by Claude Romano, Cemal Kafadar highlights the distinction between 'happening' and 'fact', which was persistently emphasized by Romano. According to Romano, the essential feature for any happening to define it as a 'happening' is that it should mean something for individual(s). Therefore, as Kafadar explains, a 'happening' is also a matter of 'meaning', and narration is intertwined with comprehending in the happening/time relation. With this definition, Kafadar questions the Battle of Karbala with regards to *happening*, *meaning*, and *comprehending*, and he defines the Karbala tragedy as 'a single massive happening' ("*tek bir hadise irisi*") which has transformed its meaning through comprehending for centuries (Kafadar, "Sunuş" 7-15). Similar to Kafadar's definition, the wars and conquests of Alexander the Great, or Büyük İskender, and even his entire life, could also be interpreted as such a single massive happening, which has gained new meanings over time for each and every audience. For today's readers, to *comprehend* any text which is linked to or influenced by *narratives* about Alexander the Great is then, is only possible by *comprehending* that massive *happening*.

As for the *Velāyetnāme*, due to its rich intertextual relations with other circulating narratives of its time, it would be deficient to read this text only as a book about the miraculous deeds of warriors who represent religious

figures in Anatolia. As a first step to uncover some *happenings* reflected in the *Velāyetnāme* which gained distinctive meanings in different social and cultural groups, this short analysis will focus on the portrayals of Hünkâr Hacı Bektaş and will try to trace his narrative(s) in the fifteenth century.

The Ḫıżırnāme

Gördüm geyükleri gelür Hünkâr önünde yüz urur
Heb gaybîler saf saf durur Hünkâr Hacım Bekdâş gelür[3]

The original title of this poetic work given by the author himself is the *Divān-ı Şeyḫ Muḥyiddīn* (1476). In academic studies it is clearly defined as a Turkish text as the main body of work is composed in Turkish, while the short introduction in Arabic and the Persian rubrics of the poems provide information about the language skills of the author. The author, Şeyh Mehmed Çelebi (d. 1493), was the head of the dervish lodge of the Zeyniyye order in Eğirdir, Hamid ili (Kofoğlu; Yiğitbaşı).

The *Ḫıżırnāme* contains short compositions in verse, which form a narrative when read in sequence. The entire narrative tells of the travels of the narrator with the spiritual blessing (*himmet*) of Hızır. Fuad Köprülü was the first scholar who introduced this text under the title *Ḫıżırnāme* in 1919, subsequently the majority of scholars followed his naming in their studies. According to Köprülü, based on the evidence in the *Ḫıżırnāme*, the founding of the Bektashi order should be dated at least a half century earlier than the beginning of the sixteenth century (Köprülü 122). The evidence in the *Ḫıżırnāme*, which was pointed by Köprülü as linking this text to the Bektashi order, must be the prominent role of Hacı Bektaş in the narrative: Hacı Bektaş is introduced as the guardian (*gözcü*) of the Ottoman lands (*Osman illeri*), and addressed as *hünkârım* (my sovereign) by the narrator dervish (Kocaer 264-265).

The status of Hacı Bektaş in the *Ḫıżırnāme* is clearly higher than that of the narrator dervish: he refers to Hacı Bektaş as *hünkârım* (*my sovereign*), and Hacı Bektaş girds the dervish with his own sword, lifts him onto his horse and puts soldiers under his command. It is clear that in this poem Hacı Bektaş is portrayed as head of the warriors in Anatolia who leads them to victory. Indeed, another poem in the *Ḫıżırnāme* includes a list of the warrior dervishes with the titles *abdāl* (O. Köprülü; La-Shay; Âşık Paşazâde

486; Karamustafa, "Kaygusuz Abdal" 330), *baba* (Uludağ, "Baba"), *dede* (Uludağ, "Dede"), and *ġāzī* (ghazi) (Tekin; Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*; Lowry; Darling). In Bardakçı's edition, this poem comes just before the quoted one above, thereby providing further context for the the leadership of Hacı Bektaş over the warrior dervishes in Anatolia.

While the portrayal of Hacı Bektaş as a leader of warriors seems accurate in these two consecutive poems giving the impression that it must be resulting from his fame among warrior groups in the fifteenth century, the ascension (*miraj*) journey of the dervish raises questions regarding the juxtaposition of a divine journey of the soul to God and a worldly war within a single text. Furthermore, while the text portrays Hacı Bektaş as the head of warriors in Anatolia, it does not mention his name during the ascension journey. What could this distinction be implying both for the reception and portrayals of Hızır and Hacı Bektaş in the fifteenth century? The answers to these questions become clear when the source texts for the *Ḫıżırnāme* can be identified with clarity. While it is easy to find numerous examples for the portrayals of Hızır with his various features, the absence of non-prophetic ascension journey in Turkish sources (Akar; Esir) complicates the analysis of his characteristics in the *Ḫıżırnāme*. In this case, literary, philosophical, and religious sources on ascension both in Arabic and Persian emerge as potential sources for the *Ḫıżırnāme* within the context of the cultural and literary history of fifteenth century Turkish and earlier. When analysing the overall lexicon employed in the *Ḫıżırnāme* and the specific terminology utilized throughout the text, one concept that prominently emerges is *keşf* (*kashf*: unveiling), serving as the pivotal notion for comprehending and interpreting the non-prophetic journey depicted in the narrative: the content of the *Ḫıżırnāme* exhibits striking resemblances to Ishraqi literature and the works of Ekberî – Konevî school. Most of the texts within this body of literature focus on the essence of knowledge, and acknowledge *heavenly experiences* as the ultimate form of acquiring knowledge about the essence of existence.

Shihab al-Din al-Suhrawardi (d. 1191) is the founder of the Ishraqi doctrine based on experiential (*nazari*) knowledge, and expounds his philosophical perspective on various subjects, including the celestial spheres, the concept of vision, the essence of existence, and the dynamics between souls and angels (*The Philosophy of Illumination*). He also authored several treatises of

a philosophical nature and some of those tell of visionary experiences (*The Philosophical Allegories*). A parallel reading of the works of Suhrawardi and the *Ḫıżırnāme* leads to the conclusion that the *Ḫıżırnāme* follows the textual lineage of Ishraqi literature as it narrates that the knowledge of existence is attained through experience, and this experience is represented by the notion of becoming Hızır (Kocaer 161-167). However, due to the lack of studies on the circulation and reception of the works of Suhrawardi in Anatolia, establishing concrete links between the *Ḫıżırnāme* and Suhrawardi's works is not straightforward (Yalman; Sariyannis).

Another corpus of literature related to the *Ḫıżırnāme* consists of the writings of Ibn 'Arabi (d. 1240) and his followers. Similar to the works of Suhrawardi, Ibn 'Arabi and his followers also employ similar terminology concerning visionary experiences (Kocaer 59-60). Additionally, Ibn 'Arabi recounts his own ascension to the heavens in four different texts (Kocaer 141-144). While it is a kind of literary tradition that the majority of the poetry collections composed by sufis mention the secrets of the universe and the human body (Ay, "Sufi Shaykhs" 8), the educational background of Şeyh Mehmed Çelebi's father makes it highly likely that the author of the *Ḫıżırnāme* had a sound knowledge of the *Kitab al-Miraj* by Ibn 'Arabi (Kocaer 141-153).

With this brief information on the content of the *Ḫıżırnāme,* the portrayal of Hacı Bektaş as the leader of the Ottoman army and head of Anatolian warrior dervishes becomes even more intriguing. While the text presents itself as one of the visionary works of Ishraqi literature and Ibn 'Arabi – Konevi corpus, the leadership of Hacı Bektaş over warrior dervishes instead of other founders of sufi pathways, including the Zeyni order to which the author Şeyh Mehmed Çelebi belongs, suggests the powerful influence of the fame of Hacı Bektaş among the warriors in Anatolia. At this point, the location where the *Ḫıżırnāme* was composed and the historical context becomes crucial to understand the portrayal of Hacı Bektaş as the leader of all of the ghazi dervishes. Eğirdir was a borderzone between the Ottomans and the Karamanids (Karamanoğulları). The attacks by the Karamanids continued until the conquest of the Karamanid lands by Mehmed II in 1468 (İnalcık 20; Şikârî). Furthermore, the collaboration of Karamanids with the Ottomans' eastern neighbours, particularly the Akkoyunlu, intensified the

conflicts in the region (Woods). Therefore, the portrayal of Hacı Bektaş as the leader of the warriors in Anatolia must be examined within the broader context of the Ottoman–Karamanid conflict and the war between the Ottomans and Akkoyunlu.

Hacı Bektaş is mentioned in only three poems in the *Ḫıżırnāme*, however, these three poems construct the epic character and political aspect of the text. Poem twenty-eight is on the arrival of Hacı Bektaş at Mount Bulgar[4] and this poem introduces Mount Bulgar as the dwelling place of the "gürbüz erenler" (*strong and clever erenler*) who are the servants of Hacı Bektaş (Bardakçı 175). When read within its historical context, the location Mount Bulgar implicitly emphasizes the protracted conflict between the Ottomans and Karamanids. The *Karamannāme* (before 1584) by Şikârî, stands out as one of the significant historical sources to understand the importance of Mount Bulgar for both the Ottoman and Karamanid warriors. Şikârî describes Mount Bulgar as an exceedingly steep mountain, so challenging to control that even the jinns of Suleyman cannot take someone from it (73, 120), and tells of the ongoing conflict between the rulers (*begs*) of Karaman, Ottoman and other principalities at Mount Bulgar (106-135).

With all these features introduced briefly here, the *Ḫıżırnāme* appears as one of the primary sources of the Bektashi literature to understand varieties in different portrayals of Hacı Bektaş in the fifteenth century. However, in some studies on the Bektashi literature and Bektashi network, there is a tendency to exclude its author Şeyh Mehmed Çelebi from the Bektashi network, and thus to exclude this text from the Bektashi literature. As stated before, Şeyh Mehmed Çelebi openly declares in the *Ḫıżırnāme* that he is one of the followers of the Zeyniyye order. Furthermore, he is not only a follower, but the third ruler of the Zeyni lodge in Eğirdir (Yazar). Ahmet Yaşar Ocak rejects Köprülü's suggestion, which accepts the *Ḫıżırnāme* as a part of Bektashi literature (Ocak, "Hızırnâme" 418). In the most recent study that includes the *Ḫıżırnāme*, Rıza Yıldırım quotes and follows Ocak's claims. Furthermore, he introduces Şeyh Mehmed Çelebi as an *outsider* of the Bektashi network, and also, similar to the author of the *Ṣaltuḳnāme*, Ebu'l-Hayr-ı Rûmî, he introduces Şeyh Mehmed Çelebi merely as an *observer* (Yıldırım 183-187). This claim by Yıldırım needs detailed explanation by himself with a particular focus on how he defines to be an 'outsider' and

an 'observer' of the Bektashi network in the fifteenth century. Despite the clear relation between Şeyh Mehmed Çelebi and the Zeyniyye order openly mentioned in the *Ḫızırnāme*, the text does not present any of the Zeyni sheiks as superior to Hacı Bektaş, but it indeed portrays Hacı Bektaş as the head of all the warrior dervishes in Anatolia. The first-person narration also gives the message to its audience that everthing told in the text is experinced by an *insider* himself. Another crucial question that needs further analysis and explanation is whether being a follower of certain sufi order would have prevented someone from being a follower of others in the fifteenth century. The *Ḫızırnāme* itself does not display or imply any conflict between such identities, namely being both a member of the Zeyni network and the Bektashi network at the same time. With all these fundamental questions, Köprülü's claim, which relates the *Ḫızırnāme* to the origins of the Bektashi order in Anatolia, remains the most consistant explanation for the formative period of the Bektashi network.

As for the importance of Hızır in the *Ḫızırnāme*, the text itself provides a reasonable explanation to its audience. One of the poems informs its audience that Âşık Paşa (d. 1333) is the one who tells him about Hızır (Bardakçı 229-230). In Âşık Paşa's voluminous *Ġaribnāme* (1330), there is a lengthy chapter on Hızır (Âşık Paşa couplets 6000-6180). When both texts are analysed, it becomes evident that the *Ġaribnāme* is also one of the main sources for the *Ḫızırnāme*. The central importance of Hızır, therefore, must be explained within the intertextual context of the *Ḫızırnāme*, including Ishraqi literature, Ekberî – Konevî literature, and the *Ġaribnāme.*

Ṣaltuḳnāme

The *Ṣaltuḳnāme* was compiled by Ebu'l-Hayr-ı Rûmî at about the same time as the *Ḫızırnāme*. Dolu/Muhyiddin (the narrator dervish) in the *Ḫızırnāme* and Saltuk in the *Ṣaltuḳnāme* share many similarities. Both of them attain the status of being a friend of God with the blessing of Hızır (Karamustafa, "Sarı Saltık") and they embark on journeys to similar places. The identical motifs and shared subjects indicate that these were popular stories circulating among the audience of these texts at that time. Therefore, it is crucial to examine the differences between the *Ḫızırnāme* and the *Ṣaltuḳnāme* with a specific focus on the identity and possible main motivations of their

authors, the intended audience, and the varieties in the possible sources that have influenced these two texts.

Unlike the *Ḫıżırnāme*, the voluminous *Ṣaltuḳnāme* is a prose work. It was commissioned by the Ottoman prince Cem (d. 1495), and the stories about Saltuk circulating in the Balkans and Anatolia were compiled by a member of Cem's court, namely Ebu'l-Hayr-ı Rûmî. This is the first significant difference between the *Ḫıżırnāme* and the *Ṣaltuḳnāme*: while the author of the *Ḫıżırnāme* is the head of the Zeyni lodge at the Ottoman – Karamanid frontier, there are multiple authors of the latter. Prince Cem, the compiler Ebu'l-Hayr-ı Rûmî, and all the numerous unknown individuals who told the stories of Saltuk were the authors of the *Ṣaltuḳnāme.* Furthermore, due to the historical identity of Saltuk, who is said to have lived at the end of the thirteenth century, the stories about Saltuk contain multiple historical layers (Aydoğan).

In secondary sources, there is no consensus on the identity of Saltuk. The complexity of his identity is further compounded by the association of certain Christian saints in the Balkans with Saltuk (Ocak, *Sarı Saltık*). The earliest extant source mentioning Saltuk is the account by Ibn al-Sarraj, a judge in the Mamluk State. This account refers to him as Saltuk al-Türki, depicts him often gazing at the sky, and mentions the miraculous deeds attributed to him including altering his appearance and changing the properties of substances (E. Öztürk 125-134). The similarity between the portrayals of Saltuk in al-Sarraj's account, the depictions of Hızır and warrior dervishes implies a close connection between the representations of dervishes circulating in Anatolia and its surrounding regions during the thirteenth century and the warrior dervish identity in the fifteenth century.

In the portrayal of Hacı Bektaş in the *Ṣaltuḳnāme*, two significant episodes stand out. The first recounts the migration of Hacı Bektaş from Khurasan to Anatolia, and the second episode depicts a gathering of Anatolian dervishes. In the first episode, the sheikhs of Khurasan express skepticism about the existence of a friend of God in Rum, and they question the legitimacy of Sarı Saltuk's miraculous deeds in Anatolia. To test if there truly exists a friend of God in Anatolia, the qutb of Khurasan throws a wooden stick towards Rum. Ahmed Fakih, present in Rum, catches the wooden stick, and upon this, Hacı Bektaş is sent to Rum to investigate further. Hacı Bektaş

meets Ahmed Fakih, who reveals to him the presence of friends of God in Rum. Upon witnessing Ahmed Fakih's spiritual insight, Hacı Bektaş returns to Khurasan and is appointed as the *guardian of Rum* by the qutb, while Ahmed Fakih assumes the position of the *qutb in Rum*. In the second episode, all the friends of God convene Ahmed Fakih's dervish lodge, as he holds the position of qutb in Rum at that time. Hacı Bektaş is depicted as a cook during that gathering. This meeting is notable, because both the *Ḫıżırnāme* and the *Ṣaltuḳnāme* feature an episode depicting the assembly of warrior dervishes (Kocaer 189-196).

Both the *Ḫıżırnāme* and the *Ṣaltuḳnāme* introduce Hacı Bektaş as a guardian, but while in the *Ḫıżırnāme* he is the guardian of the Ottoman lands, in the *Ṣaltuḳnāme* he is the guardian of Rum (Özbaran; Kafadar, "A Rome of One's Own"). The difference in the description of the territories being guarded seems to be reflecting the political contexts of the *Ḫıżırnāme* and the *Ṣaltuḳnāme*, as well as Hacı Bektaş's reputation among the warriors in the fifteenth century. The *Ḫıżırnāme* openly celebrates Ottoman victories, portraying Hacı Bektaş as supporting the Ottomans, likely leveraging his esteemed image among warriors in the Eğirdir region. The Ottoman identity of Hacı Bektaş in this text becomes evident when considered in the historical context of Ottoman – Karamanid conflicts and the Ottoman – Akkoyunlu war. Unlike the *Ṣaltuḳnāme*, the *Ḫıżırnāme* lacks conversion stories or conflicts with non-Muslims, making the entire land of Rum less relevant to its political message, as the Karamanid territories form a significant part of Rum, as well as the Ottoman lands.

In terms of its setting, the fight and travels of Sarı Saltuk mostly takes place on the Christian – Muslim frontier zone. Since it is a compiled text commissioned by the Ottoman prince Cem, the political agenda of Cem must have influenced its content and structure. The relationship between Cem and his father Mehmed II (d. 1481) is crucial, as his ambition to succeed to the throne likely influenced the *Ṣaltuḳnāme*, which consists of heroic deeds of warriors against infidels. At this point, for example the depiction of Edirne in the *Ṣaltuḳnāme* provides insight for today's readers to explore the various layers in the stories shaped by the aim of its compiler and Prince Cem. In the second and third volumes of the *Ṣaltuḳnāme*, Edirne is referred to as the hearf of the ghazis, and it is described as superior to Istanbul.

This challenging detail likely reflects Cem's aim to ensure the support of warriors in Edirne and its vicinity (Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds* 147-148, 191). When Cem ordered the stories of Saltuk to be compiled, he was in Edirne to safeguard Rumelia, while his father Mehmed II and his brothers were fighting at the Eastern border of the Ottomans against Uzun Hasan. The title 'guardian of Rum' given to Hacı Bektaş in the *Ṣaltuḳnāme* must be analysed within this historical context. For Prince Cem, Ebu'l-Hayr-ı Rûmî, and the ghazi dervishes, Anatolia and Rumelia clearly constitute a single entity called Rum.

In the second episode of the *Ṣaltuḳnāme*, which portrays Hacı Bektaş as a cook, this aspect of him is not mentioned in the *Ḫıżırnāme*. Since the *Ṣaltuḳnāme* is a compilation of long stories with rich material, the portrayal of Hacı Bektaş as a cook remains a minor detail compared to other major events in the plot. Consequently, readers might overlook this detail if their focus is not on the identity of Hacı Bektaş. This also suggests that this detail is not an additon by its authors due to its minor importance, but may be linked to the fame of Hacı Bektaş as a cook in certain stories, or may imply his rank among the dervishes in Rum.

Velāyetnāme

Rūm ḳurbına gelince ol hümām
Rūm erenlerine virdi ḫoş selām[5]

Similar to the lack of historical information about Saltuk's life, there is a lack of historical records regarding the life of Hacı Bektaş from the time he lived, which scholars accept as the thirteenth century. Among the sources mentioning Hacı Bektaş, the earliest surviving ones today are the *Menāḳıbu'l-ḳudsiyye* by Elvan Çelebi (d. c. 760/1358) and the *Manāḳib al-ʿĀrifīn* by Eflaki (d. 1360) (Ay 17-18; Karakaya-Stump 152-153; Soileau, *Humanist Mystics* 150-152; Yıldırım 59-94). In addition to the remarkable information about Hacı Bektaş in these sources, the *Velāyetnāme* stands out as the most extensive, and also controversial source on his life and identity, along with the partial information in the *Ḫıżırnāme* and the *Ṣaltuḳnāme* from the same time period.

The association between Hacı Bektaş and Ahmed Yesevi narrated in the *Velāyetnāme* is the subject of debate in recent scholarship, especially

because sources earlier than the *Velāyetnāme* refer to Vefaî/Babaî circles in Anatolia, instead of Yesevi affiliation (Karakaya-Stump 145-187). Another controversial subject is the authorship of the *Velāyetnāme*, as there are different versions of the *Velāyetnāme* in verse, prose, or mixed form (Soileau, "Vilayetname" 92-94; Soileau *Humanist Mystics* 153-154; Uzun Firdevsî *Manzum Vilâyet-nâme*). In his introduction to the most recent critical edition of the verse version of the *Velāyetnāme*, Fatih Köksal verifies that the author of the verse version must be Şerefeddin Mûsâ (d. after 1517), who is famous for Uzun Firdevsî, Firdevsî-i Tavîl and Firdevsî-i Rûmî (O. Köprülü, "Firdevsî, Uzun"). Based on the textual evidence he analysed, Köksal suggests that Uzun Firdevsî first wrote the *Velāyetnāme* in prose form, then he rewrote the same text in verse, but with some changes and additions (Uzun Firdevsî, *Manzum Vilâyet-nâme* 1-4).

Studies on the history of religious orders in Anatolia commonly indicate the differences between the social lifestyle and status of Hacı Bektaş and Rûmî (Mevlânâ) (1207-1273), who were coevals, the former living in a small town or village called Sulucakarahöyük, the latter in the capital city of former Seljuk state. Also, based on the references in historical sources, researchers emphasize the conceivable rivalry between Hacı Bektaş and Rûmî, and their followers (Soileau, *Humanist Mystics* 148-150; Ay, "Hristiyan ve İslam Züht Hayatının"; Ay, "Sufi Shaykhs"). While the portrayal of Hacı Bektaş in the *Velāyetnāme* supports the claims about his social status by associating him with rural regions, the text itself identifies the region of Rum as a single territory. Accordingly, it relates the entire lands of Rum to Hacı Bektaş, attributing him the status of *the qutb of Rum*.

Both the *Ṣaltuḳnāme* and the *Velāyetnāme* include narratives about Hacı Bektaş coming to the lands of Rum, but with differences in their plots. The major difference in the portrayals of Hacı Bektaş in these narratives is his status: in the *Ṣaltuḳnāme*, he is the guardian of Rum, while in the *Velāyetnāme*, he is the qutb of Rum, and he attains this position through a piece of mulberry wood. As studies on the history of the Bektashi network often quote, the *Velāyetnāme* narrates that Ahmet Yesevi first declares Hacı Bektaş the *qutb al-aqtab* (*the axis of axes*) and then sends him to Rum as superior to the Abdals of Rum (Soileau, *Humanist Mystics* 153-156). In this episode, there are two main details in the portrayal of Hacı Bektaş: the

people he was associated with before coming to Rum and his identity upon coming to Rum. The latter is particularly significant for comprehending the entire narrative constructed in the *Velāyetnāme*, especially when read within the context of the formative period of Bektashi identity in Anatolia. As pointed out in studies on the *Velāyetnāme*, the entire narrative, composed of many episodes, clearly emphasizes the authority and superiority of Hacı Bektaş over the warrior dervishes in Anatolia, who are generally referred to as the Abdals of Rum in the text. Therefore, regarding the portrayals of Hacı Bektaş, the *Velāyetnāme* clearly establishes the legacy of Hacı Bektaş in the Bektashi community of the fifteenth century. The opposition by the Abdals of Rum against the coming of Hacı Bektaş to their region also serves to construct his legacy in the structure of the narrative (Karakaya-Stump 155; Soileau, *Humanist Mystics*, 154-156; Soileau, "Vilayetname" 23-24).

Reading the *Velāyetnāme* in terms of power relations between warrior dervishes, religious groups, and other political identities is fundamental to understanding the historical layers in this intriguing text. Additionally, there are other approaches to explore the layers of meaning implied in the entire narrative. According to Özkan Öztürk, the *Velāyetnāme* and its codes are based on the theoretical framework of unity of being (wahdat al-wujud) and the divine names. Thus, the *Velāyetnāme* exemplifies the systematic application of Ibn 'Arabi's theoretical framework regarding the manifestation of the divine names in the levels of existence, which is based on the doctrine of the qutb. Therefore, as Öztürk claims, when the miraculous acts in the *Velāyetnāme* are read as representing the imaginal realm ('alām al-mithāl), understanding the meanings of the text becomes easier. The dervishes who have attained the stage of the imaginal realm possess the knowledge of the divine names. Therefore, when they transform into an animal, such as a dove or a bear, they represent an existence in the imaginal realm upon which the divine name manifests. In this context, the relationship between Hacı Bektaş and the Abdals of Rum represents the divine names they symbolise. The *Velāyetnāme*, then, comprises narrations that briefly depict the manifestations of the divine names (Ö. Öztürk).

Öztürk's approach is essentially reading the *Velāyetnāme* in its intertextual context. This method is crucial for comprehending the deeper meanings in the text, taking today's readers beyond the historical and political conflicts

of its time. Through this kind of reading, the *Velāyetnāme* appears as more than just a compilation of stories about Hacı Bektaş randomly circulating in the region or a miraculous biography establishing his legacy. It appears as a comprehensive text, opening and closing through a logical structure, including symbols and short narratives that refer to a web of textual connections from earlier periods. The distribution of the provinces in Rum to his successors by Hacı Bektaş for example, is a thought-provoking feature of the plot, echoing the conquest of Rum by Dārā in the *İskendernāme*. When Dārā leaves Rum for Persia after the conquest, he appoints his successors to govern the provinces of Rum.

The identification of Hacı Bektaş with Hızır in the *Velāyetnāme* also needs to be read and analyzed within the broader context of intertextual relations. In the episode that recounts the final days of Hacı Bektaş, anticipating his imminent death, Hacı Bektaş summons Sarı İsmail, one of his disciples, and appoints him as his successor. He instructs Sarı İsmail to await a visitor with specific attributes: a man with a dune-coloured horse and a green veil, who will cleanse his body upon his death. Hacı Bektaş warns Sarı İsmail not to engage in conversation with this visitor. He also imparts the belief that dervishes do not truly die but undergo a transformation of appearance. As foretold, the predicted visitor arrives and attends to the rituals of washing and funeral rites. Intrigued and suspicious, Sarı İsmail follows the man, yearning to uncover his identity, suspecting that he might be Hızır. Sarı İsmail, upon seeing the man's face, begins to worship him as he realizes that the man is none other than Hacı Bektaş himself (Uzun Firdevsî, *Vilâyet-nâme* 88-89). In this episode, the description of the unnamed visitor, such as his dune-coloured horse and green veil, convinces the audience that he is Hızır. Like the *Ḫıżırnāme* and the *Ṣaltuḳnāme*, the *Velāyetnāme* features an intriguing connection between Hacı Bektaş and Hızır, culminating in a remarkable conclusion. The identification of Hacı Bektaş with Hızır in this episode recalls the notion of *becoming Hızır* in the works of Suhrawardi and Ishraqi literature. While this identification is significant for contextualizing the *Velāyetnāme* within Ishraqi literature, Öztürk's interpretation of the *Velāyetnāme* in relation to Ibn 'Arabi and the imaginal realm is also crucial in supporting this connection.

While the intertextual context leads us to comprehend the layers of meaning in the texts of past times, historical context helps us to understand how their author(s), compiler(s), and audience have played with those layers and modified the meaning according to their aims. The insertion of Osman Beg into the *Velāyetnāme* for example, could be reflecting the centralisation of the Ottoman state (Soileau, "Vilayetname" 93). Furthermore, the *Ḫızırnāme* also identifies Hünkâr Hacı Bektaş with the Ottoman identity. This common feature of both texts suggests that the authors of these texts, Şeyh Mehmed Çelebi and Uzun Firdevsî, could be members of the same or similar social and cultural networks. Likewise, as pointed out by Karakaya Stump, shared miracles by Hacı Bektaş and Abu'l-Wafa', such as praying in the air, "implies a case of intertextual connectivity between the two traditions" (Karakaya-Stump 172). These miracle motifs seem to be widely circulated at those times as many authors include them in their writings, such as Âşık Paşa. The *Ġaribnāme* is one of the main sources for the *Ḫızırnāme*, and clearly, it is one of the significant junction texts within the broader textual network of Arabic, Persian, and Anatolian Turkish texts in the fifteenth century and before.

Conclusion

The *Ḫızırnāme* portrays Hünkâr Hacı Bektaş as the guardian of Ottoman lands, the *Ṣaltuḳnāme* portrays him as the guardian of Rum, and the *Velāyetnāme* portrays him as the qutb of Rum. Despite differences in his status and titles, the authors, as well as the audience, of these three texts of the same period, seem to be referring to the narratives about Hacı Bektaş circulating in Anatolia and the Balkans in the fifteenth century. The alterations in the portrayals of Hacı Bektaş in these three texts must be resulting from the political agenda of their authors and the audience. The portrayal of Hünkâr Hacı Bektaş in the *Ḫızırnāme* seems to be shaped by the authority and power issues within the context of the Ottoman – Karamanid relations and the war at the Eastern border of the Ottomans, his portrayal in the *Ṣaltuḳnāme* seems to be shaped by the relationship and conflict between the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II, his son Cem, and the warrior dervishes in the broader region of Edirne, and his portrayal in the *Velāyetnāme* suggests that its author, Uzun Firdevsî, composed the biography of Hacı Bektaş within the intertextual context of Ishraqi-Ekberi-Konevi

literature, and shaped his portrayal with regards to the Bektashi order and the centralization of the Ottomans. Consequently, today's authors discern a powerful and charismatic image of Hünkâr Hacı Bektaş in these three texts, which reflect his fame in the fifteenth century and earlier, as conveyed through the orally circulating narratives of the ghazi dervishes.

Regarding the discussions on the affiliation of the *Ḫızırnāme* with the Bektashi literature, it is accurate to identify this text as one of the intriguing works of the early Bektashi network and literature, as it includes a powerful image of Hünkar Hacı Bektaş among the warrior dervishes who support the Ottomans. At this point, it is necessary to revisit what it meant to be affiliated with the Bektashi network in the fifteenth century. As in the example of the author of the *Ḫızırnāme*, a dervish or a warrior could be affiliated with or be a follower of various groups or people at the same time. Therefore, researchers need to be aware of weak and sometimes obscure lines between religious groups, which are also significantly political and changeable.

The *Velāyetnāme* has mostly been the subject of research in studies focusing on the history of religious groups, the formative period of Bektashi order, or Ottoman history. In these studies, research questions generally adrress the social network, the audience of the text, and the political situation, therefore, the answers focus on the power and authority issues. Power relations is an important issue that designs almost every act in a society, however, to *comprehend* a historical text always requires deeper knowledge. The author of the *Velāyetnāme*, Uzun Firdevsî, awaits to be a subject of research with his other works alongside the *Velāyetnāme*. There is a need for further research on other works of Uzun Firdevsî to explore his affiliation with Ishraqi-Ekberî-Konevî literature, which will lead us to contextualize the content of the *Velāyetnāme* in more detail. A close reading of these works and a comparative analysis with the *Velāyetnāme* are required to understand metaphors, other textual plays, and layers of meaning in these texts, as well as to discover the knowledge of their audience about the textual connections.

The charisma of Hünkâr Hacı Bektaş in the *Ḫızırnāme, Ṣaltuḳnāme*, and the *Velāyetnāme* reflects the *ġazā* context of the fifteenth century. The varitons in his portrayal in these three texts provide important clues for identifying heroism and the *veli* identity in Rum, which were adjusted according to intertextual context, autorship, audience, and power relations.

For the reception of Hünkâr Hacı Bektaş in Rum, on the other hand, these variations present an intriguing puzzle for us. Like the Battle of Karbala or the coming of Alexander the Great to Persia and its neighbouring regions, the arrival of Hünkâr Hacı Bektaş in Rum appears to be a significant happening in the history of Anatolia. Its meaning has been interpreted and transformed over centuries, creating different perceptions and portrayals of Hacı Bektaş in Rum.

Conflict of Interest Statement

There is no conflict of interest with any institution or person within the scope of this study.

Notes

1 The biography of Alexander the Great (d. 323 BC) had a wide circulation in different languages and regions through translations and adaptations. In Eastern literatures these works are famous for *İskendernāme.*

2 For a discussion on the grouping of the *Battalnāme*, *Dānişmendnāme*, *Saltuknāme* and *Hamzanāme*, see Dedes 18-20. On the political and cultural transformation in Anatolia and the Balkans between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, and how it represented in Muslim epics and hagiogpraphies in Turkish and Byzantine martyria in Greek, see Kitapçı Bayrı. On the terms how Muslims used to conseptualise and describe their frontier, see Peacock.

3 Bardakçı 175. Translation: I saw the deer coming and bowing their heads before Hünkâr [Hacı Bektaş], the invisibles standing in rows, Hünkâr Hacı Bektaş is coming.

4 It could also be read and spelt as Bolkar, Bulkar or Bulğar in Turkish (Şikârî 87).

5 Uzun Firdevsî *Manzum Vilâyet-nâme* 124-125. Translation: When that diligent [Hacı Bektaş] approached the vicinity of Rum, he greeted the *erenler* in Rum pleasently.

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