

# Creating an Ideal Self: Representations of Infidels in the Late Medieval Anatolian Frontier Narratives

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*İdeal Bir Benlik Yaratmak: Ge Dnem Ortaađda Anadolu U Anlatılarında Kafir Temsilleri*

Öz ■ Anadolu'nun Müslümanlarca fethi sürecindeki dini kahramanlara ilişkin büyük kahramanlık anlatıları, ge dönem ortaađda Küçük Asya'da var olan sınır toplumunun dünya görüşlerini ve ideolojilerini yansıtan tanınmış kaynaklar olagelmıştır. Bu makale *Battalnâme*, *Danışmendnâme* ve *Saltuknâme* gibi destanlarda *Frenk*, *Rum* ve *Yunan* gibi çeşitli kategoriler bağlamında "öteki"nin temsilini ele almaktadır. Makale, bu grupların temsilinin, yiğitlik, adalet, cömertlik, cesaret ve öz-disiplin gibi sınır topluluklarına özgü idealleri tersine çevirerek esas itibarıyla negatif bir öz-imağ (*self-image*) işlevi gördüğünü iddia etmektedir. Bir taraftan gayrimüslim müttefikleri ihtidaya davet ederken, diğere taraftan *gaza* ideolojisini teşvik etmenin bir aracı olarak, kafirin, kahramanın "silah arkadaşı" haline gelmesi meselesine bilhassa dikkat çekmektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: U kültürü, destan, kahramanlık, *gaza*, ideoloji, *Battalnâme*, *Danışmendnâme*, *Saltuknâme*.

## Introduction

The legendary accounts of the warriors and dervishes emanating from the frontier milieu of late medieval Anatolia shed light on the way the people along the frontier conceived both of themselves and others and assigned meaning to the world in which they lived. Warrior epics and hagiographies were two types of narratives in which frontier people articulated their histories around the legendary figures of warriors and dervishes. These narratives not only "told" a particular history but also referred to the earlier layers of the frontier traditions, both Arab

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and Byzantine. Another layer became attached to these narratives when they were compiled under the patronage of the administrative centers in late medieval Anatolia. The Ottoman sultans who patronized the existent frontier lore assigned considerable significance to the *gazi* lore in the formulation of their own past even in periods of extensive centralizing policies.<sup>1</sup> As a result, the warrior epics and hagiographies in their written form were not merely an accumulation of centuries-old oral traditions but also represented ideological positions through authorial and editorial interventions.<sup>2</sup>

Late medieval Anatolian Turkish frontier narratives have generally been studied for their historiographical, linguistic and literary qualities and with only limited discussion of the cultural environment that shaped them. By and large, the studies on these narratives are limited to general commentaries attached to their published facsimiles, mostly focusing on their analysis in terms of content, language and style.

A first group of scholars examined these narratives with regard to their religious content by analyzing and comparing various motifs embedded in these texts. The focus of these studies was to find out the particularities of the Islamic

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- 1 It should be noted that the patronizing of the frontier traditions as a result of an appeasing policy between the central government and the marches was not confined to the Ottomans. The first two warrior epics that will be discussed here, the *Battalnâme* and the *Danişmendnâme*, were for instance, first written down for the Seljukid rulers Ala'eddin Keykubad (r. 1220-37) and Izzeddin (Keykavus II, d. 1279) respectively. It is no coincidence that such patronizing efforts on the part of the Ottomans reached their peak during the time of Bayezid II (r.1481-1512), in the aftermath of Mehmed II's extensive centralizing efforts that created a considerable amount of dismay among many segments of the society including the *gazi*-dervish circles, the nomadic pastoralists and the *abi*-bands. The third of the warrior epics that will be discussed here, the *Saltuknâme*, was written down for Ottoman Prince Cem and was designed to draw support from those discontented circles while Cem made alternative claims for the throne. As a means of "shaping public opinion in his favor" during and after his struggle for the throne with his brother Cem who was supported by many of these groups, Bayezid II patronized the compilation of their oral traditions. Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), p. 66; pp. 97-98 ; Halil Inalcik, "The Rise of Ottoman Historiography", *Historians of the Middle East*, eds. Bernard Lewis and P. M. Holt, (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p.164.
  - 2 This view of the frontier narratives as composed of many layers and reflecting different historical and ideological positions is based on Cemal Kafadar's discussion of the sources in his *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State*, (Berkeley, 1995), see especially Chapter 2, pp.60-117.

experience of the Muslim Turks in medieval Anatolia; in this regard these texts were treated as key examples of an emergent “Turkish folk literature” in Anatolia. Mehmed Fuad Köprülü laid the foundations of this approach, his pioneering works being carried further by recent studies.<sup>3</sup> Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı regarded these sources as a continuum within the general prospect of “Turkish hagiographic literature.” According to him, the *Book of Dede Korkut*, *Hamzanâme*, *Abu Muslimnâme*, *Battalnâme*, *Danışmendnâme*, *Saltuknâme*, *Vilayetnâme-i Otman Baba* and *Vilayetnâme-i Hacı Bektaş* constituted different cycles of this “religious” literature.<sup>4</sup> Ahmet Yaşar Ocak adopted a similar approach and categorized these sources according to their content. From a broader perspective, Ocak dealt with such questions as the emergence and dissemination of the hagiographic literature in Anatolia with an emphasis on the peculiarity of the Turkish concept of sainthood, which was also permeated by the pre-Islamic Turkic beliefs aside from Islamic concepts.<sup>5</sup>

A second group of scholars examined these sources from the perspective of intertextuality with references to the earlier layers of the frontier traditions, both Arab and Persian. While Irène Mélikoff was the first to provide a complete picture of the Persian background of the Anatolian frontier narratives, she nevertheless underlined the Turkish contribution to the genre. Accordingly, the cultural experience of the Muslim Turks in Anatolia was not confined to the translation and adaption of the Persian traditions but also involved their incorporation into the orally transmitted Turkish lore.<sup>6</sup> More recently, Yorgos Dedes provided an elaborate analysis of the frontier narratives of Anatolia in continuum with Arabo-Persian traditions with an emphasis on their oral transmission

3 Mehmet Fuat Köprülü, *Anadoluda Türk Dil ve Edebiyatının Tekamülüne Bir Bakış*, (Istanbul: Akşam Matbaası, 1930); Köprülü, “Anadolu’da İslamiyet: Türk İstilasından Sonra Anadolu Tarih-i Dinisine Bir Nazar ve Bu Tarihin Menbaları”, *Darülfünun Edebiyat Fakültesi Mecmuası*, 2, (1922).

4 Although mentioned by Gölpınarlı under the same category of ‘Turkish hagiographic literature’, it should be noted that the *Book of Dede Korkut* displays a different character than the other works mentioned here.

There are three different editions of *Vilayetnâme: Manakıb-ı Hacı Bektaş-i Veli*, all edited by Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı in 1958, 1990 and 1995. The 1958 and 1995 editions offer also the manuscript facsimile as an appendix.

5 Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Kültür Tarihi Kaynağı Olarak Menakıbnameler: Metodolojik Bir Yaklaşım*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1997).

6 Irène Mélikoff, *Abu Muslim, le “porte-hache” du Khorassan dans la tradition epic turco-iranienne*, (Paris: Librairie d’Amerique et d’Orient Adrien Maisonneuve, 1962).

into Turkish. He also stressed the narratological and thematic continuities in these texts.<sup>7</sup>

A more comprehensive third approach considered these sources as informed by the political and cultural realities of the late medieval Anatolian frontier environment. Even though Mehmed Fuad Köprülü had already underlined the historical value of these texts for studying the mentality of the frontier peoples in the early twentieth century, his early efforts in this regard were not followed by other historians until relatively recently.<sup>8</sup> While Hasluck was the first to spell out various aspects of the cultural experience of the Muslim Turks in medieval Anatolia with their Byzantine neighbors underlying such concepts as cohabitation, mutual influences, acculturation, syncretism and continuity,<sup>9</sup> more recently Cemal Kafadar provided an elaborate definition of the frontier environment on the basis of an analysis of frontier narratives. His definition of the Turco-Byzantine marches emphasized the interaction between the Muslim and Christian societies in medieval Anatolia, putting forward the syncretic elements and the cultural heterogeneity embedded in the complex structure of the frontier culture on the one hand, and the continued relationship between the frontier areas and the political centers on the other.<sup>10</sup>

Following the third of the approaches, the broader aim is to provide an understanding on how the people of the frontiers envisioned their political and cultural surroundings in a period marked by a high degree of physical mobility and ethnic fluidity where the boundaries between self and others kept being re-cast at an astonishing pace through conversion and conquest.<sup>11</sup> The conception (and the

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7 *Battâlname*. Facsimile edited by Şinasi Tekin and Gönül Alpay Tekin with introduction, English translation, Turkish transcription and commentary by Yorgos Dedes, 3 vols. (Harvard University, 1996).

8 Mehmet Fuad Köprülü, "Anadolu Selçukluları Tarihinin Yerli Kaynakları", *Bellekten* 7 (1943): 379-519. An English translation is also available: *The Seljuks of Anatolia: Their History and Culture according to Local Muslim Sources*, translated and edited by Gary Leiser (Salt Lake City, 1992).

9 Frederick William Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans*, 2 vols. (New York: Octagon Boks, 1973).

10 Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State*, (Berkeley, 1995).

11 A particular emphasis is put on the physical mobility by no means disregarding the more 'settled' elements of medieval Anatolian society. As in medieval Anatolia no political unity was to be established up until the fifteenth century there was more room for such mobility both in its physical and social sense. Not only the frontiers were moving through conquest and conversion re-molding ethnic and religious

misconception) of the infidels constitutes the central theme, which is founded on the assumption that the frontier areas did not constitute a barrier between Muslim and Christian societies. Moreover, in spite of the permanent state of war they also functioned as an area of contact and cohabitation.<sup>12</sup>

Such a symbiotic atmosphere left little or no room for speculation about the rival. Nevertheless, the “infidels” in the Anatolian warrior epics are portrayed in a caricaturized manner and are reduced into stereotypes as foolish, corrupt and bestial people, devoid of any further specific character. By analyzing the representations of the infidels such as *Frenks*, *Rumis* and *Yunanis*, the aim is first to try to uncover the stereotypes embedded in these texts and in so doing to attain an understanding of the way the people transmitting these stories constructed their own ideal self-image, through the negation of the other. By looking at the “infidels” as a motif the second aim is to underline the ways in which the warrior epics served as instruments of promoting the inclusion of the subjugated infidels upon their conversion to Islam. The discussion will be brought together with the geographical definitions of the countries to which these infidels are referred.

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composition, but people, too, were moving across the Anatolian peninsula: There were warriors in pursuit of booty or religious ideals, wandering dervishes –some of them more militant than these warriors–, nomads looking for new pastures, Muslim scholars on their way to their new patrons, displaced peasants, drifting ex-Byzantine soldiers, mercenaries and profit-seeking Latin merchants, all searching for new opportunities to make their way through this period of turmoil and ongoing transformation in Anatolia (Kafadar, p.61).

- 12 Owing much to Paul Wittek’s concept of Ottoman frontier, the frontier zones discussed here are, to put it broadly, a moving zone between two distinct zones of culture and settlement: the zones of Islamic domination and of Byzantine Orthodox rule, predating the Ottoman state and hence exceeding the limits of Ottoman history itself. According to Wittek, similar processes can be observed between the Ottoman concept of frontier and the Arabic *thughur* meaning in a broader sense the whole area separating the *dar al-Islam* (the abode of Islam) and *dar al-harb* (the abode of war, the territories of the ‘infidels’). Wittek traces the establishment of the Anatolian *thughur* stretching from the Taurus to the upper Euphrates, back to as early as the seventh century, aftermath of the first wave of Arab conquests. Like the Ottoman frontiers, these areas were soon to be peripheralized and separated from the settled hinterland forming a distinct frontier sub-culture that shared more in common with its Christian neighbors in spite of the cultural, religious and linguistic divide. Paul Wittek, “Deux chapitres de l’histoire des Turcs de Roum” *Byzantion* Vol. II (1936): 285-319.

### **Historical Context: Frontier Zones in Late Medieval Anatolia**

Following the Battle of Manzikert (1071) the political setting of Anatolia was dominated by the struggle between various competing powers and was not to gain stability until the Ottomans established their unitary rule at the end of the fifteenth century. In the eleventh century, Anatolia was divided up among Turkish warrior-bands, Armenian princes and Byzantine commanders. The Frankish knights who arrived with the First Crusade also joined the political landscape of the peninsula. Two powers enjoyed some longevity among the Turco-Muslims, the House of the Seljuks and of Danişmend, which for almost one century, competed to gain supremacy that came to an end in favor of the former. The Seljuks of Rum succeeded in establishing a relatively stable government after the establishment of Konya as their capital during the reign of Mesud I (r.1118-55) and reduced their rivals to vassalage after they have captured the core of Danişmendid administration, Malatya in 1177.<sup>13</sup>

Nevertheless, some scholars have viewed the fragile nature of the Seljukid rule and argued that it contained all the defects proper to the other medieval Turkic states founded on a nomadic basis:

There were many frontier zones of various sizes where the administrative apparatus hardly reached; there were many tribal groups that were not controlled; there were many ambitious warriors, some of them possibly made by the Seljuks, ready to imagine themselves independent of Seljuk authority and when two or three of these came together, as they frequently did, they were able to shake if not dissolve, state power.<sup>14</sup>

While the thirteenth century witnessed the consolidation of administrative power, the Seljuks of Rum also suffered a major setback in this period due to an external factor: The Mongol invasion which presented not only a severe challenge to the Seljukid authority, but also pushed many tribes towards Anatolia. The Mongol authority that replaced the Seljukid one failed in its efforts to reduce the Turcomans, especially in the western part of Asia Minor. What had been no more than bands of nomadic pastoralists around cities, which were more or less governed by representatives of those cities, gradually became autonomous groups and took possession of those cities. So principalities, still in a primitive stage of development, came into existence and divided up the realm of the Seljuks of Rum.<sup>15</sup>

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13 Kafadar, pp. 3-4.

14 Kafadar, pp. 4-5.

15 Claude Cahen, *The Formation of Turkey: The Seljukid Sultanate of Rum, Eleventh to Fourteenth Century*, trans. and ed. by P.M. Holt, (Pearson Education, 2001), p. 227.

### The Late Medieval Anatolian Frontier Narratives

In a period dominated by physical mobility it should come as no surprise that stories also circulated. The Turkish warrior epics that emanated in the frontier areas of late medieval Anatolia, as aforementioned, were based on the earlier layers of the frontier traditions. Represented through legends, *topoi* and set patterns this first ‘ahistorical’ layer is permeated by centuries-old frontier lore that have the central theme of *gaza* against the ‘infidels’ and therefore constitutes the primary focus of the present study.

With regard to the scope, the narrative style and the content the first three narratives that will be discussed here, the *Battalnâme*, the *Danişmendnâme* and the *Saltuknâme*, constitute different cycles of what it came to be called “warrior epic genre” in medieval Anatolia.<sup>16</sup> The *Battalnâme* is the Book of Seyyid Battal, the legendary Arab warrior from the late Umayyad period whose cult is primarily associated with Malatya.<sup>17</sup> The historical backgrounds of both the *Danişmendnâme* and the *Saltuknâme* follow chronologically the period within which the *Battalnâme* is set. While the former is the story of Melik Danişmend, the founder of the Danişmendid dynasty, the latter is the legendary account of the life and deeds of the thirteenth-century dervish-warrior Sarı Saltuk and both are modeled after Seyyid Battal.<sup>18</sup> All works share the same subject-matter:

- <sup>16</sup> *Battalnâme*; Irène Mélikoff, *La geste de Melik Danişmend: Étude critique du Danişmendnâme*, (Paris: Librairie Adrien Maisonneuve, 1960); *Danişmendnâme*, ed. Necati Demir, 4 volumes. (The Department of Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations Harvard University, Cambridge, 2002); Ebu’l-hayr-i Rumi, *Saltuknâme*, Facsimile edition of Topkapı Palace Library, H. 1612 by Fahir İz, 7 volumes (Cambridge: The Department of Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations Harvard University, 1986); Ebu’l-Hayr-i Rumi, *Saltuknâme*, ed. Şükrü Haluk Akalın, 3 volumes (Ankara: 1990).
- <sup>17</sup> The lore of Seyyid Battal was first patronized by the Seljukid ruler Ala’eddin Keykubad (r.1220-37). However, the earliest manuscript of the *Battalnâme* that has survived today is dated 1436-37. It is also on the copy of this manuscript Yorgos Dedes based his edition including an introduction, an English translation and transcription of the manuscript attached to its facsimile. According to Dedes, the *Battalnâme* is maybe one of the earliest prose works of Islamic Turkish literature in Anatolia and its oral roots can be traced back as early as the arrival of the Danişmendid Turks in Malatya in the late eleventh century. Kafadar, p.66; Dedes, vol. I, p.1.
- <sup>18</sup> The stories about Melik Danişmend were first written down for the Seljukid Sultan Izzeddin (Keykavus II, d. 1279) by a certain Mevlana Ibn Ala. The text composed by Mevlana Ibn Ala (now lost) was discovered in 1360-61 by Arif Ali, the governor of Tokat. According to his own account, Arif Ali copied the text and adorned it with verses. The fact that there is no mention of the Ottomans makes us assume that the composition of the text dates before 1392 prior to Ottoman annexation of Tokat. Mélikoff, *La geste*, p.55,

*gazas* against the “infidels.” They also share the same style and narrative structure. All three works consist of multiple stories that form the biography of the eponymous heroes.<sup>19</sup> Apart from this cycle of warrior epics, another narrative in verse also of heroic nature is included in the discussion. The *Düsturnâme* by Enveri (completed in 1465) is an original epic that relates the military exploits of Umur Beg (d.1348), the ruler of the Aydınoğlu principality in western Anatolia.<sup>20</sup>

The scene of action in these narratives changes as the frontiers kept moving through conversion and conquest. Whereas most of the incidents in the *Battalnâme* are centered around Malatya in southeastern Anatolia, the center of action moves to the northwest with the *Danişmendnâme* and even further west into the Balkans with the *Saltuknâme*. The *Düsturnâme* takes the scene of *gaza* altogether to a different level, that of naval warfare on the shores of the Aegean Sea.

### Drawing Boundaries: The *Frenks*, *Rumis* and *Yunanis*

The infidels--*kafirs*--included in this paper are the Christian enemies against whom the *gazis* living on the frontiers waged war. From a broader perspective, there are three main categories attached to three different geographies: *Rumis*,

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59. Completed ca. 1480, the *Saltuknâme*, the book of Sarı Saltuk, was compiled by Ebu'l-Hayr Rumi, a member of Prince Cem's court and submitted to the latter. According to the author's own account, while on campaign against the Akkoyunlu ruler Uzun Hasan in 1473, Mehmed II had left Prince Cem in Edirne to guard the Balkan borders. Cem soon became interested in the well-known Sarı Saltuk legends in the area and asked Ebu'l-Hayr Rumi to compile them into a book. Ebu'l-Hayr spent seven years wandering from country to country to collect the stories from oral tradition. Ebu'l-Hayr-ı Rumi, *Saltuknâme*, ed. Şükrü Haluk Akalın, vol. III, pp.365-366.

19 For a detailed analysis of the common features shared by these narratives, see Yorgos Dedes' discussion in the Introduction part of the first volume of the *Battalnâme*, especially pp.48-51.

20 The *Düsturnâme* is composed of three parts. The first part is a history of Prophets and of the kings of Persia. The second and the largest part of the text, which is also the focus of this study is the history of the Aydınoğlu emirate featuring Umur Beg and his military feats. The third part is an Ottoman history starting from the Seljuks of Rum until the completion of the text in 1465. The text was commissioned by Mahmud Paşa, the grand-vizier of Mehmed II. Irène Mélikoff, *Le Destan d'Umur Pacha*. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1954). There is an earlier edition of the text by M. Halil (Yinanç). There is also a new edition of the section concerning Ottoman history by Necdet Öztürk.; *Düsturname-i Enveri*, ed. M. Halil Yinanç, (Istanbul, 1928); *Düsturname-i Enveri: Osmanlı Tarihi Kısmı*, ed. Necdet Öztürk, (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2003).



*Yunanis* and *Frenks*. In most of the narratives, *Rum* stands geographically for Anatolia and politically for the Byzantine Empire. *Frengistan*, the country of the *Frenks* (*Frenk İli*) is adjacent to the domain of Rum (*Rum mülki*) and is governed by *Filyon Frenk* or the Pope (*Pap*).<sup>21</sup> While there is no detailed description of the *Yunan* in the *Battalnâme* and the *Danışmendnâme*, it appears to be a sub-category of the *Rum*. In the *Battalnâme*, there are only a few references with an Ancient Greek flavor, yet with no specific information about what *Yunan* geographically stands for. There is for instance, the infidel warrior called *Sokrat* (Socrates), or *Arastatalis* (Aristotle), the ruler of *Yunan* (*hakim-i Yunan*).

The *Saltuknâme* provides us with further explanation by stating that Anatolia is *Yunan*<sup>22</sup> and that “the rule of *Yunan* is in Kayseriyye”, Kayseri.<sup>23</sup> Further in the text, western parts of Anatolia are also referred as *Yunan*, whereas the territories in *Rumeli*, in Thrace and in the Balkans are referred as *Rum*. The perplexity about the terms *Rum* and *Yunan* may be attributed to a certain level of confusion that also existed in medieval Arab accounts pertaining to the legacy of the Byzantine past where *al-Rum* was used to refer to the ancient Greeks, although the dominating term in that context was *al-Yunaniyyun/Yunan*, deriving from the Greeks’ biblical name: Yonan (Genesis 2:10).<sup>24</sup>

As the frontier areas changed with further conquests, so did the “ethnic” variety of the infidels in contact. Whereas in the *Battalnâme*, there are few references to any infidel people other than the Byzantines, in the *Danışmendnâme* as the frontiers moved northward, three infidel peoples come forward along with the Byzantines, the *Ermens* (Armenians), the *Gürcis* (Georgians) and the *Çerkes* (Circassians). As the setting for *gaza* moved further west in the *Saltuknâme*, the *Rum* acquired a new definition, and exceeded the limits of the Byzantine Empire it came to embrace such infidel countries as *Eflak* (Wallachia, today’s southern

21 In medieval Arab accounts, the word *Frenk* designated all western and northwestern Europeans. Aziz Al-Azmeh, “Barbarians in Arab Eyes”, *Past and Present*, No: 134, (February, 1992), p. 6. In the *Saltuknâme*, this area may also be referred to as the Latin country (*Latin diyarı*). Since what the *Saltuknâme* records as *Frenk begs* bears similarity with some of the Latin countries: *Gedlan*, *Frençe*, *Milan*, *Cinevis*, *Frankal* and *Espan*. While *Frenk* and *Frençe* are used interchangeably throughout the text, *Frenk* has also a broader meaning to include all the Christians in Western Europe. *Saltuknâme*, ed. Şükrü Akalın, vol.I, p.88, 99.

22 “Anatolya yunan dirler.” *Ibid.*, p.21.

23 *Ibid.*, p.12.

24 Nadia Maria El-Cheikh, *Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs* (Harvard University Press, 2004), pp. 21-22.

Romania), *Üngürüs* (Hungary), *Alaman* (Country of the Germanic people)<sup>25</sup>, *As* (Alans), *Leh* (Poles), *Çeh* (Czech country), *Rus* (Land of the Rus; parts of today's Belarus and northern Ukraine)<sup>26</sup>.<sup>27</sup> The country of the *Frenks* is described more distinctively in the *Saltuknâme* covering such Latin countries as *Gedlan* (Catalans), *Frençe* (France), *Milan*, *Cinevis* (Genoa), *Frankal* (the country of the Franks) and *Espan* (Spain).<sup>28</sup>

The infidels in the *Düsturnâme* almost appear as three-dimensional characters where it becomes possible to associate them with historical figures. There is a keen awareness of the distinction between the Byzantines and the members of various Frankish kingdoms established around the Aegean Sea. In addition to the Byzantines and the *Frenks*, one of the key infidel actors in the *Düsturnâme* are

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25 The word *Alaman* is probably used to refer to the German-speaking people in general, or to the *Germanoi* as some Byzantine authors referred to them. Alexander Kazhdan, "Latins and Franks in Byzantium: Perception and Reality from the Eleventh to the Twelfth Century", in *The Crusaders From the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World*, eds. Angeliki E. Laiou and Roy Parviz Mottahedeh, (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2001), p.89. The ethnic origin of the word Alamanni from which the word Alaman might have derived goes back to the third century. The Romans distinguished among the Germani those who lived on the lower Rhine as the Franks and those on the upper Rhine as the "Alamanni", that is "the people." Such distinction was not linguistic but geographical. In the fifth century the kingdom of Alamannia was succumbed to the Frankish state. Patrick J. Geary, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2002), p.81.

26 The medieval meaning of *Rus* is associated with the *Kievan Rus*, in today's Ukraine and Belarus: "Ancient Rus is ancient Ukraine, not ancient Russia, and certainly not ancient Rossiia (a late medieval re-import from the cognate Greek form Rhosia)." Simon Franklin, "The Invention of Rus(sia)(s): Some Remarks on Medieval and Modern Perceptions of Continuity and Discontinuity", *Medieval Europeans: Studies in Ethnic Identity and National Perspectives in Medieval Europe*, ed. Alfred P. Smyth, (New York: Palgrave, 2002), p.184.

27 *Saltuknâme*, v. I, p. 24.

28 The confusion between *Frenk* and Latin in the *Saltuknâme* also existed in Byzantine texts. Whereas previously the Byzantines had thought of the West as composed of separate political units with distinct peoples, following the First Crusade, especially by the twelfth century, the Byzantine intellectuals began to consider the "Latin" West as a unified entity with its own Latin peoples, Latin language and Latin customs. Although "Frank" had a relatively more specific meaning, it had also different usages. Some Byzantine authors used it to refer to the *Germanoi*, the Germanic tribes allied with the Vandals, while some others used it to refer to the Normans. It was also often the case that "Franks" and "Latins" were used interchangeably. For more see, Alexander Kazhdan, "Latins and Franks in Byzantium."

the *Kadalans*, probably referring to the Catalans under the service of the Duke of Athens, Gauthier V de Brienne.<sup>29</sup>

### **Infidels: Creating an Ideal Self-Image**

The infidels in the Anatolian warrior epics, as aforementioned, are described as arrogant, ridiculous and immoral people who deserve a good lesson, which often means their being slaughtered without any hesitation. This is how all the violence shown by the Muslim protagonist towards them is justified. Although, the central theme is the *gazas* undertaken against the infidel enemies, very little is known concerning their particularities, except for the constant comparison of the infidel behavior with the Muslim one with the superiority of the latter.

The narration goes in both ways where the audience is given the chance to hear both sides of the story through the implementation of digressions offering multiple viewpoints. The evil plans of the infidels and their perception of the Muslim enemies are recorded based on –what is imagined to be– their own narration from the eyes of the Muslim storyteller. Accordingly, the Muslims are referred as “cadu”s, as witchlike creatures whenever the infidels are allowed direct speech. From the point of view of the Muslim storyteller, Christianity is a “batıl din,” a superstitious religion, which can be attributed to the concept of Holy Trinity often considered as polytheism among the Muslims.<sup>30</sup> There are also few instances where the infidels are “imagined” to speak their own “infidel” language. A Greek sounding prayer goes for instance as “titi miti tonuz eti” (titi miti pork meat), which undoubtedly served as a comical effect for the audience.<sup>31</sup>

The names of the infidel rulers are distorted to such a great extent that their association with any historical figure becomes almost impossible, except for the *Düsturnâme* where most of the historical figures and references can actually be identified. But even when the oral tradition kept a foreign name, this was the title rather than the name of the historical figure.<sup>32</sup> To give one example, the best friend of Umur Beg John VI Kantakouzenos first appears in the scene as “Domes-

29 The Catalans who were under the service of Gauthier V de Brienne soon turned against him and after their victory against Latin forces occupied his territory. See Footnote 3 by Mélikoff, *Le Destan d'Umur Pacha*, p.65.

30 Elizabeth A. Zachariadou, “Religious Dialogue between Byzantines and Turks during the Ottoman Expansion” in *Studies in Pre-Ottoman Turkey and the Ottomans* (Variorum Collected Studies Series, 2007), p.294.

31 *Danışmendnâme*, ed. Necati Demir, vol.I, p.152.

32 Mélikoff, *La Geste*, p.132.

tikos Frenk” given that he was “Megas Domestikos”, the commander-in-chief of the Byzantine army before he became emperor.<sup>33</sup>

As opposed to the highly idealized world of the Muslims acting as a unified one –under the great leadership of our Muslim hero-, the infidels’ world is more of a chaotic nature where corruption, disagreement and personal interests prevail.<sup>34</sup> The alliances forged against the Turks can easily break down. In one such instance in the *Saltuknâme*, an alliance is established between the infidels, which can be interpreted as a reference to a Crusade. Sarı Saltuk disguised as a *Rumi* witnesses a quarrel between the rulers of *Yunani* and *Frençe* during a meeting in a church where they are, as usual, all drunk:

The ruler of Frençe, Geylevan, rose among the others and said: ‘O the rulers of Yunan and Kırvan!’<sup>35</sup> There are no people worse than you are in this world and this is why the Turks took over your territories. Allied with Tekür<sup>36</sup> (Tekür yanında) you became so miserable and so contemptible (h’ar ü zar). Now you say that Armenians are better than the Rum and the Frenk, and that Alexander the Great (İskender-i Zül-karneyn) arose from the Yunan. So tell me, where is your effort?’ And the son of the sultan of Yunan replied: ‘You did not encounter the Turks as we did. If you had, you would all have been smashed.’ The ruler of Frençe sprinkled a sip from his glass on the Yunan (Yunan oğlu). The Yunan responded: ‘I am the descendant of Caesar and you are insulting me. Alright then, you will see, I will

33 Some other typical examples that are common in the warrior epics are *Tekfur*, the Armenian loan word that stood for Byzantine lord or ruler, *Kaysar* for Byzantine emperor, *Sivasdos* for Sebastos, *Medrepelit* for Metropolitan, *Batıraş* for Patriarch, *Pap* or *Papos* for Pope. Mélikoff, *Le Destan d’Umur Pacha*, pp.93-94; Mélikoff, *La Geste*, p.132.

34 Such a description of the infidel world as fragmented into small polities under certain “tekmur”s dominates the texts under discussion. In a similar way, the world of the Muslims seems to enjoy a unified rule only in the hands of our Muslim hero. In his article, “Heroes and Saints”, Gottfried Hagen brings to the fore the political fragmentation in Anatolia in the formation of such heroic literature attributing a greater role to the heroic individuals and elements of localism: “More than the confrontation with the infidel, it was political fragmentation, the power vacuum of Anatolia that have given rise to this literature, as indicated by the element of localism and competition between saints, and the continuous notion of absence of a higher authority.” Gottfried Hagen, “Heroes and Saints in Early Ottoman Literature,” *Oriente Moderno*, Nuova Serie, LXXXIX, 2 [Special issue: *Studies on Islamic Legends*, ed. Giovanni Canova], 2009, pp.357-358.

35 What Kırvan exactly stood for is not clear. Although here it denotes some infidel country it is also stated in the *Saltuknâme* that Sarı Saltuk is from the Kırvan Turks.

36 Due to the confusion caused by different spellings of the letter “ج” the word is sometimes transcribed into Turkish as *Tekür* instead of *Tekvur* or *Tekfur*, Byzantine lord or ruler.

become Turk and create so much trouble for you!' The sultan of France replied: 'I am the descendant of Filyon (Pope). I am the highest of all I will replace Pap (Pope) and become Pap in Frenk. I will march against the Turks, slaughter them all and make the Christians stronger!'<sup>37</sup>

The dispute between the two goes on with mutual insults and ends up with the *Yunani* prince's slaughtering of Geylevan by cutting him into two pieces. The passage is significant for it reflects the conflict between the Crusaders and the Byzantines in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Many contemporary Byzantine intellectuals portrayed the Crusaders (Latins) in a similar fashion to the *Saltuknâme*. Anna Komnene (d.1153), daughter of the Byzantine emperor Alexios I Komnenos, in her history *Alexiad* described them as arrogant, avaricious and greedy for power.<sup>38</sup> The Byzantine chronicler Niketas Choniates' (d.1215 or 1216) list was longer. Choniates characterized them as "cruel, treacherous, stupid, unrestrained in speech, arrogant, unreliable, ambitious for glory and profit, and hostile toward the empire."<sup>39</sup>

Maybe partly as the outcome of a shared perception among the Byzantines and their Turco-Muslim neighbors, such negative portrayal of the Crusades (Latins or *Frenks*)<sup>40</sup> also persisted in the Anatolian frontier narratives where the *Frenks* were put in altogether a new category, that of the cannibals. In fact, William of Tyre, the medieval chronicler as well as the archbishop of Tyre, provides us with a possible explanation on the roots of such conception. Accordingly, the Crusaders roasted the flesh of some prisoners and pretended to eat it in order to frighten and drive away the Turkish spies who were too numerous to be tracked down.<sup>41</sup> In the *Düsturnâme*, we have a reverse situation where the local Christians are offered sheep meat by the Turkish conquerors, which they thought was actually human flesh. Frightened, they deserted the whole area.<sup>42</sup> The fact that a similar method was also used by the Turco-Muslims resulting in the desertion of an area demonstrates either the practice itself or the exchange between two sides to be common.

37 *Saltuknâme*, vol. I, p.23.

38 Anne Comnène, *Alexiade*, ed. P. Gautier, (Paris, 1976) in Alexander Kazhdan, "Latins and Franks in Byzantium," p.87.

39 *Nicotae Choniatae Historia*, ed. J. L. van Dieten (Berlin-New York: 1975) in *Ibid.*, p.88.

40 In the *Saltuknâme*, *Frengistan* may also be referred as Latin country (*Latin diyarı*), and *Frenk* and Latin are used interchangeably.

41 Mélikoff, *La Geste*, p.136; *Guillaume de Tyr et ses continuateurs, texte français du XIIIe siècle*, revu et annoté par M. Paulin Paris (Paris, Firmin Didot et cie, 1879-80.), p.151.

42 Mélikoff, *Le Destan d'Umur Pacha*, pp.91-92.

Now that I have just mentioned the abundance of spies it should be noted that one of the most common themes in the narratives is that of espionage –*casuslak-*. Against the background of shifting loyalties in medieval Anatolia where there were no clear-cut boundaries and changing sides was quite often, it should come as no surprise that spying activities constituted an essential part of warfare.<sup>43</sup> In the warrior epics, the protagonists always have perfect knowledge about the rival language and religion. Disguised as Christians, they can easily deceive the enemy and break into their castles and monasteries. Not only do they have spies at their disposal whom they send occasionally on mission, but the newly converts can also serve as informers.<sup>44</sup>

Although it has been pointed out that one of the characteristics attributed to the infidels is their being deceitful, when we look more closely we see that they are the ones exposed to treachery, deceitfulness and all kinds of cruel ruses by their Muslim counterparts, which at the end turn them into objects of derision. It can be assumed from the bulk of such “amusing” examples that the ridiculing of the infidels mostly served the purpose of entertaining the audience. Whenever faced with the atrocities committed by the Muslim hero, the infidel rulers get all too soppy and cannot help but burst into tears. In one such instance from the *Saltuknâme*, Sarı Saltuk destroys everything in Hagia Sophia, which causes the Byzantine emperor to have a minor nervous breakdown and his retinue takes him to a mountainous area (the mountain of *Macar*) to cheer him up.<sup>45</sup> This incident becomes more meaningful from the viewpoint of the nomad, according to which the mountains were considered places to get away from the troubles of the everyday city life. In a similar example from the *Saltuknâme*, the *Tekür* asks to be given a piece of land from Sarı Saltuk on a highland pasture near Istanbul in order to have some peace of mind.<sup>46</sup>

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43 For a general survey of spying activities, see Kate Fleet, “Turks, Italians and Intelligence in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries” in *The Balance of Truth: Essays in Honour of Professor Geoffrey Lewis*. Edited by Çiğdem Balım-Harding and Colin Imber (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2000), pp.99-112. See also Mélikoff’s note on the role of spies in the conquest of Anatolia in *La Geste*, pp.126-127.

44 For some examples on spying activities in the narratives, *Battalnâme*, p.379, 481, 485, 490; *Danişmendnâme*, ed. Necati Demir, vol.I, p.35, 37-38, 55 (newly converts as spies), 92-94, 106, *Saltuknâme*, ed. Akalın, vol.I, p.9, vol II, p.237.

45 “Tekür bu hali görüp melul olup ağladı Vezirler tekürü alup gönli açılun diyü şehirden çıkarup yaylaya iletdiler.” *Saltuknâme*, v. I, p. 68.

46 “Pes anda Tekür Server’den İstanbul yanında bir tağ istedi kim daim anda gele yaylaya, kimesneler anda ana zahmet virmeyeler diyü.” *Saltuknâme*, v. II, p. 166.

It is worth spelling out that the examples reflecting the nomadic perspective are extremely scarce in these narratives, although from the extant sources providing firsthand information we know that up until the mid-fourteenth century the Ottoman rulers preferred to reside in tents on the highlands pursuing their nomadic customs and would only spend limited time in the city.<sup>47</sup> Therefore, the scarcity of examples reflecting the nomadic perspective must be attributed to the recording of these texts in courtly circles and in much later periods. This must be also why the examples seem to reflect a certain degree of nostalgia for a distant past even when we find them.<sup>48</sup>

### The ‘Good’ Infidels: Conversion and Signs of Inclusion

One of the most immediate outcomes of *gaza* is no doubt conversion and along with *gaza* it is also one of the most central themes in the narratives. Aside from the “fear of the sword”, the dream apparitions of the Prophet Muhammed, the wisdom of the Muslim hero in addition to his miraculous deeds is an efficient tool for Islamization. Some infidels freely accept conversion due to their simple admiration of the hero’s martial skills or his physical appearance. Some convert as they lose the bet over a miraculous deed. Those who resist the callings for conversion are eventually killed, especially when the invitation is hostilely turned down. It is also very common that once they acquire enough knowledge, the infidels easily convert to Islam and friendly relations occur between them and their Muslim fellows.

Before I move further with the examples it should be noted that the warrior epics that are discussed here served as instruments of promoting a certain

47 For sources providing information on the Ottoman sultans keeping up with their nomadic customs, see Cantacuzenus’ memoirs in *Historiarum Libri IV*, ed. Ludwig Schopen, Vol.I (Bonn, 1828), p.341; Ibn Khaldun, *Kitab el-Ibar*. Ed. Bulak, Vol.V, p.562; Ibn Battuta, *Voyages d’Ibn Batoutah: texte arabe, accompagné d’une traduction* par C. DeFrémery et B.R. Sanguinetti (Paris, 1914-1926, Vol. II, p.322, all cited in George Arnakis, “Gregory Palamas among the Turks and Documents of His Captivity as Historical Sources,” in *Speculum*, v. 26, No. 1, Jan., 1951, p. 113.

48 Gottfried Hagen categorizes the warrior epics that are discussed here as products of a sedentarized culture. According to Hagen, “the heroic age ends about the period when the extant texts are committed to writing in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century” due to unification and consolidation of the Ottoman rule as well as growing orthodoxy. “All this”, Hagen further states, “caused a fundamental change in outlook and world-view which rendered the heroic individual more and more obsolete in real life, reducing it to a nostalgic reminiscence.” Gottfried Hagen, “Heroes and Saints in Early Ottoman Literature,” p.350, 357-358.

ideology (or ideologies) in at least two ways: First, by encouraging the frontier warriors to zealously engage in *gaza* warfare, and second, by calling Christians to convert to Islam offering them not only the hope of inclusion but also material benefits upon their conversion. Although conversion at the point of the sword hardly seems to be a sign of inclusion, as it will be demonstrated with a number of examples, the companion figure, an ex-enemy from the rival religion who becomes our hero's most fearless comrade in arms after his conversion to Islam, in addition to more direct examples of cooperation with the infidels indicates such efforts of inclusion with or without the conversion element.<sup>49</sup>

49 Let us briefly remember Paul Wittek's *gaza* thesis and the controversies it created among Ottoman historians. At the center of criticism is Wittek's reliance on gazis' religious ideals as the driving force for the rise of the Ottomans, as many of their actions were seen as too 'unorthodox' to be closely connected with any idea of Holy War. Many of the critics focused their efforts in negating Wittek's thesis while also trying to bring one or another factor forward as the motive force for the early Ottomans. For more historiographical positions, see George Arnakis, *Hoi protoi othomanoi*, (Athens: 1947); Mustafa Akdağ, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Kuruluşu ve İnkişafı Devrinde Türkiye'nin İktisadi Vaziyeti", in two parts, *Belleten* 13 (1949): 497-571, 14(1950): 319-418; Speros Vryonis, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century*, (Berkeley: 1971); Rudi Lindner, *Nomads and Ottomans in Medieval Anatolia*, (Bloomington: 1983); G. Kaldy-Nagy, "The Holy War (*jihād*) in the First Centuries of the Ottoman Empire", *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 3/4 (1979-80): 467-73; Ronald C. Jennings, "Some Thoughts on the Gazi-Thesis", *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 76 (1986):151-61; Colin Heywood, "Wittek and Austrian Tradition", *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society* (1988): 7-25; idem, "Boundless Dreams of the Levant: Paul Wittek and the *George Kreis*, and the writing of Ottoman History", *ibid.* (1989):30-50; Colin Imber, "De la défaite d'Ankara à la prise de Constantinople", *Journal of Ottoman Studies* 5 (1986): 65-81; idem. "Ottoman Dynastic Myth", *Turcica* 19 (1987):7-27; idem. "The Legend of Osman Gazi", *The Ottoman Emirate (1300-1389): A Symposium Held in Rethymnon, 11-13 January 1991*, ed. E. Zachariadou, (Rethymnon: 1993). Most of the critics concurred on the fact that Bursa inscription and Ahmedî's chronicle on which Paul Wittek based his *gaza* thesis should be dismissed as productions of later ideologies. What can be considered as the most original of these studies that actually produced an alternative theory was Rudi Lindner's study, *Nomads and Ottomans in Medieval Anatolia*. While adopting an anthropological approach Lindner explained the rise of the Ottomans in terms of nomadic/sedentary dichotomy and as opposed to the 'exclusivist' nature of *gaza*, he put forward the tribal factor that was more 'inclusive' in nature and hence more proper to Ottoman advance. According to Lindner, examples of cooperation with the infidels have to be seen from a nomadic perspective where "protecting the rights of ethnically and ecologically diverse groups" is indispensable for the growth of the tribe and this is



The companion figure, as mentioned, is an important element shared by all three warrior epics. The hero always has a companion, a former “infidel” whom he converts giving him a new Muslim name. The companion in return gives the hero his *lakab*, nom de guerre as it were. In the *Danişmendnâme*, in addition to the companion figure Artuhi, there is also a female comrade in arms, Efromiya, the Byzantine princess and the real hero of the epic. Efromiya, keeping her Greek name all along, commands armies, undertakes attacks on the frontline, slaughters as many as twenty infidels with a single sword blow and can handle as many as hundred infidels single-handedly.<sup>50</sup>

Such efforts on the part of the new converts are not without their reward. There are direct examples of their “preferential treatment” upon their conversion where they are showered with gifts by the Muslim hero as part of their welcome to the new religion.<sup>51</sup> In one such example from the *Battalnâme*, Battal Gazi, while not taking anything for himself, rewards his companion Ahmad Turan with many gifts after his first battle against his former co-religionists.<sup>52</sup>

An important aspect of the close contact between the Muslims and Christians was that conversion could go in both directions. There are instances where Muslims “betray” their religion and convert to Christianity often through the evil temptation of an infidel woman, which eventually drags them down into debauchery and misery. One of the closest companions of Seyyid Battal, Abdu’l-Vahhab becomes Christian in order to marry a Byzantine princess, but due to excessive alcohol consumed out of regret he cannot even perform his most important duty on the wedding night and scandalously passes out.<sup>53</sup>

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how the tribe prospers and earns respect from the neighbors. See Lindner, pp.24-25. I am using the term “inclusion” here borrowing it from Cemal Kafadar. According to Kafadar, “contrary to modern scholars’ arguments as to the incompatibility of the *gaza* spirit and cooperation with or toleration of infidels, the congruity of these two allegedly disharmonious attitudes appears to be a topos in frontier literature which reveals an essential point concerning the *gaza* spirit: it is, among other things, an attempt to gain hearts and minds; it is always possible that the pure-hearted infidel will join your fold. He or she is not necessarily an enemy to the bitter end.” Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, p.89.

50 *Danişmendnâme*, ed. Necati Demir, Efromiya fighting on the frontline, p.73; Efromiya killing twenty infidels with a single sword blow, p.27; Efromiya against hundred infidels, p.63,133.

51 For more see Yorgos Dedes’ note in the *Battalnâme*, pp.621-622.

52 *Battalnâme*, p.377.

53 *Battalnâme*, p.548.

It should come as no surprise that there are also many instances where the new converts become renegades. Just to give one example is when Sarı Saltuk gets married again and disappears from the scene for forty days. When he sets out for *gaza* again, he arrives at the unidentified city of *Haynub*, whose population had previously converted to Islam. When Sarı Saltuk sees that the mosque was converted back to a church, he first invites its ruler to return to the religion (Islam). Rejected, he decides to kill him. Out of fear, the ruler becomes Muslim again (*kılıç korkusundan iman getürdi*). When Sarı Saltuk asks him why he did not remain faithful to Islam, the latter tells him that he was afraid of circumcision.<sup>54</sup>

Conversion is not the sole means indicating closer contact and inclusion. There are more direct examples of cooperation between the infidels and the Muslims without the conversion element. Just like Şamas Pir, the monk who receives Seyyid Battal with great hospitality, in the *Danişmendnâme* another monk Harkil Zahid offers Melik Danişmend refuge in his monastery.<sup>55</sup> The most striking example is the relationship between the Byzantine emperor Kantakouzenos (r.1341-1355) and Aydınoğlu Umur Beg as recorded in the *Düsturnâme*. Not only do they become blood brothers but they also engage in *razzia* –*akın*- together. Even the emperor calls his co-religionists “infidel”. When Kantakouzenos offers his daughter in marriage to Umur Beg, the latter turns him down considering the marriage will constitute incest, as the emperor is his brother.<sup>56</sup>

In conclusion, the present paper has been highly informed by the approach that was put forward by Cemal Kafadar, and which emphasized such concepts as cohabitation, acculturation, conversion and syncretism to characterize the cultural transformation in the frontier areas of late medieval Anatolia. Nevertheless, the tendency to represent the infidels within the framework of stereotypes prevailed in the Anatolian warrior epics, which has been brought together with the earlier layers of Arabo-Muslim frontier traditions. The constant negation of the infidel behavior as opposed to highly idealized Muslim one must be understood as an effort to construct an ideal self-image through the disparaging of the “other.”

In a world dominated by physical mobility where the boundaries between self and others kept being re-cast at an astonishing pace trying to construct one’s ideal identity against others was perhaps common. What was even more common

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54 *Saltuknâme*, vol.II, p.26.

55 *Battalnâme*, pp.349-350; *Danişmendnâme*, ed. Necati Demir, vol.I, p.15.

56 Mélikoff, *Le Destan d’Umur Pacha*, Kantakouzenos and Umur Beg becoming blood brothers, pp.84-85; engaging in *razzia* together, p.102; Kantakouzenos calling his co-religionists *kafir*, p.103; Kantakouzenos offering Umur Beg his daughter’s hand, p.106.

that came along with the same process was no doubt conversion. Aside from such standardized descriptions of the infidels as sworn enemies of Islam, there are signs of inclusion, articulated through conversion and cooperation. The companion figure, an ex-enemy from the rival religion, and the examples of cooperation in the warrior epics undoubtedly indicated such efforts for inclusion of the subjugated infidels.

*Creating an Ideal Self: Representations of Infidels in the Late Medieval Anatolian Frontier Narratives*

Abstract ■ The grand epic narratives of the religious heroes of the Muslim conquest of Anatolia have been well-known repositories of the world views and ideologies of the frontier society of late medieval Asia Minor. This article investigates the representation of the “other” of various categories, such as *Frenk*, *Rum*, and *Yunan*, in epics such as the *Battalnâme*, the *Danışmendnâme*, and the *Saltuknâme*, arguing that the representation of these groups primarily functions as a negative self-image, as an inversion of the ideals of the frontier communities, such as chivalry, justice, generosity, courage, and self-discipline. It draws special attention to the “companion figure” of the hero as a tool to promote *gaza* ideology while inviting conversion of non-Muslim allies.

Key words: Frontier culture, epic, heroism, *gaza*, ideology, *Battalnâme*, *Danışmendnâme*, *Saltuknâme*.